

2018

## Apology effectiveness: The impact of prior wrongful behaviour and voluntariness of apologies within juvenile justice

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Apology Effectiveness: The Impact of Prior Wrongful Behaviour and Voluntariness of  
Apologies within Juvenile Justice

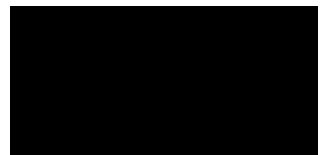
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A Report Submitted in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements for the Award of Bachelor of  
Arts (Psychology) Honours, School of Arts and Humanities,  
Edith Cowan University

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Apology Effectiveness: The Impact of Prior Wrongful Behaviour and Voluntariness of  
Apologies within Juvenile Justice

Abstract

The justice system diverts young offenders away from further contact through restorative justice processes. Juvenile justice conferencing allows for the goals of restorative justice to be met, including meeting the needs of victims and offenders. Apologies, when offered by offenders to victims within a conferencing setting, can assist with meeting these restorative goals. Apologies, however, need to be effective to have the desired outcome. Several variables influence the effectiveness of apologies, including the perceived voluntariness of apologies, with prompted apologies reducing apology effectiveness. The reduced effectiveness of prompted apologies might be an issue during conferencing as some offenders are prompted to apologise during these procedures. Prior wrongful behaviour of offenders is also thought to impact apology effectiveness, but there is no published research that investigates whether the impact of prior wrongful behaviour is different for voluntary and prompted apologies. Participants ( $N = 124$ ), recruited through convenience sampling, were positioned as victims of a crime where they were asked to rate a voluntary or prompted apology from either an offender with prior police contact or no prior police contact. The findings of this study indicated that voluntary apologies were significantly more effective than prompted apologies, but prior wrongful behaviour did not have a significant effect.

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Supervisors: Professor Alfred Allan and Dr Maria Allan

**Word count: 8176**

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### **Acknowledgements**

I would like to thank both my supervisors, Professor Alfred Allan and Dr Ricks Allan, for their patience, help, and support. You have both made this process and journey enjoyable and stress-free. I have learned so much from the two of you. Thank you to all the participants who participated in this study and for their contribution to this study's findings. Lastly, thank you to my friends and family for your support and letting me obsessively discuss my project.

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## Introduction

Youth offenders comprise of 21%, or 85,442 of the total Australian offender population (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2016). Richards (2011), in discussing juvenile offending within Australia, states that age, particularly adolescence, is considered to have a strong relationship with crime. Fifteen to 19 year olds, therefore, have a higher likelihood of having contact with police services and the criminal justice system as offenders, with young people being four times more likely to commit criminal offences than the general population (Richards, 2011). Most juvenile offenders commit minor crimes against *property*, including graffiti vandalism, shoplifting, and fare evasion, rather than offences against the *person*, such as physical and sexual assaults, and stalking (Richards, 2011). A large proportion of young offenders, however, do not continue their offending behaviour into adulthood (Richards, 2011). For this reason, state and territory legislation allow young people to be diverted away from further involvement with the juvenile justice system, with young people only being detained as a last resort (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare [AIHW], 2015; Joudo-Larsen, 2014; Richards, 2010, 2011).

The diversion of juveniles away from the traditional justice system is a form of restorative justice (Richards, 2011). Proponents of restorative justice view crime as being committed against the state, relationships, and the community (Latimer, Dowden, & Muise, 2005). Crime can damage both the web of relationships within the community and interpersonal relationships that might have existed prior to the wrongful behaviour being committed (Zehr & Gohar, 2015). The goals of restorative justice, therefore, reflect this view, focusing on meeting the needs of the victims, facilitating communication between victims and offenders, and the rehabilitation and transformation of offenders (Shapland et al., 2006). Juvenile justice conferencing (conferencing) is one way in which the goals of restorative justice can be met (see Allan, 2008; AIHW, 2015; Dhimi, 2016; Richards, 2011; Stewart,

Hayes, Livingston, & Palk, 2008). Conferencing provides a respectful environment for the victims and offenders to discuss the offending behaviour (Moore, 2012). Offenders are also provided with an opportunity to acknowledge that they have violated social norms (Brathwaite, 1989, 2001) and to make plans with the victims to repair the harm to the relationship, and the community, resulting from their criminal behaviour (see Bergseth & Bouffard, 2012; Brathwaite, 2001; Joudo-Larsen, 2014; Latimer et al., 2005; Marshall, 1996; Stewart et al., 2008; Strang, 2001; Weatherburn & Macadam, 2013).

According to Dhami (2016), an important part of the conferencing process is the offering and receiving of apologies. This can benefit both victims and offenders, as apologies are seen as a form of symbolic reparation between the two parties (Dhami, 2016). Apologies demonstrate that the wrongdoers have acknowledged and taken responsibility for their actions, helping offenders and victims to move towards reconciliation and resolution (Kirchoff, Wagner, & Strack, 2012). Lazare (2004) proposed that apologies could also be seen as an ongoing commitment by offenders to change their behaviour.

Victims see apologies as important and they report wanting apologies from offenders (see Allan, Beesley, Attwood, & McKillop, 2014; Dhami, 2016). Apologies can assist to rebuild the power victims lost when the crime occurred and restore justice through the admission of responsibility (e.g. the acceptance of guilt; Okimoto, Wenzel, & Hedrick, 2013). Apologies can also help to improve the physical and emotional wellbeing of victims (Sherman et al., 2005) by removing self-blame, and reducing their feelings of hostility, revenge, and anger (see Lawler et al., 2005; Worthington, Witvliet, Pietrini, & Miller, 2007). The positive outcomes of apologies can assist victims to forgive offenders, move closer to emotional restoration (see Strang & Sherman, 2003), and improve their perceptions of the wrongdoers (see Darby & Schlenker, 1982; Gold & Weiner, 2000).

Offenders can offer apologies to correct their wrongdoing and identify to themselves, and the victims, that their behaviour has caused harm (Allan, Strickland, & Allan, 2017). Some offenders might not fully comprehend their actions and the harm inflicted, whereas other offenders might have acted inconsistently with their beliefs (Allan et al., 2017). Apologies, therefore, acknowledge that offenders have wronged and caused harm to the victims, and for some offenders, identify that their behaviour was inconsistent with their beliefs (Allan et al., 2017; Braithwaite, 1989). Offenders that offer apologies will often experience a separation of self from the wrongful behaviour, leading to reduced feelings of guilt (see Blecher, 2011). Apologies can also result in offenders experiencing a transformative and re-integrative process back into society through the *reintegrative shaming* process. Within this process, apologies shame the wrongful behaviour of offenders, leading them to form respect for themselves, others, and the law (Braithwaite, 1989). Morris and Maxwell (1997) reported that young offenders from New Zealand, who apologised within a conferencing setting, were three times less likely to reoffend over a three year follow up than offenders who did not offer apologies to victims. The positive outcomes of offering apologies can, therefore, help to reduce the likelihood of offenders repeating their wrongful behaviour and having further contact with the criminal justice system, benefitting both offenders and the community (Hayes & Daly, 2003).

Braithwaite (2006), however, points out that for apologies to be constructive, and elicit positive outcomes for victims, offenders, and the community, they need to be effective. When apologies are ineffective, victim and offender relationships are unlikely to be restored (Braithwaite, 2006), which can contribute to reoffending, and hinder the positive offender and community benefits of apologies (Hayes & Daly, 2003). Authors who write about the effectiveness of apologies, however, have largely focused on the perceptions of victims (Blecher, 2011; Dhimi, 2012). Researchers have identified that ineffective apologies can lead

to victims having negative perceptions of offenders, such as believing the offenders have not adequately accepted responsibility or demonstrated sufficient remorse for their behaviour (Blecher, 2011). Victims, therefore, might view the conferencing process as ineffective, preventing the restorative goals from being met (i.e. reparation and healing; see Dhimi, 2012; Fehr, Gelfand, & Nag, 2010).

