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Culture and forgiveness: a prototype perspective

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Culture and forgiveness: A prototype perspective

by

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CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

"Forgiveness is not just an occasional act; it is an attitude." -*Martin Luther King, Jr.*

"Tolerance and patience should not be read as signs of weakness. They are signs of strength." - *Dalai Lama*

"Forgiveness is the final form of love." - *Reinhold Niebuhr, philosopher*

Forgiveness is a concept virtually everyone is familiar with. People grant forgiveness for everything from minor offenses, such as forgetting to return a phone call, to severe offenses, such as marital infidelity. Most everyone has forgiven someone at some point in their lives, but it is likely that many people have not given much thought to what forgiveness actually *is*. Considering the quotes above, forgiveness could be characterized as an act, an attitude, a sign of strength, or a form of love. Is excusing someone for an offense considered to be forgiveness? Is forgiveness an emotion one feels, such as compassion towards the offender, or is it a behavior one enacts, such as not punishing the offender? Is forgiveness something a victim feels inside, or is it something that occurs mutually between the victim and offender? Discrepancies in the meaning of forgiveness exist in everyday life as well as in the laboratory. Although pinpointing precise definitions may seem trivial to some, it is vital to the advancement of forgiveness research.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

Challenges in Characterizing Forgiveness

In the academic forgiveness literature, there is a great range in the focus of forgiveness definitions, including components of avoidance and revenge motivations (McCullough, Worthington, & Rachal; McCullough, Rachal, Sandage, Worthington, Brown, & Hight, 1998), behavior (Pingleton, 1997), emotion (Worthington & Wade, 1999), cognition (Al-Mabuk, Dedrick, & Vanderah, 1998; Thompson & Snyder, 2003), and the interplay of cognition, emotion, and behavior (Enright & Fitzgibbons, 2000). Despite noticeable discrepancies among researchers, little research has been conducted to define forgiveness. Studies that have attempted to empirically define forgiveness have surveyed clinicians, academics, and religious figures. As Kearns and Fincham (2004) point out, however, this is a critical limitation because lay conceptions of forgiveness can help refine current and perhaps inspire new theories of forgiveness. Although there are limitations in using lay perspectives and definitions to inform theory, this method is especially useful when there is a lack of empirical research. As Worthington (2005) points out, “Definitions provide a framework for explaining why and how a phenomenon happens” (p. 3).

Historically, there has been surprisingly little empirical research concerning forgiveness. As a result, a number of theories and perspectives on forgiveness have recently emerged. Enright’s process perspective defines forgiveness as a combination of cognition, affect, and behavior, in which negative thoughts, feelings, and actions are replaced with more positive ones (Enright & Fitzgibbons, 2000). McCullough et al. (1998) proposed a two-component motivational system of

forgiveness. They theorized that the motivational forces of *avoidance* and *revenge* are directly involved in the forgiveness process. In this perspective, negative motivations are “redirected” into more positive motivations (McCullough, Fincham, & Tsang, 2003, as cited in Worthington, 2005). Worthington and some of his colleagues (e.g., Exline, Worthington, Hill, & McCullough, 2003; Wade & Worthington, 2003; Worthington & Scherer, 2004; Worthington & Wade, 1999) characterize forgiveness as a transformation of emotion. This perspective emphasizes negative emotions transforming to become more positive and other-oriented over time. Finally, several researchers (Gordon, Baucom, & Snyder, 2005; Thompson, Snyder, Hoffman, Michael, Rasmussen, Billings, et al., 2005) view forgiveness from a cognitive perspective. Forgiveness is defined in terms of thinking about the self, the other, and the relationship in such a way as to “free the self” from being consumed by negative thoughts, feelings, and behaviors after an interpersonal transgression (Gordon et al., 2005, p. 407).

Forgiveness and Culture

The forgiveness literature may be sparse when it comes to empirically defining forgiveness, but it is even more inadequate when considering how forgiveness may differ across cultures. According to Sandage and Williamson (2005), little research has focused on examining cultural and contextual variables and how they relate to forgiveness. For example, is forgiveness valued and practiced in similar ways across cultures? How do cultural factors influence individual and group processes of forgiveness? Given that the current state of cross-cultural forgiveness research is deficient, the goal of this research is to

examine the similarities and differences in how members of Eastern and Western cultures characterize forgiveness.

What might contribute to culturally-specific understandings of forgiveness? In order to generate possible ideas, it is helpful to look at previous cross-cultural research. One of the central and most well-researched differences between Eastern and Western cultures is individualism and collectivism (e.g., Markus & Kitayama, 1991; Nisbett & Cohen, 1996; Oyserman, Coon, & Kemmelmeier, 2002).

Individualists are defined as those who tend to favor personal interests over the interests of collectives, and collectivists are those who are likely to place collective interests ahead of personal interests, or not distinguish between personal and collective interests (Triandis, 1989). As a result of being part of an individualistic or collectivistic society, people become focused on different aspects of the self and others. Members of Western cultures tend to develop an independent self-construal, and become focused on personal goals and autonomy of self. These individuals tend to view the self as separate from others and define the self largely in terms of personality traits, abilities, and attitudes. In contrast, members of Eastern cultures tend to develop a collective (or interdependent) self-construal and become focused on interdependence and relationships. These individuals tend to view the self as linked to others and define the self largely in terms of social relationships.

Whereas the current literature emphasizes that forgiveness is a personal decision, the highly collectivistic Hmong culture construes forgiveness as a communal process that serves to eliminate tension and restore harmony among the different clans (Sandage, Hill, & Vang, 2003). In collectivistic societies, it is common

for a family or group to offer forgiveness to the offender. Consequently, forgiveness serves to restore closeness and group harmony rather than confer personal benefits (Sandage & Williamson, 2005).

Personal Choice vs. Obligation

Even though the forgiveness literature has included a range of theoretical components (such as attitudes, cognition, emotion, and behavior) in an attempt to be comprehensive, there are a number of cultural differences that are not acknowledged. For example, research has repeatedly demonstrated that forgiveness is likely to occur in a relationship to the extent to which it is close, committed, and satisfactory (McCullough, 2000; Hoyt, Fincham, McCullough, Maio, & Davila, 2005; Tsang, McCullough, & Fincham, 2006). However, this assumes that the relationship between the victim and the offender is voluntary. Voluntary relationships are common in individualistic societies such as the United States, where personal choice is paramount (Iyengar & Lepper, 1999). In contrast, this type of relationship is less common in Eastern cultures such as Japan, where relationships tend to be obligatory and not as easily dissolved. Following this idea, forgiveness may be perceived to be a personal choice in Western cultures because, if not granted, the relationship can be easily dissolved. Similarly, forgiveness may be perceived to be an obligation in Eastern cultures – that is, granting forgiveness may be a means to maintain harmony and should be granted, particularly in relationships that cannot be dissolved.

Harmony

Interpersonal harmony is an extremely important concept in Eastern cultures. In Japanese culture, the idea of *omoiyari* is considered to be an exceedingly important value (Wierzbicka, 1997). Although there is no direct English translation of the concept, *omoiyari* can be loosely defined as “empathy,” “compassion,” or “consideration.” *Omoiyari* is commonly used in Japanese language, and “is one of the highest-ranking words...referring to particularly desirable human characteristics” (Wierzbicka, 1997, p. 276). Because social harmony and the idea of *omoiyari* are very important and pervasive constructs in Japanese society, one might expect the notion to be particularly salient and encourage actions that promote harmony. In particular, perhaps *omoiyari* enhances one’s willingness or proclivity to forgive an offender.

In a study using Chinese participants, Fu, Watkins, and Hui (2004) reported that the way Chinese individuals think about and define forgiveness is potentially influenced by their collectivistic cultural traditions, particularly the importance of social harmony. Chinese participants reported that they tended to forgive in their daily lives because they cared about maintaining in-group stability and relationship harmony. In contrast, 0% of undergraduates and only 11% of a community in a Tennessee sample reported “striving for peace” or “do not like conflict” as a factor in forgiving (Younger, Piferi, Jobe, & Lawler, 2004). Thus, it may be likely that members of Eastern cultures forgive to maintain or restore group harmony.

Self- vs. Other-Orientation

Given cultural differences in self-views, it is no surprise that a number of other important differences have been identified. For example, North Americans are more

likely to affirm characteristics of the self that set them apart from others and make them unique (Herzog, Franks, Markus, & Holmberg, 1998). To members of individualistic cultures, internal characteristics such as abilities, thoughts, and feelings are perceived to be important (Markus & Kitayama, 1991). In contrast, compared to North Americans, East Asians have a greater concern for relationships, interpersonal harmony, and fulfillment of obligations to others. In general, members of collectivistic cultures are concerned with external characteristics such as roles and status (Markus & Kitayama, 1991). Indeed, research by Cousins (1989) found that when describing the self, American participants used more traits than Japanese participants, whereas Japanese participants used more concrete attributes and social categories. Furthermore, Trafimow, Triandis, and Goto (1991) found that native English speakers from the United States were more likely to provide self-descriptions containing trait-like terms (e.g., *nice* and *truthful*) than were Chinese participants, whereas Chinese participants were more likely to provide collective self-descriptions (e.g., *sister* and *student*) than were native English speakers. Thus, members of Western cultures may be more likely than members of Eastern cultures to generate and endorse forgiveness features related to self-oriented, internal characteristics. In contrast, members of Eastern cultures may be more likely than members of Western cultures to generate and endorse forgiveness features that are other- and relationship-oriented.

Influence and Adjustment: Primary vs. Secondary Control

In an influential article, Weisz, Rothbaum, and Blackburn (1984) made distinctions between primary and secondary control in order to contrast American

and Japanese forms of self-control. Primary control is used to influence targets such as people, objects, and environmental circumstances, and the goal is to enhance reward by influencing one's reality to fit the self (Weisz et al., 1984). Employing secondary control allows one to adjust to situations and circumstances (Morling, Kitayama, & Miyamoto, 2002). Secondary control targets one's own expectations, wishes, goals, perceptions, and attitudes, and the goal is to enhance reward by influencing the impact of realities on the self (Weisz et al., 1984).

