

**Why Did I Apologize? Apology Motives and Offender Perceptions in the Aftermath
of Workplace Conflicts**

by

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A thesis

presented to the University of Waterloo

in fulfilment of the

thesis requirement for the degree of

Master of Arts

in

Psychology

Waterloo, Ontario, Canada, 2016

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AUTHOR'S DECLARATION

I hereby declare that I am the sole author of this thesis. This is a true copy of the thesis, including any required final revisions, as accepted by my examiners.

I understand that my thesis may be made electronically available to the public.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would first like to express my deepest gratitude to my supervisor, Dr. Ramona Bobocel. Her continuous support from day one made this entire endeavor possible. I would also like to thank my readers, Dr. James Beck and Dr. Wendi Adair, for their helpful guidance and insightful comments on this thesis. Finally, I must also thank my colleagues, my family, my friends, and especially my girlfriend Yuna for providing me with unfailing support and continuous encouragement throughout my years of study.

ABSTRACT

Despite an abundance of research demonstrating the importance of apologies in restoring damaged relationships, relatively little is known about the offender perspective after apologizing. Recent research on apology suggests that for offenders, apologizing may be an aversive experience, and refusing to apologize can provide psychological benefits (i.e., power, control, self-worth). In contrast, the present research seeks to explore why individuals do apologize after harming co-workers. Using both qualitative and quantitative methodologies, four apology motives were identified: (1) Self-Censure, (2) Relational Concerns, (3) Expedience, and (4) Fear of Sanctions. Then, we drew on Motivated Action Theory to examine the relationship between apology motives and offender perceptions in the reconciliation process. Results indicate that apology motives influenced offender perceptions of victim forgiveness and relational reconciliation. Those who apologized to preserve valued relationships, to correct the wrongdoing, and to resolve the conflict quickly perceived their apologies to be effective in eliciting forgiveness and reconciliation. Paradoxically, those who apologized to avoid further conflict perceived their apology to be ineffective in promoting forgiveness and reconciliation. Implications and future directions for research are discussed.

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INTRODUCTION

An inevitability of organizational life is relational conflict. Relational conflict, defined as a dyadic process in which one party transgresses against or offends the other (Ren & Gray, 2009), leads to several negative consequences for employees: anxiety, psychological strain, poor listening, distraction from tasks, reduced commitment, and reduced job satisfaction (De Dreu & Weingart, 2003; Ren & Gray, 2009). Left unchecked, such conflict can escalate by creating animosity among coworkers, which ultimately detracts from the organization's effectiveness. Fortunately, research indicates such negative effects are mitigated, and relationships are easily repaired, when offenders apologize (Dirks, Lewicki, & Zaheer, 2009; Fehr & Gelfand, 2010; Tomlinson, Dineen, & Lewicki, 2004; Ren & Gray, 2009).

Apology is essential to eliciting forgiveness from victims, effectively reconciling or repairing damaged relationships¹. For example, meta-analytic evidence suggests that apologies are one of the strongest predictors of victim forgiveness (Fehr, Gelfand, & Nag, 2010). However, to the best of our knowledge, research on apology and reconciliation have almost exclusively focused on the victim perspective (i.e., party experiencing transgressions), to the exclusion of the offender perspective (i.e., party committing transgressions). In fact, research on apology as a reconciliatory mechanism tends to focus on how apologies are received by victims (e.g., Fehr & Gelfand, 2010; Okimoto, Wenzel, & Hornsey, 2015). Of note, research suggests that apologies may be risky for offenders in that apologies can exacerbate the conflict if perceived by victims as insincere or manipulative (Skarlicki, Folger, & Gee, 2004).

¹ In this paper, we use the terms "relationship repair," "reconciliation," and all other forms of reconciliation (i.e., reconciliatory, conciliatory) interchangeably to mean restoration of a relationship to a functional state following relational conflict (Atkinson, Field, Holmes, & O'Donovan, 1995; Baumeister, Exline, & Sommer, 1998; Bies, Barclay, Tripp, & Aquino, 2016; Palanski, 2012; Ren & Gray, 2009).

In contrast to the victim perspective, the offender perspective in apologies and reconciliation is relatively unknown. Whereas scholars postulate that apologies are generally beneficial for reconciliation, such hypotheses are often formulated in the context of victim forgiveness research (e.g., Bies et al., 2015). In fact, recent research on offenders suggests that offenders often regret apologizing (Exline, Deshea, & Holeman, 2007). Moreover, organizational policies and procedures often encourage offenders to avoid acknowledging transgressions (Sitkin & Bies, 1993; Bies et al., 2016), motivating offenders to withhold apologies. Given these barriers to apologizing, and considering the risks of apologizing for offenders, we ask (1) why *do* offenders apologize? And (2) when offenders do choose to apologize, might their motives or reasons for apologizing influence their experience during the reconciliation process?

The present research seeks to address the two questions above. Following recent calls for more research on the offender perspective during reconciliation in a workplace context (e.g., Palanski, 2012; Bies et al., 2016), we sought to initiate research on offenders' perspective on apology by uncovering factors that may influence the offender experience during an apology. Research in human motivation suggests that understanding the motives or goals for a behavior is crucial to understanding subsequent perceptions of events (DeShon & Gillespie, 2005). From this, we propose that salient motives behind an apology could provide a lens through which offenders perceive post-apology outcomes, namely victim forgiveness and victim-offender relationship reconciliation. For example, offenders may apologize to avoid potential retaliation from others—a self-serving motive—or to alleviate harm caused by their actions—a prosocial motive. In both cases, an apology is provided. However, the goal or motive for apologizing may direct offenders' attention in subsequent reconciliation processes. The self-serving motive may prompt offenders to pay attention to threatening cues (e.g., rejection of apology); whereas the

prosocial motives may prompt offenders to attune to positive cues (e.g., victim forgiveness and reconciliation).

Unfortunately, few empirical studies have documented why offenders apologize (cf. Exline, Deshea, & Holeman, 2007), and none have done so within the workplace context. To address this shortcoming, the goals for the current research were to uncover offender motives for apologizing and examine how motives might influence offender perceptions of victim forgiveness and victim-offender relationship reconciliation. Using both qualitative and quantitative methodologies, we (1) uncovered apology motives, (2) developed a measure to empirically assess apology motives, and (3) tested the novel prediction that motives for apologizing would influence offender perceptions during the reconciliation process. In the next sections, we first review the relevant background research that served as the basis for the specific goals of the present research. Then we report three studies in which we aimed to address these goals.

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

Apologies and Reconciliation

Apologies are defined as attempts by offenders to convey acknowledgement of harm, responsibility for the offense, respect for the victim, absence of malicious intent, regret for their action, or desire to reconcile relationships (Bies et al., 2016; Lewicki & Bunker, 1996; Tomlinson, Dineen, & Lewicki, 2004). In short, apologies allow offenders to explain themselves to victims in hopes of “fixing the situation,” remedying the imbalance created by the offense, and re-affirming the social standing of victims (Exline et al., 2007; Reb, Goldman, Kray, & Cropanzano, 2006).

Plenty of evidence demonstrates the importance of apology in reconciliation. Research on forgiveness highlights apology as a major antecedent to victim willingness to grant forgiveness (Exline & Baumeister, 2000; Girard & Mullet, 1997; Girard, Mullet, & Callahan, 2002). For example, apologies facilitate victim empathy and increase victim motivation to forgive (McCullough, Worthington, & Rachal, 1997; McCullough, Rachal, Sandage, Worthington, Brown, & Hight, 1998). Recent research continues to reveal that receiving an apology is a major reason why victims say that they forgive offenders (Cox, Bennett, Tripp, & Aquino, 2012). Furthermore, developmental research suggests that from an early age, children are socialized to provide apologies if they harm others and to accept apologies (when provided) if others harm them (Kochanska, Casey, & Fukumoto, 1995; Smith, Chen, & Harris, 2010). Consequently, victims may view apology as a normative social script and therefore expect, or even demand, apologies from offenders (Goffman, 1971; Tavuchis, 1991). Overall, then, apologies are considered to be an essential component of the reconciliation process.

Victim-Centric Research in Apology and Reconciliation

Despite the importance of apology in the reconciliation process, research has yet to pay much attention to the people engaging in the behavior: offenders. Traditionally, research on reconciliation has heavily focused on forgiveness from victims while de-emphasizing the role of offenders (Palanski, 2012). This victim-centric focus on reconciliation is exemplified by traditional definitions of reconciliation “as an effort *by the victim* to extend acts of goodwill toward the offender in the hope of restoring the relationship” (Aquino, Tripp, & Bies, 2006, p. 654; [emphasis added]). The victim-centric focus on reconciliation carries over to apology research as well. For example, major studies on apology focus on victim or third-party reactions to apologies (e.g., Fehr & Gelfand, 2010; Ohbuchi, Kameda, & Agarie, 1989; Risen & Gilovich, 2007; Skarlicki, et al., 2004; Struthers, Eaton, Santelli, Uchiyama, & Shirvani, 2008; Zechmeister, Garcia, & Romero, 2004). Furthermore, apology scholars often describe an apology-forgiveness cycle in which relational conflicts are resolved when offenders apologize and victims forgive (Leunissen, De Cremer, Reinders Folmer, van Dijke, 2013; Shnabel & Nadler, 2008; Tavuchis, 1991). This model implicitly assumes that forgiveness from victims symbolizes reconciliation. Essentially, the apology-forgiveness cycle assumes that once an offender initiates the reconciliation process via apologizing, victims are the sole determinant of conflict resolution and reconciliation.

Even apology research that involves offenders tends to focus on how apologies are received by victims. For example, studies tend to focus on the relations between: offender use of apology components and victim reactions (Fehr & Gelfand, 2010); victim perceptions of apology sincerity and victim reactions (Skarlicki, Folger, & Gee, 2004); offender-victim power differences and victim reactions (Zheng, van Dijke, Leunissen, Giurge, & De Cremer, 2016); and

apology source (i.e., status of apologizer) and victim reactions (Hill & Boyd, 2015). In summary, the extant research on apology is dominated by victim-centric studies that tend to focus on victim or third-party reactions to apologies as the primary variables of interest.

