

Benefits of apology for offenders: The effects of victim presence and coercion on apologies

By

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**CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL**

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**Master of Arts in Criminology**

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**Benefits of apology for offenders: The effects of victim presence and coercion on apologies**

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### **Abstract**

Offenders in some restorative justice programs are required to offer an apology as a condition of successful completion of the restorative justice procedure, or else return to court. Apologies can be required even when victims do not attend the restorative justice procedure. Apologising can result in several benefits for apologisers, but previous research suggests that coercion and lack of victim presence in restorative justice procedures may reduce those benefits. Participants ( $n = 120$ ) took part in a deceptive live study designed to elicit confessions for a transgression and subsequent apologies. In this study, I manipulated coercion (Coerced, Not coerced) and victim presence (Direct, Surrogate, Ambiguous), to test their effects on the outcome benefits that offenders derived from offering an apology. Findings indicated that victim presence and coercion significantly impact outcome benefits for apologisers, including: perceptions of personal responsibility, accountability for consequences, transgression exaggeration and procedural fairness judgments. Implications for restorative justice programs are discussed.

*Keywords:* restorative justice, apology, coercion, victims

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## **Chapter 1: Introduction**

Restorative justice advocates argue that restorative justice is a process that holds many potential benefits for offenders, including: internalisation of responsibility for transgressions and greater recognition of the harmful action(s) and consequences (Bazemore & Umbreit, 1995; Choi & Stevenson, 2009), enhanced perceptions of apology importance and process finality (Choi & Stevenson, 2009; O'Hara & Yam, 2002), increased value consensus (Okimoto & Wenzel, 2009; Wenzel, Okimoto, Feather & Platow, 2008), greater perceptions of procedural and outcome fairness, and greater satisfaction with procedures and outcomes (Bergseth & Bouffard, 2007; Gray, 2003; Latimer, Dowden & Muise, 2005; Tyler, Sherman, Strang, Barnes & Woods, 2007). However, no research has explored how elements of restorative justice procedures might influence the outcomes experienced by offenders in restorative justice. This research sought to develop a greater understanding of restorative justice for offenders by focusing on aspects of the conference procedure that psychological research suggests are particularly influential for offenders. Specifically, I examined the effects of apology coercion and victim presence on the benefits of restorative justice for offenders who apologise.

### **Societal Reactions to Transgressions**

Notions of justice are generally founded in either retributive or restorative philosophies (Wenzel et al., 2008). The focus of retributive justice is to establish blame and determine a proportionate punishment (Zehr, 1997). The primary sanctioning objective is the administration of punishment deemed justifiably proportionate to the crime (Bazemore & Umbreit, 1995). The process of justice is designed to be adversarial, pitting the offender against the state with the possibility of only one victor. For example, the criminal justice system in Canada draws upon retributive justice ideology by imposing a series of increasingly punitive consequences (i.e., fines

to imprisonment) to a hierarchy of increasingly harmful behaviours. Restorative justice theorists argue that the retributive approach has been popular historically because the punitive sanctions employed immediately punish, denounce unwanted behaviour and provide norm affirmation (Bazemore & Umbreit, 1995). Drawing upon retributive justice principles, the formal criminal justice system considers crime to be an offence against the state and holds a monopoly on victimisation; deciding who victims are and how they will be represented (Zehr, 1997).

### **Restorative Justice**

In contrast to retributive justice, the purpose of restorative justice is to promote the restoration of both the victim and offender, as well as reparation of harm done to the community, while balancing the needs of offenders, victims and communities (Bergseth & Bouffard, 2007). The primary objective of restorative justice is relationship restoration for all parties connected to the offence, with bilateral (as opposed to unilateral) power distribution (Braithwaite, 2000). For example, participants in restorative justice conferences, though guided by a conference facilitator, control the information that is shared during the procedure as well as the outcome of the conference. These elements help to level hierarchy between participants as well as facilitators. Descriptions of restorative justice state that the model is best understood as a process that involves all stakeholders to an offence in a dialogue, which collectively reflects upon and resolves the causes and outcomes of a transgression (Braithwaite, 2000; Latimer, Dowden & Muise, 2005). Restorative justice has been proposed as an alternative or complementary system of justice to the formal criminal justice system, though some advocates maintain that restorative justice actually predates the retributive justice model and was the predominant resolution practice across multiple ancient civilizations (Van Ness, 1993).

The core principles reviewed above distance restorative justice considerably from retributive justice, but restorative justice also employs a very different procedure. The formality of court in retributive justice is replaced by a relatively informal conference procedure in restorative justice (Braithwaite, 2000). In restorative justice conferences, victims, offenders and their supporters, guided by a conference convener, meet to discuss an offence and decide on an outcome plan (sanctions) for the offender to complete. First, victims, offenders and their respective supporters are led by a conference convenor (or panel) in a discussion of why the harm occurred and what the implications were for all parties (Wenzel et al., 2008). The process is designed to be reflective, with honesty strongly encouraged so that sanctions that are appropriate to both the situation and individual offender can be drafted.

Sanctions are the tangible outcome of conferences. They are consequences levied on the offender for the harm caused and are jointly crafted by all parties to the restorative justice conference. Sanctions are intended to serve two fundamental roles: (1) to restore the victim/community after the harm that was done, and (2) to encourage personal growth in the offender that will help avoid further transgressions (Zehr, 1997). Restorative justice sanctions aim to attach meaningful consequences to delinquency, denounce criminality and convey expected standards of behaviour while emphasising the importance of relationship restoration for the parties involved (Van Ness, 1993). While it is important to communicate to the offender that their behaviour was inappropriate, it is also important that any relationships damaged by the harmful act(s) be restored as much as possible.

Conceptually, restorative justice conferences have been described as interaction rituals (Sherman et al., 2005). Interaction rituals are social events characterised by the core qualities of: (1) bringing people physically together, (2) clearly defining roles in the process, and (3) creating

a dynamic experience that involves sharing a common purpose. Through this method, restorative justice aims to respond differently to crime than does the retributive model. Restorative justice gives priority to stakeholder reparation on a case-by-case basis while constructing safer communities as a result of the process (Bazemore & Umbreit, 1995). The intention of restorative justice is that individual relationships are repaired through the conference procedure while acceptable standards of behaviour are communicated to the group. Additionally, the restorative model has been touted as fostering a “less punitive, less costly and less stigmatizing” method of sanctioning (Bazemore & Umbreit, 1995, p.298). Yet, both advocates and critics question the application of restorative justice to some offences (e.g., sexual and domestic violence offences) due to concerns associated with victims, such as safety and coercion to participate (Daly & Stubbs, 2006; Hudson, 1998). However, overall, advocates of restorative justice maintain that the model is a holistic approach to justice that seeks to reintegrate and rehabilitate those in need more effectively than does retributive justice (Bazemore & Umbreit, 1995).

### **Theoretical Underpinnings of Restorative Justice**

**Reintegrative shaming.** Although the formal criminal justice system operates on principles of proportional retributive justice, criminological theory proposes that this model may be detrimental to the offender. It has been argued that offenders experience stigmatisation as a result of an encounter with the criminal justice system through the process of labelling. To be labelled as a ‘criminal’ prompts society to reject the offender, identifying them as different and treating them accordingly (Becker, 1963; Links, 1987). Stigmatisation can make reintegration into mainstream society difficult (Braithwaite, 2000; Braithwaite & Mugford, 1994; Maruna, LeBel, Mitchell & Naples, 2004). By contrast, restorative justice procedures seek to avoid stigmatisation by employing principles of reintegrative shaming.

Reintegrative shaming seeks to communicate shame for the harmful act while maintaining an attitude that is respectful to the offender (Braithwaite & Mugford, 1994). Core components of successful reintegrative shaming procedures include: a focus on the event, but not on the offender, as bad; the empowerment of participants with process control; and full recognition by the offender of the harmful act(s) (Braithwaite & Mugford, 1994). Restorative justice adopts the process of reintegrative shaming by emphasising that while the act was harmful and wrong, the offender is worthy of redemption (Tyler, Sherman, Strang, Barnes & Woods, 2007). Reintegrative shaming is not an isolated component in the restorative justice conference; it is an underlying philosophy that guides the procedure. Braithwaite (2000) maintains that reintegrative shaming works because it draws together people respected by the offender to disapprove of their behaviour constructively, allowing the offender to recognise that while their action was wrong, they are still valued.

**Procedural justice.** Restorative justice theorists also attribute part of the success of restorative justice to its attention to procedural justice concerns. Procedural justice, in the legal context, is concerned with evaluations of the application of law; specifically, the extent to which a *procedure* is perceived as fair and satisfactory (Tyler, 1989). Distributive justice refers to the extent to which the *outcomes* of a procedure are perceived as fair and satisfactory. Research has demonstrated that procedural and distributive justice evaluations rest heavily on the practices employed during a procedure.

Thibaut and Walker (1978) were the first to systematically investigate procedural justice effects in legal contexts and found voice to be a highly influential variable. *Voice* refers to the input or process control a participant is permitted throughout a decision-making procedure. Voice has repeatedly been found to affect procedural and distributive justice judgments: When

people are permitted voice in a decision-making procedure, they judge the procedure and its outcome to be more satisfactory and fair (Lind, Kanfer & Earley, 1990; Lind, Tyler & Huo, 1997). Relational models of procedural justice argue that the effect occurs because voice impacts an individual's sense of social value and perceived respect (Lind & Tyler, 1988; Tyler & Lind, 1992). These models posit that voice is valued because the opportunity to offer input implies that the participant is a valued member of the group overseeing the procedure (i.e., they are asked to provide input because they have an important contribution to offer; Lind, Tyler & Huo, 1997). Lind and Tyler's (1988) group value model is the dominant relational model of procedural justice effects, suggesting that procedures communicate symbolic messages of respect and value from the group to the individual. It suggests that treatment by authorities during a procedure (in terms of respect, neutrality and standing) influences procedural justice evaluations because group membership is very important to the individual (Smith, Tyler, Huo, Ortiz & Lind, 1998; Tyler, 1994).

Drawing from the group value model, restorative justice theorists argue that the success of restorative justice may hinge upon the respect, neutrality and equal standing demonstrated through the inclusion of voice and perceptions of a procedurally just process (Tyler, 2006). A key communication in the restorative justice conference is that the criminal act was bad but that the offender is a respected person. This lays the foundation for a procedure that engages the offender respectfully and with neutrality. Restorative justice conferences require that offenders fully acknowledge their harmful act and honestly recount the incident. This process presents the opportunity for the offender to exercise voice in an interactive and respectful dialogue, and this voice enhances perceptions of procedural justice. Engaging offenders in an restorative justice

conference that holds them accountable for their actions while maintaining respect, neutrality and equal standing encourages the individual to evaluate the procedure as just.

Procedural justice has important consequences. Perceptions of procedural justice: increase perceptions of satisfaction with outcomes (Mossholder, Bennett & Martin, 1998); heighten support for and commitment to decisions (McFarlin & Sweeney, 1992; Tyler & Degoey, 1995); lead outcomes to be evaluated as more legitimate (Tyler, Degoey & Smith, 1996); and encourage voluntary acceptance of those outcomes (Gibson, 1989; Lind, Tyler & Huo, 1997; Sunshine & Tyler, 2003). Legitimacy is a particularly important component in the legal context. Perceived legitimacy of authorities (or institutions) prompts an attitude of compliance with the future instructions of those authorities (Sunshine & Tyler, 2003). Legitimacy engenders voluntary and cooperative behaviours, even to unpopular decisions, which translates into a lower likelihood of recidivism in the legal context (Gibson, 1989; Sunshine & Tyler, 2003; Tyler & Degoey, 1995).

### **Evaluations of Restorative Justice**

It has been suggested that restorative justice procedures offer offenders a number of beneficial outcomes, including “responsibilisation” effects (which restorative justice researchers define as the promotion of greater ownership of and accountability for behaviour; Bazemore & Umbreit, 1995; Regehr & Gutheil, 2002; Van Ness, 1993; Wenzel et al., 2008), perceptions of value consensus between stakeholders (Okimoto & Wenzel, 2009; Wenzel et al., 2008), and feelings of remorse and empathy (Bazemore & Umbreit, 1995; Choi & Stevenson, 2009). It has also been suggested that communities reap long-term benefits in the form of lower recidivism rates. Comparative evaluations have revealed that restorative justice results in greater participant satisfaction and completion of sanction agreements, as well as fewer future police encounters, in

comparison to the formal criminal justice system (Bergseth & Bouffard, 2007; Gray, 2003; Latimer, Dowden & Muise, 2005; Tyler et al., 2007). Strang and Sherman (2003) conducted randomised field tests to better understand victim, offender and community justice concerns. Results indicated that restorative justice promoted offender compliance with the law as, or more, effectively than conventional court responses, resulting in lower recidivism rates. The high levels of participant satisfaction, acceptance of conference sanctions, and future compliance with the law following restorative justice are frequently attributed to the model's inclusion of reintegrative shaming and procedural justice concerns (Braithwaite, 2000). Restorative justice advocates, therefore, evoke reintegrative shaming theory and procedural justice literature to explain the positive performance of restorative responses in evaluations comparing restorative justice to court. However, critics of restorative justice note that these causal assumptions have never been tested, and suggest that further investigation is required to identify the factors that determine whether restorative procedures will be successful.

### **Further Investigation Required in Restorative Justice**

Bergseth and Bouffard (2007) conducted a critical evaluation of the restorative justice literature, maintaining that prior evaluations have suffered from a variety of methodological shortcomings. Utilising a sample of offenders directed to court versus those diverted to restorative justice, the authors compared offenders with similar offense histories to evaluate the effectiveness of both responses in reducing recidivism. Recidivism was operationalised as any subsequent charge over a four-year follow-up period. Restorative justice was found to result in lower recidivism rates during the earlier follow up periods than the formal criminal justice system, but after four years, the advantage of restorative justice over court procedures was not apparent; offenders recidivated as often following restorative justice procedures as following



court. Tyler et al. (2007) cite similar findings from an experimental design comparing restorative justice conferences and court procedures as a response to drunk-driving offences. The authors found that both restorative and court procedures effectively reduced recidivism rates if they employed reintegrative shaming and were perceived as procedurally fair.