Early American psychology defined control exclusively in terms of primary control (Abramson, Seligman, & Teasdale, 1978; Bandura, 1977; Langer, 1979). Weisz et al. (1984) argued that this was a culturally biased analysis of control because primary control is certainly valued and emphasized in American culture, but not necessarily in all cultures. Subsequent research by Morling, Kitayama, and Miyamoto (2002) examined cultural differences in influence and adjustment. Across two studies, Morling et al. (2002) provided further support for Weisz et al.'s (1984) ideas of cultural differences in primary and secondary control. When asked to recall instances of influence or adjustment situations in their own lives, North American participants were more likely to identify influence situations than were East Asian participants, whereas East Asian participants were more likely to identify adjustment situations than were North American participants. In addition, North American participants reported that influence situations produced an internal sense of power and competence, whereas Japanese participants reported that adjustment situations produced a sense of relatedness and closeness to others.

Because of differences in self-control, it is possible that the forgiveness

process takes different forms in different cultures. For example, because North Americans are socialized to value primary control, it is possible that forgiveness is characterized or perceived to be some form of influence or action one must take to effect change. Similarly, because East Asians are socialized to value secondary control, it is possible that forgiveness is characterized as something an individual does to change the self and adjust to the situation. Thus, members of Eastern cultures may be more likely to generate and endorse forgiveness features related to adjustment, whereas members of Western cultures may be more likely to generate and endorse forgiveness features related to influence.

Analytic vs. Dialectical Thinking

One of the most interesting developments in cultural psychology has been the discovery of very different ways of thinking in the West and East. Individuals in Western cultures tend to think analytically, which emphasizes the laws of *identity* (e.g., $A = A$); *non-contradiction* (e.g., something cannot be both black and white); and *the excluded middle* (e.g., A is either B or not-B; Peng & Nisbett, 1999). In contrast, individuals in Eastern cultures tend to think dialectically, which emphasizes principles of *change* (existence is not stable; rather, it is dynamic and changeable); *contradiction* (e.g., something can be both strong and weak, black and white); and *relationship* or *holism* (nothing is isolated and independent; everything is connected). Because members of collectivistic cultures are attuned to the interrelationships among the various components of a situation, it is likely that they are more likely to be concerned with others and how their actions affect others than are members of individualistic cultures. Thus, members of Eastern cultures may be more likely than

members of Western cultures to endorse forgiveness features related to interpersonal harmony and minimizing the transgression. Furthermore, because members of Eastern cultures think dialectically, they may be more likely than members of Western cultures to characterize forgiveness using both positive and negative attributes, rather than uniformly positive or uniformly negative descriptions.

Face

Another important concept in Eastern cultures is the idea of face. Face is a notion that has been contrasted with Western notions of self-esteem. Whereas self-esteem is, in essence, under the control of the individual, face is something that is granted by others, similar to the idea of public-esteem (Heine, 2005). In Western cultures, high self-esteem allows an individual to think positively about the self, and maintain this positivity even when receiving negative information about the self. Thus, self-esteem is readily enhanced but is hard to decrease. In contrast, for members of Eastern cultures, face is easy to lose but hard to gain. Because face does not exist internally, an individual must rely on others to grant them face. Therefore, individuals must work hard to not offend, embarrass, or anger others. Compared to members of Western cultures, it may be more likely for members of Eastern cultures to identify features related to maintaining face as important for forgiveness.

Pulling it All Together: Theory, Forgiveness, and Culture

Thus far, I have described recent theoretical developments in the forgiveness literature, as well as identified various deficits from a cultural point of view. Along with their attempts to build a stronger theoretical foundation for forgiveness,

McCullough et al. (1998) note that the forgiveness literature is likely to make slow progress due to sluggish theory development and the lack of psychometrically sound forgiveness measures. This statement highlights the need for further forgiveness research, which includes incorporating a cultural perspective into theory and measurement. Sandage and Williamson (2005) discussed various ways in which the current forgiveness literature has excluded ties to possible cultural differences. First, they suggest that qualitative research focusing on obtaining detailed descriptions of forgiveness, as well as cultural conflicts and practices, would be extremely beneficial in extending the forgiveness literature. Furthermore, they point out the lack of measure development, commenting that there have been virtually no cross-cultural validations of forgiveness measures. Because nearly all of the currently utilized forgiveness scales have been tested and validated using Western samples, it is possible that defining forgiveness in primarily Western terms biases these measures. For example, Kearns and Fincham (2004) conducted a prototype analysis of forgiveness, in which the most frequently generated forgiveness features focused on personal choice and personality characteristics. Responses such as *forgetting the incident*, *moving on*, *relief*, and *feeling happy/joyful* were in the top ten most frequently generated features. This focus on personal choice and internal attributes may reflect a Western way of thinking. Finally, the lack of cultural emphasis in the definition and testing of forgiveness may have resulted in theories that are less inclusive than they should be. For example, Western notions of forgiveness may be unknowingly excluding an important aspect or focus that

Eastern cultures emphasize (i.e., obligations and adjustment in relationships or sense of community).

The Current Research: A Prototype Perspective

The purpose of this research is to begin to bridge the cross-cultural gap in the forgiveness literature. I focus on how individuals from collectivistic cultures, such as Japan, view and define forgiveness compared to traditional individualistic cultures such as the United States. As a first step, these studies adopt a prototype approach to examine Japanese perspectives of forgiveness. A prototype analysis is a theory-based approach used to identify important features of a concept (Fehr, 1988, 2005; Rosch, 1975). Prototype analyses involve identifying central features of a concept, whereas classical definition paradigms require certain characteristics to be necessary and sufficient for definition (Rosch, 1975). Some concepts (such as forgiveness), however, lack specific defining characteristics and cannot be defined in such rigid terms. For example, although not holding a grudge may be a central feature of forgiveness, it might be necessary but not sufficient to define forgiveness. Instead, concepts can be organized around the best examples, called prototypes (Fehr, 1988, 2005; Rosch, 1975). Prototype analyses provide information regarding the content and structure of concepts (Fehr, 1988, 2005). Other social psychological research has employed the use of prototype analysis to examine abstract concepts such as relationship quality (Hassebrauck, 1997) and respect (Frei & Shaver, 2002).

In order to examine a lay perspective of forgiveness, Kearns and Fincham (2004) conducted a prototype analysis of forgiveness in a predominantly Western sample. Their research found that no single characteristic of forgiveness was

reported by every participant, and this was attributed to the variability in how individuals think about and describe forgiveness. Indeed, these results are similar to a prototype analysis conducted by Fehr and Russell (1984), in which they found significant variability in how participants defined emotion.

It is important to note that this research does not aim to demonstrate that forgiveness is organized prototypically; rather, the prototype perspective will be used to examine the content and structure of forgiveness for members of East Asian cultures. Using a prototype perspective to examine forgiveness is crucial because results from such analyses can be used extensively in subsequent cross-cultural research. For example, this data may provide the necessary information to clarify forgiveness processes, refine current measures, create additional scales, or develop more inclusive theories in non-Western societies.

Because these studies involve a comparison to data from Kearns and Fincham (2004), it was important to follow similar procedures (i.e., instructions and materials). Thus, Studies 1 and 2 were designed to be almost identical in procedure and content to the Kearns and Fincham (2004) studies. This research aims not only to replicate procedures used in Studies 1 and 2, but to also build upon their findings. To this end, I conducted a third study that enabled me to examine the underlying factor structure of forgiveness in Japanese and American samples. I combined forgiveness features generated in this research, as well as the features generated by the American participants in Kearns and Fincham's (2004) study. Participants rated the centrality of forgiveness features, which allowed me to identify commonalities as well as differences in responding between Japanese and United States participants.

CHAPTER 3: STUDY 1

Study 1: Feature Generation

Overview

In this study, Japanese participants were asked to define forgiveness. I hypothesized that the most frequently generated features would be attributes related to group harmony and accommodation.

Method

Participants

Participants were 123 undergraduates from Hokkaido University in Sapporo, Japan. The average age of participants was 20.2.

Procedure

Each participant was asked to think about the concept of forgiveness and what it meant to him or her. Participants were given the following instructions from Kearns and Fincham (2004, Study 1):

This is a study of the characteristics and attributes that people think of when they think of the word forgiveness. For example, if you were asked to list the characteristics of a person experiencing fear, you might write: possible danger occurs, attention is focused on the threat, heart beats quickly, the person runs as fast as they can. In the current study, we are interested in the attributes of forgiveness. Imagine that you are explaining the word forgiveness to someone who has no experience of forgiveness. Include the obvious. However, try not to just free-associate. We are interested in what is common to instances of forgiveness. Remember, these attributes can be positive or negative. Also, there are no right or wrong answers. Please take the next 8 minutes to complete this task.

Participants were instructed to list all of the attributes of forgiveness that came to mind during an eight-minute period. Following Kearns and Fincham (2004),

participants were given a page with 20 lines, and were asked to record one attribute per line. These instructions were translated and back translated to ensure linguistic equivalence. After finishing this task, participants completed demographic items and were debriefed by the experimenter.

Results

Compilation of Features

A Japanese undergraduate research assistant compiled a verbatim list of the forgiveness features identified by participants. Features were then placed into larger categories following procedures used by Kearns and Fincham (2004), which were adapted from Fehr (1988), Rosenberg and Jones (1972), and Rosenberg and Sedlak (1972). First, linguistic units were extracted. Monoleximic (one-word) features were identified as distinct features. Examples of monoleximic features included features such as *sincerity* and *emotional*. When participants listed a phrase, it was necessary to determine whether the phrase consisted of a single feature, or if it could be separated into more than one feature. Phrases that included an adjective or modifier (i.e., *hurt* and *deep hurt*) were coded as a single unit. The total number of linguistic units extracted from the feature list was 504. On average, participants generated approximately 4.1 features.

