ABSTRACT

Title of thesis: WHEN APOLOGIES WORK: THE BENEFITS OF MATCHING APOLOGY CONTENT TO VICTIMS AND CONTEXT

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Research shows that apologies are useful social tools. They help people to resolve conflict, reduce feelings of aggression, and foster forgiveness. Yet common sense tells us that all apologies are not created equal. From one to the next, they are likely to contain different verbal elements, to be offered to different people, and to be given under different circumstances. In each of these cases, an apology's impact can be expected to change. To explore the boundaries of apology effectiveness, the current study asks four distinct questions. First, how effective are three different apology components (offers of compensation, expressions of concern, and acknowledgements of violated rules/norms) in eliciting forgiveness? Second, how does a victim's self-construal (independent, relational, or collective) influence forgiveness of an offender? Third, does a victim's self-construal moderate the effectiveness of different apology components? Finally, how does harm severity influence the effectiveness of long versus short apologies?

To answer each of these questions, 171 undergraduate students participated in a policy capturing experiment. Regarding the role of apology components, all three components are found to positively affect forgiveness. Offers of compensation are shown to be the most effective, followed by expressions of concern and acknowledgments of violated rules/norms, respectively. Regarding the direct impact of the self, no significant effect was found.

As for the moderating effect of the self on apology components, the independent self is found to strengthen the effectiveness of offers of compensation, the relational self is found to strengthen the effectiveness of both expressions of concern and acknowledgments of violated rules/norms, and the collective self is found to strengthen the effectiveness of acknowledgments of violated rules/norms. Regarding the role of harm severity, an increase in apology length is found to exhibit a stronger effect under severe harm than mild harm. Implications for research and practice are discussed.

WHEN APOLOGIES WORK: THE BENEFITS OF MATCHING APOLOGY CONTENT TO VICTIMS AND CONTEXT.

by

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When Apologies Work: The Benefits Of Matching Apology Content To Victims And Context

Throughout history, the act of apology has served as a common tactic for ending conflict, restoring relationships, and promoting forgiveness. Its importance is evidenced in the literatures and histories of civilizations around the globe (Lazare, 2004; Tavuchis, 1991). For instance, in Homer's *The Odyssey*, which has been dated circa 800 B.C., the King dictates that another character "will have to make a formal apology and a present too, for he has been rude" (Homer, 1999, p. 70). In 1077, King Henry IV achieved historical fame for his contrite apology to Pope Gregory VII, wherein he repented for his sins against the church (Brooks, 1999). Apologies can similarly be found in many ancient philosophy texts, such as Cicero's *On the Commonwealth* (Cicero & Zetzel, 1999).

In the modern era, apologies continue to receive constant attention. In *The New York Times* alone, over 500 articles involving apology were published in 2006 (Source: Lexis Nexis). Anecdotal evidence from popular culture suggests a similar trend. An episode of Seinfeld, entitled "The Apology", focused on who was at fault, and who needed to apologize. Self-help books such as *The Power of Apology: Healing Steps to Transform All Your Relationships* fill the shelves in bookstores, and in China, it is possible to visit the Tianjin Apology and Gift Center, where a staff of 20 people will "write letters, deliver gifts, and offer explanations" (Engel, 2002; Lazare, 2004, p. 7). Within organizations, apologies have become an increasingly popular tool for fostering support from employees and stakeholders alike. Indeed, as one author noted, "the fine art of organizational apology is the focus of entire college courses, dissertations and books"

(Adams, 3B, 2000). In fact, apologies have become common enough to move at least one scholar to refer to our time as the "Age of Apology" (Brooks, 1999, p.3).

Within academia, apologies have received attention from nearly every field in the social sciences and humanities, including political science (Cunningham, 2004), philosophy (Govier & Verwoerd, 2002), international relations (Avruch & Wang, 2005), anthropology (James, 2006), sociology (Tavuchis, 1991), psychology (Scher & Darley, 1997), and organizational behavior (Tomlinson et al, 2004), to name a few. Across these fields, scholars have focused on a wide range of interactions, from close interpersonal relationships among coworkers and dating partners to large-scale conflicts including corporate scandals, slavery, and genocide (Brooks, 1999; Gonzales, Pederson, Manning, & Wetter, 1990; Tedesco, 2005).

Despite the prevalence of apologies in academics and in everyday life, there is surprisingly little consensus on what exactly constitutes an apology. Is it enough just to say "I'm sorry", or do standard apology phrases need to be accompanied by more complex offerings, such as expressions of regret, feelings of shame, and substantive amends? Research suggests that people are heavily influenced by the specific components of apologies (Scher & Darley, 1997; Schmitt, Gollwitzer, Forster, & Montada, 2004), a finding that can be substantiated with real-world examples. For instance, although Pope Benedict issued a public apology for his comments about the Muslim community in June 2006, his words were met with widespread anger. To quote one politician from the Muslim world, his words did not "rise to the level of a clear apology" (Cooperman, 2006). Similarly, many stakeholders of a company caught in the Enron scandal expressed dissatisfaction with the company's apology, noting that while

the company offered an apology, "there was no admission of guilt" (Tedesco, 2005, p. FP1). Lazare (2004) provides additional insight into the importance of apology components:

"Examples of failed apologies are everywhere. When an acquaintance says to you, 'I apologize for whatever I may have done,' he or she has failed to apologize adequately, because he or she has not acknowledged the offense and may not even believe an offense was committed. Another common example is the statement, 'If you were hurt, I am sorry.' Not only does this statement begin with a conditional acknowledgement of the offense (e.g. 'I will be sorry only if you are hurt'), but it even suggests that your sensitivity may be the problem."(p. 18)

Despite a growing theoretical interest in the content of apologies, empirical research on how specific apology components influence peoples' attitudes and behaviors remains scarce (for notable exceptions, see Scher & Darley, 1997; Schmitt et al, 2004). Most empirical analyses have instead conceptualized apologies as strictly dichotomous. In these studies, a person either a) gives an apology, or b) doesn't (e.g. Darby & Schlenker, 1989; Frantz & Bennigson, 2004; Fukuno & Ohbuchi, 1998; Itoi, Ohbuchi, & Fukuno, 1996; Park, Lee, & Song, 2005). For instance, Frantz & Bennigson (2004) operationalized an apology in a scenario through the phrase "Sorry" and an explanation of the offending event. Similarly, Darby & Schlenker (1989) used the phrase "I'm sorry, I feel bad about this" for an apology and, for the no apology condition, explained that the offender "just walks away without saying anything" (p. 356). Park, Lee, and Song (2005) content coded spam emails for apologies, using a count system to determine if an apology was either present or absent.

The distinction between the presence and absence of apologies is undoubtedly important and worth examining. However, by ignoring the *specific* components of apologies, researchers risk an oversimplified understanding of the apology process. Should it be inferred that the phrase "I'm sorry, I feel so upset about what happened" is analogous to a simple "I'm sorry"? What if an apologetic CEO also offers to compensate stakeholders monetarily? In theory, the content of an apology should influence its effects. The first goal of this thesis, then, is to explore how specific apology components influence forgiveness.

Of additional importance is the recognition that apologies do not occur in a vacuum. Rather, they are given to different people in a variety of contexts. For instance, they can be given to close friends or strangers, in response to severe or mild harm, and as a result of incompetence or a breach of integrity (Fukuno & Ohbuchi, 1998; Kim, Ferrin, Cooper, & Dirks, 2004). Across these different types of situations, apologies can differ drastically in their effectiveness, and even "backfire", leaving victims with a more negative opinion of the offender (Gonzales et al, 1990; Skarlicki, Folger, & Gee, 2004). To fully understand the impact of apology content on forgiveness, a consideration of context is needed.

The second goal of this thesis, then, is to examine how both individual differences and situational context moderate apology effectiveness. Specifically, individual differences are examined through the lens of self-construal, a psychological construct that examines the schemas through which individuals interpret and interact with their surroundings (Kashima et al, 1995). With this construct, the following question is proposed: are apology components weighed differently depending on the nature of the self? Situational

context is in turn explored through the lens of harm severity. Here, a similar question is raised: are apology components weighed differently depending on the severity of the transgression? Throughout this paper, apology is framed as a predictor of forgiveness, an important psychological variable with significant implications for emotional and psychological well-being (e.g. McCullough et al, 1998; Witvliet, Ludwig, & van der Laan, 2001).

This paper proceeds as follows. First, the apology component literature is synthesized to differentiate among three important apology components. Then, the construct of self-construal is reviewed to show how the relational self can exhibit a positive effect on forgiveness. Next, self-construal is examined as a moderator in determining which apology components are most effective. Finally, the construct of harm severity is examined to show how it too can influence forgiveness by determining the ideal length of an apology. An overall model of these hypotheses is presented in figure 1.

To test the proposed model of apology effectiveness, a policy capturing design is used. Policy capturing is a common method of decision analysis, often used by researchers to examine how individuals differentially weight a variety of cues (Karren & Barringer, 2002).

Insert Figure 1

Apology Components

The majority of current theory on apology components is rooted in the early research of Goffman (1959, 1967), a sociologist who examined apologies within the context of

everyday social interaction. He was perhaps the first scholar to propose a taxonomy of apology components, and has inspired numerous subsequent attempts to classify apologies into a specific number of components. Table 1 lists many of these efforts, which reveal both diversity and overlap in the apology component literature.

Insert Table 1

For the purposes of the current research, three apology components are examined: *offers of compensation*, *expressions of concern*, and *acknowledgements of violated rules/norms*. Although it would be possible to examine other elements of apology (e.g. promises of forbearance, admissions of guilt), the three components in this study are chosen for three reasons. First, they are all commonly mentioned components, discussed in detail by a variety of scholars from different disciplines (e.g. Blum-Kulka, House, & Jasper, 1989; Goffman, 1972; Lazare, 2004; Scher & Darley, 1997; Schlenker & Darby, 1981; Tavuchis, 1991; Wagatsuma & Rosett, 1986). Second, they are theoretically distinct components with little overlap. In other words, it is quite possible, in theory, to offer an apology that includes compensation but not concern, acknowledgement of a violated rule but not compensation, etc. Third, they each relate to a different model of the self, allowing for a parsimonious empirical analysis of the role of the self in determining apology effectiveness. In the following paragraphs, a brief theoretical treatment of each focal apology component is offered.

Offers of Compensation

Offers of compensation represent one of the most common components in the apology

literature. These can refer to tangible compensation (e.g. “[I] could go and see if I can get you another…” (Schmitt et al, 2004, p. 270) or more general offers, which could include some type of relational compensation (e.g. “If there is any way I can make it up to you please let me know.” (Scher & Darley, 1997, p. 132). In many qualitative studies from law, sociology, and psychology, compensation is mentioned as a vital component of the apology process (Goffman, 1972; Lazare, 2004; O’Hara & Yarn, 2002; Schlenker & Darby, 1981; Wagatsuma & Rosett, 1986). The importance of offers of compensation can be summed up by Bishop Desmund Tutu, who once noted that “If you take my pen and say you are sorry, but don't give me the pen back, nothing has happened" (Tutu, 2004). In quantitative studies, offers of compensation are generally found to enhance victim impressions of an offender, victim impressions of a conflict, and victim emotional states following a conflict (Blum-Kulka, House, & Kasper, 1989; Conlon & Murray, 1996; Scher & Darley, 1997; Schmitt et al, 2004). In organizations, compensation is frequently offered as a form of apology to alleviate the negative effects of organizational injustices against employees (Okimoto & Tyler, 2007).

Expressions of Concern

The second apology component, *expression of concern*, can likewise be traced to Goffman’s (1972) taxonomy of account components. Many qualitative studies have since used this component in psychology (Lazare, 2004; Schlenker & Darby, 1981), sociology (Tavuchis, 1991), and law (Cohen, 1999; Wagatsuma & Rosett, 1986). In essence, this component recognizes the relational value of an apology, and the importance of emotion in the apology process. The importance of expressions of concern for victim suffering was recently evidenced during the trial of a Catholic Bishop for charges of molestation.

The plantiffs were awarded $23.4 million dollars, but demanded that the settlement be stalled until the priest delivered a direct apology. The Bishop in turn offered the following apology: "I...want to, with very profound and deep compassion, renew my apology to the victims and their families for the immense suffering that has been a part of their lives..." Interestingly, the Bishop's concern for the victims' suffering might have been more important than compensation, since the plantiffs dropped their monetary request after the apology was received (Blaney and Dooley, 1998, p. 15). Recent advances in management theory have likewise emphasized the broad importance of expressing concern for employees, noting how relationality can help to ease conflict and facilitate cooperation (Gelfand, Major, & Raver, 2006). In the most recent quantitative analysis to examine expressions of concern, Schmitt et al (2004) operationalized the component through the phrase "I feel really sorry for what I have done. I know how you feel now" (p. 469). Kotani (2002) and Wagatsuma & Rosett (1986) provide additional theoretical support for this component by suggesting that expressions of concern for suffering represent the most culturally salient meaning of apology in Japan.