Offender Perspective in Apologies and Reconciliation

Fortunately, scholars are now beginning to recognize the relational aspect of reconciliation, and conceptualize the construct as a *dyadic* process which requires input from both victims and offenders to renew or restore the relationship after conflict (Atkinson et al., 1995; Baumeister et al., 1998; Worthington & Drinkard, 2000). Implicit in these conceptualizations is that reconciliation must go beyond simple victim cognitions and behaviors (i.e., “I have forgiven the offender”), and that reconciliation is a property of the dyad (Palanski, 2012). That is, reconciliation requires both victims and offenders to perceive that the relationship between them has been restored to a functional state (i.e., “we have moved on from the conflict”). If offenders perceive that victims are unforgiving following their apology, this may threaten offenders’ moral identity and create a negative cycle that hinders reconciliation (Lazare, 2004; Shnabel & Nadler, 2008). Thus, research on offender perspective during relationship repair is needed to advance the reconciliation literature. Because apology is an effective conciliatory tactics for offenders (Fehr et al., 2010; Ren & Gray, 2009), apology research should align with the relational conceptualization of reconciliation and investigate the offender perspective during apologies².

The sparse literature on offender perspective during apologies suggests that despite the importance of apologies in promoting forgiveness and reconciliation from the victim perspective,

² We recognize that reconciliation is a dyadic construct and should ideally be studied at the dyadic level. Nonetheless, we choose to focus on the offender perspective because relative to victims, not much is known about offenders during the process of reconciliation.

the offender experience during an apology is not well understood. Offenders in organizational settings often hesitate to apologize (Bies et al., 2016) and may, in fact, find apologizing to be an aversive experience. For example, offenders can find apologizing self-threatening and difficult (McLaughlin, Cody, & O'Hair, 1983), and would often rather be defensive (i.e., make excuses or justify transgression) than apologetic (Hodgins & Liebeskind, 2003). Furthermore, offenders tend to hold negative expectations about the benefits of apologizing (Lazare, 2004; Leunissen, De Cremer, van Dijke, & Folmer, 2014) and fear that apologizing may undermine their status or power, potentially fueling victim demands for compensation (Leunissen, De Cremer, & Reinders Folmer, 2012; Shnabel & Nadler, 2008). Finally, some evidence suggests that even after apologizing, offenders may not perceive reconciliation with victims but, instead, they may experience regret about apologizing (Exline et al., 2007). In fact, offenders may be motivated to deliberately withhold apologies because doing so may protect their feelings of power, control, and value integrity (Okimoto, Wenzel, & Hedrick, 2013). These findings suggest that for offenders, apologizing may sometimes be a negative experience that leads to adverse outcomes.

In addition to being an aversive experience, apologies can be a risky tactic for offenders. Scholars have long raised concerns about the effectiveness of apologies as conciliatory mechanism (Bobocel & Zdaniuk, 2005; Ren & Gray 2009; Schlenker, 1980). Despite empirical evidence in support of apologies discussed above, other research has demonstrated that apologies may "backfire" and trigger punitive attitudes in victims when they are perceived as insincere or manipulative (Skarlicki, et al., 2004). So although apologies are typically effective in reconciling the relationship, apologizing can also be a risky tactic for offenders.

Put together, considering that apologizing can be an aversive experience for offenders, and that apologies can be risky and further exacerbate the conflict, the question of why offenders

do apologize is particularly interesting. That is, what motives drive offender apology? And when offenders apologize, do their motives influence their experience in the reconciliation process?

Apology Motives and Offender Perceptions

As mentioned at the outset, research on human motivation suggests understanding the underlying motivation behind a behavior is crucial for understanding the actor's perceptions of subsequent events. In particular, Motivated Action Theory (MAT) posits that as the underlying cause of a behavior, the goals or motives³ causing a behavior would direct the actor's attention to situational cues or feedback about the behavior (DeShon & Gillespie, 2005). For example, research on social perception has shown that when individuals are motivated to be affiliative, they become particularly sensitive to social cues (Pickett, Gardner, & Knowles, 2004). In effect, salient motives often influence subsequent perceptions to be congruent with motives.

Drawing from these lines of research, we theorize that motives behind an apology should influence offender perceptions during the subsequent reconciliation process in motive-congruent ways. For example, offenders who apologize due to fear of retaliation (e.g., subordinate apologizing to supervisor out of fear of reprimands) may be attentive to retaliatory cues such as nonverbal signs of anger, leading them to believe that the apology was ineffective in reconciling the relationship. Conversely, offenders who apologize out of desire to preserve valued relationships (e.g., apologizing to a highly liked co-worker) may be attentive to reparative cues and believe that the apology was effective in restoring the relationship. Thus, the motives for apologizing may have important implications for subsequent offender perceptions in the reconciliation process.

³ Given the prevalence of goal-driven theories in the motivation literature (see Schmidt, Beck, & Gillespie, 2013, for a review), we use the terms "goals" and "motives" interchangeably to refer to "internal representation of desired states, where states are broadly construed as outcomes, events, or processes" (Austin & Vancouver, 1996, p. 388).

Unfortunately, research on motives for apologizing is still in its infancy, and no clear theory exists to guide research. In fact, we are aware of only one apology typology that considers motives. Exline and colleagues (2007) created a typology of apology motives in the context of intimate relationships. However, given that prominent factors in the apology and reconciliation process (e.g., types of transgressions) may be vastly different between intimate relationships and workplace contexts, organizational scholars have cautioned against blindly generalizing findings from intimate relationships to workplace relationships (Cox et al., 2012; Palanski, 2012). Because of this, the typology of apology motives developed by Exline et al. (2007) may not be relevant for workplace settings. In short, existing evidence on apology motives is inadequate, prompting the need for more exploratory research.

THE PRESENT RESEARCH

Due to the sparse research on apology motives and the offender perspective in reconciliation, the present research is an initial attempt to generate research in these areas. As noted above, the construct of “apology motives,” has yet to receive much empirical attention, particularly in the workplace context. Although researchers in the close relationships literature have written about apology motives at the conceptual level (e.g., Lazare, 2004; Tavuchis, 1991), these ideas have yet to be validated and may not even be applicable for workplace relationships due to differences in context, for example the types of transgressions, and the emotional intensity associated with transgressions (see Palanski, 2012). Furthermore, research has yet to produce an instrument for measuring apology motives in the workplace context.

To address these issues, we conducted the present research in three phases (involving three field surveys): During phase one, our goal was to uncover apology motives in the workplace setting by developing a typology of motives. During phase two, we sought to develop a scale to quantitatively measure apology motives from offenders. Finally, during phase three, we tested our proposition that apology motives would influence offender perceptions during the apology and reconciliation process. In the next sections, we describe each of the three phases in detail and present the data associated each phase. Finally, we discuss the overall implications of the present research program for the literature on apologies and reconciliation, and highlight future research directions.

PHASE ONE: IDENTIFY APOLOGY MOTIVES⁴

During this phase, we sought to uncover the reasons why offenders apologize in the workplace. Given the lack of empirical research on apology motives in a workplace context, our aim was to develop a comprehensive typology of apology motives. We began by conducting a literature review for theory-building. Then, we initiated research on apology motives by conducting an exploratory qualitative study of employee offenders who had apologized for a transgression. Reasons for apologies were content-analyzed to develop a typology of apology motives.

Prior Research on Apology Motives

As noted earlier, some scholars have theorized about certain apology motives, but empirical evidence is lacking (for one exception, see Exline et al., 2007). Two motives that are perhaps discussed most often are *guilt-reduction* and *relationship maintenance* (Exline & Baumeister, 2000; Howell, Dopko, Turowski, & Buro, 2011; Lazare, 2004; Tangney, Youman, & Stuewig, 2009; Tavuchis, 1991). Following transgressions, offenders may experience guilt as they reflect on the harm they have caused, and ponder if victims will opt to end the relationship (Baumeister, Stillwell, & Heatherton, 1994). This anxiety over social exclusion (losing a relationship) may motivate offenders to assuage their feelings of guilt by apologizing and engaging in relationship repair. On the other hand, offenders may not experience guilt (for example, after intentional transgressions; Leunissen et al., 2013), but still be concerned with

⁴ In the interest of full disclosure, phase one of the current research program was initially undertaken for my undergraduate honor's thesis. As such, details here overlap with B.A. thesis content. However, after completion of the B.A. thesis, additional data were collected and the qualitative analysis was redone with the entire dataset in more depth than was appropriate previously. Thus, we report a substantially revised typology of apology motives than initially described in my honor's thesis. In addition, details in this phase set the stage for phases two and three; thus despite the content overlap, we include all methodological and sample details here.

damaging valued relationships. Offenders may believe their actions to be morally justified, but still apologize to preserve valuable relationships (Okimoto et al., 2013; Tavuchis, 1991). In other words, when victims are liked or held in high regard by the offender, offenders may apologize in hopes of maintaining the valued relationship.

Some scholars have also suggested that offender *self-censure* may motivate apology giving. Discussion of this motive is typically embedded in the alternative view of apologies as a mechanism for the offender to reaffirm his/her self-view as someone who engages in acceptable conduct (Scher & Darley, 1997; Okimoto et al., 2013). Generally, individuals are motivated to view themselves as someone who can interact with others cooperatively (engages in acceptable conduct) and someone who does not hurt or wrong others. Thus, when one transgresses against another and is labelled as an “offender,” this threatens the person’s private view of themselves as a “good person.” To protect this self-view, offenders assert their ability to engage in acceptable conduct. Given that apologies are a deeply socialized response to transgressions (Leunissen et al., 2013), apologizing allows offenders to demonstrate their ability to engage in acceptable conduct. Thus, offenders may often be motivated to apologize due to self-censure.

Note that any discussion (albeit sparse) of apology motives in the literature has thus far been speculative. To date, the only existing empirical evidence concerning apology motives is represented by the work of Exline and colleagues. Exline et al. (2007, Study 1) used open-ended questions to gauge the reasons that motivate apology among students in the context of their intimate relationships. Exline et al. found that the most common apology motives were: (1) desire to help the victim or restore the relationship, (2) guilt-reduction, and (3) fear of anger from victims (Exline et al., 2007). Thus, at least in the context of close relationships, there is some

empirical support for the two motives proposed by other scholars, namely relationship maintenance and guilt reduction; as well, the findings suggest fear of anger as a possible motive.

However, the typology of apology motives developed by Exline et al. (2007) was not the primary of focus of their study, and may not have adequately captured apology motives. Furthermore, given that organizations tend to have power differences not observed in intimate relationships, and considering that employees often lack choice in who they work with, organizational scholars have cautioned against merely generalizing findings from close relationships to workplace relationships (Cox et al., 2012; Palanski, 2012). In short, existing evidence on apology motives is inadequate, prompting the need for more exploratory research. Thus, we conducted an exploratory study, using qualitative methods, to collect and content analyze reasons for offender apologies from a broad sample of working adults. Ultimately, we strived to gather, categorize, and develop a typology of apology motives appropriate for workplace settings in this phase of the research.

