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# Conflict resolution and forgiveness in the child's psychological well-being: Experimenting with *Forgive Freely* animated film

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## Abstract

Over the years, animated films have always captured the interest of people, especially, young ones, irrespective of ethnicity, or religion. Like many other media, animated films have themes that are capable of posing positive or negative effects on their consumers. They are a common commodity in many households around the world. Hardly any household exists who would deny having seen one. However, its role in conflict resolution, forgiveness, and the child's psychological wellness is under-researched, especially in Nigeria. Using Alfred Adler's individual psychology theory developed by Rudolf Dreikurs, This study examined the conflict resolution methods children and parents employed in resolving conflict among children. 107 households comprising 221 children were exposed to lesson 11, *Forgive Freely* of the Become Jehovah's Friend Animated Film series for 30 days. After this, resolved conflicts and forgiveness were examined concerning the child's psychological well-being. For a better understanding of the context, the synopsis of lesson 11, *Forgive Freely* was presented and briefly analysed. Responses to each of the questions used were presented in analytical tables. The descriptive method of data analysis was used to analyse the data collected. Percentages and frequencies were used to evaluate the responses collected from the respondents. The conclusion was drawn based on the percentage ratio. The study finds that conflicts arise among children every day but the relationship between animated films (*Forgive Freely*), conflict resolution, and forgiveness is insignificant. However, there is a significant relationship between resolved conflict, forgiveness, and psychological well-being. Parental intervention in child conflict is emphasised over that of the animated film genre.

## Keywords

animated films; Become Jehovah's Friend; conflict resolution; forgiveness; psychological well-being

## Introduction

The purpose of this forgiveness and conflict resolution interventions in general and forgiveness education, in particular, is to find out if animated films could equip children with the tools to improve their mental health by reducing their anger and depression levels while increasing forgiveness, hope, and prosocial behaviour.<sup>1</sup> Parents and guidance especially have put in great effort to teach children morality in their infancy. Among the many means they use, are children's books and animated films.<sup>2</sup> With a combination of text, audio, graphics, and animation, animated films communicate and educate children in a way that the traditional teaching medium such as books, and the classroom learning mode looks irrelevant and tedious.<sup>3</sup>

The communicative value of animated films can not be undermined. The world over, they are used to expressing ideas and feelings or imparting information to young ones.<sup>4</sup> Every animated film is created for a purpose. While some are meant to give information and educate, others entertain. Whether for information, education, or entertainment, the ultimate aim is to generate feedback. Without feedback, the communication process would be meaningless.<sup>5</sup> The feedback is the effect of certain animated films on children. Blessing<sup>6</sup> researched animated films in the development of the child where he mentioned that the feedback of some animated films included helping children in the development of social responsibility involving social skills, ethics, characters, and way of living with others. Although, the messages kids encounter, the knowledge they gain, the connections they make with film characters, and the creative freedom certain animated films give them all vary. Filmmakers use them to communicate morality and the life experiences of the cultures that produce them (or producing them).

Scholars have researched and concluded that the powerful effect the animated film genre has on children is limitless, and they could be both positive and neg-

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<sup>1</sup> H. Lozano, *Un-forgiveness: An Alternative Space for People Who Cannot Forgive*. Thesis in Curriculum & Instruction: Equity Studies in Education Faculty of Education, Simon Fraser University 2018, p. 17; E. Taysi, & D. Vural, *Forgiveness Education for Fourth Grade Students in Turkey*, "Child Indicators Research" 2016, 9(4), pp. 1095–1115.

<sup>2</sup> A. Blessing, *Imported cartoon films: Replacing African social-cultural values?* "Pedagogika Społeczna Nova" 2022, 2(3), p. 172.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>4</sup> A.M. Hornby, *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary of Current English*, Oxford 2004.

<sup>5</sup> F. Foluke, & F. Fatimayin, *What Is Communication?*, Lagos 2016, [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/337649561\\_What\\_Is\\_Communication](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/337649561_What_Is_Communication) [accessed: 4.04.2024]; S. Oluwanisola, *The Importance of Feedback in Communication*, [http://EzineArticles.com/?=Oluwanisola\\_Seun](http://EzineArticles.com/?=Oluwanisola_Seun) [accessed: 4.04.2024].

