

2006

## Examination of different levels of restorative behaviour utilising the affect, affirmation and action model

Jessica Sumner  
*Edith Cowan University*

Follow this and additional works at: [https://ro.ecu.edu.au/theses\\_hons](https://ro.ecu.edu.au/theses_hons)



Part of the [Cognitive Psychology Commons](#)

---

### Recommended Citation

Sumner, J. (2006). *Examination of different levels of restorative behaviour utilising the affect, affirmation and action model*. Edith Cowan University. [https://ro.ecu.edu.au/theses\\_hons/1053](https://ro.ecu.edu.au/theses_hons/1053)

This Thesis is posted at Research Online.  
[https://ro.ecu.edu.au/theses\\_hons/1053](https://ro.ecu.edu.au/theses_hons/1053)

# Edith Cowan University

## Copyright Warning

You may print or download ONE copy of this document for the purpose of your own research or study.

The University does not authorize you to copy, communicate or otherwise make available electronically to any other person any copyright material contained on this site.

You are reminded of the following:

- Copyright owners are entitled to take legal action against persons who infringe their copyright.
- A reproduction of material that is protected by copyright may be a copyright infringement. Where the reproduction of such material is done without attribution of authorship, with false attribution of authorship or the authorship is treated in a derogatory manner, this may be a breach of the author's moral rights contained in Part IX of the Copyright Act 1968 (Cth).
- Courts have the power to impose a wide range of civil and criminal sanctions for infringement of copyright, infringement of moral rights and other offences under the Copyright Act 1968 (Cth). Higher penalties may apply, and higher damages may be awarded, for offences and infringements involving the conversion of material into digital or electronic form.

## USE OF THESIS

The Use of Thesis statement is not included in this version of the thesis.

Running Head: LEVELS OF RESTORATIVE BEHAVIOUR IN AAA MODEL



Examination of Different Levels of Restorative Behaviour Utilising the  
Affect, Affirmation and Action Model

Jessica Sumner

A report submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements  
For the Award of Bachelor of Science Honours in Psychology,  
Faculty of Computing, Health and Science,  
Edith Cowan University

October, 2006

I declare that this written assignment is my own work and does not include:

- i. material from published sources used without proper acknowledgement; or
- ii. material copied from the work of other students'.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ (Jessica Sumner)

### Declaration

I certify that this literature review and research project does not incorporate, without acknowledgement, any material previously submitted for a degree or diploma in any institution of higher education and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, it does not contain any material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made in the text.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: 22/01/07

### Acknowledgements

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all of those who have supported and encouraged me during this very busy year. I owe a huge thankyou to my two supervisors, Professor Alfred Allan and Dr. Maria Allan for helping me with articulating my ideas better, for your generous time, feedback and motivation. Both of you have truly inspired me with your passion in this area. I am deeply grateful for your interest and guidance throughout this project.

I would also like to thank my closest family and friends for their support and understanding. In particular, a special thanks goes to my Mother and Father for their ongoing support and believing in me. Also, the friends that were there for me during the challenging times, you know who you are.

I am also thankful for the support provided by Carol Gamsby, the fourth year Psychology student support officer. She was always willing to listen during my stressful times, and expressed genuine interest in my other pressing issues that arose throughout the year. Your encouragement is greatly appreciated. Indeed, I have learnt a lot from this project, and learnt a lot about myself.

Without the contribution of those that participated in this study, it could not be conducted. Therefore, thankyou to my participants, who took the time to complete a questionnaire and return it to me. Your responses are greatly appreciated.

# Table of Contents

Copyright .....	i
Title .....	ii
Declaration .....	iii
Acknowledgements .....	iv
Table of Contents .....	v
List of Figures .....	vi
List of Tables .....	vii
Literature Review Title .....	1
Abstract Literature Review .....	2
Literature Review .....	3
References .....	20
 Research Project Title .....	 22
Abstract Research Project .....	23
Introduction .....	24
Method .....	31
Research Design .....	31
Participants .....	32
Materials .....	33
Procedure .....	36
Results .....	37
Discussion .....	46
References .....	55
Appendices .....	57
Appendix A .....	57
Appendix B .....	59
Appendix C .....	62

List of Figures

Figure 1. Affirmation, Affect and Action Model of Apology and True Sorrowiness.....9  
.....30

Figure 2. Box plots presenting the distribution of ratings on perceived apologetic  
behaviour in Scenario A, compared to Scenario B.....39

Figure 3. Boxplots presenting the distribution of ratings on perceived true sorrowiness in  
Scenario A, compared to Scenario B.....40

Figure 4. Boxplots presenting the distribution of ratings on the likelihood of forgiveness  
between the different age ranges of participants (20-29 years, 30-39 years, 40-49 years  
and 50+ years old).....42

Figure 5. Interaction effect between the two levels of restorative behaviour (Scenario A  
and Scenario B) and the different age groups (20-29 years, 30-39 years, 40-49 years and  
50+ years) on the average Log of apologetic behaviour rating..... 43

Figure 6. Mean log of offense severity ratings for participants in the different age ranges  
(20-29 years, 30-39 years, 40-49 years and 50+ years).....44

Figure 7. The association between perceived ratings of true sorrowiness and ratings on the  
likelihood of forgiveness..... 45

Figure 8. The association between perceived ratings of apologetic behaviour and ratings  
on the likelihood of forgiveness.....46



List of Tables

Table 1. Displays the manipulation of elements included in Scenario A and Scenario B from each component of Slocum et al.’s AAA Model (affirmations, affect and actions).....35

Table 2. The mean ratings of perceived apologetic behaviour, perceived true sorriness and likelihood of forgiveness in each restorative behaviour condition (Scenario A and Scenario B) for males and females.....38

Running Head: LEVELS OF RESTORATIVE BEHAVIOUR

Examining Support for the Affirmation, Affect and Action Model of Apology and  
True Sorrowiness in the Literature

Jessica Sumner

Edith Cowan University

Abstract

The present paper reviews the relevant literature to determine whether there is support for the Affirmation, Affect and Action Model of Apology and True Sorrow (AAA model) that was developed by Slocum, Allan and Allan (2006). The chronological review of the literature examines how the constructs of apology and true sorrow evolved. Initially, apologetic types were perceived on a continuum, however, with time researchers' acknowledged different components of apologetic behaviour. These components were later named affirmation, affect and actions in the development of Slocum's et al. AAA model. In further research, such components were quantified for manipulation in experimental research and distinctions were recognized between what Slocum et al. would later refer to as an 'apology' and 'true sorrow', In the literature reviewed, the three components of affirmation, affect and action in the model are supported in both an apology and true sorrow. However, the nature of these components differed between an apology and true sorrow. Elements of an apology in the AAA model were supported to take on a self focus, whereas elements of true sorrow in the AAA model were supported to involve higher order cognitions and concerns for others, consistent with the Slocum et al.'s AAA model.

Author: Jessica Louise Sumner

Supervisors: Professor Alfred Allan,  
and Dr. Maria Allan

Submitted: 28 August, 2006

Examining Support for the Affirmation, Affect and Action Model of Apology and  
True Sorrow in the Literature

Apologies are an important element in human interaction, particularly when predicaments occur, whether minor or severe. Apologies have been studied in social situations (Schlenker & Darby, 1981) and in legal contexts (Allan, Allan, Kaminer, & Stein, 2006). Previous research on apology has supported an association between an apology and forgiveness, such that apology enhances forgiveness (McCullough et al., 1998; McCullough, Worthington, & Rachal, 1997). For example, research conducted by McCullough et al. (1998) examined the extent to which forgiveness could be predicted from the manipulation of several variables in an interpersonal transgression-related vignette. Variables manipulated included offense-severity, relationship closeness, relationship commitment, apology, empathy and rumination to name a few. Data from participants self-reported responses revealed that an apology is indeed associated with forgiving. Therefore, the uses and implications of an apology are important because an apology is supported in research to enhance forgiveness.

There has been an abundance of research conducted on forgiveness, and the benefits of forgiveness have been well supported. For example, research conducted by Witvliet, Ludwig and Vander Laan(2001), examined the implications of forgiveness and un-forgiveness on personal physical health. Seventy-one participants in the study were examined on emotional and physiological effects of imagining unforgiving and forgiving responses to an interpersonal offender in their own life. Physiological responses were monitored throughout the imagining process and participants rated their feelings after each imagining trial including their emotional valence, anger, sadness and perceived control. Analyses of the data revealed that unforgiving thoughts provoked more aversive emotions, and significantly higher corrugators (brow), electromyogram, skin conductance, heart rate, and blood pressure changes from baseline than the forgiving thoughts condition. Some of these were

also found to persist after imagining into the recovery periods. On the other hand, forgiving thoughts provoked a greater sense of control and comparatively less physiological arousal/responses to the imagining process. Therefore, it was concluded that un-forgiveness in response to an offense may erode health whereas forgiveness responses enhance health. This study provides support for the notion that forgiveness is important because it enhances physical well-being.

Moreover, Coyle and Enright (1997) have shown further benefits of forgiveness on mental health. Coyle and Enright's study was conducted on ten men who described themselves as hurt by the abortion decision of a partner. Participants were randomly assigned to a 12 week forgiveness treatment course or a wait-list control. The benefits of receiving the forgiveness treatment was demonstrated through these men experiencing significantly better psychological well-being compared to the wait-list controls. More specifically, the experimental participants were reported to have significant gains in forgiveness and significant reductions in anxiety, anger and grief. Coyle and Enright also reported that these psychological gains exhibited by the participants from forgiveness were maintained through a three month follow up period. Therefore, forgiveness is very important for mental wellbeing.

Research conducted by Kaminer, Stein, Mbanga and Zungu-Dirwayi (2001) has also supported the benefits of forgiveness on mental well-being. Kaminer et al. (2001) examined a population of South African people who had been victims of human rights violations. Through a procedure of documenting cases of human rights abuse, the 134 survivors provided a testimonial account of the offence. Furthermore, Kaminer et al. examined participant's psychiatric or mental health and their levels of forgiveness. Results revealed by Kaminer and colleagues indicated that the process of providing a testimony did not enhance participants mental health or degree of forgiveness. However, analysis of data did reveal that victims of human rights abuse with low levels of forgiveness to the offenders were highly associated with poorer mental health status. Kaminer et al.

argued that implications from their research supported the need for therapeutic forgiveness interventions on such victims of human rights abuse, in order to enhance forgiving and therefore increase mental health.

As research has well established the benefits of forgiveness on both physical and mental wellbeing, the psychological construct of an apology is very important to clinical psychologists, as it enhances forgiving. However, it is apparent that there is a problem in the literature in defining an apology. Researchers in the area seem to differ on their definitions of an apology. For example, early research in the apology literature defines an apology as generally any admissions of blameworthiness and regret (Schlenker & Darby, 1981). On the other hand, Gonzales, Pederson, Manning and Wetter (1990) argue later in the literature that apologies are more specific and need to be distinguished from excuses, which mitigate the actor's personal responsibility; justifications, which attempt to argue that under a different circumstance the act would have been unacceptable; and refusals which deny any responsibility for the act. They argue that an apology acknowledges the offence act, assumes responsibility for the act, gives an expression of regret and may offer some sort of restitution (Gonzales et al., 1990).

In legal contexts, the debate about how an apology is defined continues. Taft (2000) argues that in the legal system, an apology is fundamentally perceived as a moral act. He explains that even after the verdicts or settlement of cases, the deep wounds in many clients are still not healed, and as a result they continue to suffer and feel hurt. Taft explains that the missing piece in order for healing to occur was an apology. In this line of thinking, it is the moral component of an apology that is important for healing, not the material items such as the money or house that the offended individual had been compensated with by the legal proceedings.

The importance of how an apology is defined and delivered by an offender has received further publicity in legal and political contexts by the popular press. As Lazare (1995) recalls, on

August 8, 1974, President Richard Nixon gave a speech of resignation. Nixon's speech featured regret for hurt caused by his decision to leave. Nixon then went on to say that if he had made some wrong judgments, it was because he believed it was in the best interest of the nation at the time. Such examples in legal or political contexts cause controversy over what is an apology, as the people of the nation ask themselves if they accept the speech as an apology or not. Lazare argues that Nixon never acknowledged his wrongdoing or the consequences of his actions and does not take responsibility, therefore this is a failed attempt at an apology. One may ask if an apology was avoided because of any implications that may arise.

Based on this confusion in the literature, Allan, Allan, Kaminer and Stein (2006) asked the question of what actually is an apology? Their research was conducted on the same victim sample as Kaminer et al. (2001). Allan et al. examined the relationship between forgiving and four restorative behaviours namely excuses, admissions of guilt, apology and true sorrow. For the purpose of this paper, restorative behaviour describes any type of behaviour individuals engage in which attempts to restore a hurt relationship. The results revealed that it is not just any apology that will enhance forgiveness. The research findings indicated that while an apology does promote forgiving, it is only when true sorrow is perceived that a significant difference in forgiving occurs. In other words, true sorrow perceived by an offended person in response to a serious misconduct by another is more likely to lead to forgiveness than other restorative behaviours including an apology, excuses or admission of guilt (Allan et al., 2006). Therefore, it can be argued that not just any apology or restorative behaviour promotes forgiveness, however perceptions of true sorrow significantly do.