Method

Participants and procedure. Participants were recruited via StudyResponse, an academic research participant pool hosted by the School of Information Studies at Syracuse University (<http://www.studyresponse.net>). Employed adults in the United States were invited to fill out an online survey using Qualtrics in exchange for \$5 USD. After providing informed consent, invitees complete an eligibility questionnaire. Invitees were eligible to participate only if they could recall a recent apology interaction with someone in their workplace (i.e., co-worker, supervisor, subordinate, or client). If eligible, participants were prompted to describe the apology incident using the critical incident technique, adapted from Exline et al. (2007), to elicit salient experience of workplace apologies. Specifically, the apology prompt read:

“Please describe the event in which you apologized to someone with whom you currently work (i.e., co-worker, supervisor, subordinate, client). This should be a situation in which the other person knew or believed that you had hurt, offended, or had some negative effect on him/her. This should NOT be a situation in which the offense was completely hidden from the other person.”⁵

Then, participants were asked to describe up to five reasons explaining why they apologized. Participants were assured of the anonymity of their responses to elicit honest, accurate responses. Finally, participants were debriefed and thanked.

With the eligibility criteria described above, 280 usable surveys were received. Of the 280 surveys, 56 were excluded on the basis of unintelligible responses, namely random strings of text or incomprehensible words as responses to open-ended questions, resulting in a total of 224 (80%) valid surveys. Of these participants, 48.7% were female. The average age for participants was 38.6 ($SD = 8.81$), with average organizational tenure of 7.9 years (median = 7.5; $SD = 5.12$) and position tenure of 5.79 (median = 4.42; $SD = 4.86$). In terms of education attainment, 6.7% of participants reported high school, 33.6% reported college or vocational training, and 59.6% reported undergraduate degree or above. For primary racial/ethnic group, 78.9% of participants reported Caucasian, 5.4% reported African American, 4.9% reported East Asian, 4.5% reported South Asian, 4% reported Hispanic, 0.9% reported Native American, and 1.3% reported others.

Apology motives content analysis. As mentioned above, we sought to identify apology motives through qualitative methods during this phase. Specifically, content analysis (Smith, 2000) was conducted to highlight themes among reasons for apologizing. To maximize the amount of data collected for apology motives, participants were encouraged to provide five

⁵ All study materials available upon request.

reasons for apologizing. Each apology reason was treated as an independent coding unit. After truncating duplicates within responses provided by each individual participant (i.e., when the same response was repeated more than once by a participant), a total of 588 apology reasons were used in the analysis.

Following established content analysis guidelines (Smith, 2000), we developed a coding scheme to categorize all of the apology reasons into higher-order themes. First, prior literature on apology motives (described above) was reviewed to guide theme generation. Next, all of the open-ended responses were evaluated by the first author for commonalities and trends, with similar responses being grouped together on the basis of higher-order themes. These themes were both informed by prior literature and inductively derived from response patterns in the dataset. Finally, precise definitions and clear examples were written for each category (see Results section below for details).

After developing the coding scheme, all of the apology reasons were sorted into themes in the coding scheme. To ensure reliability in coding, two independent raters were employed. The raters first independently coded all of the responses to gauge inter-rater agreement (i.e., Cohen's Kappa; Cohen, 1960), then they jointly resolved disagreements. The final codes (with all disagreements resolved) were used to compute the frequency of each apology motive theme.

Results and Discussion

Given that the purpose of having participants describe the conflict and apology was to prompt their recall of the reasons why they apologized rather than to assess the types of conflict, the types of conflict was not formally analyzed.

Apology motives coding scheme. Six themes emerged from our content analysis described above: (1) Self-Censure, (2) Relational Value, (3) Personal Expedience, (4) Guilt

Reduction, (5) Fear of Sanctions, and (6) Professionalism. Each these is discussed in detail below and a summary is provided in Table 1 in Appendix A.

(1) *Self-Censure*. As mentioned, self-censure has been discussed by some scholars as a motive for apologizing (Okimoto et al., 2013; Scher & Darley, 1997). Apologies are driven by this motive when offenders truly believe that they had engaged in a wrongdoing and attempt to correct for their previous misdeeds by apologizing. Given that children are socialized to apologize whenever they are responsible for transgressions (e.g., Smith et al., 2010), offenders are essentially following the typical transgression-apology social script when apologizing for this motive. Examples of this motive include: “I was wrong,” “I screwed up,” “I realized my mistake,” and “I should not have yelled.”

(2) *Relational Value*. Similar to Self-Censure, Relational Value has been discussed previously by scholars (e.g., Exline & Baumeister, 2000; Exline et al., 2007; Howell et al., 2011; Lazare, 2004; Tangney, et al., 2009; Tavuchis, 1991). However, this motive has received scant empirical support (e.g., Exline et al., 2007). This may, in part, be due to extant research focusing on apologies in intimate relational contexts. Nonetheless, a substantial number of participants explained their apology as attempts to restore valued relationships. Offenders perceive certain workplace relationships as valuable, motivating them to devote effort into relationship repair by apologizing. Relational value may be expressed by offenders as liking, care, or affection for the victim. Offenders may also be motivated to apologize when they perceived the victim as a friend. Overall, this motive encompasses cases in which offenders explained their apology as driven by desires to retain a valuable relationship. Examples of this motive include: “I care about her/him,” “I like the person and value our friendship,” “I wanted to mend our relationship,” and “I will continue to work with this same person and want to have a good relationship.”

(3) *Personal Expedience*. This motive is derived from cases in which offenders explained their apologies as purely instrumental — apologizing to quickly dissolve the tension and move past the transgression (i.e., a means to an end). Essentially, offenders view apologies as an advantageous and efficient solution to their current predicament. Examples of this motive include: “end the drama,” “I didn’t have the energy to fight,” “it was easier to deal with at the given time,” “to move on from the situation,” and “it seemed a quick way to resolve an uncomfortable situation.”

(4) *Guilt Reduction*. As mentioned, guilt reduction has also been proposed by several scholars as a motive for apologizing (e.g., Howell et al., 2011; Lazare, 2004; Tangney et al., 2009; Tavuchis, 1991). Essentially, offenders feel guilty about their previous wrongdoing, and apologize to relieve their guilt. Note that this motive differs from self-censure in that guilt is affective rather than cognitive. Offenders are indicating their own feelings of guilt as the driving factor behind their apologies, but are not explicitly recognizing wrongdoing. In reducing guilt, offenders are alleviating a negative affective state rather than attempting to correct a previous wrongdoing or following the typical transgression-apology social script. Examples of this motive include: “I felt remorseful for what I had done,” “I felt guilty,” “I felt sorry,” “it had been bothering my conscience so much,” and “I needed to get it off my chest sort of speak.”

(5) *Fear of Sanctions*. Exline et al. (2007) described “fear of anger from victims” as an apology motive. We broaden this idea to include fear of retaliation or reprimands from any potential sources (e.g., co-workers, supervisors, etc.). Following workplace transgressions, victims may indirectly retaliate by reporting the incident to higher authority. When this occurs, offenders often face reprimands from higher authority. Even if victims do not report transgressions, supervisors may consider relationship conflicts to be unacceptable at work and

impose formal sanctions on offenders. In addition, other parties may attempt to seek justice for the transgression, and retaliate by imposing sanctions on offenders through, for example, knowledge hiding (Connelly, Zweig, Webster, & Trougakos, 2011) or other means. Such potential threats may trigger fear for offender. Offenders, in response, could alleviate these fears by apologizing to reduce the risk for sanctions. Examples of this motive include: “the boss told me I should,” “I want to save my job,” “I did not want the manager to feel negatively about me,” and “she is our director of human resources and I like being employed.”

(6) *Professionalism*. This motive is derived from cases in which offenders described professional role expectations as the driving factor for apologizing. Because people may not always have a choice in who they work with (Palanski, 2012), offenders may be motivated to apologize to maintain a functional working relationship with victims. Offenders may also believe relationship conflicts are detrimental to performance, and apologize to comply with expectations that performance should be given the highest priority in the workplace. In short, offenders may be motivated to apologize due to professional obligations. Examples of this motive include: “I was unprofessional,” “it was wrong of me to not be professional,” “I have to continue to work closely with the co-worker,” and “I fear I have compromised my future ability to work well with this person.”

Content analysis results. After the coding scheme was developed, two raters were employed to code all responses independently. Each apology reason could be coded as one of the six themes described above. Any reasons that did not fit into any of the themes were coded as “other.” Raters were trained on the coding scheme and separately coded all of the 588 apology reasons (20 reasons, select at random, were used for training) to assess the inter-rater agreement. We computed Cohen’s Kappa (Cohen, 1960) to determine agreement between the raters. Results

indicated acceptable agreement, $\kappa = .624, p < .01$. According to Landis and Koch (1977), κ values between .61 and .80 indicate substantial agreement. Thus, the initial categorization of apology reasons was deemed acceptable in terms of reliability. Raters then met to resolve all coding disagreements, and the joint coding data were used to calculate frequency of each theme.

Out of the 588 apology reasons, 241 (41%) were coded as *Self-Censure*, 118 (20.1%) were coded as *Relational Value*, 59 (10%) were coded as *Personal Expedience*, 46 (7.8%) were coded as *Guilt Reduction*, 27 (4.6%) were coded as *Professionalism*, and 22 (3.7%) were coded as *Fear of Sanctions*. In addition, 75 (12.8%) of reasons could not fit into any of our six themes and were considered as “ambiguous.” For the most part, these reasons were vague (i.e., one word responses) or incoherent for coding purposes (i.e., “Remove contradictions,” “Unlock the misunderstanding,” etc.). (See Table 1 in Appendix A for summary of data.)

Given the relatively low frequency of some of the motives, we did not conduct quantitative analyses (e.g., comparing endorsement of motives by demographic variables). The main purpose of the present study was to identify motives for apologizing in the workplace. Therefore, we focused on categorizing the qualitative data into themes. Note also that, although certain motives had low frequencies (i.e., Fear of Sanctions, Professionalism), they were retained to develop a comprehensive typology as such motives may nonetheless be informative.

In subsequent phases, we moved to a quantitative investigation of the relation between the six offender motives and offender experiences during reconciliation (i.e., perceived victim forgiveness and victim-offender reconciliation). This was conducted in two phases – phase two, in which we developed a self-report measure to assess motives; in phase three, we tested the empirical relationships between motives and post-apology outcomes for offenders.