Acknowledgements of Violated Rules/Norms

The final apology component, *acknowledgement of violated rules/norms*, has been offered as theory by Goffman (1972) and Tavuchis (1991), among others. In essence, this component recognizes that interpersonal behavior is bound by rules and norms, either implicit or explicit, that must be followed. For instance, during an apology for the mistreatment of civilians, a soldier offered the following reference to her duties as a soldier: "I failed my duties**.** I failed my mission to protect and defend… I let down every single soldier that serves today" (Stevenson, 2005, p. 23). Thus, acknowledgements of

violated rules/norms may be particularly important within organizational and group contexts wherein strong behavioral norms are prevalent. On a broader level, apologies can also reference peoples' duties as members of an entire society or culture. According to Wagatsuma & Rosett (1986), "The act of apologizing can be significant for its own sake as an acknowledgement of the authority of the hierarchical structure upon which social harmony is based" (p. 473). Tavuchis (1991) expands upon the logic of this component by examining apology within the context of social order. According to this conceptualization, every social order "depends...on some measure of commitment to norms dealing with standards of behavior and institutional arrangements" (p. 12). Insomuch as an apology references the social order, it "directs attention to rules and meta-rules, that is, rules about rules" (p. 13). Cross-cultural theory suggests that this component might be particularly salient to specific non-Western cultures and subgroups, which have been shown to weigh social rules and norms more heavily than Americans when developing attitudes and displaying behaviors (Markus & Kitayama, 1991).

As outlined above, significant theoretical support exists for each of the three focal apology components, suggesting that they represent important, conceptually distinct forms of apology. Each can be given separately or in combination with other components, and each can be used to address a variety of transgressions. In the next section, the specific implications of each of these components for victim forgiveness are considered.

The Impact of Apology Components on Forgiveness

Beyond the realm of scholarly theory, a handful of empirical studies have shown a link between apology components and important victim outcomes. For instance, Schmitt et al

(2004) found that apology components such as admissions of fault and expressions of remorse independently influenced victims' positive mood, inner harmony, anger, moral indignation, assessments of the offender's character, and assessments of the appropriateness of the offender's behavior. Similarly, Scher and Darley (1997) found that apology components such as promises of forbearance and offers of compensation independently influenced perceived offender conscientiousness, perceived offender apologeticness, and perceived reliability of the offender as a friend. Other researchers have provided additional support for peoples' ability to distinguish among apology components, though they have not linked the components to outcomes such as trust, forgiveness, or reconciliation (e.g. Ohbuchi et al, 1989; Schlenker & Darby, 1981).

Although research on the direct effects of apology components is beginning to accumulate, an analysis of the effects of offers of compensation, expressions of concern, and acknowledgements of violated rules/norms on forgiveness in the current study is vital for several reasons. The first reason is that no empirical study to date has simultaneously examined the effects of each focal apology component in the current research. This simultaneous examination represents an important first step in showing that each apology component plays a significant role in fostering forgiveness. Although the current theory suggests that each apology component will foster forgiveness, one or more apology components might overshadow the others, rendering them unnecessary. If, for example, one employee took another's stapler, an offer of compensation (e.g. giving the stapler back) might be sufficient in moving the victim to forgive the offender.

The second reason to examine the main effects of apology components is that no known study has examined such effects on the outcome of forgiveness. It is therefore

impossible to know a priori if previously found effects of apologies on such constructs as aggression translate to the construct of forgiveness. Finally, no study has examined overall differences in the weights assigned to each apology component in the current research. Therefore, motivated by the aforementioned limitations of the current apology literature, the following hypotheses are proposed:

Hypothesis 1a: An offering of compensation will exhibit a main effect on forgiveness, so that compensation will positively impact forgiveness.
Hypothesis 1b: An expression of concern will exhibit a main effect on forgiveness, so that expressions of concern will positively impact forgiveness.
Hypothesis 1c: An acknowledgement of a violated rule/norm will exhibit a main effect on forgiveness, so that acknowledgement of a violated rule will positively impact forgiveness.

Defining Self-Construal

The general effectiveness of apologies across individuals is likely a near-universal phenomenon. However, to the degree that individuals differ in their perception of and reactions to harm, individual differences in apology effectiveness are likely to be observed. To this end, the following paragraphs explore and define the construct of self-construal, with later sections linking self-construal to both forgiveness and apologies.

Converging evidence in the psychological literature suggests that the self can act as a powerful regulator of individuals' behavior, influencing how information is processed, perceived, and acted upon (Fiske & Taylor, 1991). When specific attitudes or beliefs are particularly central to the self, the individual tends to interpret the world through the lens of these views, and pay particular attention to information that is consistent with them (Markus, Smith, & Moreland, 1985). In order to understand exactly how self-construal impacts behavior, it is first important to develop an understanding of the types of self-construals that people can hold. To this end, recent research has suggested a tripartite

model of the self, consisting of the independent, relational, and collective self-construals (Kashima et al, 1995).

The Independent Self-Construal

The *independent* self represents the primary conceptualization of the self in the West (Triandis, 1989). When the independent self is accessed, the individual is viewed as a unique and autonomous entity. In other words, the individual is "separated from others" (Cross & Madson, 1997, p. 7). Although a broader social context is recognized, the self exists primarily outside of this context. This conceptualization of the self influences both how the individual acts and what the individual expects from others. In terms of personal actions, the independent self is generally associated with a tendency to act consistently across time. In other words, behaviors and cognitions are not affected by context. Rather, they are guided primarily by the individual's internal attributions, including personal traits, values, abilities, and moral beliefs. In terms of what the individual expects, the independent self is generally associated with self-relevant expectations. As a unique and bounded entity, people who identify with the independent self are highly concerned with their personal rights and entitlements (Markus & Kitayama, 1991). They generally pursue self-relevant goals, exhibiting little concern for the goals of others (Gore & Cross, 2006). They furthermore perceive their relationships as exchange-oriented, wherein they expect to receive specific benefits from what they provide others (Bresnahan, Chiu, & Levine, 2004; Downie, Koestner, Horberg, & Haga, 2006; Hara & Kim, 2004). Thus, when interacting with others, people with an independent self-construal demonstrate a focus on competition over cooperation, exchange over communality, rights over duties, and

individual achievement over group consensus (Shteynberg, Gelfand, & Kim, 2007; Wagner, 1995).

The Relational Self-Construal

Whereas the independent self-construal conceptualizes the self as separate and removed from other people, the *relational* self-construal conceptualizes the self as fundamentally and inextricably connected to other people (Cross, Morris, & Gore, 2002). Consequently, the self is no longer defined primarily through internal attributes. Rather, the self is defined through close relationships, leading to a more flexible and contextually contingent set of guiding principles for cognition, emotion, and motivation. In terms of cognition, people who emphasize the relational self are likely to exhibit an increased sensitivity to other peoples' behaviors, and a heightened awareness of other peoples' goals (Cross & Madson, 1997). They generally focus on their similarities with other people, and are also likely to organize their memories of people according to their relationships with them (Cross, Morris, & Gore, 2002). When interacting with others, they exhibit a strong concern with the quality of their relationships (Markus & Kitayama, 1991). When the relational self is emphasized, people are also likely to experience empathy for others' emotions, and may even experience these emotions vicariously (Cross & Madson, 1997). Finally, they are unlikely to display negative emotions, such as anger, if such emotions could put the relationship at risk (Cross & Madson, 1997). Regarding motivation, people accessing the relational self-construal are likely to seek out and affirm positive relationships (Gelfand et al, 2006). They therefore tend to exhibit behaviors to meet these goals. For example, they might disclose personal information, aide others in achieving their own goals, and take other peoples' needs and wishes into

account when making decisions (Cross et al, 2000). They are highly concerned about both what other people think of them and how other people feel internally, and generally act in ways that address these concerns (Markus & Kitayama, 1991).

The Collective Self-Construal

The *collective* self, like the relational self, is focused on social connections. However, whereas the relational self focuses on close, personalized, and generally dyadic relationships, the collective self focuses on a broader, more impersonal identification with a group or social category (Brewer & Gardner, 1996). When the collective self-construal is accessed, the individual's sense of self shifts from a sense of "I" to a sense of "we". Just as the relational self-construal enhances the salience of close interpersonal relationships, the collective self-construal enhances the salience of group identity and the collective welfare. Thus, when the collective self-construal is accessed, people are more likely to attend to group differences, the membership boundaries of teams, and other contextual cues that differentiate members of the group from outsiders. In addition, they are generally more concerned with maintaining the welfare of the group than people accessing the relational or independent self-construals (Johnson, Selenta, & Lord, 2006). Furthermore, they are highly attentive to the rules that guide these groups, including group duties, norms, and commitments (Johnson & Chang, 2006; Shtyenberg, Gelfand, & Kim, 2006).

Empirical evidence thus supports the construct of self-construal as an important conceptual schema through which many cognitions, behaviors, and motivations can be understood (Brewer & Gardner, 1996; Cross & Madson, 1997; Gelfand et al, 2006). The independent self, for instance, is associated with a strong negative reaction to violations

of personal rights (Shtyenberg, Gelfand, & Kim, 2006), a direct communication style (Hara & Kim, 2004), self-oriented goals (Johnson & Chang, 2006), and exchange relationships (Bresnahan, Chiu, & Levine, 2004). The relational self, on the other hand, is associated with relational goals (Gore & Cross, 2006), a concern for positive interpersonal interactions (Johnson et al, 2006), and relational outcomes, even in traditionally arelational settings, such as business negotiation (e.g. Gelfand et al, 2006). The collective self, lastly, is associated with strong negative reactions to violations of duties and norms (Johnson et al, 2006; Shtyenberg, Gelfand, & Kim, 2006), consistently salient group comparisons (Marx, Stapel, & Muller, 2005), and group-oriented commitments (e.g. continuance commitment; Johnson & Chang, 2006).

The Impact of Self-Construal on Forgiveness

Having now defined the construct of self-construal and its triad of subcomponents, the following paragraphs hypothesize about the direct impact of the self on forgiveness. Afterward, an analysis of the moderating effects of the self on apology components is offered.

Regarding the three conceptualizations of the self originally proposed by Kashima et al (1995) and others, it is likely that the relational self-construal is most positively related to outcomes such as forgiveness. This prediction is derived from Rusbult, Verette, Whitney, Slovik, & Lipkus's (1991) theory of accommodation, which states that an individual's decision to accommodate rather than retaliate against a transgressor can be traced to four distinct factor classes: happiness factors, commitment factors, importance factors, and self-centeredness factors. To the extent that an individual is happy with a relationship, committed to a relationship, considers a relationship important to personal well-being,

and is generally not egocentric, accommodation will be favored over retaliation.

Given the relational self-construal's concern with relationships as a defining feature of the self, it stands to reason that, under the relational self-construal, people will be happy with their relationships, committed to them, consider them to be important, and generally exhibit low levels of self-centeredness. For these reasons, the following hypothesis is proposed:

Hypothesis 3: Self-construal will exhibit a main effect on reactions to conflict, so that the relational and self-construal will exhibit the strongest positive effect on forgiveness.

Beyond the direct influence of the self on forgiveness, it is possible to propose the question: do people that emphasize different self-construals care more about certain apology components than others? To explore this possibility, a set of formal hypotheses are developed to show how a) the independent self-construal enhances the effectiveness of *offers of compensation*, b) the relational self-construal enhances the effectiveness of *expressions of concern for victim suffering*, and c) the collective self-construal enhances the effectiveness of *acknowledgement of a violated rule/norm*. An overall model of these hypotheses is presented in Figure 2.

Insert Figure 2

The Moderating Effect of Self-Construal

<u>The Independent Self-Construal and Offers of Compensation</u>

When the victim of an offense is accessing the independent self-construal, he or she will be primarily concerned with violations against the individual's autonomy and individuality. Consequently, apologies that address the individual will be most effective.

Among the three focal apology components in the current study, *offers of compensation* appear to best address these concerns. They establish the legitimacy of the victim's claims and, in doing so, allow the victim to feel that he or she has "won" the moral competition between them, providing information that is congruent with the victim's conceptualization of interpersonal relationships as competition-based (Brewer & Gardner, 1996; Markus & Kitayama, 1991). Previous research on cross-cultural conflict management supports this general idea. For instance, Ohbuchi et al (1997; 1999) found that Americans, who generally act under the independent self-construal, were more interested in justice goals (the restoration of fairness) than relational goals (the maintenance of a positive relationship). The importance of compensation to the independent self-construal is more directly evidenced in the law literature, which notes that "An American who is found to have wronged another is likely to consider that paying the damages or accepting punishment ends further responsibility and that there is no need for personal contrition or apology to the injured individual" (Wagatsuma & Rosett, 1986, p. 462). It is further supported in the organizational literature, which shows that the independent self cares strongly about the just distribution of resources (i.e. distributive justice; Johnson et al, 2006). For these reasons, the following hypothesis is proposed

Hypothesis 2a: The relationship between offers of compensation and forgiveness is moderated by self-construal, so that the independent self-construal strengthens the relationship between these admissions and forgiveness.