In light of these findings, Slocum, Allan and Allan (2006) further investigated apology and true sorrow. Their research qualitatively explored the differences between an apology and true sorrow in interviews with 23 participants. These participants were offended by somebody that they were in an intimate relationship with for a period longer than two years and within the previous two

years. The consented interview with the participants asked for their experiences regarding the offence, the type of apology received if any, how sincere the apology was and if they were able to forgive the offender. The analysis of the participants' experiences revealed a clear distinction between what the participants perceived as an apology and what they saw as true sorrow.

Based on the qualitative research findings, Slocum and her colleagues (2006) proposed an apology model to distinguish between an apology and true sorrow. The proposed model is comprised of three components; affirmation, affect and actions. The model holds that although both an apology and true sorrow feature these three components, the nature of these components differ. Slocum et al. argue that an individual cannot reach true sorrow without progressing through the apology phase. Although true sorrow is comprised of similar components (affirmation, affect and action), it may be described as one step further as the individual shifts from a self-focus to an other-focus perspective. In other words, both an apology and true sorrow comprise affirmation, affect and action, however they are different as true sorrow involves further higher-order cognitions in these three components and a different nature. Only with true sorrow clearly defined, it is possible to determine the components that have been shown to significantly influence forgiveness.

The *Affirmation, Affect and Action Model* (AAA model) developed by Slocum et al. (2006) is further outlined as follows. The affirmation component includes expressions, disclosure, confirmation and assurances, communicated through speech (Roget's Thesaurus; Lloyd, 1984, cited in Slocum et al., 2006). The affect component incorporates perceptions of the offender's emotional response to the offense. Finally, the action component represents behaviour exhibited by the offender in response to the offense. According to the model, an apology takes on a self focus as demonstrated by affirmation of the offense and wrong-doing by the offender. An apology features affect such as regret, where the offender wishes the offence had never occurred, and feeling bad about it. In addition, an apology features action such as appeasement. At the apology level of the model, this is



an attempt by the offender to pacify the response of the offended and may incorporate attempts to restore the offense by repayment, replacement or restitution.

True sorrowfulness also features the components of affirmation, affect and action, however, the nature of these components differs from an apology, and takes on more of a self and other focus. Affirmations of truly sorry individuals involve acknowledgement of the offence act, and the implications that it had on the offended. Furthermore, this involves taking responsibility for the offence. Expressions of affect in true sorrowfulness feature sorrow. Sorrow is described by Slocum et al. (2006) as a negative emotional state which arises from feeling responsible for the hurt and suffering experienced by others. The offender realises the implications and consequences of the offence on not only themselves, but on others. Finally, the action component of true sorrowfulness features atonement. Slocum et al. explain that truly sorry individuals engage in atonement, which involves attempting to correct the offence situation through reformation, reparations, and thoughtful deeds that address the needs of the offended individuals. The affirmation, affect and action model is outlined below (Figure 1).

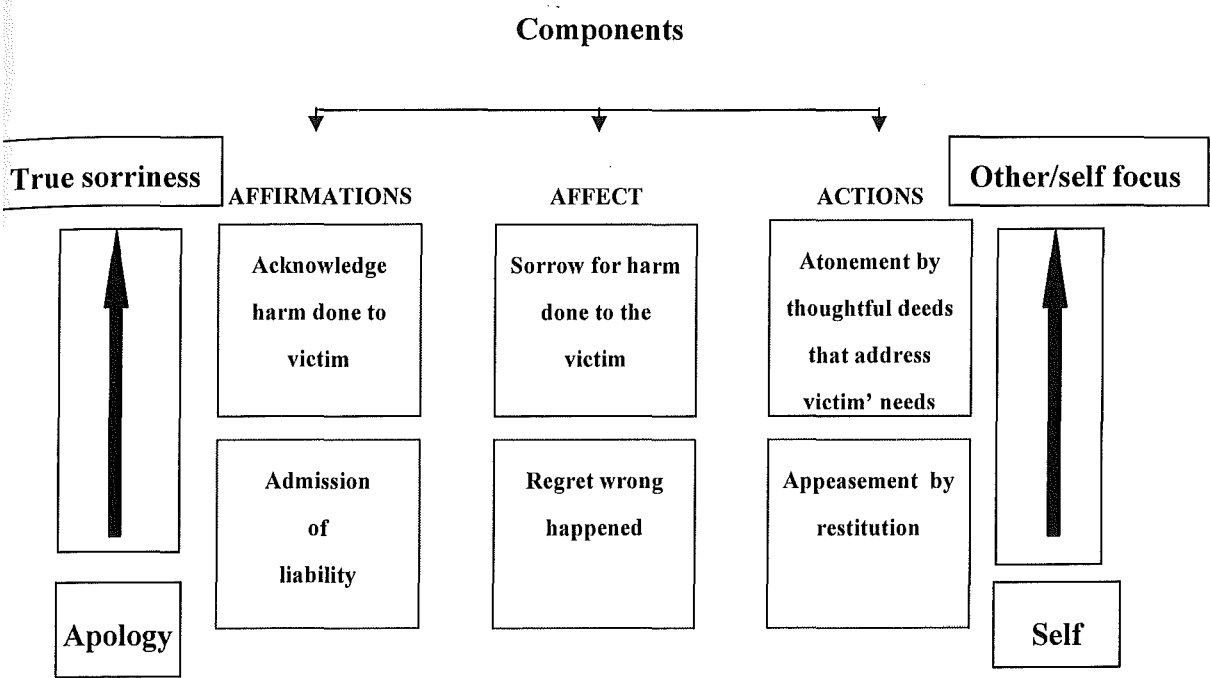


Figure 1: Affirmation, Affect and Action Model of Apology and True Sorrowness

Given the confusion in the literature, the following terminology will be used. In the present paper the components of the AAA model refers to affirmation, affect and action. Each component comprises two elements. The elements of an apology are positioned at the bottom of the model and the elements of true sorrowness are positioned on top. This demonstrates the movement from self focus to other focus in an individual. The elements of an apology consist of admissions (affirmation component), regret (affect) and appeasement (actions). Then positioned above, the elements of true sorrowness include acknowledgement (affirmation), sorrow (affect) and atonement (actions).

Limited research has investigated the three components of apology and true sorrowness. Therefore, with this literature review the researcher aims to determine whether the proposed AAA model is supported in the literature. This present paper explores the notion that although an apology and true sorrowness share similar components, they differ in their nature of affirmations, affect and

action. The progress of knowledge and understanding of apology in the literature over time is outlined, which lead to support the recently formulated AAA model. Although this paper has important implications for conflict resolution training, counseling, mediation, legal contexts and physical and mental well-being, this paper primarily focuses on a clinical psychology perspective.

There is a wealth of literature that examines the meaning of the apology construct. Early research on social predicaments has differentiated between two types of restorative behaviour. Schlenker and Darby (1981) distinguish between accounts using excuses and justifications and apologies, which are admissions of fault and regret by the offender for the undesirable act. Schlenker and Darby explain that an apology may contain a number of elements such as a statement of apology, expressions of remorse, sorrow, embarrassment or feeling bad, offering to help, self-castigation and finally directly attempting to obtain forgiveness. In their study, Schlenker and Darby examined restorative behaviour in 120 individuals based on a hypothetical written transgression. The participants were instructed to respond by indicating how likely it was that they would engage in each of the elements mentioned above. Furthermore, the transgressions were manipulated in terms of the responsibility of the offender and the consequences of the offence.

Schlenker and Darby (1981), found that when the consequences of the transgression were minimal, participants employed the use of accounts more. However, as the responsibility of the offender and the consequences increased, the number of apologetic elements employed also increased. From these results, it may be perceived that apologetic behaviour is on a continuum. In more serious predicaments people often employ more elements of an apology, their expressions are more complex and it involves more extreme admissions of self-blame. On the other end of the continuum, when minor transgressions occur people employ less apologetic elements as the consequences are not so severe.

Gonzales, Pederson, Manning and Wetter (1990) also mention an apology-type continuum,

which they term the mitigation-aggravation dimension. They describe mitigating accounts as concessions or excuses which acknowledge the undesirable act, argue the accuracy of the offended person's interpretations of the act and state their right to issue a different interpretation. In particular, concessions also acknowledge responsibility and consequences of the undesirable act, offer expressions of regret or embarrassment, sometimes offer restitution and are often known as elaborate apologies. On the other hand, aggravating accounts refer to justifications or refusals, which do not consist of any of the elements mentioned above.

The study conducted by Gonzales et al. (1990) examined this apology continuum with participants that were induced to believe they had committed a gaffe. The particular gaffes were manipulated in terms of mild or severe consequences. The participant's verbal and nonverbal behaviours were coded in terms of the length of the account given, number of concessionary statements and precedence of verbal/nonverbal helping behaviours. These reflect the affirmation and action components of the AAA model as defined by Slocum et al. (2006). Gonzales et al. found that participants (induced offenders) preferred to employ mitigating restorative behaviours to aggravating restorative behaviours, indicating more sincere apologies that indeed consisted of more apologetic components.

This earlier research on apology adopts a continuum-like model to account for differences in apologetic behaviour observed. There are two extremes, mitigating accounts are at one end on the continuum and aggravating accounts are at the other end. This research has identified that accounts more towards the mitigating end of the continuum are preferred. Therefore, this earlier literature makes an important acknowledgement regarding differing types of apologies, which prompts further research. At this point in the literature, researchers also attempted to quantify apologetic behaviour which brings about further noticeable differences in types of restorative behaviour, or more importantly, distinguishing different types of apologies.

Furthermore, these early definitions of an apology were already making distinctions regarding the components of an apology. As Gonzales and colleagues (1990) explain, some apologies comprise acknowledgement of responsibility and consequences (affirmation component), regret (affect component) and offers of restitution (action component). This research also refers to the extent of elaboration in an apology offered (affirmation). Even though apologies were distinguished at this level as a perception on a continuum, many of the components of the AAA model are recognized in this type of earlier research.

While Gonzales et al. (1990) provide support for the components of an apology, in a later article they provide support for more complex levels of an apology. In the study conducted by Gonzales, Manning and Haugen (1992), participants were asked to imagine themselves as the offender in a given predicament and provide a written account of what they would do or say. The inferences made by Gonzales et al. (1992) in their research were based on quantifying different apologetic elements employed by their participants. The researchers took a more scientific approach by measuring the length of the account, number of apologetic statements employed and the types of apologetic elements employed. Similarly to their previous research, results revealed that concessionary strategies were employed more frequently, particularly in cases of a high blame offence. The results also indicated that the more blameworthy an offence, or the more responsible the offender was, the more effort they expended to help the offended (action) and more concessionary elements were employed (affirmation). These findings illustrate that more complex apologies are sometimes employed, and the nature of the components (affirmation, affect and action), as defined by Slocum et al.'s (2006) model, may differ depending on the type of apology. Later, Slocum et al.'s model distinguished between two types of apologetic nature, namely an apology and true sorrow.

A huge advancement in the complex understanding of apologetic nature is evident in 1995, when Lazare (1995) looked deeper into differentiating types of apology based on affirmations, affect

and action. This theoretical article distinguished between successful and failed apologies. Lazare, describes the anatomy of a 'successful' apology which comprises a four elements. Firstly, the successful apology reestablishes a common moral ground between the offender and the offended. Secondly, the offender is required to explain why they committed the undesirable act, and that it was not representative of who they are. Thirdly, the successful apology requires the offender to express that their behaviour was not intended to personally upset the offended individual. Finally, the offended needs to perceive that the wrong-doer is suffering and can perceive a genuine soul-searching regret, guilt, anxiety and even shame. According to Lazare, apologies are only useful if they are done right. A failed apology without these elements are said to strain relationships beyond repair.

These elements described by Lazare (1995) as a successful apology are similar to true sorrow as describe by Slocum et al. (2006). It appears that Lazare's definition of a successful apology features the true sorrow components of affirmation, affect and action. The importance of affirmation is evident in Lazare's description of the successful apology. According to Lazare, the anatomy of a successful apology features acknowledgement that the relationship was violated and accepting responsibility for it. Lazare further described that the wording of an apology "...has to be specific" regarding the wrong-doing behaviour and this works by reestablishing a similar set of values and a "...common moral ground" (1995, p. 42). In addition, Lazare explains that in order for the apology to be successful, it requires an explanation of why the undesirable act was committed by the offender, a statement expressing that the wrongdoing act was not representative of who the offending person is, and requires mention that the undesirable act will not happen again. The final part of a successful apology should also include affirmation that the behaviour exhibited by the offender was not intended as a personal affront, in order for the apology to be perceived as sincere. According to Slocum et al., these demonstrate the acknowledgment element of true sorrow.

Furthermore, Lazare (1995) mentions the importance of affect, which is evident in Lazare's description of the successful apology. Affect was described by Lazare as understanding the impact of the offense on the other person. More specifically, Lazare describes the successful apology as one that makes the offender suffer. It is necessary to "...express genuine, soul-searching regret" (1995, p. 43) for the apology to be taken as sincere and genuine. It was argued that without expression of guilt, anxiety and shame by the offender, it is difficult to perceive the depth of remorse. This illustrates the sorrow element of true sorrow as defined by Slocum et al.'s (2006) AAA model.

According to Slocum et al. (2006), the final component of true sorrow features the right type of actions by the offender. Lazare also acknowledges that, "...sometimes words are just not enough" (1995, p. 43). Lazare outlines that a successful apology also incorporates an offer to help the offended. This may be an offer of financial compensation, or an unsolicited gift or favor. Lazare explains that these actions are largely symbolic as they say the offender understands what the offended person values and demonstrates thoughtfulness of their needs. Such actions outlined by Lazare are similar to the actions outlined by Slocum and colleagues that are required for perceptions of true sorrow.