PHASE TWO: APOLOGY MOTIVES SCALE DEVELOPMENT

After uncovering apology motives in phase one, we ultimately sought to test our proposition that apology motives would influence offender perceptions during the reconciliation process. However, before this is possible, a method to assess variation in apology motives is required. In phase two of the current research, we developed a measure to assess the extent to which offenders attributed their apologies to each motive. Following established scale development guidelines (e.g., Hinkin, 1998), we created state-specific scales on which offenders self-report the degree to which each motive influenced their decision to apologize for a particular transgression. Then, we examined the psychometric properties of the scales. Because our apology motive typology largely confirmed previous theorizing, definitions and examples from the typology were used for item generation. After extensive discussion between the authors, six items were generated for each motive (36 items in total)⁶. After item generation, data from two samples were collected to assess the psychometric properties (i.e., factor structure, reliability) of the apology motives scales. First, data from the Sample A were subjected to exploratory factor analysis (EFA) to determine the factor structure of the motives scales. Although conceptually our apology motives typology comprises six motives, it is not clear whether the motives are empirically distinct. Thus, we opted to be conservative, and use Parallel Analysis (PA; Hayton, Allen, & Scarpello, 2004) as explained more below to make factor retention decisions. Results from the EFA suggested four empirically meaningful factors. We then revised the typology as

⁶ To ensure that these items indeed tapped into their intended motives, content validation was conducted with a sample of undergraduate students ($N = 95$). Specifically, participants were asked to rate the correspondence between each item and each motive definition (Hinkin & Tracy, 1999; Schriesheim, Powers, Scandura, Gardiner, & Lankau 1993). Results indicate that three items ($n = 1$ for Relational Value; $n = 2$ for Personal Expedience) did not show significantly higher correspondence with their intended motive definition than other motive definitions. Although these items failed to demonstrate content validity, they were retained for further analysis with the caveat that they would be dropped if they show any other problems. All other items showed significantly higher correspondence with their intended motive definitions than all other definitions.

needed. After revisions, data from a larger Sample B was used to validate the updated typology and motives scales via confirmatory factor analysis (CFA).

Sample A: Initial Validation of Apology Motives Typology

Participants and procedure. US participants were recruited via StudyResponse in exchange for \$10 USD. Eligibility criteria and initial procedures were the same as phase one. If eligible, participants were prompted to describe the apology incident using the same procedures as the qualitative study described above. Then, participants completed the apology motives measure. Specifically, they were asked to rate the extent to which each of the 36 apology motive items factored into their decision to apologize on a 5-point Likert-type scale (1 = *not at all*, 5 = *very much*). Next, participants completed measures of post-apology outcomes (described in phase three below). Attention check items were embedded throughout the survey (i.e., “this is an attention check, please select X”). Finally, participants were thanked and debriefed.

From this sample, we received 296 usable surveys. Of the 296 surveys, 81 were excluded for failing attention checks, resulting in a total of 215 (72.6%) valid participants. Of these participants, 54.4% were female. The average age for participants was 42.3 (median = 41; $SD = 9.46$), with average organizational tenure of 9.9 years (median = 8.67; $SD = 7.05$) and position tenure of 7.06 years (median = 6.04; $SD = 5.16$). In terms of educational attainment, 7.9% of participants reported high school, 34.9% reported college or vocational training, and 57.2% reported undergraduate or above. For primary racial/ethnic group, 85.6% of participants reported Caucasian, 3.7% reported African American, 4.2% reported East Asian, 2.3% reported South Asian, 3.3% reported Hispanic, and 0.9% reported others.

Parallel analysis. Given that our initial apology motives typology was derived inductively through qualitative analysis, we had little theoretical reason to specifying a priori the

distinctiveness of each motive. For example, Guilt Reduction (i.e., apologizing to reduce feelings of guilt) and Self-Censure (i.e., apologizing to correct previous wrongdoing) may be highly correlated, and treating them as distinct would produce misspecification errors. Thus, as with our initial apology motives typology, we took an inductive and exploratory approach to test our apology motive measure. To this end, prior to conducting a factor analysis, we conducted a Parallel Analysis (PA) to determine the number of common factors needed to account for the pattern of observed correlations among scale items (Hayton et al., 2004).

Parallel analysis is based on the rationale that nontrivial factors in real observations should have larger eigenvalues than parallel factors derived from randomly-generated data (Hayton et al., 2004; Lautenschlager, 1989). If eigenvalues are not larger, these factors are expected to be observed by chance alone and thus should be dropped. Using PA to determine the number of factors is methodological superior to using traditional factor retention criteria (e.g., Kaiser or eigenvalue > 1 , Cattell's scree test) because traditional criteria fail to take sampling error into account, which often result in incorrect factor retention decisions (Hayton et al., 2004; Velicer, Eaton, & Fava, 2000; Zwick & Velicer, 1986). Thus, we followed PA procedures outlined by Hayton et al. (2004) to make factor retention decisions. First, 50 random datasets were generated with the exact same characteristics as the real dataset in terms of number of observations (i.e., $n = 215$), variables in dataset (i.e., number of items, $v = 36$), and item characteristics (i.e., 1-5 Likert-type scale). Then, eigenvalues from each randomly-generated dataset were extracted using maximum likelihood extraction. Next, a vector of average eigenvalues, equal in size to number of variables and diminishing in value, were computed by averaging eigenvalues extracted from the random datasets. Finally, eigenvalues extracted from the real data (also via maximum likelihood extraction) were compared with the vector of average

eigenvalues. The results of the PA showed four factors from the real data as having higher eigenvalues than factors derived from the random data (see Table 2 in Appendix B), suggesting that only four factors should be retained in the subsequent EFA. The scree plot also suggests four factors (see Figure 1 in Appendix B).

Exploratory factor analysis. After determining that four factors should be retained through PA, we conducted an EFA using maximum likelihood with oblimin rotation, whereby a 4-factor structure was forced on the apology motives scale items. Oblimin rotation was selected because it is best suited for factors that are likely to be correlated. After extraction and rotation, scale items were retained if the loading on one factor was greater than 0.60 and the loading was at least 0.20 higher than the loading on any other factor (Hair, Black, Babin, Anderson, & Tatham, 2006; Nunnally, 1978). Fifteen items (of 36) failed to meet these criteria (i.e., either did not load highly on any factors or showed high cross-loadings on two or more factors) and were dropped, resulting in 21 items. Upon re-running the EFA with these 21 items, two additional items (i.e., “the event was bothering my conscience,” “I just wanted to get on with work”) were dropped because they failed to meet the inclusion criteria (loading below 0.60 on any factor). Thus, the final EFA resulted in 19 items. We labelled each factor based on the surviving items. Of the six motives in our apology motives typology, the four retained factors included items reflecting Self-Censure, Relational Value, Personal Expedience, and Fear of Sanctions. With the exception of the Self-Censure factor, which included one item initially intended for Professionalism (i.e., “what I did was unprofessional”) and one item intended for Guilt Reduction (i.e., “I felt guilty”), surviving items in all other factors were intended for their respective factors. The four motives are identified and factor loadings are reported in Table 3 in Appendix B.

Overall, results from the EFA suggested that modification was required to our initial apology motives typology. Given the exploratory and inductive nature of these results, we were cautious and wanted to gather more evidence before finalizing the apology motives scales. Thus, we aimed to conduct confirmatory factor analysis with another sample to ensure the replicability of these results before finalizing our measure.

Sample B: Validation and Revision of Apology Motives Typology

Participants and procedure. US Participants were recruited from CrowdFlower (<https://www.crowdfunder.com/>), an online crowdsourcing platform through which contributors can be recruited to complete surveys. Procedures were almost exactly the same as described for Sample A above, with two exceptions: (1) when indicating apology motives, participants were only presented with the 19 surviving items from the EFA (instead of the original 36 items)⁷, and (2) participants were paid \$2 USD for completing the survey.

For this sample, we received 367 usable surveys. Of the 367 surveys, 26 were excluded for failing attention checks, resulting in a total of 342 (93.2%) valid participants. Of these participants, 44.7% were female. The average age for participants was 33.1 (median = 30; *SD* = 10.72), with average organizational tenure of 6.7 years (median = 4.0; *SD* = 17.70) and position tenure of 4.5 years (median = 2.7; *SD* = 8.16). In terms of educational attainment, 1.5% of participants reported less than high school, 20.5% reported high school, 34.3% reported college or vocational training, and 43.7% reported undergraduate degree or above. For primary racial/ethnic group, 72.4% of participants reported Caucasian, 4.4% reported African American,

⁷ We initially wrote an additional item for the expedience scale and included it in the survey. However, given our interest in conducting a CFA to validate our EFA results, we decided to exclude this item from analysis.

3.5% reported East Asian, 2.9% reported South Asian, 9.1% reported Hispanic, 5.5% reported Native American, and 2.2% reported others.

Confirmatory factor analysis. We sought to validate the factor structure of the apology motives scale using confirmatory factor analysis. Specifically, we tested the four-factor measurement model based on Sample A's exploratory factor analysis results using SPSS AMOS 23, Chicago, IL. The model produced the following fit indices: $\chi^2 = 598.27$, $df = 146$, $p < .01$, $CFI = .85$, $RMSEA = .10$. Unfortunately, this model does not appear to offer an acceptable goodness of fit based on Hair et al.'s (2006) recommendations ($CFI > .90$ and $RMSEA < .07$). Thus, we examined the standardized residual covariance matrix to investigate problematic items (Brown, 2015; Byrne, 2013). In a CFA, standardized residual covariances indicate the degree of model misspecification between two items. Because standardized residuals are often interpreted as z scores, the absolute z values that correspond to conventional statistical significance (i.e., $|z| = 2.58$, $p < .01$)⁸ are often employed as practical cutoffs. Any residual covariances between two items with values larger than 2.58 or smaller than -2.58 warrant further attention because they indicate significant covariances, suggesting that the measurement model is unable to fully account for the observed correlation between these two items (Brown, 2015, pp. 99).

Scale revision. Unfortunately, as evident from the standardized residual covariances matrix in Table 4 (Appendix B), 17.5% of all residual covariances were significant, with 17 items showing significant residual covariances with at least one other item. Thus, whenever possible, we opted to drop highly problematic items (i.e., with three or more significant residual covariances) for each of the apology motive factors. Items were not dropped from the Personal

⁸ $|z| = 2.58$, $p < .01$ was chosen as the significance threshold based on recommendations from Brown (2015).

Expedience factor because with only three items to begin, further reduction would limit accuracy in assessing model fit. As the result of this item reduction process, seven items were dropped: one from the *Relational Values* factor (“I wanted to continue the relationship”)⁹; three from the *Fear of Sanctions* factor (“others told me to”, “others might hold it against me”, and “there might be negative consequences if I didn’t”); and three from the *Self-Censure* factor (“what I did was unprofessional”, “I felt guilty”, and “I disapproved of the way I acted”).