In formulating a theory of apology, Slocum, Allan, and Allan (2011) concluded that effective apologies require three components: affirmation, affect, and action. *Affirmation* is the cognitive component that requires offenders to explain their behaviour and admit accountability for their actions. The second component, *affect*, is centred on the emotional responses of offenders to their behaviour. Lastly, *action* refers to the behaviour of offenders to repair the harm they have inflicted, including reassuring the victims they will not repeat their wrongful behaviour. These three components exist on a continuum, ranging from *self-focus* to *self-other focus*. Self-focus exists when offenders admit wrongdoing, but only acknowledge the harm that occurred to them through their behaviour. A self-other focus, however, involves offenders highlighting their wrongful behaviour and its impact on both themselves and the victims. Victims are more likely to perceive offenders as sorry for their behaviour when apologies include these three components at the self-other focus end of the spectrum (Slocum et al., 2011). Apologies that do not meet these criteria, however, might be satisfactory or *good enough* for victims, as apology effectiveness can be influenced by contextual factors, such as the personal and social influences of the victims (Allan et al., 2017; Daly, 2002).

### **Variables that Influence Apology Effectiveness**

Researchers have also identified variables thought to impact apology effectiveness (see Allan et al., 2017), including offender, offence, and apology variables. *Offender variables* include the level of responsibility attributed to offenders (Allan et al., 2014; Bennet

& Earwaker, 1994), the cultural factors both within and between cultural groups (Guan, Park, & Lee, 2009), the prior wrongful behaviour of offenders (Tomlinson, Dineen, & Lewicki, 2004), the gender of offenders (Walfisch, Van Dijk, & Kark, 2013), and the age of offenders (Allan et al., 2014). *Offence variables* include the level of harm caused (Slocum et al., 2011), the severity and intentionality of the offending behaviour and how adequately these variables are addressed by offenders (Bennett & Earwaker, 1994), the perceived wrongfulness of the behaviour (i.e. a minor offence is viewed as less severe and perceived differently by victims than a serious offence; Allan et al., 2014; Bennet & Earwaker, 1994), and the existence of prior relationships (i.e. stranger assaults are perceived as less wrongful; Slocum et al., 2011). Lastly, *apology variables* include the quality or wording of the apologies, acknowledgement of wrongdoing, perceived remorsefulness, and the voluntariness of the apologies (Slocum et al., 2011).

### **Measuring the Effectiveness of Apologies**

The effectiveness of apologies, however, is hard to measure (see Allan et al., 2017), as there is no psychometric instrument measuring apology effectiveness due to the lack of research and accepted theory in the field of apologies (De-Mott, 2016). Researchers who do try to measure the effectiveness of apologies appear to exclusively focus on the perceptions of victims (see, e.g., Jehle, Miller, Kemmelmeier, & Maskaly, 2012; Risen & Gilovich, 2007; Tomlinson et al., 2004). They generally do this by measuring victim ratings of sincerity, acceptance, and forgiveness (see Allan et al., 2014), and their behavioural intentions (see Darby & Schlenker, 1982; Risen & Gilovich, 2007).

#### **Sincerity.**

Tomlinson et al. (2004) found that the perceived sincerity of apologies was an important consideration for victims. They also found that the sincerity of the apologies offered was more important to victims than other variables that were thought to impact

apology effectiveness, such as the timeliness of the apologies. Sincerity, therefore, has a strong impact on victims' willingness to reconcile relationships with offenders (Risen & Gilovich, 2007).

### **Acceptance.**

Apology acceptance has also been identified as an important aspect of apology effectiveness (Dhami, 2012). Apology acceptance has been equated to the implied effectiveness of apologies (see Kirchoff et al., 2012), a symbolic acknowledgement of the restoration of issues arising from the offending behaviour (see Dhami, 2012), and a precursor to forgiveness of offenders by victims (see Dhami, 2016).

### **Forgiveness.**

Lastly, it has been found that forgiveness is positively associated with apologies and that effective apologies can lead to forgiveness (see Fehr et al., 2010). Forgiveness is a transformative step in the attitudes and emotions of victims *induced* by apologies from offenders (see Struthers, Eaton, Santelli, Uchiyama, & Shirvani, 2008), and forgiveness often results in the restoration of relationships and healing for victims (see Struthers et al., 2014).

### **Behavioural intentions.**

Victims, however, sometimes report accepting apologies due to the social pressures or scripts that expect victims to accept apologies that are offered (see Allan et al., 2017; Darby & Schlenker, 1982; Struthers et al., 2014). Behavioural intentions are, therefore, used as a subliminal measure of apology effectiveness to determine whether victims' perceptions of apologies are consistent with what they have stated (see Darby & Schlenker, 1982; Risen & Gilovich, 2007). More lenient behavioural intentions towards offenders often demonstrate that victims have perceived apologies to be effective (see Darby & Schlenker, 1982; Gold & Weiner, 2000; Mullet & Girard, 1998; Risen & Gilovich, 2007).

### **Voluntariness of the Apology**

Extensive research on the voluntariness of apologies has identified that voluntary apologies are more effective than prompted apologies (see Allan et al., 2014; Jehle et al., 2012; Risen & Gilovich, 2007). Victims who receive prompted apologies evaluate wrongdoers more negatively, as prompted apologies are perceived to be less sincere than voluntary apologies (Risen & Gilovich, 2007). Victims are more likely to accept apologies and forgive offenders who voluntarily apologise, with offenders being viewed as sorry for their transgressions (Dhimi, 2012; Jehle et al., 2012). Possibly this is because voluntary apologies could be seen as being motivated by internal factors such as guilt and remorse, as hypothesised by Lazare (2004).

Apologies have become embedded in the juvenile justice conferencing process due to the positive outcomes for offenders and victims alike, however, the voluntariness of apologies might pose a problem as court facilitators often require or prompt offenders to apologise (see s. 37(4) of the *Youth Justice Act 1992* (Qld); Joudo-Larsen, 2014). This might be problematic, as victims are sensitive to the level of coercion (see Jehle et al., 2012) when determining offender motivation for offering apologies (Blecher, 2011; Fehr et al., 2010). Coercion can result in negative perceptions of offenders and the quality of apologies, resulting in victims viewing apologies as being offered for manipulative or external factors (i.e. avoidance of blame or punishment; see Daly, 2002; Jehle et al., 2012; Saulnier & Sivasubramaniam, 2015). De-Mott (2016), investigating the age of offenders, and Turnbull (2016), investigating the gender of offenders, found that although age and gender did not affect apology effectiveness, the voluntariness of apologies did, with voluntary apologies being significantly more effective. Blecher (2011) further reported that prompted apologies were viewed with scepticism among conferencing stakeholders. Prompted apologies, therefore, have a central role in conferencing and its outcomes (see Choi, Bazemore, &

Gilbert, 2012; Hayes, 2006), despite research identifying prompted apologies are less effective than voluntary apologies (see Allan et al., 2014; Jehle et al., 2012; Risen & Gilovich, 2007).

### **Prior Wrongful Behaviour of the Offender**

Prior wrongful behaviour of the offender is also thought to influence apology effectiveness. Participants in Allan et al.'s (2014) study reported that they questioned the sincerity of apologies offered by repeat offenders. To find out what was known about the impact of prior wrongful behaviour on apology effectiveness, a systematic review of research was conducted on research published in peer-reviewed journals from January 1970 until present. A broad definition of prior behaviour was used to ensure an expansive review of the literature, therefore, prior wrongful behaviour included any wrongful and repeated behaviour by an individual within an apology context. EBSCO host databases (PsycINFO, PsycARTICLES, and Criminal Justice Abstracts) and SCOPUS were used. The following search filters were used across all EBSCO host databases: i) English language publication, ii) published in a peer-reviewed journal, and iii) empirical study. A Boolean search phrase sequence was used, as follows (repeated behaviour AND apolog\*), OR (repeated wrongful behaviour AND apolog\*), OR (past behaviour AND apolog\*), OR (prior behaviour AND apolog\*). The following search filters were used on SCOPUS: i) article. The identical Boolean search phrases listed above were also used on SCOPUS. The reference lists of selected papers were examined for further relevant articles. After examining the articles and their reference lists, the review only provided three relevant empirical articles (see Figure 1).