Overall, Lazare (1995) argues that a successful apology is a sign of strength not a sign of weakness. Expressing a successful apology is an act of courage because "...it subjects us to the emotional distress of shame and the risk of humiliation, rejection, and retaliation at the hands of the person we offended" (Lazare, 1995, p. 78). However, by doing this it shows that the offender is genuine and actually a good person. According to Lazare, often apologies fail because the offender has too much pride, is egocentric, or fails because the offender's misconception that an apology may trivialize the damage that has occurred. Ultimately, a successful apology is summarized nicely by Lazare when he states "...the apology is a statement that the harmony of the group is more important than the victory of the individual" (1995, p.43).

The same elements of true sorriness are further supported by Hodgins, Liebeskind and Schwartz (1996) in an investigation of written accounts to offended individuals in a social predicament. In this study, 96 participants were randomly distributed hypothetical vignettes in which the participant caused a negative consequence, and then were asked to write down what they would say in this situation. Their status of the victim and closeness to the victim were controlled by the experimenter. Results indicated that often restorative behaviours employed by the participants were about saving-face. Participants tended to employ the strategy that they thought would save the most face, however, some participants also considered repairing others' face damage. This article makes an important contribution to the development of an understanding of the concept of apology. It recognizes the difference between having a self-focus and a self-and-other focus. According to Slocum et al. (2006), an apology that is concerned with one-self is perceived as an apology. On the other hand, when an individual expresses concern not just for oneself but for others, this is perceived as true sorriness (Slocum et al., 2006). This distinction made by Hodgins et al. is supported in the model composed by Slocum and colleagues.

Hodgins et al. (1996), concluded that participants' restorative behaviours were based on competing demands for facework. Offenders wanted to protect their self-esteem and self-concept, while at the same time preserving the relationship and others' face damage. However, Hodgins et al. recognised that failing to protect others' face damage may result in a lack of forgiveness. From this participants made a decision whether to be self-focused or self-and-other focused in their apologetic behaviour. As Slocum and colleagues (2006), argue participants that acknowledged the wrongdoing and took responsibility (affirmation), were concerned for others' face (affect) and showed effort and thoughtfulness (action) demonstrated true sorriness, and others were not.

The importance of the component of affect in Slocum et al.'s (2006) model is further supported by McCullough, Worthington and Rachal (1997). McCullough et al.'s research explains



that empathy, a component of affect, is a critical element in an apology and therefore forgiveness.

According to Slocum et al.'s model, the affect demonstrated by an individual at the level of an apology features regret and wishing that the offence had not occurred. This can be accompanied by feeling bad. However, affect demonstrated by an individual who is truly sorry exhibits deeper affect. According to Slocum and colleagues, affect demonstrated at the true sorrow level features the addition of sorrow and concern about the implications of the offense on not just oneself but also others. McCullough et al., also acknowledge the importance of affect in moving from an apology to expressing genuinely truly sorry feelings. McCullough and colleagues argue that it is the feelings of empathy that cause an individual to shift in affect from a self-focus to concern and caring for the others. In fact, McCullough and colleagues argue that it is this component of affect, concern for others, which plays an important role in the relationship between apology and forgiveness.

The element of empathy in the affect component of an apology was supported by the intervention study conducted by McCullough et al. (1997). In their research, participants were assigned to an intervention group either targeting empathy, or forgiveness without specifically targeting empathy. Although an increase in forgiveness was observed in both groups, there was greater forgiveness in the participants in the empathy intervention. These results support the importance of empathy, as an element of affect in the apology model, and further support its link to promoting forgiveness.

Furthermore, research conducted by Robbennolt (2003), distinguished between two elements of an apologetic nature, which she termed a partial apology and a full apology. Robbennolt investigated the use of apologies in legal contexts and the implications of such apologies in legal contexts. The researcher argued that a partial apology expresses sympathy only, whereas a full apology expresses sympathy, regret and responsibility for the wrongdoing. According to Robbennolt, apologies are important in legal contexts as they promote the settlement of civil cases. Robbennolt

argued that a full apology is more sufficient as more regret is expressed. However, the paradox in legal contexts is that because a full apology acknowledges responsibility for the wrongdoing it may result in more negative consequences in legal proceedings.

This distinction made by Robbennolt (2003) regarding different elements of an apology, supports the model of apologetic behaviour comprised by Slocum et al. (2006). The partial apology, as explained by Robbennolt can be argued to resemble the affect component of an apology in Slocum and colleague's model. Furthermore, the full apology described by Robbennolt resembles the affirmation and the affect component of an apology in the model. When the component of affirmation is added to the apologetic behaviour, it involves acknowledgment of responsibility for the act of wrongdoing. Therefore, the distinction made by Slocum and her colleagues in their model between the components of affirmation and affect was supported in earlier research by Robbennolt.

Robbennolt (2003) described a partial apology offered in legal contexts as incomplete, as it does not comprise all the elements that an apology does. According to Slocum et al.'s (2006) model, the partial apology as described by Robbennolt consists of only the affect component of an apology. However, in legal contexts this type of apology may be employed as a 'safe' apology, as it does not admit fault or responsibility for the incident (affirmation component) and may be perceived to settle cases more quickly and favourably.

Research conducted by Zechmeister, Garcia, Romero and Vas (2004) acknowledges the component of action in an apology. Their research involved studying participants' response to receiving a scripted offence, which in this case was undeserved failure feedback. The level of arousal in participants was manipulated and the effects of an apology and or offence removal were observed. The participant's retaliation and forgiveness following the offence were assessed.

The component of action from Slocum and colleagues (2006) model was supported in research conducted by Zechmeister et al. (2004). Zechmeister et al.'s study revealed that indeed

participants were less forgiving when the experimenter apologised (affirmation), however no steps were taken to remove the offence (action). The latter, refers to the action component in the apology model described by Slocum et al. Experimenters that apologised, however, did not demonstrate any 'action' to address the hurt following the offence, were perceived as offering an insincere apology. An apology was not perceived as sincere unless the action of making amends was demonstrated, consistent with the action component in the AAA model.

Further support for the necessity of inclusion of affirmation, affect and action in the apology model is evident in research conducted by Schmitt, Gollwitzer, Forster and Montada (2004). This study asked participants to imagine an incident in which they were harmed by one of their friends. The researchers were interested in the offended participant's reactions to the offence based on the manipulation of the offenders' admitting fault, admitting damage, expressing remorse, asking for pardon and offering compensation. For purposes of analysing the research, admitting fault and damage may be grouped together as affirmation, expressing remorse is an element of affect and offering compensation is an action.

Schmitt et al.'s (2004) results revealed that simply asking for pardon after an individual has committed an offence was not enough, other components also needed to be addressed. According to Schmitt and colleagues, the components interact to influence the perceived sincerity of an apology. The results revealed that the specific offer of compensation (action component) implies psychologically that the offender admits fault and damage and expresses remorse. Also, admitting fault can imply admission of damage (affirmation component) and an expression of remorse (affect component). Therefore, it is possible to see an interplay between these factors in offenders' accounts of their behaviour. Separation of these components would be very difficult and any model of apologetic components would need to acknowledge the interaction among components and movement within the model.

The research findings by Schmitt et al. (2004) raised a very important point in the literature regarding the interaction of apologetic 'components'. A need for a model to address the interaction of components in perceptions of sorriness can be perceived at this later stage in the literature. Huge advancements have been made in the research of apology, from viewing apology as a continuum, to identifying apologetic components and quantifying apologetic components. The model proposed by Slocum and her colleagues (2006) manages to arrange apologetic components identified in previous research in a concise and grouped way, and demonstrates the movement possible within the model, the interaction of components, and movement toward higher order apologies (true sorriness) with deeper and more elaborate elements. Based on the interaction of apologetic components within the model, it is possible to perceive how perceptions of an apology and true sorriness may arise, nevertheless, can be differentiated between.

This review of the literature has demonstrated researchers' development in understanding the construct of an apology. It has identified three components evident in all types of apologies, which Slocum et al. (2006) later refers to as affirmation, affect and action (AAA). In further research, such components were quantified for investigation in various experimental manipulations (Gonzales et al., 1990; Gonzales et al., 1992). However, researchers started understanding that the construct of an apology is complex in nature because of the interaction between the components evident and development of higher order apologies (Hodgins et al., 1996; Lazare, 1995). The model developed by Slocum et al., provides a coherent demonstration of how an apology and true sorriness share the same three components (AAA), however the nature of these components differ. As the model illustrates, the components of an apology take on a self-focus, whereas, the components of true sorriness take on a self-and-other focus. This review demonstrated that there is support in the literature for the AAA model proposed by Slocum et al. to distinguish between an apology and true sorriness. Further research is necessary to quantitatively support the model.

## References

- Allan, A., Allan, M., Kaminer, D., & Stein, D. (2006). Exploration of the association between apology and forgiveness amongst victims of human rights violations. *Behavioral Sciences and the Law*, 24, 87-102.
- Coyle, C. T., & Enright, R. D. (1997). Forgiveness intervention with postabortion men. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*, 65, 1042-1046.
- Gonzales, M. H., Manning, D. J., & Haugen, J. A. (1992). Explaining our sins: Factors influencing offender accounts and anticipated victim responses. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 62, 958-971.
- Gonzales, M. H., Pederson, J. H., Manning, D. J., & Wetter, D. W. (1990). Pardon my gaffe: Effects of sex, status, and consequence severity on accounts. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 58, 610-621.
- Hodgins, H., Liebeskind, E., & Schwartz, W. (1996). Getting out of hot water: Facework in social predicaments. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 71, 300-314.
- Kaminer, D., Stein, D., Mbanga, I., & Zungu-Dirwayi, N. (2001). The truth and reconciliation commission in South Africa: Relation to psychiatric status and forgiveness among survivors of human rights abuses. *British Journal of Psychiatry*, 178, 373-377.
- Lazare, A. (1995). Go ahead say you're sorry. *Psychology Today*, 28, 40-43, 76, 78.
- McCullough, M. E., Rachal, K. C., Sandage, S., Worthington, E. L., Brown, S. W., & Hight, T. L. (1998). Interpersonal forgiving in close relationships: II. Theoretical elaboration and measurement. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 75, 1586-1603.
- McCullough, M. E., Worthington, E. L., & Rachal, K. C. (1997). Interpersonal forgiving in close relationships. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 73, 321-336.
- Robbennolt, J. K. (2003). Apologies and legal settlement: An empirical examination. *Michigan Law*

*Review*, 102, 460-516.

- Schlenker, B. R., & Darby, B. W. (1981). The use of apologies in social predicaments. *Social Psychology Quarterly*, 44, 271-278.
- Schmitt, M., Gollwitzer, M., Forster, N., & Montada, L. (2004). Effects of objective and subjective account components on forgiving. *The Journal of Social Psychology*, 144, 465-485.
- Slocum, D., Allan, A., & Allan, M. (2006, 7-9 June). *The relationship between apology, sorriness and forgiving: The findings of a qualitative and quantitative study*. Paper presented at the Third International Conference on Therapeutic Jurisprudence, Perth, Western Australia.
- Taft, L. (2000). Apology subverted: The commodification of apology. *The Yale Law Journal*, 109, 1135-1160.
- Witvliet, C. V., Ludwig, T. E., & Vander Laan, K. L. (2001). Granting forgiveness or harboring grudges: Implications for emotion, physiology, and health. *Psychological Science*, 12, 117-123.
- Zechmeister, J., Garcia, S., Romero, C., & Vas, S. (2004). Don't apologize unless you mean it: A laboratory investigation of forgiveness and retaliation. *Journal of Social and Clinical Psychology*, 23, 532-564.

Running Head: LEVELS OF RESTORATIVE BEHAVIOUR IN AAA MODEL

Examination of Different Levels of Restorative Behaviour Utilising the

Affect, Affirmation and Action Model

Jessica Sumner

Edith Cowan University

## Abstract

Slocum, Allan and Allan's (2006) developed an *Affirmation, Affect and Action Model* (AAA model) of restorative behaviour. Slocum et al. suggest that levels of restorative behaviour differ according to the nature of affirmations, affect and actions perceived, and influence perceptions of an apology, on one end of a continuum, to true sorriness, at the upper end of the continuum. This study was the first investigation of the AAA model. In the present study, two hypothetical scenarios were employed to investigate participant's perceptions of apologetic behaviour, true sorriness and the likelihood of forgiveness, through manipulation of affirmations, affect and actions in the scenarios. One hundred people from the population were randomly assigned either *Scenario A* or *Scenario B*. Scenario A demonstrated a lower level of restorative behaviour using the AAA model, or scenario B incorporated higher levels of restorative behaviour. It was hypothesised that the participant's ratings on a Visual Analogue Scale (VAS) of apologetic behaviour, true sorriness and forgiveness would differ between the two scenarios. Secondly, gender differences were hypothesised. Finally, it was hypothesised that higher ratings on the VAS for true sorriness and apologetic behaviour would be associated with higher ratings of forgiveness. Three 2 X 2 factorial ANOVA's were conducted on the data obtained from 100 participants. The results revealed significantly higher ratings of apology and true sorriness in Scenario B compared to Scenario A. No interaction or gender differences were found. The correlation between true sorriness and forgiveness ratings was highly significant, and the correlation between apology and forgiveness ratings was significant. Further analysis also revealed a significant main effect of age on ratings of forgiveness, the oldest age range of participants (50+ years) were significantly less forgiving than the youngest age range of participants (20-29 years). The results of this quantitative study provides support for Slocum et al.'s hypothesis that the manipulation of the affirmation, affect and action components influence people's perceptions of restorative behaviour.