These studies cast doubt on the widely accepted findings that restorative justice is inherently more effective than traditional court procedures. In fact, restorative justice has been subject to considerable criticism. It has been argued that restorative procedures have the potential to be perceived as intrusive by participants due to the focus on discussion and reflection (Polk, 1994). The outcome of a restorative procedure perceived as intrusive may be more detrimental to offender reintegration than court based procedures. Additionally, Waldman (1999) suggests that evaluative studies that have touted the success of restorative justice in comparison to court procedures based on participant satisfaction must be approached cautiously. Waldman (1999) maintains that marginalised groups tend to define their needs differently than the dominant group (e.g., individuals who are minorities may define their needs differently than Caucasians). Therefore, we should be very cautious in interpreting data about participant satisfaction, as differences in perceived needs could artificially inflate self-reports of satisfaction with the outcomes of restorative justice among marginalised groups. While a procedure might receive high subjective reports of satisfaction from individual participants, the procedure may not necessarily meet either objective or societal standards of justice.

Collectively, the reviewed literature reveals that we know very little about how or why restorative justice works. These concerns highlight the need to understand more about the specific mechanisms by which restorative justice procedures are effective. This study sought to

refine these nebulous understandings of restorative justice by exploring how outcome benefits of restorative justice for offenders can be affected by particular aspects of the conference procedure.

### **Factors affecting the Outcomes of Restorative Justice for Offenders**

**Apology.** Apology is the most commonly practiced method used to resolve social conflicts, though it is yet to be fully integrated into the formal criminal justice system (Davila, 2004; McPherson Frantz & Benningson, 2005). In contrast, apology is central to restorative justice. Petrucci (2002) argues that because apology directly addresses the harmful act, it may be an important component of conflict resolution for both offenders and victims. Haley (1986) suggests that while the choice to apologise may be in the pursuit of an end goal, apologies can also act as informal sanctions. Apologies serve to confirm truth, suggest compensation or restoration possibilities, and clarify blame (Petrucci, 2002). Victims and observers value apologies, in part, because they communicate important information about a transgression, including demonstrating an acceptance of responsibility by the offender and symbolising respect by the offender for the victim (Gold & Weiner, 2000; Thompson, 2005). However, some apologies are more effective than others.

Research consistently finds that apologies that are accepted by the intended recipient(s) tend to include remorse, acceptance of responsibility, and empathy (Brown, 2003; Choi & Stevenson, 2009; Coombs & Holladay, 2008; O'Hara & Yam, 2002; Petrucci, 2002; Regehr & Gutheil, 2002). Offenders who offer sincere apologies to receptive recipients are believed to experience a variety of outcome benefits. Sincere apologies are associated with greater ownership over past actions, as well as feelings of shame and regret by offenders (Choi & Stevenson, 2009). Apology also encourages reflection upon one's actions, and this reflective

process fosters empathy for the victim(s). Feelings of empathy encourage understanding for the victim's experience and recognition of harm caused by the wrong-doing (Choi & Stevenson, 2009). Value consensus, the belief that community norms and acceptable standards of behaviour are shared between conference participants, is experienced between parties to a successful apology (Okimoto, Wenzel & Feather, 2009). Value consensus is communicated through dialogue. Perceptions of value consensus offer benefits to all parties involved, allowing apologisers to feel accepted and apology recipients to feel respected. This shared understanding offers conference participants the opportunity to satisfyingly rectify the injustice from the perspective of all stakeholders (Okimoto, Wenzel & Feather, 2009). Finally, apologisers report a sense of accomplishment that is connected to the perception of process finality (Choi & Stevenson, 2009; O'Hara & Yam, 2002). The self-respect generated from this accomplishment may be drawn upon by the offender to support effective community reintegration.

Research has therefore established that an apology by an offender to a victim can lead to benefits for the offender. However, there are two common features of restorative justice procedures that may quality the benefits of apology for offenders: victim presence and apology coercion.

***Victim presence.*** First, although restorative justice conferences would ideally include victims, this is not always the case. In Ontario, restorative justice conferences will proceed without a victim present, and when victims are unable or unwilling to attend, the offender is still expected to offer an apology as a condition of their participation in the program (Ministry of Child and Youth Services, 2010). This means that offenders may have conferences where only they and the conference facilitator(s) are present but the offender is still required to draft a written apology addressed to the victim. Under these circumstances, it is very possible that the

offender will have very little insight into the victim's experience when crafting their apology. Without a victim's voice in the restorative justice procedure to inspire offender accountability and personal reflection, the apology may fail to yield the outcome benefits associated with genuine and successful apologies. Despite these concerns, we have a limited understanding of whether victim presence actually influences apology outcome benefits for apologisers.

Taft (2000) suggests that the primary pattern through which remorse is expressed is dyadic – referring to an interaction involving the offender and victim. When an offender delivers an apology to an absent victim the outcome benefits associated with apology and restorative justice may be permanently lost. Umbreit's (1998) research on victim and offender experiences with restorative justice supports this assertion. Offenders and their supporters reported that victim presence during the restorative justice conference was important because it presented the opportunity for the victim-offender relationship to be repaired through apology and forgiveness. Furthermore, offenders and their supporters indicated that victim presence was important to help the offender recognise the harm they had caused and to hold themselves accountable for the wrong done. Gray (2005) elaborates on the importance of victim presence for restorative justice, suggesting that a conference can only be fully restorative if there is direct contact between the offender and victim. Victim presence directly addresses the harm the offender has caused and holds the individual responsible for their actions while also demonstrating a desire to resolve the conflict. Gray (2005) suggests that victim presence assists the offender in community reintegration.

The studies discussed above can be used to inform our understanding of the importance of victim presence for apologisers. When offenders offer an apology in a restorative justice setting where the victim's voice has been absent, the offender may lack important precedents to a

sincere apology. The absence of victim voice may attenuate outcome benefits of sincere apologies (i.e., acknowledgment of and accountability for the harm done). Given that restorative justice conferences sometimes occur where the direct victim(s) are either unwilling or unable to attend, inviting a surrogate victim to attend the conference may be a viable means to include victim voice in proceedings in which it would otherwise be absent, thus enhancing apology outcome benefits for offenders. Surrogate victim presence can be practiced in restorative justice by inviting victim impact panels or community members to attend the conference and convey a victim-like voice and experience to the offender (Bergseth & Bouffard, 2007). However, no research to date has examined whether the presence of a surrogate victim allows an offender to experience the same outcome benefits of apology that they would experience if interacting directly with the actual victim of their transgression.

***Apology coercion.*** A second factor that may affect the outcome benefits of apology for offenders is the level of coercion used in the process of generating the apology. Apologies are offered for two fundamental reasons: As a means to an end (instrumental) or as an end in and of itself (non-instrumental; Folger & Konovsky, 1989). Scholars have argued that when apologies serve an instrumental function (e.g., when they are a legal requirement) they lose the effect they would have as a meaningful interaction (i.e., outcome benefits for all parties are significantly diminished; Petrucci, 2002; Taft, 2000). For this reason, the inclusion of apology in judicial proceedings has been questioned (Regehr & Gutheil, 2002).

As noted previously, restorative justice conferences may require an offer of apology from the offender. In addition, in Ontario, offenders are offered the opportunity to participate in restorative justice as an alternative to the formal criminal justice system (Ministry of Child and Youth Services, 2010). This means that if the offender fails to follow through with all

components of the restorative justice program (including apology), they will be returned to the formal criminal justice system. Under these circumstances, it is very possible that an apology will only be offered in the restorative justice conference to fulfill the instrumental purpose of avoiding further contact with the formal criminal justice system. Including apology as a requirement of restorative justice procedures may thus prompt offenders to perceive the call for apology as coercive. No research has examined whether coercion actually reduces the outcome benefits of apology for offenders. However, cognitive dissonance theory suggests a mechanism by which such coercion would attenuate the beneficial effects of apology for offenders who apologise.

Cognitive dissonance refers to the psychological state experienced by an individual when their actions and cognitions are at odds with each other (Egan, Santos & Bloom, 2007). When an individual's behaviours and thoughts are not aligned an aversive state of internal inconsistency develops. Psychological discomfort is the resultant experience and, in the pursuit of internal consistency, individuals will try to reduce this dissonance (Elliot & Devine, 1994; Harmon-Jones, Brehm, Greenberg, Simon & Nelson, 1995; Stone & Cooper, 2001). Festinger's (1957) original theory of cognitive dissonance states that cognitive alterations will result when an individual experiences a sufficient amount of dissonance. There are components of this theory that have been questioned, but a consistent finding regarding dissonance reduction strategies exists: When little incentive is offered for an individual to act in ways that oppose his or her beliefs, there is a greater chance that the individual will engage in a dissonance reduction strategy that involves changing their belief system to alleviate the resultant discomfort (Harmon-Jones et al., 1995). Greater incentives do not encourage the individual to engage a dissonance reduction strategy because the individual uses the incentive to justify their actions.

Cognitive dissonance theory can inform our understanding of apology outcome benefits for apologisers. When offenders offer an apology in a restorative justice setting wholly for the instrumental purpose of avoiding further contact with the criminal justice system, they could justify their apology in terms of the negative consequence they have avoided. Justification may prevent effective resolution of cognitive dissonance and nullify the offender's ability to experience outcome benefits of the apology.

### **Significance of the Present Study**

This research project used an experimental psychology paradigm to test whether victim presence and coercion to apologise affect the benefits that offenders experience when they apologise for transgressions in a restorative justice conference. This research enhances our understanding of the outcome benefits of apology for offenders in restorative justice conferences by identifying specific conditions under which the offender is more likely to experience outcome benefits.

This investigation provides evidence-based policy implications for restorative justice procedures, which may enhance outcome benefits for offenders. Further, manipulating both victim presence and coercion in a fully-crossed design allowed us to test how the two variables interact with one another in restorative justice contexts. Assuming that apology coercion eliminates the possibility of cognitive dissonance, it is expected that a floor effect would be created, stunting any subsequent benefits that may have been achieved through the various levels of victim presence. Under coercion, the offender may become less likely to internalise any aspect of the apology and, therefore, regardless of whether victim presence is direct, surrogate or absent, the cognitive dissonance, which prompts apologisers to reflect upon their actions and alter future behaviour, will not occur. I predicted that any benefits of direct or surrogate victim

presence would be apparent only when apologies were not coerced, and that all benefits of victim presence would be nullified when apologies were coerced.

Drawing from the research reviewed above, the following hypothesis was tested in this study: **The effect of victim presence on apology outcome benefits for offenders depends on whether the apology is offered under coercion. When the apology is not offered under coercion, victim presence has an effect on benefits – outcome benefits are greater when the apology is delivered to a direct or surrogate victim than when the apology is directed to no one in particular. However, when the apology is offered under coercion, victim presence has no effect on benefits – outcome benefits are no different when the apology is delivered to a direct victim, surrogate victim or no one in particular.**



## Chapter 2: Method

### Design

The study was conducted as a 3 (Victim: Direct, Surrogate, Ambiguous) x 2 (Apology: Coerced, Not Coerced) between-subjects experimental design, with participants randomly assigned to conditions. Victim presence was manipulated so that participants were told that they were either interacting with the victim of their transgression (Direct victim condition), a representative of that victim (Surrogate victim condition), or no specific victim was identified to the participant (Ambiguous victim condition). Apology coercion was manipulated so that participants were either told that they would suffer a severe negative consequence (an academic misconduct charge) if they failed to write an apology (Coerced condition), or that they would suffer no negative consequence if they chose not to write an apology (Not Coerced condition).

Apology outcome benefits were the focus of the dependent measures, though procedural and distributive fairness measures were included as well. The constructs assessed as dependent variables were: internalisation of responsibility, responsabilisation, apology importance, transgression finality, value consensus, and procedural and outcome fairness. Internalisation of responsibility refers to the extent to which an internal or external locus of control was adopted to explain involvement in the incident, and the internalisation of responsibility measure was drawn from Coombs and Holladay (2002; Cronbach's  $\alpha = .91$ ). The responsabilisation measure probed for responses employed by the participant after the consequences of the transgression were revealed and was derived from a larger empathy scale used by Mehrabian and Epstein (1972; empathy scale Cronbach's  $\alpha = .84$ ). The measure of apology importance, which assessed perceived impact of the apology as well as perceptions of transgression finality, was drawn from Devilly and Borkovec (2000; Cronbach's  $\alpha = .85$ ). The value consensus measure explored the

extent to which the participant perceived the victim to share similar standards of behaviour and social values as themselves and was drawn from Wenzel and Okimoto (2009; Cronbach's  $\alpha = .71$ ). Finally, the procedural and outcome fairness measures were drawn from Heuer, Penrod, Hafer and Cohn (2002; fair procedures scale Cronbach's  $\alpha = .89$ ; fair outcomes scale Cronbach's  $\alpha = .87$ ). Respectively, the measures evaluated the extent to which the procedure used to generate the apology, and the outcome that followed offering the apology, were perceived as favourable.

### **Participants**

Introductory Psychology students ( $n = 153$ ) at the University of Ontario Institute of Technology participated in exchange for course credit. No participants were excluded from participation based on sex, race, age or any other characteristic.

### **Procedure and Materials**

The procedure for this study was based on that used by Kassin and Kiechel (1996). The study was advertised to participants under the name "Typing Task". Upon arrival at the experiment, participants were asked for verbal consent to participate and were told that the study was concerned with typing ability (i.e., the speed and accuracy with which people can type spoken text). The participant was then asked to complete a "Typing History Questionnaire" (see Appendix A). While the participant completed this document, Confederate I entered the lab, pretending to be another participant who signed up for the same experimental session. Upon Confederate I's arrival, the experimenter asked for Confederate I's verbal consent to participate and requested that they also complete the typing history questionnaire.

After both the participant and Confederate I completed the materials, the participant was told that they had been randomly selected to type first while their partner (Confederate I) dictated the materials. The experimenter escorted the participant and Confederate I to private experiment

room 1 and directed the participant to sit in front of the computer while Confederate I sat in the other chair provided. After providing some basic instruction, the experimenter stated that there was a glitch in the program and emphasised that no one should hit the ALT key because this would cause all recent data to be lost, with very negative implications for the research project.

After the experimenter left private experiment room I, Confederate I read out the instructions on the typing test materials, which reiterated the instructions provided by the experimenter, and asked the participant if they were ready to begin (see Appendix B). The mock typing task was administered via MediaLab. MediaLab prompted the participant to proceed to the “typing” screen. When the participant came to the “typing” screen, Confederate I read the sentences on the typing test materials at a pace of approximately 90 words per minute (faster than the average person’s typing ability). If the participant asked Confederate I to slow down, the comment was acknowledged (Confederate I smiled and nodded their head) but retained the same pace. After the participant had been typing for 90 seconds, MediaLab moved to a “blue screen of death”, indicating that the program had crashed. At this point, Confederate I leaned in and said: “I saw you hit the ALT key.”

