

The Enright Process Model as an Effective Tool for Unforgiveness and Anger Management among College Students in Ghana.

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ABSTRACT

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Uncontrolled anger and lack of forgiveness contribute significantly to conflicts within the school and home environments. This research investigated the potential of the Enright Process Model to promote forgiveness and help in anger management among college students. A quasi-experimental design with both experimental (Enright Process Model) and control groups (no intervention), utilizing pre- and post-test assessments was adopted. The sample comprised level 100 students from two Colleges of Education in Ghana. A total of 26 first-year students (13 from each institution) were assigned to the experimental and control groups, respectively. The instruments included the Enright Forgiveness Inventory and the General Anger Inventory. The ages of the participants were 19- 36 years. Paired sample t-test was used to analyse the data. Findings indicated that the Enright Process Model positively influenced forgiveness levels of participants who received the intervention as they reported higher post-test mean score ($M=295.23, SD=11.75$) compared to their pre-test mean score ($M=158.92, SD=46.57$), [$t(12)=-11.51, p<.05$]. There was no significant difference in pre-test and post-test anger scores of participants who received the intervention [$t(12)=-2.19$]. The pre-test and post-test forgiveness scores of participants who did not receive the intervention was not significantly different [$t(12)=-1.04$]. Similarly, there was no significant difference in the pre-test and post-test anger scores of participants who did not receive the intervention [$t(12)=-1.57$]. This study demonstrates the effectiveness of the Enright Process Model in fostering forgiveness among college students. It is recommended that school counsellors should integrate this therapy into their practice to promote anger management and facilitate forgiveness.

Introduction

School violence reports highlight the prevalence of sexual, verbal, physical, and emotional abuse among students, a phenomenon observed across all educational levels (Human Rights Commission, 2009; Allemand et al., 2007). Such experiences can cultivate anger and a lack of forgiveness within the student population. Several studies underscore anger and forgiveness issues as challenges faced by students (Gelaye et al., 2008; Tariku et al., 2017). The consequences of anger and unforgiveness can manifest as violent behaviours, including physical fights, bullying, carrying weapons, and a desire for retaliation (Park et al., 2013). Casarrella (2021) identifies physiological manifestations of frequent anger, including increased heart rate and elevated blood pressure. Furthermore, studies link difficulties in emotional and behavioural regulation among college students with academic challenges (Loveland et al., 2007; Strauss, et al., 2008). The effects of these psychological and emotional problems are dire on the students, and they these behaviours present significant public health concerns.

The challenges associated with anger and unforgiveness appear particularly acute among first-year college students who may experience heightened vulnerability to abuse (Park et al.,

2013). Norman et al. (2017) listed sexual harassment, bullying, verbal insults, and physical assault as some of the commonest forms of abuse perpetrated against newly admitted students in most colleges. Anger is an emotion characterized by antagonism toward someone or something that one feels has deliberately done them wrong, and it varies from mild irritation to intense fury (American Psychological Association, 2023). Enright and his colleagues defined forgiveness as the “willingness to abandon one’s rights to resentment, negative judgement, and indifferent behaviour towards a person who has unjustly hurt us while fastening the underserved qualities of compassion, generosity, and even love towards him or her” (Enright & Coyle, 1998, pp. 46-47).

Forgiveness and forgiveness therapies have been used to help different groups solve their psychological and emotional problems. Forgiveness models (e.g., Enright Process Model) have influenced psychological problems. Baskin et al. (2004) adopted the Enright Process Model to investigate the effects of anger on the mood vulnerability of substance-dependent clients. Fehr et al.’s (2010) comprehensive meta-analysis explored the relationship between forgiveness and constructs including intention, empathy, and anger. Their investigation encompassed 175 studies, totalling

26,000 participants, and tested 22 relevant hypotheses. The researchers discovered a negative correlation between forgiveness and negative emotions, with specific effect sizes of -0.27 for general negative emotions and a stronger correlation of -0.47 for anger. These findings align with Lijo's (2018) work, demonstrating a significant negative correlation between anger and forgiveness.

Lawler-Rowet al. (2008) demonstrated a negative correlation between forgiving others and specific anger-related thought patterns. These patterns include anger afterthoughts, characterised by persistent rumination and mental replay of the anger-inducing event, and anger memories, where the individual fixates on experienced injustices. From the literature above, it was evident that the model was effective against forgiveness. Nevertheless, for anger, there were mixed reports. This means that there is still more to be done in this field.