Next, the linguistic units were sorted into different attribute categories by two Japanese graduate students. Following Fehr (1988), linguistic units were grouped into a similar category on the basis of three guidelines. First, different grammatical forms of the same word were placed into one attribute category. Additionally, linguistic units modified by adjectives or adverbs such as *extremely*, *slight*, or

sometimes were placed into one attribute category. Finally, linguistic units that were judged as having the same meaning were placed into one attribute category. The coders agreed on 98% of attribute categories. Discrepancies were resolved by the author.

The coding procedure yielded a total of 112 forgiveness features. Of these, 60 responses were mentioned by only one participant. Examples of these responses included features such as *smile*, *relativity*, and *extend deadlines*. These responses were eliminated from further analyses, leaving a final list of 52 attributes.

Feature frequencies

Similar to Kearns and Fincham (2004, Study 1), no one feature was mentioned by all participants (see Table 1). Although there was variability in the frequency of the forgiveness features, there was substantial agreement for one particular feature: 52.85% percent of Japanese participants identified *to have an open heart/broad mind* as a feature of forgiveness. In contrast, the most frequently generated feature in the Kearns and Fincham (2004) American sample was reported by 33.33% of the participants (see Table 2). Other frequently generated Japanese features included *being accepting* (34.96%), *charitable* (25.20%), *kindness* (21.95%), *to be tolerant* (19.51%), and *to compromise* (14.63%). In contrast, features such as *consequence of a wrong doing* (33.33%), *understanding* (29.17%), *relief* (27.60%), *forgetting the incident* (27.60%), and *an act of love* (27.60%) were most frequently generated in the Kearns and Fincham (2004) American sample. Note that there was no overlap in the top five most frequently generated features between the American and Japanese samples.

Less-frequently generated Japanese features included *give a good impression* (1.63%), *a positive characteristic to have* (1.63%), *accept own flaws* (1.63%), *back down from argument* (1.63%), and *not caught up in matters* (1.63%). In contrast, features such as *respect* (3.13%), *saying "I forgive you"* (3.13%), *confusion* (3.13%), *compromising* (3.13%), and *pretending the incident didn't happen* (3.13%) were the least frequently generated American features (Kearns & Fincham, 2004). Again, it is noteworthy that there was no overlap in the five least frequently generated features between the American and Japanese sample.

The Japanese features overlapped with American features on only 18 of 52 (35%) categories. These categories were (Japanese category first, American category in parentheses if not exact duplicate): *to have an open heart/broad mind (open-minded)*, *being accepting (acceptance)*, *kindness (an act of kindness)*, *to compromise (compromising)*, *letting go of anger, being understanding (understanding)*, *empathy*, *to reconcile (reconciling)*, *maturity*, *being superior to perpetrator (being the bigger person)*, *a sign of weakness*, *accept someone's apology*, *done to preserve the relationship*, *focusing on good instead of bad*, *give in (giving in)*, *love (an act of love)*, *respect*, and *a positive characteristic to have*. As shown in Table 3, however, the frequencies in each of the shared Japanese and American categories differ greatly. Chi-square analyses revealed that Japanese participants were significantly more likely than American participants to list features such as *to have an open heart/broad mind*, *being accepting*, and *to compromise*. In contrast, chi-square analyses revealed that American participants were significantly more likely than Japanese participants to list features such as *being understanding*,

empathy, to reconcile, give in, accept someone's apology, an act of love, a sign of weakness, done to preserve the relationship, and a positive characteristic to have. Japanese and American participants were equally likely to list features such as *kindness, letting go of anger, maturity, being superior to the perpetrator, respect, and focusing on the good instead of the bad.*

Discussion

The results of Study 1 provide initial evidence of culturally specific understandings of forgiveness. As previously mentioned, only 35% of the categories were mentioned in both cultures, and frequencies were very different for several of the categories. It is important to note that there are several types of features that the American sample identified but the Japanese sample did not, and vice versa. For example, the American sample generated features relating to strong feelings and emotions, such as *sadness, angry, hurt/pain, and feeling happy/joyful*, whereas the Japanese sample did not generate such features. The generation of such features supports recent emotion research by Tsai and colleagues (Tsai, Knutson, & Fung, 2006). They found that Americans prefer high arousal emotions, such as being enthusiastic or nervous, whereas East Asian prefer low arousal emotion, such as being calm.

In addition, the American sample generated features relating to actions and influence, such as *buying the other person things, end to fighting, and still holding a grudge*, whereas the Japanese sample did not. Instead, it appears the Japanese emphasize harmony and adjustment, as evidenced by features such as *respond flexibly, control one's emotions, blame no one, cooperate, to be tolerant, and*

patience, whereas the American sample did not generate these type of statements.

Table 1

Forgiveness features generated by Japanese sample (Study 1; N = 123)

Forgiveness feature	N	% of participants
To have an open heart/broad mind	65	52.85
Being accepting	43	34.96
Charitable	31	25.20
Kindness	27	21.95
To be tolerant	24	19.51
To compromise	18	14.63
Letting go of anger	17	13.82
Calm	15	12.20
Being understanding	14	11.38
Respond flexibly	11	8.94
Overlook the incident	10	8.13
Blame no one	9	7.32
Empathy	7	5.69
Patience	7	5.69
High caliber quality	7	5.69
Control one's emotions	7	5.69
Moral ambiguity	7	5.69
Indifference	6	4.88
Pamper/spoil	6	4.88
Wide range of tolerance	6	4.88
Not pushy	6	4.88
Not strict	6	4.88
To reconcile	6	4.88
Do not fuss over small matters	5	4.07
Overlook small mistakes	5	4.07
Maturity	5	4.07
All-encompassing	5	4.07
A broad world view	4	3.25
Listening	4	3.25
Have space in the heart	4	3.25
Able to live in harmony	4	3.25
Being superior to perpetrator	4	3.25
Evoked when victim is calm	3	2.44
Give in	3	2.44
Respect	3	2.44

Table 1, continued

An act of love	3	2.44
Focusing on the good instead of the bad	3	2.44
A sign of weakness	3	2.44
Done to preserve the relationship	3	2.44
Trust	3	2.44
Appeals more to adults than children	2	1.63
Mercy	2	1.63
Close to Godliness	2	1.63
Not being indifferent	2	1.63
Cooperate	2	1.63
Give a good impression	2	1.63
A positive characteristic to have	2	1.63
Accept own flaws	2	1.63
Do not hold back	2	1.63
Back down from argument	2	1.63
Not caught up in matters	2	1.63

Note: Attribute categories generated in both groups are listed in bold.

Table 2

Forgiveness features generated by Kearns and Fincham (2004, Study 1) American sample (N = 208)

Forgiveness feature	% of participants
Consequence of a wrong doing	33.33
Understanding	29.17
Relief	27.60
Forgetting the incident	27.60
An act of love	27.60
Moving on	26.56
Feeling happy/joyful	24.48
Reconciling	21.35
Empathy	20.31
Acceptance	19.79
Physical acts	19.27
Perpetrator feels sorry or regretful	18.75
Religious act	18.23
Talking things out	18.23
Done to preserve the relationship	17.71
Letting it go	16.67
An act of kindness	15.63
Not holding a grudge	15.63
Letting go of anger	15.63
Having peace of mind	15.63
Perpetrator says they're sorry	15.10
Still think about the incident	13.54
Sadness	13.02
Understanding that everyone makes mistake	13.02
Not worrying that the event will happen again	12.50
Telling the person it's okay what they did	11.98
Crying	11.46
Still lack of trust	10.94
Caring	10.94
Finding a solution to a problem	9.90
Giving in	9.90
Not wanting or seeking revenge	9.90
Difficult to do	9.38
Being angry	9.38
Having sympathy for the perpetrator	9.38
Giving someone a second chance	9.38
Open-minded	9.38
Freeing another person from blame	8.85

Table 2, continued

Forgiveness feature	% of participants
Perpetrator admits they're wrong	8.85
Accepting someone's apology	8.85
Hurt/pain	8.85
Makes you feel good afterward	8.33
Learning from mistakes	8.33
Takes time	7.81
Starting over	7.81
Happens between friends	7.81
Maturity	7.81
A sign of weakness	7.81
Nice	7.81
Being the bigger person	7.29
Making amends	6.77
Thinking about the situation	6.77
A positive characteristic to have	6.77
Truthful	6.77
Emotional	6.25
Sincerity	6.25
Makes you feel good about yourself	6.25
Everything continues as normal	5.73
Perpetrator does not feel guilty anymore	5.73
Questioning if you made the right decision	5.73
Fear	5.21
Generosity/not being selfish	5.21
Happens among family members	4.69
Giving the person permission to do it again	4.69
Focusing on the good instead of the bad	4.69
Something you're supposed to do	4.69
Compassion	4.17
Something you ask for	3.65
Buying the other person things	3.65
Thinking about the future	3.65
Doing the right thing	3.65
End to fighting	3.65
Still holding a grudge	3.65
Respect	3.13
Saying "I forgive you"	3.13
Confusion	3.13
Compromising	3.13
Pretending the incident didn't happen	3.13

Table 2, continued

Note: Data from Kearns and Fincham (Study 1, 2004). Attribute categories generated in both groups are listed in bold. Forgiveness features in Tables 1 and 2 were generated by different samples, and therefore are not the same list of features.

Table 3

Comparison of forgiveness feature frequencies in Japanese and Kearns & Fincham

(2004, Study 1) American samples

Forgiveness feature	Sample		χ^2
	Japanese (N = 123)	Kearns & Fincham (2004, Study 1; N = 208)	
To have an open heart/broad mind	52.85	9.38	75.69***
Being accepting	34.96	19.79	14.72***
Kindness	21.95	15.63	1.93
To compromise	14.63	3.13	14.06***
Letting go of anger	13.82	15.63	0.25
Being understanding	11.38	29.17	14.20***
Empathy	5.69	20.31	12.89***
To reconcile	4.88	21.35	15.97***
Maturity	4.07	7.81	1.71
Being superior to perpetrator	3.25	7.29	2.24
Give in	2.44	9.90	6.74**
Respect	2.44	3.13	0.23
Accept someone's apology	2.44	8.85	5.02*
An act of love	2.44	27.60	32.46***
Focusing on the good instead of the bad	2.44	4.69	1.15
A sign of weakness	2.44	7.81	3.94*
Done to preserve the relationship	2.44	17.71	17.14***
A positive characteristic to have	1.63	6.77	4.38*

Note: * $p \leq .05$; ** $p \leq .01$; *** $p \leq .001$. Japanese data in this table taken from Study 1 in this paper; American data taken from Kearns and Fincham (Study 1, 2004).