The experimenter waited a few moments upon hearing the typing stop and then called out: “Is everything okay?” before re-entering private experiment room I, looking at the screen and saying: “What happened?” The Confederate I responded “I saw him/her hit the ALT key and then the screen just went blue”. At this point the experimenter asked the participant whether they hit the ALT key. If the participant denied hitting the ALT key, the experimenter reminded them that they was typing fast, and asked if it was possible that they hit the ALT key without realising it. Confederate I also reiterated their eyewitness testimony by stating: “I definitely saw you hit the ALT key”.

At this point, the victim presence manipulation was introduced. In the Direct victim condition, the experimenter stated that the lost information was “part of my thesis research, it’s been funded through a grant and the preliminary report is due next week. I can’t possibly meet the deadline without that data”. In the Surrogate victim condition, the experimenter stated that the lost information was “part of another student’s, Kamille’s, thesis research. It’s been funded through a grant, and the preliminary report is due next week. She can’t possibly meet the deadline without that data”. In the Ambiguous victim condition, the experimenter stated that the lost information was “part of a research project at the university that has been funded through a grant. Preliminary reports are due next week and the deadline can’t possibly be met without that data”.

The experimenter then sought a signed confession from the participant by scrawling “I hit the ALT key and data was lost” on a piece of notebook paper. The terminology of the experimenter’s spoken request varied based on the victim presence manipulation. In the Direct victim condition, the experimenter requested that the participant sign the note to let “my supervisor know what happened”. In the Surrogate victim condition, the experimenter requested that the participant sign the note to let “Kamille’s supervisor know what happened”. In the Ambiguous victim condition, the experimenter requested that the participant sign the note to let “the lab supervisor know what happened”. (Regardless of victim condition, if the participant refused to sign the confession on the first request, the experimenter requested the signature one additional time before terminating the experiment and moving to debriefing.)

After obtaining the signed confession, the experimenter informed Confederate I that the study would not be able to finish today and that they were free to go but asked the participant to wait a moment while the experimenter checked the Lab Protocol binder. Before leaving,

Confederate I asked: “Do I still get my credit for this?” The experimenter responded “Yes. I’ll take care of that once this gets sorted out” and Confederate I then exited the lab. The experimenter then picked up a binder labelled ‘Lab Protocol’ from a shelf in the main lab room and checked the Table of Contents before leafing through the binder to the ‘Lost Data Protocol’ page. There were, in fact, two ‘Lost Data Protocol’ pages. The page that the experimenter turned to differed based on the coercion manipulation. Both conditions contained identical ‘Lost Data Protocol’ pages with the exception that in the coerced condition (see Appendix C-1), the first consequence listed for a loss of data is an “Academic Misconduct Violation” while the Not coerced ‘Lost Data Protocol’ page does not list this consequence (see Appendix C-2). The page outlined the procedure following a loss of data and instructed the experimenter to contact the lab supervisor.

After reading the “Lost Data Protocol” page, the experimenter stated that they would need to contact the lab supervisor while the participant waited. The language of this exchange varied based on the victim presence manipulation. In the Direct victim condition, the experimenter informed the participant that “The protocol says I need to contact my lab supervisor”. In the Surrogate victim condition, the experimenter informed the participant that “The protocol says I need to contact Kamille’s lab supervisor”. In the Ambiguous victim condition, the experimenter informed the participant that “The protocol says I need to contact the lab supervisor”.

The experimenter left the binder open on the main lab room table beside the participant before walking across the room to “telephone” the lab supervisor. The experimenter staged a phone call to the “lab supervisor” from the telephone in the main lab area and engaged in a brief, one-sided “conversation”. Upon hanging up the phone, the experimenter introduced the apology

prompt manipulation. Based on the apology prompt condition, the experimenter requested a written apology from the participant.

In the Coerced condition, the experimenter informed the participant that the situation merited being reported to the academic misconduct committee for a violation of conduct within a laboratory, which could result in a decision of academic misconduct. The experimenter proceeded with the call for apology based on the victim presence manipulation. In the Direct victim condition, the experimenter told the participant that “My supervisor is really upset and although this could be considered a case of academic misconduct, she said that if you write an apology that I could submit to my grant funding committee you can totally avoid escalating it to that level”. In the Surrogate victim condition, the experimenter told the participant that “Kamille’s supervisor is really upset and although this could be considered a case of academic misconduct, she said that if you write an apology that Kamille could submit to her grant funding committee you can totally avoid escalating it to that level”. In the Ambiguous victim condition, the experimenter told the participant that “The lab supervisor is really upset and although this could be considered a case of academic misconduct, she said that if you write an apology that could be submitted to the research’s grant funding committee you can totally avoid escalating it to that level”.

In the Not coerced condition, the experimenter did not mention a possibility of academic misconduct but simply requested an apology from the participant based on the victim presence manipulation. In the Direct victim condition, the experimenter told the participant that “My supervisor is really upset, she’s asked if you would mind writing an apology that I could submit to my grant funding committee. But there’s no negative consequence if you don’t want to – it’s completely up to you”. In the Surrogate victim condition, the experimenter told the participant

that “Kamille’s supervisor is really upset, she’s asked if you would mind writing an apology that Kamille could submit to her grant funding committee. But there’s no negative consequence if you don’t want to – it’s completely up to you”. In the Ambiguous victim condition, the experimenter told the participant that “The lab supervisor is really upset, she’s asked if you would mind writing an apology that could be submitted to the grant funding committee for the research. But there’s no negative consequence if you don’t want to – it’s completely up to you”.

In all conditions, the experimenter requested that all written apologies: (1) identify the victim, (2) offer condolences, (3) accept responsibility, and (4) acknowledge the impact of their actions. (Regardless of victim condition, if the participant refused to offer a written apology, the experimenter made the request once more, noting that the participant is only explaining what they have already acknowledged happened through their signed “confession”. If the participant still refused to write an apology after this prompt, the experimenter terminated the experiment and moved to debriefing.)

If the participant agreed to write an apology then the experimenter led the participant to private experiment room II to complete this task. After exiting private experiment room II, the experimenter sent an instant message to Confederate II who was waiting in a meeting room down the hall. Confederate II walked down the hall a few minutes later and the experimenter called out to them. The experimenter and Confederate II staged a brief discussion within earshot of the participant about Confederate II’s “research”. The conversation suggested that the participant might be suitable for this “different” study and Confederate II agreed to wait and see if the participant might be interested in doing this research project instead. Both the experimenter and Confederate II waited quietly at the main lab door for the participant to emerge with their completed apology letter. At that point, the experimenter thanked the participant for taking the

time to write the letter and expressed that the apology was greatly appreciated. The experimenter then introduced the participant to Confederate II and the idea of taking part in a different study, stating that there has been difficulty in recruiting participants for this other study. The experimenter asked the participant if they would be interested in taking part in an alternative study in a different lab. While the experimenter introduced the participant to the idea of taking part in a different study, Confederate II interrupted the experimenter to describe the alternative research project as “a quick questionnaire that assesses responses following transgressions”, and stated that if the participant just offered an apology, they would be ideal for this “alternative” study. (If the participant refused to complete the additional questionnaire, then the experiment was terminated and the participant was fully debriefed.)

If the participant agreed to complete the questionnaire, then Confederate II led the participant to a separate lab space to complete the “alternative” study. As Confederate II and the participant entered the new lab space, Confederate II unobtrusively measured the participant’s level of internalisation of the confession. Internalisation of confession is the degree to which the participant actually believed that they committed the transgression to which they confessed. Confederate II solicited a description from the participant of the transgression while recording the participant’s description of the incident via laptop. As Confederate II and the participant walked into the new experiment room, Confederate II said to the participant “Alana told me there was a problem with the experiment – what happened?” The participant’s reply was audio recorded on Confederate II’s laptop. As soon as the experimental session was over, Confederate II, who was blind to the participant’s condition, transcribed the audio-recording of the participant’s reply, without identifying information, and destroyed the original recording. This transcribed reply was recorded along with the participant’s other data. Coders who were blind to



participant condition used the transcriptions to code participants for internalisation of responsibility for the incident. In coding, any reply that was qualified by “the experimenter said”, or “I may have” was not taken as evidence of internalisation. Responses such as “I hit the ALT key”, or “I wrecked the experiment” were taken as evidence of internalisation.

After soliciting and audio-recording this description from the participant, Confederate II then gave the participant the questionnaire (see Appendix D-1 for the questionnaire organised by construct, see Appendix D-2 for the questionnaire as it was presented to participants) and explained to the participant what the questionnaire required. The questionnaire instructed participants to think of a recent situation in which they offered an apology for their behaviour, and Confederate II added to this instruction verbally by requesting that the participant think of the incident in which they were just involved “because it fits the study’s purpose”. The participant was asked to notify Confederate II when they had completed the questionnaire.

When the participant completed the questionnaire, the experiment was over. Confederate II then appeared to lead the participant back to the main lobby area but, in doing so, passed by the original lab where the original experimenter has been waiting. Upon seeing the participant, the experimenter called out for the participant to come back in for a moment.

Before debriefing, the experimenter asked the participant four questions as suspicion checks. These questions are: (1) Did anything seem odd or strange about the instructions or any other part of the research? (2) Did anything in this study seem unclear or confusing? (3) At any point during this study, did you doubt what you were being told? (4) Do you have a guess as to what this study is about? Participants who indicated knowledge of the deception, suspicion about the deception, or knowledge of the study’s aims or hypotheses were excluded from data analysis.

The experimenter then extensively debriefed the participant. In particular, participants were debriefed in detail about the deception and manipulations (the mock transgression and false eyewitness statement, the true nature of the study, and the manipulations of victim presence and coercion). Once the participant had been informed of the true nature of the study, they were given the opportunity to withdraw from the study and opt to have their data excluded from the study. If they did not decide to withdraw from the study, participants were asked to sign an informed consent form (see Appendix E). Participants were also given a debriefing form to take home with them if they wished (see Appendix F). All participants were thanked for their participation and given the opportunity to ask questions.

## Chapter 3: Results

### Manipulation Checks

A total of 153 participants took part in the study, with data from 33 of those participants discarded. Of those 33 participants, 13 people indicated during debriefing that they believed the study to be deceptive. Six of the 33 participants failed to correctly respond to categorical victim presence or coercion manipulation checks in the questionnaire. Finally, 14 of the 33 participants had to be debriefed before completing the study due to miscellaneous problems that arose in the experimental session (e.g., the participant recognised the confederate, refused to write an apology or complete the alternative research project, was excessively agitated, or breached procedure by actually hitting the ALT key). After removing data from these 33 participants, 120 cases were included in the final analyses.

The final 120 participants were coded as having internalised responsibility for the transgression or not based on the responses they gave to the confederate before completing the “alternative research project”. Of the 120 participants, 89 were coded as internalising and 31 were coded as not internalising. To test whether the effects of coercion and victim presence differed depending on whether participants internalised the transgression, internalisation serves as a third independent variable in the two-way ANOVAs reported below.

Two-way ANOVAs revealed that the victim presence and coercion manipulations were both effective. A 3 (Victim presence: Direct, Surrogate, Ambiguous), x 2 (Coercion: Coerced, Not coerced), x 2 (Internalisation: Internalised, Not internalised) between groups ANOVA was conducted with coercion as the dependent variable. There was a statistically significant main effect of coercion,  $F(1, 108) = 115.30, p < .001$ , indicating that the coercion manipulation was effective. The mean score in the coerced condition ( $M = 6.31, SD = 1.14$ ) was significantly

higher than the not coerced condition ( $M = 2.48, SD = 1.92$ ). Participants in the coerced condition indicated greater perceptions of coercion than participants in the not coerced condition. There were no further significant main or interaction effects.

A second 3 (Victim presence: Direct, Surrogate, Ambiguous), x 2 (Coercion: Coerced, Not coerced), x 2 (Internalisation: Internalised, Not internalised) between groups ANOVA was conducted with victim familiarity as the dependent variable. There was a statistically significant main effect of victim presence,  $F(2, 108) = 9.15, p < .001$ , indicating that the victim presence manipulation was effective. Post hoc comparisons using the Tukey HSD test indicated that the mean score for participants in the direct victim condition ( $M = 4.30, SD = 2.26$ ) was significantly higher than that of participants in the surrogate ( $M = 2.26, SD = 1.74; p = .01$ ) and ambiguous ( $M = 2.62, SD = 1.93; p = .01$ ) victim conditions. Participants in the surrogate and ambiguous victim conditions did not differ significantly from each other. There were no further significant main effects. This result suggests that the manipulations in this study worked as intended.

However, a significant interaction effect was found between victim presence and internalisation,  $F(2, 108) = 3.51, p = .03$  (see Figure 1). Further one way ANOVAs revealed no significant effects of victim presence on victim familiarity among participants who internalised the transgression, but among participants who did not internalise the transgression, there was a statistically significant difference,  $F(2, 28) = 9.69, p = .001$ . Post hoc comparisons using the Tukey HSD test indicated that when participants did not internalise responsibility for the transgression, the mean score for participants in the direct victim condition ( $M = 5.23, SD = 1.62$ ) was significantly higher than that of participants in the surrogate ( $M = 1.79, SD = 1.64; p = .001$ ) and ambiguous ( $M = 2.82, SD = 1.70; p = .01$ ) victim conditions. These findings indicate that, among participants who did not internalise the transgression, those who offered their

apology directly to the victim of their actions reported greater perceptions of victim familiarity than participants who offered their apology to a surrogate victim or no one in particular. Among those who did internalise the transgression, victim presence had no effect on victim familiarity. In addition, t-tests revealed that there were no significant effects of internalisation on victim familiarity among participants in the surrogate and ambiguous victim conditions, but participants in the direct victim condition had significantly higher scores on victim familiarity when they did not internalise responsibility for committing the transgression ( $M = 5.23, SD = 1.62$ ) than when they did internalise ( $M = 3.36, SD = 2.26; t(38) = 2.58, p = .01$ ). This interaction effect indicates that victim presence moderated the effect of internalisation on victim familiarity: Participants who did not internalise responsibility for the transgression indicated greater perceptions of victim familiarity than those who did internalise, but this difference was only significant in the direct victim condition. There were no further significant interaction effects.