The Relational Self-Construal and Expressions of Concern

When the relational self-construal is accessed, individuals will be concerned about relational harmony and relationship maintenance. Apologies should therefore be directed

at the relational issues that the transgression affected. In terms of apology components, *expressions of concern for victim suffering* should be most effective in influencing forgiveness. Such expressions are highly relational, insomuch as they address the emotional state of the victim, and imply empathy for the victim. They suggest feelings of closeness, interdependence, and interpersonal relatedness, all of which are important under the relational self-construal (e.g. Cross & Madson, 1997). Organizational research also tends to support to this claim. When the relational self is activated, Johnson et al (2006) found that people valued interpersonal justice, which reflects an emotional concern for others, more that distributive and procedural justice, which reflect compensatory and rule-oriented processes, respectively. Across cultures, Fu et al (2004) found that "other-oriented" variables, such as relationship orientation, were more predictive of victim outcomes than self-oriented variables, such as self-esteem, in the highly relational country of China. For these reasons, the following hypothesis is proposed:

Hypothesis 2b: The relationship between expressions of concern for victim suffering and forgiveness is moderated by self-construal, so that the relational self-construal strengthens the relationship between these expressions and forgiveness.

The Collective Self-Construal and Acknowledgements of Violated Rules/Norms

The collective self-construal involves a focus on group goals and norms, and the maintenance of specific roles and status within collectives (Kashima et al, 1995). When a victim is accessing the collective self-construal, he or she will be concerned with violations against the norms and rules that define both the group and, in turn, the individual's group identity. Here, an *acknowledgement of a violated rule or norm* should be particularly important. Rules, by nature, are social constructions. In acknowledging a

violated rule, the offender affirms an awareness of and concern with group norms. Therefore, the offender addresses the primary concern of the victim, leading to the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 2c: The relationship between acknowledgement of a violated rule or norm and forgiveness is moderated by self-construal, so that the collective self-construal strengthens the relationship between these acknowledgements and forgiveness.

The Moderating Effect of Harm Severity

Along with victim self-construal, apology effectiveness is likely to be moderated by numerous environmental factors (e.g. Barnlund & Yoshioka, 1990; Fukuno & Ohbuchi, 1998; Gonzales et al, 1990; Itoi et al, 1996; Ohbuchi, Suzuki, & Takaku, 2003; Sugimoto, 1999). In this section, harm severity is examined as a potential moderator of apology effectiveness.

Although common sense suggests that apologies would be less effective under severe harm than mild harm, empirical data have been mixed. In a scenario study, Fukuno and Ohbuchi (1998) found that as harm severity increases, the effectiveness of apologies in alleviating victims' emotions and improving victims' opinion the offender decreases. However, in a seemingly contradictory finding, Ohbuchi et al (1989) and McLaughlin, Cody, & O'Hair (1983) found that victims expected apologies more often under severe harm than mild harm. Thus, it seems that while people *expect* apology under severe harm, they only *accept* apology under mild harm. In an effort to reconcile these seemingly contradictory findings, it is possible to propose that the number of apology components in a given apology interacts with harm severity to determine an apology's effectiveness. More specifically, it is hypothesized here that the number of apology components exhibits a stronger effect under severe harm than mild harm. In other words, the

differential effectiveness of short versus long apologies is greater under severe harm than mild harm. This effect is likely driven by the finding that apologies, when perceived as insincere or inadequate (as they might be given a perfunctory apology in a severe situation), actually *exacerbate* victims' opinions of an offender (Skarliki, Folger, & Gee, 2004).

Hypothesis 4: The impact of apology length on forgiveness is moderated by harm severity, such that apology length exhibits a stronger impact on forgiveness as harm severity increases.

Method

Overview of the Methodology

In this study, a policy capturing design is used to assess the relative importance of each apology component across participants. According to Karren & Barringer (2002), policy capturing is a popular methodology in which researchers can "assess how decision makers use available information when making evaluative judgments (p. 337). It has been used to study decision making in numerous fields, including computer science, social policy, psychology, management, and organizational behavior, to name a few (Aiman-Smith, Scullen, & Barr, 2002). In policy capturing, participants are typically given a series of profiles that manipulate several variables of interest, and asked to react to each by rating them on a dependent variable. Their responses are in turn computed with a series of regression analyses that allow researchers to explore how each independent variable is weighted both within and across participants (Aiman-Smith et al, 2002; Karren & Barringer, 2002).

The policy capturing methodology offers a number of useful advantages that make it particularly appropriate for the current research. First, it provides a more accurate

estimation of individuals' decision policies than direct assessment techniques, which have been shown to exhibit poor external validity and strong social desirability effects (Rynes, Schwab, & Heneman, 1983). Second, it allows researchers to experimentally manipulate any number of cues, thus minimizing problems of multicollinearity that often stem from field data (e.g. real-world apologies likely contain several confounded components; Feldman & Arnold, 1978). Third, policy capturing allows researchers to control the experimental context, and thus enhance the internal validity of the research (Karren & Barringer, 2002).

Over the past several decades, the policy capturing methodology has been used to effectively examine numerous decision-making phenomena (Aiman-Smith, Scullen, & Barr, 2002). It represents an appropriate methodology for the current study's proposed hypotheses, insomuch as it allows for an analysis of the relative importance of each apology component while maintaining a high level of internal validity. In addition, a number of steps have been taken to address some common concerns with the policy capturing methodology. First, equivalence scores were established for each component, to assure that any found effects were not contaminated by overall differences in the relative associations of the components with their underlying constructs (Rotundo & Sackett, 2002). Second, the number of profiles given to each participant was limited to ten to avoid participant fatigue while maintaining the recommended 5:1 profile-to-cue ratio to achieve sufficient power (Karren & Barringer, 2002). Third, the scenarios were piloted in focus groups to ensure that they would seem realistic and relevant to the specific participant population and thus be as externally valid as possible. Finally, a full factorial design was utilized to allow for the independent analysis of all main effects and

higher-order interactions. (Aiman-Smith, Scullen, & Barr, 2002; Karren & Barringer, 2002).

Participants

Undergraduate students at a large Northeastern university completed two surveys in exchange for course credit. The sample consisted of 171 students. The majority of the sample (75.4%) were women, and 24.6% were men. The mean age of the sample was 20.2, with participant ages ranging from 18 to 38. The majority of the participants were Caucasian (61.4%), African-American (14.6%), or Asian (11.1%). Additional reported ethnicities included Hispanic (5.8%) and Arab (1.8%).

Design

A mixed experimental design including both within-subject and between-subject components was used. Consistent with most policy capturing designs, the within-subject manipulations were utilized to measure each individual's weights of several variables of interest. The current study's within-subject variables consisted of the three focal apology components, including an *expression of concern*, an *offer of compensation*, and an *acknowledgement of a violated rule/norm*. These variables were manipulated across scenarios by being either included or excluded from a given apology. The three variables were completely crossed in a full factorial design, allowing for the measurement of the independent effects of each apology component. Two repeat profiles were also included to allow for reliability analyses (e.g. Rotundo & Sackett, 2002), yielding a total of 10 scenarios to be read by each participant.

Between-subject variables included both manipulated and measured constructs. The manipulated between-subject variable was harm severity, for which three conditions were

included. In the control condition, the consequences of the offense were not detailed. In the mild condition, the offense led to a small loss of work. In the severe condition, the offense led to the loss of a significant amount of work, and hindered the victim's academic performance. The exact wording of the conditions is included in Appendix C. Participants were randomly assigned to one of the conditions. The primary measured between-subject variable was self-construal, which consisted of a 15 item self-report survey, discussed below (Selenta & Lord, 2005)

Procedure

Focus Groups

Prior to data collection for the primary experiment, two focus groups were conducted to assess the appropriateness of the study in terms of length, realism, and distributional equivalence. In the first focus group, participants were asked to fill out a first draft of the policy capturing study, along with several qualitative questions to assess the appropriateness of the study in terms of length, realism, and clarity. During discussions with the focus group, many participants indicated that the survey was too long and too repetitive. In addition, a t-test indicated a nonsignificant difference in forgiveness across the severity manipulation, $t(57) = -.89$, $p > .10$. A manipulation check further showed that the severity manipulation was ineffective, $t(57) = -.384$, $p > .10$.

Before conducting the second focus group, the concerns of the first group were addressed in several ways. First, the severity manipulation was strengthened by increasing the consequence severity in the severe condition, and decreasing the consequence severity in the mild condition. Second, to increase variance in perceived severity, a control condition was added to the surveys wherein the consequences of the

transgression were not specified. Third, the amount of repeated background information in each scenario was decreased to mitigate fatigue and boredom. Fourth, the instructions were adjusted to warn the participants that the scenarios would contain many similarities.

As with the first focus group, the second focus group included several qualitative questions regarding overall perceptions of the survey. To better assess the effectiveness of the adjusted scenarios in the second focus group, participants' qualitative responses to the survey were coded and quantified. 95% of respondents indicated that they could differentiate among the scenarios. 95% also indicated that the scenarios were realistic. 85% indicated that the scenarios were believable, and 85% indicated that the scenarios were not confusing. Only 12% of respondents indicated that they felt fatigued by the scenarios.

The distributional equivalence of the apology components was also assessed with single Likert-scale items that asked how much the apology components represented their underlying constructs, 1=*not at all*, 7=*completely*. To assess the compensation item, participants were asked "*To what degree does the phrase* 'I'll pay to get the computer fixed for you' *represent an offer of compensation?*'" To assess the concern item, participants were asked "*To what degree does the phrase* 'I feel sick to my stomach thinking about how upset you must be over this' *represent an expression of concern?*'" To assess the group item, participants were asked "*To what degree does the phrase* 'I've failed in my duties to our fraternity and the campus community' *represent an acknowledgement of a violated group rule or norm?*'" For compensation, the item was viewed as a strong representation of its underlying construct, $M = 6.46$. For concern, the item was perceived as a slightly weaker representation of its underlying construct, $M =$

5.59. For group, the item was perceived as a significantly weaker representation of its underlying construct, $M = 4.80$. To address these differences, a stronger operationalization of the group item and a weaker operationalization of the compensation item were developed. Specifically, for compensation, the phrase "*I'll pay to get the computer fixed for you*" was changed to "*I can find someone to fix the computer for you*". The group item was changed from "*I've failed in my duties to our fraternity and the campus community*" to "*I've let the whole group down. I've failed in my duties to our fraternity and the campus community."* These adjustments ultimately resulted in reasonable distribution equivalence. In the primary study, reported strengths of the compensation, concern, and group items were M=6.17, M=6.19, and M=6.30, respectively.

The primary study was conducted in two phases. In phase I, participants were asked to fill out a survey that measured their demographic characteristics and self-construal scores. For the majority of participants (N=151), phase I was filled out as a self-administered, online questionnaire. The remaining participants (N=30) filled out the phase I survey as part of a larger battery of tests in a classroom setting. For both sets of participants, phase I took approximately 20 minutes to complete. Phase II was completed at least one week, but no more than two months, after phase I to eliminate any possible primacy or consistency effects that could have potentially affected the study's results (Salanick & Pfeffer, 1978). During phase II, participants filled out the policy capturing survey in a proctored laboratory setting. Phase II lasted approximately 30 minutes. In both phases, all participants signed informed consent forms before participating. Participants were also debriefed after completing phase II. Responses from the two

phases were matched with anonymous identification numbers assigned to each participant.

Policy-Capturing Questionnaire

During phase II, each participant answered a questionnaire containing 10 separate conflict scenarios. After filling out the informed consent form, participants first read some background information regarding their relationship with a fictional person. The primary purposes of the background information were to establish a) the participant's relationship with the other person, and b) the context of the situation in which the conflict occurred. After reading the background information, participants read each of the 10 conflict scenarios, which manipulated the apologies that were given following the conflict. After each scenario, they were asked to rate their hypothetical forgiveness of the offender.

The Conflict Context

As previously mentioned, the questionnaire began with some brief background information. The information was consistent across participants, and included the following:

Pat lives down the hall from you in your dorm here at UMD. You see each other frequently, and are in the same co-ed fraternity. You've gone to many parties and events together and often eat at the same table in the dining halls. Recently, the two of you were working next to each other in the library when Pat asked to borrow your laptop to quickly write up an assignment. You agreed. Later, Pat reached for a disk to save the project.

After reading the background information, the participants read and responded to the scenarios, each of which included a different combination of the three apology components. A sample scenario, including all three apology components and a mild severity condition, is listed below. Each dimension is listed in brackets after it appears.