CHAPTER 4: STUDY 2

Study 2: Centrality Ratings

Overview

The purpose of Study 2 was to examine the centrality of the forgiveness attributes participants generated in Study 1 to determine which features were more prototypical of forgiveness than others. When determining whether an attribute is typical of a concept, it is not sufficient to merely rate the attribute as being representative of that concept. Instead, the extent to which an attribute is central or peripheral to the concept of interest is more important. It is hypothesized that some attributes will be rated as more central to forgiveness than others. In their predominantly Western sample, Kearns and Fincham (2004) found that some of the most central features of forgiveness were *truthful*, *sincerity*, *open-minded*, and *caring*. These features demonstrate the Western focus on personality traits and individual characteristics. In contrast, because members of collectivistic cultures place relatively greater value on group harmony, Japanese participants may instead rate features related to group harmony and cooperation as most central.

Method

Participants

Participants were 154 students from Tohoku University in Sendai, Japan who were recruited from introductory psychology classes. The average age of participants was 19.2 (SD = 1.15) years, and was 44.2% male. Five participants reported living in a Western culture, but none for more than twelve weeks. Therefore, all Japanese participants were included in the study.

Procedure

Following Kearns and Fincham (2004, Study 2), participants were given the following set of instructions:

In a previous study, we asked different groups to tell us their views of forgiveness. Specifically, we asked them to “list the characteristics or attributes of forgiveness that come to mind.” Below are the responses of some of the people in our earlier study. Please read each of the descriptions of forgiveness below. After you have read each one, please rate how central or important you think each feature is to the concept of forgiveness. Remember, there are no right or wrong answers.

Participants were instructed to rate the extent to which each of the 52 attributes generated from Study 1 characterizes forgiveness. Items were rated on a scale ranging from 1 (*extremely poor feature of forgiveness*) to 8 (*extremely good feature of forgiveness*). These instructions were translated and back translated to ensure linguistic equivalence. To reduce order effects, half of the participants received the items in reverse order. After finishing this task, participants completed demographic items and were debriefed by the experimenter.

Results

Centrality ratings are presented in Tables 4 and 5. The five features rated as most central to the concept of forgiveness in the Japanese sample were: *to be tolerant* (7.50), *high quality/high caliber person* (7.14), *charitable* (7.08), *to have an open heart/broad mind* (6.96), and *being accepting* (6.95). In contrast, the five features rated as most central in the Kearns and Fincham (2004, Study 2) American sample were: *truthful* (7.36), *sincerity* (7.15), *open-minded* (7.09), *caring* (7.07), and *learning from mistakes* (6.85).

Forgiveness features rated as least central to the concept of forgiveness in the Japanese sample were: *indifference* (3.64), *moral ambiguity* (3.42), *to pamper/spoil* (3.03), *being superior to the perpetrator* (2.26), and *a sign of weakness* (2.12). In contrast, the features rated as least central in the Kearns and Fincham (2004) American sample were: *still lack of trust* (3.34), *giving in* (3.27), *pretending the incident didn't happen* (2.85), *giving the person permission to do it again* (2.70), and *still holding a grudge* (2.64).

I also examined the relationship between frequency and centrality for the forgiveness features. In the Japanese sample, frequencies from Study 1 and centrality ratings from Study 2 were significantly positively correlated, $r(52) = .40, p = .003$. This suggests that the most frequently generated features were also rated as most central. In contrast, this correlation was not significant in the Kearns and Fincham (2004) American sample, $r(78) = .17, p > .10$. Thus, no relationship exists between frequency and centrality for the American sample.

Discussion

In the Japanese sample, features related to interpersonal harmony and benevolence were rated as more central than personality traits. Features such as *to be tolerant*, *high caliber*, *charitable*, *to have an open heart/broad mind*, and *being accepting* were rated as the most central forgiveness features. In the Kearns and Fincham (2004) American sample, personality traits such as *truthful* and *sincerity* were rated as most central. Although Japanese and American participants rated different sets of items, it is worth mentioning that *to have an open heart/broad mind* was the only feature shared in the top ten most central features. The Japanese

emphasis on interpersonal harmony and benevolence coupled with the American emphasis on personality traits provides further evidence that there appears to be different cultural understandings of forgiveness.

Table 4

Japanese sample forgiveness feature centrality ratings (Study 2; N = 154)

Forgiveness feature	Mean (SD)
To be tolerant	7.50 (1.17)
High quality or high caliber	7.14 (1.10)
Charitable	7.08 (1.29)
To have an open heart/broad mind	6.96 (1.13)
Being accepting	6.95 (1.21)
Wide range of tolerance	6.50 (1.28)
Have space in the heart	6.50 (1.18)
All-encompassing	6.38 (1.50)
Listening	6.37 (1.48)
Respond flexibly	6.34 (1.50)
Cooperate	6.32 (1.28)
Respect	6.16 (1.52)
Being understanding	6.16 (1.46)
Maturity	5.88 (1.49)
Appeal more to adults than children	5.87 (1.78)
Mercy	5.79 (1.63)
A positive characteristic to have	5.78 (1.59)
An act of love	5.73 (1.81)
Empathy	5.71 (1.59)
Kindness	5.66 (1.88)
A broad world view	5.64 (2.08)
Calm	5.62 (1.46)
Accept someone's apology	5.48 (1.62)
Close to godliness	5.45 (2.00)
Control one's emotions	5.43 (1.70)
Overlook the incident	5.43 (1.60)
Accept own flaws	5.42 (1.76)
Done to preserve the relationship	5.34 (1.75)
Focusing on the good instead of the bad	5.16 (1.73)
To reconcile	5.06 (1.62)
Give a good impression	5.03 (2.06)
Do not fuss over small matters	5.02 (1.64)
Not pushy	4.89 (1.85)
Overlook small mistakes	4.74 (1.80)
Able to live in harmony	4.62 (1.73)
Blame no one	4.59 (1.74)
Give in	4.57 (1.92)
Letting go of anger	4.56 (1.53)
Trust	4.51 (1.73)
Patience	4.46 (1.72)

Table 4, continued

Forgiveness feature	Mean (SD)
Back down from argument	4.39 (1.86)
Not caught up in matters	4.33 (1.87)
Not strict	4.22 (1.75)
Not being indifferent	4.20 (1.80)
To compromise	4.12 (1.76)
Evoked when victim feels calm	4.06 (1.89)
Do not hold back	3.75 (1.59)
Indifference	3.64 (1.90)
Moral ambiguity	3.42 (1.76)
To pamper/spoil	3.03 (1.68)
Being superior to perpetrator	2.26 (1.54)
A sign of weakness	2.12 (1.41)

Note: Attribute categories generated in both groups are listed in bold.

Table 5

Kearns & Fincham (2004, Study 2) American sample forgiveness feature centrality ratings (N = 137)

Forgiveness feature	Mean (SD)
Truthful	7.36 (0.96)
Sincerity	7.15 (1.16)
To have an open heart/broad mind	7.09 (1.07)
Caring	7.07 (1.00)
Learning from mistakes	6.85 (1.15)
Giving someone a second chance	6.82 (1.17)
Doing the right thing	6.79 (1.21)
Finding a solution to a problem	6.78 (1.22)
Accepting someone's apology	6.77 (1.08)
An act of love	6.77 (1.07)
Understanding that everyone makes mistake	6.72 (1.22)
Makes you feel good afterward	6.70 (1.30)
Maturity	6.66 (1.42)
Making amends	6.64 (1.44)
Respect	6.63 (1.19)
A positive characteristic to have	6.62 (1.30)
Reconciling	6.62 (1.09)
Empathy	6.59 (1.33)
An act of kindness	6.57 (1.31)
Makes you feel good about yourself	6.53 (1.54)
Talking things out	6.52 (1.40)
Perpetrator feels sorry or regretful	6.44 (1.32)
Generosity/not being selfish	6.42 (1.19)
Understanding	6.42 (1.08)
Not holding a grudge	6.40 (1.44)
Perpetrator admits they're wrong	6.38 (1.55)
Acceptance	6.38 (1.09)
Feeling happy/joyful	6.37 (1.31)
End to fighting	6.35 (1.51)
Having peace of mind	6.30 (1.32)
Thinking about the situation	6.30 (1.26)
Nice	6.26 (1.39)
Compromising	6.26 (1.30)
Relief	6.25 (1.43)
Focusing on the good instead of the bad	6.20 (1.60)
Thinking about the future	6.20 (1.35)
Not wanting or seeking revenge	6.19 (1.69)
Moving on	6.14 (1.32)

Table 5, continued

Note: Data taken from Kearns and Fincham (Study 2, 2004). Attribute categories generated in both groups are listed in bold.

CHAPTER 5: STUDY 3

Study 3: Comparison of Forgiveness Structures

Overview

The purpose of Study 3 was to examine the factor structure of forgiveness in Japanese and American participants. I hypothesized that the structure of forgiveness attributes should be significantly different between the two cultures. In particular, I expected factors representing adjustment, dialectical thinking, and face to emerge in the Japanese sample, and factors representing influence and personality characteristics to emerge in the American sample.

Method

Participants

Participants were 191 students from Tohoku University in Sendai, Japan and 181 students from Iowa State University in the United States. One Japanese student reported living in the United States for more than six months. Because I was concerned with possible acculturation effects from living in a Western culture, this participant was eliminated from all analyses, leaving a sample of 190 Japanese participants. Participants from both countries were recruited from introductory psychology classes. Iowa State participants received partial course credit for their participation. The average age in both samples was 19.7 years ($SD_{\text{Japan}} = 1.15$; $SD_{\text{US}} = 2.41$). The Japanese sample was 51.3% male, and the American sample was 47.1% male.