Statement of the Problem

The Seventh-day Adventist (S.D.A.) College of Education and Mount Mary College of Education are among Ghanaian institutions attracting high enrolments of first-year students. Interviews with authorities at these institutions reveal trends of ill-treatment and harm inflicted upon first-year students, often perpetrated by students in higher year levels. Further interviews revealed that the unpleasant treatment given to the first-year students at the above-mentioned colleges emanates from a student cultural practice described in educational settings in Ghana as 'homoyeing' (initiating) welcoming first-year students with harsh treatment (Agbador, 2021). In some schools, this maltreatment continues until the seniors are out of school. All the students who have suffered such maltreatment repress the anger, unforgiveness, pain, and bitterness and project it onto other students who later come. Some students may also carry hurt, bitterness, anger, and unforgiveness from home to school because of the hurt they have suffered. Unfortunately, some of these students carry these negative emotions for life unknowingly (Enright, 1996). According to the school management of the colleges, victimisation and bullying of first-year students have resulted in poor academic performance and self-isolation among first-year students. High levels of maltreatment among the students have caused unforgiveness and its associated problems, which is an indication that the need for therapeutic remedies to help the students must be considered by the authorities.

Objectives of the Study

The main objectives of the study were to examine whether:

1. Participants in the Enright Process Model would differ in their pre-test and post-test scores on measure of forgiveness.
2. Participants in the Enright Process Model would differ in their pre-test and post-test scores on measure of anger.
3. Participants outside the Enright Process Model would differ in their pre-test and post-test scores on measure of forgiveness.

4. Participants outside the Enright Process Model would differ in their pre-test and post-test scores on measure of anger.

Research Hypotheses

The work was guided by four research hypotheses as follows:

1. There is a significant difference between the pre-test and post-test scores of participants in the Enright Process Model on measure of forgiveness.
2. There is a significant difference between the pre-test and post-test scores of the participants in the Enright Process Model on measure of anger.
3. There is a significant difference in pre-test and post-test scores of participants outside the Enright Process Model on measure of forgiveness.
4. There is a significant difference in pre-test and post-test scores of the participants outside the Enright Process Model on measure of anger.

Method

Research design: This study employed a Quasi-Experimental design that involved a pre-test post-test experimental control group design. The control group (*participants outside the Enright Process Model*) consisted of 13 students from the SDA College of Education, and the experimental group (*participants in the Enright Process Model*) consisted of 13 students from Mount Mary College of Education.

Ethical Clearance. Before commencing the research, ethical clearance was obtained from the University of Cape Coast Institutional Review Board. Additionally, the study secured permission from relevant lecturers, and informed consent was obtained from all participating students. The participants were not required to write their names or identities on the questionnaires.

Sampling techniques: The study population encompassed first-year students enrolled at the Seventh-day Adventist (S.D.A.) College of Education ($N = 427$) and Mount Mary College of Education ($N = 486$) in the Eastern Region of Ghana. A lottery method of simple random sampling was employed to select these two institutions. Following a pre-test assessment, students scoring below 210 on the attitude scale and 105 or below on the anger inventory were invited to participate in the study. Twenty-six first year students, made up of 13 students with anger and forgiveness problems, were sampled for the study.

Data Collection: Two instruments were adopted in the data collection, namely the Anger Inventory (Zelin et al., 1972) and the Enright Forgiveness Inventory (EFI) (Enright & Rique, 2017). Pre-test and post-test data collection employed the EFI and the Anger Inventory. These instruments are widely recognised for their strong psychometric properties and frequent use in forgiveness research (Worthington, 2001; Schamborg et al., 2016). The General Anger

Inventory developed using 30 items from the original instruments designed by Zelin et al. (1972). Individual items are measured on a 6-point, Likert-type of scale beginning from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (6). The Enright Forgiveness Inventory (EFI) comprises 60 items but incorporates a five-item subscale designed to assess pseudo-forgiveness, aiding in the identification of participants whose behaviours may not represent genuine forgiveness (evidence of construct validity). Participants respond to all the statements about forgiveness using a six-point Likert-type scale, ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (6).

Both the Anger Inventory and the EFI were pilot tested on 35 students at the Kibi College of Education. The scales had Cronbach alphas .93 for the EFI and .87 for the Anger scale, which were considered good and reliable (Pallant, 2010) since they have Cronbach's alpha values above .70. The validity of the instruments is well established by different researchers (Worthington, 2001; Schamborg et al., 2016). To control extraneous variables in this study, it was organised to be lovely and interactive to prevent fatigue and boredom. Snacks were also served to sustain the interest of the participants.