Pat hurriedly grabbed the wrong disk, marked "do not use", from a pile on the table. It had a virus on it, and when Pat inserted the disk into your laptop, the laptop crashed. You lost a small amount of schoolwork, which will take you an hour to reenter. [mild harm]

*Upon realizing what happened, Pat said "*Sorry*". Pat then expressed concern for your suffering, saying "*I feel sick to my stomach thinking about how upset you must be over this.*"* [expression of concern] *Then, Pat admitted to not being a good group member, saying "*I've let the whole group down. I've failed in my duties to our fraternity and the campus community.*"* [acknowledgment of violated rule/norm] *Lastly, Pat suggested the possibility of compensating you by saying "*I can find someone to fix the computer for you.*"* [offer of compensation]

Measures

Forgiveness

Forgiveness was measured using two items adapted from the Transgression Related Interpersonal Motivations Scale (TRIM; McCullough et al, 1998). The first was "Given this situation, I would forgive Pat", and the second was "Given this situation, I would trust Pat in the future". The items were combined to form an overall measure of forgiveness, $\alpha = .84$.

Self-Construal

Self-construal was measured with the Levels of Self-Concept Scale, which uses a self-report questionnaire to measure the chronic strength of individuals' independent, relational, and collective self-construals (LSCS; Selenta & Lord, 2005). More specifically, the primary subscales for each self-construal were utilized, since previous empirical studies have shown these to be most indicative of individuals' self-relevant motivations (Johnson & Chang, 2006; Johnson, Selenta, & Lord, 2005). Each scale consists of five items measured on a 5-point Likert scale, 1=*strongly disagree*, 5=*strongly agree*. The *comparative identity* subscale was used to measure the independent self-construal ($\alpha = .79$), and includes such items as "I have a strong need to know how I stand

in comparison to my classmates or coworkers." The *concern for others* subscale was used to measure the relational self-construal (α = .71), and includes such items as "Caring deeply about another person such as a close friend or relative is very important to me." Finally, the *group achievement focus* subscale was used to measure the collective self-construal (α = .62), and includes such items as "I feel great pride when my team or work group does well, even if I'm not the main reason for success." These alphas are generally consistent with previous studies (e.g. Johnson, Selenta, & Lord, 2005).

Apology components

An offer of compensation was measured with the phrase "Pat suggested the possibility of compensating you by saying *'I can find someone to fix the computer for you.'"* An expression of concern was measured with the phrase "Pat expressed concern for your suffering, saying *'I feel sick to my stomach thinking about how upset you must be over this.'"* An acknowledgement of a violated rule/norm was measured with the phrase "Pat admitted to not being a good group member, saying *'I've let the whole group down. I've failed in my duties to our fraternity and the campus community.'"* Following completion of the primary part of the survey (i.e. the scenarios), participants were asked to rate the degree to which each apology item represented its underlying construct, 1=*not at all,* 7=*completely*. As mentioned in the procedure, each of the items exhibited approximately equivalent representation of its underlying construct. For the offer of compensation, *M*=6.17; for the expression of concern, *M*=6.19; for the acknowledgement of a violated rule/norm, *M*=6.30.

Perceived severity

Perceived severity was assessed with a 4 item measure of perceived offense severity (α =

.93). All items were measured on a 7 point Likert scale. An example item is "How severe were the consequences of Pat's transgression against you?"

Control variable

Gender was controlled for in all Level 2 analyses, since previous research has shown gender to relate to both forgiveness (Tomlinson et al, 2004) and self-construal (Kashima et al, 1995).

Results

Two sets of identical profiles were included in the survey to assess reliability. The two sets of profiles yielded reliability coefficients of .91 and .92, respectively. Correlations for all level 1 and level 2 variables are reported in Table 2 and Table 3, respectively.

Insert Table 2

Insert Table 3

Level 1 analyses

In Hypotheses 1a-1c, offers of compensation, expressions of concern, and acknowledgments of violated rules/norms were predicted to exhibit independent effects on forgiveness, such that each component would lead to more forgiveness. These hypotheses were tested with a level 1 hierarchical linear modeling procedure, conducted in HLM version 6.04 (Raudenbush, Bryk, & Congdon, 2006). First, a null model with no level-1 predictors was run to determine the amount of variance explained by the apology

components (Hofmann, Griffin, & Gavin, 2000). Variance explained was calculated as the total variance (i.e. variance in the null model) minus the variance not attributed to the level one predictors, divided by total variance. The calculated effect size indicated that the Level 1 predictors (apology components) accounted for 59.8% of the variance in forgiveness (see Table 4).

Insert Table 4

After calculating the null model, a full level 1 equation was entered by simultaneously regressing forgiveness on the three apology components. This model can be summarized with the equation, $Forgiveness_{ij} = B_{0j} + B_{1j}(Compensation_{ij}) + B_{2j}(Concern_{ij}) + B_{3j}(Group_{ij}) + r_{ij}$ where the subscript "i" refers to each scenario presentation (or observation), "j" refers to individuals, "r_{ij}" indicates the within-person residual variance, "Compensation" refers to an offer of compensation, "Concern" refers to an expression of concern, and "Group" refers to an acknowledgment of a violated rule/norm. Average slopes and intercepts across participants are reported in table 2. The regression weights for each apology component differed from zero in the positive direction, indicating that each apology component positively impacted forgiveness. For compensation, $B_1 = 1.06$, $p < .01$ (standardized $\beta_1 = .36$), supporting hypothesis 1a. For concern, $B_2 = .67$, $p < .01$ (standardized $\beta_2 = .22$), supporting hypothesis 1b. For group, $B_3 = .49$, $p < .01$ (standardized $\beta_3 = .16$), supporting hypothesis 1c. Thus, hypotheses 1a-1c were all supported. One significant advantage of policy capturing is that it allows researchers to examine the weights attached to each cue. In other words, it is possible to see how

influential each cue was in the decision process. In this regard, compensation was weighted most heavily among the three apology components, followed by expressions of concern and acknowledgments of violated rules/norms, respectively.

Level 2 analyses

For Hypothesis 2, the relational self-construal was hypothesized to exhibit a main effect on forgiveness, such that the relational self-construal would positively affect forgiveness, but the independent and collective self-construals would not. To test this hypothesis, forgiveness was simultaneously regressed on each self-construal at Level 2, controlling for gender, yielding the following intercepts-as-outcomes model: $B_{0j} = \pi_{00} + \pi_{01}$ $(Gender_j) + \pi_{02} (Independent_j) + \pi_{03} (Relational_j) + \pi_{04} (Collective_j) + U_{0j}$. The relational self-construal did not predict forgiveness, $\pi_{03} = .12$, $p>.10$ (standardized $\Pi_{03} = .05$). Thus, hypothesis 2 was not supported. The independent self-construal likewise did not predict forgiveness, $\pi_{02} = .00$, $p > .10$ (standardized $\Pi_{02} = .00$). In addition, the collective self-construal did not predict forgiveness, $\pi_{04} = -.35$, $p > .05$ (standardized $\Pi_{04} = -.17$). (See Table 5).

Insert Table 5

Cross-level analyses

For Hypotheses 3a-3c, a slopes-as-outcomes model was hypothesized. With slopes-as-outcomes models, a level 2 variable is hypothesized to affect (i.e. moderate) the weights assigned to each level 1 variable. In this case, self-construal at level 2 is hypothesized to

moderate the weights of apology components at level 1. Specifically, it was hypothesized that the independent self-construal would moderate the impact of compensation (H3a), the relational self-construal would moderate the impact of concern (H3b), and the collective self-construal would moderate the impact of group (H3c). To test these hypotheses, three models were separately tested. To test hypothesis 3a, forgiveness was simultaneously regressed on each apology component and the independent self-construal was entered at level 2. To test hypothesis 3b, forgiveness was simultaneously regressed on each apology component and the relational self-construal was entered at level 2. To test hypothesis 3c, forgiveness was simultaneously regressed on each apology component and the collective self-construal was entered at level 2. In each of these analyses, gender was entered as a control variable at level 2. The mathematical models for hypotheses 3a-3c are as follows:

Hypothesis 3a (equation 1)

$$\text{L1: Forgiveness}_{ij} = B_{0j} + B_{1j}(\text{Compensation}_{ij}) + B_{2j}(\text{Concern}_{ij}) + B_{3j}(\text{Group}_{ij}) + r_{ij}$$

$$\text{L2: } B_{0j} = \pi_{00} + \pi_{01}(\text{Gender}_j) + \pi_{02}(\text{Ind}_j) + U_{0j}$$

$$\text{L2: } B_{1j}(\text{Compensation}) = \pi_{10} + \pi_{11}(\text{Gender}_j) + \pi_{12}(\text{Ind}_j) + U_{1j}$$

$$\text{L2: } B_{2j}(\text{Concern}) = \pi_{20} + \pi_{21}(\text{Gender}_j) + \pi_{22}(\text{Ind}_j) + U_{2j}$$

$$\text{L2: } B_{3j}(\text{Group}) = \pi_{30} + \pi_{31}(\text{Gender}_j) + \pi_{32}(\text{Ind}_j) + U_{3j}$$

Hypothesis 3b (equation 2)

$$\text{L1: Forgiveness}_{ij} = B_{0j} + B_{1j}(\text{Compensation}_{ij}) + B_{2j}(\text{Concern}_{ij}) + B_{3j}(\text{Group}_{ij}) + r_{ij}$$

$$\text{L2: } B_{0j} = \pi_{00} + \pi_{01}(\text{Gender}_j) + \pi_{02}(\text{Rel}_j) + U_{0j}$$

$$\text{L2: } B_{1j}(\text{Compensation}) = \pi_{10} + \pi_{11}(\text{Gender}_j) + \pi_{12}(\text{Rel}_j) + U_{1j}$$

L2: B_{2j} (Concern) = π_{20} + π_{21} ($Gender_j$) + π_{22} (Rel_j) + U_{2j}

L2: B_{3j} (Group) = π_{30} + π_{31} ($Gender_j$) + π_{32} (Rel_j) + U_{3j}

Hypothesis 3c (equation 3)

L1: $Forgiveness_{ij} = B_{0j} + B_{1j}(Compensation_{ij}) + B_{2j}(Concern_{ij}) + B_{3j}(Group_{ij}) + r_{ij}$

L2: $B_{0j} = \pi_{00} + \pi_{01}$ ($Gender_j$) + π_{02} (Col_j) + U_{0j}

L2: B_{1j} (Compensation) = π_{10} + π_{11} ($Gender_j$) + π_{12} (Col_j) + U_{1j}

L2: B_{2j} (Concern) = π_{20} + π_{21} ($Gender_j$) + π_{22} (Col_j) + U_{2j}

L2: B_{3j} (Group) = π_{30} + π_{31} ($Gender_j$) + π_{32} (Col_j) + U_{3j}

Results indicated that the independent self-construal significantly predicted compensation (π=.15, p<.05; standardized Π=.11), but not concern (π=.03, p>.10; standardized Π=.02) or group (π=.07, p>.10; standardized Π=.05). Thus, hypothesis 3a was supported, such that when the independent self is emphasized, the influence of compensation on forgiveness becomes more positive. The relational self-construal significantly predicted weights on concern (π=.20, p<.05; standardized Π=.09) and group (π=.23, p<.05; standardized Π=.10), but not compensation (π=.06, p>.10; standardized Π=.03). Thus, hypothesis 3b was partially supported, such that when the relational self is emphasized, the influences of both concern and group on forgiveness become more positive. The collective self-construal significantly predicted group (π=.23, p<.05; standardized Π=.11), but not compensation (π=.13, p>.10; standardized Π=.06) or concern (π=.09, p>.10; standardized Π=.04). Thus, hypothesis 3c was supported, such

that when the collective self is emphasized, the influence of group on forgiveness becomes more positive. These results are summarized in Table 6 and presented in Figure 3.

Insert Table 6

Insert Figure 3

Hypothesis 4 stated that harm severity would moderate the impact of apology length on forgiveness. To explore the divergent effects of actual and perceived harm, two sets of analyses were conducted. For the first set of analyses, the moderating effect of perceived harm severity was examined with through regression. Specifically, forgiveness was regressed on the number of apology components and perceived severity in step 1, followed by the interaction term in step 2 (all analyses at level 1; N=1710). Results indicated a significant interaction, B = .067, $p<.01$ (standardized $\beta = .190$), such that when the offense was perceived as severe, additional components were more effective than when the offense was not perceived as not severe (See Figure 4). The interaction is presented in Figure 4. For the second set of analyses, forgiveness was regressed on the number of apology components and actual severity in step 1, followed by the interaction term in step 2 (analyses again conducted at level 1; N=1710). Results indicated a nonsignificant interaction, B= .052, $p>.10$ (standardized $\beta = .074$). Thus, hypothesis 4 was supported for perceived severity but not manipulated severity.