Procedure

Participants completed the same centrality-rating task used in Study 2. All participants received the 78 forgiveness attributes used in Kearns and Fincham (2004, Study 2), plus the 52 forgiveness attributes generated from this research (Study 1). The instructions and forgiveness attributes were translated and back translated to ensure linguistic equivalence. Eighteen forgiveness features were generated in both the Japanese and American sample, leaving 112 possible features. Due to time concerns, we reduced the total number of items by omitting features with a centrality rating of 4.0 or less, resulting in the omission of 14 items (4 Japanese, 8 American, and 2 shared, Japanese and American), leaving a total of 98 forgiveness attributes.

Results

Centrality ratings

Centrality ratings for both cultures are presented in Table 6; for ease of comparison, rankings by culture are presented in Table 7. The five features rated as most central to the concept of forgiveness in the Japanese sample were: *charitable* (6.64), *acceptance* (6.63), *high caliber quality* (6.54), *to have an open heart/broad mind* (6.45), and *compassion* (6.38). In contrast, the five features rated as most central in the American sample were: *understanding* (6.85), *doing the right thing* (6.84), *respect* (6.77), *accepting someone's apology* (6.72), and *sincerity* (6.68). Interestingly, 9 of 10 most central features on the Japanese list were generated by Japanese participants (or in both Japanese and American samples), whereas 8 of 10 most central features on the American list were generated by American participants or both samples.

Forgiveness features rated as least central to the concept of forgiveness in the Japanese sample were: *not worrying that the event will happen again* (3.35), *religious act* (3.00), *crying* (2.84), *being the bigger person* (2.75), and *perpetrator does not feel guilty anymore* (2.41). In contrast, the features rated as least central in the American sample were: *sadness* (3.97), *questioning if you made the right decision* (3.93), *still think about the incident* (3.80), *crying* (3.75), and *buying the other person things* (2.69). It is interesting to note that the least central items on the Japanese list were generated by American participants (see bottom of Table 6). In fact, 18 of 20 least central features on the Japanese list were generated by American participants; the remaining 2 items were generated in both cultures. In contrast, seven of 10 least central features on the American list were generated by American participants; the remaining 3 items were generated by Japanese participants.

I also examined the relationship between the Japanese and American centrality ratings. The centrality ratings were moderately positively correlated, $r(98) = .37, p < .001$. Thus, there was a moderate degree of agreement among the Japanese and American participants in the centrality of the forgiveness features.

Summary. Although Japanese and American participants rated the same set of forgiveness features, there was no overlap in the five most central features between the two cultures. Japanese participants rated features associated with being flexible, such as *acceptance and to have an open heart /broad mind*, and features associated with benevolence, such as *charitable* and *compassion*, as most central to forgiveness. In contrast, American participants rated personality traits

such as *understanding* and *sincerity*, and actions such as *doing the right thing* and *accepting someone's apology* as most central to forgiveness. Furthermore, *crying* was the only feature that Japanese and American participants shared in the five least central features. It is notable that 80% of the least central features in the American sample can be construed as negatively-valenced or related to rumination (*sadness, questioning if you made the right decision, still think about the incident, and crying*). This suggests that Americans may view forgiveness in a relatively positive light. Indeed, Kearns and Fincham (2004) found that centrality ratings were significantly positively related to positivity ratings – that is, the more central the feature, the more positively it was rated.

Exploratory Factor Analysis

In order to examine the simple structure of forgiveness for the two cultures, I conducted separate exploratory factor analyses (EFA). Given cultural differences in previous research, I hypothesized that the analyses would reveal adjustment, dialectical thinking, and face factors in the Japanese sample, and influence and personal trait factors in the American sample.

Japanese sample. As recommended by Fabrigar, Wegener, MacCallum, & Stahan (1999), I first examined all variables for normality. All absolute skew values were less than 2, and all kurtosis values were less than 7. Thus, use of exploratory factor analysis in this sample is permitted. A maximum likelihood factor analysis was conducted to determine the factor structure for the 98 forgiveness features. A parallel analysis suggested a 5-factor structure; thus, the number of factors to extract was fixed at 5. Because all features were derived from describing

forgiveness, an oblique rotation was used to allow the factors to correlate. Table 8 shows variance explained before and after rotation for both cultures. The factor loadings for a 5-factor model resulting from a Promax rotation are shown in Table 9. The first 10 eigenvalues were 21.09, 8.72, 3.89, 3.55, 3.12, 2.45, 2.35, 2.23, 2.11, and 2.03. This factor structure accounted for 38.1% of the total variance.

Forgiveness features in the Japanese sample yielded five factors that were labeled *Positive and negative consequences of forgiveness*, *Adjustment/harmony*, *Process of forgiveness*, *Face*, and *Reflection*. Table 10 displays the correlation between these factors. It is interesting to note that the first factor in the Japanese sample is comprised of both positive and negative features. Given the cultural differences identified in the dialectical thinking literature (i.e., Nisbett, Peng, Choi, & Norenzayan, 2001), this is not surprising. As expected, a factor relating to adjustment emerged in the Japanese sample. The emergence of this factor underscores the importance of interpersonal harmony and adjustment in members of Eastern cultures (Morling, Kitayama, & Miyamoto, 2002). It is noteworthy that a similar factor did not emerge in the American sample. Furthermore, a factor relating to face emerged in the Japanese sample, but not in the American sample.

American sample. All EFA procedures were identical to the ones used in the Japanese sample. All absolute skew values were less than 2, and all kurtosis values were less than 7. Thus, use of exploratory factor analysis in this sample is permitted. A maximum likelihood factor analysis was conducted to determine the factor structure for the 98 forgiveness features. A parallel analysis suggested a 6-factor structure; thus, the number of factors to extract was fixed at 6. Because all

features were derived from describing forgiveness, an oblique rotation was used to allow the factors to correlate. The first 10 eigenvalues were 23.75, 5.50, 4.01, 3.09, 2.73, 2.62, 2.30, 2.22, 2.01, and 1.90. Table 11 shows the factor loadings for a 6-factor model resulting from a Promax rotation. This factor structure accounted for 38.8% of the total variance.

Forgiveness features in the American sample yielded six factors that were labeled *Ideal actions of forgivers*, *Forgiver moving on*, *Personality traits*, *Ongoing process of forgiveness*, *Love/compassion*, and *Miscellaneous*, and Table 12 displays the correlations between these factors. Factors representing forgiveness from the perspective of the forgiver emerged as the first two factors. As expected, a factor relating to personality characteristics and interpersonal qualities emerged in the American sample. It is noteworthy that a similar factor did not emerge in the Japanese sample. In addition, a factor relating to love emerged in the American sample, which underscores the importance of love for forgiveness. Interestingly, the sixth factor in the analysis was uninterpretable, and was labeled *Miscellaneous*. The features loading highest on this factor appear to have nothing in common, except that 3 out of 4 were rated as least central in the American sample (*questioning if you made the right decision*, *sadness*, and *buying the other person things*).

Similarity of Factors

Bivariate correlations between the five Japanese and six American factors are presented in Table 13. Due to the number of significant correlations, I will discuss several that appear to have the most implications.

First, there was a significant negative correlation between American Factors 1 (*Ideal actions of forgivers*) and 2 (*Forgiver moving on*), $r = -.37, p < .001$. Although both factors describe forgiveness from the forgiver's point of view, the relationship is negative. This suggests that moving on is not an ideal action when forgiving another; this is logical, because moving on suggests adjustment more than action. Perhaps offenses must be completely reconciled and dealt with before forgiveness can be granted. Along a similar vein, there was a significant negative correlation between American Factor 1 (*Ideal actions of forgivers*) and Japanese Factor 2 (*Adjustment/harmony*), $r = -.22, p < .05$. This seems to support the previous correlation in that ideal actions of forgivers are not related to adjustment. Furthermore, there was a significant positive correlation between American Factor 2 (*Forgiver moving on*) and Japanese Factor 2 (*Adjustment/harmony*), $r = .36, p < .001$. Taken together, it appears that American ideal actions for forgiveness are dissimilar to the American notion of moving on, and moving on is similar to Japanese notions of adjustment/harmony.

Three additional correlations deserve explication. There was a significant negative correlation between American Factor 4 (*Ongoing process of forgiveness*) and Japanese Factor 3 (*Process of forgiveness*), $r = -.22, p < .05$. This suggests that the forgiveness processes described in each culture are different from one another. There was also a significant negative correlation between American Factor 5 (*Love/compassion*) and Japanese Factor 1 (*Positive and negative consequences of forgiveness*), $r = -.28, p < .01$. This suggests that love may not be a central to consequences of forgiveness in the Japanese. Finally, there was a significant

positive correlation between American Factor 4 (*Ongoing process of forgiveness*) and Japanese Factor 4 (*Face*), $r = .38$, $p < .001$. This suggests that the process of forgiveness described by the American sample is similar to the factor representing face in the Japanese sample.