<sup>6</sup> A. Blessing, *Imported cartoon...*, *op. cit.*

ative.<sup>7</sup> Animated films, though, are a relatively new medium in developing countries, parents and educators have used them not only at home but as a teaching medium at school. Many schools especially privately owned schools in Nigeria now employ the use of educative animated films to teach educational subjects to pupils in play/kindergarten classes. Besides educational subjects, animated films could also serve as a tool that teaches negative morality to children that would impair the child's psychological well-being when there is no parental guidance.<sup>8</sup>

Anisha,<sup>9</sup> in 2018 looked at some negative effects of animated films on young children and found violent behaviour, unruly conduct, lack of empathy, use of foul language, unsocial behaviour, and a sedentary lifestyle among children who were not properly guided when watching animated lessons. Distinctly, however, he stated that animated films also help toddlers get an early start on learning. And that while growing, the film genre helps in cognitive development, and language development, enhances creativity, promotes laughter, and relieves stress. Resolved conflict and forgiveness are prominent stress-relieving factors. Hence, Desmond Tutu, the Anglican Archbishop Emeritus of South Africa, says, "without reconciliation, there is no future". Therefore, forgiveness is necessary for peace-building and the harmonious coexistence of all. This study therefore experiments with conflict resolution, forgiveness, and psychological wellness of the child with lesson 11, *Forgive Freely*, of the Become Jehovah's Friend animated film.

## Theoretical foundation

This study is based on Alfred Adler's individual psychology theory developed by Rudolf Dreikurs. Dreikurs recognises family as the first social context in which education occurs. and the the film medium and school environment are only an extension of the family. Thus, the home's micro-environment serves as the foundation for promoting appropriate behaviour and deterring misbehavior. His fundamental premise was that human behaviour, including conflict and forgiveness, is neither influenced by heredity nor only the product of uncontrollable external factors. However, such behavior stems from a need for significance in a social con-

<sup>7</sup> A. Nair, *Positive and Negative Effects of Cartoons on Child Behaviour and Development*, <https://parenting.rstcry.com/articles/positive-and-negative-effects-of-cartoons-on-child-behaviour-and-development/> [accessed: 4.04.2024]; J. Cohen, & G. Weimann, *Cultivation Revisited: Some Genres have some Effects on some Viewers*, „Communication Reports” 2000, 13(2); S. Berman, *Children's Social Consciousness and the Development of Social Responsibility*, New York 1997; W. Douglass, *E Fall From Grace: E Modern Family on Television*, „Communication Research” 1996, 23(6).

<sup>8</sup> A. Blessing, *Media usage, media violence and the Nigerian Child*, „Language, Discourse & Society” 2022, 10(1(19)), p. 64.

<sup>9</sup> A. Nair, *Positive and Negative...*, *op. cit.*

text. Dreikurs acknowledged that seeking retribution is a behavior that leads to conflict among children and suggested adopting proactive measures to prevent such behavior. However, he thought that for behavior and interpersonal relationships to develop, encouragement or mediation was crucial. He exhorts educators and parents to create environments in which kids may show off their abilities and skills and, in the end, accept peers and feel accepted as well.<sup>10</sup>

## Research context: Conflict resolution, forgiveness, and psychological well-being

I would like to mention that this present study is one among the series of my research on the influence of screen media on child development especially within Nigeria.<sup>11</sup> In 2015, I studied animated film and child development among children living in Sapele Delta State Nigeria. That study researched the positive and negative influence of foreign animated films on local consumers. In 2022, I went ahead to examine violent animated films and their effect on the Nigerian child. Later that year, I published another paper that deals with imported cartoon films and the replacement of African social and cultural values. In September 2023, I further looked critically at religious animated films and their implication on the Nigerian child's moral development. While these studies focus on violence, morality, and the gradual erosion of the African culture from the minds of African children through the influx of foreign cartoons into the continent, this present study focuses on communicating conflict resolution, and forgiveness to children through animated films and the psychological implication of resolved conflict and forgiveness on the child.