Insert Figure 4

Discussion

In the introduction to his landmark book O*n Apology*, psychiatrist Aaron Lazare opens by referring to apology as "One of the most profound human interactions" (Lazare, 2004, p. 1). Indeed, the value and importance of apology is difficult to refute. On a national scale, apologies have helped to heal the wounds of the Holocaust, the Nanking Massacre, and many other atrocities (Brooks, 1999). Among individuals, they have helped to heal countless relationships and restore harmony (Lazare, 2004; Ohbuchi et al, 1989; Scher & Darley, 1997; Tavuchis, 1991). Within organizations, apologies have helped to ease the concerns of stockholders, foster employee commitment, and reshape companies' images (Adams, 2000; Liao, 2007; Moxley, 2007). With the dual goals of fostering a positive work climate and avoiding lawsuits, "Savvy employers are seeing the need to incorporate the apology strategy into their relationships with workers" (Kellogg, 2007).

Despite an apparently overwhelming popular consensus on the potential advantages of apology, scholars and laypeople alike seem to recognize the potential for apologies to fail. They have, in fact, been referred to as "Highly risky strategies… [that] can make a bad situation worse" (Kellogg, 2007, p. 21). Furthermore, empirical research supports the idea that apologies can backfire (Skarlicki, Folger, & Gee, 2004). Nations, managers, CEOs, friends, and other conflicting parties must therefore understand not only what to say when apologizing, but also when to say it. In an effort to explore the boundary conditions of apology effectiveness, the current research empirically tested the interacting

roles of specific apology components, victim self-construals, and harm severity in fostering and inhibiting forgiveness.

To examine the role of specific apology components, three elements of apology were analyzed: offers of compensation, expressions of concern, and acknowledgements of violated rules/norms. These components were selected by virtue of their simultaneous popularity in the apology literature and relative conceptual distinctness. As a first hypothesis, each apology component was expected to demonstrate a positive effect on forgiveness. This hypothesis represented a vital first step to show that each apology component can independently influence forgiveness. For all three components, the hypothesis was supported. Thus, a generalization could be made that elaborate apologies including several distinct factors are always better than shorter, less involved apologies. Of additional interest is the fact that people generally weighed certain apology components more heavily than others. More specifically, compensation was generally viewed as most important, followed by expressions of concern and acknowledgment of violated rules/norms. This effect is perhaps not surprising, given the focus of the scenario on property damage. Thus, it seems likely that in any given context, certain apology strategies will be more effective than others.

Beyond the direct effects of apology components, the current study was interested in examining the role of the self as a predictor of both forgiveness and preference for specific apology components. This aspect of the project was motivated by a significant body of research attesting to the influential role of the self in determining a wide variety of individual cognitions, motivations, and behaviors (Markus & Kitayama, 1991). Regarding the main effect of self-construal on forgiveness, it was hypothesized that

people would be more forgiving when they emphasize the relational self than when they emphasize the independent or collective selves. This hypothesis was not supported. Although disappointing, this finding does emphasize the importance of examining more complex relationships between the self and conflict outcomes. Future research should therefore seek to examine the *indirect* relationship between the self and forgiveness under a variety of external situations and conditions. For instance, from the perspective of self-construal theory, it is possible to suggest that the collective self exhibits a negative effect on forgiveness when the victim is from an outgroup, and a positive effect on forgiveness when the victim is from an ingroup. Similarly, the relational self might influence a positive effect on forgiveness only within the context of close relationships, as in the case of a spouse or parent.

Regarding the moderating role of the self, each type of self-construal was hypothesized to moderate the effectiveness of a specific apology component. Specifically, the individual, relational, and collective selves were hypothesized to strengthen the effectiveness of offers of compensation, expressions of concern, and acknowledgements of violated rules/norms, respectively. Taken together, the empirical results of this study support these hypotheses. First, the independent self was found to predict the importance of compensation but nothing else. Second, the collective self was found to predict the importance of acknowledging group norms, but nothing else. Third, the relational self was found to predict the importance of concern, although it also predicted the importance of acknowledging group norms, contrary to the hypothesis. Thus, a clear pattern has emerged from the data, wherein individuals' perceptions of the self influence what they want to hear in an apology and, consequently, the degree to which those components

facilitate forgiveness. Indeed, the strength of these effects was often striking. For instance, whereas compensation was the *only* apology component considered effective by independent people, it was the only apology component considered *not* effective by relational people. Thus, the content of an effective apology in the current study is entirely orthogonal for the relational and independent selves.

Overall, the current findings support an ever-growing accumulation of evidence for the role that self-construal plays in everyday social interactions. In this particular study, the self has been found to influence the types of apologies that people want to receive. This finding lends support to the idea that self-construals influence not only how people behave, but also how they expect others to behave (e.g. Markus & Kitayama, 1991). These findings in turn implicate self-construal as an important factor in determining both how people act and what people expect during interpersonal communication, negotiation, and conflict. The distinction between the relational and collective selves in this study is particularly noteworthy, since scholars have only recently begun to adopt a notion of the self as tripartite (e.g. Kashima et al, 1995).

As a final hypothesis, it was predicted that harm severity would moderate the effect of apology length on forgiveness. Specifically, length was expected to be more important for severe harm than for mild harm. This prediction was supported when severity was operationalized as an individual perception, but not when it was operationalized as a manipulation. Taken together with the previously mentioned findings on the moderating effect of the self, this result strongly supports the concept of matching apologies to situations, and helps to explain the potential for apologies to "backfire" when they are seen as insincere or empty.

Implications

First and foremost, this study lends support to the idea that apologies are efficacious, useful tools in the quest toward victim forgiveness. Thus, conflicting groups, managers, coworkers, friends, and other parties seeking to foster forgiveness should integrate apologies into their dialogues. Second, this study emphasizes the idea that apologies should not be simple, rote banalities, but rather contain a variety of carefully considered and distinct verbal elements, such as offers of compensation and expressions of concern.

Although most people are likely to support the idea that apologies facilitate forgiveness, this study's most significant contribution can be found in its emphasis on the concept of matching apologies to specific people and situations. Indeed, the concept of "tailoring" apologies to the situational context and the individual victim appears particularly important in the path to forgiveness. Thus, an elaborate apology is likely more appropriately delivered by a CEO following a large scale accounting scandal than a minor interpersonal dispute.

Regarding the self, the strongest applications of the current study's results can be found by examining how self-construal becomes both chronically and temporally activated in real-life situations. Regarding the temporary activation of the self, previous research has shown that the relational self is activated when people are interacting within the context of a close relationship (e.g. Cross & Madson, 1997). Therefore, when conflict arises in close relationships (such as in the case of coworkers or leader-follower dyads who have worked together for many years), an effective apology should include an expression of concern. Research has also shown that the collective self becomes activated under situations of salient group comparison (Markus & Kitayama, 1991). Therefore, apologies

given in situations with clear in-group out-group distinctions (e.g. cross-cultural negotiations) should include acknowledgements of violated rules and norms.

Regarding the chronic activation of the self, Kitayama et al (1995) showed that women tend to be more relational than men, and that East Asian cultures tend to be more collectivist than Western cultures. Therefore, in general, women should prefer expressions of concern more often than men. In addition, East Asians should prefer acknowledgements of violated rules/norms more often than Westerners. Thus, for instance, an expatriate visiting Japan from the United States should be more sensitive to the importance of acknowledging violated rules and norms than she might otherwise be while in a Western country. Similarly, an executive in a male-dominated branch of a company on assignment in a more diverse branch should be aware of the importance of expressing concern following a conflict.

Limitations

Despite the many contributions of this study, a number of limitations should be noted. First, as a lab study in general and policy capturing study more specifically, this study can be criticized in terms of its external validity. Indeed, it is not known how the results of the scenario responses would translate to real-world situations. Second, this study was not able to address more than one type of situation. Even in the lab, the interrelationships among context, self, and apology might differ across situations. Finally, this study was limited to college students, and therefore might exhibit only limited applicability to the population at large. Future studies should therefore take a broader approach to the roles of apologies and self-construals in forgiveness by quantifying real-life transgressions.

Future Directions

A recent study in the United Kingdom estimated that the word "sorry" is used over 368 million times per day in the UK alone, with the average person using the phrase an average of 1.9 million times in a lifetime (Howie, 2006). The prevalence of apologies, as emphasized throughout this paper, suggests that research on apology will continue to be valued for many years to come. Given the relative dearth of research on the topic, a number of vital future directions should be noted. First, apology research should shift away from the lab and into everyday settings, such as actual organizations. Content analysis, observation, and recall studies can all be used to study real-world apologies. Second, apology research should continue to explore more types of apology phrases, including admissions of guilt, promises of forbearance, and self-castigation, to name a few. Third, apology research should explore a wider range of context, including the implications of relationship closeness, contact with offender, social networks, and social constraint. Fourth, future scholars should continue to explore a wide range of outcome variables, including behavioral measures in real world conflict. Finally, future research should explore within-account differences in other types of social accounts, including explanations, denials, and excuses.

Conclusion

Across people, cultures, and time, conflict is ubiquitous. Assuming that these problems will continue to persist, effective avenues for conflict resolution are vital. Previous research has linked apologies to a variety of positive outcomes. However, the differing effects of apologies on different people and in different situations have, until now, remained largely unexamined. By integrating theories of self-construal, apology, and

context, the current study has shown how the tailoring of apologies to individuals' self-construals and situations can result in increased victim forgiveness. Hopefully, the results from this study will lead to a broader understanding of the dynamics of interpersonal and cross-cultural conflict resolution.

Table 1
Apology Components Across Disciplines

Article	Field of Study	Apology components
Goffman, 1972	Sociology	1. Expression of concern for the victim's suffering 2. Acknowledgment of the rule being violated 3. Approval of sanctions 4. Nonapproval of one's own behavior 5. Dissociation from the misdeed 6. Affirmation of obeying the rule in the future 7. Offer of compensation for the deed
Schlenker & Darby, 1981	Psychology	1. Statement of apologetic intent (e.g. I'm sorry) 2. Expression of remorse, sorrow, etc. 3. Offer of compensation 4. Self-castigation 5. Direct requests for forgiveness
Wagatsuma & Rosett, 1986	Law	1. Acknowledgement that the hurtful act happened, caused injury, and was wrongful 2. Acknowledgement that the apologizer was at fault and regrets participating in the act 3. Acknowledgement that the apologizer will compensate the injured party 4. Acknowledgement that the act will not happen again 5. Acknowledgement that the apologizer intends to work for good relations in the future
Blum-Kulka et al, 1989	Psychology	1. Illocutionary force indicating device (I'm sorry) 2. Responsibility expression "affirms a belief in the offended rule" 3. Offer of repair 4. Promise of forbearance 5. Explanation or account of the event
Tavuchis, 1991	Sociology	1. Acknowledgment of the legitimacy of the violated rule 2. Admission of fault and responsibility for its violation 3. Expression of genuine regret and remorse for the harm done
Scher, & Darley, 1997	Psychology	1. Illocutionary force indicating device (I'm sorry) 2. Responsibility expression "affirms a belief in the offended rule" 3. Offer of repair 4. Promise of forbearance
Cohen, 1999	Law	1. Admission of fault 2. Expression of regret for the injurious action 3. Expression of sympathy for the victim's injury 4.
O'Hara & Yarn, 2002	Law	1. Identification of the wrongful act 2. Expression of remorse 3. Promise to forbear 4. Offer to repair
Lazare, 2004	Psychiatry	1. Acknowledgement of the offense 2. Expression of genuine remorse 3. Offer of appropriate reparations
Schmitt et al, 2004	Psychology	1. Admission of fault 2. Admission of damage 3. Expressing Remorse 4. Asking for Pardon 5. Offering Compensation

Table 2
Level 2 Correlation Table

	M	*SD*	*1*	*2*	*3*	*4*	*5*	*6*	*7*
1. Gender[a]	1.75	.43	--						
2. ISC	3.10	.77	-.071	(.79)					
3. RSC	4.43	.47	.196*	-.120	(.71)				
4. CSC	3.98	.53	.255**	.032	.477**	(.62)			
5. Manipulated Severity[b]	2.00	.83	-.033	.018	.157*	.111	--		
6. Perceived Severity	4.23	1.45	.021	.120	.094	.118	.569**	(.93)	
7. Forgiveness	4.51	1.09	-.069	-.008	-.034	-.151*	-.426**	-.605**	(.84)