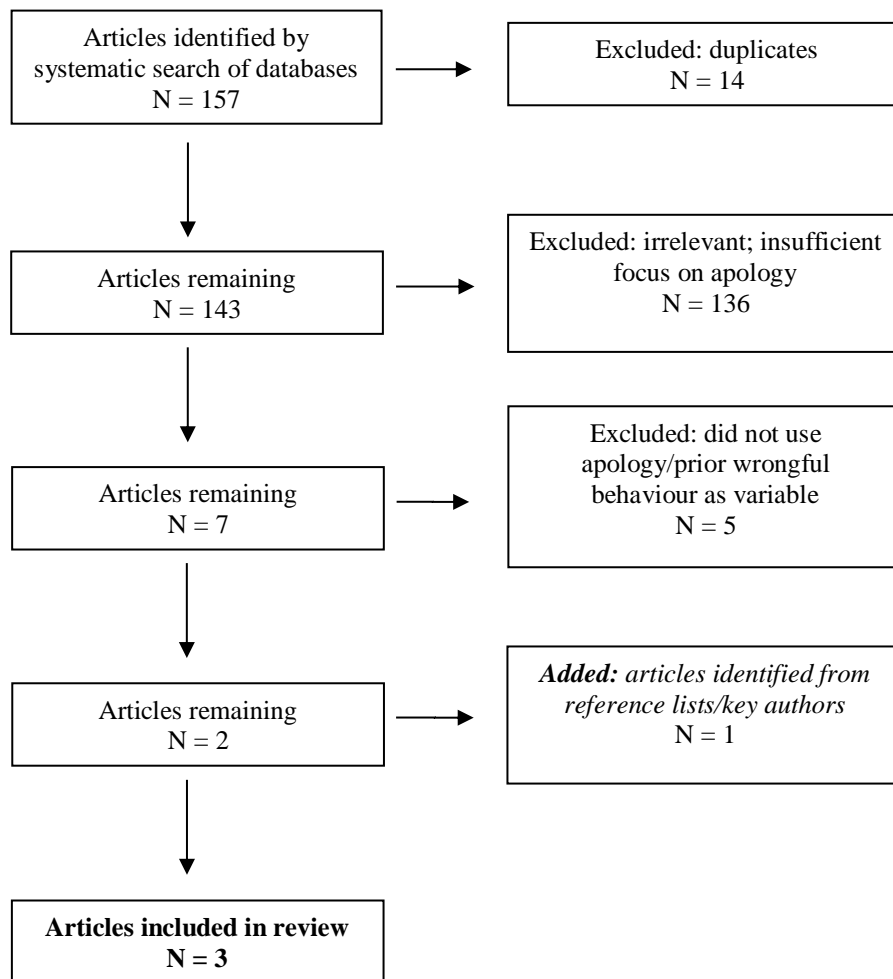


Figure 1. Flow diagram of systematic search process.

Tomlinson et al. (2004) investigated the willingness of victims to reconcile a professional relationship after a trust violation had occurred. Offender tactics (e.g. wording of the apologies, sincerity of the apologies, and timeliness of the reparation act) and relationship characteristics (e.g. past relationship history and probability of future violations) were examined. The study found that victims were more likely to reconcile when: i) offenders (a) offered apologies and (b) admitted responsibility for their actions, ii) when they had positive past relationships with the offenders, and iii) the victims believed the offenders were unlikely to transgress again. Similarly, Wooten (2009) investigated the effect of apologies, reputability, and punishment by exploring how participants would react to a hypothetical professional wrongdoing. He found apologetic offenders with fewer offences received a

reduced punishment, compared to offenders with a history of wrongdoing. Wooten's findings suggest reputation (or number of prior wrongful acts) influences apology and punishment outcomes. Lastly, Hui, Lau, Tsung, and Pak (2011) found that post-apology behaviour influenced forgiveness in a professional setting. Offenders who did not behave in line with their apologies (i.e. no further wrongdoing) received reduced levels of forgiveness from victims, with victims being concerned offenders would repeat their wrongful behaviour in the future (Hui et al., 2011).

These studies, despite highlighting the influence of prior wrongful behaviour on apologies, are not relevant to the current study for several reasons: i) wrongdoers and victims had prior relationships, which often is not the case in conferencing situations, where it is likely there are no prior or post relationships, ii) the effects are based on adult populations whereas the effects might be different in juvenile populations, and iii) the type of incidents researched were interpersonal or business wrongdoings and not criminal offences. Currently, there exists no published literature on the role of prior wrongful behaviour of offenders on apology effectiveness within a juvenile justice context.

### **Study Objectives**

The aims of this study were to investigate the impact of prior wrongful behaviour and voluntariness of apologies on the effectiveness of apologies in juvenile justice conferencing and whether the impact of prior wrongful behaviour is different for voluntary and prompted apologies. In respect of voluntariness, this study replicated research by De-Mott (2016) and Turnbull (2016), but there is no published research regarding the influence of prior wrongful behaviour in a juvenile justice or in a conferencing setting.

The study is part of a more comprehensive research project aimed at investigating the impact perceived coercion might have on offenders and victims who participate in juvenile justice conferencing. My fellow student, Lacey Willett, who investigated offence seriousness,

and I collaborated in recruiting participants and collecting data, but undertook separate studies. The study examined the impact of prior wrongful behaviour and voluntariness of apologies on victims' perceptions of the sincerity of the apology, the extent to which victims accept the apology, the extent to which victims forgive the offender, and the recommended number of community hours the offender should receive. It was hypothesised that offenders with prior wrongful behaviour would be rated lower on sincerity, acceptance, and forgiveness, and receive higher numbers of community hours. It was also hypothesised that prompted apologies would receive lower ratings on the measurements of apology effectiveness, and higher numbers of community hours.

## **Method**

### **Research Design**

The study involved a quantitative between-subjects experimental design. Two independent variables were explored. The first variable, prior wrongful behaviour was operationalised as police contact (prior police contact and no prior police contact) to investigate the influence of prior wrongful behaviour of the offender. The second variable investigated was apology type (voluntary or prompted). The participants were randomly assigned to one of four experimental conditions to reduce demand characteristics that might have arisen if the participants were assigned to all four conditions.

A vignette (Appendix A) described a 16-year-old male, Sam, committing an opportunistic theft and subsequently providing an apology to the victim in a conferencing setting. According to Richards (2010), 15 to 16 year olds are the most represented age group within juvenile justice systems, and males are the most represented gender group. For this reason, and given De-Mott's (2016) and Turnbull's (2016) findings, a 16-year-old male was selected in this study.

The two police contact levels consisted of an offender with prior police contact and no prior police contact. A statement from a police officer within the vignette identified whether the offender was known to the police or not. The two apology conditions presented the juvenile wanting to and delivering an apology (voluntary) and being instructed by the facilitator to deliver an apology (prompted). The wording of the apology included an affirmation, affect, and action component as suggested by Slocum et al. (2011) for an effective apology. The seriousness of the harm caused (brand new top of the range phone, \$1000 or an old cheap phone, \$100) was also manipulated to investigate the independent variable, offence seriousness, for the other study conducted. To prevent the results being influenced by the content of the apology and seriousness of the offence, the apology had identical wording for both apology levels, and the researcher aimed to include an equal number of high and low levels of seriousness in all police contact and apology level conditions to control the influence of this variable. A qualitative question, asking participants if they wanted to explain their responses, was included in the survey to ascertain the reasons and motivations for participant answers. The qualitative question, however, was not used to gather qualitative data for the study, but to provide clarification surrounding the reasoning or motivation for responses provided in the survey (see Onwuegbuzie & Combs, 2010).