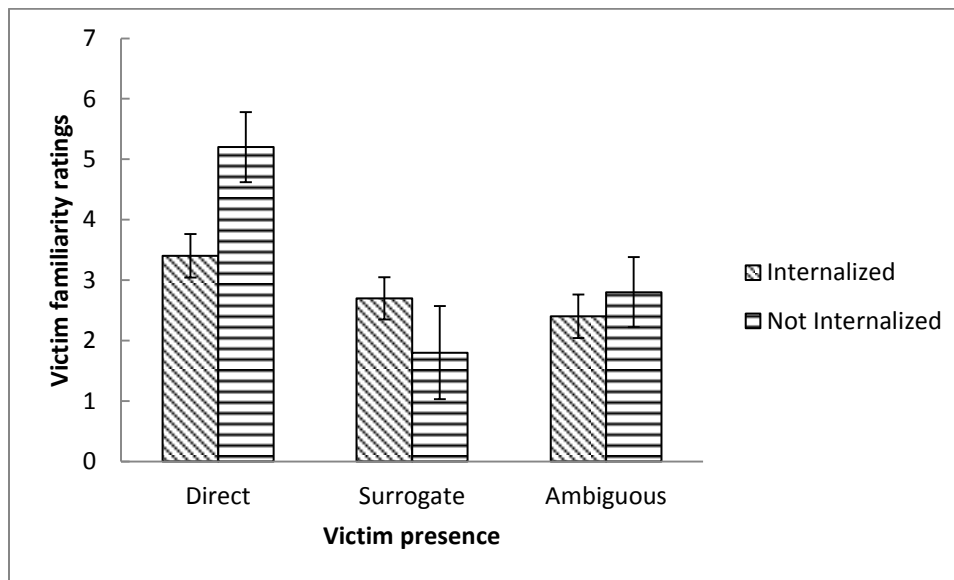


Figure 1 Victim presence x internalisation on victim familiarity scale.

## Reliability Tests

Eleven constructs were measured through the questionnaire items, of which one construct (voice) was measured using a single item. Of the remaining ten constructs, the items for eight constructs had good internal consistency (see Table 1).

Table 1

*Reliability Tests of Scales*

Scale	# of Items	Cronbach's Alpha
Personal responsibility	5	0.86
Internal accountability	6	0.80
Transgression finality	2	0.89
Value consensus	5	0.76
Procedural fairness	3	0.79
Procedural satisfaction	2	0.84
Outcome fairness	3	0.79
Outcome satisfaction	2	0.85
Transgression ramification	3	0.45
Impact of apology	3	0.49

Two scales (transgression ramification and impact of apology) were found to have low internal consistency. As a result, the items that made up these scales were analysed separately.

### **Tests of Hypothesis**

A series of two-way ANOVAs were conducted to test the hypothesis: The effect of victim presence on apology outcome benefits for offenders depends on whether the apology is offered under coercion. Specifically, I predicted that apology outcome benefits would vary based on victim presence only when the apology was not coerced (with direct and surrogate victim conditions resulting in greater outcome benefits than the ambiguous victim condition). I hypothesised that outcome benefits would not vary based on victim presence when the apology

was offered under coercion. Because some participants did not internalise the transgression, internalisation was included as a third independent variable in the analyses to test whether internalisation moderated the effects of victim presence and coercion on outcome benefits. As all of the results described below indicate, I did not find support for the hypothesis; coercion and victim presence did not interact to affect any of the dependent measures in this study. However, victim presence, coercion and internalisation did produce several interesting effects.

**Effects of victim presence, coercion and internalisation on personal responsibility.** A 3 (Victim presence: Direct, Surrogate, Ambiguous), x 2 (Coercion: Coerced, Not coerced), x 2 (Internalisation: Internalised, Not internalised) between groups ANOVA was conducted with the personal responsibility scale as the dependent variable. There was a statistically significant main effect of victim presence,  $F(2, 108) = 4.21, p = .02$ , with the means for the direct ( $M = 4.50, SD = 1.31$ ) and ambiguous ( $M = 4.59, SD = 1.57$ ) victim conditions appearing higher than the mean for the surrogate victim condition ( $M = 3.46, SD = 1.57$ ), but post hoc comparisons using the Tukey HSD test did not indicate significant differences between groups. No further significant main effects were found. A statistically significant interaction effect was found between victim presence and internalisation,  $F(2, 108) = 3.49, p = .03$  (See Figure 2).

**Interaction of victim presence and internalisation.** Further one way ANOVAs revealed no significant effects of victim presence on personal responsibility among participants who internalised the transgression, but among participants who did not internalise the transgression, there was a statistically significant difference,  $F(2, 28) = 4.55, p = .02$ .

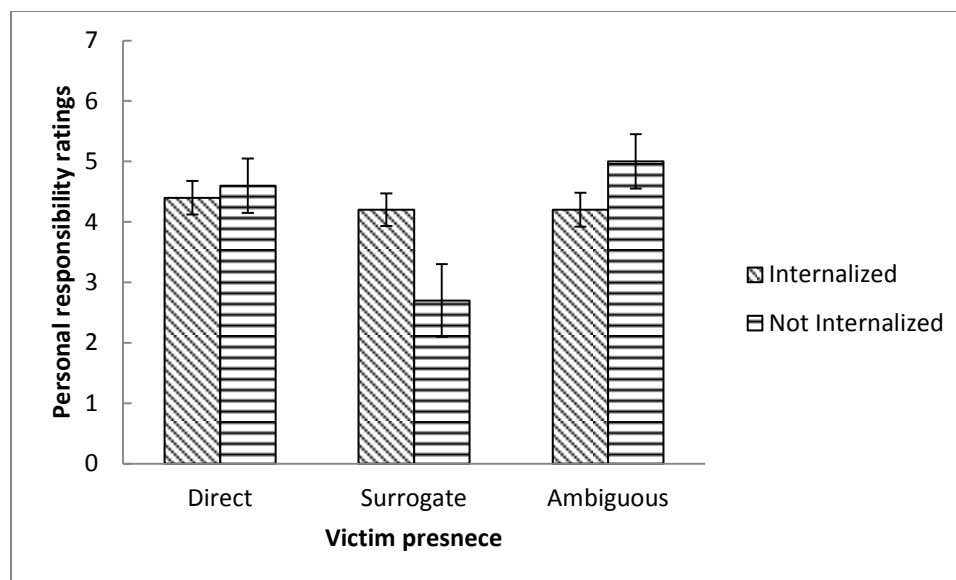


Figure 2 Victim presence x internalisation on personal responsibility.

Post hoc comparisons using the Tukey HSD test indicated that when participants did not internalise responsibility for the transgression, the mean score for participants in the ambiguous victim condition ( $M = 4.97$ ,  $SD = 1.59$ ) was significantly higher than that of participants in the surrogate victim condition ( $M = 2.74$ ,  $SD = 1.22$ ;  $p = .02$ ). Participants in the direct victim condition ( $M = 4.58$ ,  $SD = 1.51$ ) did not differ significantly from either surrogate or ambiguous victim conditions. These findings indicate that, among participants who did not internalise the transgression, those who offered their apology to no one in particular reported greater perceptions of personal responsibility than participants who offered their apology to a surrogate victim. Among those who did internalise the transgression, victim presence had no effect on personal responsibility.

In addition, t-tests revealed that there were no significant effects of internalisation on personal responsibility among participants in the direct and ambiguous victim conditions, but participants in the surrogate victim condition had significantly higher scores on personal



responsibility when they internalised responsibility for committing the transgression ( $M = 4.17$ ,  $SD = 1.57$ ) than when they did not internalise ( $M = 2.74$ ,  $SD = 1.22$ ;  $t(38) = -2.04$ ,  $p = .05$ ).

These findings indicate that victim presence moderated the effect of internalisation on personal responsibility: Participants who internalised responsibility for the transgression felt greater personal responsibility than those who did not, but this difference was only significant in the surrogate victim condition.

**Effects of victim presence, coercion and internalisation on accountability for consequences.** A 3 (Victim presence: Direct, Surrogate, Ambiguous), x 2 (Coercion: Coerced, Not coerced), x 2 (Internalisation: Internalised, Not internalised) between groups ANOVA was conducted with the accountability for consequences scale as the dependent variable. Statistically significant main effects were found for victim presence,  $F(2, 108) = 8.49$ ,  $p < .001$ , and coercion,  $F(1, 108) = 8.85$ ,  $p = .004$ . Post hoc comparisons using the Tukey HSD test indicated that the mean score for the direct victim condition ( $M = 6.29$ ,  $SD = 0.83$ ) was significantly higher than both the ambiguous ( $M = 5.73$ ,  $SD = 1.26$ ;  $p = .02$ ) and surrogate ( $M = 5.20$ ,  $SD = 0.89$ ;  $p = .03$ ) victim conditions. Participants in the direct victim condition indicated greater accountability for consequences than participants in the ambiguous and surrogate victim conditions. The mean score in the coerced condition ( $M = 6.05$ ,  $SD = 0.92$ ) was significantly higher than the not coerced condition ( $M = 5.43$ ,  $SD = 1.17$ ). Participants in the coerced condition indicated higher accountability for consequences of the transgression than participants in the not coerced condition. Two interaction effects were statistically significant: coercion by internalisation,  $F(1, 108) = 7.22$ ,  $p = .01$  (see Figure 3), and victim presence by internalisation,  $F(2, 108) = 8.35$ ,  $p < .001$  (see Figure 4).

***Interaction of coercion and internalisation.*** While the omnibus test for the coercion x internalisation interaction was significant, further t-tests did not reveal any significant differences between individual conditions (see Figure 3).

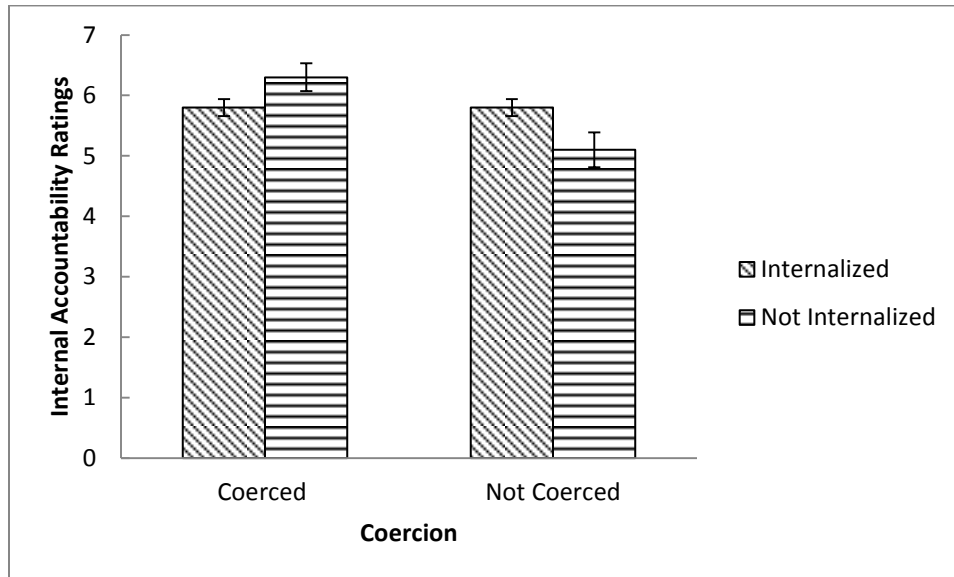


Figure 3 Coercion x internalisation on accountability for consequences.

***Interaction of victim presence and internalisation.*** Further one way ANOVAs revealed no significant effects of victim presence on accountability for consequences among participants who did not internalise the transgression, but among participants who did internalise, there was a statistically significant difference in accountability for consequences according to victim presence,  $F(2, 86) = 7.56, p = .001$  (see Figure 4).

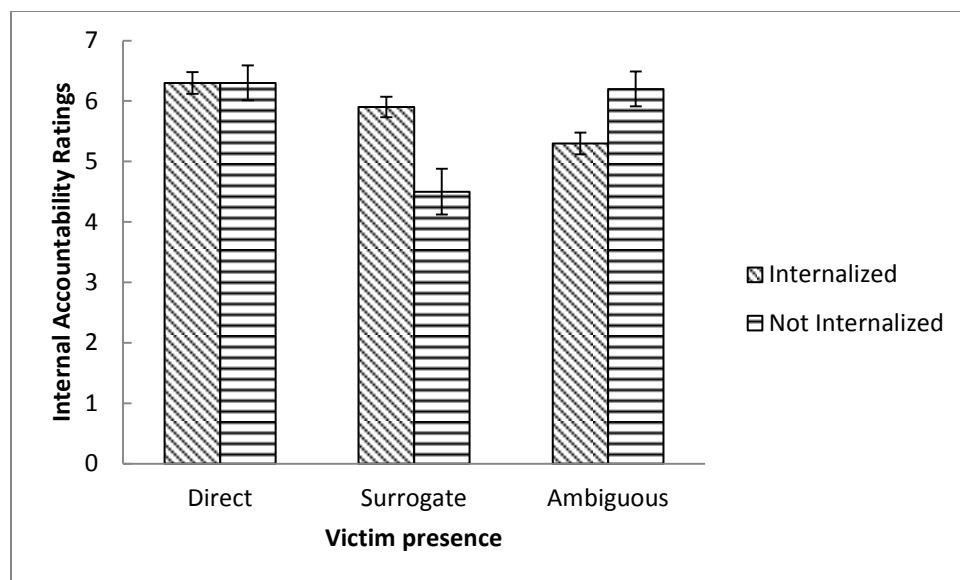


Figure 4 Victim presence x internalisation on accountability for consequences.

Post hoc comparisons using the Tukey HSD test indicated that when participants internalised responsibility for the transgression, the mean score for participants in the direct victim condition ( $M = 6.28$ ,  $SD = 0.82$ ) was higher than that of participants in the ambiguous victim condition ( $M = 5.29$ ,  $SD = 1.28$ ;  $p = .001$ ). Participants in the surrogate victim condition ( $M = 5.86$ ,  $SD = 0.70$ ) did not differ significantly from participants in either direct or ambiguous victim conditions. These findings indicate that, among participants who internalised the transgression, those who offered their apology directly to a victim of their actions reported greater perceptions of accountability for consequences of the transgression than participants who offered their apology to no one in particular. Among those who did not internalise the transgression, victim presence had no effect on accountability for consequences.

**Effects of victim presence, coercion and internalisation on transgression finality.** A 3 (Victim presence: Direct, Surrogate, Ambiguous), x 2 (Coercion: Coerced, Not coerced), x 2 (Internalisation: Internalised, Not internalised) between groups ANOVA was conducted with the

transgression finality scale as the dependent variable. No statistically significant main or interaction effects were found.