An assessment of the validity of the revised measurement model suggested acceptable model fit ($\chi^2 = 96.5$, $df = 48$, $p < .01$, $CFI = .97$, $RMSEA = .05$). Because the original and revised measurement models are non-nested, due to differences in number of observed variables (i.e., items), we examined cross-validation capacity from (1) the Expected Cross-Validation Index (EVCV; Browne & Cudeck, 1989) and (2) the Bayesian Information Criterion (BIC; Raftery, 1995) to gauge the extent to which each measurement model will cross-validate in a similar sample (i.e., another sample with same size and characteristics). As evident from Table 5 in Appendix B, the revised 12-items measurement model has much lower values for both cross-validation indices ($ECVI = .46$, $BIC = 271.54$) than the original 19-items measurement model ($ECVI = 2.01$, $BIC = 855$), suggesting that the revised measurement model has higher likelihood of cross-validating and thus better fit.

To further validate these revisions to the apology motives scales, the data from Sample A were also subjected to CFA to assess model fit. Results, shown in Table 6 in Appendix B,

⁹ Although one other item under the *Relational Value* factor, “the relationship is important to me”, also had three significant residual covariances, we chose not to drop that item because doing so would yield a factor with less than three items, thereby limiting accuracy in assessing model fit. The decision between “I wanted to continue the relationship” and “the relationship is important to me” was based on content accuracy and factor loading. We believe “the relationship is important to me” to be more representative of the *Relation Values* motive than “I wanted to continue the relationship”. This is also reflected by the former having higher factor loading (.86) than the latter (.77) in the CFA.

suggest that again, the original 19-items measurement model showed poor fit ($\chi^2 = 317.59$, $df = 129$, $p < .01$, $CFI = .90$, $RMSEA = .083$, $EVCI = 1.89$, $BIC = 542.96$) according to general recommendations (i.e., $CFI > .90$ and $RMSEA < .07$; Hair et al., 2006), whereas the revised 12-items measurement model showed good fit ($\chi^2 = 87.67$, $df = 48$, $CFI = .97$, $RMSEA = .062$, $EVCI = .69$, $BIC = 248.65$). Given that the revised 12-items measurement model demonstrates adequate fit across both Samples A and B, whereas the original EFA-derived measurement model does not, the apology motives scale was finalized to reflect the revised measurement model.

The final measurement model included 12 items, which were averaged into the appropriate four apology motives scales. All scales included three items (see Table 5 in Appendix B), and reliabilities were assessed in Sample B by calculating Cronbach's alpha. The scales were identified using the same labels as motives in our original typology: *Self-Censure* (e.g., "I was at fault"; $\alpha = .86$), *Relational Value* (e.g., "I liked him/her as a person"; $\alpha = .88$), *Personal Expedience* (e.g., "I wanted to end the conflict quickly" $\alpha = .78$), and *Fear of Sanctions* (e.g., "I might be punished if I didn't"; $\alpha = .76$). We also assessed reliabilities for these scales in Sample A, and found similar results. Cronbach's alphas and correlations among motive scales for both Sample A and Sample B are reported in Tables 7 and 8, respectively in Appendix B.

Summary and Discussion

During phase two of the current research, we developed a measure to assess offender endorsement of each motive in the apology motives typology developed during phase one. Scale items were first generated based on definitions and examples from the apology motives typology. Based on established guidelines for scale development (e.g., Hinkin, 1998), we followed a two-

step approach in which the data from an initial sample was subjected to exploratory factor analysis, then another sample was subjected to confirmatory factor analysis, to determine the internal structure of the motives scales. The parallel analysis during the EFA stage showed that four meaningful factors explain the data in Sample A. Consequently, EFA results highlighted (1) Self-Censure, (2) Relational Values, (3) Personal Expedience, and (4) Fear of Sanctions as meaningful factors, suggesting the other theorized motives (i.e., Guilt Reduction and Professionalism) were not empirically supported. Then, during the CFA stage with data from a new sample, the apology motives scales were further revised given that the EFA-derived measurement model did not demonstrate adequate model fit. Problematic items from each scale (i.e., items generating lack of fit for measurement models) were dropped, and results from the final CFA indicated that the revised scales fit the data from both samples much better than the EFA-derived scales. Because of all of these revisions, we are confident that the methodological and statistical rigor employed during the analyses has yielded a valid typology and scales. Thus, on the basis of these results, we revised our apology motives typology to include (1) Self-Censure, (2) Relational Values, (3) Personal Expedience, and (4) Fear of Sanctions, and we finalized the scales to assess each motive.

Definitions for these four motives were the same as in our previous phase. The self-censure motive leads an offender to apologize because the offender believes apologizing is the appropriate course of action to remedy a previous wrongdoing. Here, the offender truly believes that he/she had done something inappropriate to cause harm to the victim, and use apologies as a means to symbolically atone for the transgression. A second motivation to apologize captures when an offender believes not making amends would jeopardize a highly valued relationship. The third motivation to apologize captures when offenders believe apologizing would be the

most efficient method to quickly dissolve the tension and move on from the transgression. Finally, the fourth apology motive captures when an offender fears potential retaliation or sanctions if he/she does not attempt to make amends. In other words, the offender believes not apologizing would likely invite retaliation from victims and/or punishment or sanctions from others parties (e.g., supervisors, co-workers, etc.).

Although these results are promising in that they support our initial apology motive typology, these results failed to show empirical support for two of the theorized motives, namely Guilt Reduction and Professionalism. During the EFA stage, the parallel analysis suggested only four meaningful factors. The subsequent EFA indicated that scale items for both Guilt Reduction and Professionalism motives should be dropped due to low loading weights or cross-loading on several factors. Given the exploratory nature of the present research, we chose to remove these motives and drop their respective items based on our empirical results. Nevertheless, guilt reduction has been theorized as a motivation for apology in the close relationships literature (e.g., Lazare, 2004; Exline & Baumeister, 2000), so the lack of empirical support here warrants further attention. Alternatively, guilt reduction may be an *antecedent* of apologizing as opposed to a motive for apologizing. That is, in the absence of guilt, an offender may engage in other conflict mitigation tactics, such as making excuses or attempting to justify the transgression (see Bobocel & Zdaniuk, 2005, for a review). Thus, the experience of guilt may be a necessary precondition for apology, rather than a motive for apology. In terms of Professionalism, in hindsight we recognize that the norms for what is defined as “professional” may differ across organizations, such that in some organizations it may actually be viewed as *unprofessional* to apologize. In other words, apologizing out of a professionalism motive may be specific to the culture and norms of a particular work environment in which it is professional to apologize, and

should not be considered a fundamental reason prompting offenders to apologizing. Of course, this reasoning is speculative on our part, and requires future examination.

Overall, results from phase two of the research program suggest that in organizations, individuals may apologize for various reasons. Having identified items to tap into these apology motives, we next went on to test relationships between apology motives and offender experience during reconciliation. Specifically, we hypothesized and tested relationships between apology motives and offender perceptions of (1) forgiveness from victims and (2) relationship reconciliation.

PHASE THREE: APOLOGY MOTIVES AND OFFENDER PERCEPTIONS DURING RECONCILIATION

During this phase of the research, we sought to examine the relations between apology motives and offender perceptions during the reconciliation process. Our theorizing is based on Motivated Action Theory (Deshon & Gillespie, 2005). A tenet of this theory is that salient motives should influence perceptions of situational cues. That is, salient motives/goals should influence the direction (the *what*) of behavior or thought. As discussed earlier, relational conflicts often produce communication difficulties such as poor listening (e.g., De Dreu & Weingart, 2003; Ren & Gray, 2009) which could increase the ambiguity of information between the conflicting parties. Due to this ambiguity, offender perceptions of situational cues are likely to be biased by salient motives (Deshon & Gillespie, 2005). In line with this assumption, much research in psychology and organization sciences has demonstrated top-down, motive-driven influences in the interpretation of ambiguous situations, as evidenced by studies on various psychological phenomena such as confirmation bias, wishful thinking, motivated reasoning, optimism bias, egocentric bias, and perceptual defence (e.g., Balci et al., 2006; Brown, 1986; Ditto & Lopez, 1992; Klein & Kunda, 1992; Nickerson, 1998; Ross & Sicoly, 1979; Weinstein, 1980). For example, research on visual perception often demonstrates a motivated perception effect whereby visual perception is reliably influenced by salient motives (e.g., Dunning, 2015). In fact, recent research demonstrates that motives can affect both perceptual (i.e., detecting and processing information) and decision-making processes (Voss, Rothermund, & Brandtstädter, 2008). In short, ample evidence suggests that in ambiguous situations, people's perceptions are frequently influenced by the motives or goals that are activated.

Extrapolating from these lines of research, we expect motives for apologizing to similarly shape subsequent perceptions of situational cues in motive-congruent ways. As discussed previously, the normative function of apologies is to both elicit forgiveness from victims and to reconcile the relationship. Following an apology, the offender will be seeking feedback from the victim as to whether they accept or reject the apology. Such feedback informs the offender about the extent to which the victim has forgiven the transgression, as well as the extent to which the relationship has been restored. Nevertheless, feedback at this early stage may be ambiguous as the relationship is still in flux and communication difficulties are still apparent. Thus, salient motives would be expected to influence offender perceptions of victim forgiveness and reconciliation. We discuss each of these perceptions in the following sections.

Offender Perceptions of Victim Forgiveness

Even when victims attempt to express forgiveness, offender perceptions of victim forgiveness — the extent to which the offender believes the victim has forgiven him/her (Exline et al., 2007) — could be influenced by the motives for apologizing because feedback from victims would be filtered through the lens of the salient motives. For example, if a victim responds to an offender apology with a pithy “that’s okay” or “let’s move on,” the relational value motive might lead the offender to attend to the acceptance aspect of the response as indicating forgiveness, whereas the fear motive might lead the offender to attend to the brevity aspect of the response as indicating unforgiveness. Thus, we posit that apology motives would shape offender perceptions of victim forgiveness.

Offender Perceptions of Relational Reconciliation

Similar to offender perceptions of victim forgiveness, apology motives could also influence offender perceptions of reconciliation. As discussed previously, reconciliation is a

property of the victim-offender dyad and indicates the degree to which the victim-offender relationship has been restored to a functional state (Palanski, 2012). In this vein, perceptions of reconciliation must use the victim-offender *relationship* as a referent. To offenders, perceptions of reconciliation indicate the extent to which he/she believes that the conflict no longer impedes his/her relationship with the victim. When perceived reconciliation is low, offenders do not believe the relationship has not been restored to a functional state, and would believe that the conflict is still on-going. For example, an apology motivated by relational value may prompt an offender to attend to conciliatory cues such as pleasantness of interactions between him/her and the victim. In contrast, an apology motivated by fear of sanctions may prompt an offender to attend to threatening cues such as awkwardness during interactions between him/herself and the victim. In both cases, attention is being directed to cues that are relevant for salient motives, but the former suggests that the relationship has been reconciled while the latter suggest that detrimental effects of relational conflict still linger.