The following dependent variables used in De-Mott's (2016) and Turnbull's (2016) studies to assess the victims' perceptions of the effectiveness of apologies were also used in this study: i) the sincerity of the apology, ii) the extent to which they accept the apology, iii) the extent to which they forgive the offender, and iv) the recommended number of community hours for the offender. Using a five-point Likert scale for items (a), (b) and (c), participants were asked to respond to the following:

(a) On a scale 1 to 5 with (1) being *strongly disagree* and (5) being *strongly agree*:

Sam's apology was sincere.

(b) On a scale of 1 to 5 with (1) being *fully reject* and (5) being *fully accept*: Please

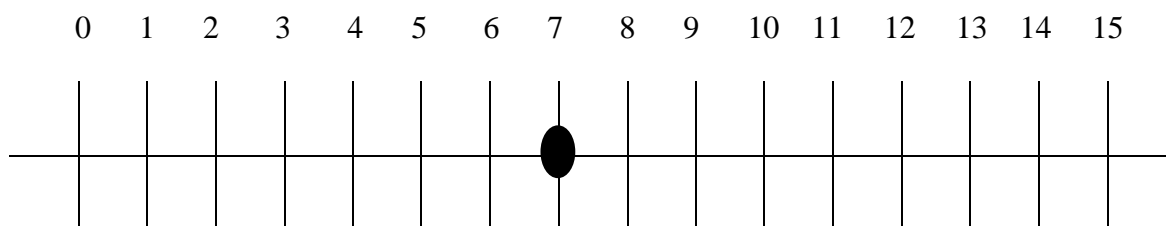
indicate the extent to which you accept Sam's apology.

(c) On a scale of 1 to 5 with (1) being *not at all* and (5) being *completely*: Please

indicate the extent to which you forgive Sam.

Item (d) was included as a behavioural indicator of the effectiveness of apologies (see Darby & Schlenker, 1982), with the expectation that lower scores on item (d) would correlate with higher scores on item (a), (b) and (c). Participants were asked to respond to the following question using a sliding scale:

(d) If you could recommend the number of hours of community work Sam should do, between 0 and 15, how many hours do you recommend?



### Participants

A total of 197 participants were recruited. Participants were recruited via convenience and snowball sampling through persons known to the researchers and through research flyers (Appendix B) posted around the Edith Cowan University (ECU) Joondalup campus. The online web survey (Appendix A) contained demographic questions regarding age, gender, country (if Australia, State or Territory) of residence, and if participants had previously been complainants in juvenile justice conferencing. The inclusion criteria for participants required them to be 18 years and over and residing within Australia. It was hoped 30 observations per each condition would be achieved to reduce the risk of Type 1 error due to *researcher's degrees of freedom* (see Simmons, Nelson, & Simonsohn, 2011).

## Materials

Participants were recruited using an invitation to participants (Appendix C) or a research flyer, containing information about the research, survey, participation, and contact details of the researchers' supervisors. The survey included an information page, an online consent form, participant information, the vignettes, survey and demographic questions, and three manipulation check questions. Another web survey (Appendix D) was created for participants who wished to enter the draw to win one of four \$50 Coles Myer gift cards.

## Procedures

The research proposal was submitted for approval to the ECU School of Arts and Humanities. Once approval had been granted, the researchers engaged in participant recruitment. Individuals wishing to participate followed the directions to the online link. The link presented the individuals with participant information and informed consent. The individuals were asked to click *I agree*, if they consented to participate. Participants were asked to use the *continue* button rather than their browser buttons to navigate through the survey, as using browser buttons might have resulted in resetting the survey. The survey used in this study was designed and implemented using the Qualtrics (2016) online software.

One of four scenarios were presented (voluntary or prompted apology, and no prior police contact or prior police contact) to participants, along with the survey and demographic questions. The participants were positioned as the victim of the crime to avoid any confound due to the possibility for observers to perceive apologies differently from victims (see Jehle et al., 2012; Risen & Gilovich, 2007). All variations were displayed an equal number of times by applying randomisation instructions to the Qualtrics survey. Participants were asked to respond to each of the four survey questions (ratings of sincerity, acceptance, forgiveness, and community hours). Following this, the qualitative question was presented, and then the three manipulation check questions were displayed consecutively (the type of apology

received, whether it was Sam's first or second offence, and the value of the phone).

Participants were not allowed to return to previous pages on the survey when answering the manipulation questions. Once the survey had been completed, the participants were asked to *submit* their answers.

After submitting, the participants were directed to another Qualtrics survey to enter a contact number or email address if they wished to be part of the gift card draw. It was emphasised the survey and participant details would be submitted separately to ensure confidentiality and anonymity. After completing the survey, participants were asked to forward or share the survey with friends and family. After collecting 124 responses that passed the manipulation check questions, the survey was closed. The data was downloaded for analysis. The data of this study will be securely stored for future research purposes. To select the participants who won the prizes, a list was created containing the contact details of the participants in the draw and a number was allocated to each. The numbers were then written on a separate piece of paper, with the researchers drawing four pieces of paper. The participants that corresponded to the numbers were contacted regarding collecting the prize. The list containing the participants' names was disposed of in a document destruction bin to ensure confidentiality. The participant details that were collected through the gift card survey were then deleted.

## **Results**

### **Preliminary Data Check**

SPSS Version 23 was used to analyse the data. An initial review of the manipulation check output indicated that, 50 participants, (25.38%) of respondents, incorrectly identified one or more of the manipulation conditions they were assigned to. Of the 50 participants, 12 had stated they received a voluntary apology when they had received a prompted apology, and 19 indicated they received a prompted apology when they had received a voluntary

apology. A further 19 gave wrong answers to one or more of the questions regarding the value of the phone, whether it was the offender's first offence or not, and in some cases, also about the type of apology they received. Four surveys were also removed due to being located outside of Australia and 19 surveys were removed due to incomplete responses. To ensure a valid testing of the hypotheses (see Foschi, 2007), these 73 cases were excluded, resulting in 124 cases for analysis.

### **Final Sample**

From the sample of 124 participants, 54 participants identified as male, 68 participants identified as female, and 2 participants identified as other. The age of participants varied with a range of 18 to 77 ( $M = 32.12$ ,  $SD = 13.12$ ). All participants were Australian residents, with 111 (89.52%) participants located in Western Australia. Seven participants were in New South Wales, three participants were in Queensland, and three participants were from South Australia. One participant indicated he had previous experiences with juvenile justice conferencing.

Table 1 provides the number of participants in each condition and shows that cell sizes were reasonably similar. The aim was to have a minimum of 30 participants in each condition, however the prior contact/voluntary and no prior contact/prompted conditions had just below 30 participants in each condition due to the removal of cases that failed the manipulation check questions.

Table 1 also shows the number of participants for the two levels of seriousness, the variable used in the other honours study. Equal numbers of participants were assigned to the seriousness levels in the different conditions, but the distribution of participants in the final sample varies due the cases that failed the manipulation check questions. It is anticipated, however, that the similarity of the distribution of the two seriousness levels in the different

conditions will counteract any effect that seriousness might have on the findings in respect of police contact.