Treatment Plan

The intervention lasted for 24 meetings of 50-60-minute meeting time two days a week for the participants in the Enright Process Model. *Participants outside the Enright Process Model* did not undergo any treatment or intervention. The treatment plan lasted for 12 weeks and is described as follows: Pre-Intervention: On the first day, rules were set, consent was sought and signed, and the general nature of the study was well explained to them. The preamble of the questionnaires was discussed with the participants before answering the questionnaire. The participants were asked to recall a hurt they had experienced and focus on the hurts they suffered for some time. The Enright Process model has four stages. The first, *Uncovering Stage* is where the counsellor helps the clients identify the hurts they have suffered from. The second stage was the *working stage*. This stage was where the counsellor and client worked for the client to accept that the client (students) has a forgiveness problem. The third stage was the *working stage*, where the counsellor worked with students to see the importance of forgiveness and the need for the students to consider forgiveness. The fourth and last stage was the *deepening stage*. This was the stage where the counsellor addressed the concerns of clients during all the sessions. They were made to remember the effects of the pain they had suffered afresh. Finally, they answered the questionnaire without skipping any of the items. Their privacy was ensured by spacing them apart without being interrupted.

Intervention: The intervention sessions were structured around a four-stage thematic framework (Enright & The Human Development Study Group, 1991), progressing as follows:

i. Identifying Offenses: Participants explored and acknowledged experienced hurts.

ii. Committing to Forgiveness: Participants made a conscious decision to pursue forgiveness.

iii. Actively Forgiving: Participants engaged in exercises designed to foster forgiveness toward their offender(s).

iv. Strengthening Forgiveness: Participants focused on deepening and solidifying the forgiveness process.

Sessions 1 to 4 (two weeks) **The Uncovering Stage**

The initial phase of the intervention involved an in-depth exploration of the offences experienced by participants. The students were guided to identify and articulate their specific hurts. Emphasis was placed on assessing the severity of the impact, including identifying instances where prolonged rumination may have contributed to emotional and psychological depletion.

Sessions 5-8 (two weeks) Decision Phase

Participants were guided to examine their negative emotions, cognitions, and potential behavioural responses towards those who caused them harm. The intervention emphasised the natural inclination towards resentment, judgement, and indifference following unjust treatment. Simultaneously, the process explored the possibility of cultivating alternative responses, such as empathy, generosity, and even compassion towards the offender.

Sessions 9 and 10 (one week) Working Stage: The work phase was where participants were encouraged to reframe the injustices, develop empathy towards the offender, and begin to accept the pain. It is at this stage that people who are hurt are made to see the perpetrator in a positive light. Participants were made to have a positive new view of the offender.

Sessions 11 and 12 (one week) Deepening Stage. The participants were invited to reflect on their experiences across the intervention stages, identifying any challenges encountered. These challenges were addressed collaboratively. In the culminating phase, participants were asked to articulate their final decision regarding forgiveness. Upon their confirmation of choosing forgiveness, the intervention process ended.

Post Intervention. The post-test data collection occurred two weeks after the intervention process was concluded. To obtain these data, the participants completed the same forgiveness and anger questionnaires administered during the pre-test phase.

Results

This section presents and interprets the study's findings, organized in relation to the research objectives. Paired samples t-test was used to analyse the data. All the hypotheses were tested at the $p < .05$ level of significance (Pallant, 2010).

Hypothesis 1: There is a significant difference between the pre-test and post-test scores of participants in the Enright Process Model on measure of forgiveness.

Table 1: Paired samples t-test of pre-test and post-test scores of the participants in the Enright Process Model on the measure of forgiveness

Group	N	Mean	SD	t	df	Sig(2-tail)
Pre-test forgiveness scores	13	158.92	6.57	-11.51*	12	.000*
Post-test forgiveness scores	13	295.23	11.75			

* $p < 0.05$

Table 1 revealed a significant difference between pre-test and post-test forgiveness scores of participants in the Enright Process Model, $t(12) = -11.51, p < .05$. This finding is supported by the higher post-test mean score ($M = 295.23, SD = 11.75$) compared to the pre-test mean score ($M = 158.92, SD = 46.57$). Consequently, the null hypothesis was rejected in favour of the alternative hypothesis, which posits a significant difference between pre-test and post-test forgiveness scores within the participants in the Enright Process Model.