**Effects of victim presence, coercion and internalisation on perceived voice.** A 3 (Victim presence: Direct, Surrogate, Ambiguous), x 2 (Coercion: Coerced, Not coerced), x 2 (Internalisation: Internalised, Not internalised) between groups ANOVA was conducted with perceived voice as the dependent variable, as measured by a single continuous item. A statistically significant main effect was found for internalization,  $F(1, 108) = 5.20, p = .03$ . The mean score among participants who internalised the transgression ( $M = 4.84, SD = 1.93$ ) was significantly lower than the mean for participants who did not internalise ( $M = 5.78, SD = 1.61$ ). Participants who did not internalise responsibility for committing the transgression indicated that they were able to express their opinion to a greater extent than participants who internalised responsibility. No further main effects or interaction effects were found.

**Effects of victim presence, coercion and internalisation on value consensus.** A 3 (Victim presence: Direct, Surrogate, Ambiguous), x 2 (Coercion: Coerced, Not coerced), x 2 (Internalisation: Internalised, Not internalised) between groups ANOVA was conducted with the value consensus scale as the dependent variable. No statistically significant main or interaction effects were found.

**Effects of victim presence, coercion and internalisation on procedural fairness.** A 3 (Victim presence: Direct, Surrogate, Ambiguous), x 2 (Coercion: Coerced, Not coerced), x 2 (Internalisation: Internalised, Not internalised) between groups ANOVA was conducted with the procedural fairness scale as the dependent variable. There was a statistically significant main effect of victim presence,  $F(2, 108) = 3.39, p = .04$ . Post hoc comparisons using the Tukey HSD

test indicated that the mean score for the direct victim condition ( $M = 5.78$ ,  $SD = 1.52$ ) was significantly higher than the surrogate victim condition ( $M = 4.78$ ,  $SD = 1.23$ ;  $p = .04$ ). The ambiguous victim condition ( $M = 5.33$ ,  $SD = 1.37$ ) did not differ significantly from either of the direct or surrogate victim conditions. Participants in the direct victim condition reported the process in which they offered their apology to be fairer than did participants in the surrogate victim condition. There were no further significant main or interaction effects.

**Effects of victim presence, coercion and internalisation on procedural satisfaction.** A 3 (Victim presence: Direct, Surrogate, Ambiguous), x 2 (Coercion: Coerced, Not coerced), x 2 (Internalisation: Internalised, Not internalised) between groups ANOVA was conducted with the procedural satisfaction scale as the dependent variable. No statistically significant main or interaction effects were found.

**Effects of victim presence, coercion and internalisation on outcome fairness.** A 3 (Victim presence: Direct, Surrogate, Ambiguous), x 2 (Coercion: Coerced, Not coerced), x 2 (Internalisation: Internalised, Not internalised) between groups ANOVA was conducted with the outcome fairness scale as the dependent variable. No statistically significant main or interaction effects were found.

**Effects of victim presence, coercion and internalisation on outcome satisfaction.** A 3 (Victim presence: Direct, Surrogate, Ambiguous), x 2 (Coercion: Coerced, Not coerced), x 2 (Internalisation: Internalised, Not internalised) between groups ANOVA was conducted with the outcome satisfaction scale as the dependent variable. No statistically significant main or interaction effects were found.

### **Effects of victim presence, coercion and internalisation on transgression**

**ramifications.** Three individual continuous items were intended to measure the transgression ramifications construct. However, because reliability tests indicated low internal consistency among these items, the items are analysed separately here.

*I believe I was held accountable for my actions.* A 3 (Victim presence: Direct, Surrogate, Ambiguous), x 2 (Coercion: Coerced, Not coerced), x 2 (Internalisation: Internalised, Not internalised) between groups ANOVA was conducted with this transgression accountability item as the dependent variable. No statistically significant main or interaction effects were found.

*It is not hard for me to see how my actions could have upset someone so much, given the consequences.* A 3 (Victim presence: Direct, Surrogate, Ambiguous), x 2 (Coercion: Coerced, Not coerced), x 2 (Internalisation: Internalised, Not internalised) between groups ANOVA was conducted with this transgression consequences for others item as the dependent variable. No statistically significant main or interaction effects were found.

*I believe that the person/people that I offered my apology to exaggerated the impact my actions had on themselves or others.* A 3 (Victim presence: Direct, Surrogate, Ambiguous), x 2 (Coercion: Coerced, Not coerced), x 2 (Internalisation: Internalised, Not internalised) between groups ANOVA was conducted with this transgression exaggeration item as the dependent variable. There was a statistically significant main effect of internalisation on this measure,  $F(1, 108) = 4.40, p = .04$ . The mean score in the internalised group ( $M = 3.68, SD = 1.92$ ) was significantly higher than in the not internalised group ( $M = 2.83, SD = 1.68$ ). The results indicate that participants who internalised responsibility for the transgression were more likely to believe that the person to whom they offered their apology exaggerated the impact of their actions,

compared to participants who did not internalise responsibility for the transgression. No further significant main effects were found, but a statistically significant interaction effect was found between coercion and internalisation,  $F(1, 108) = 6.19, p = .01$  (see Figure 5).

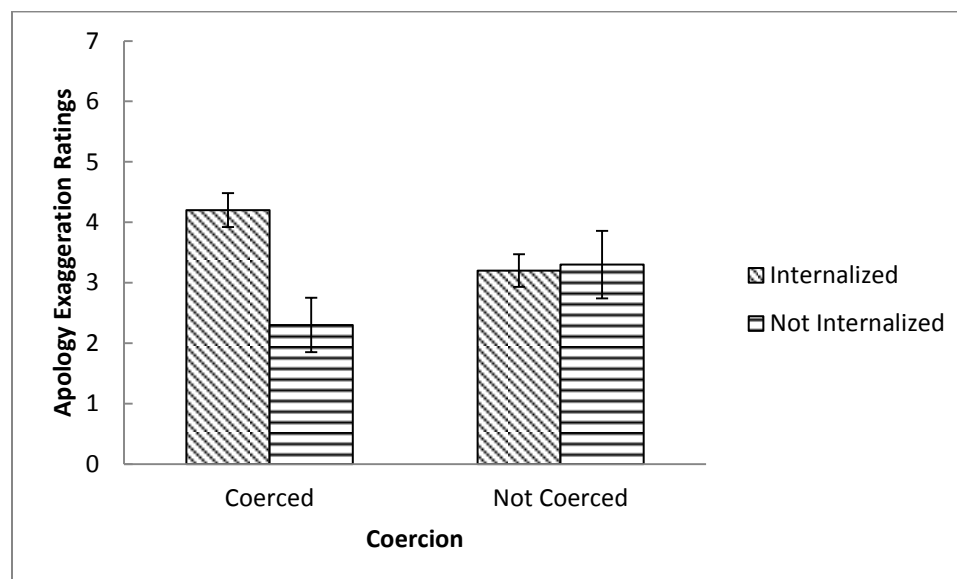


Figure 5 Coercion x internalisation on transgression exaggeration.

*Interaction of coercion and internalisation.* Further t-tests revealed that, among participants who were coerced into apologising, those who had internalised responsibility for the transgression ( $M = 4.19, SD = 1.83$ ) had significantly higher scores on transgression exaggeration than participants who had not internalised responsibility for the transgression ( $M = 2.32, SD = 1.50; t(58) = -3.63, p = .001$ ). So, while the main effect indicated that internalisation increased perceptions of transgression exaggeration, this was qualified by the two-way interaction: Internalisation increased perceptions that the person to whom an offender offered their apology exaggerated the impact of their actions, but only when the offender was coerced into apologising.

Further, follow-up t-tests also revealed that there were no significant effects of coercion

on transgression exaggeration among participants who did not internalise responsibility for the transgression, but when participants had internalised responsibility for the transgression, those in the coerced condition ( $M = 4.19$ ,  $SD = 1.83$ ) had significantly higher scores on transgression exaggeration than participants in the not coerced condition ( $M = 3.18$ ,  $SD = 1.88$ ;  $t(87) = -2.63$ ,  $p = .01$ ). The findings indicate that, when people internalised responsibility for their transgression, coercion to apologise increased perceptions that the person to whom they offered their apology exaggerated the impact of their actions.

**Effects of victim presence, coercion and internalisation on impact of apology.** Three individual continuous items were intended to measure the impact of apology construct. Because reliability tests indicated low internal consistency among these items, the items were analysed separately.

*I would be confident in recommending the use of apology to a friend.* A 3 (Victim presence: Direct, Surrogate, Ambiguous), x 2 (Coercion: Coerced, Not coerced), x 2 (Internalisation: Internalised, Not internalised) between groups ANOVA was conducted with this apology recommendation item as the dependent variable. There was a statistically significant main effect of victim presence,  $F(2, 108) = 3.17$ ,  $p = .05$ , but post hoc comparisons using the Tukey HSD test did not indicate statistically significant mean differences between groups. No further significant main effects were found. A statistically significant interaction effect was found between victim presence and internalisation,  $F(2, 108) = 3.98$ ,  $p = .02$ .

*Interaction of victim presence and internalisation.* Further one way ANOVAs revealed no significant effects of victim presence on apology recommendation among participants who did internalise the transgression, but among participants who did not internalise the



transgression, there was a statistically significant difference in apology recommendation according to victim presence,  $F(2, 28) = 4.06, p = .03$ .

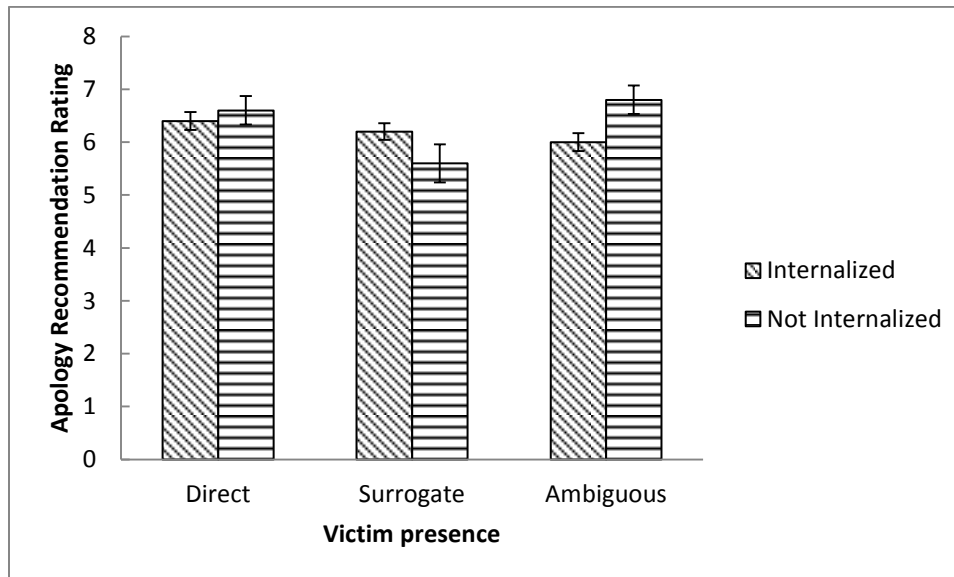


Figure 6 Victim presence x internalisation on apology recommendation.

Post hoc comparisons using the Tukey HSD test indicated that when participants did not internalise responsibility for the transgression, the mean score for participants in the surrogate victim condition ( $M = 5.57, SD = 1.05$ ) was significantly lower than that of participants in the ambiguous victim condition ( $M = 6.83, SD = 0.41; p = .02$ ). Participants in the direct victim condition ( $M = 6.55, SD = 0.69$ ) did not differ significantly from either surrogate or ambiguous victim conditions. These findings indicate that participants who offered their apology to no one in particular would be more confident in recommending the use of apology to a friend than participants who offered their apology to a surrogate victim, but only when they did not internalise responsibility for committing the transgression.

In addition, t-tests revealed that there were no significant effects of internalisation on apology recommendation among participants in the direct and surrogate victim conditions, but

participants in the ambiguous victim condition had significantly lower scores on apology recommendation when they internalised responsibility for committing the transgression ( $M = 6.03$ ,  $SD = 1.05$ ) than when they did not internalise responsibility for committing the transgression ( $M = 6.83$ ,  $SD = 0.41$ ;  $t(37.94) = 3.40$ ,  $p = .002$ ). These findings indicate that victim presence moderated the effect of internalisation on apology recommendation: Participants who internalised responsibility for the transgression were less confident in recommending the use of apology to a friend than those who did not internalise responsibility for the transgression, but this difference was only significant in the ambiguous victim condition.

*I thought that apologising seemed logical.* A 3 (Victim presence: Direct, Surrogate, Ambiguous), x 2 (Coercion: Coerced, Not coerced), x 2 (Internalisation: Internalised, Not internalised) between groups ANOVA was conducted with this logic of apologising item as the dependent variable. No statistically significant main effects were found. A statistically significant interaction effect was found between victim presence and internalisation,  $F(2, 108) = 4.31$ ,  $p = .02$ .

*Interaction of victim presence and internalisation.* Further one way ANOVAs revealed no significant effects of victim presence on logic of apologising among participants who did internalise the transgression, but among participants who did not internalise the transgression, there was a statistically significant difference in mean scores according to victim presence,  $F(2, 28) = 4.72$ ,  $p = .02$ .



Figure 7 Victim presence x internalisation on logic of apologising

Post hoc comparisons using the Tukey HSD test indicated that when participants did not internalise responsibility for the transgression, the mean score for participants in the surrogate victim condition ( $M = 5.29$ ,  $SD = 1.13$ ) was significantly lower than that of participants in the ambiguous victim condition ( $M = 6.67$ ,  $SD = 0.67$ ;  $p = .02$ ). Participants in the direct victim condition ( $M = 6.43$ ,  $SD = 0.93$ ) did not differ significantly from either surrogate or ambiguous victim conditions. These findings indicate that participants who offered their apology to no one in particular thought that apologising seemed more logical than participants who offered their apology to a surrogate victim, but only when they did not internalise responsibility for committing the transgression.

In addition, t-tests revealed that there were no significant effects of internalisation on logic of apologising among participants in the direct and ambiguous victim conditions, but participants in the surrogate victim condition had significantly lower scores on logic of apologising when they did not internalise responsibility for committing the transgression ( $M =$

5.29,  $SD = 1.13$ ) than when they internalised responsibility for committing the transgression ( $M = 6.40$ ,  $SD = 0.77$ ;  $t(38) = -3.01$ ,  $p = .01$ ). These findings indicate that victim presence moderated the effect of internalisation on logic of apologising. Participants who internalised responsibility for the transgression thought that apologising seemed more logical than those who did not internalise responsibility for the transgression, but this difference was only significant in the surrogate victim condition.