Table 1

*Cell Sizes for Police Contact and Seriousness x Apology-type Groups*

Seriousness	Apology			
	Voluntary		Prompted	
	Prior Contact	No Prior Contact	Prior Contact	No Prior Contact
High	11	13	20	15
Low	15	19	17	14
Total	26	32	37	29

### Analysis of Variance

Four factorial, between groups analysis of variance (ANOVA) tests were conducted to investigate the effect of apology type (voluntary or prompted) and police contact (no prior contact or prior contact) on the four dependent variables representing apology effectiveness: i) sincerity of the apology, ii) acceptance of the apology, iii) forgiveness of the offender, and iv) the number of community service hours given to the offender. A Bonferroni corrected  $\alpha$  of .0125 was used to maintain an alpha rate of .05 across the multiple comparisons conducted (see Sinclair, Taylor, & Hobbs, 2013).

To meet the assumptions of normality for ANOVA testing, the data is required to be normally distributed and the homogeneity of variance to be non-significant (Allen & Bennett, 2012). Levene's test for homogeneity of variance was non-significant for all dependent variables, except community hours. Although the skewness and kurtosis values for each condition were within the acceptable limit of -2 to +2 (see George & Mallery, 2010),

significant Shapiro-Wilkes values were obtained for the four variables, except for sincerity in the voluntary/prior contact conditions, indicating that the skewness and/or kurtosis of the data was significant and non-normal (see Table 2).

Table 2

*Statistical Distribution of Data for Police Contact x Apology-type Groups for all Dependent Variables*

Dependent Variables	Voluntary						Prompted					
	Prior Contact			No Prior Contact			Prior Contact			No Prior Contact		
	s	k	sw	s	k	sw	s	k	sw	s	k	sw
Sincerity	-.167	-.673	.480	.542	.126	.002	.364	-1.298	<.001	.160	-1.303	.001
Acceptance	-.704	-.517	.003	.908	.126	<.001	.378	-1.401	<.001	-.220	-1.294	.002
Forgiveness	-.629	-.864	.001	.900	-.454	<.001	.121	-1.502	<.001	-.133	-1.444	.001
Community Hours	-1.014	-.455	<.001	.502	-1.270	<.001	-1.709	2.690	<.001	-.368	-1.179	.002

*Note.* s = skewness, k = kurtosis, sw = Shapiro-Wilkes *p*-values.

Due to significant Shapiro-Wilkes values and the moderately skewed data, a reflect and square root transformation was conducted on the data (see Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007). Skewness and kurtosis remained within acceptable limits for the transformed data, but significant Shapiro-Wilkes values remained for all conditions, except for sincerity in the voluntary/prior contact condition. After conducting the ANOVA tests on the untransformed data, ANOVA tests were run on the transformed data with no appreciable differences in *p*-values and effect sizes. The untransformed data, therefore, was selected to report in this thesis. As the ANOVA is a robust form of data analysis it was deemed that the violations of normality would not impact the outcome of data analysis (see Norman, 2010).

The descriptive and inferential statistics for all groups for each dependent variable are provided in Table 3. The ANOVA results indicate that apology type had a significant main effect on sincerity, acceptance, and forgiveness, but not on community hours. Partial eta-squared values show a large effect size for sincerity, and medium effect sizes for acceptance and forgiveness, further demonstrating there was an association between the three dependent variables and apology type (see Norouzian & Plonsky, 2017). Voluntary apologies were perceived as more sincere and were rated as more acceptable and led to higher levels of forgiveness than prompted apologies. The mean scores for all dependent variables among prompted apologies ranked below the midpoint of 3 on the rating scales, indicating that prompted apologies were viewed somewhat negatively.

Apologies made by offenders with no prior police contact were rated as more sincere, with higher levels of acceptance and forgiveness, and fewer community hours, in comparison to apologies made by offenders with prior police contact. The ANOVA results, however, indicate that there was no significant main effect for police contact and no significant interaction between apology type and police contact.

### **Qualitative Question**

Content analysis was conducted on participant responses to the qualitative question in the survey. The analysis of the responses to the qualitative question identified general themes surrounding participant reasoning and motivations for their ratings, which were used for interpretive purposes in disseminating the findings of this study (see Silverman, 2011).

Table 3

*Descriptive Statistics and Results of Police Contact(A) x Apology(B) ANOVAs on Measures of the Effectiveness of the Apology (N = 124)*

Dependent Variables	Apology				A				B				AxB			
	Voluntary		Prompted		df	F	p	$\eta^2_p$	df	F	p	$\eta^2_p$	df	F	p	$\eta^2_p$
	M	SD	M	SD												
Sincerity <sup>a</sup>					1,120	3.35	.070	.027	1,120	37.08	<.001	.236	1,120	.372	.543	.003
Prior contact	3.23	1.18	2.14	1.11												
No prior contact	3.72	1.02	2.38	1.12												
Acceptance <sup>b</sup>					1,120	1.33	.251	0.01	1,120	14.18	<.001	.106	1,120	.148	.701	.001
Prior contact	3.50	1.30	2.49	1.48												
No prior contact	3.69	1.23	2.86	1.33												
Forgiveness <sup>c</sup>					1,120	1.77	.186	.015	1,120	10.29	.002	.079	1,120	.195	.660	.002
Prior contact	3.27	1.37	2.57	1.44												
No prior contact	3.72	1.40	2.79	1.37												
Community Hours <sup>d</sup>					1,120	4.03	.047	.032	1,120	2.67	.105	.022	1,120	.141	.708	.001
Prior contact	11.17	5.28	12.27	4.09												
No prior contact	9.08	5.91	10.84	3.94												

*Note.*  $\alpha = .0125$  following Bonferroni correction. Items a to c used the following 5-point Likert-type scales: <sup>a</sup> anchors 1 = *strongly disagree*, 5 = *strongly agree*; <sup>b</sup> anchors 1 = *fully reject*, 5 = *fully accept*; <sup>c</sup> anchors 1 = *not at all*, 5 = *completely*. <sup>d</sup> Item used a sliding scale from 0-15.

### **Discussion**

The first aim of this study was to investigate if the prior wrongful behaviour of juvenile offenders influenced the effectiveness of apologies delivered to victims in a conferencing setting, and whether the impact of prior wrongful behaviour was different for voluntary and prompted apologies.

#### **Prior Wrongful Behaviour of the Offender**

The findings of this study did not support the hypothesis that an apology from an offender with relevant prior wrongful behaviour (i.e. police contact) would be viewed more negatively than an apology given by an offender with no prior wrongful behaviour. The results did indicate that participants rated apologies higher on sincerity, acceptance, and forgiveness when they received an apology from an offender with no prior wrongful behaviour, but these differences were not significant. The interaction between apology type and prior wrongful behaviour was also non-significant.

It was expected that participants would rate Sam significantly lower on the four dependent variables when it was highlighted he had prior wrongful behaviour. As participants in Allan et al.'s (2014) study questioned the sincerity of apologies offered by offenders with past criminal histories, it was expected Sam's prior wrongful behaviour would result in significantly lower ratings than no prior wrongful behaviour. Also, although not relevant to the conferencing setting, the significant influence of prior wrongful behaviour on apologies offered in a professional context (see Tomlinson et al., 2004; Wooten, 2009), led to the expectation that prior wrongful behaviour would have a significant effect on apology effectiveness in this study.

Four reasons, however, could explain the insignificant finding for prior wrongful behaviour. Firstly, the manipulation of prior wrongful behaviour (i.e. if the police officer had prior contact with Sam or not) might not have been a strong indicator, or not read by

participants as a strong indicator of prior wrongful behaviour. Secondly, the fact that Sam had not had prior contact with the police officer in the vignette was unlikely to be read as a strong indication that Sam had no prior wrongful behaviour (i.e. Sam could have prior contact with other police officers). This fact was also highlighted by one of the participants in the qualitative question. Thirdly, prior contact with the police is not indicative of prior wrongful behaviour (i.e. Sam could have been a victim or witness to a crime). Lastly, no details were given about Sam's prior offences. Participants in Allan et al.'s (2014) study reported that they perceived minor offences to be less wrongful than offences against the person. It is, therefore, possible a significant finding could have occurred if the vignette provided details about a serious prior offence committed by Sam.