## Examination of Different Levels of Restorative Behaviour Utilising the Affect, Affirmation and Action Model

Apologies are an important element in human interaction, particularly when predicaments occur, whether minor or severe. Apologies have been studied in social situations (Schlenker & Darby, 1981) and in legal contexts (Allan, Allan, Kaminer, & Stein, 2006). Previous research on apology has supported an association between an apology and forgiveness, such that apology enhances forgiveness (McCullough et al., 1998; McCullough, Worthington, & Rachal, 1997). For example, research conducted by McCullough et al. (1998) examined the extent to which forgiveness could be predicted from the manipulation of several variables in an interpersonal transgression-related vignette. Variables manipulated included offence-severity, relationship closeness, relationship commitment, apology, empathy and rumination. Data from participants self-reported responses revealed that an apology is indeed associated with forgiving. Therefore, apologies are important in predicaments because they are supported by research as enhancing forgiveness.

There has been an abundance of research conducted on forgiveness, and the benefits of forgiveness have been well supported. For example, research conducted by Witvliet, Ludwig and Vander Laan (2001) examined the implications of forgiveness and un-forgiveness on personal physical health. Seventy-one participants in the study were examined on emotional and physiological effects of imagining unforgiving and forgiving responses to an interpersonal offender in their own life. Physiological responses were monitored throughout the imagining process and participants rated their feelings after each imagining trial including their emotional valence, anger, sadness and perceived control. Analyses of the data revealed that unforgiving thoughts provoked more aversive emotions, and significantly higher corrugators (brow), electromyogram, skin conductance, heart rate, and blood pressure changes from baseline than the forgiving thoughts condition. Some of these were also found to persist after imagining into the recovery periods. On the other hand, forgiving thoughts

provoked a greater sense of control and comparatively less physiological arousal/responses to the imagining process. Therefore, it was concluded that un-forgiveness in response to an offence may erode health whereas forgiveness responses enhance health. This study provides support for the notion that forgiveness is important because it enhances physical well-being.

Coyle and Enright (1997) have shown further benefits of forgiveness on mental health. Coyle and Enright's study was conducted on ten men, who described themselves as hurt by an abortion decision made by their partner. Participants were randomly assigned to a 12 week forgiveness treatment course or a wait-list control. The benefits of receiving the forgiveness treatment were demonstrated through these men experiencing significantly better psychological well-being compared to the men in the wait-list control group. More specifically, the experimental participants were reported to have significant gains in forgiveness and significant reductions in anxiety, anger and grief. Coyle and Enright reported that these psychological gains exhibited by the participants from forgiveness were maintained through a three month follow up period.

Research conducted by Kaminer, Stein, Mbanga and Zungu-Dirwayi (2001) has also supported the benefits of forgiveness on mental well-being. Kaminer et al. (2001) examined a population of South African people who had been victims of human rights violations. Through a procedure of documenting cases of human rights abuse, the 134 survivors provided a testimonial account of the offence. Kaminer et al. examined participant's psychiatric or mental health and their levels of forgiveness. Results revealed by Kaminer and colleagues indicated that the process of providing a testimony did not enhance participants mental health or degree of forgiveness. However, analysis of data did reveal that victims of human rights abuse with low levels of forgiveness to the offenders were highly associated with poorer mental health status. Kaminer et al. argued that implications from their research support the need for therapeutic forgiveness interventions on such victims of human rights abuse, in order to enhance forgiving and therefore increase mental health.

Research has well established the benefits of forgiveness on both physical and mental well-being. Therefore, the psychological construct of an apology is very important to clinical psychologists because it enhances forgiving. However, it is apparent that there is a problem in the literature in defining an apology. Researchers in the area seem to differ on their definitions of an apology. For example, early research in the apology literature defines an apology as generally any admissions of blameworthiness and regret (Schlenker & Darby, 1981). On the other hand, Gonzales, Pederson, Manning and Wetter (1990) argue later that apologies are more specific and need to be distinguished from excuses, justifications and refusals. They explain that excuses mitigate the actor's personal responsibility and justifications attempt to argue that under a different circumstance the act would have been unacceptable. Furthermore, refusals deny any responsibility for the act. They argue that an apology acknowledges the offence act, assumes responsibility for the act, gives an expression of regret and may offer some sort of restitution (Gonzales et al., 1990).

In legal contexts, the debate about how an apology is defined is evident. Taft (2000) argues that in the legal system, an apology should be considered to be a moral act. He explains that even after the verdicts or settlement of cases, the deep wounds in many clients are still not healed, and as a result they continue to suffer and feel hurt. Taft explains that the missing piece in order for healing to occur is an apology. In this line of thinking, it is the moral component of an apology that is important for healing, not the material items such as the money or house that the offended individual had been compensated with by the legal proceedings.

The importance of how an apology is defined and delivered by an offender has received further publicity in legal and political contexts. As Lazare (1995) recalls, on August 8, 1974, President Richard Nixon gave a speech of resignation. Nixon's speech featured regret for hurt caused by his decision to leave. Nixon then went on to say that if he had made some wrong judgments, it was because he believed it was in the best interest of the nation at the time. Such restorative

behaviours in legal or political contexts cause controversy over what an apology is, as the people of the nation ask themselves if they would accept the speech as an apology or not. Lazare argues that Nixon never acknowledged his wrongdoing or the consequences of his actions and does not take responsibility, therefore this is a failed attempt at an apology. As there is no consensus about what really constitutes an apology, it is likely that the people in the population would have had different opinions about Nixon's restorative behaviour.

Based on the confusion in the literature, Allan, Kaminer and Stein (2006) asked the question of what actually is an apology? Their research was conducted on the same victim sample as Kaminer et al. (2001). Allan et al. examined the relationship between forgiving and four restorative behaviours - excuses, admissions of guilt, apology and true sorrow. The results revealed that it is not just any apology that will enhance forgiveness. The research findings indicated that while an apology does promote forgiveness, it is only when true sorrow is perceived that a significant difference in forgiving occurs. In other words, true sorrow perceived by an offended person in response to a serious misconduct by another, is more likely to lead to forgiveness than other restorative behaviours including an apology, excuses or admission of guilt (Allan, Kaminer, & Stein, 2006). Therefore, it can be argued that not just any apology or restorative behaviour promotes forgiveness, however perceptions of true sorrow significantly do.

In light of these findings, Slocum, Allan and Kaminer (2006) further investigated apology and true sorrow. Their research qualitatively explored the differences between an apology and true sorrow. Interviews were conducted with 23 participants who were subjected to a breach of their personal trust (for example physical/verbal abuse, adultery) by a long term partner within the previous two years. These participants were offended by their partner that they were in an intimate relationship with for a period longer than two years. The consented interviews with the participants asked for their experiences regarding the offending behaviour, the type of apology received if any,

how sincere the apology was and if they were able to forgive the offending partner. The analysis of the participants' experiences revealed a clear distinction between what the participants perceived as an apology and what they saw as true sorrow.

Based on the qualitative research findings, Slocum and her colleagues (2006) proposed a model of apologetic restorative behaviour to distinguish between an apology and true sorrow. The model comprises three components; affirmation, affect and actions. According to Slocum et al., both an apology and true sorrow feature these three components, however the nature of these components differ. Slocum et al. argue that an individual cannot reach true sorrow without progressing through the apology phase. Although true sorrow is comprised of similar components (affirmation, affect and action), it may be described as one step further as the individual shifts from a self-focus to an other-focus perspective. In other words, both an apology and true sorrow comprise affirmation, affect and action, however they are different in nature. True sorrow perceptions display a deeper understanding of the cognitive and emotional processes involved, demonstrated in an individual's apologetic restorative behaviour. With the assistance of Slocum et al.'s model, it is possible to differentiate between different levels of apologetic restorative behaviour and their nature.

The *Affirmation, Affect and Action Model* (AAA model) developed by Slocum et al. (2006) is further outlined as follows. The affirmation component includes expressions, disclosure, confirmation and assurances, communicated through speech (Roget's Thesaurus; Lloyd, 1984, cited in Slocum et al., 2006). The affect component incorporates perceptions of the offender's emotional response to the offence. Finally, the action component represents behaviour exhibited by the offender in response to the offence. According to the model, an apology takes on a self focus as demonstrated by affirmation of the offence and wrong-doing by the offender. An apology features affect such as regret, where the offender wishes the offence had never occurred and feeling bad about it. In addition, an apology features action such as appeasement. At the apology level of the model, this is

an attempt by the offender to pacify the response of the offended and may incorporate attempts to restore the offence by repayment, replacement or restitution.

True sorrowfulness also features the components of affirmation, affect and action, however, the nature of these components differs from an apology, and takes on more of a self and other focus. Affirmations of truly sorry individuals involve acknowledgement of the offence act, and the implications that it had on the offended. Furthermore, this involves taking responsibility for the offence. Expressions of affect in true sorrowfulness feature sorrow. Sorrow is described by Slocum et al. (2006) as a negative emotional state which arises from feeling responsible for the hurt and suffering experienced by others. The offender realises the implications and consequences of the offence on not only themselves, but on others. Finally, the action component of true sorrowfulness features atonement. Slocum et al. explain that truly sorry individuals engage in atonement, which involves attempting to correct the offence situation through reformation, reparations, and thoughtful deeds that address the needs of the offended individuals. The affirmation, affect and action model is outlined below (Figure 1).

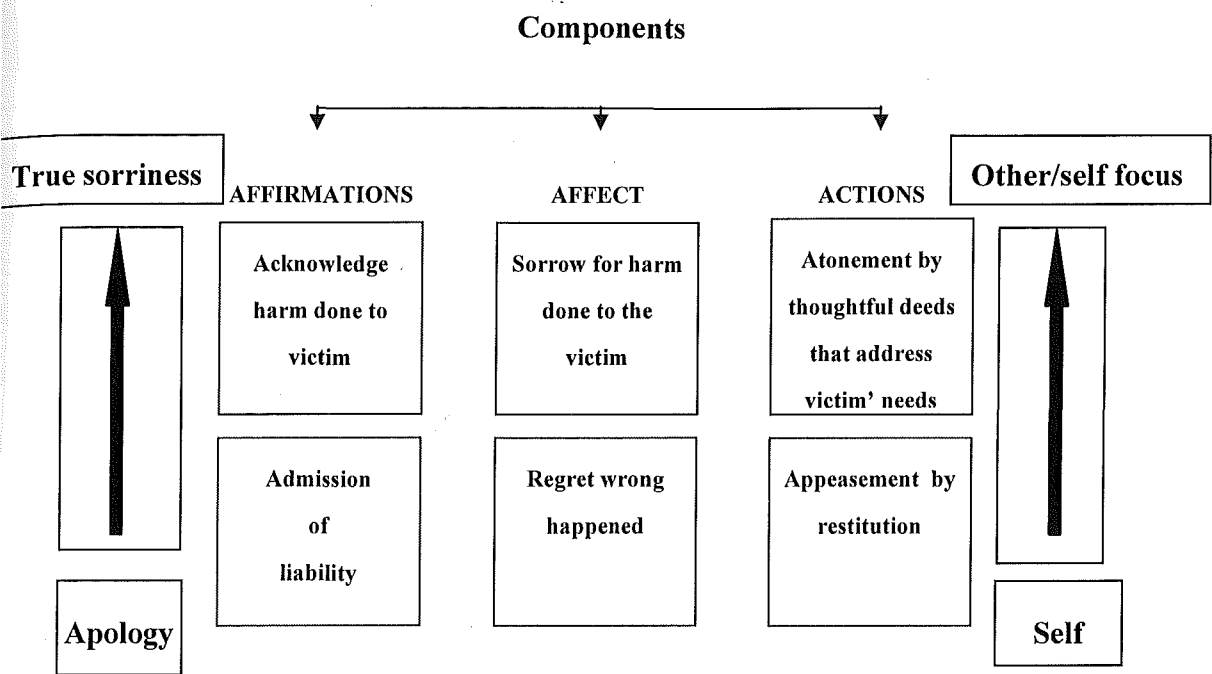


Figure 1: Affirmation, Affect and Action Model of Apology and True Sorriness

Given the confusion in the literature, the following terminology will be used. In the present paper the components of the AAA Model refers to affirmation, affect and action. Each component comprises numerous elements that differ in nature along a continuum. The elements of a lower level of apologetic restorative behaviour are positioned at the bottom of the model and the elements of true sorriness are positioned on top. This demonstrates the movement along a continuum from self focus to a self and other focus in an individual. The elements of an apology (lower level apologetic restorative behaviour) consist of admissions (affirmation component), regret (affect) and appeasement (actions). Then positioned above, the elements of true sorriness include acknowledgement (affirmation), sorrow (affect) and atonement (actions). For the purpose of this paper, the term restorative behaviour from this point onwards describes any type of apologetic restorative behaviour individuals engage in which attempts to restore a hurt relationship. It does not

include excuses, justifications or denial.