*I think that I will experience improvement in my situation as a result of apologising.* A 3 (Victim presence: Direct, Surrogate, Ambiguous), x 2 (Coercion: Coerced, Not coerced), x 2 (Internalisation: Internalised, Not internalised) between groups ANOVA was conducted with this situation improvement item as the dependent variable. No statistically significant main or interaction effects were found.

## **Chapter 4: Discussion**

In this study, I explored how victim presence and coercion influence the outcome benefits of apology for apologisers. I hypothesised that the effect of victim presence would depend on coercion. When apologies were not coerced, I expected that outcome benefits would be greater when the apology was offered to a direct or surrogate victim compared to when it was offered to no one in particular. But, when apologies were coerced, I expected that outcome benefits would be consistently low and would not vary across victim presence conditions. This hypothesis was grounded in the assumption that coercion to apologise neutralises the cognitive dissonance that would have resulted from a voluntary apology, thus eliminating the individual's need to shift subsequent behaviour to align with the volunteered apology. As a result, I expected that coercion to apologise would prompt a floor effect, stunting any benefits associated with victim presence.

Manipulation checks suggest that the conditions were perceived by participants as I had intended. Participants who were coerced to offer an apology reported greater perceptions of coercion than did participants who were not coerced. Also, participants in the direct victim condition reported greater perceptions of victim familiarity overall than did participants in the surrogate and ambiguous victim conditions.

### **Findings Supportive of Expectations**

While the hypothesised interaction between victim presence and coercion on apology outcome benefits was not confirmed (indicating that the effect of victim presence was not dependent on coercion), findings suggest that victim presence and coercion affect apology outcome benefits independently, and largely in the ways that might be expected in light of previous research on the independent effects of victim presence and coercion.

**Victim presence.** Greater outcome benefits were associated with direct victim presence. Participants in the direct victim condition indicated greater accountability for consequences than participants in the surrogate and ambiguous victim conditions. Furthermore, among participants who internalised the transgression, those who offered their apology directly to a victim reported greater perceptions of accountability than participants who offered their apology to no one in particular. Victim presence had a similar effect on procedural fairness evaluations. Participants in the direct victim condition reported greater procedural fairness evaluations than participants in the surrogate victim condition.

Collectively, the effects of victim presence on accountability for consequences and procedural fairness tell a similar story: Direct victim presence offers the greatest outcome benefits. This finding is in line with literature relevant to the topic. Restorative justice theorists argue that the process of apologising, which is fundamental to a restorative conference, is most ideally expressed in a dyadic form – between an offender and victim (Taft, 2000). Restorative justice conferences are interaction rituals that are characterised by bringing people together (Sherman et al., 2005), and restorative justice theorists argue that it is this closeness that allows victims and offenders to work towards a common resolution because the presence of the victim helps offenders to recognise and acknowledge the harm that their actions caused (Umbreit, 1998). In this study, the direct victim condition includes what restorative justice researchers consider to be a fundamental component of interaction rituals: Bringing people, specifically the victim and offender, physically together (Sherman et al., 2005). Physical closeness to the victim is absent in the surrogate and ambiguous victim conditions. This physical proximity to, and direct interaction with, the victim may have allowed participants in the direct victim condition to take part in a more dynamic experience while jointly rectifying the situation, resulting in greater

perceptions of accountability and procedural fairness. The results of the present study suggest that when a restorative justice conference fails to include a direct victim, the offender is less equipped to feel accountable for the consequences of the transgression or to perceive the procedure as fair. Cumulatively, the results reported above support Gray's (2005) assertion that restorative justice conferences function best when there is direct contact between an offender and victim.

**Coercion.** The findings indicate mixed effects of coercion on apology. First, participants in the coerced condition indicated greater accountability for consequences than participants in the not coerced condition. This suggests that coercion is capable of producing greater outcome benefits for apologisers. However, when participants internalised responsibility for the transgression, coercion to apologise increased perceptions that the person to whom they offered their apology had exaggerated the impact of their actions. These findings may be interpreted as contradictory: Coercion led participants to feel greater accountability for the consequences of their actions, but also led participants to perceive that the impact of their transgression was being exaggerated. Referring to theories of self-perception and psychological reactance may shed some light on these results.

I had predicted that, due to cognitive dissonance processes, coercion would attenuate the outcome benefits of an apology for an offender when that apology was offered under coercion. However, in contrast to cognitive dissonance theory, Bem's (1972) self-perception theory maintains that prior behaviour drives attitude formation. Self-perception theory differs from cognitive dissonance in that self-perception theory asserts that attitudes are modified without the aid of cognitive processes. Instead, self-perception theory suggests that an individual's attitudes align with behaviour through a process of self-observation. Drawing from this proposition, self-

perception theory suggests that the act of apologising alone is capable of prompting outcome benefits for the apologiser. This would lead us to expect that apologisers would experience outcome benefits (e.g., perceptions of accountability) in both the coerced and not coerced conditions and offers an explanation as to why coercion might not lead to a deficit in apology outcome benefits. Despite the presence of coercion, apologisers in this study experienced accountability for consequences, suggesting that coerced apologies are capable of prompting outcome benefits and supporting self-perception theory. However, it was not simply the case in this study that coerced apologies fared as well as apologies that were not coerced. Participants in the coerced condition actually reported greater accountability for consequences than participants in the not coerced condition. This may be due, in part, to the experimental manipulation of coercion in this study: The threat of misconduct issued in the coerced condition may have prompted participants to perceive the transgression to be more severe, and their accountability for it to be greater, than did participants in the not coerced condition.

The effect of coercion on transgression exaggeration complicates the self-perception theory explanation, but psychological reactance may also play into this effect. Brehm's (1966) theory of psychological reactance is concerned with behavioural responses to encroachments upon personal freedom. Reactance is the behavioural and cognitive response a person experiences when their freedom is threatened. In response to a perceived loss of freedom, a person will strive to re-establish freedom through reactance: opposition and resistance (Brehm & Brehm, 1981). Psychological reactance has received considerable empirical support: People tend to move away from positions that are forcibly forwarded (Worchel & Brehm, 1970); intrusiveness has been linked to feelings of irritation (Edwards, Li & Lee, 2002); and, perhaps



most relevant, reactance prompts people to dismiss and reject information as well as its source (Miller, Lane, Deatruck, Young & Potts, 2007).

The effect of coercion on transgression exaggeration in this study may be the result of reactance. In other words, coercion may be perceived as a threat to one's freedom, prompting offenders to minimise the implications of the transgression through assumptions of exaggeration. Thus, the offender is able to contextualise the situation in a way that might allow perceptions of encroachments upon personal freedom to be reduced. Operating under coercion, it is conceivable that an offender would feel accountable for their actions while also perceiving that their transgression was being exaggerated. Coercion may encourage the offender to offer an apology for instrumental reasons – as a way for the offender to resolve this conflict with minimal negative consequences for themselves. An apology offered wholly for instrumental reasons loses its effect as a meaningful interaction (Petrucci, 2002; Taft, 2000). Ultimately, therefore, the results suggest that coercion may negatively influence an offender's ability to experience outcome benefits of an apology offered in a restorative conference.

**Internalisation.** Finally, internalisation significantly impacted perceived voice. I had not originally posited a hypothesis about the effects of internalisation because it was not intended to serve as a third independent variable in the analyses in this study. It was included as a third independent variable after a moderate number ( $n = 31$ ) of participants were coded as not having internalised the transgression, so that I could explore differences in apology outcome benefits between participants who had and had not internalised responsibility. Participants who did not internalise responsibility for committing the transgression indicated that they were able to express their opinion to a greater extent than participants who internalised responsibility.

Explaining the relationship between internalisation and perceived voice may be aided by considering the literature on suspect strategies during interrogations. The interrogation literature has consistently found that innocent suspects are considerably more willing to talk during interrogations than are guilty suspects. Kassin (2005) offers two potential explanations for the consistent finding that innocent people tend to invoke voice during interrogations more than guilty people: (1) the just world hypothesis, and (2) the illusion of transparency. Lerner (1980) introduced the just world hypothesis as a generalised human assumption that outcomes received are founded in deservingness. In the case of innocent interrogations, the belief in a just world forwards the assumption that innocent people having nothing to hide and therefore nothing to fear. The “illusion of transparency” runs in a similar vein to the just world hypothesis, contending that we tend to assume others are aware of our inner thoughts and feelings (Miller & McFarland, 1987). In the case of innocent interrogations, the illusion of transparency suggests that innocent people are more likely to invoke voice to demonstrate their honesty to interrogators. This strategy of invoking voice is employed because of a general assumption in the transparency of innocence: Innocent people tend to believe they can reveal and display their innocence through truth telling (Hartwig, Granhag & Stromwall, 2006; Kassin, 2005; Kassin & Norwick, 2004).

Both of these explanations are equally viable in the context of this study. In my study, participants coded as not internalised are comparable to innocent suspects – these participants believed that the computer had legitimately crashed but did not confidently vocalise that the crash was their fault. Conversely, participants coded as internalised are comparable to guilty suspects – these participants accepted the belief that the computer had legitimately crashed and vocalised that the crash was their fault. The just world hypothesis and the “illusion of

transparency” are both psychological mechanisms that encourage a desire among innocent people to invoke voice. As a result, participants who believed that they were innocent of the transgression (i.e., those who did not internalise the transgression in my study) may have actually invoked voice more than guilty (i.e. internalised) participants. Despite the fact that all participants in this study were given equal opportunities to voice their opinions to the experimenter directly and to the victim in their apology letter, participants who believed that they were innocent (i.e. those who did not internalise responsibility for the transgression in my study) may have taken greater advantage of those opportunities – for example, writing longer and more detailed apology letters to their victims than did participants who believed that they were guilty (i.e., those who did internalise the transgression in my study). This behaviour would be consistent with the significantly greater perceptions of voice among participants who did not internalise the transgression, but I cannot determine that more expressive apology letters were related to greater perceptions of voice based solely on the results presently analysed. However, in future research I could analyse participants’ written apologies to test for significant differences between the lengths of apologies offered by participants who did and did not internalise responsibility for the transgression. A follow-up study may shed light on whether participants who did not internalise responsibility for the transgression actually exercised the opportunity for voice to a greater extent than participants who did internalise responsibility, thereby explaining the discrepancy in perceived voice across internalisation groups.

### **Findings Contrary to Expectations**

While some findings confirmed my expectations of the effects of the independent variables on apology outcome benefits, other findings failed to support my predictions.

**Victim presence.** Several sets of findings contradicted my expectations regarding the effect of victim presence on apology outcome benefits. First, among participants who did not internalise responsibility for the transgression, those who offered their apologies to no one in particular compared to a surrogate victim reported: (1) greater perceptions of personal responsibility, (2) increased confidence in recommending the use of apology to a friend, and (3) greater endorsement of the logic of apologising. The findings for these variables tell a consistent (though surprising) story: Among participants who did not internalise responsibility for the transgression, ratings of personal responsibility, apology recommendation, and logic of apologising were all significantly higher when participants apologised to no one in particular compared to a representative of the victim. Because this set of findings relates to participants who did not internalise responsibility, the results are of lesser concern – in this study, I was primarily interested in those participants who did internalise the transgression and who therefore most closely represent the target population of offenders taking part in restorative justice conferences. However, the consistency of these findings makes them noteworthy.

The data suggest that when people are not genuinely convinced that they are at fault for an incident, they benefit more from minimal victim presence. These findings have implications for the literature on public apologies. Apologies delivered publicly by corporate representatives or political leaders are often delivered to de-identified (or ambiguous) victims. While public apologies are often seen as necessary to ensure the maintenance of social relationships, the act of apologising can also hamper perceptions of the apologiser's ability to perform their public role (Kampf, 2009). In an attempt to temper negative perceptions, those delivering public apologies tend to attribute responsibility for harm caused to external circumstances (Kampf, 2009). Attributing a wrong done to situational influences is reasonable under appropriate circumstances

(Kim, Dirks, Cooper & Ferrin, 2006). In this way, public apologisers may be similar to participants in this study who did not internalise responsibility for the transgression: Both groups acknowledge and accept that harm was done, but they also do not vocalise that the harm was their fault. Despite this recognisable distancing of themselves from the harm caused, participants in my study who did not internalise responsibility for the transgression reported significantly greater perceptions of personal responsibility, apology recommendation, and logic of apology when they had apologised to no one in particular than when they had apologised to a victim representative. The results of this study suggest that apologisers who do not internalise responsibility for a transgression are actually able to reap greater outcome benefits from apologising when victim presence is minimised. Therefore, internalisation may play an important role in conjunction with victim presence in affecting apology outcome benefits: I had expected that greater victim presence would result in greater apology outcome benefits, but this expectation was grounded in an assumption of transgression internalisation. It may be the case that minimal victim presence is the optimal condition for apologisers to experience outcome benefits of apology when they have not internalised responsibility for the transgression.

Second, among participants in the surrogate victim condition, those who internalised responsibility for the transgression reported: (1) greater perceptions of personal responsibility, and (2) greater support for the logic of apologising than did participants who did not internalise responsibility. It may be that the surrogate victim condition has the capacity to reveal the effect of internalisation on the dependent variables of personal responsibility and logic of apologising. In the direct victim condition, the means for internalised and not internalised participants are consistently high on these dependent variables, indicating that when the victim is present, perceptions of personal responsibility and logic of apologising are consistently high. In the

ambiguous victim condition the means for internalised and not internalised participants are consistently low on these dependent measures, indicating that when the victim is absent and is not represented, perceptions of personal responsibility and logic of apologising are consistently low. However, in the surrogate victim condition there seems to be enough variance in the dependent measures to reveal the effect of internalisation. Adding to the discussion about the effects of victim presence and internalisation on outcome benefits, it appears that participants who have the opportunity to recognise the victim through a victim representative reap greater outcome benefits when they have internalised responsibility than when they have not.

Third, and building upon the two sets of results just discussed, participants in the ambiguous victim condition who internalised responsibility for the transgression were less confident in recommending the use of apology to a friend than those who did not internalise. This finding may support the argument that, when offenders have internalised responsibility for the transgression, absence of the victim offers offenders limited opportunities to reap outcome benefits from apologising. Failure to unite the offender with a victim seems particularly detrimental to apology recommendation among participants in this study who internalised responsibility for the transgression. This finding may be rooted in the outcome of a failed interaction ritual between the offender and victim. Failing to have any sort of meaningful contact with the victim appears to be particularly detrimental to the offender who has internalised responsibility for a transgression.