Hypothesis 2: There is a significant difference between the pre-test and post-test scores of the participants in the Enright Process Model on measure of anger. Hypothesis 2 aimed to investigate potential differences between pre-test and post-test anger scores of the participants in the Enright Process Model.

Table 2: Paired samples t-test of pre-test and post-test scores of participants in the Enright Process Model on the measure of Anger

Group	N	Mean	SD	t	df	p
Pre-test anger scores	13	119.38	9.02			
Post-test anger scores	13	114.92	13.69	-2.194*	12	.062*

Table 2 indicated no statistically significant difference between pre-test and post-test anger scores within the participants in the Enright Process Model, $t(12) = -2.194, p > 0.05$. While a slight increase was observed in the post-test mean ($M = 119.38, SD = 9.02$) compared to the pre-test mean ($M = 114.92, SD = 13.69$), this change did not reach statistical significance. Therefore, the null hypothesis was not rejected.

Hypothesis 3: There is a significant difference in pre-test and post-test scores of participants outside the Enright Process Model on measure of forgiveness. Hypothesis 3 sought to investigate potential differences between pre-test and post-test forgiveness scores within the Participants outside the Enright Process Model.

Table 3: Paired samples t-test pre-test and the post-test scores of participants outside the Enright Process Model on the measure of forgiveness

Group	N	M	SD	t	df	p
Pre-test forgiveness scores	13	164.13	7.55			
Post-test forgiveness scores	13	169.67	8.52	-1.04	12	.061

Table 3 indicated a slight increase in the participants outside the Enright Process Model post-test forgiveness scores ($M = 169.67, SD = 8.52$) compared to pre-test scores ($M = 164.13, SD = 7.55$). However, this difference did not reach statistical significance, $t(12) = -1.04, p > 0.05$. Therefore, the null hypothesis was not rejected.

Hypothesis 4: There is a significant difference in pre-test and post-test scores of the participants outside the Enright Process Model on measure of anger.

Table 4: Paired samples t-test of pre-test and post-test scores of participants outside the Enright Process Model on the measure of anger

Group	N	Mean	SD	t	df	p
Pre-test anger score	13	124.80	13.98			
Post-test anger score	13	121.72	12.01	-1.57	12	.139

Table 4 indicates a slight decrease in the participants outside the Enright Process Model's post-test anger scores ($M = 123.80, SD = 13.98$) compared to pre-test scores ($M = 124.80, SD = 13.8$). However, this difference was not statistically significant, $t(12) = -1.57, p > 0.05$. The null hypothesis was not rejected.

Discussion

Difference between pre-test and post-test scores of the Participants in the Enright Process Model on the measure of Forgiveness

The findings from research hypothesis one confirmed a statistically significant difference between pre-test and post-test forgiveness scores of participants in the Enright Process Model. This significant improvement suggests the intervention's effectiveness, as evidenced by observable changes in pre- and post-test measures. These findings align with prior research by Gambaro (2008). In Gambaro's study, there was a significant increase in forgiveness for participants in the Enright Process Model. There was a significant increase in the post-test score compared with a post-test score and a 4-month follow-up. This finding aligns with prior research on the potential benefits of forgiveness interventions. Previous research (e.g., Baskin et al., 2004; Freedman & Enright, 2017) also found that after the intervention, participants had increased in forgiveness. In their study on the impact of a six-week forgiveness intervention on health-related psychosocial variables, including anger and stress, Harris et al. (2006) reported a significant reduction in anger and anxiety scores for participants in the Enright Process Model when comparing pre-test and post-test measures.

Differences between pre-test and post-test score of the participants in the Enright Process Model on the Measure of Anger

This research hypothesis aimed to investigate potential changes in anger scores within the participants in the Enright Process Model following the intervention. Findings indicated no statistically significant difference between pre-test and post-test anger scores. This outcome aligns with the intervention's primary focus on forgiveness rather than direct anger management. Despite the lack of statistical significance, a slight reduction in post-test anger scores was observed, potentially suggesting an indirect effect of forgiveness therapy on anger, as theorized by Rye and Pargament (2002). This finding is consistent with research by Holter et al. (2008) and Hilbert (2015) studies where similar interventions did not yield statistically significant changes in anger. One possible reason for the observed decrease in anger scores, even though was

not statistically significant could be due to indirect effects of forgiveness or limitations in measurement sensitivity.