This current study was the first to quantitatively examine the model developed by Slocum et al. (2006) in an attempt to investigate support for their findings. Furthermore, Slocum et al.'s model was based on interviews with victims, but it is important to understand the different levels of restorative behaviour as perceived by people in the general population. The current study has important implications for relationship development between two people, conflict resolution, therapy, physical and mental well-being and from a mediation point of view. In line with Slocum et al.'s AAA Model, hypothetical scenarios were used to investigate different levels of restorative behaviour. In addition, gender differences in perceptions of restorative behaviour were also investigated, based on preliminary gender differences found by Slocum et al. and Allan et al. (2006).

This current study investigated three different hypotheses. Firstly, it was hypothesised that participant's ratings on Visual Analogue Scales (VAS) for apologetic behaviour, true sorrow and the likelihood of forgiveness would be different between the two levels of restorative behaviour. Secondly, gender differences were also hypothesised. The direction of differences was not indicated for the first two hypotheses. Finally, higher ratings of true sorrow and apologetic behaviour were hypothesised to be associated with higher ratings of forgiveness.

## Method

### *Research Design*

This study investigated how different levels of restorative behaviour demonstrated by the transgressor influenced perceptions of apology, true sorrow and the likelihood of forgiveness. The levels of restorative behaviour were manipulated in an experimental design through the use of hypothetical vignettes. The participants were randomly assigned to one of two restorative behaviour levels. According to Slocum et al.'s (2006) AAA Model, Scenario A featured affirmations, affect and actions that demonstrated a lower level of restorative behaviour. Alternatively, Scenario B featured



affirmations, affect and actions that demonstrated a higher level of restorative behaviour. In other words, the nature of the affirmations, affect and actions were manipulated in the experimental design. The combined influence of the three components in each scenario was investigated, not the individual influence of such components.

The present study also investigated gender differences in perceptions of apology, true sorrow and the likelihood of forgiveness from participant's responses on the hypothetical vignettes. Therefore, the main effect of two independent variables, namely restorative behaviour and gender, was investigated. A between subjects factorial design was employed to allow the investigation of possible interaction effects. The dependent variables that were investigated in the series of Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) were perceptions of the extent of an apology and true sorrow, and the likelihood of forgiveness.

### *Participants*

One hundred adult participants over the age of 20 years were sampled from the Western Australian population, from a variety of socio-economic classes, ages and origin of descent. The participants were recruited from the community through schools, higher education, employment companies, public shopping centres, public leisure centres and networking. Equal numbers of each restorative behaviour scenario were printed for distribution. Furthermore, approximately equal numbers of participants and equal representation of gender in each condition were targeted. Although random allocation was not obtained, it was attempted to obtain a wide variety of participants from different socio-economic classes, ages and origin of descent. However, after collection of 65 survey responses, male responses for Scenario A were deficient in numbers and were therefore targeted in final distributions, maintaining a wide age range and socio-economic status. The final count revealed 51 completed questionnaires were returned for Scenario A and 49 completed questionnaires were returned for Scenario B. Furthermore, for Scenario A there were 21 males and 30 females. For

Scenario B there were 25 males and 24 females. All participants in the study were between 20 and 69 years of age, with a relatively even representation from each age range in each condition (see Table 1). In addition to participants' recruitment from different socio-economic status and residential locations in the city of Perth, participants represented a wide range of main occupations and included doctors, managers, government workers, receptionists, engineers, hospitality workers, students, mothers and partially retired individuals. Also, participants reported a variety of marital status and included individuals that were single, in a de-facto relationship, married once, married more than once, divorced and single, and divorced and remarried.

### *Materials*

Each participant was provided with an information sheet detailing the aims of the research, confidentiality of participants, voluntary nature of participation and voluntary consent by return of the questionnaire (see Appendix A). One of two hypothetical scenarios was distributed to the participants (Appendices B and C). The scenarios were based on material reported by Slocum et al. (2006). Both scenarios were identical in storyline, however, they were manipulated in terms of affect, affirmation and action to determine if this brought about different responses on the dependant variables; ratings of perceived apologetic behaviour and true sorriness, and the likelihood of forgiveness. According to Slocum et al.'s model, scenario A portrayed more of a self focus, which featured admission of liability (affirmation), regret (affect) and appeasement (action). On the other hand, in terms of Slocum et al.'s model, scenario B portrayed more of a self-other focus. This incorporated acknowledgement of harm caused to the victim (affirmation), sorrow (affect) and atonement (action).

The three components in the AAA model were manipulated to present a different level of restorative behaviour in each scenario. The affirmations, affect and actions presented by Peter in scenario A demonstrated a lower level of restorative behaviour, in terms of Slocum et al.'s (2006)

model (Appendix B). According to Slocum et al., this display of affirmations, affect and action by an offender has a more self-focus and concern for themselves. Alternatively, the manipulation of affirmations, affect and actions presented by Peter in scenario B demonstrated more elements of restorative behaviour and a self-other focus, in terms of Slocum et al.’s model (Appendix C). Slocum et al. described these deeper and more understanding affirmations, affect and actions, as demonstrated by Peter in scenario B, as displaying a more self-other focus. In other words, higher levels of restorative behaviour involve a concern for the offended as well as the offender, and have a deeper focus on the offense principle rather than just the offense act. The table below outlined how the three components of Slocum et al.’s model, affirmation, affect and action, were manipulated in the two restorative scenarios.

Scenario A

Scenario B

Affirmation

“I wish I hadn’t done it” (wish it did not happen)

“I violated your trust and respect” (acknowledge offense principle)

“It was very wrong of me” (know it is wrong)

“I insulted and humiliated you..” (acknowledge wrongdoing)

“I’m sorry I yelled at you and had a go at you like that.” (saying sorry)

“You have every right to be angry and upset with me” (acknowledge hurt caused to self and others)

Regret offense (self blame)

“I was wrong and very inconsiderate” (take responsibility)

“I know I should have never mentioned your abortion like that...” (acceptance of fault/blame)

“I would like to make it up to you” (state intent for correcting the wrong)

Affect

Not so deep

“worried look on his face..” (feeling truly sorry and ‘see it’, eg deep sadness)

“Peter felt regret for what he had done” (regret for self, being the agent of wrongdoing)

“..deeply sad that he had hurt Janet so much” (concern for the others)

"I feel so embarrassed..." (concern for self)	(Sorrow)
"I am feeling very bad..."(concern for self)	"Peter felt bad about his actions and words.." (focus on emotional elements surrounding the hurtful consequences)
<u>Action</u>	
"I won't do that to you again" (restore damaged perception of self)	"continued to ask Janet if she would like to..." (effort and thoughtfulness)
"He reached out to Janet, took her hands..." (reaching out to the offended person as a relief mechanism)	"apologise to you in front of the others" (address the needs of the partner)
	"let them know that I realize that I was inconsiderate and disrespectful to you and hurt you.." (going out of their way for the offended)

Table 1. Displays the manipulation of elements included in Scenario A and Scenario B from each component of Slocum et al.'s AAA Model (affirmations, affect and actions).

At the end of each scenario there were three questions, and participants were instructed to make a mark anywhere on the Visual Analogue Scale (VAS) corresponding to their response. The three questions included were:

- to what degree do you think Peter was apologetic?
- to what degree do you think Peter was sorry?
- to what degree do you think Peter will be forgiven?

Furthermore, general demographic questions were attached to the questionnaire to obtain information about each participant's age range, gender, main occupation and marital status.

Procedure

Firstly, the hypothetical vignettes were created based Slocum et al.'s (2006) AAA model. Secondly, both the scenarios were pilot tested to examine if they led to different responses in the

same individual. Six participants were recruited for the purpose of the pilot test, three males and three females of varying ages. Each of these participants was invited to complete the questionnaire for each scenario. Half of the participants received scenario A first and the other half received scenario B first, to reduce potential order bias. The participants were provided time alone to complete both questionnaires. Upon completion, the participants were interviewed on their opinions of the scenarios including perceived differences between the scenarios, how realistic the scenarios were and if any component of the scenario, instructions or questions was ambiguous. The participants generally agreed that the scenarios were a good reflection of reality, were understandable and five of the participants recognised differences between the two scenarios, consistent with Slocum et al.'s (2006) AAA model. These responses were not included in the final data analysis.

Data collection procedures involved the random distribution of 140 surveys to people in the general population. Participants were invited to participate in the study through: networking and acquaintances in a diversity of community groups, word of mouth, workplaces (varies), education (schools and higher education), public shopping centres and public leisure centres. However, at no stage were participants pressured to participate. Participants interested in volunteering were issued with an information letter, a demographic survey and one of the two restorative scenarios. Participants were required to read the information sheet before participating in the project. Then, participants were asked to read the scenario and complete the questions truthfully and to the best of their ability. This took approximately 5-10 minutes. For convenience, all participants were issued return address pre-paid envelopes to allow participants the option to complete the questions at a later time, seal and post their responses if they chose to. No names were recorded and participants remained anonymous. The response rate was thus particularly high (74%), with 104 surveys returned. However, four surveys were omitted as they were not complete enough for purposes of data analysis.

Due to the design of the study, it was not necessary to use consent forms for participants. If participants chose to volunteer and participate, they implicitly gave their consent by posting or handing the completed questionnaire back for use in the research. In the unlikely event that a participant felt distressed, upset or hurt by the scenario, the information document provided to all participants included telephone numbers where participants could obtain free support (see Appendix A).

### Results

Table 2 provides the means and standard deviations for all three dependant variables for the different levels of restorative behaviour. The means were relatively high for both scenario, on ratings of apologetic behaviour and true sorriness. The mean scores for the likelihood of forgiveness were moderate in both scenarios. Both male and female participants also responded with high rating on the VAS for both scenarios.

Dependant Variable	Scenario	Gender	Mean	Standard Deviation
<u>Apology</u>	A	Male	7.24	1.76
		Female	6.95	1.55
	B	Male	7.38	2.35
		Female	8.32	1.39
<u>True Sorriness</u>	A	Male	6.55	1.97
		Female	6.55	1.78
	B	Male	7.40	2.18
		Female	7.52	2.02
<u>Forgiveness</u>	A	Male	3.93	1.76
		Female	3.84	1.79
	B	Male	4.69	1.90
		Female	4.35	1.74

Table 2. The mean ratings of perceived apologetic behaviour, perceived true sorriness and likelihood of forgiveness in each restorative behaviour condition (Scenario A and Scenario B) for males and females.

Using SPSS for Windows Version 14.0, three 2 x 2 factorial Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) were conducted to investigate the effect of different levels of restorative behaviour (Scenario A and Scenario B) and the effect of gender (males and females) on participants’ perceptions of apologetic behaviour and true sorriness, and the likelihood of forgiveness, as rated on the VAS. An alpha level of .05 was used for all statistical analyses. All the assumptions of the ANOVA were tested and

revealed that both the normality and homogeneity of variance assumptions were violated in the perceived apologetic behaviour ratings. To better satisfy these assumptions a data transformation (Log10 (11- rating)) was conducted. The log of the perceived apologetic behaviour ratings resulted in a more normally distributed population and all the assumptions were deemed satisfactory. The log of the perceived truly sorry ratings was also employed for analysis as it improved the normality of the population. The likelihood of forgiveness rating assumptions were deemed satisfactory.

The factorial ANOVA indicated a significant main effect for the restorative behaviour variable. Perceptions of apologetic behaviour were significantly higher in Scenario B than in Scenario A ( $F(1,96) = 7.47, p = .007$ ). The distribution of ratings on perceived apologetic behaviour in Scenario A and Scenario B is graphically presented below (Figure 2).

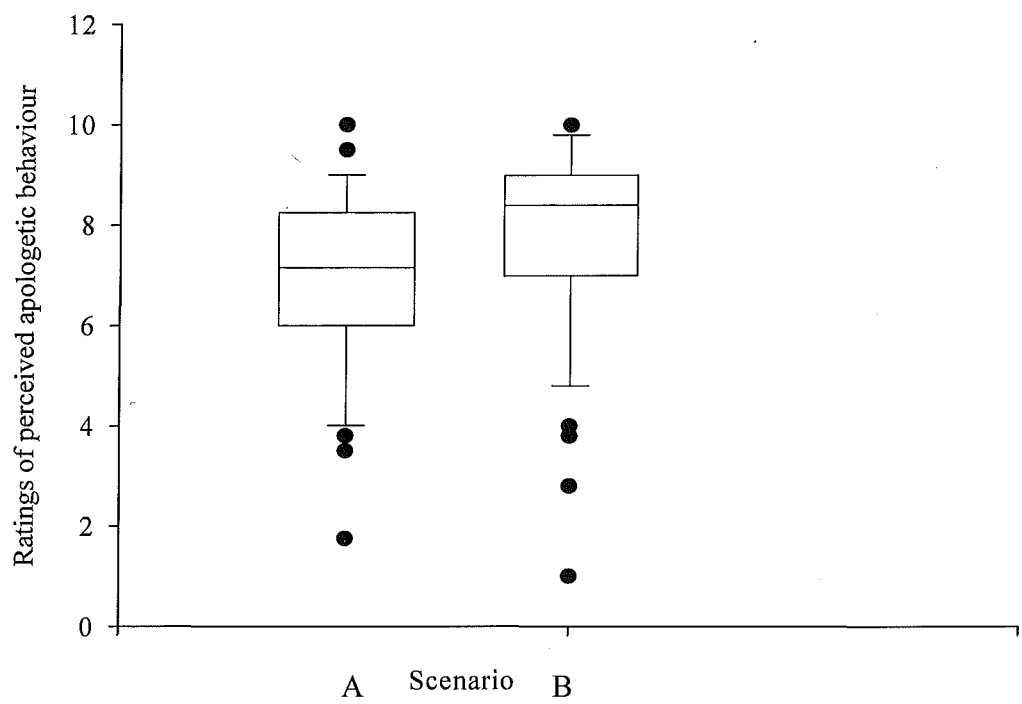


Figure 2. Box plots presenting the distribution of ratings on perceived apologetic behaviour in Scenario A, compared to Scenario B.