### **Voluntariness of the Apology**

The second aim of this study was to investigate if the voluntariness of apologies affected apology effectiveness. It was hypothesised that voluntary apologies would be rated as more sincere, with higher levels of acceptance and forgiveness than prompted apologies. The results supported this hypothesis for sincerity, acceptance, and forgiveness, but not for community hours. These results are in line with findings from previous studies where voluntary apologies were deemed more effective than prompted apologies (see De-Mott, 2016; Jehle et al., 2012; Risen & Gilovich, 2007; Turnbull, 2016).

#### **Sincerity.**

Past research has indicated that victims are sensitive to the level of coercion behind apologies (see De-Mott, 2016; Jehle et al., 2012; Turnbull, 2016). The higher rating of sincerity in the voluntary apology condition in this study is likely to be the result of voluntary apologies being viewed as motivated by internal factors such as guilt and remorse, which could be interpreted by victims as sincerity (Lazare, 2004). Responses to the qualitative question, that asked the participants if they wanted to explain their ratings, including, "because Sam asked to apologise [*sic*] this showed me that he is genuine and hasn't been

coerced [*sic*] into an apology by any authority figure” and “he was apologetic and remorseful”, demonstrate it was likely that participants viewed the voluntary apology as being motivated by internal factors.

The prompted apology was probably viewed as less sincere because it was not seen as being motivated by internal factors like guilt and remorse. This interpretation is supported by responses to the qualitative question including, “felt like he only apologised [*sic*] because he was told to”, “how can a forced apology be sincere?”, and “they made him apologise so he doesn't care”, indicating that the participants perceived the apology to be forced, and therefore, not sincere.

### **Acceptance.**

The finding that participants rated the level of acceptance significantly higher for a voluntary than a prompted apology provides support for Dhimi's (2012) finding that a voluntary apology is more likely to induce greater levels of acceptance. Responses to the qualitative question, such as, “I am more likely to accept an apology that he has asked to give rather than be forced to give”, indicated that participants who received a voluntary apology accepted the apology because it was given voluntarily. It is interesting to note that several participants that received a forced apology also commented they would accept the apology due to Sam's age. For example, one participant stated, “I would accept [*sic*] his apology as he is only a child and deserves a second chance [*sic*]”.

### **Forgiveness.**

The significantly higher forgiveness rating in the voluntary apology condition is in line with previous research by Jehle et al. (2012). They found that forgiveness is more likely to occur when a voluntary apology is given, with offenders being viewed more positively. They suggested that this is the case because offenders are seen to be sorry for their transgressions when they voluntarily apologise. Responses to the qualitative question indicate

that participants who received a voluntary apology viewed the offender more positively, for example, “if an apology is sincere and the person has learned from their [*sic*] mistake then they should always be forgiven”. This can be compared to participants who received a prompted apology, e.g. “I don't forgive him because he's done it before and they made him apologise so he doesn't care”.

### **Behavioural Intentions**

There was no significant difference between the conditions for behavioural intentions, however, the means for the voluntary apology and no prior police contact conditions were marginally lower than the prompted apology and prior police contact conditions. Past research on behavioural intentions has found that effective apologies elicit more lenient victim responses towards offenders (see Darby & Schlenker, 1982; Gold & Weiner, 2000; Mullet & Girard, 1998). Based on such findings, it could be concluded that the voluntary apology was rated as significantly more effective on the three other dependent variables because the participants felt they must instinctively accept the apology (i.e. rate the apology high on sincerity, acceptance, and forgiveness) due to social pressures that expected them to do so, while they covertly viewed the apology as inadequate (see Allan et al., 2017). This, therefore, could explain the high number of suggested community hours in the voluntary apology condition and the insignificant finding for behavioural intentions. Participant responses to the qualitative question, however, do not suggest this explanation as the reason for the insignificant finding, with their responses highlighting three other potential explanations for the insignificant finding.

Firstly, a high number of hours might have been selected as a deterrent from future offending behaviour or punishment for the criminal behaviour for both police contact conditions, which was demonstrated in participant responses to the qualitative question, e.g. “by making amends for his crime by community service hopefully he will learn what is

expected in society and be a little more sincere”. Secondly, participants in the prior police contact conditions highlighted concerns for Sam in the qualitative question, for example, “Sam needs counselling, further negative responses would not help his situation” and “maybe counselling would be a better option”. These concerns could have contributed to the insignificant finding between the police contact conditions. Lastly, some participants stated they had selected the number of community hours based on how many hours of paid work would pay for the value of the phone (\$100 or \$1000). For example, “I gave him community hours based on how long it would take to pay off the cost of the phone if he were to work for it”, which could have also contributed to the insignificant findings.

### **Apologies that are Good Enough**

This study, like previous studies (see De-Mott, 2016; Jehel et al., 2012; Turnbull, 2016) indicates that voluntary apologies elicit higher levels of sincerity, acceptance, and forgiveness than prompted apologies. The use of prompted apologies within conferencing might, therefore, hinder the achievement of the goals of restorative justice (see Allan, 2008; De-Mott, 2016; Dhimi, 2016; Shapland et al., 2006; Turnbull, 2016). Despite voluntary apologies being more effective, De-Mott (2016) and Turnbull (2016) found that the mean ratings for sincerity, acceptance, and forgiveness were over three, except in one of the prompted apology conditions. It was therefore concluded that even prompted apologies were effective to some extent. In contrast, within this study, the mean ratings were below three (despite controlling for confounding variables), indicating that prompted apologies were viewed somewhat negatively by participants. These findings suggest that the victims’ contextual factors (i.e. personal and social influences) impact how they perceive apology effectiveness and apologies that are good enough for them, as reported by Allan et al. (2017).

### **Implications for Conferencing**

The findings of this study are in line with previous findings that voluntary apologies are significantly more effective than prompted apologies (see Allan et al., 2014; De-Mott, 2016; Jehle et al., 2012; Risen & Gilovich, 2007; Turnbull, 2016). Despite this, prompted apologies are still used in conferencing (see Joudo-Larsen, 2014). Researchers have also highlighted that voluntary apologies are more effective in meeting the goals of restorative justice than prompted apologies (see Slocum et al., 2011). Although voluntary apologies are more effective (see Jehle et al., 2012), past research also suggests that apologies, voluntary or prompted, are likely to be of some benefit to victims (see Daly, 2002), although this was not explored in this study.

The study also highlighted that victims might hold preconceived ideas about conferencing and its process, ultimately influencing the effectiveness of apologies given within this context, as reported by Dhami (2012). This was demonstrated by the fact that of the 50 participants removed from the final sample due to failing the manipulation check questions, 42% incorrectly identified the type of apology they received, stating they had received a prompted apology when they had received a voluntary apology. Participant responses to the qualitative question also showed that they struggled to determine the sincerity of the apology. For example, “The apology was pretty formulaic. It felt like he was parroting something he had been told to say and didn't truly believe he had done the wrong thing. Had he wanted to apologise [*sic*] before it went to court then I would have believed it to be sincere”. Many participants even commented that although the apology was offered voluntarily, the formulaic style of the apology made it seem as if it were forced and insincere.

Interestingly, responses to the qualitative question indicate that a large proportion of participants viewed the number of hours as a punishment, for example, “15 hours isn't enough” and “15 not enough punishment”. Only a small number of participants viewed the

community hours as a rehabilitative activity that could bring benefit to the offender, despite this being the intention of community service (see Joudo-Larsen, 2014).