N=171
[a] Male=1, Female=2
[b] Mild Harm=1, Control Condition=2, Severe Harm=3

Table 3
Level 1 Correlation Table

	M	*SD*	*1*	*2*	*3*	*4*	*5*	*6*	*7*	*8*	*9*	*10*	*11*
1. Gender[a]	1.75	.431	--										
2. ISC	3.10	.77	-.071**	(.79)									
3. RSC	4.43	.47	.196**	-.120**	(.71)								
4. CSC	3.98	.52	.255**	.032	.477**	(.62)							
5. Compensation[b]	.50	.50	.000	.000	.000	.000	--						
6. Concern[b]	.50	.50	.000	.000	.000	.000	.200**	--					
7. Group[b]	.50	.50	.000	.000	.000	.000	-.200**	-.200**	--				
8. Number of Components	1.50	.81	.000	.000	.000	.000	.620**	.620**	.372**	--			
9. Manipulated Severity[c]	2.00	.824	-.033	.018	.157**	.111*	.000	.000	.000	.000	--		
10. Perceived Severity	4.23	1.44	.021	.120**	.094**	.118**	.000	.000	.000	.000	..569**	(.93)	
11. Forgiveness	4.51	1.49	-.050*	-.006	-.025	-.111**	.369**	.265**	.047	.422**	-.312**	-.443**	(.84)

N=1710
[a] Male=1, Female=2
[b] 0=Cue not included, 1=Cue included
[c] Mild Harm=1, Control Condition=2, Severe Harm=3

Table 4
Level 1 Model of Apology Components on Forgiveness

Predictor	*Coefficient*	*SE*[a]	*t*	Variance[b]
Intercept, B_0	4.51**	.084	53.94	1.149**
Comp, B_1	1.06**	.059	18.05	.393**
Concern, B_2	.67**	.042	15.92	.109**
Group, B_3	.49**	.045	10.70	.156**
Effect size (%)[c]				59.83

Note. *N*=171. Comp = Offer of Compensation; Concern = Expression of Concern; Group = Acknowledgement of a Violated Rule/Norm.
[a] Average estimated *SE* of the Level 1 regression coefficients. [b]Variance in Level 1 parameter estimates and chi-square test of significance of variance. [c]Percentage of Level 1 variance in the dependent variable accounted for by apology components.
** $p < .01$

Table 5
Level 2 Model of Self Construal on Forgiveness[a]

Variable	*Coefficient*	*SE*	*t*
Independent Self, π_{i1}			
Intercept, B_{02}	.001	.110	.013
Relational Self, π_{i2}			
Intercept, B_{03}	.124	.206	.60
Collective Self, π_{i3}			
Intercept, B_{04}	-.348†	.186	-1.87

Note. *N*=171.
[a]All results are controlling for gender.
† $p < .10$

Table 6
Results of Hierarchical Linear Modeling Level 2 Analysis For Self-Construal[a]

Variable	*Coefficient*	*SE*	*t*
Independent Self, π_{i1}			
Intercept, B_{01}	-.018	.109	-.16
Compensation, B_{21}	.152*	.075	2.01
Concern, B_{31}	.029	.055	.52
Group, B_{41}	.073	.059	1.23
Relational Self, π_{i2}			
Intercept, B_{02}	-.049	.183	-.27
Compensation, B_{22}	.060	.128	.47
Concern, B_{32}	.199*	.091	2.17
Group, B_{42}	.230*	.098	2.35
Collective Self, π_{i3}			
Intercept, B_{03}	-.297†	.164	-1.81
Compensation, B_{23}	.113	.116	.98
Concern, B_{33}	.084	.084	1.01
Group, B_{43}	.184*	.089	2.07

Note. *N*=171. Comp = Offer of Compensation; Concern = Expression of Concern; Group = Acknowledgement of a Violated Rule/Norm.
[a]All results are controlling for gender.
* $p < .05$, † $p < .10$

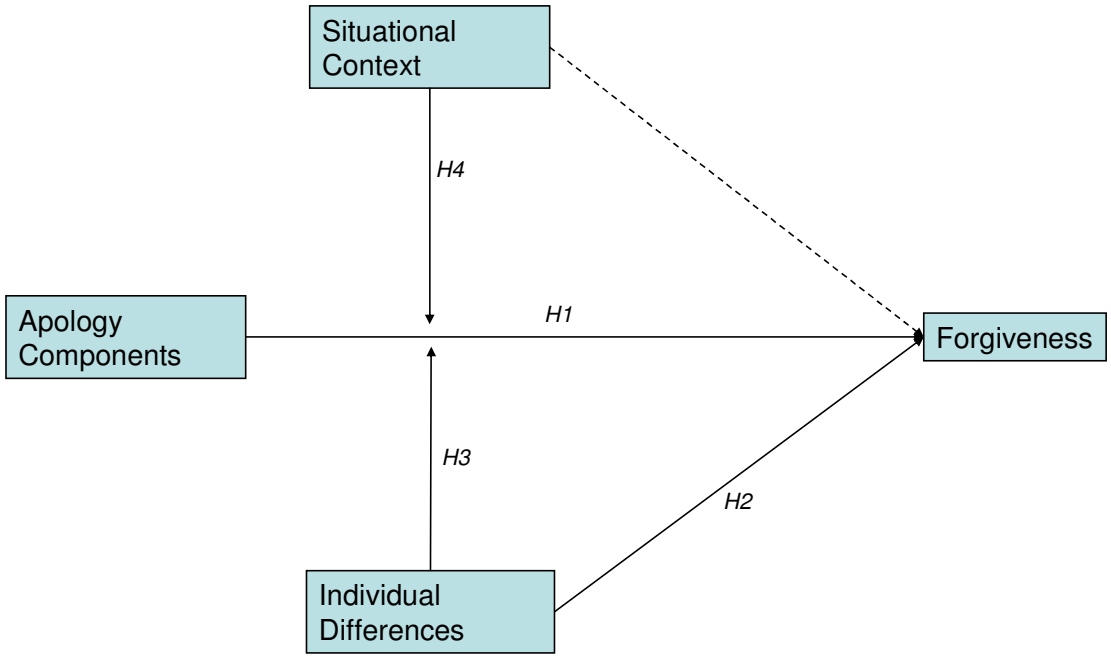
Figure Captions

Figure 1. The effects of apology, context, and individual differences on forgiveness.

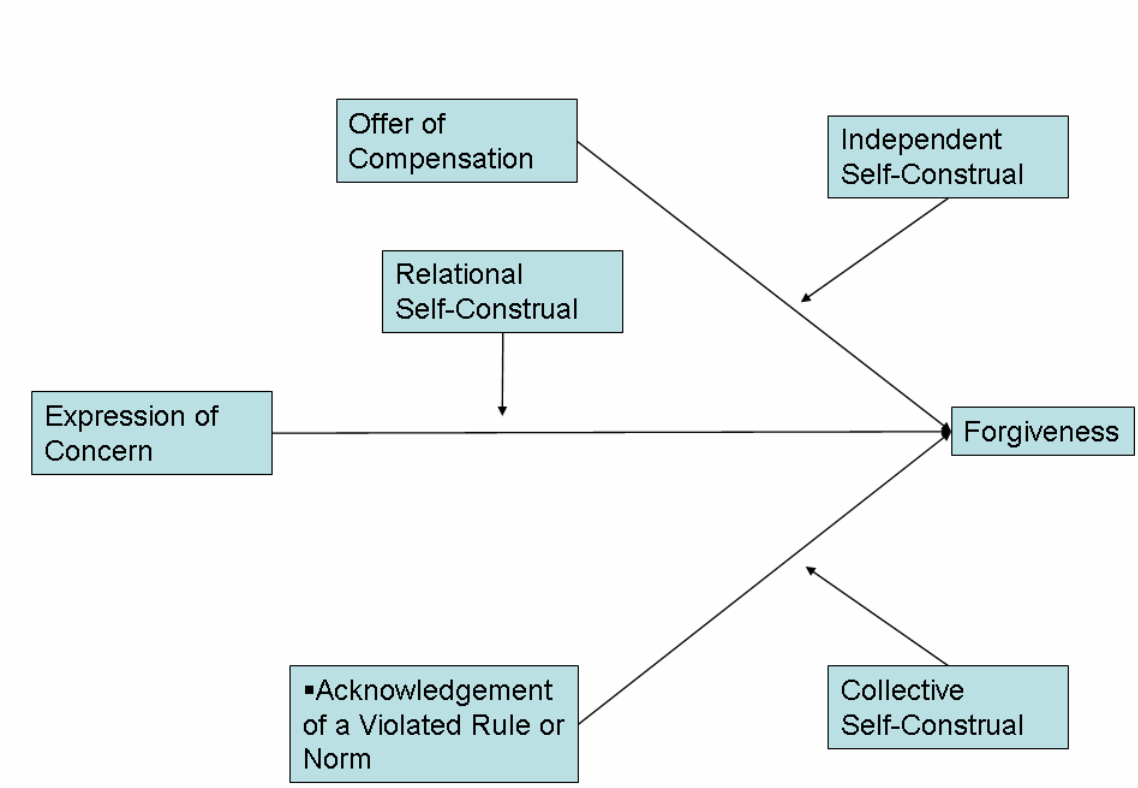
Figure 2. The moderating effect of the self on apology component effectiveness: A theoretical model

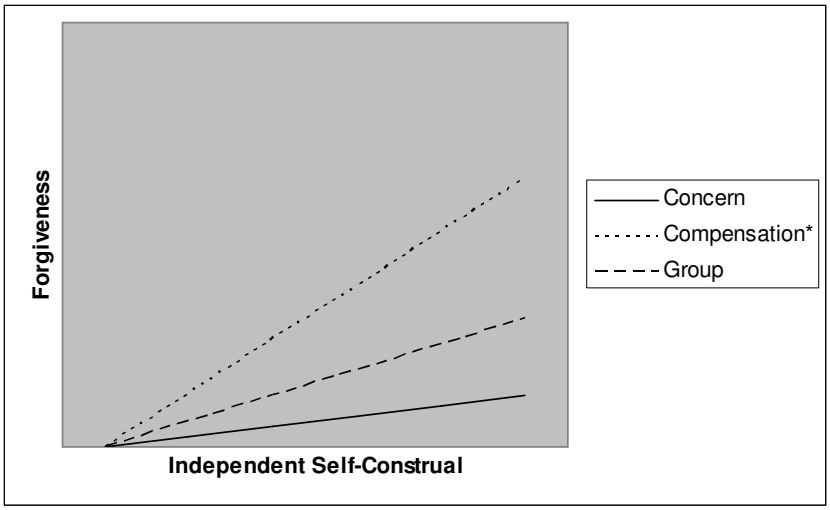
Figure 3. The moderating effect of the self on apology component effectiveness: Empirical findings

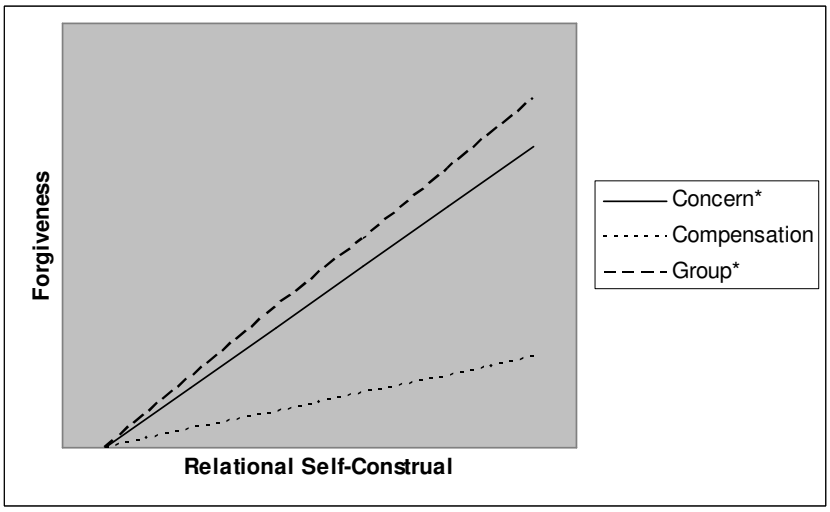
Figure 4. The interaction between perceived harm severity and number of apology components.

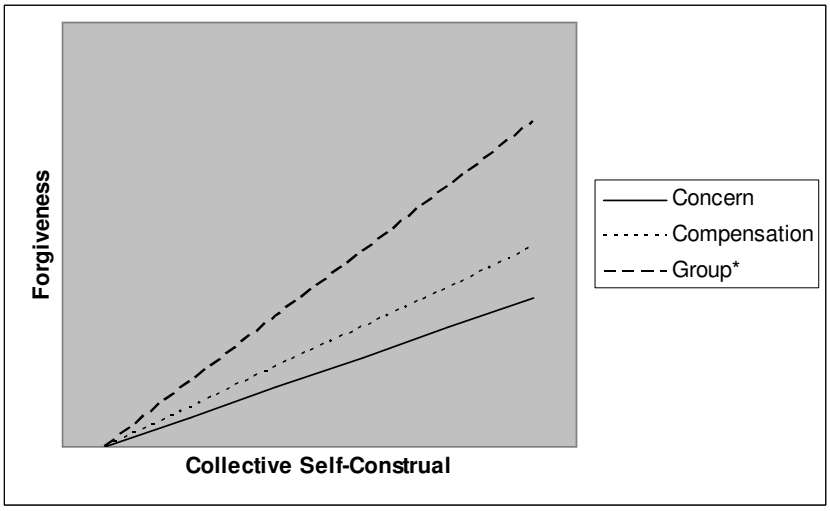


Note. Dashed line indicates a relationship that is not tested in this experiment.