Furthermore, perceptions of true sorriness were significantly higher in Scenario B than in Scenario A ( $F(1,96) = 6.91, p = .01$ ). The distribution of ratings on perceived true sorriness in Scenario A and Scenario B is graphically presented below (Figure 3).

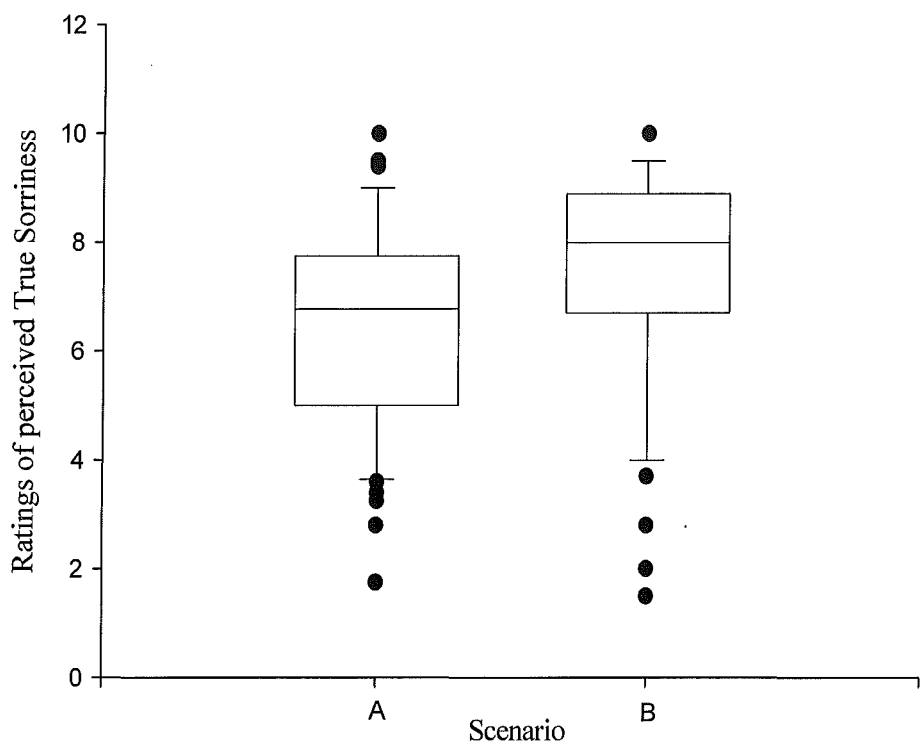


Figure 3. Boxplots presenting the distribution of ratings on perceived true sorriness in Scenario A, compared to Scenario B.

Perceptions of forgiveness did not differ significantly between the two restorative behaviour conditions. No significant main effect of gender or interaction was revealed.

Further analysis also investigated the main effect of age range of participants (20-29, 30-39, 40-49 and 50+ years old) on the three dependant variables, using an ANOVA. The assumptions of equal variances and normality were tested. The log of perceptions of apologetic behaviour ratings did not

satisfy the assumption of equal variance ( $F(7,92) = 1.87, p = .048$ ). However, the assumptions were more closely met using the log transformation than the original ratings. Given the robustness of the ANOVA to violations of unequal variances the analysis was continued, using the log of apologetic and true sorriness ratings. Similarly to the previous factorial ANOVA, the main effect of restorative behaviour condition revealed perceptions of apologetic behaviour were significantly higher in Scenario B than in Scenario A ( $F(1,92) = 6.77, p = .01$ ). Furthermore, perceptions of true sorriness were significantly higher in the Scenario B than in the Scenario A ( $F(1,92) = 5.94, p = .017$ ). Perceptions of forgiveness did not significantly differ between the two restorative behaviour conditions.

Analysis of the main effect of age range revealed that perceptions of forgiveness was significant ( $F(3,92) = 4.83, p = .004$ ). Pair-wise post hoc comparisons using Tukey's Honestly Significant Difference (HSD) revealed that perceptions of the likelihood of forgiveness significantly differed between participants in the youngest age group and the oldest age group. More specifically, the youngest age range of participants were significantly more forgiving ( $M = 4.69, SD = 1.32$ ) than the oldest age range of participants ( $M = 3.05, SD = 1.66$ ). The different ratings on likelihood of forgiveness between the different age ranges (in years) is presented in the box plot graph below (Figure 4).

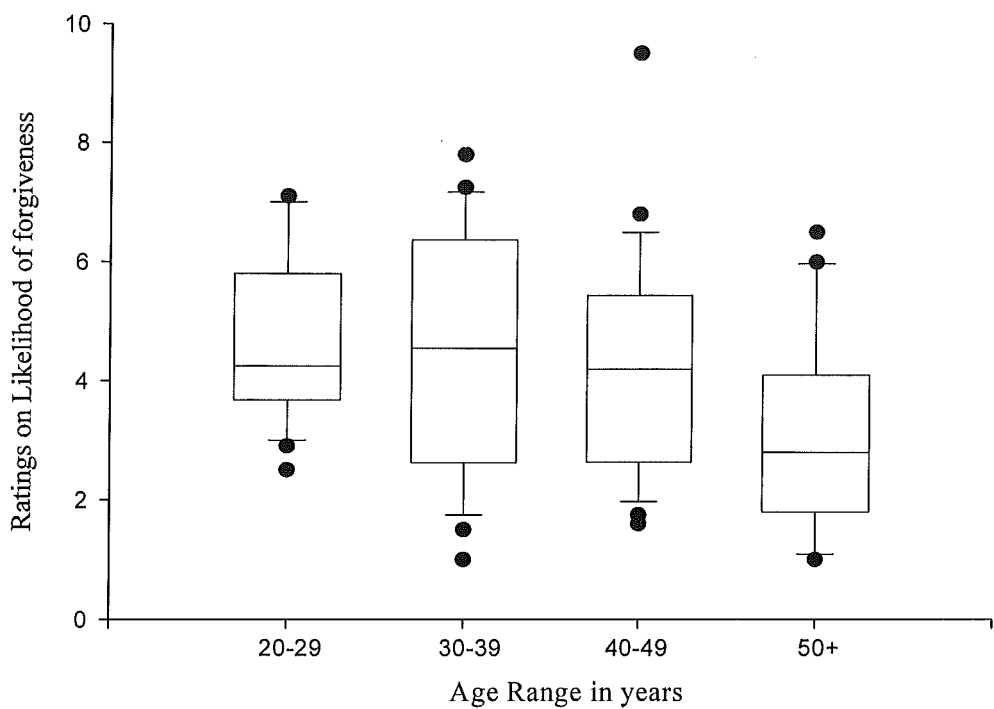


Figure 4. Boxplots presenting the distribution of ratings on the likelihood of forgiveness between the different age ranges of participants (20-29 years, 30-39 years, 40-49 years and 50+ years old).

A significant interaction was revealed between restorative behaviour and age groups on rating of perceived apologetic behaviour. The interaction is graphically represented below (Figure 5), using the Log of apologetic behaviour ratings<sup>1</sup>. The graph reveals only slight variation in apologetic behaviour ratings between the two scenarios for the 30-39 years, 40-49 years and 50 plus years age groups. However, in the graphical representation, a larger difference in apologetic behaviour ratings between the two scenarios can be observed for participants in the 20-29 years age group. In the 20-29 years age group, Scenario B had higher ratings on perceived apologetic behaviour than scenario A.

<sup>1</sup> The Log of apologetic behaviour ratings presented in Figure 5 inversed the relationship in the Y-axis, therefore lower scores on the scale of 0 to 1 represent higher ratings of perceived apologetic behaviour.

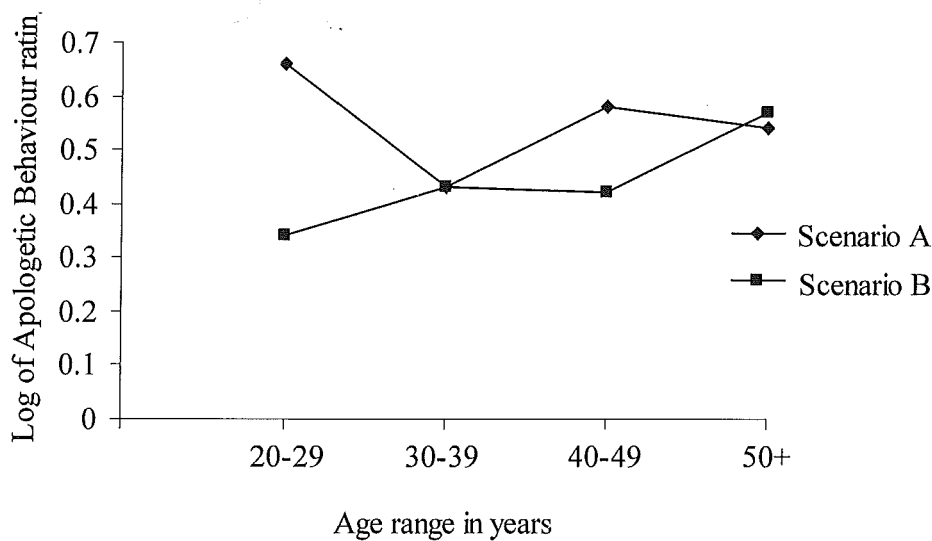


Figure 5. Interaction effect between the two levels of restorative behaviour (Scenario A and Scenario B) and the different age groups (20-29 years, 30-39 years, 40-49 years and 50+ years) on the average Log of apologetic behaviour rating.

Based on the above research findings, further analysis was conducted to investigate the possibility that the age differences in likelihood of forgiveness ratings were related to the perceived severity of the transgression. The severity ratings for the two levels of restorative behaviour were combined for purposes of analysis, as the offence situation was identical and only the level of restorative behaviour of the offender differed between the two scenarios. The homogeneity of variance assumption was violated in the offence severity ratings, therefore a data transformation (Log10 (11- rating)) was conducted. The log of the offense severity ratings was employed for analysis as it improved the homogeneity of variances and the assumptions were deemed satisfactory. A one-way ANOVA was conducted to investigate whether the different age groups rated the severity of the transgression differently. The results revealed a significant difference between age groups in the ratings of severity ( $F(3,97) = 3.59, p = .016$ ). Post-hoc analysis using Tukey's HSD, revealed that

the oldest age range of participants rated the scenario as significantly more severe than the youngest age range of participants. The mean of the different ratings in offense severity between the age groups are graphically represented in the figure below<sup>2</sup> (Figure 6).

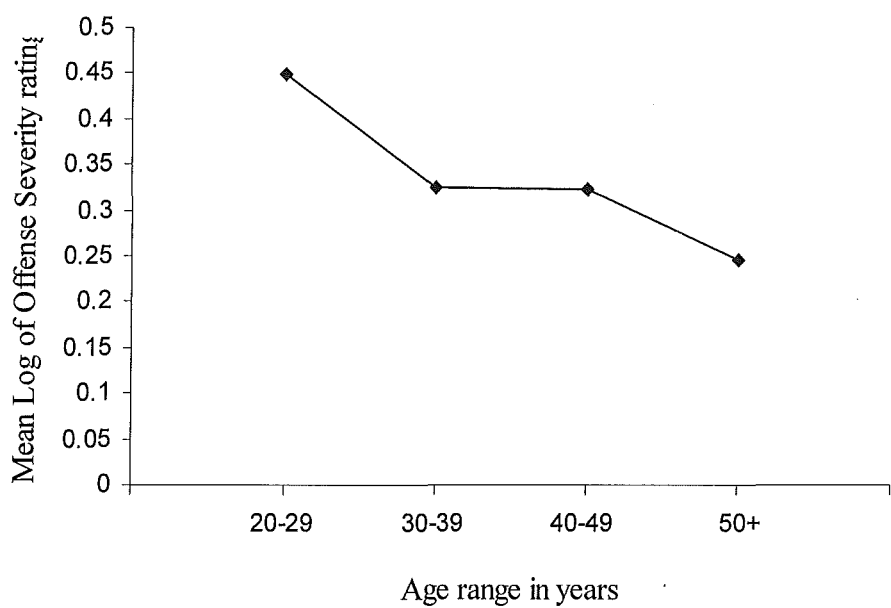


Figure 6. Mean log of offense severity ratings for participants in the different age ranges (20-29 years, 30-39 years, 40-49 years and 50+ years).

Furthermore, the relationship between the dependant variable likelihood of forgiveness and both the other dependant variables was investigated. The associations between perceived apologetic behaviour ratings and forgiving, and perceived true sorriness and forgiving were investigated by utilising Pearson’s product-moment correlation. The assumptions of the correlational analysis were met. The dependent variable perception of true sorriness was significantly correlated with the dependant variable forgiveness ( $r = .30, p = .003$ ). This suggests a low, positive association between

<sup>2</sup> The Log of offense severity ratings presented in Figure 6 inversed the relationship in the Y-axis, therefore lower scores on the scale of 0 to 1 represent higher ratings of offense severity.

perceived true sorriness and forgiveness, as displayed in Figure 7 below.