In summary, apology motives may influence both the extent to which the offender believes the victim has granted forgiveness, as well as the degree of relational reconciliation after the conflict.

Theoretical Rationale and Hypotheses

Above, we have posited that during an apology, salient motives may influence subsequent offender perceptions. In motivational terms, offenders are allocating limited attentional resources to cues that are relevant for monitoring the discrepancy between their current state and their desired end-states as reflected by motives (e.g., Dalal & Hulin, 2008; Pritchard & Ashwood, 2007; Schmidt, Beck, & Gillespie, 2013). Given that the self-censure, relational value, and personal expedience motives all reflect offenders' desire for conflict

resolution to a certain degree, subsequent offender perceptions would be positively biased as attentional resources are allocated toward motive-congruent cues. For example, the self-censure motive may bias offenders to perceive high levels of victim forgiveness because forgiveness from victims indicates that the previous misdeed has been corrected. Similarly, the relational value motive may bias offenders to perceive high levels of relational reconciliation because reconciliation indicates that a valued relationship has been preserved. Thus, we expected these three motives to be positively associated with offender perceptions of victim forgiveness and relational reconciliation because both are cues of conflict resolution. Note that although these three motives are all expected to be positively associated with subsequent offender perceptions, we suspect that the magnitude of these associations might differ depending on the motive because the motives differ in content and may highlight different cues. Due to this, we chose to separately examine the association between each motive and offender perceptions.

In stark contrast to the above, we posit that the fear of sanctions motives would be negatively associated with subsequent offender perceptions. Given that the fear of sanctions motive reflects offenders' desire to avoid negative outcomes, offender perceptions paradoxically may be negatively biased as attentional resources are allocated toward motive-congruent cues. When apologizing out of fear, offenders would be vigilant of threatening cues. Such vigilance could lead offenders to overweigh negative cues and ignore positive cues. For example, apologizing out of fear may highlight indicators of rejection, unforgiveness, and continued conflict (e.g., hesitance, anger, avoidance) to offenders. Thus, we expected fear of sanctions to be negatively associated with offender perceptions of victim forgiveness and reconciliation. Taken together, we hypothesize that:

Hypothesis 1: Self-Censure motive will be positively associated with offender perceptions of (a) victim forgiveness and (b) relational reconciliation.

Hypothesis 2: Relational Value motive will be positively associated with offender perceptions of (a) victim forgiveness and (b) relational reconciliation.

Hypothesis 3: Personal Expedience motive will be positively associated with offender perceptions of (a) victim forgiveness and (b) relational reconciliation.

Hypothesis 4: Fear of Sanctions motive will be negatively associated with offender perceptions of (a) victim forgiveness and (b) relational reconciliation.

Methods

Participants and procedure. Data were obtained in Samples A and B described earlier in phase two. Given that data from both samples were collected using the same measures and procedures, we combined the samples into a larger dataset ($n = 557$) to test our hypotheses. Participants in the combined dataset comprised 48.6% females, with an average age of 36.7 years (median = 34.5; $SD = 11.18$), average organizational tenure of 7.9 years (median = 5.3; $SD = 14.67$), and average position tenure of 5.5 years (median = 3.5; $SD = 7.28$). In terms of educational attainment, 0.9% of participants reported less than high school, 15.6% reported high school, 34.5% reported college or vocational training, and 48.9% reported undergraduate degree or above. For primary racial/ethnic group, 77.5% of participants reported Caucasian, 4.1% reported African American, 6.8% reported Hispanic, 3.8% reported East Asian, 2.7% reported South Asian, 3.4% reported Native American, and 1.7% reported others.

Measures. Apology motives were measured with the scales developed during phase two described above. All scales included three items, and all scales showed acceptable internal consistency reliability: Self-Censure (e.g., “I was at fault”; $\alpha = .87$), Relational Value (e.g., “I

liked him/her as a person”; $\alpha = .88$), Personal Expedience (e.g., “I wanted to end the conflict quickly”; $\alpha = .77$), and Fear of Sanctions (e.g., “I might be punished if I didn’t”; $\alpha = .81$).

Perceived victim forgiveness. A 3-item Likert-Type scale, adapted from Exline et al. (2007), was used to measure offender perceptions of victim forgiveness. The scale showed good internal consistency reliability ($\alpha = .89$). Participants were asked to indicate the extent to which victims forgave them after their apology on a scale ranging from 1 (not at all) to 9 (extremely). Items were: “To what extent do you believe the other person has forgiven you”, “To what extent did the other person verbally acknowledge that he/she forgave you”, and “To what extent did the other person acknowledge that he/she forgave you through actions”.

Perceived relational reconciliation. We adapted the avoidance and benevolence subscales of the Transgression-Related Interpersonal Motivations scale (TRIM; McCullough & Hoyt, 2002) to measure perceived reconciliation, consistent with previous research (e.g., McCullough, Pedersen, Tabak, & Carter, 2014). Whereas forgiveness is defined as the *intrapersonal* process of “letting go” of negative emotions and anger toward the offender, reconciliation is defined as the *interpersonal* process of restoring the relationship (i.e., Aquino et al., 2006). In this vein, reconciliation is conceived of as involving behaviors by conflicting parties which involve (1) extending goodwill to each other and (2) overcoming social estrangement brought on by conflict (Aquino, Grover, Goldman, & Folger, 2003; Rusbult; Verette, Whitney, Slovik, & Lipkus, 1991). Benevolence and avoidance items in the TRIM are typically used to capture victim behaviors of extending goodwill and minimizing social avoidance, respectively. Thus, we altered these items by using the victim-offender relationship as the referent (i.e., “we” instead of “I” as referent) to capture perceptions of relational reconciliation. For example, benevolence items, such as “even though the conflict was hurtful,

we still have goodwill for each other” and “*we released our anger so can work on restoring our relationship to health,*” reflect behaviors associated with the degree of goodwill in the victim-offender relationship. Similarly, avoidance items, such as “*we keep as much distance between us as possible*” and “*we avoid each other,*” reflect behaviors associated with social estrangement between victims and offenders. Furthermore, previous research has use the TRIM as a measure reconciliation (i.e., McCullough et al., 2014). Participants were asked to indicate the degree of avoidance (items were reverse-coded) and benevolence in the relationship following their apology on a 1 (not at all) to 9 (extremely) scale. The 10-items scale showed good internal consistency reliability ($\alpha = .87$).

Control variables. Given the cross-sectional nature of our data, we attempted to reduce common method biases whenever possible. Thus, we included a measure of social desirability, one of the most common sources of method bias (Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Lee, & Podsakoff, 2003). Social desirability bias was measured via the 6-item short form of the Marlowe-Crowne Social Desirability Scale (revised MC-SDS Form X2; Fischer & Fick, 1993; Strahan & Gerbasi, 1972) on a 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree) Likert scale ($\alpha = .66$).

Results and Discussion

Table 9 in Appendix C presents descriptive statistics and inter-correlations among all study variables. These correlations provide preliminary support for our hypotheses. Specifically, perceived forgiveness was positively related to self-censure ($r = .41, p < .01$), relational value ($r = .56, p < .01$), and personal expedience ($r = .25, p < .01$), but negatively related to fear of sanctions ($r = -.23, p < .01$). Similarly, perceived reconciliation was positively related to self-censure ($r = .26, p < .01$), relational value ($r = .47, p < .01$), and personal expedience ($r = .24, p < .01$), but negatively related to fear of sanctions ($r = -.46, p < .01$).

To provide a stronger test of our hypotheses, we conducted two hierarchical multiple regression analyses to examine the unique effects of each apology motive on each of our criterion variables. In Step 1, we entered the control variable social desirability bias. In Step 2, we entered all of the apology motives. Results, summarized in Table 10 in Appendix C, demonstrate that: Apologizing to correct a previous wrongdoing (i.e., self-censure) had a positive unique effect on offender perceptions of victim forgiveness ($\beta = .18, p < .01$), but did not have a significant unique effect on offender perceptions of relational reconciliation ($\beta = .04, p = .28$). Apologizing to preserve valuable relationships (i.e., relational value) had positive unique effects on both perceptions of victim forgiveness ($\beta = .46, p < .01$) and relational reconciliation ($\beta = .41, p < .01$). Apologizing out of instrumental desire to quickly resolve the conflict (i.e., personal expedience) also had positive unique effects on perceptions of victim forgiveness ($\beta = .10, p < .01$) and relational reconciliation ($\beta = .12, p < .01$). Finally, apologizing to prevent negative consequences (i.e., fear of sanctions) had negative unique effects on perceptions of victim forgiveness ($\beta = -.21, p < .01$) and perceptions of reconciliation ($\beta = -.44, p < .01$). These results fully support Hypotheses 2 to 4, but partially support Hypothesis 1.

Results from this phase of the research suggest that motives for apologizing influence subsequent offender perceptions in the reconciliation process. Even after apologizing, an offender may still believe the victim does not forgive him/her, and that the relationship is not reconciled. Indeed, it appears that the reasons why offenders apologize influence their perceptions of post-apology outcomes such as victim forgiveness and relational reconciliation. When offenders apologize because they want to correct their previous wrongdoing, conveniently resolve the conflict, or maintain valued relationships, they perceive greater levels of forgiveness from victims and reconciliation of the relationship. In contrast, when offenders apologize

because they fear the repercussions from the offence, they perceive lower levels of victim forgiveness and reconciliation. In other words, apologies motivated by fear could lead offenders to believe their apology was ineffective in eliciting forgiveness from victims and reconciling the relationship. Apology motives showed distinct associations with offender perceptions, and not all motives lead to beneficial outcomes. Overall, these results contribute to the growing body of research examining the offender perspective in reconciliation by highlighting the unique effects of offender motivations when engaging in one of the most common reconciliatory tactics.

GENERAL DISCUSSION

Theoretical and Practical Implications

The current research program presented an initial examination of the offender perspective during the apology and reconciliation process. We contribute to the apology literature by developing a useful typology and measurement instrument for studying offender behavior in response to relational conflict at work.

Our typology and scale are beneficial toward understanding the intent of offenders when they apologize after a workplace offence. In general, research on human motivation suggests that motives/intent are an important determinant of situational perception (e.g., DeShon & Gillespie, 2005). Of particular relevance to the current research, the importance of intent has been recently demonstrated in research on forgiveness. Cox et al. (2012) showed that victims' motives for forgiveness have important implications for their health. Similarly, as demonstrated in the current research, motives for apologies have important implications for understanding the apology and reconciliation process from the offender perspective. Contrary to victim-centric view of reconciliation (e.g., Aquino et al., 2006), our results suggest that reconciliation cannot be examined solely from the victim perspective. Instead, offenders also actively form their own perceptions about victim reactions (i.e., victim forgiveness) and reconciliation of the relationship. These perceptions are affected by the reasons they apologized in the first place. These results provide a glimpse into the complexity of the relationship repair process, and suggest that the offender perspective during reconciliation must also be taken into account.