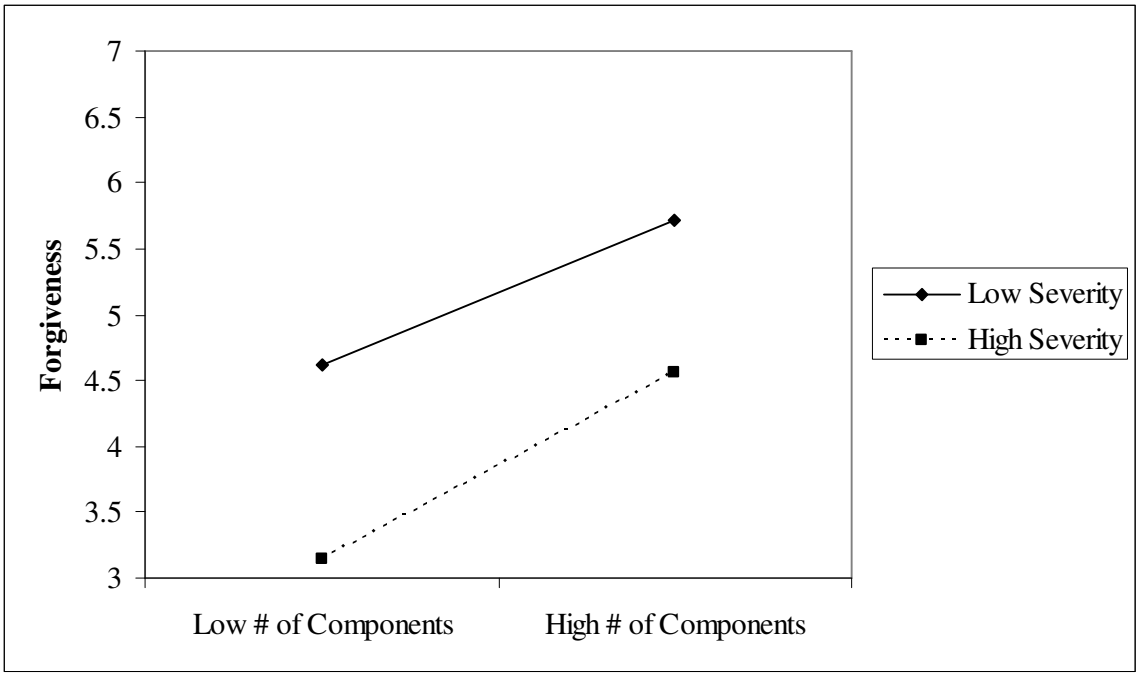

Offer of Compensation
Independent Self-Construal
Relational Self-Construal
Expression of Concern
Forgiveness
▪Acknowledgement of a Violated Rule or Norm
Collective Self-Construal


Forgiveness
Concern
Compensation*
Group
Independent Self-Construal


Forgiveness
Concern*
Compensation
Group*
Relational Self-Construal


Forgiveness
Concern
Compensation
Group*
Collective Self-Construal

* p<.05


7
6.5
6
5.5
5
4.5
4
3.5
3
Forgiveness
Low # of Components
High # of Components
Low Severity
High Severity

Appendix A
The Levels of Self-Concept Scale (Selenta & Lord, 2005)

Comparative Identity subscale (Individual level)

1. I thrive on opportunities to demonstrate that my abilities or talents are better than those of other people.
2. I have a strong need to know how I stand in comparison to my coworkers.
3. I often compete with my friends.
4. I feel best about myself when I perform better than others.
5. I often find myself pondering over the ways that I am better or worse off than other people around me.

Concern for Others subscale (Relational level)

1. If a friend was having a personal problem, I would help him/her even if it meant sacrificing my time or money.
2. I value friends who are caring, empathic individuals.
3. It is important to me that I uphold my commitments to significant people in my life.
4. Caring deeply about another person such as a close friend or relative is important to me.
5. Knowing that a close other acknowledges and values the role that I play in their life makes me feel like a worthwhile person.

Group Achievement Focus subscale (Collective level)

1. Making a lasting contribution to groups that I belong to, such as my work organization, is very important to me.
2. When I become involved in a group project, I do my best to ensure its success.
3. I feel great pride when my team or group does well, even if I am not the main reason for its success.
4. I would be honored if I were chosen by an organization or club that I belong to, to represent them at a conference or meeting.
5. When I am part of a team, I am concerned about the group as a whole instead of whether individual team members like me or whether I like them.

Appendix B
Policy Capturing Survey

Page 1 of 2 *Initials _____ Date _____*

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

Project Title: *Personal Stories / Personal Thoughts*

Why is this research being done?
This is a research project being conducted by Michele Gelfand and Ryan Fehr at the University of Maryland, College Park. We are inviting you to participate in this research project because you are at least 18 years of age. At a later time, the information you provide today will be linked with either your responses to mass testing or the internet survey you filled out (see "What about confidentiality?" below for a description of how we will link the data). The purpose of this research project is to study your reactions to several personal stories. We are interested in studying your reactions to better understand how people interpret and respond to a variety of interpersonal situations.

What will I be asked to do?
The procedures involve reading a series of interpersonal interactions and telling us how you feel about them. You will also be asked to fill out several questions about your own preferences and values. This study will be conducted in room 0144 BPS. Participation in the lab portion of this study will take approximately 20 minutes if you filled out an internet survey, and 60 minutes if you did not. If you did not fill out an internet survey, you will also be asked to recall an event from your past and write about it.

What about confidentiality?
We will do our best to keep your personal information confidential. To help protect your confidentiality, all physical documents will be stored in a locked office in the Biology-Psychology building. The corresponding electronic files will also be kept in a locked office on a disc. The electronic data will be password protected and only the study investigators (Michele Gelfand and Ryan Fehr) will have access to the files. Regarding the handling of your data, the following steps will be taken: (1) your name will not be included on the surveys and other collected data; (2) a code will be placed on the survey and other collected data; (3) through the use of an identification key, the researcher will be able to link your survey to your identity; and (4) only the researcher will have access to the identification key. If we write a report or article about this research project, your identity will be protected to the maximum extent possible. Your information may be shared with representatives of the University of Maryland, College Park or governmental authorities if you or someone else is in danger or if we are required to do so by law.

What are the risks of this research?
You may experience some emotional stress or discomfort while reading stories that reflect negative interpersonal interactions and thinking about your own past interpersonal interactions.

What are the benefits of this research?
This research is not designed to help you personally, but the results may help the investigator learn more about interpersonal interaction. We hope that, in the future, other people might benefit from this study through improved understanding of interpersonal processes.

Do I have to be in this research? May I stop participating at any time?
Your participation in this research is completely voluntary. You may choose not to take part at all. If you decide to participate in this research, you may stop participating at any time. If you decide not to participate in this study or if you stop participating at any time, you will not be penalized or lose any benefits to which you otherwise qualify.

What if I have questions?
This research is being conducted by Michele Gelfand at the University of Maryland, College Park. If you have any questions about the research study itself, please contact Michele Gelfand at:

Michele Gelfand, Department of Psychology, University of Maryland
College Park, MD 20742
E-mail: mgelfand@psyc.umd.edu
Telephone: 301-405-6972

If you have questions about your rights as a research subject or wish to report a research-related injury, please contact:

Institutional Review Board Office, University of Maryland
College Park, Maryland, 20742
E-mail: irb@deans.umd.edu
Telephone: 301-405-0678

This research has been reviewed according to the University of Maryland, College Park IRB procedures for research involving human subjects.

Statement of Age of Subject and Consent
Your signature indicates that: you are at least 18 years of age; the research has been explained to you; your questions have been fully answered; and you freely and voluntarily choose to participate in this research project.

Signature and Date

NAME OF SUBJECT: _____

SIGNATURE OF SUBJECT: _____

DATE: _____

Instructions: This is a study of interpersonal relationships. We are interested in knowing how you would respond to several different situations. First, you will read some background information about you and another person. Then, you will read ten different passages describing an interaction between the two of you. After each passage, you will be asked to respond to a series of questions. Please read each passage CAREFULLY. *The passages may seem very similar to each other, but they do have important differences.*

Background Information

Pat lives down the hall from you in your dorm here at UMD. You see each other frequently, and are in the same co-ed fraternity. You've gone to many parties and events together and often eat at the same table in the dining halls. Recently, the two of you were working next to each other in the library when Pat asked to borrow your laptop to quickly write up an assignment. You agreed. Later, Pat reached for a disk to save the project.

You are now ready to read the first scenario. Please turn the page to continue.

The progress bar below will indicate how far you are through the scenario portion of this survey.

0% **100%**

Scenario 1

Pat hurriedly grabbed the wrong disk, marked "*do not use",* from a pile on the table. It had a virus on it, and when Pat inserted the disk into your laptop, the laptop crashed.

Upon realizing what happened, Pat said "*Sorry"*. Pat then expressed concern for your suffering, saying *"I feel sick to my stomach thinking about how upset you must be over this."*

Given this situation, I would…

Forgive Pat

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Strongly Disagree *Neutral* *Strongly Agree*

Trust Pat in the future

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Strongly Disagree *Neutral* *Strongly Agree*

Feel angry toward Pat

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Strongly Disagree *Neutral* *Strongly Agree*

Want to avoid Pat

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Strongly Disagree *Neutral* *Strongly Agree*

You are now ready to read the second scenario. Please turn the page to continue.

10% **90%**

Scenario 2

Pat hurriedly grabbed the wrong disk, marked "*do not use",* from a pile on the table. It had a virus on it, and when Pat inserted the disk into your laptop, the laptop crashed.

Upon realizing what happened, Pat said "*Sorry"*. Pat then suggested the possibility of compensating you by saying *"I can find someone to fix the computer for you."* Then, Pat expressed concern for your suffering, saying *"I feel sick to my stomach thinking about how upset you must be over this."*

Given this situation, I would…

Forgive Pat

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Strongly Disagree *Neutral* *Strongly Agree*

Trust Pat in the future

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Strongly Disagree *Neutral* *Strongly Agree*

Feel angry toward Pat

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Strongly Disagree *Neutral* *Strongly Agree*

Want to avoid Pat

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Strongly Disagree *Neutral* *Strongly Agree*

You are now ready to read the third scenario. Please turn the page to continue.

20% **80%**

Scenario 3

Pat hurriedly grabbed the wrong disk, marked "*do not use",* from a pile on the table. It had a virus on it, and when Pat inserted the disk into your laptop, the laptop crashed.

Upon realizing what happened, Pat said "*Sorry"*. Pat then admitted to not being a good group member, saying *"I've let the whole group down. I've failed in my duties to our fraternity and the campus community."*

Given this situation, I would…

Forgive Pat

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Strongly Disagree *Neutral* *Strongly Agree*

Trust Pat in the future

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Strongly Disagree *Neutral* *Strongly Agree*

Feel angry toward Pat

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Strongly Disagree *Neutral* *Strongly Agree*

Want to avoid Pat

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Strongly Disagree *Neutral* *Strongly Agree*

You are now ready to read the fourth scenario. Please turn the page to continue.

30% **70%**

Scenario 4

Pat hurriedly grabbed the wrong disk, marked "*do not use",* from a pile on the table. It had a virus on it, and when Pat inserted the disk into your laptop, the laptop crashed.

Upon realizing what happened, Pat said "*Sorry"*. Pat then expressed concern for your suffering, saying *"I feel sick to my stomach thinking about how upset you must be over this."* Then, Pat admitted to not being a good group member, *saying "I've let the whole group down. I've failed in my duties to our fraternity and the campus community."* Lastly, Pat suggested the possibility of compensating you by saying *"I can find someone to fix the computer for you."*

Given this situation, I would…

Forgive Pat

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Strongly Disagree *Neutral* *Strongly Agree*

Trust Pat in the future

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Strongly Disagree *Neutral* *Strongly Agree*

Feel angry toward Pat

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Strongly Disagree *Neutral* *Strongly Agree*

Want to avoid Pat

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Strongly Disagree *Neutral* *Strongly Agree*

You are now ready to read the fifth scenario. Please turn the page to continue.

40% **60%**

Scenario 5

Pat hurriedly grabbed the wrong disk, marked "*do not use",* from a pile on the table. It had a virus on it, and when Pat inserted the disk into your laptop, the laptop crashed.