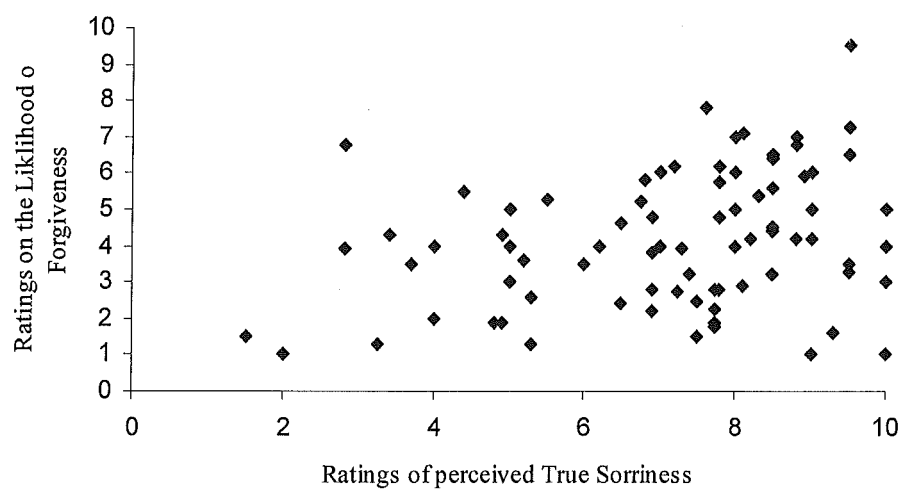


Figure 7. The association between perceived ratings of true sorriness and ratings on the likelihood of forgiveness.

In addition, the dependent variable perception of apologetic behaviour was significantly correlated with the dependant variable forgiveness ( $r = .22, p = .03$ ). This also suggests a low, positive association between apologetic behaviour and forgiveness (see Figure 8 below).

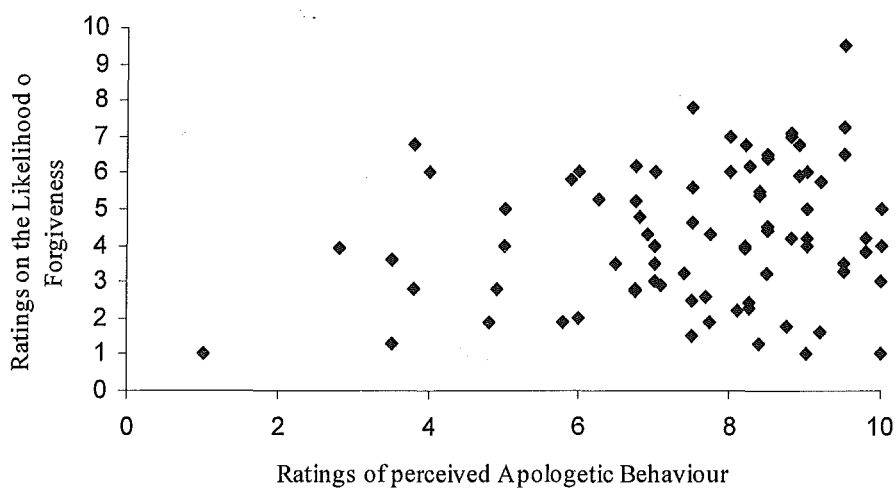


Figure 8. The association between perceived ratings of apologetic behaviour and ratings on the likelihood of forgiveness.

Further analysis investigated the association between apology and forgiveness, and true sorriness and forgiveness for each level of restorative behaviour separately, using Pearson’s product-moment correlation. This analysis revealed that neither perceived apologetic behaviour or true sorriness ratings were significantly correlated with likelihood of forgiveness ratings in Scenario A. Alternatively, in separate analysis of Scenario B, true sorriness ratings were significantly correlated with forgiveness rating ( $p = .002$ ), which suggests a high association between the two dependant variables. In addition, apologetic behaviour ratings were significantly correlated with forgiveness ratings ( $p = .04$ ) for Scenario B, which suggests an association between the two dependant variables.

Discussion

The current study investigated different levels of restorative behaviour, according to Slocum et al. (2006)’s AAA model, and results supported the first and third experimental hypothesis. Firstly, it was hypothesised that participant’s ratings on the VAS of apologetic behaviour, true sorriness and the likelihood of forgiveness would be different between the two levels of restorative behaviour. The

results support this hypothesis as the factorial ANOVA revealed a significant main effect of restorative behaviour condition. As hypothesised, the ratings for apology and true sorrow differed significantly between the two levels of restorative behaviour. More specifically, both the apology and true sorrow rating were significantly higher in Scenario B compared to Scenario A. However, no significant difference was found between the two restorative behaviour conditions on ratings of the likelihood of forgiveness.

According to Slocum et al. (2006), there are differing levels of restorative behaviour. Restorative behaviour can be described as consisting of affirmations, affect and actions, however, the nature of these elements may vary along a continuum, hence lower and higher levels of restorative behaviour in the AAA Model (Slocum et al., 2006). Scenario B, represented a restorative behaviour, which involved more elements in the AAA model which reflected a self-other rather than a self focus. For example, Peter in the scenario demonstrated more concern for his offended partner (affect) and acknowledged the principle involved that he violated (affirmation). It can be perceived that this restorative behaviour entails a deeper understanding at the emotional (affect) and cognitive (affirmation) levels, which in turn leads to behaviour that addresses the offended individual's needs (action). In the current research findings, significant differences were reported between the two scenarios on the ratings of apologetic behaviour and true sorrow. These findings support the notion that the two scenarios presented in the current study demonstrate two different levels of restorative behaviour. Through the manipulation of affirmations, affect and action in the scenarios, participants from the general population perceived Scenario B as displaying significantly higher levels of apologetic behaviour and true sorrow than Scenario A. Therefore, it is argued that the present study provides support for Slocum et al.'s AAA Model of restorative behaviour.

Scenario A represented a lower level of restorative behaviour, which involved affirmations, affect and actions from Slocum et al.'s (2006) AAA Model, however of a different nature. Although,



the same elements are presented as in Scenario B, this scenario demonstrated more of a focus on the offender rather than addressing the needs of the offended. For example, Peter in the scenario was concerned about himself, being the agent of wrongdoing. Peter does admit fault, feels bad about his actions (affect), and acknowledges the offense act (affirmation). According to Slocum et al., the distinction between this level of restorative behaviour and higher levels can be perceived by the offender's focus - on the self rather than others including the offended. For example, restorative behaviours of a lower level are less thoughtful, involve recognition of the offense act and admit fault without a deep understanding at the emotional and cognitive levels. According to Slocum et al.'s AAA model, the lower level of restorative behaviour demonstrated by Peter in Scenario A comprises the elements of an apology. The participants from the general population rated perceptions of apologetic behaviour and true sorriness in Scenario A accordingly. Although Scenario A demonstrated an apology, participants rated perceived apologetic behaviour and true sorriness significantly lower than Scenario B. Based on the current research findings, it suggests that the addition of a deeper understanding through acknowledging the offense principle and the needs and hurt of the offended are required for higher levels of perceived apologetic behaviour and thus true sorriness.

The distinction between levels of restorative behaviour present by Slocum et al. (2006) has several important implications. According to Slocum et al.'s AAA model, higher levels of restorative behaviour communicate true sorriness. The present research findings indeed revealed significantly higher ratings of true sorriness in the higher level of restorative behaviour (Scenario B). Therefore, the levels of the affirmation, affect and action components that communicate true sorriness are supported. As research has suggested that only perceptions of true sorriness significantly promote forgiveness (Allan et al., 2006), the AAA Model provides a good illustration of the nature of components that constitute true sorriness. Furthermore, the supported association between true

sorriness and forgiveness is important because forgiveness increases individuals' physical and mental wellbeing (Schmitt, Gollwitzer, Forster, & Montada, 2004; Witvliet, Ludwig, & Vander Laan, 2001).

The second hypothesis in the current study was expected gender differences, however, the direction of difference was not predicted. Despite preliminary research findings on gender differences by Slocum et al. (2006) and Allan et al. (2006), the current study does not support these gender differences. This may be influenced by a number of factors, such as gender bias in response to the transgressor in the hypothetical scenario being male, sensitivity of the participants to the issue of abortion presented in the scenario or not an adequate sample size to indicate possible gender differences. Although this study does not support gender differences in response to restorative behaviour in the sampled population, it is premature to suggest that they do not exist. Alternatively, if further research continues to find non-significant gender differences, this suggests a consistency between males and females regarding how they perceive restorative behaviour.

The final investigation in the current study, investigated the correlation between true sorriness and forgiveness. Higher ratings of true sorriness and apologetic behaviour were hypothesised to be correlated with higher ratings of forgiveness. Correlation analysis revealed that indeed true sorriness ratings were significantly correlated with ratings of the likelihood of forgiveness. In addition, apologetic behaviour ratings were significantly correlated with ratings of the likelihood of forgiveness. These results support previous research findings conducted by Allan et al. (2006), that perceived true sorriness significantly promotes forgiveness. Although the current study also found a significant correlation between forgiveness and apologetic behaviour, it was less significant than the correlation between true sorriness and likelihood of forgiveness.

Although the correlations presented in the two correlational analysis (Figure 7 & 8) are relatively weak, the significant findings suggest that there is an association between true sorriness

and forgiveness, and apologetic behaviour and forgiveness. The weak correlation reported indicates a limitation of the study in interpretation of the correlational analysis. However, the pattern of the distribution in the correlational scatter plots for both the variables investigated is more in line with previous research (Allan et al., 2006). Previous research has indicated that there are many factors that promote forgiveness (Allan, Allan, Kaminer, & Stein, 2006; Robbennolt, 2003; Taft, 2000; Zechmeister, Garcia, Romero, & Vas, 2004). Allan et al. (2006) reported that true sorrow significantly promotes forgiveness. Research conducted by Taft (2000) suggested that forgiveness comes from within, and can occur without the presence of an apology. Therefore, it would be naïve to suggest that perceptions of true sorrow and apologetic behaviour bring about forgiveness, without taking into consideration the other multiple factors identified in previous research to influence forgiveness.

The importance of the current correlational analysis findings indicate that there is an association between apologetic behaviour and forgiveness and true sorrow and forgiveness. However, it does not support the necessity of these variables in order for forgiveness to occur. As displayed in Figure 7, if low levels true sorrow are perceived, the likelihood of forgiveness is very low. However, if high levels of true sorrow are perceived, the likelihood of forgiveness may be low or high. This association suggests that perceptions of true sorrow do not lead to forgiveness, however it certainly does promote the likelihood of forgiveness. A very similar association may be observed in Figure 8 between levels of perceived apologetic behaviour and the likelihood of forgiveness. It is argued that perceived apologetic behaviour and particularly perceived true sorrow help promote forgiveness, which is important for physical and mental well-being (Coyle & Enright, 1997; Witvliet, Ludwig, & Vander Laan, 2001).

The investigation of the influence of age range of participants on their rating of apologetic behaviour, true sorrow and likelihood of forgiveness was not planned in the aims of the present

study. However, based on the research findings of no significant differences between males and females on all three dependant variables, the potential influence of participants age was unknown. Therefore, post-hoc analysis was conducted to investigate the influence of participants' age range (in years) on their rating of apologetic behaviour, true sorriness and forgiveness. Interestingly, the findings revealed a significant difference between participants' age range on their ratings of the likelihood of forgiveness. More specifically, the oldest participants were significantly less forgiving than the youngest age range of participants. This suggests an influence of age on the likelihood of forgiveness ratings.

The research finding that the older participants rated the likelihood of forgiveness significantly less than the youngest age range of participants raised interest in their ratings of severity on the scenario. Further post-hoc analysis investigated participants' ratings of severity on the scenario based on their different age groups. This further analysis revealed that the oldest age range of participants rated the severity of the scenario significantly more severe than the youngest age range of participants. Other age range groups of participants did not significantly differ on their ratings of offense severity. These findings suggest that age differences between the youngest and oldest participants in ratings of forgiveness are related to their perceptions of the severity of the transgression.

The findings of this research have important implications in clinical and forensic contexts. Employing Slocum et al.'s AAA model, psychologists may be able to differentiate between lower levels of restorative behaviour, such as an apology concerned about oneself, and higher levels of restorative behaviour that demonstrate more elements of restorative behaviour and communicate true sorriness. The AAA model of restorative behaviour outlines the way in which apologies are able to differ in nature, and therefore may be used to evaluate restorative behaviour.

It is important not to divide the AAA model into two, with an upper and lower level, as

Slocum et al. explains that there are various levels of restorative behaviour that fit along a continuum in the model. The AAA model demonstrates the range of elements composing apologetic restorative behaviour, and the direction of variation. Such restorative behaviours differ in nature. For purposes of this experiment, two different levels of restorative behaviour were chosen for Scenario A and Scenario B, to attempt to determine if responses differed based on the manipulation of the AAA model components. The results of this study supported two different levels of restorative behaviour by nature in the AAA model.

The current study supports that manipulation of affirmations, affect and actions in the AAA model influences perceptions of the level of restorative behaviour. The findings from this research facilitate a greater understanding of the components involved in levels of restorative behaviour. Therefore, the AAA model of restorative behaviour assists in identifying the nature of the components that transgressors' present. The AAA Model allows greater interpretation of meaning when an individual says that they have apologised for a transgression. Moreover, the AAA model allows a greater understanding of what offended individuals want in an apology. Particularly, with the demonstrated confusion in the literature with regards to how an apology is defined, this study has important implications for the way in which apology is operationally defined. Therefore, the current research findings have important implications in the analysis of what one is offering in a level of apologetic restorative behaviour.