For practical implications, our results also suggest that not all motivations for apologizing are necessarily beneficial toward reconciliation. Apologizing to avoid negative consequences is associated with lower perceptions of victim forgiveness and relational reconciliation.

Importantly, these findings suggest that “forced” reconciliatory gestures (i.e., apologizing for fear of reprimand) may not be beneficial for relationship repair. Even if the victim accepts the apology and forgives the offender, forcing an offender to apologize through fear of reprimands may lead him/her to believe the victim is not forgiving and the relationship is still in a conflict state. Thus, despite the importance of peace and reconciliation for professionalism in organizations (Chusmir & Parker, 1991; Bies et al., 2016), managers should be cautious at forcing employees to apologize and reconcile after an offence as doing so may have negative repercussions for the relationship in the long-run. Instead, emphasizing the relational aspects of apologies (i.e., benefits of preserving valuable relationship) would likely be a better alternative.

Future Directions

The results from our exploratory research presents several exciting avenues for future research. First, we did not find any significant relation between apologizing to correct a wrongdoing and perceptions of reconciliation. Perhaps this apology motive highlights both positive and negative cues for offenders. On the one hand, the motive would bias offender perceptions toward cues that suggest the wrongdoing has been corrected (i.e., victim forgiveness). On the other hand, the motive might also bias offender perceptions toward cues that suggest the effect of their wrongdoing (i.e., harm caused to victims). Future research should investigate whether the self-censure motive highlight, positive, negative, or both types of cues to clarify our findings.

Second, given evidence suggesting that victims are unlikely to accept insincere or manipulative apologies (Skarlicki et al., 2004), our results suggest a potential asymmetry between offender vs. victim perceptions of reconciliation. Presumably, apologizing out of expedience could lead offenders to give a quick and simple apology. Although such apologies

are likely to be considered as ineffective by victims (e.g., Fehr & Gelfand, 2010), offenders may attend only to cues that align with the expedience motive. For example, the offender might pay attention to cues suggesting victim desires for resolution while ignoring cues suggesting victim dissatisfaction with the apology. Future research should probe this idea further by examining the relationship between apology motives and delivery of apologies, as well as the interplay between victim and offender perceptions of the reconciliation process.

Third, future research should extend outcomes of apology motives beyond offender perceptions. Another interesting outcome that apology motives may influence is the quality of apologies. Research has highlighted that apologies can be composed of various content, ranging from offers of compensation to promises of forbearance (Fehr & Gelfand, 2010; Kirchhoff, Wagner, & Strack, 2012). Drawing on the functional approach to human behavior (Snyder, 1993), which suggests that behaviors such as delivering apologies serve goals, we speculate that the salient motives would differentially predict apology content. For example, when reparative motives are salient (i.e., relational value), offenders wish to genuinely repair the relationship, which may lead them to offer more elaborate apology statement containing multiple components (e.g., acknowledgment of harm, acceptance of responsibility, forbearance). In contrast, when avoidant motives are salient (i.e., fear of sanctions), offenders may be focused on placating victims and escaping the conflict situation, which may lead them to offer a simplistic apology. The importance of motives in determining behavior has been demonstrated in other research, such as research on motives underlying organizational citizenship behaviors (Rioux & Penner, 2001). Thus, we would expect the influence of apology motives on apology content to be an exciting avenue for future research.

Furthermore, as discussed after phase two, our apology motives typology failed to demonstrate empirical support for motives previously proposed by other scholars (i.e., guilt reduction; Lazare, 2004; Exline & Baumeister, 2000; Exline et al., 2007). Future research should clarify the role of guilt in apologies, as well as attempt to uncover additional motives for apologizing.

Finally, future research should synthesize research on the offender and victim perspectives in reconciliation by examining downstream consequences of apology motives on offenders, victims, and the overall relationship. Although purely speculative at this point, examining downstream consequences of apology motive would provide glimpses into the complexity of apology, forgiveness, and reconciliation. For example, might victims judge sincerity of apologies by attempting to infer offender motives for apologizing? Furthermore, given that apology motives have the potential to influence apology content, might certain motives, such as fear of sanctions, actually exacerbate conflict? These possibilities present exciting avenues for future research.

Limitations

Despite contributions to a novel and understudied area in apology research, conclusions from the current research are restricted by several limitations. First, our study employed a cross-sectional design, considering only one apology event and collecting data about the event once. To further examine the process between apology motives and reconciliation, longitudinal and multisource data are needed. For example, perceptions of reconciliation can be collected from offenders, victims, and third parties to triangulate the effects of apology motives in the overall reconciliation process.

Second, the use of recall and survey methodology prevents us from testing causality. It may be possible that perceptions of relational reconciliation affected offender memories about their initial apology motives. For instance, perhaps offenders who currently perceive lower degrees of forgiveness and reconciliation are more likely to recall their apology as being driven by fear. Indeed, part of Motivated Action Theory recognize that perceptions may also influence salient motives (DeShon & Gillespie, 2005). However, given the abundance of empirical evidence (often with experiments) demonstrating motive-congruent perceptions (e.g., Balci et al., 2006), and because conflict often leaves both parties in ambiguous states, we speculate that motives would be a stronger predictor of post-apology perceptions than the reverse. In addition, unmeasured extraneous variables, such as pre-conflict relational closeness, may influence both offender apology motives and subsequent offender perceptions of reconciliation. Although our data cannot address these issues, given our state-based conceptualization of apology motives, we would expect such situational variables to be antecedents to apology motives. Nonetheless, future research should investigate these issues using a variety of methodologies.

A third limitation for the current research is the potential for response biases associated with self-report data. Response biases often inflate common method variance and confound empirical results (Podsakoff et al., 2003). Although we controlled for social desirability bias in our analyses, we cannot rule out other sources of biases such as participant implicit theories, acquiescence biases, or influence of mood states. Future research should use experimental methodology whereby various apology motives are manipulated to examine their relations to criteria of interest. Although the dependent variables of interest in the current research were perceptions, experiments may still improve our understanding of the relation between apology motives and offender perceptions. For example, a simple experiment, manipulating apology

motives via a vignette, may be paired with eye-tracking and post-task recall to assess the cues that draw offender attention. In short, future research should employ experimental designs to advance apology motive research.

Despite these limitations, our exploratory research also has some strength that increase our confidence in the results. First, we collected data from multiple samples and employed both qualitative and quantitative methodologies to develop a typology of apology motives. Second, we used highly conservative criteria (i.e., with factor and item retention decisions) when developing the apology motives scales. Third, collecting data with personal apology experiences engendered more realism than a typical scenario study might have. In effect, describing personal apology experiences allowed us to capture variation in apology motives. Inducing offences in a laboratory setting would most likely hinder our ability to tap into various motives.

CONCLUSION

Despite the utilities of apologies for victims, apologizing may be a vastly different experience for offenders. In fact, when apologizing for the wrong reasons, offenders are likely to perceive continued conflict because they are unlikely to believe their apology was effective. The current research is an exploratory attempt at examining why offenders apologize and how motives for apologizing influence offenders' perceptions during the reconciliation process. Understanding apology motives is crucial toward understanding the offender experience during the reconciliation process, so we encourage future researchers to incorporate motives into their models of reconciliation.

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APPENDIX A: TABLES FOR PHASE ONE

Table 1

Phase 1 Higher-Order Apology Motive Definitions and Percentage Frequency

Motive	%	Definition	Characteristic Responses
Self-Censure	41%	The offender is motivated to view the self as good, moral, and socially acceptable person. The offender truly believe that he/she had engaged in a wrongdoing, and is motivated to correct for their previous misdeeds by apologizing.	“I was wrong” “I screwed up” “I realized my mistake”
Relational Value	20%	The offender feels liking, care, or affection (friendship) toward the victim, and is motivated to apologize in order to maintain a valued interpersonal relationship.	“I care about her/him” “I like the person and value our friendship”
Personal Expedience	10%	The offender views apologies as a conflict mitigation tactic. The offender is motivated to quickly resolve conflict, and offers an apology in hopes of appeasing victims and moving past the situation.	“end the drama,” “it was easier to deal with at the given time” “to move on from the situation”
Guilt Reduction	7.8%	The offender feels guilty about transgression, and is motivated to apologize in order to relieve her/his feelings of guilt.	“I felt remorseful” “I felt guilty” “I felt sorry”
Professionalism	4.6%	Workplaces typically prescribe acceptable conduct and role expectations. The offender believes relationship conflict is detrimental to performance, and is motivated to maintain professional character by apologizing.	“I was unprofessional” “it was wrong of me to not be professional” “I have to continue to work closely with the co-worker”
Fear of Sanctions	3.7%	The offender fears not apologizing may cause backlash against them, and is motivated to apologize to avoid retaliation from victims or reprimands from higher authority.	“the boss told me I should” “I want to save my job” “I did not want the manager to feel negatively about me”

Note. % column represents frequency of endorsement/use in current dataset. 12.9% of cases were vague or incoherent for coding purposes and coded as “ambiguous”.

APPENDIX B: TABLES FOR PHASE TWO

Table 2

Phase 2 Parallel Analysis Results – Actual and Random Eigenvalues

Actual Eigenvalues	Average Eigenvalues ¹	95 th Percentile Eigenvalues ¹
9.970*	1.879	1.981
4.953*	1.766	1.841
3.046*	1.666	1.733
2.187*	1.600	1.659
1.281	1.544	1.593
1.104	1.480	1.528
1.071	1.428	1.477
0.999	1.380	1.423
0.895	1.331	1.376
0.786	1.283	1.311
0.755	1.237	1.273
0.703	1.194	1.233
0.657	1.152	1.190
0.617	1.112	1.149
0.601	1.075	1.105
0.545	1.038	1.066
0.504	0.997	1.031
0.454	0.967	0.992
0.442	0.928	0.960
0.410	0.893	0.930
0.379	0.865	0.893
0.373	0.833	0.861
0.349	0.801	0.831
0.333	0.768	0.796
0.312	0.738	0.770
0.300	0.706	0.732
0.282	0.674	0.707
0.248	0.643	0.670
0.241	0.611	0.648
0.216	0.584	0.608
0.201	0.553	0.577
0.182	0.523	0.553
0.177	0.491	0.515
0.160	0.456	0.484
0.137	0.423	0.456
0.130	0.380	0.415

Note. Parallel analysis based on guidelines from Hayton et al. (2004). ¹ Eigenvalues extracted from randomly-generated data with same characteristics as the actual data ($n = 215$, $v = 36$, 1-5 point scale).