Table 6

Forgiveness feature centrality ratings for Japanese and American samples (Study 3)

	Sample			
	Japanese (N = 190)		American (N = 181)	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
<i>Charitable</i>	6.64	1.64	5.11	1.78
Acceptance	6.63	1.45	6.37	1.36
<i>High caliber quality</i>	6.54	1.53	5.15	1.67
To have an open heart/broad mind	6.46	1.63	6.39	1.31
Compassion	6.38	1.47	6.38	1.29
<i>To be tolerant</i>	6.37	1.95	6.38	1.42
<i>Have space in the heart</i>	6.34	1.32	5.89	1.49
<i>Wide range of tolerance</i>	6.13	1.53	5.65	1.67
An act of love	6.08	1.73	6.13	1.59
<i>Control one's emotions</i>	6.08	1.50	5.84	1.58
<i>Overlook the incident</i>	6.07	1.70	4.38	1.87
Caring	5.98	1.58	6.28	1.36
Generosity/not being selfish	5.97	1.77	5.97	1.58
<i>Listening</i>	5.95	1.61	6.57	1.38
<i>All-encompassing</i>	5.92	1.58	5.30	1.56
An act of kindness	5.91	1.62	6.19	1.39
Respect	5.89	1.62	6.77	1.25
<i>Appeals more to adults than children</i>	5.84	1.90	4.61	1.91
Nice	5.83	1.66	5.99	1.44
<i>Mercy</i>	5.82	1.80	5.87	1.51
Understanding	5.81	1.70	6.85	1.17
<i>Respond flexibly</i>	5.78	1.76	5.75	1.41
Focusing on the good instead of the bad	5.73	1.76	6.02	1.57
<i>Blame no one</i>	5.68	1.82	5.07	1.78
Accepting someone's apology	5.62	1.78	6.72	1.27
<i>Cooperate</i>	5.61	1.80	6.10	1.32
<i>A broad world view</i>	5.59	1.82	5.40	1.66
A positive characteristic to have	5.56	1.67	6.47	1.45
Understanding that everyone makes mistakes	5.56	1.78	6.66	1.31
Empathy	5.53	1.78	6.14	1.41
<i>Trust</i>	5.51	1.75	6.59	1.24

Table 6, continued

	Sample			
	Japanese (N = 190)		American (N = 181)	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Giving someone a second chance	5.49	1.89	6.55	1.25
Having peace of mind	5.47	1.82	6.29	1.35
<i>Gives a good impression</i>	5.43	1.75	5.53	1.67
Maturity	5.42	1.78	6.43	1.43
<i>Close to Godliness</i>	5.37	2.01	4.66	2.13
Saying "I forgive you"	5.35	1.73	6.31	1.55
Done to preserve the relationship	5.31	1.73	5.97	1.63
<i>Patience</i>	5.29	1.72	6.23	1.23
Something you ask for	5.21	1.70	5.36	1.69
<i>Calm</i>	5.21	1.81	6.23	1.32
<i>Do not fuss over small matters</i>	5.14	1.86	5.79	1.64
<i>Overlook small mistakes</i>	5.14	1.80	5.60	1.59
End to fighting	5.11	1.81	5.66	1.70
Reconciling	5.08	1.85	6.40	1.23
Not holding a grudge	5.03	1.78	6.26	1.51
<i>Not pushy</i>	5.01	1.67	5.18	1.56
Letting it go	4.96	2.10	5.69	1.70
Not wanting or seeking revenge	4.93	2.02	6.28	1.59
Freeing another person from blame	4.87	1.97	4.89	1.77
<i>Able to live in harmony</i>	4.85	1.78	5.98	1.49
Moving on	4.84	2.05	6.34	1.58
<i>Accept own flaws</i>	4.81	1.96	6.32	1.42
<i>Not caught up in matters</i>	4.77	1.72	5.38	1.42
Makes you feel good about yourself	4.70	1.74	5.97	1.48
Learning from mistakes	4.68	1.90	6.64	1.32
<i>Back down from argument</i>	4.68	1.76	4.36	1.75
<i>Not being indifferent</i>	4.66	1.62	5.20	1.53
Happens between friends	4.64	1.77	5.84	1.59
Sincerity	4.57	1.71	6.68	1.24
Compromising	4.48	1.99	6.09	1.33
<i>Not strict</i>	4.48	1.91	4.69	1.69
Makes you feel good afterward	4.39	1.93	6.25	1.40

Table 6, continued

	Sample			
	Japanese (N = 190)		American (N = 181)	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Telling the person it is okay what they did	4.35	1.93	4.21	2.08
Happens among family members	4.34	1.83	5.90	1.73
Starting over	4.31	1.82	5.70	1.46
Thinking about the situation	4.22	1.71	5.56	1.64
Having sympathy for the perpetrator	4.22	1.83	5.64	1.63
Feeling happy/joyful	4.18	1.76	5.78	1.55
Perpetrator admits they are wrong	4.13	2.05	6.18	1.60
Finding a solution to a problem	4.08	1.86	6.36	1.47
Takes time	4.08	1.83	5.75	1.62
Difficult to do	4.08	1.78	4.86	1.90
Doing the right thing	4.07	1.71	6.84	1.10
Truthful	4.04	1.78	6.61	1.39
Something you are supposed to do	3.98	1.91	5.12	1.86
Talking things out	3.97	1.86	6.49	1.39
Letting go of anger	3.92	1.80	6.35	1.47
Relief	3.77	1.91	5.73	1.43
Making amends	3.76	1.79	6.55	1.28
Still think about the incident	3.74	1.83	3.80	1.82
Buying the other person things	3.73	1.89	2.69	1.67
Physical acts	3.71	1.69	4.07	1.75
Perpetrator feels sorry or regretful	3.68	2.11	5.96	1.61
Perpetrator says they are sorry	3.64	1.89	6.30	1.45
Forgetting the incident	3.63	1.81	4.73	2.02
Emotional	3.56	1.84	5.24	1.60
Questioning if you made the right decision	3.55	1.73	3.93	1.64
Everything continues as normal	3.49	1.93	4.90	1.81
Sadness	3.46	1.93	3.97	1.64
Thinking about the future	3.43	1.91	5.89	1.46

Table 6, continued

	Sample			
	Japanese (N = 190)		American (N = 181)	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Not worrying that the event will happen again	3.35	1.76	5.41	1.87
Religious act	3.00	1.70	4.72	2.14
Crying	2.84	1.83	3.75	1.86
Being the bigger person	2.75	1.81	6.34	1.71
Perpetrator does not feel guilty anymore	2.41	1.61	4.62	1.97

Note: Attribute categories generated in Japanese sample are listed in italics, in American sample are listed in regular typeset; in both groups are listed in bold. in regular typeset; in both groups are listed in bold.

Table 7

Centrality rankings of forgiveness features by culture

	Culture	
	Japan	US
<i>Charitable</i>	1	77
Acceptance	2	20
<i>High caliber quality</i>	3	75
To have an open heart/broad mind	4	17
Compassion	5	18
<i>To be tolerant</i>	6	18
<i>Have space in the heart</i>	7	49
<i>Wide range of tolerance</i>	8	62
An act of love	9	38
<i>Control one's emotions</i>	9	52
<i>Overlook the incident</i>	11	90
Caring	12	29
Generosity/not being selfish	13	44
<i>Listening</i>	14	10
<i>All-encompassing</i>	15	71
An act of kindness	16	35
Respect	17	3
<i>Appeals more to adults than children</i>	18	87
Nice	19	42
<i>Mercy</i>	20	51
Understanding	21	1
<i>Respond flexibly</i>	22	56
Focusing on the good instead of the bad	23	41
<i>Blame no one</i>	24	78
Accepting someone's apology	25	4
<i>Cooperate</i>	26	39
<i>A broad world view</i>	27	68
A positive characteristic to have	28	14
Understanding that everyone makes mistakes	28	6
Empathy	30	37
<i>Trust</i>	31	9
Giving someone a second chance	32	11
Having peace of mind	33	28
<i>Gives a good impression</i>	34	66
Maturity	35	15
<i>Close to Godliness</i>	36	85
Saying "I forgive you"	37	26
Done to preserve the relationship	38	44
<i>Patience</i>	39	33

Table 7, continued

	Culture	
	Japan	US
<i>Calm</i>	40	33
Something you ask for	40	70
<i>Do not fuss over small matters</i>	42	54
<i>Overlook small mistakes</i>	43	64
End to fighting	44	61
Reconciling	45	16
Not holding a grudge	46	31
<i>Not pushy</i>	47	74
Letting it go	48	60
Not wanting or seeking revenge	49	29
Freeing another person from blame	50	80
<i>Able to live in harmony</i>	51	43
Moving on	52	23
<i>Accept own flaws</i>	53	25
<i>Not caught up in matters</i>	54	69
Makes you feel good about yourself	55	44
<i>Back down from argument</i>	56	91
Learning from mistakes	56	7
<i>Not being indifferent</i>	58	73
Happens between friends	59	52
Sincerity	60	5
Compromising	61	40
<i>Not strict</i>	61	84
Makes you feel good afterward	63	32
<i>Evoked when a victim is calm</i>	64	89
Telling the person it is okay what they did	65	92
Happens among family members	66	48
Starting over	67	59
Having sympathy for the perpetrator	68	63
Thinking about the situation	68	65
Feeling happy/joyful	70	55
Perpetrator admits they are wrong	71	36
Difficult to do	72	81
Finding a solution to a problem	72	21
Takes time	72	56
Doing the right thing	75	2
Truthful	76	8
Something you are supposed to do	77	76
Talking things out	78	13
Letting go of anger	79	22
Relief	80	58

Table 7, continued

	Culture	
	Japan	US
Making amends	81	11
Still think about the incident	82	96
Buying the other person things	83	98
Physical acts	84	93
Perpetrator feels sorry or regretful	85	47
Perpetrator says they are sorry	86	27
Forgetting the incident	87	82
Emotional	88	72
Questioning if you made the right decision	89	95
Everything continues as normal	90	79
Sadness	91	94
Thinking about the future	92	49
Consequence of a wrong doing	93	88
Not worrying that the event will happen again	94	67
Religious act	95	83
Crying	96	97
Being the bigger person	97	23
Perpetrator does not feel guilty anymore	98	86

Note: Attribute categories generated in Japanese sample are listed in italics, in American sample are listed in regular typeset; in both groups are listed in bold.