The AAA Model of restorative behaviour supported in the present study can be employed to analyse the level of individuals' restorative behaviour. As previously mentioned, on August 8, 1974, President Richard Nixon gave a speech of resignation. According to Lazare (1995), Nixon's speech featured regret for hurt caused by his decision to leave. Lazare also argues that Nixon never acknowledged his wrongdoing or the consequences of his actions and does not take responsibility for his actions. However, Nixon did explain that any wrong decisions he had made were because he

believed it was in the best interest of the country at the time. Utilising Slocum et al.'s (2006) AAA Model of restorative behaviour, it is possible to perceive that the restorative behaviour displayed by Nixon featured the regret element of affect. This element presented by Nixon is very much self-focused, and represents a lower level of apologetic restorative behaviour. This may be perceived by individuals as an apology, however the only element that Nixon displays from the AAA model is regret. It may be argued that Nixon only offered regret in his attempt at an apology.

Slocum et al.'s AAA model has implications on how apologies have been defined in previous research. Gonzales et al., (1990) argue that an apology acknowledges the offense act, assumes responsibility for the act, gives an expression of regret and may offer some sort of restitution. According to the AAA Model, the apology defined by Gonzales features the affirmation, affect and action components of a lower level restorative behaviour. Gonzales identifies the elements of admission of liability, regret and appeasement that demonstrate an apology. However, Slocum et al. describe this level of restorative behaviour as an apology, that is also self-focused.

One limitation of the present study was that it was based on one type of personal transgression. It must be recognised that there are various types of transgressions that may occur in peoples' lives and require restorative behaviour. However, the transgression selected in this study demonstrated that the manipulation of affirmations, affect and action does influence perceptions of the level of restorative behaviour. Another possible limitation in the current study is gender bias, as the offending partner in the transgression was male. This may have influenced males' or females' responses to the scenario. Further research may wish to investigate potential gender bias in response to personal transgressions.

This study quantitatively demonstrates that the manipulation of affirmations, affect and action influences perceptions of different levels of restorative behaviour. The model developed by Slocum et al. (2006) provides a coherent demonstration of how different levels of restorative behaviour may

share the same three components (AAA), however the nature of these components differ along a continuum. As the model illustrates, lower levels of restorative behaviour take on a self-focus, whereas, higher levels demonstrate more elements of restorative behaviour, are concerned about the self and others, and are argued to communicate true sorrow. This quantitative study demonstrated support for the AAA Model proposed by Slocum et al. to distinguish between different levels of apologetic restorative behaviour.

## References

- Allan, A., Allan, M., Kaminer, D., & Stein, D. (2006). Exploration of the association between apology and forgiveness amongst victims of human rights violations. *Behavioral Sciences and the Law*, 24, 87-102.
- Coyle, C. T., & Enright, R. D. (1997). Forgiveness intervention with postabortion men. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*, 65, 1042-1046.
- Gonzales, M. H., Manning, D. J., & Haugen, J. A. (1992). Explaining our sins: Factors influencing offender accounts and anticipated victim responses. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 62, 958-971.
- Gonzales, M. H., Pederson, J. H., Manning, D. J., & Wetter, D. W. (1990). Pardon my gaffe: Effects of sex, status, and consequence severity on accounts. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 58, 610-621.
- Kaminer, D., Stein, D., Mbanga, I., & Zungu-Dirwayi, N. (2001). The truth and reconciliation commission in South Africa: Relation to psychiatric status and forgiveness among survivors of human rights abuses. *British Journal of Psychiatry*, 178, 373-377.
- Lazare, A. (1995). Go ahead say you're sorry. *Psychology Today*, 28, 40-43, 76, 78.
- McCullough, M. E., Rachal, K. C., Sandage, S., Worthington, E. L., Brown, S. W., & Hight, T. L. (1998). Interpersonal forgiving in close relationships: II. Theoretical elaboration and measurement. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 75, 1586-1603.
- McCullough, M. E., Worthington, E. L., & Rachal, K. C. (1997). Interpersonal forgiving in close relationships. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 73, 321-336.
- Robbennolt, J. K. (2003). Apologies and legal settlement: An empirical examination. *Michigan Law Review*, 102, 460-516.
- Schlenker, B. R., & Darby, B. W. (1981). The use of apologies in social predicaments. *Social*



*Psychology Quarterly*, 44, 271-278.

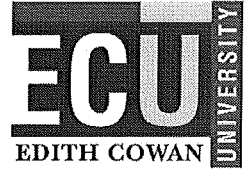
Schmitt, M., Gollwitzer, M., Forster, N., & Montada, L. (2004). Effects of objective and subjective account components on forgiving. *The Journal of Social Psychology*, 144, 465-485.

Slocum, D., Allan, A., & Allan, M. (2006, 7-9 June). *The relationship between apology, sorriness and forgiving: The findings of a qualitative and quantitative study*. Paper presented at the Third International Conference on Therapeutic Jurisprudence, Perth, Western Australia.

Taft, L. (2000). Apology subverted: The commodification of apology. *The Yale Law Journal*, 109, 1135-1160.

Witvliet, C. V., Ludwig, T. E., & Vander Laan, K. L. (2001). Granting forgiveness or harboring grudges: Implications for emotion, physiology, and health. *Psychological Science*, 12, 117-123.

Zechmeister, J., Garcia, S., Romero, C., & Vas, S. (2004). Don't apologize unless you mean it: A laboratory investigation of forgiveness and retaliation. *Journal of Social and Clinical Psychology*, 23, 532-564.



## **Appendix A**

### **Information Letter to Participants**

My name is Jessica Sumner and I am conducting a psychology research project as a part of my BSc Honours program at Edith Cowan University. I would like to invite you to participate in this study. I am seeking participants that are 20 years of age or older.

The aim of this study is to examine restorative behaviour in intimate relationships. The implications of this study are important for clinical psychology, therapeutic mediation and conflict resolution between two people. The study has been approved by the Faculty of Community Services, Education and Social Sciences Ethics Committee. Participation is completely voluntary and you can withdraw from the study at any time.

The study will involve the participant in reading a scenario and responding to 3 questions based on the scenario, then completing a general demographic questionnaire. Participants do not have to answer any questions that they do not wish to. Participation in this study should only take up a maximum of 10 minutes of your time. If you wish to participate, the completed questionnaires can be returned sealed in the pre-paid envelope by either returning it to the researcher in person or via the post. Your confidentiality is protected by not providing your name or any other identifying information. No-one other than myself and my supervisors will have access to this information. This research will be typed and printed as required for the Psychology Honours program, however, all participants will remain anonymous.

If you have any questions regarding the study please do not hesitate to contact me on any of the numbers below. You may also wish to contact my supervisors, Professor Alfred Allan or Dr. Ricks Allan, on 6304 5536 and 6304 5048 respectively. If you wish to speak to someone not directly connected with the study, please phone Dr. Julie-Ann Pooley, the fourth-year psychology co-ordinator at Edith Cowan University, on 6304 5591. If you feel any distress at any time whilst participating in this research, I recommend you to contact Lifeline on (08) 13 1114 or Crisis Care on (08) 9223 1111.

I sincerely appreciate your time and participation in this study,  
Kindest Regards,  
Jessica Sumner

**Researcher**

Jessica Sumner  
School of Psychology  
Edith Cowan University  
Mob: 041 718 2751

**Supervisors**

Professor Alfred Allan  
School of Psychology  
Edith Cowan University  
(08) 6304 5536

Dr. Ricks Allan  
School of psychology  
Edith Cowan University  
(08) 6304 5408

## **Appendix B**

Dear Participant,

Please read the following scenario and then answer the attached 3 questions based on the scenario. Please complete all questions if possible. This questionnaire should only take up to 10 minutes of your time. Finally, complete the attached demographic questions about yourself. Remember, participation in this survey is completely voluntary and your responses will remain in strict confidence.

### **Scenario A**

Peter and Janet are a couple that have been in an intimate relationship for some time. Janet confided in Peter that when she was younger she had an abortion, and that Peter was the only one she had ever told about it. Peter promised to keep it that way. One evening last weekend they went to a birthday party together with family and friends. The party was at one of Janet's cousin's house, which was beautifully set up in their back yard. Things were going well until there was an argument between Peter and Janet, during which Peter revealed Janet's past abortion in front of everyone including all her family and friends. Janet felt betrayed, angry and hurt, so she left the party.

Peter went after her and caught up with her. Peter felt regret for what he had done. He said to Janet: "I'm sorry I yelled at you and had a go at you like that. It was very wrong of me. And I know I should have never mentioned your abortion like that in front of everyone. It's in the past, and it should be left that way. I feel so embarrassed that I humiliated you and I am feeling very bad about it. I wish I hadn't done it". He reached out to Janet, took her hands and said: "I won't do that to you again". Then Peter asked Janet to come back to the party with him and join the others.

Questions

Please mark with an 'X' ANYWHERE on the line corresponding to your response.

For example:

1            2            X 3            4            5            6            7            8            9            10

OR

1            2            3            4            5            6            7            X 8            9            10

1) To what degree do you think Peter was apologetic?

Not at all Very Apologetic

1            2            3            4            5            6            7            8            9            10

2) To what degree do you think Peter was sorry?

Not at all Truly Sorry

1            2            3            4            5            6            7            8            9            10

3) To what degree do you think Peter will be forgiven?

Not at all Completely Forgiven

1            2            3            4            5            6            7            8            9            10

4) How severe do you think the offense is in the scenario?

Not at all Extremely Severe

1            2            3            4            5            6            7            8            9            10

Why do you think the scenario was severe or not so severe? (relate to question 4)

.....

.....

.....

Demographic Information

1) Indicate your age range:  
(please circle)

20-29 years  
30-39 years  
40-49 years  
50-59 years  
60-69 years  
70-79 years  
80-89 years  
90+ years

2) Please circle your biological gender:

Male

Female

3) Please circle your marital status:

Married (first marriage)  
De facto  
Single  
Divorced & single  
Divorced & currently de facto  
Divorced & re-married  
Widowed & single  
Widowed & currently de facto  
Widowed & re-married  
Other.....

4) Please state your current main occupation: (for example: student, pensioner, mother, doctor)

.....

Thankyou for your time to participate in this study! Your responses are greatly appreciated.

## Appendix C

Dear Participant,

Please read the following scenario and then answer the attached 3 questions based on the scenario. Please complete all questions if possible. This questionnaire should only take up to 10 minutes of your time. Finally, complete the attached demographic questions about yourself. Remember, participation in this survey is completely voluntary and your responses will remain in strict confidence.

### Scenario B

Peter and Janet are a couple that have been in an intimate relationship for some time. Janet confided in Peter that when she was younger she had an abortion, and that Peter was the only one she had ever told about it. Peter promised to keep it that way. One evening last weekend they went to a birthday party together with family and friends. The party was at one of Janet's cousin's house, which was beautifully set up in their back yard. Things were going well until there was an argument between Peter and Janet, during which Peter revealed Janet's past abortion in front of everyone including all her family and friends. Janet felt betrayed, angry and hurt, so she left the party.

Peter went after her and caught up with her. Peter felt bad about his actions and words, and deeply sad that he had hurt Janet so much. Looking Janet in the eyes he said: "I am really really sorry that I insulted and humiliated you in front of our family and friends. I realise I violated your trust and respect, and betrayed you by mentioning your abortion which I promised not to. You have every right to be angry and upset with me. I was wrong and very inconsiderate, and I will not do it again. I would like to make it up to you. Would you like me to apologise to you in front of the others and let them know that I realize that I was inconsiderate and disrespectful to you and hurt you?" With a worried look on his face, Peter continued to ask Janet if she would like to come back to the party with him and join the others.

Questions

Please mark with an 'X' ANYWHERE on the line corresponding to your response.

For example:

1          2          X 3          4          5          6          7          8          9          10

OR

1          2          3          4          5          6          7          X          8          9          10

1) To what degree do you think Peter was apologetic?

Not at all Very Apologetic

1          2          3          4          5          6          7          8          9          10

2) To what degree do you think Peter was sorry?

Not at all Truly Sorry

1          2          3          4          5          6          7          8          9          10

3) To what degree do you think Peter will be forgiven?

Not at all Completely Forgiven

1          2          3          4          5          6          7          8          9          10

4) How severe do you think the offense is in the scenario?

Not at all Extremely Severe

1          2          3          4          5          6          7          8          9          10

Why do you think the scenario was severe or not so severe? (relate to question 4)

.....

.....

.....



## Demographic Information

- 1) Indicate your age range:  
(please circle)
- 20-29 years  
30-39 years  
40-49 years  
50-59 years  
60-69 years  
70-79 years  
80-89 years  
90+ years
- 2) Please circle your biological gender:
- Male Female
- 3) Please circle your marital status:
- Married (first marriage)  
De facto  
Single  
Divorced & single  
Divorced & currently de facto  
Divorced & re-married  
Widowed & single  
Widowed & currently de facto  
Widowed & re-married  
Other.....
- 4) Please state your current main occupation: (for example: student, pensioner, mother, doctor)

Thankyou for your time to participate in this study! Your responses are greatly appreciated.