Conflict was originally used to mean strike at another, to fight with an enemy, or to do battle with an opposing force. It equally means to be antagonistic towards others or to be in sharp disagreement with others.<sup>12</sup> Conflicts are a part of everyday life. They occur locally, nationally, and internationally, between and within the family circle, friends, communities, and nations. Frank listed five levels of conflict to be:

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<sup>10</sup> R. Dreikurs, *Psychology in the classroom: A manual for teachers*, New York 1968; R. Dreikurs, & P. Cassell, *Discipline without tears: A reassuring and practical guide to teaching your child positive behaviour*, (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.), New York 1996.

<sup>11</sup> A. Blessing, *Imported cartoon films...*, *op. cit.*

<sup>12</sup> O.S. Benson, *Concepts and Methods of Conflict Resolution and Peace-Building: Imperatives for Religious Leaders in Nigeria*, "UNIZIK Journal of Religion and Human Relations" 2009, 1(2), <https://www.ajol.info/index.php/jrhr/article/view/87329> [accessed: 4.04.2024].

1. Intra-personal conflict, which occurs at the individual level, within a person, as a result of discrepancy between goals, expectations, and realities, or inability to achieve objectives set by self and for self.
2. Inter-personal conflict: occurs between different persons as a result of disagreement.
3. Group conflict, occurs among sets of people with common interests and aims.
4. Intra-state conflict, which deals with a clash of interests, agitation, and fights for resources or positions among different constituents of a country, especially along ethnic, tribal, or racial lines, and
5. Inter-national conflict, which occurs between nations or countries.<sup>13</sup>

The focus of the study is interpersonal conflict. Although, all levels of conflict, at times, can be constructive, more often than not they are destructive.<sup>14</sup> Besides intra-personal, conflict, whether Inter-personal, Group, Intra-state, or Inter-national, could lead to aggression, hostility, and even war. Resolving or managing any of these levels of conflict effectively requires implementing strategies that promote cooperation.<sup>15</sup>

While some conflicts are resolved with negotiation, others need either mediation or arbitration. Whatever method is applied, when successfully resolved, leads to forgiveness. In turn, forgiveness leads to the positive psychological well-being of the individual. Also, when handled properly and constructively, conflicts can be a stepping stone leading to change and wisdom.<sup>16</sup> Conflict is therefore not an evil phenomenon per se, its effect whether constructive or destructive depends on how it's being managed.<sup>17</sup>

There are two broad methods of conflict resolution. They are the proactive and reactive methods.<sup>18</sup> Conflict could be avoided when proactive measures are applied. Such measures include Good governance, building trust and confidence

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<sup>13</sup> F.O. Nnaemeka, *Mediation and Methods of Conflict Resolution Introduction to Peace and Conflict: A Comprehensive and Multi-Perspective Exploration*, Enugu 2019, pp. 18–34.

<sup>14</sup> M. Deutsch, *The resolution of conflict: Constructive and destructive processes*, New Haven 1973; R. Dreikurs, & P. Cassell, *Discipline without tears...*, *op. cit.*

<sup>15</sup> T.R. Cohen, *Conflict resolution*, [in:] I.B. Weiner, & W.E. Craighead (ed.), *The Corsini Encyclopedia of Psychology*, 4<sup>th</sup> ed., vol. 1, Hoboken, NJ, 2010, pp. 390–391, [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/242299308\\_Conflict\\_Resolution](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/242299308_Conflict_Resolution) [accessed: 4.04.2024].

<sup>16</sup> B. Vestergaard, E. Helvard, & A.R. Sørensen, *Conflict Resolution – working with conflicts*, The Danish Centre for Conflict Resolution 2011, <https://konfliktloesning.dk/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/ConflictResolution.pdf> [accessed: 4.04.2024].

<sup>17</sup> M.A. Rahim, *Managing organisational conflict. A non-traditional Approach*, New York 2002; B.J. Osabiya, *Conflict Management and Resolution in Nigeria Public Sector*, “Review of Public Administration and Management” 2015, 4(8).

<sup>18</sup> O F.O. Nnaemeka, *Mediation and Methods...*, *op. cit.*

in individuals, and maintaining good communication. However, reactive methods are applied when proactive measures fail. Reactive methods of conflict resolution include Mediation, Negotiation, and Arbitration.<sup>19</sup> The ability to successfully manage conflict using any of these methods minimizes disagreement and hatred, leads to decreased rates of conflict situations, and builds positive psychological wellness. The need for positive psychology of individuals opens up the need to forgive and be forgiven.