### **Study Limitations and Future Research Suggestions**

Two major strengths to this study was the use of manipulation check questions and the qualitative question that asked participants if they wanted to provide reasons for their ratings. The manipulation check questions ensured participants understood the manipulation within the vignettes, and it was found to be a major strength to the validity of this study, as almost 26% of participants were removed from the final sample as they did not correctly identify the manipulations. The use of the manipulation check questions was also identified as a major strength in De-Mott's (2016) and Turnbull's (2016) studies, where 90 participants were removed from the final sample due to failing the manipulation check questions. Secondly, the use of a qualitative question was also a major strength, as it assisted in disseminating the findings of the study, which provided a deeper insight into the decisions and motivations of the participants (see Onwuegbuzie & Combs, 2010; Silverman, 2011).

Several limitations within this study, however, might have impacted the study's findings. Firstly, as already mentioned, the representation of prior wrongful behaviour is likely to be a major limitation in this study. It is suggested that future research represent prior wrongful behaviour more clearly (e.g. the police look up the offender's criminal record on the computer and relay this information to the victim) to ascertain whether prior wrongful behaviour influences apology effectiveness.

Secondly, it is recommended that future research consider the use of visual and verbal cues within the vignettes. Although the use of such cues was not feasible for this research study, participant responses to the qualitative question demonstrate that they struggled to ascertain the sincerity of the apology. The use of verbal and visual cues, however, could lead to confounding variables such as the race, ethnicity, and appearance of the offender. These

could potentially influence the results, diminish the internal validity of the study, and minimise the understanding of how specific variables influence apology effectiveness within conferencing settings.

Thirdly, although this study found voluntary apologies to be more effective than prompted apologies, it would be useful for future research to explore the effect of no apologies. In particular, how the ratings differ across no apologies, voluntary apologies, and prompted apologies. This could determine the extent to which voluntary apologies are more beneficial than prompted apologies, if prompted apologies are more beneficial to victims than no apology at all, and the extent to which different apology types (or no apology) affect the restorative outcomes of conferencing.

As recommended by De-Mott (2016), future studies should investigate race and ethnicity, particularly Indigenous, refugees, and migrant populations. This is likely to be a significant factor in victim-offender interactions and apology effectiveness within juvenile justice conferencing settings due to the high incarceration numbers and supervision rates for such populations (see AIHW, 2015). It is also recommended that future researchers are mindful of how they formulate apologies to avoid voluntary apologies being viewed as formulaic and forced, which occurred in this study. Lastly, researchers should be aware that victims might view community hours as punishment rather than offender reparation efforts, which also occurred in this study. It is, therefore, recommended that future researchers use another subliminal measure for apology effectiveness, for example the Trait Rating Questionnaire used by Risen and Gilovich (2007), where participants are required to rate the offender on certain traits, such as their likability, selfishness, and rudeness after receiving a prompted or voluntary apology to determine how effective the participants perceived the apology to be.

### **Conclusion**

The current study provided empirical support that voluntary apologies are more effective than prompted apologies, which is line with previous research (see Allan et al., 2014; Jehle et al., 2012; Risen & Gilovich, 2007). Despite such findings, prompted apologies remain a regular part of the conferencing procedures (Joudo-Larsen, 2014). This study also indicates that further research into the effect of prior wrongful behaviour within the juvenile justice conferencing context is needed, as there is no published research on how the prior wrongful behaviour of offenders' influences apologies, and ultimately the outcomes of conferencing. Until more research is conducted on the impact of prior wrongful behaviour of offenders with the effects of prompted apologies considered in the practical application of conferencing, the achievement of restorative and positive outcomes in conferencing largely relies on the help and support juvenile justice practitioners provide to victims and offenders.

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## **APPENDIX A**

### **QUALTRICS SURVEY**

#### **Introduction and Consent**

#### **PARTICIPANT INFORMATION**

##### **Apologies in Youth Justice Conferencing Study**

We invite you to take part in a research study investigating the impact of apologies in youth justice conferences. You will be asked to read a short scenario involving a young offender. You will then be asked to answer four questions relating to the given scenario. The study will also include four demographic questions.

The study will take approximately fifteen minutes to complete and consists of one session. There are no known benefits or risks for you in participating in this study.

Your participation in this study is voluntary and you may decide to stop being a part of the research study at any time without explanation. You have the right to omit or refuse to answer any question that is asked. You have the right to have your questions about the procedures answered. If you have any questions as a result of reading this information sheet, you should contact our supervisors before the study begins.

To thank you for participating in this survey, we are offering the chance to win one of four \$50 Coles Myer gift cards. On completion, you will be redirected to another page where you can provide your email address or contact number if you wish to be part of the draw. The details you provide will not be linked to your survey responses. Survey responses will remain completely anonymous.

All findings from this research will be presented in a final thesis, which will be published after the research is complete. This report will be stored at the university library, and will be available to university staff and students. The data from this study may also be used in future studies. Please note that this report and any future reports will not include any information that could personally identify you or any other participants. If you have any questions about the research project, or require any further information, please contact our supervisors.

Your participation in this study and your responses will be kept confidential. The data we collect do not contain any identifying information about you. All information will be stored securely and will only be accessible to the researchers and supervisors.

Our supervisor, Alfred Allan, will be glad to answer your questions about this study at any time. You may contact him at [a.allan@ecu.edu.au](mailto:a.allan@ecu.edu.au). If you would like information about the final results of this study, you should email the supervisor and request the findings. This project has been approved by the ECU School of Arts and Humanities. If you have any concerns or complaints about the research project and would like to talk to someone other than our supervisors, you may contact:

Research Ethics Officer  
Edith Cowan University  
270 Joondalup Drive  
JOONDALUP WA 6027  
Phone: (08) 6304 2170

**Contact Details:**

Supervisors: Alfred Allan (a.allan@ecu.edu.au)  
Ricks Allan (m.allan@ecu.edu.au)

If you would like to participate in this research, please read the following consent form and click **I agree** on the following page.

Thank you for your participation in this study.

Lacey Willett and Isolde Larkins  
School of Arts and Humanities  
Edith Cowan University

**INFORMED CONSENT**

This section acknowledges that you understand your rights as a participant in this study.

By clicking **yes I agree** on the following page, I agree that:

- I have been provided with information explaining the research study
- I understand that if I have further questions I can contact the supervisors
- I am aware that the study will take approximately 15 minutes to complete and will involve:
  - Reading a short scenario
  - Responding to four related questions
  - Answering four demographic questions
- I am aware that my participation in this study is voluntary and that I can withdraw from this study at any time, without explanation
- My rights as a participant, the requirements of this study and any potential risk involved in participating in this study have been explained
- I understand that any information I provide will be confidential and anonymous
- I will not receive any compensation or direct benefit for my participation in this study
- I confirm that I am over 18 years of age and am eligible to participate in this study
- I agree to participate in this study

If you have any concerns regarding your participation in this study you may contact our supervisor, Alfred Allan through the contact details provided.

Please indicate your consent to participate

- ☐ **Yes I agree** to participate in the study (1)
- ☐ **No I do not agree** to participate in the study (2)

### **Block 1 Demographics**

Please indicate whether you are:

- ☐ Male
- ☐ Female
- ☐ Other

Do you currently reside in Australia?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

Please indicate which Australian State or Territory

- ☐ New South Wales
- ☐ Victoria
- ☐ Australian Capital Territory
- ☐ Queensland
- ☐ Northern Territory
- ☐ Tasmania
- ☐ South Australia
- ☐ Western Australia

Which country do you reside in?

What is your age? Please state your age in years only.

Have you previously been a complainant in a juvenile justice conference?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

### **Block 2 Vignette Options**

Please take time to read the following scenario

Imagine you were drinking coffee with a friend at a sidewalk café when another customer shouted “watch your phone” and ran past you chasing a boy. You glanced at where you had put your **new \$1000** mobile phone down on the table next to you, and saw that it had disappeared. You followed the customer and found that he had apprehended the running boy with the assistance of a police officer. The boy handed a mobile to the police officer who asked you whether you could identify it and when you said it was yours the police officer asked you to come to the police station to give a statement. At the police station the officer taking your statement states, “**This is the second time Sam has done this**” when he sees the boy who stole your phone. The police officer told you Sam was 16 years-old and was

attending a school in the neighbourhood. The police officer returned your mobile to you, in the same condition as before and asked you to sign a receipt for it.