Finally, there were no significant effects of the independent variables on a number of the dependent variables. The reason for these null effects may be that the procedure in which participants took part was too subtle to prompt recognisable differences between experimental conditions for some of the dependent measures. The heightened personal investment and

additional time permitted to conference participants might generate stronger effects of victim presence and coercion. For example, participants in this study had relatively little at stake when compared to offenders in a restorative justice conference. While participants in the coerced condition were exposed to the possibility of serious negative consequences for their transgression, the threat of academic misconduct still carries different long-term and real-world ramifications than a criminal record. Greater consequences may prompt greater personal investment in a procedure, producing greater variance across coercion conditions on dependent variables such as transgression finality and situation improvement. Further, participants in this study spent a relatively short time (less than five minutes) discussing the consequences of this transgression for the victim. In a restorative justice conference, implications of the harmful behaviour would be a centrepiece of the conversation and would likely consume a much greater amount of time. With more time for the offender to consider the viewpoint of the victim, we may see greater and more consistent differences across victim presence conditions on dependent variables such as the ability to achieve value consensus.

### **Limitations and Future Directions**

While this study incorporates an innovative and engaging procedure and offers interesting findings, it is important to bear in mind several limitations of the research. First, analysis of the victim familiarity manipulation check presented a problematic finding: Among participants who internalised responsibility for the transgression, victim presence had no effect on ratings of victim familiarity. This finding is problematic because it suggests that the victim presence manipulation check was not fully effective among participants who internalised responsibility for the transgression. However, all of the participants whose data were analysed in this study did correctly answer the categorical manipulation check about this variable. The ability

of participants to correctly respond to this manipulation check suggests that the victim presence manipulation was registered by participants as intended, but when participants were asked to indicate their familiarity with the victim on a continuous measure, direct interaction with the victim did not equate to significantly greater victim familiarity ratings. In future research, we should consider the extent of interaction needed between an offender and previously unknown victim before significant effects on victim familiarity ratings are established.

Second, while this study was engaging for participants, it can be criticised for lacking ecological validity. Ecological validity is the extent to which experimental studies mimic a real life experience when studying various phenomena (Bronfenrenner, 1977). Ecological validity can be enhanced by ensuring that the experimental environment, examined stimuli and behaviour of interest are all relevant, important and natural to the phenomenon under study in real life. The deceptive nature of this study was intended to contribute to the emotional realism of the experience, which is an important component of ecological validity (Brunswick, 1943). However, one important difference between the situation in which participants engaged in the current study and the real-world situation to which we seek to generalise these findings is that in the real-world situation, offenders are often participating in restorative justice procedures for offences which they have committed deliberately. This paradigm allowed me to convince participants that they had committed a transgression, but I did not attempt to convince them that they had done so deliberately. While this element of the experimental design may limit the extent to which the findings of this study can be generalised to the experiences of actual offenders, it is important to bear in mind that some offenders do approach restorative conferences with degrees of externalisation, experiencing emotional responses to the transgression such as indignation and anger (Retzinger & Scheff, 1996). These reactions suggest that while an offence might have been



deliberately committed, the offender may believe that he or she is not fully at fault – that circumstance influenced their behaviour. This element of externalisation makes the distinction between accidentally and deliberately committed offences less clear.

However, one way to increase the ecological validity of this research in the future would be to study deliberately committed transgressions as opposed to those which are accidental. Future research might consider whether apology outcome benefits for apologisers are experienced differently based on offender intention – accidental versus deliberate. The design of the present study might be suitably modified to test for a difference in deliberately versus accidentally committed transgressions. In a condition in which a participant commits the transgression deliberately, a confederate might encourage the participant to purposefully hit the ALT key, expressing scepticism about the experimenter's assertion regarding the "glitch" in the system and coaxing the participant to test the experimenter's warning. Use of this paradigm would offer some insight into the outcome benefits of apology for deliberately committed transgressions.

Third, and as mentioned earlier, in this study coercion may have been confounded with offence seriousness. In the coerced condition, participants were told that if they failed to apologise, this would have very serious consequences for them (i.e., a misconduct violation that could affect their standing at the university). This consequence may have led participants to perceive that the transgression itself was more serious than in the not coerced condition, where participants were told that there would be no consequences for them if they did not apologise. Future research should continue to explore the effects of coercion on apology by isolating coercion itself more effectively in a deceptive experimental paradigm. A future study might replicate the design of this study but alter the instructions given to participants in the coerced

condition: Instead of threatening participants with a serious negative consequence, the experimenter might simply tell the participant that they must write a letter of apology before they leave the lab. This procedural change should eliminate possible differences in perceived offence seriousness between coercion conditions, and would provide a more accurate and specific assessment of the effects of coercion.

### **Implications for Restorative Justice**

There were no significant interaction effects between victim presence and coercion on the dependent variables. While the findings of this study therefore do not support the hypothesis that the effects of victim presence depend on coercion, I did find that both victim presence and coercion influence outcome benefits of apology for apologisers independently. As such, victim presence and coercion need to be considered when constructing and conducting restorative justice procedures.

The findings associated with victim presence support Gray's (2005) assertion that restorative justice conferences function best when there is direct contact between an offender and victim. With ratings of accountability for consequences and procedural fairness highest when direct victims are included in the procedure, I find support for arguments that emphasize the importance of direct victim presence in restorative justice conferences (for example, Gray, 2005; Taft, 2000; Umbreit, 1998). It seems that the ability of restorative procedures to foster accountability and resolve the conflict in a way that is perceived as procedurally fair is best achieved with an actual victim in attendance. The inclusion of victims in restorative procedures is already a central tenet of restorative justice theory, and the findings of this study support the

theoretical underpinnings of restorative justice regarding victim presence: Victims should be included in restorative procedures whenever possible.

Given that restorative conferences sometimes occur where the direct victim(s) are either unwilling or unable to attend, I had suggested that inviting a surrogate victim to attend the conference might be a viable means to enhance apology outcome benefits for offenders. I did not find full support for this suggestion. Surrogate victim presence did seem to serve as something of a middle ground between the direct and ambiguous victim conditions when it came to generating accountability for the consequences of a transgression among offenders. When participants had internalised responsibility for the transgression, those in the direct victim condition reported significantly higher ratings of accountability for consequences than participants in the ambiguous victim condition, but participants in the surrogate victim condition did not differ significantly from either direct or ambiguous conditions. So, while surrogate victim presence was not more advantageous than ambiguous victim presence, it was not significantly worse than direct victim presence either. Collectively, the lack of significant difference between surrogate victim presence and both the direct and ambiguous conditions on this dependent variable, and the mixed effects of surrogate victim presence on other dependent variables suggests that the role of surrogate victim presence in restorative justice conferences warrants further exploration. If victim presence plays an important role in restorative justice procedures, as our findings suggest, then it is necessary to consider alternative forms of victim presence in restorative conferences that would otherwise have no victim present.

While coercion increased perceptions of accountability for consequences, it also prompted apologisers to believe that the people around them were exaggerating the consequences of the transgression. Based on these results, it appears that the effects of coercion

are more nuanced than I had initially predicted, and that in restorative justice procedures coercion can be beneficial in some ways and detrimental in others. It may be the case that coercion in restorative justice procedures fosters outcome benefits for offenders by simply encouraging pro-social behaviour but that it also limits outcome benefits by engaging psychological reactance. Restorative justice theoretically condemns coercion, contending that offenders must accept full responsibility for their offences and desires to repair the harm caused in a conference. However, in practical applications of restorative justice, coercion is sometimes employed. Based on the results of this study, I can conclude that coercion wields some influence over offender perceptions and experiences during restorative justice conferences, but I cannot state conclusively or specifically what effect this coercion has on offenders. Therefore, I recommend that the effects of coercion in the context of restorative justice continue to be explored. Future experimental research might consider coercion more closely, testing the underlying psychological mechanisms by which it affects apology outcome benefits in restorative justice conferences.

## **Conclusions**

Through this research, I sought to build upon our existing knowledge of the outcome benefits of apology for apologisers in restorative justice procedures. This exploratory study employed an engaging experimental design and produced interesting results. The findings suggest that the presence of an actual victim in a restorative conference is important to offender perceptions of accountability and procedural fairness, though the degree to which the offender has internalised responsibility for the transgression may qualify the importance of victim presence during the apology. The findings associated with coercion are more nuanced, and ultimately suggest that the use of coercion to prompt an apology in a restorative procedure

ultimately may not be conducive to outcome benefits for offenders. In summary, the findings generally demonstrate that the way in which restorative justice is practiced (specifically, whether victims are present and whether offenders are coerced to apologise) does have important effects on the outcome benefits of apology for offenders. These findings warrant continued investigations into how the practice of restorative justice procedures and the delivery of apologies within them affect not only victims, but offenders as well.

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## Appendix A: Typing History Questionnaire

Record your answers to the following questions by using the response categories provided or writing your response (to the best of your recollection).

Did you have a computer in your home as a child? YES NO

If so, in approximately what year did you first have a computer in your primary residence? \_\_\_\_\_

Approximately what age did you first start typing? \_\_\_\_\_

Approximately how many years have you been typing? \_\_\_\_\_

Do you have a computer in your residence during the school year? YES NO

Do you ever use computers located on campus? YES NO

Do you regularly use a computer to complete your school assignments? YES NO

Have you ever had a job that involved primarily working on a computer? YES NO

If given the option, would you prefer to type a letter, as opposed to handwriting? YES NO

Would you be able to type a letter faster than you could handwrite it? YES NO

What would you estimate your typing speed, in words per minute, to be? \_\_\_\_\_

On a scale from 1 – 10 (with 1 being the lowest and 10 being the highest) how would you rate your typing skill in regards to...

Accuracy

1    2    3    4    5    6    7    8    9    10

Speed

1    2    3    4    5    6    7    8    9    10

On a scale from 1 – 10 (with 1 representing 10% and 10 representing 100%) what percentage of UOIT's students would you estimate to type slower than you?

1    2    3    4    5    6    7    8    9    10

On a scale from 1 – 10 (with 1 representing 10% and 10 representing 100%) what percentage of UOIT's students would you estimate to type less accurately than you?

1    2    3    4    5    6    7    8    9    10

## Appendix B: Typing Test Materials

### DIRECTIONS

While completing the typing test be sure to include proper case and grammar. Sentences should be typed with all grammar as it appears below. The reader is responsible for indicating to the typist exactly where punctuation is located in the sentences.

### MATERIALS

The cat lived in the hat but came out for bats.

St. Petersburg is the capital of both Florida and Russia.

Using chicken in tacos is a tasty substitute for beef.

Mandy might be moody but maybe she's just missing Mike.

The most common source of student anxiety stems from ineffective time management skills.

When you travel, always be sure to carry your personal identification in case of an emergency.

Although Easter is nice and Christmas is charming, my favourite holiday is Halloween, even though it can be alarming.

Jumping Jack Sprat lost his hat but found it again in the corner.

Mrs. Black's dog, Max, knows how to sit, stay, stand and come.

It goes without question that Charles Dickens was a master of the written word.

The children who are the happiest are those who listen to their Mothers.

While winter days are freezing cold, summer days are fun to behold.

In the pursuit of knowledge we must wonder how it feels to be bored.

When considering future careers you should place great weight on your personal aptitudes.

Did you know the most popular name for a cat in the United States is Kitty?

If you don't like the team, you should get out of the stadium.

So shines a good dead in a weary world.

Falling in a dream is the most common nightmare from which people wake.

For a child to be wild, their hair must not be style

## **Appendix C-1: Lost Data Protocol (Coerced)**

### 7B: Procedure for Irretrievable Data

Loss of data is a serious issue that must be reported immediately.

Data that has been terminally lost delays research progress, decreases sample size, contributes to skewed results and may impact project funding.

If, for any reason, there is a loss of data during your shift you are to contact the lab supervisor without delay.

If the lab supervisor is not present at the time of the incident, you are to make direct contact or leave a message at Extension #579.

Understand that, dependent upon the situation, a loss of data can result in:

- Academic Misconduct Violations for participants
- Experimenter termination
- Study cancellation
- Withdrawal of funding for research projects

## **Appendix C-2: Lost Data Protocol (Not coerced)**

### 7B: Procedure for Irretrievable Data

Loss of data is a serious issue that must be reported immediately.

Data that has been terminally lost delays research progress, decreases sample size, contributes to skewed results and may impact project funding.

If, for any reason, there is a loss of data during your shift you are to contact the lab supervisor without delay.

If the lab supervisor is not present at the time of the incident, you are to make direct contact or leave a message at Extension #579.

Understand that, dependent upon the situation, a loss of data can result in:

- Experimenter termination
- Study cancellation
- Withdrawal of funding for research projects

## **Appendix D-1: “Alternative Study” Questionnaire**

(Questions organised by construct)

### **Victim Manipulation Check**

(1) I offered a verbal or written apology to the victim of my actions, and met with him or her in person.

I offered a verbal or written apology to the victim of my actions by name, but never met with him or her in person.

I offered a verbal or written apology for my actions, but it was not addressed to a specific victim by name.

(Select the correct answer)

(2) I am familiar with the victim of my actions.

(Scale of 1-7, Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree)

### **Apology Prompt Manipulation Check**

(3) If I had not apologised for my actions, I would have faced negative consequences.

- No
- Yes

(Select the correct answer)

(4) If I had not apologised, there would have been some negative consequence for me.

(Scale of 1-7, Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree)

**When responding to the following statements, think of the transgression you committed, which led to you offering your apology.**

(Scale of 1-7, Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree)

### **Internalisation of responsibility**

(7) Circumstances, not me, are responsible for the situation.

(9) The blame for the situation lies with me.

(5) The blame for the situation lies in the circumstances, not with me.

(8) I believe what I did was wrong.

(6) I am remorseful.

**When responding to the following statements, think about the circumstances leading up to your apology.**

**(Scale of 1-7, Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree)**

**Responsibilisation**

(13) I became nervous because the person / people present at the time of my actions seemed to be nervous.

(17) I believe that the person / people that I offered my apology to exaggerated the impact my actions had on themselves or others.

(12) It is not hard for me to see how my actions could have upset someone so much, given the consequences.

(16) I became more sympathetic than irritated when I learned about the impact of my actions

(14) I became upset because I believed the person impacted by my actions was going to get upset.

(18) Knowing that my actions were going to impact someone else upset me.

(19) I could not continue to feel okay following my actions because I knew someone was going to be negatively impacted by them.

(11) It upset me to know the negative impact my actions had on someone else.

(15) I made my decision to apologise because I was influenced by the feelings of the person / people I had impacted by my actions.