Forgiveness is a prominent moral value lagging in today's society. *Webster's New World College Dictionary* states that to forgive is to give up resentment against the desire to punish, stop being angry with pardon, or give up all claims to punish or exert punishment for an offense. It is therefore a component of morality that deals with controlling one's rage and pardoning other people's errors. The need to forgive and be forgiven is emphasised in films, scholarly works, religious houses, schools, and workplaces.<sup>20</sup> Despite the attention forgiveness receives, many people, including young ones struggle to forgive. Interestingly, however, when offered or attained, forgiveness diminishes feelings of anger and hatred. Through forgiving others, the cycle of violence is broken. And the hurt that has been caused to the injured is healed. Forgiving others and seeking forgiveness are associated with happiness.

Like adults, children fall into conflicting situations among peers resulting in the holding of grudges. Therefore, teaching children the willingness to abandon their right to resentment, and negative judgment toward one who unjustly hurt them, while fostering the undeserved qualities of compassion, generosity, and even love<sup>21</sup> toward them would help build their moral and spiritual strength, foster peace and unity in the micro environment of their home and the wider society now and the future. There are several places where children learn forgiveness. From birth, parent, are saddled with the responsibility of teaching their children good virtues. Children also learn from school moral values needed for a better society. The influence of peers cannot be overlooked as well. Among these mediums of (or for) communicating virtues, children pay closer attention to the screen media. Because animated films grab children's attention more than any other medium, their influence on their moral, physical, and psychological well-being needs evaluation.

Psychological well-being is fundamental to the collective and individual ability of humans to think, interact with each other, and enjoy life. The promotion, pro-

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<sup>19</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>20</sup> E.L. Worthington, Jr., *The Science of Forgiveness*, Richmond 2020; S.R. Freedman, & R.D. Enright, *Forgiveness as an intervention goal with incest survivors*, "Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology" 1996, 64(5), pp. 983–992; M. Stone, *Forgiveness in the workplace*, "Industrial and Commercial Training" 2002, 34(7), pp. 278–286; The Faith and Order Commission, *Forgiveness and Reconciliation in the aftermath of abuse*, London 2017.

<sup>21</sup> S.R. Freedman, & R.D. Enright, *Forgiveness as an intervention goal...*, *op. cit.*

tection, and restoration of mental health is regarded as a vital concern for individuals, communities, and societies throughout the world.<sup>22</sup> It is crucial for individuals realize their full potential, work productively, and manage everyday pressures.<sup>23</sup> Managing everyday pressure greatly influences an individual's overall feelings, autonomy, pleasant relationships, low levels of negative emotions, sense of purpose in life, life satisfaction, and personal growth. The implication of this is that psychological well-being is essential for overall health and happiness and is associated with greater physical and mental health as well as a longer life span.<sup>24</sup> Dhanabhakyaam and Sarath<sup>25</sup> reviewed several works of literature that discuss the essential elements of psychological well-being. Among them are Diener, Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, Park & Peterson, Ryan & Deci, Keyes & Lopez, Ryff, Waterman, Frederick & Loewenstein, Argyle, Sheldon & King, and Lucas. In their review, psychological well-being has among other components, life satisfaction, positive emotions – such as joy, excitement, and contentment- and low levels of negative emotions – such as anxiety, despair, and rage. Positive behaviour or relationship with loved ones and friends, having a feeling of purpose in life leading to a feeling of contentment and a sense of purpose, self-improvement, and developing new relationships help individuals maintain a sense of growth throughout their lives. These elements are not only connected, they work together to advance general fulfillment, happiness, and well-being.

## Research method

The experimental, sociological, and analytical research methods were used for this study. Using the simple random technique.<sup>26</sup> Two Hundred and Twenty-One (221) children in One Hundred and Seven (107) households participated in the study. These families were randomly selected around the Three (3) Senatorial District in Delta State, Nigeria. Thirty-six (36) households participated in Delta South, Thirty-Six (36) in Delta North, and Thirty-Five (35) in Delta Central. The respondents

<sup>22</sup> World Health Organization, *Mental Health*, 2001, [https://www.who.int/health-topics/mental-health/#tab=tab\\_1](https://www.who.int/health-topics/mental-health/#tab=tab_1) [accessed: 4.04.2024].