#### Court Proceedings

When he appeared in Court, Sam was referred to the Juvenile Justice Team, as he was willing to make amends for his actions. You have been invited to participate in a Family Conference.

Imagine you were drinking coffee with a friend at a sidewalk café when another customer shouted “watch your phone” and ran past you chasing a boy. You glanced at where you had put your **old \$100** mobile phone down on the table next to you, and saw that it had disappeared. You followed the customer and found that he had apprehended the running boy with the assistance of a police officer. The boy handed a mobile to the police officer who asked you whether you could identify it and when you said it was yours the police officer asked you to come to the police station to give a statement. At the police station the officer taking your statement states, “**This is the second time Sam has done this**” when he sees the boy who stole your phone. The police officer told you Sam was 16 years-old and was attending a school in the neighbourhood. The police officer returned your mobile to you, in the same condition as before and asked you to sign a receipt for it.

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#### Court Proceedings

When he appeared in Court Sam was referred to the Juvenile Justice Team, as he was willing to make amends for his actions. You have been invited to participate in a Family Conference.

Imagine you were drinking coffee with a friend at a sidewalk café when another customer shouted “watch your phone” and ran past you chasing a boy. You glanced at where you had put your **old \$100** mobile phone down on the table next to you, and saw that it had disappeared. You followed the customer and found that he had apprehended the running boy with the assistance of a police officer. The boy handed a mobile to the police officer who asked you whether you could identify it and when you said it was yours the police officer

asked you to come to the police station to give a statement. At the police station the officer taking your statement states, **“I think this is Sam’s first offence”** when he sees the boy who stole your phone. You later find out Sam was 16 years-old and was attending a school in the neighbourhood. The police officer returned your mobile to you, in the same condition as before and asked you to sign a receipt for it.

#### Court Proceedings

When he appeared in Court Sam was referred to the Juvenile Justice Team, as he was willing to make amends for his actions. You have been invited to participate in a Family Conference.

### Block 3 Apology Conditions

During the Family Conference, as Sam's actions are being discussed, **Sam asks the facilitator for permission to apologise** to you and says:

“I’m sorry for taking your phone. I know it was wrong because it was stealing from you. I’ve learned my lesson and I won’t do it again.”

During the Family Conference, as Sam's actions were being discussed, **the facilitator orders Sam to apologise** to you and Sam says to you:

“I’m sorry for taking your phone. I know it was wrong because it was stealing from you. I’ve learned my lesson and I won’t do it again.”

### Block 4 Responses

Please provide your response to the following:

On a scale of 1 to 5, with (1) being strongly disagree and (5) being strongly agree please indicate your response to: Sam's apology was sincere

- ☐ 1 Strongly disagree
- ☐ 2
- ☐ 3
- ☐ 4
- ☐ 5 Strongly agree

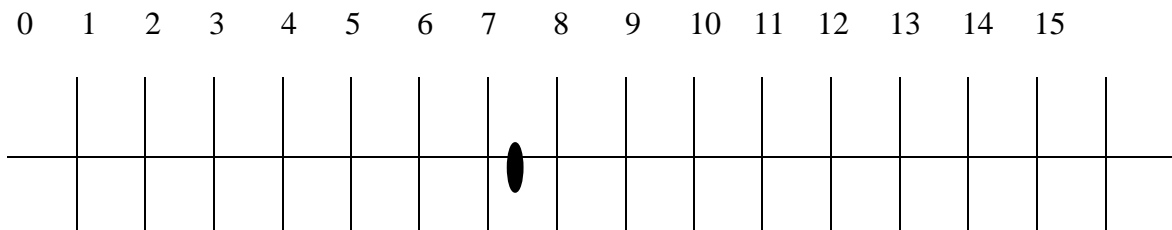
On a scale of 1 to 5 with (1) being fully reject to (5) being fully accept please indicate the extent to which you accept Sam's apology:

- ☐ 1 Fully reject
- ☐ 2
- ☐ 3
- ☐ 4
- ☐ 5 Fully accept

On a scale of 1 to 5 with (1) being not at all to (5) being completely please indicate the extent to which you forgive Sam:

- ☐ 1 Not at all
- ☐ 2
- ☐ 3
- ☐ 4
- ☐ 5 Completely

If you could recommend the number of hours of community work Sam should do, how many hours do you recommend? Please move the slider to indicate your choice



Would you like to give an explanation of any of your responses to the questions?

Based on the scenario you were presented with, please answer three final questions.

What was the value of your phone?

- ☐ \$1000
- ☐ \$100

Has Sam been involved in Family Conferencing before?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

Which option best describes the type of apology you received?

- ☐ Sam's apology was provided voluntarily
- ☐ Sam apologised after being prompted

## Block 5

Thank you for taking time to participate in this survey.

If you have any questions, please contact the supervisors of this study:

**Supervisors:** Alfred Allan (a.allan@ecu.edu.au)

Ricks Allan (m.allan@ecu.edu.au)

## **APPENDIX B**

### **RESEARCH FLYER**

#### **PARTICIPANTS WANTED**

We invite you to participate in a short, 15-minute online survey investigating the impact of apologies in youth justice conferencing. Doing this will give you a chance to win one of four Coles Myer gift cards. The only requirement is that you must be 18 or over.

Your participation is voluntary and you can withdraw at any time. All information will be kept confidential.

Findings of this research will be presented in a final Honours thesis.

Please type the link to the survey below into your browser or scan the QR code if you are interested. This link will provide more information about the study and contact details of the supervisors of this study.

[https://ecuau.qualtrics.com/SE/?SID=SV\\_0U3hTeVwB6VysgR](https://ecuau.qualtrics.com/SE/?SID=SV_0U3hTeVwB6VysgR)

Thank you for your time.



**APPENDIX C**  
**INVITATION TO PARTICIPANTS**  
**RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS WANTED**

We are students at Edith Cowan University conducting research into the impact of apologies in youth justice conferences.

We are looking for people aged 18 years and above to participate in this online study.

Participation will involve going to an online website (link and QR code provided below) where you will be asked to read a short scenario and then answer four related questions. The study will also include four demographic questions and all information you provide will remain confidential and anonymous. The survey will take approximately 15 minutes to complete and will consist of one session.

Your participation is greatly appreciated and will help to develop further understanding of this important area of research.

If you are interested in participating in this research please click on the following link [https://ecuaau.qualtrics.com/SE/?SID=SV\\_0U3hTeVwB6VysgR](https://ecuaau.qualtrics.com/SE/?SID=SV_0U3hTeVwB6VysgR) or the QR code below, which will take you directly to the online survey page. If the link does not direct you, please copy and paste the link into your browser.

To thank you for participating in this survey, we are offering the chance to win one of four \$50 Coles Myer gift cards. On completion, you will be redirected to another page where you can provide your email address or contact number if you wish to be part of the draw. The details you provide will not be linked to your survey responses. Survey responses will remain completely anonymous.

Please feel free to forward this email onto other people who may like to participate in this study. When forwarding, please add recipients into the bcc section of your email to protect anonymity.

Thank you for your time. If you have any further questions, please contact one of our supervisors.

**Contact Details:**

<b>Supervisors:</b>	Alfred Allan	(a.allan@ecu.edu.au)
	Ricks Allan	(m.allan@ecu.edu.au)



**APPENDIX D****QUALTRICS SURVEY FOR PARTICIPANT DRAW****Contact Details**

If you wish to be in the draw for one of the four \$50 Coles Myer gift card, please provide an email address or phone number to contact you if you are drawn as a winner. Contact information will not be linked to survey responses. Survey responses will be completely anonymous.