Table 8

Variance explained before and after rotation: Japanese and American samples

Sample	Rotation	Factor						Total
		1	2	3	4	5	6	
Japanese	Before	20.89%	8.32%	3.28%	3.07%	2.54%	--	38.10%
	After	13.40%	13.04%	12.72%	6.21%	8.27%	--	38.10%
American	Before	23.59%	4.97%	3.44%	2.51%	2.18%	2.14%	38.83%
	After	14.85%	14.47%	13.81%	13.06%	13.53%	5.07%	38.83%

Table 9

Pattern matrix (Maximum likelihood, Promax oblique rotation) for Japanese centrality ratings of forgiveness features (Study 3; N = 190)

Feature	Factor 1: Positive and negative consequences of forgiveness	Factor 2: Adjustment/ harmony	Factor 3: Process of forgiveness	Factor 4: Face	Factor 5: Reflection
Not worrying the event will happen again	.654	-.069	.010	.406	-.012
Perpetrator says they are sorry	.646	.004	.016	-.085	-.022
Crying	.646	.053	-.156	.122	.014
Making amends	.644	-.060	.033	.288	.000
Sadness	.642	-.021	-.020	-.044	.213
Questioning if you made the right decision	.601	.015	-.139	-.109	.162
Perpetrator admits they are wrong	.598	.178	.089	-.185	.052
Thinking about the future	.596	-.120	.038	.337	.094
Being the bigger person	.576	-.084	-.212	.129	-.044
Still think about the incident	.568	-.075	.263	-.169	-.017
Perpetrator feels sorry or regretful	.553	-.038	-.005	-.136	-.141
Doing the right thing	.536	-.066	.415	.063	-.064
Physical acts	.517	-.056	.161	.087	.098
Relief	.514	.093	.077	-.218	.121
Starting over	.484	.311	.012	-.150	.133
Something you are supposed to do	.471	-.230	.182	.356	.056
Talking things out	.468	-.035	.399	-.197	-.064
Truthful	.466	.029	.287	.020	.012
Having sympathy for the perpetrator	.465	.235	-.033	.138	-.067

Table 9, continued

Feature	Factor 1: Positive and negative consequences of forgiveness	Factor 2: Adjustment/ Harmony	Factor 3: Process of forgiveness	Factor 4: Face	Factor 5: Reflection
Forgetting the incident	.463	.339	-.046	.117	-.080
Perpetrator does not feel guilty anymore	.455	-.074	-.175	.100	.217
Religious act	.435	.236	-.093	.001	-.037
<i>Back down from argument</i>	.397	.360	.048	.195	-.141
Emotional	.367	-.225	.186	.011	.211
Sincerity	.360	.008	.285	.080	.248
Feeling happy/joyful	.365	-.140	.300	.061	.260
Consequences of a wrong doing	.354	.206	.002	-.109	-.099
Learning from mistakes	.336	.103	.218	-.209	.295
<i>Evoked when a victim is calm</i>	.333	.167	-.120	.276	.084
Moving on	.284	.124	.245	-.147	.014
<i>Overlook the incident</i>	-.153	.696	.099	-.014	-.109
Letting it go	.151	.683	-.116	.064	.078
<i>Blame no one</i>	-.077	.620	.056	-.028	-.050
<i>Patience</i>	.172	.620	.081	-.086	-.292
Telling the other person it's okay what they did	.235	.597	-.275	.246	-.097
<i>Overlook small mistakes</i>	.065	.589	-.102	.163	-.062
Giving someone a second chance	.218	.578	.090	-.147	0.78
Accepting someone's apology	.015	.573	.041	-.037	0.38
Saying "I forgive you"	.145	.561	.016	.248	-.025
<i>Do not fuss over small matters</i>	-.060	.522	-.024	.214	0.57
Everything continues as normal	.452	.509	-.171	.033	-.044
Letting go of anger	.235	.485	-.021	.266	-.083
Have an open heart/broad mind	-.332	.472	.252	.324	-.049

Table 9, continued

Feature	Factor 1: Positive and negative consequences of forgiveness	Factor 2: Adjustment/ harmony	Factor 3: Process of forgiveness	Factor 4: Face	Factor 5: Reflection
Compromising	.204	.467	-.353	.102	.060
Acceptance	-.347	.460	.252	-.049	.172
Not holding a grudge	.091	.453	-.047	.160	.209
Freeing another person from blame	.254	.421	.012	-.060	.116
<i>Close to Godliness</i>	-.103	.421	.076	.169	.238
Having peace of mind	.135	.404	.152	-.139	.222
<i>High caliber quality</i>	-.332	.388	.322	.044	.092
<i>Appeals more to adults than children</i>	-.208	.378	-.249	.349	.233
<i>Wide range of tolerance</i>	-.198	.377	.118	.165	-.148
<i>Control one's emotions</i>	-.027	.356	.162	-.221	.119
<i>Have space in the heart</i>	-.235	.330	.177	.205	.246
Understanding that everyone makes mistakes	.099	.318	-.180	.090	.264
<i>Mercy</i>	.076	.296	.292	.082	.120
Not wanting or seeking revenge	.164	.293	.094	.076	.183
<i>All-encompassing</i>	-.003	.250	.178	.034	.239
An act of love	-.003	.171	.605	.056	.122
Buying the other person things	.466	-.182	.523	.256	-.306
<i>Trust</i>	.295	.055	.514	-.024	.101
Reconciling	.250	.203	.496	-.033	-.029
Compassion	-.198	-.025	.495	.254	.364
An act of kindness	-.138	.231	.467	.272	.112
<i>To be tolerant</i>	-.023	-.079	.458	.032	-.107
Empathy	.165	-.064	.452	.135	-.112
<i>Able to live in harmony</i>	.176	.002	.449	.168	-.015

Table 9, continued

Feature	Factor 1: Positive and negative consequences of forgiveness	Factor 2: Adjustment/ harmony	Factor 3: Process of forgiveness	Factor 4: Face	Factor 5: Reflection
<i>Cooperate</i>	.010	.062	.443	.391	-.060
Caring	.156	.318	.418	.028	.007
Respect	-.013	.008	.402	.348	.144
Understanding	-.229	-.052	.402	-.050	.084
<i>Listening</i>	.081	.072	.394	-.029	.059
End to fighting	.178	.335	.385	-.013	-.139
Generosity/not being selfish	-.177	.332	.359	.299	-.259
Finding a solution to a problem	.315	-.309	.357	.324	.146
<i>Not being indifferent</i>	.289	-.151	.340	-.056	.325
Happens among family members	.226	.049	.306	.151	.023
<i>Respond flexibly</i>	-.142	.172	.296	.025	.250
<i>Gives a good impression</i>	-.112	.091	.189	.562	.138
Nice	-.061	.225	.392	.517	-.086
Done to preserve the relationship	.036	.154	.233	.483	-.082
A positive characteristic to have	-.088	.208	.017	.476	.201
Makes you feel good afterward	.324	.075	.063	.347	.080
<i>Not strict</i>	.228	.143	-.107	.301	.008
Difficult to do	.208	.041	-.224	.102	.555
Something you ask for	-.037	.152	-.254	.293	.487
<i>A broad world view</i>	-.165	-.064	.171	.226	.469
Takes time	.222	-.115	-.031	.135	.439
Thinking about the situation	.410	-.165	-.097	.189	.417
<i>Calm</i>	.090	.208	.098	-.124	.410
<i>Not pushy</i>	.003	.192	.075	-.064	.391
Makes you feel good about yourself	.195	.025	-.024	.322	.387
<i>Accept own flaws</i>	.247	-.050	.213	-.001	.343

Table 9, continued

Feature	Factor 1: Positive and negative consequences of forgiveness	Factor 2: Adjustment/ harmony	Factor 3: Process of forgiveness	Factor 4: Face	Factor 5: Reflection
Focusing on the good instead of the bad	.022	.077	.291	.120	.291
<i>Not caught up in matters</i>	.101	-.003	.056	.202	.260
Maturity	.004	-.087	.108	-.070	.213

Note: Attribute categories are differentiated by typeset. American-generated categories are in normal typeset; Japanese-generated categories are in italics, and categories generated in both samples are in bold.

Table 10

Japanese sample correlations among factors

Factor	1	2	3	4	5
1	--				
2	.122	--			
3	.282	.458	--		
4	.136	.212	.136	--	
5	.299	.293	.379	.029	--

Table 11

Pattern matrix (Maximum likelihood, Promax oblique rotation) for American centrality ratings of features of forgiveness (Study 3; N = 181)

Feature	Factor 1: Ideal actions of forgiver	Factor 2: Forgiver moving on	Factor 3: Personality traits	Factor 4: Ongoing process of forgiveness	Factor 5: Love/ compassion	Factor 6: Misc.
Truthful	.639	-.306	.197	.062	.140	-.150
Learning from mistakes	.584	-.072	.190	-.040	-.075	.220
Doing the right thing	.556	-.130	-.029	.192	.053	.043
Finding a solution to a problem	.531	.129	.130	.027	-.179	.237
<i>Trust</i>	.527	-.094	.112	.088	.113	.082
Having peace of mind	.515	.014	.071	-.072	.265	-.150
Giving someone a second chance	.507	.032	-.153	.165	.055	.086
Sincerity	.496	-.189	.166	.000	.181	-.123
Perpetrator admits they are wrong	.477	-.122	.012	.164	-.031	.413
Talking things out	.470	-.172	.258	.024	-.087	.128
Acceptance	.458	.320	.109	-.059	-.049	-.107
Perpetrator says they are sorry	.456	-.031	-.101	.269	-.008	.362
Feeling happy/joyful	.452	.252	-.099	-.130	.414	-.110
Reconciling	.403	.112	-.023	.117	.211	-.153
Respect	.401	.012	.245	.016	-.034	.042
Making amends	.393	-.024	-.051	.271	.161	.001
End to fighting	.383	.367	-.115	-.125	.057	.008
Telling the person it is okay what they did	-.377	.230	.217	.167	.142	.144
Takes time	.376	-.185	-.141	-.024	.296	.203