<sup>23</sup> World Health Organization, *The Global Health Observatory*, 2021, <https://www.who.int/data/gho/data/major-themes/health-and-well-being> [accessed: 4.04.2024].

<sup>24</sup> M. Dhanabhakyaam, & M. Sarath, *Psychological well-being: a systematic literature review*, "International Journal of Advanced Research in Science, Communication and Technology" 2023, 3(1), pp. 603–607.

<sup>25</sup> M. Dhanabhakyaam, & M. Sarath, *Impact of occupational stress on job satisfaction and Psychological Wellbeing*, "International Journal of Advanced Research in Science, Communication and Technology (IJARSCT)" 2022, 2(2), pp. 270–275.

<sup>26</sup> S. Ukala, *Manual of Research and Thesis Writing in Theatre Arts*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed., Ibadan 2016.

were of different tribes and cultural and educational backgrounds. Each family was provided access to the animated lesson (<https://www.jw.org/en/bible-teachings/children/become-jehovahs-friend/videos/forgive-freely/>). The lesson was also sent via WhatsApp messenger to families who could not download the lesson from the internet. A period of Thirty (30) days was given after which, parents were asked to observe children in the area of conflict resolution, forgiveness, and their effect on psychological well-being. Three (3) sets of questions were used to get feedback from parents. The questions are:

1. When your children fight or quarrel, are you able to settle them?
2. How do you settle the fight or quarrel between your children?
3. Are your children happy and resume playing together after you have settled their quarrels?

The descriptive method of data analysis was used to analyse the data collected. Percentages and frequencies were used to evaluate the responses collected from the respondents. The conclusion was drawn based on the percentage ratio.

## Data from the experiment

Question 1: When your children fight or quarrel, are you able to settle them?

Table 1. Total numbers of conflict resolved/unresolved

Total number of conflicts resolved	2,510	–
Total number of conflicts unresolved	–	–
Total respondents	97	100%

The response to question one is presented in Table 1. The table shows that for 30 days, no conflict was left unresolved in the 97 families. The 2,510 disputes between 221 children were all resolved. This shows that on average, about one dispute was settled in one household every day for 30 days across Delta State.

Question 2: How do you settle the fight or quarrel between your children?

Table 2. Conflict resolution method(s) used to resolve conflict

Negotiation	12	11.21%
Mediation	61	57%
Arbitration	34	31.77%
Total	107	100%



All respondents responded to the question presented in Table 2. Of the 107 families 12 of 11.21% observed that children after 30 days of continual exposure negotiated and resolved their conflict between themselves during playtime at home. This means that no third (3<sup>rd</sup>) party was involved in resolving their conflict. 95 (61 + 34) representing 88.78 (57%, and 31.77%) needed a 3<sup>rd</sup> party to resolve their conflict. However, parents who mediated (61 of 57%) almost doubled those who arbitrated (34 of 31.77%). This is an indication that children in Delta State hardly forgive without a 3<sup>rd</sup> party's intervention.

Question 3: Are your children happy and resume playing together after you have settled their quarrels?

Table 3. Resolved conflicts, forgiveness and psychological well-being

Resolved conflicts, forgiveness affects psychological well-being	93	86.91%
Resolved conflicts and forgiveness do not affect psychological well-being	14	13.08%
Total	107	100%

Responses to question 3 presented in Table 3 show how resolved conflict leading to forgiveness affects the child's psychological well-being. All respondents responded to the question. 93 of 86.91% of respondents observed a significant relationship between resolved conflict, forgiveness, and the psychological wellness of the child. 14 of 13.08% of respondents say there is no positive relationship between forgiveness and psychological well-being. This percentage (13.08%) may be among those whose parents arbitrated. Although the conflict was resolved, few parties in the studies may not have been satisfied with the decision of the arbitrator leading to no positive outward reflection of happiness which could be translated as positive psychological well-being.