Upon realizing what happened, Pat said "*Sorry"*. Pat then suggested the possibility of compensating you by saying *"I can find someone to fix the computer for you."*

Given this situation, I would…

Forgive Pat

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Strongly Disagree *Neutral* *Strongly Agree*

Trust Pat in the future

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Strongly Disagree *Neutral* *Strongly Agree*

Feel angry toward Pat

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Strongly Disagree *Neutral* *Strongly Agree*

Want to avoid Pat

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Strongly Disagree *Neutral* *Strongly Agree*

You are now ready to read the sixth scenario. Please turn the page to continue.

50% **50%**

Scenario 6

Pat hurriedly grabbed the wrong disk, marked "*do not use",* from a pile on the table. It had a virus on it, and when Pat inserted the disk into your laptop, the laptop crashed.

Upon realizing what happened, Pat said "*Sorry"*. Pat then admitted to not being a good group member, saying *"I've let the whole group down. I've failed in my duties to our fraternity and the campus community"*. Then, Pat expressed concern for your suffering, saying *"I feel sick to my stomach thinking about how upset you must be over this."*

Given this situation, I would…

Forgive Pat

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Strongly Disagree *Neutral* *Strongly Agree*

Trust Pat in the future

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Strongly Disagree *Neutral* *Strongly Agree*

Feel angry toward Pat

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Strongly Disagree *Neutral* *Strongly Agree*

Want to avoid Pat

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Strongly Disagree *Neutral* *Strongly Agree*

You are now ready to read the seventh scenario. Please turn the page to continue.

60% **40%**

Scenario 7

Pat hurriedly grabbed the wrong disk, marked "*do not use",* from a pile on the table. It had a virus on it, and when Pat inserted the disk into your laptop, the laptop crashed.

Upon realizing what happened, Pat said "*Sorry"*. Pat then admitted to not being a good group member, saying *"I've let the whole group down. I've failed in my duties to our fraternity and the campus community"*

Given this situation, I would…

Forgive Pat

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Strongly Disagree *Neutral* *Strongly Agree*

Trust Pat in the future

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Strongly Disagree *Neutral* *Strongly Agree*

Feel angry toward Pat

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Strongly Disagree *Neutral* *Strongly Agree*

Want to avoid Pat

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Strongly Disagree *Neutral* *Strongly Agree*

You are now ready to read the eighth scenario. Please turn the page to continue.

70% **30%**

Scenario 8

Pat hurriedly grabbed the wrong disk, marked "*do not use",* from a pile on the table. It had a virus on it, and when Pat inserted the disk into your laptop, the laptop crashed.

Upon realizing what happened, Pat said "*Sorry"*. Pat then admitted to not being a good group member, saying *"I've let the whole group down. I've failed in my duties to our fraternity and the campus community"*. Then, Pat suggested the possibility of compensating you by saying *"I can find someone to fix the computer for you."*

Given this situation, I would…

Forgive Pat

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Strongly Disagree *Neutral* *Strongly Agree*

Trust Pat in the future

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Strongly Disagree *Neutral* *Strongly Agree*

Feel angry toward Pat

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Strongly Disagree *Neutral* *Strongly Agree*

Want to avoid Pat

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Strongly Disagree *Neutral* *Strongly Agree*

You are now ready to read the ninth scenario. Please turn the page to continue.

80% **20%**

Scenario 9

Pat hurriedly grabbed the wrong disk, marked "*do not use",* from a pile on the table. It had a virus on it, and when Pat inserted the disk into your laptop, the laptop crashed.

Upon realizing what happened, Pat said "*Sorry"*

Given this situation, I would…

Forgive Pat

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Strongly Disagree *Neutral* *Strongly Agree*

Trust Pat in the future

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Strongly Disagree *Neutral* *Strongly Agree*

Feel angry toward Pat

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Strongly Disagree *Neutral* *Strongly Agree*

Want to avoid Pat

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Strongly Disagree *Neutral* *Strongly Agree*

You are now ready to read the final scenario. Please turn the page to continue.

90% **10%**

Scenario 10

Pat hurriedly grabbed the wrong disk, marked "*do not use",* from a pile on the table. It had a virus on it, and when Pat inserted the disk into your laptop, the laptop crashed.

Upon realizing what happened, Pat said "*Sorry"*. Pat then suggested the possibility of compensating you by saying *"I can find someone to fix the computer for you."* Then, Pat expressed concern for your suffering, saying *"I feel sick to my stomach thinking about how upset you must be over this."*

Given this situation, I would…

Forgive Pat

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Strongly Disagree *Neutral* *Strongly Agree*

Trust Pat in the future

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Strongly Disagree *Neutral* *Strongly Agree*

Feel angry toward Pat

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Strongly Disagree *Neutral* *Strongly Agree*

Want to avoid Pat

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Strongly Disagree *Neutral* *Strongly Agree*

***Instructions*: Now, we just need to ask a few more questions. Recall the following information from your scenarios:**

Pat lives down the hall from you in your dorm here at UMD. You see each other frequently, and are in the same co-ed fraternity. You've gone to many parties and events together and often eat at the same table in the dining halls. Recently, the two of you were working next to each other in the library when Pat asked to borrow your laptop to quickly write up an assignment. You agreed. Later, Pat reached for a disk to save the project.

Pat hurriedly grabbed the wrong disk, marked "*do not use",* from a pile on the table. It had a virus on it, and when Pat inserted the disk into your laptop, the laptop crashed.

Please use the scales beneath each item to rate your opinions regarding your conflict event.

How severe were the consequences of Pat's transgression against you?

1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**
Not at all Severe			*Somewhat Severe*			*Extremely Severe*

To what extent do you feel that Pat harmed you?

1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**
Not at all			*Somewhat*			*Completely*

In terms of seriousness, how would you rate the consequences of the offense against you?

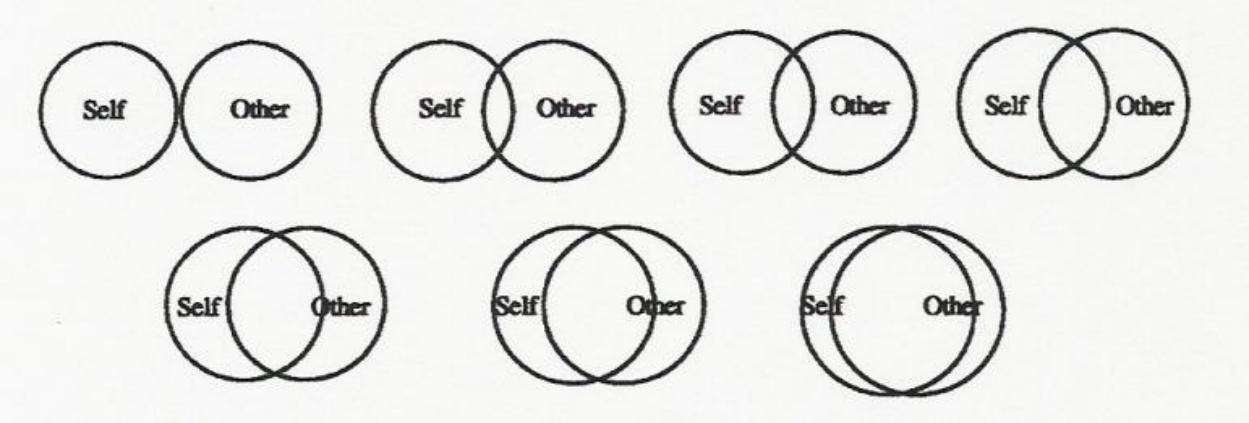
1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**
Not serious At all			*Somewhat Serious*			*Extremely Serious*

How severely were you harmed by Pat?

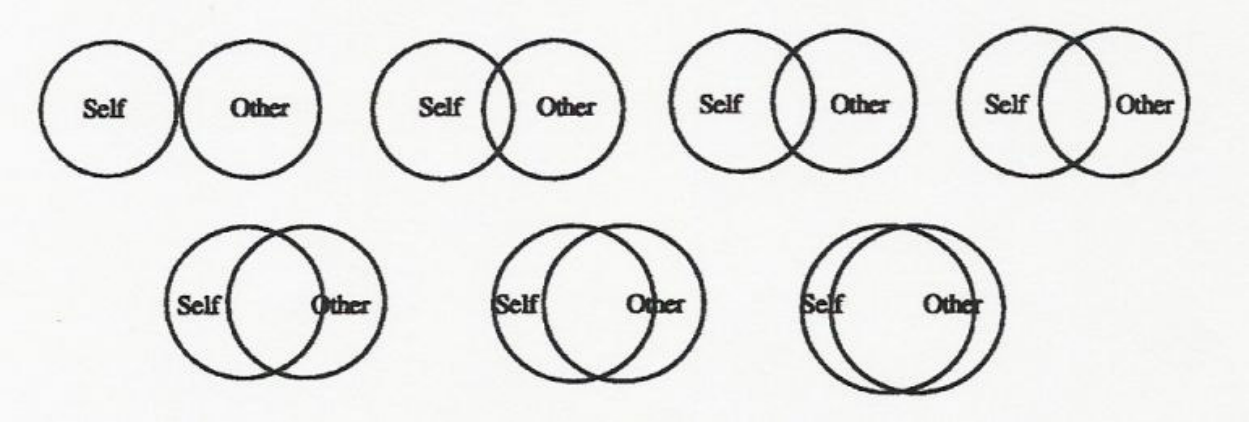
1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**
Not severely At all			*Somewhat Severely*			*Extremely Severely*

Please use the scales beneath each item to rate your opinions regarding your conflict event.
Prior to the transgression, to what extent did you and Pat share a close relationship? **1 2 3 4 5 6 7** *Not at all* *Somewhat* *Completely*
Before you and your offender experienced conflict, to what degree would you describe you and Pat as friends? **1 2 3 4 5 6 7** *Not at all* *Somewhat* *Completely*
To what extent do you and Pat currently share a close relationship? **1 2 3 4 5 6 7** *Not at all* *Somewhat* *Completely*
To what degree would you currently describe you and Pat as friends? **1 2 3 4 5 6 7** *Not at all* *Somewhat* *Completely*
To what extent is Pat at fault for what happened? **1 2 3 4 5 6 7** *Not at all* *Somewhat* *Completely*
What gender is Pat? (circle one) **Male Female**

Please circle the picture below that best describes your relationship with Pat BEFORE YOUR CONFLICT.



Please circle the picture below that best describes your relationship with Pat CURRENTLY.



1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**
Not at All			Somewhat			Completely

To what degree does the phrase **"Pat suggested the possibility of compensating you by saying *'I can find someone to fix the computer for you.'"*** represent the following?

1.	The speaker's acknowledgement that he/she violated an important group rule, norm, or standard	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
2.	The speaker's recognition of a failure to act as a good member of the group	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
3.	The speaker's expression of concern for a victim's suffering	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
4.	The speaker's empathy for the victim	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
5.	The speaker's offer of compensation	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
6.	The speaker's suggestion that he/she reimburse the victim	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
7.	The speaker's admission that the offense was his/her fault	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
8.	The speaker's recognition that he/she is to blame for what happened	1 2 3 4 5 6 7

1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**
Not at All			Somewhat			Completely

To what degree does the phrase **"Pat expressed concern for your suffering, saying *'I feel sick to my stomach thinking about how upset you must be over this.'"*** represent the following?

1.	The speaker's acknowledgement that he/she violated an important group rule, norm, or standard	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
2.	The speaker's recognition of a failure to act as a good member of the group	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
3.	The speaker's expression of concern for a victim's suffering	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
4.	The speaker's empathy for the victim	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
5.	The speaker's offer of compensation	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
6.	The speaker's suggestion that he/she reimburse the victim	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
7.	The speaker's admission that the offense was his/her fault	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
8.	The speaker's recognition that he/she is to blame for what happened	1 2 3 4 5 6 7

1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**
Not at All			Somewhat			Completely

To what degree does the phrase **"Pat admitted to not being a good group member, saying '*I've let the whole group down. I've failed in my duties to our fraternity and the campus community*'"** represent the following?

1.	The speaker's acknowledgement that he/she violated an important group rule, norm, or standard	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
2.	The speaker's recognition of a failure to act as a good member of the group	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
3.	The speaker's expression of concern for a victim's suffering	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
4.	The speaker's empathy for the victim	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
5.	The speaker's offer of compensation	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
6.	The speaker's suggestion that he/she reimburse the victim	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
7.	The speaker's admission that the offense was his/her fault	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
8.	The speaker's recognition that he/she is to blame for what happened	1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Thank you for your participation!

Appendix C
Severity Manipulations

Mild condition

"You lost a small amount of schoolwork, which will take you an hour to reenter."

Severe condition

"You lost a significant portion of your work from the semester, which will take you several weeks to reenter. As a result, you end up receiving low grades on several important assignments."

Control condition

No consequence was provided

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