* Retained factors.

Table 3

Phase 2 Final Exploratory Factor Analysis of Apology Motive Items using Maximum Likelihood Extraction and Oblimin Rotation

Item Content	Self-Censure	Fear of Sanctions	Relational Value	Personal Expedience
I was at fault	.88	.02	-.02	-.10
I was responsible for the situation	.80	.16	-.06	-.23
I realized the error I made	.78	-.02	-.04	.05
What I did was unprofessional	.67	.00	.06	.12
I felt guilty	.65	-.08	-.10	.03
I disapproved of the way I acted	.61	-.09	.00	.16
I might be punished if I didn't	-.03	.86	.04	.00
I was afraid of he/she might do if I didn't	-.04	.80	-.08	.04
I felt like I was forced to	-.20	.76	.01	.06
Others told me to	.09	.67	-.09	-.14
There might be negative consequences if I didn't	.07	.65	.05	.03
Others might hold it against me	.05	.60	.07	.12
I liked him/her as a person	-.03	.00	-.91	-.04
I viewed him/her as a friend	-.03	.02	-.87	-.08
the relationship is important to me	.09	.01	-.77	.11
I wanted to continue the relationship	.05	-.05	-.74	.17
I didn't want the conflict to affect my work	-.06	.06	-.01	.76
I wanted to end the conflict quickly	.10	.01	-.11	.67
I didn't want to drag out the conflict	.05	.04	-.01	.65
Initial eigenvalue	5.41	3.74	1.95	1.77
Rotated percentage of variance explained	26.19	17.46	8.18	7.48
Rotated cumulative % of variance explained		43.65	51.83	59.31

Note. Factor loadings > .60 are in boldface.

Table 4

Phase 2 Standardized Residual Covariances from Confirmatory Factory Analysis (sample B)

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1. I felt guilty*	.00								
2. I realized the error I made	.12	.00							
3. I wanted to end the conflict quickly	2.10	.81	.00						
4. I didn't want to drag out the conflict	.22	-.37	.01	.00					
5. I didn't want the conflict to affect my work	1.12	.34	-.18	.23	.00				
6. I was at fault	-.69	.44	-.75	-1.34	-1.00	.00			
7. I disapproved of the way I acted*	-.03	-.20	1.09	-.40	-.21	-.74	.00		
8. I was responsible for the situation	.13	.14	-.73	-1.12	-.04	1.84	-1.24	.00	
9. What I did was unprofessional*	-.01	-.56	.22	-.60	-.29	-.75	3.19	-1.95	.00
10. There might be negative consequences if I didn't*	3.39	2.18	4.32	4.37	5.84	1.48	1.21	1.26	2.61
11. I might be punished if I didn't	-1.39	-.47	-.60	-.95	-.57	-.48	.35	-.98	2.66
12. Other told me to*	-1.30	-1.09	-3.25	-3.81	-3.89	.06	-1.04	.20	.75
13. I felt like I was forced to	-2.80	-3.21	-1.85	-.26	-1.25	-2.37	-3.15	-1.89	-1.27
14. I was afraid of what he/she might do if I didn't	.40	-.76	.50	.96	.97	-.40	-.07	-.44	1.21
15. Other might hold it against me*	4.80	3.50	2.32	2.66	3.00	3.31	2.72	2.59	4.55
16. I liked him/her as a person	2.42	-.47	.16	-1.00	-1.09	.34	-.37	.07	-.99
17. The relationship is important to me	1.28	-1.26	.26	-1.01	.32	-.25	-.46	-.15	-.44
18. I viewed him/her as a friend	.73	-.77	-1.53	-1.58	-.81	-.49	-.83	.88	-.86
19. I wanted to continue the relationship*	2.23	.42	2.73	2.60	2.58	1.23	.15	1.22	.62

Table 4 Continued

	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19
10. There might be negative consequences if I didn't*	.00									
11. I might be punished if I didn't	.45	.00								
12. Other told me to*	-2.89	.12	.00							
13. I felt like I was forced to	-1.46	.10	1.48	.00						
14. I was afraid of what he/she might do if I didn't	1.10	-.08	-.18	-.35	.00					
15. Other might hold it against me*	2.51	-.63	.32	-.28	-.02	.00				
16. I liked him/her as a person	.18	-2.39	-1.36	-2.44	-.05	1.92	.00			
17. The relationship is important to me	2.60	-.26	-.39	-.07	2.80	2.79	-.37	.00		
18. I viewed him/her as a friend	1.13	-.91	.23	-.33	1.08	1.24	1.13	-.14	.00	
19. I wanted to continue the relationship*	3.83	-1.42	-2.92	-1.47	1.39	3.24	-.75	.80	-.92	.00

Note. Based on recommendations from Brown (2015), values may be interpreted as z scores, and values above 2.58 or below -2.58 indicate significant and thus problematic residuals. * Items dropped based on number of problematic residuals. Note that items belonging to the Personal Expedience motives scale were left intact because the scale only had 3 surviving items and any additional exclusions would limit accuracy when assessing model fit.

Table 5

Final Apology Motives Scale Items

Motive	Definition	Items
Self-Censure	The offender is motivated to view the self as good, moral, and socially acceptable person. The offender truly believe that he/she had engaged in a wrongdoing, and is motivated to correct for their previous misdeeds by apologizing.	1. I was at fault 2. I was responsible for the situation 3. I realized the error I made
Relational Value	The offender feels liking, care, or affection (friendship) toward the victim, and is motivated to apologize in order to maintain a valued interpersonal relationship.	1. I like him/her as a person 2. I view him/her as a friend 3. the relationship is important to me
Personal Expedience	The offender views apologies as a conflict mitigation tactic. The offender is motivated to quickly resolve conflict, and offers an apology in hopes of appeasing victims and moving past the situation.	1. I wanted to end the conflict quickly 2. I didn't want to drag out the conflict 3. I didn't want the conflict to affect my work
Fear of Sanctions	The offender fears that not apologizing may cause backlash against them, and is motivated to apologize to avoid retaliation from victims or reprimands from higher authority.	1. I might be punished if I didn't apologize 2. I was afraid of what he/she might do if I didn't apologize 3. I felt like I was forced to apologize

Note. When using scale to assess apology motives, must instruct participants to use "I apologized because..." as stem to items. Alternatively, items may be rewritten to include the stem.

Table 6

Phase 2 Confirmatory Factor Analyses Results

	χ^2	<i>df</i>	<i>p</i>	CFI	RMSEA	EVCI	BIC
Sample A EFA model (19 items)	317.59	129	.00	.90	.08	1.89	542.96
Sample A revised model (12 items)	87.67	48	.00	.97	.06	.69	248.54
Sample B EFA model (19 items)	598.27	146	.00	.85	.10	2.01	855
Sample B revised model (12 items)	96.5	48	.00	.97	.05	.46	271.54

Table 7

Phase 2 Sample A Correlation of Apology Motives

	\bar{x}	<i>SD</i>	1	2	3	4
1. Self-Censure	3.26	1.23	(.87)			
2. Relational Value	3.45	1.17	.44**	(.88)		
3. Personal Expedience	3.98	0.89	.15*	.21*	(.76)	
4. Fear of Sanctions	2.42	1.24	-.03	-.03	.14*	(.85)

Note. $N = 215$; alphas are reported on the diagonals; all variables measured with 1-5 Likert-Type scales; higher scores on the variables reflect more of the construct.

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$.

Table 8

Phase 2 Sample B Correlation of Apology Motives

	\bar{x}	<i>SD</i>	1	2	3	4
1. Self-Censure	3.47	1.14	(.86)			
2. Relational Value	3.35	1.11	.40**	(.88)		
3. Personal Expedience	3.91	0.91	.24*	.26*	(.78)	
4. Fear of Sanctions	2.15	1.02	-.12*	-.04	.03	(.76)

Note. $N = 342$; alphas are reported on the diagonals; all variables measured with 1-5 Likert-Type scales; higher scores on the variables reflect more of the construct.

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$.

APPENDIX C: TABLES FOR PHASE THREE

Table 9

Phase 3: Descriptive Statistics and Correlations of Variables

	\bar{x}	<i>SD</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1. Age	36.68	11.18	-								
2. Sex [†]	1.51	0.50	-.19**	-							
3. Social Desirability ¹	3.05	0.76	-.10*	-.06	(.66)						
4. Self-Censure ¹	3.39	1.17	-.01	.10*	.02	(.87)					
5. Relational Value ¹	3.39	1.13	.05	.10*	.01	.41**	(.88)				
6. Personal Expedience ¹	3.93	0.90	.09*	-.20**	-.04	.20**	.24**	(.77)			
7. Fear of Sanctions ¹	2.18	1.04	-.18**	.23**	-.09*	-.06	-.02	-.002	(.81)		
8. Perceived Forgiveness ²	6.45	1.96	.05	-.01	.04	.41**	.56**	.25**	-.23**	(.89)	
9. Perceived Reconciliation ²	6.32	1.66	.22**	-.12**	.03	.26**	.47**	.24**	-.46**	.62**	(.87)

Note. $N = 557$; alphas are reported on the diagonals; higher scores on the variables reflect more of the construct. [†] Sex was dummy coded (1 = female, 2 = male). ¹ Variables measured with 1-5 Likert-type scales. ² Variables measured with 1-9 Likert-type scales.
* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$.

Table 10

Phase 3: Hierarchical Regression Analyses Predicting Offender Perceptions of Forgiveness and Reconciliation

Predictor	Perceived Forgiveness				Perceived Reconciliation			
	<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	95% <i>CI</i>	β	<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	95% <i>CI</i>	β
Step 1								
Social desirability	.11	.11	(-.11, .32)	.04	.06	.09	(-.13, .24)	.03
R^2			.002				.001	
Step 2								
Social desirability	.05	.09	(-.12, .21)	.02	-.03	.07	(-.17, .11)	-.02
Self-censure	.31**	.06	(.19, .43)	.18**	.05	.05	(-.05, .15)	.04
Relational value	.79**	.06	(.67, .92)	.46**	.61**	.05	(.50, .71)	.41**
Personal expedience	.22*	.08	(.07, .36)	.10**	.23**	.06	(.11, .35)	.12**
Fear of sanctions	-.40**	.06	(-.52, -.28)	-.21**	-.72**	.05	(-.82, -.62)	-.45**
R^2			.41**				.44**	
ΔR^2			.41**				.44**	
ΔF			94.12**				105.74**	

Note. $N = 55$; higher scores on the variables reflect more of the construct.

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$