### ***Forgive Freely: The animated film experience***

Caleb and Sophia are children of the same parent. While playing with Sophia's toy, Caleb broke the toy. Sophia is not happy with Caleb even though he apologized because she told her not to touch it. For Sophia, sorry won't fix her toy. Caleb has always offended Sophia. She ate her ice cream, went to her room without asking, and wrote nonsense in her songbook. Their father asked Sophia if she could remember something she had also done wrong. Sophia forgot to arrange her bed, misplaced her homework refused to watch the dishes. But she is sorry. Their father asked them if they could remember what Jehovah does to people who are truly sorry.

He read Ephesians 4 verse 32 which says, God freely forgave you. After a brief reflection on Ephesians 4 verse 32, Sophia forgave Caleb after which she felt relief.

In the animated lesson, the psychological well-being of Sophia was positively affected after her father taught her the value of forgiveness through mediation. Sophia learned to trust and live peacefully without the feeling of hatred but that of compassion and true affection. Forgiveness helped Sophia to diminish negative feelings such as hatred, anger, and the desire for revenge. The Forgiveness Sophia learns is that of both letting go and pulling forward. With forgiveness, after conflict resolution, she was able to avoid the desire to seek revenge against Caleb, her offender. She was able to release the feelings of resentment, hatred, and bitterness which are features of un-forgiveness. The animated lesson further showed that forgiveness is one among several warmth-based virtues. Its avoidance or acceptance had a psychological effect on Sophia the offended party. Her forgiveness for Caleb leads to positive psychological health through improved positive mood and interpersonal relationships with Caleb, her younger brother.<sup>27</sup> Sophia's psychological wellness was made evident through her warm embrace with Caleb. They were peacefully reunited, reawaken, and continued with their lost pleasant relationship. Importantly, Sophia's negative emotions were lost, she had a sense of happiness and satisfaction after the successful conflict resolution. Lesson Eleven (11) of the Become Jehovah's Friend animated film, *Forgive Freely*, created a connection between resolved conflict, forgiveness, and a child's psychological well-being.

## Discussion

Responses to question one presented in Table 1 show that viewing animated films (*Forgive Freely*) has little or no direct effect on conflict resolution, forgiveness, and the child's psychological well-being. After watching the animated lesson, about 2,510 conflicts came up and were settled. However, the study was not to find out the causes or reasons for the conflicts. The response to question two presented in Table 2 shows the conflict resolution methods parents applied to resolve conflict. Very few children were able to negotiate and settle a dispute without a 3<sup>rd</sup> party's involvement. Table 3 shows a significant relationship between resolved conflict, forgiveness, and positive psychological well-being. Very few of the total respondents could observe that children after watching lesson 11, *Forgive Freely*, imbibed the forgiveness morality. Parental guidance was paramount in children's learning

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<sup>27</sup> J.W. Berry, & E.L. Worthington, *Forgiveness, relationship quality, stress while imagining relationship events, and physical and mental health*, "Journal of Counseling Psychology" 2001, (48), pp. 447-455.

of forgiveness and conflict resolution. Mediation and arbitration are conflict resolution methods necessary to attain forgiveness and to successfully resolve child disputes. There is evidence in the study that shows that choosing to forgive is a liberating practice among children. On a few occasions, forgiveness is possible only when the child offended chooses to do so. The 11.21% chose to take the offense less personally after negotiation and continued to put up with their peers. Mediation, arbitration, or interventions from adult family members were prominent leading causes of forgiveness in the study.

The significant difference between the conducted experiment and the animated lesson used for the study is in the area of religion. While the film portrays religious conviction as a factor that influences a child's decision to forgive or reconcile, the experiment does not refer to the influence of religion in conflict resolution and forgiveness. It focused on the after-effects of resolved conflict and forgiveness in a child's psychological well-being. Few cases, forgiveness shown was not unconditional but dependent on the offender's confessions or apologies. Apologies and confessions in most cases came after a mediated or arbitrated intervention.