(10) I believe that I was held accountable for my actions.

**When responding to the following statements, think about the apology that you offered.**

**(Scale of 1-7, Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree)**

**Impact of apology**

(24) I thought that apologising seemed logical.

(21) I would be confident in recommending the use of apology to a friend.

(22) I think that I will experience improvement in my situation as a result of apologising.



**Transgression finality**

(23) I think that my apology will successfully resolve my dispute.

(20) I think that my apology will completely resolve my dispute.

**When responding to the following questions, think of your interaction with the victim of your actions.**

**(Scale of 1-7, Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree)**

**Value Consensus**

(29) I feel this person agreed with me on principles of decent conduct.

(26) I feel this person and I share the same values.

(25) I feel like this person rejects values widely shared in our community.

(28) I feel this person ignores a broadly accepted understanding of what is right and wrong.

(27) I feel like this person disregards commonly shared beliefs and values.

**When responding to the following questions, think of your interaction with the person to whom you offered your apology.**

**(Scale of 1-7, Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree)**

**Voice**

(35) I had the ability to voice my opinions during the interaction that prompted my apology.

**Procedural Fairness**

(34) This person treated me unfairly during our encounter.

(33) This person behaved fairly toward me during our encounter.

(39) I was treated the way I deserved to be treated during our encounter.

**Procedural Satisfaction**

(31) I was satisfied with my encounter with this person.

(36) I was pleased with my encounter with this person.

**Outcome Fairness**

(30) The outcome of my encounter with this person was fair.

(40) The encounter produced a fair result.

(38) The outcome of my encounter with this person was not fair.

**Outcome Satisfaction**

(32) I was satisfied with the outcome produced by this encounter.

(37) I was pleased with the outcome that resulted from this encounter.

**Demographic Variables**

**Sex:** (circle one)

*Male*

*Female*

**Age:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Ethnic origin:** My Ethnic Background is (circle one):

White/Caucasian

Hispanic / Chicano(a) / Latino(a)

Black / African-American

Pacific Islander

Native American

Asian

Other (Please specify):

South Asian

## Appendix D-2: “Alternative Study” Questionnaire

(Questions as presented to participants)

**When responding to the following questions, think about the situation that prompted you to apologise and the person or people you apologised to.**

**(Scale of 1-7, Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree)**

1. Circle the response that most accurately describes your apology...

a) I offered a verbal or written apology to the victim of my actions, and met with him or her in person.

b) I offered a verbal or written apology to the victim of my actions by name, but never met with him or her in person.

c) I offered a verbal or written apology for my actions, but it was not addressed to a specific victim by name.

2. I am familiar with the victim of my actions.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Strongly Disagree		Neutral				Strongly Agree

3. If I had not apologised for my actions, I would have faced negative consequences.

No

Yes

4. If I had not apologised, there would have been some negative consequence for me.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Strongly Disagree		Neutral				Strongly Agree

**When responding to the following statements, think of the transgression you committed, which led to you offering your apology.**

**(Scale of 1-7, Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree)**

5. The blame for the situation lies in the circumstances, not with me.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Strongly Disagree			Neutral		Strongly Agree	

6. I am remorseful.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Strongly Disagree			Neutral		Strongly Agree	

7. Circumstances, not me, are responsible for the situation.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Strongly Disagree			Neutral		Strongly Agree	

8. I believe what I did was wrong.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Strongly Disagree			Neutral		Strongly Agree	

9. The blame for the situation lies with me.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Strongly Disagree			Neutral		Strongly Agree	

**When responding to the following statements, think about the circumstances leading up to your apology.**

**(Scale of 1-7, Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree)**

10. I believe that I was held accountable for my actions.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Strongly Disagree			Neutral		Strongly Agree	

11. It upset me to know the negative impact my actions had on someone else.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Strongly Disagree			Neutral	Strongly Agree		

12. It is not hard for me to see how my actions could have upset someone so much, given the consequences.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Strongly Disagree			Neutral	Strongly Agree		

13. I became nervous because the person / people present at the time of my actions seemed to be nervous.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Strongly Disagree			Neutral	Strongly Agree		

14. I became upset because I believed the person impacted by my actions was going to get upset.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Strongly Disagree			Neutral	Strongly Agree		

15. I made my decision to apologise because I was influenced by the feelings of the person / people I had impacted by my actions.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Strongly Disagree			Neutral	Strongly Agree		

16. I became more sympathetic than irritated when I learned about the impact of my actions.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Strongly Disagree			Neutral	Strongly Agree		

17. I believe that the person / people that I offered my apology to exaggerated the impact my actions had on themselves or others.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Strongly Disagree			Neutral	Strongly Agree		

18. Knowing that my actions were going to impact someone else upset me.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Strongly Disagree			Neutral	Strongly Agree		

19. I could not continue to feel okay following my actions because I knew someone was going to be negatively impacted by them.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Strongly Disagree			Neutral	Strongly Agree		

**When responding to the following statements, think about the apology that you offered.**

**(Scale of 1-7, Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree)**

20. I think that my apology will completely resolve my dispute.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Strongly Disagree			Neutral	Strongly Agree		

21. I would be confident in recommending the use of apology to a friend.

1      2      3      4      5      6      7  
 Strongly Disagree                  Neutral                  Strongly Agree

22. I thought that apologising seemed logical

1      2      3      4      5      6      7  
 Strongly Disagree                  Neutral                  Strongly Agree

23. I think that my apology will successfully resolve my dispute.

1      2      3      4      5      6      7  
 Strongly Disagree                  Neutral                  Strongly Agree

24. I think that I will experience improvement in my situation as a result of apologising.

1      2      3      4      5      6      7  
 Strongly Disagree                  Neutral                  Strongly Agree

**When responding to the following questions, think of the victim of your actions.**

**(Scale of 1-7, Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree)**

25. I feel like this person rejects values widely shared in our community.

1      2      3      4      5      6      7  
 Strongly Disagree                  Neutral                  Strongly Agree

26. I feel this person and I share the same values.

1      2      3      4      5      6      7  
 Strongly Disagree                  Neutral                  Strongly Agree

27. I feel like this person disregards commonly shared beliefs and values.

1      2      3      4      5      6      7  
 Strongly Disagree                  Neutral                  Strongly Agree

28. I feel this person ignores a broadly accepted understanding of what is right and wrong.

1      2      3      4      5      6      7  
 Strongly Disagree                  Neutral                  Strongly Agree

29. I feel this person agrees with me on principles of decent conduct.

1      2      3      4      5      6      7  
 Strongly Disagree                  Neutral                  Strongly Agree

**When responding to the following questions, think of your interaction with the person to whom you offered your apology.**

**(Scale of 1-7, Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree)**

30. The outcome of my encounter with this person was fair.

1      2      3      4      5      6      7  
 Strongly Disagree                  Neutral                  Strongly Agree

31. I was satisfied with my encounter with this person.

1      2      3      4      5      6      7  
 Strongly Disagree                  Neutral                  Strongly Agree

32. I was satisfied with the outcome produced by this encounter.

1      2      3      4      5      6      7



Strongly Disagree                      Neutral                      Strongly Agree

33. This person behaved fairly toward me during our encounter.

1      2      3      4      5      6      7

Strongly Disagree                      Neutral                      Strongly Agree

34. This person treated me unfairly during our encounter

1      2      3      4      5      6      7

Strongly Disagree                      Neutral                      Strongly Agree

35. I had the ability to voice my opinions during the interaction that prompted my apology.

1      2      3      4      5      6      7

Strongly Disagree                      Neutral                      Strongly Agree

36. I was pleased with my encounter with this person.

1      2      3      4      5      6      7

Strongly Disagree                      Neutral                      Strongly Agree

37. I was pleased with the outcome that resulted from this encounter.

1      2      3      4      5      6      7

Strongly Disagree                      Neutral                      Strongly Agree

38. The outcome of my encounter with this person was not fair.

1      2      3      4      5      6      7

Strongly Disagree                      Neutral                      Strongly Agree

39. I was treated the way I deserved to be treated during our encounter.

1      2      3      4      5      6      7  
 Strongly Disagree                  Neutral                  Strongly Agree

40. The encounter produced a fair result.

1      2      3      4      5      6      7  
 Strongly Disagree                  Neutral                  Strongly Agree

### **Demographic Variables**

**Sex:** (circle one)

*Male*                  *Female*

**Age:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Ethnic origin:** My Ethnic Background is (circle one):

White/Caucasian	Hispanic / Chicano(a) / Latino(a)
Black / African-American	Pacific Islander
Native American	Asian
Other (Please specify):	South Asian

## Appendix E: Informed Consent Form

You are invited to voluntarily participate in the following research project: **Typing Task**.

In this experiment, you were involved in an initial task, the Typing Task, which seemed to experience loss of data that you were told was due to your actions (ie, hitting the ALT key). You were asked to sign a confession and write an apology. Following the apology, you were asked to complete a questionnaire asking about how that apology affected you. We expect that it will have taken 40-45 minutes for you to complete this study.

There are no known physical, psychological, economic, or social risks associated with this study. Your participation in this study is completely voluntary and you may withdraw from this study at any time without any consequences or penalties. You are not obliged to answer any questions that you find objectionable or which make you uncomfortable.

You will be given one credit for your participation in this study. Full credit will be awarded whether you completed the study or not.

All information will be stored in a secure area. Individual responses will remain anonymous and will not be released to professors or in publications. Only group results will be reported (e.g., conference presentations, journal articles). Dr. Diane Sivasubramaniam and her research assistants will be responsible for keeping and analysing the anonymous data files based on your responses. Also, other researchers could request to analyse these anonymous files for other valid research purposes (e.g., for meta-analyses).

This study has been reviewed and cleared by the Research Ethics Board at UOIT (REB # 10-035). The principal investigator is Alana Saulnier of the Faculty of Social Science and Humanities, under the supervision of Dr. Diane Sivasubramaniam of the Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities, UOIT. In the event that you have any questions, concerns, or complaints, you may contact Dr. Diane Sivasubramaniam (diane.sivasubramaniam@uoit.ca), or the REB Administration (compliance@uoit.ca; 905-721-8668, ext. 3693).

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I have read and understood the statements above. My signature, below, indicates my free and informed consent to participate in this research.

Name (please print): \_\_\_\_\_

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

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix F: Debrief Form

Thank you for participating in this study!

The study that you participated in today was designed to test a question about Restorative Justice Conferencing procedures. These procedures seek to bring together victims, offenders, and their supporters to discuss an offence with the guidance of a conference convener. During these procedures offenders are asked to apologise to their victims but the actual victim(s) of their offence may be unable or unwilling to participate. This differs significantly from a court procedure. In a court procedure, (1) offenders are never required to issue an apology for their actions, and (2) victims are given little to no opportunity to be involved in the justice process or outcomes.

Some evaluations have shown that, after a transgression has occurred, Restorative Justice is a satisfactory and rewarding resolution for all parties involved. Most research focuses on victim benefits of restorative justice, but our research considers benefits for the offender.

Research on the effects of apology has shown that sincere apologies hold many benefits for apologizers. However, will an offender experience those benefits to the same degree, if (a) an apology is offered only for instrumental means (i.e. to avoid the possibility of a more formal sanction), or (b) an offender is not able to offer their apology directly to the victim but must express the apology to a representative of the victim?

The study in which you participated today is designed to test these questions.

We manipulated two factors in this experiment:

- Victim presence: One third of our participants saw a direct victim, who claimed to be the person most directly impacted by the loss of data. One third of our participants saw a surrogate victim, who described the victim and claimed that individual was going to be the person most directly impacted by the loss of data. One third of our participants experienced an ambiguous victim condition, in which it was simply stated that the loss of data was going to impact ongoing research.
- Apology prompt: One half of our participants were prompted to give an apology by being told that an apology would be appreciated. One half of our participants were prompted to give an apology by being told that their actions potentially warranted an academic misconduct violation and that an apology would likely avoid escalating the incident to this level.

We manipulated these two things because we want to investigate how people react to offering an apology when they have a strong incentive to apologize (compared to apologizing voluntarily) and when they are offering the apology to a victim representative, or an “ambiguous”, nameless victim (compared to directly apologizing to the actual victim).

We hypothesised that, when apologies are offered without incentive, apologisers will be more likely to experience the benefits of apology. We also hypothesise that, when a direct victim or a

surrogate victim is present for the apology, the apologiser will be more likely to experience the benefits than when no victim is present. Lastly, we hypothesise that, the effect of victim presence on apology outcome benefits for the offender depends on whether the apology is offered under incentive or not. When the apology is not offered under an incentive, victim presence has an effect on benefits – outcome benefits are greater when the apology is delivered to a direct or surrogate victim than when the apology is directed to no one in particular. However, when the apology is offered under an incentive, victim presence has no effect on benefits – outcome benefits are no different when the apology is delivered to a direct victim, surrogate victim, or no one in particular.

It is important to note that this study involved some deception.

- First, you were asked to complete a typing task today. This study was not actually about typing ability – the typing task was intended to distract you from the real purpose of the experiment. You were also told that hitting the ALT key would cause experimental data to be lost. This was not true. Hitting the ALT key during the experiment did not cause any data to be lost. The program was pre-programmed to “crash” at a particular time.
- You were told that there was another participant working with you. This was not true. You are the only participant in the experimental session. The other person completing the typing task was a confederate of the experimenter, and behaved towards you in a way that was predetermined by the experimenter. Specifically, the confederate said that you had hit the ALT key, when you actually did not.
- You were told that your actions potentially warranted a violation of academic conduct. This was not true. You are not responsible for any academic misconduct as a result of this experiment and no action will be taken against you.
- You were asked to participate in a “separate study” about transgressions and apologies. This was not a separate study at all, but part of the study that you signed up for today. In this study, you completed a questionnaire about how you felt after offering an apology – it is from this questionnaire that we will get our data about how apology affected you, depending on the condition to which you had been randomly assigned. The person who gave you that questionnaire also asked you what happened in the Typing Task study – your reply to that person was audio recorded, and we will use that reply as an indication of whether you really believed that you had crashed the computer in the typing task study today.

If you have any additional questions, please feel free to stay and discuss them with us now or to contact Alana Saulnier at [alana.saulnier@uoit.ca](mailto:alana.saulnier@uoit.ca) or Dr. Diane Sivasubramaniam at [diane.sivasubramaniam@uoit.ca](mailto:diane.sivasubramaniam@uoit.ca).

Thank you again for your participation and assistance with our research!

Alana Saulnier and Diane Sivasubramaniam  
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 University of Ontario Institute of Technology