The present study's findings contrast with those of Baskin et al. (2004), who reported a significant reduction in anger scores for participants in the Enright Process Model. This difference might be attributed to the broader focus of Baskin et al.'s intervention, which directly addressed both forgiveness and anger management, while the current study primarily targeted forgiveness. In Baskin's study, the therapy treated forgiveness and anger. However, this study did not pay attention to anger because it was believed that when the hurt is treated well, the anger and other emotions attached to the hurt would reduce. Lijo (2018) also reported a negative correlation between anger and forgiveness. Prior research demonstrates a significant negative correlation between forgiveness and anger (Lijo, 2018; Lawler-Row et al., 2008). These studies underscore the potential for interventions targeting forgiveness to indirectly mitigate anger-related responses.

Difference between pre-test and post-test scores of the participants outside the Enright Process Model on the measure of Forgiveness

The participants outside the Enright Process Model showed no statistically significant differences in their pre-test and post-test forgiveness scores. This expected outcome aligns with the absence of any forgiveness intervention for this group. These findings are consistent with those of Freeman and Enright (2017), whose participants outside the Enright Process Model similarly showed no significant change due to the lack of intervention. Baskin et al. (2004), in contrast, reported a change in their participants outside the Enright Process Model's forgiveness scores. This difference is likely attributable to the alternative intervention provided to their participants outside the Enright Process Model. While the present study's participants outside the Enright Process Model exhibited some variation between pre-and post-test scores, this difference was neither statistically significant nor comparable to the marked impact of the Enright Process Model observed for the participants in the Enright Process Model. The potential reason why forgiveness scores within the participants outside the Enright Process Model might not have changed significantly could also include factors like natural fluctuations in forgiveness over time or the absence of any targeted intervention.

Difference between pre-test and post-test scores of the participants outside the Enright Process Model on the measure of anger

Research hypothesis 4 aimed to investigate potential changes in anger scores within the participants outside the Enright Process Model. Findings indicated no statistically significant difference between pre-test and post-test anger scores, demonstrating the expected stability of anger levels in the absence of intervention. This finding aligns with Hilbert's (2015) research, which similarly reported no significant change within the participants outside the Enright Process Model. The present results contrast with Baskin et al. (2004), where an alternative intervention yielded a difference in pre- and post-test anger scores for the

participants outside the Enright Process Model. The lack of similar change in the current study underscores the importance of targeted interventions for mitigating anger and highlights the specificity of the Enright Process Model's impact within the participants in the Enright Process Model. The possible reason why anger scores within the participants outside the Enright Process Model might have remained stable could be due to factors like natural fluctuations in anger over time or the absence of any targeted intervention. After the post-test data collection for this study, those in the participants outside the Enright Process Model were offered a limited intervention to compensate them for their loss of time, but this was not included in this report.

Implications of the findings for School Counselling

Based on the results and findings of the study, the study has some important implications. Counsellors should use the Enright Process Model to help students who have forgiveness problems. Counsellors should consider using the therapy in individuals and group sessions, noting the effectiveness of each type. Often, forgiveness should be taught to children in their formative years so that they become easily accommodating as they grow into adulthood. In addition, at Parent Teacher Association (PTA) meetings and other social gatherings, counsellors should talk about the ill effects of anger and unforgiveness. More importantly, issues of anger and forgiveness must be part of the orientation to first-year students to reduce dropout and to shape their lives after school.

Limitations of the study and suggestions for future research

This study employed a quasi-experimental pre-post-test design. While this design offers advantages, it inherently carries the risk of confounding factors. To mitigate this limitation, potential confounding variables were identified, measured, and controlled by using appropriate statistical techniques. However, the researchers cannot claim to have controlled for all possible cofounders. Additionally, the specific sample of first-year college students may limit the generalisability of the findings to broader populations. The EFI has three subscales of twenty items each that assess the domains of affect, behaviour, and cognition, but we used the total scores in the present study. Future research should consider the subscales in their analyses to provide a more nuanced understanding of the forgiveness construct in the African setting.

Conclusion

The Enright Process Model effectively promotes forgiveness among college students following interpersonal hurts, thereby reducing unforgiveness. While the intervention did not yield a significant reduction in anger, this outcome aligns with the study's primary focus on forgiveness rather than direct anger management. Therefore, it is recommended that the model be used to treat forgiveness. Where the model is considered for treating anger, the researchers should pay attention to the anger associated with unforgiveness. These will help foster good relationships among students on campuses and elsewhere

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