Mediation was the most effective method of child conflict resolution as it allowed parties to vent their feelings and fully explore their grievances.<sup>28</sup> Children are immature hence they would always need a mediator or arbitrator to help resolve their conflict. Because of their immaturity, negotiation becomes almost invaluable. Children, like the character of Sophia in *Forgive Freely*, do not accept their peers' apology offers without a third party's involvement. Many who could not reach consensus through negotiation, settled for mediation or arbitration. Negotiation and arbitration, as a conflict resolution method, therefore have a low function in child conflict management. A neutral third party, usually, serves as a sort of mediator who is responsible for resolving the dispute. The mediator listens to each side as they argue their case and present relevant evidence, then suggests or recommends a solution.<sup>29</sup> Children are usually committed to conform to the third party's recommendation.<sup>30</sup> It would not be a fallacy, therefore, to mention, however, that the animated film portrayed the cultural situation obtainable among children in many societies. When negotiation fails, parents mediate, arbitrate, and encourage

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<sup>28</sup> The Program on Negotiation at Harvard Law School, *What are the Three Basic Types of Dispute Resolution? What to Know About Mediation, Arbitration, and Litigation How to choose the best dispute resolution process*, <https://www.pon.harvard.edu/daily/dispute-resolution/what-are-the-three-basic-types-of-dispute-resolution-what-to-know-about-mediation-arbitration-and-litigation/> [accessed: 4.04.2024].

<sup>29</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>30</sup> M. Goltsman, J. Hörner, G. Pavlov, & F. Squintani, *Mediation, Arbitration, and Negotiation*, "Journal of Economic Theory" 2009, 144(4), pp. 1397–1420.

concessions. In many cases, parents also reframe the opponent in the dispute in a more positive light for the conflict to be resolved and to achieve forgiveness.

Caleb's effort to negotiate with Sophia by pleading for forgiveness in the animated movie failed but partially succeeded in the experiment conducted as seen in Table 2 where 12 of 11.21 succeeded in negotiating their conflicts to a successful ending. Sophia and Caleb could not come to a consensus until their father acted as a mediator who made a non-binding biblical recommendation. Being the neutral third party, the father's goal was to help Sophia and Caleb come to a consensus rather than imposing a solution. He worked with Sophia by using biblical thought to appeal to her on the need to forgive and resolve the conflict between her and Caleb. *Forgive Freely*, is one communication medium parents and educators could learn from. Applying the same principle to teach children forgiveness through conflict resolution modes. Parents and educators do not only need to expose children to animated content glorifying forgiveness over un-forgiveness but teaching them forgiveness through conflict resolution methods early in life would have a lasting psychological effect on children, create peace and unity among them at home and in the larger society.<sup>31</sup> Parental guidance, and the application of mediation when necessary would especially have an immense influence on the individual child's perceptions of conflict, conflict resolution, and forgiveness.

## Conclusion

Animated films alone could not equip children with the tools to improve their mental health. Proper application of varied methods in conflict resolution and forgiveness by parents was paramount in reducing anger, and depression, fostering prosocial behaviour, and leading to positive psychological well-being. In the study conducted forgiveness and methods of conflict resolution are communicated minimally to children through animated films. Children learn and apply little in conflict resolution modes from animated lessons. Parents played a great role in resolving conflict leading to forgiveness among children. Animated films though are a medium of communication. A genre most popular among children,<sup>32</sup> and they spend less time engaging in other activities than they do with the medium, they had a major effect on children in the area of conflict resolution and forgiveness. Though conflict is unavoidable among young ones, when resolved or managed properly, leads to psychological wellness. Children are inexperienced, hence, many are likely or unable to resolve conflict through negotiation. In such cases, mediation and arbitration were the most effective

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<sup>31</sup> A. Blessing, *Imported cartoon films...*, *op. cit.*

<sup>32</sup> M. Bedekar, & P. Joshi, *Cartoon films and their impact on children's mentality*, "Research Review International Journal of Multidisciplinary" 2020, 5(6), pp. 13–17.

method to resolve conflict among children. While conflict is a neutral phenomenon and an unavoidable consequence of human interaction in any society, and an inevitable phenomenon,<sup>33</sup> Forgiveness is a universal virtue needed for harmonious coexistence and peacebuilding. Although this study was unable to determine the direct and indirect relationship between Forgiveness and physical health. It, however, finds that forgiveness involves a variety of physiological processes that forbid revenge and encourage strong positive love-based emotions. The psychological changes involved in forgiveness contribute to a direct effect on the mental health and well-being of the individual child.

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