Table 11, continued

Feature	Factor 1: Ideal actions of forgiver	Factor 2: Forgiver moving on	Factor 3: Personality traits	Factor 4: Ongoing process of forgiveness	Factor 5: Love/ compassion	Factor 6: Misc.
Compromising	.357	.229	.093	.125	-.167	.125
A positive characteristic to have	.335	.037	-.014	.180	.270	-.213
<i>Cooperate</i>	.329	.169	.178	-.017	.004	.059
Happens between friends	.292	.051	-.135	.038	.229	.091
Forgetting the incident	.026	.788	-.279	.070	-.100	.023
Everything continues as normal	-.258	.644	.101	.042	.047	.136
Letting it go	-.087	.626	-.093	.211	.032	-.069
Freeing another person from blame	-.127	.553	.010	.160	.023	-.022
Perpetrator does not feel guilty anymore	-.033	.546	-.127	.262	-.024	.097
<i>Overlook the incident</i>	-.019	.520	-.045	-.037	.024	.294
<i>Blame no one</i>	-.097	.483	.138	-.102	.159	.021
<i>Control one's emotions</i>	.294	.480	.208	-.070	-.336	-.065
Starting over	.163	.474	-.138	.045	.222	-.034
Relief	.215	.420	.151	-.107	-.021	.091
<i>Not strict</i>	.216	.378	.008	.083	.075	.157
Moving on	.195	.374	.226	.158	-.283	-.075
<i>Not pushy</i>	.178	.373	.098	-.013	.171	-.080
<i>Respond flexibly</i>	.125	.353	.308	-.198	.214	-.084
<i>Not caught up in matters</i>	.093	.326	.137	.050	.088	.145
Not worrying that the event will happen again	-.123	.318	-.062	.281	.139	-.022
<i>Mercy</i>	-.122	.278	.246	.051	.206	-.051
Focusing on the good instead of the bad	.225	.250	.035	.067	.208	-.009

Table 11, continued

Feature	Factor 1: Ideal actions of forgiver	Factor 2: Forgiver moving on	Factor 3: Personality traits	Factor 4: Ongoing process of forgiveness	Factor 5: Love/ compassion	Factor 6: Misc.
Understanding	.038	-.113	.755	-.037	-.087	-.097
<i>Listening</i>	.302	-.249	.700	-.087	-.078	.094
<i>To be tolerant</i>	-.021	.051	.639	.210	-.231	-.091
Empathy	.148	-.010	.632	-.008	.001	.001
<i>Accept own flaws</i>	-.018	-.022	.508	.191	.123	-.135
<i>Patience</i>	.286	.097	.500	-.239	.154	-.168
Maturity	.247	-.051	.436	-.039	.074	-.020
<i>Calm</i>	.198	.202	.433	-.079	.009	-.126
Caring	.267	.152	.421	.074	.009	-.069
<i>Wide range of tolerance</i>	.081	.077	.392	.044	.116	.212
<i>All-encompassing</i>	-.142	.058	.358	.277	.197	.137
<i>Overlook small mistakes</i>	-.109	.210	.280	.177	.060	.105
Accepting someone's apology	.303	-.024	.161	.685	-.157	-.255
Saying "I forgive you"	.054	-.003	-.007	.609	-.003	-.073
Being the bigger person	.125	-.072	-.026	.490	-.011	.191
Not holding a grudge	.232	.249	-.039	.467	-.042	-.112
Letting go of anger	.076	.071	.157	.440	.051	-.206
Understanding that everyone makes mistakes	.356	.084	-.008	.438	.079	-.207
Generosity/not being selfish	.292	.149	-.006	.418	-.047	.063
Not wanting or seeking revenge	.035	.040	.229	.400	.136	-.354
Something you are supposed to do	-.152	.134	.059	.397	.163	.192
Have an open heart/broad mind	.173	.008	.372	.384	-.038	-.092
Makes you feel good about yourself	.246	.110	-.231	.370	.201	.085

Table 11, continued

Feature	Factor 1: Ideal actions of forgiver	Factor 2: Forgiver moving on	Factor 3: Personality traits	Factor 4: Ongoing process of forgiveness	Factor 5: Love/ compassion	Factor 6: Misc.
Happens among family members	.104	.136	-.017	.330	.061	.008
<i>Do not fuss over small matters</i>	.009	.109	.273	.322	.078	-.029
Makes you feel good afterward	.198	.155	-.100	.293	.224	-.062
Done to preserve the relationship	.213	.125	-.007	.267	.089	.183
Something you ask for	.029	.010	-.079	.242	.170	.195
An act of love	.266	.101	.031	-.102	.593	-.095
Religious act	.003	.183	-.192	.021	.580	.034
Compassion	.004	-.246	.248	.265	.577	.017
An act of kindness	.220	-.174	-.020	.209	.557	.059
<i>Charitable</i>	-.029	-.094	.131	.110	.539	.303
<i>Able to live in harmony</i>	.208	.154	.075	-.104	.509	-.116
<i>Close to Godliness</i>	-.022	.039	-.095	.096	.490	.083
<i>Have space in the heart</i>	.301	-.014	-.126	.245	.486	-.002
<i>High caliber quality</i>	.088	.145	.044	.006	.414	.278
Nice	.302	-.003	-.039	.129	.352	.015
Perpetrator feels sorry or regretful	.318	.095	.097	.025	-.334	.294
Having sympathy for the perpetrator	-.243	.075	.210	.320	.322	.122
<i>Gives a good impression</i>	.060	.096	-.130	.243	.276	.242
Questioning if you made the right decision	.073	.117	-.151	-.083	-.128	.570
Sadness	.095	-.023	-.113	-.023	.079	.532
<i>Appeals more to adults than children</i>	-.010	-.034	.037	-.094	.188	.514

Table 11, continued

Feature	Factor 1: Ideal actions of forgiver	Factor 2: Forgiver moving on	Factor 3: Personality traits	Factor 4: Ongoing process of forgiveness	Factor 5: Love/ compassion	Factor 6: Misc.
Buying the other person things	-.094	.228	-.145	-.061	-.043	.505
Physical acts	.007	.129	-.142	.119	.009	.490
Still think about the incident	.122	-.113	.159	-.025	-.297	.429
Difficult to do	.135	-.133	-.120	-.156	.146	.371
<i>Evoked when a victim is calm</i>	-.063	.081	.052	-.002	.190	.369
Crying	-.042	.043	-.036	.086	.126	.365
<i>A broad world view</i>	.058	.127	.222	-.137	.298	.342
Consequence of a wrong doing	.089	-.104	.311	.022	-.195	.330
<i>Back down from argument</i>	-.219	.166	.278	.083	.084	.328
Emotional	.231	.060	.048	-.200	.264	.315
Thinking about the situation	.270	-.130	.144	.085	-.118	.304
<i>Not being indifferent</i>	.152	.128	.061	-.104	.298	.299
Thinking about the future	.231	.020	.174	.151	.087	.277

Note: Attribute categories are differentiated by typeset. American-generated categories are in normal typeset;

Japanese-generated categories are in italics, and categories generated in both samples are in bold.

Table 12

American sample correlations among factors

Factor	1	2	3	4	5	6
1	--					
2	.419	--				
3	.474	.466	--			
4	.390	.446	.442	--		
5	.369	.529	.442	.452	--	
6	-.027	.157	.099	.148	.085	--

Table 13

Correlations among Japanese and American factors

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1. US 1	--									
2. US 2	-.37***	--								
3. US 3	-.08	-.25*	--							
4. US 4	-.14	-.11	-.16	--						
5. US 5	-.13	-.15	-.26**	-.09	--					
6. US 6	-.20*	-.14	-.27**	-.27**	-.10	--				
7. J 1	-.06	.01	-.29**	.01	-.28**	.32**	--			
8. J 2	-.22*	.36***	-.01	.19	.03	-.31**	-.43***	--		
9. J 3	.34**	-.24*	.29**	-.22*	.17	-.20*	-.27**	-.29**	--	
10. J 4	-.22*	-.08	-.20*	.38***	.32***	.03	-.24*	-.08	-.04	--
11. J 5	.15	-.11	-.13	-.10	.18 ⁺	.02	-.11	-.17	-.17	-.13

Note: + $p = .07$; * $p \leq .05$; ** $p \leq .01$; *** $p \leq .001$. US 1 = Ideal actions of forgivers; US 2 = Forgiver moving on; US 3 = Personality traits; US 4 = Ongoing process of forgiveness; US 5 = Love/compassion; US 6 = Miscellaneous; J 1 = Positive and negative consequences for forgiveness; J 2 = Adjustment/harmony; J 3 = Process of forgiveness; J 4 = Face; J 5 = Reflection.

CHAPTER 6: GENERAL DISCUSSION

General Discussion

This series of studies aimed to bridge the cross-cultural gap in forgiveness research, and is the first to examine cultural differences in defining and understanding forgiveness. Overall, the results of the current research support the hypothesis that members of Eastern and Western cultures characterize forgiveness in different ways. The results of Study 1 demonstrated several qualitative differences between members of Western and Eastern cultures. In contrast to the Kearns and Fincham (2004) American sample focus on personality characteristics and influence, Japanese participants generated forgiveness features related to harmony and benevolence. In addition, Japanese participants generated only 18 (35%) of the same forgiveness features the American sample generated, which further demonstrates a culturally different way of characterizing forgiveness.

As evidenced by Study 2, Japanese and American participants also had very different ideas about which features were most (and least) central to forgiveness. Furthermore, the Japanese factor structure was very different from the American factor structure. Factor 1 in the Japanese sample represented positively- and negatively-valenced consequences of forgiveness, which provides evidence that forgiveness may be thought about dialectically (i.e., comprised of both positive and negative features) by the Japanese. Features such as *not worrying the event will happen again*, *perpetrator says they are sorry*, *crying*, *thinking about the future*, and *making amends*, which all loaded highly on the same factor, demonstrate the Japanese emphasis on dialecticism. Recall that members of Eastern cultures allow

for both positive and negative entities to coexist; in Western cultures, this would be perceived as contradictory. In contrast, the features loading highest on the Factor 1 in the American sample were positively-valenced, representing ideal actions of the forgiver (as well as ideal actions on the part of the perpetrator). Features such as being *truthful, learning from mistakes, doing the right thing, and finding a solution to a problem* reinforce the importance of action and influence, as well as characterizing forgiveness positively, in the American sample.

Factor 2 in the Japanese sample emphasized the importance of adjustment and harmony in conceptualizing forgiveness. Features such as *overlooking the incident, letting it go, blaming no one, patience, and overlook small mistakes* demonstrate the Japanese focus on harmony. In contrast, Factor 2 in the American sample represented the forgiver moving on. Features such as *forgetting the incident, everything continues as normal, letting it go, and freeing another person from blame* are examples of the Western notion of personal choice. Forgiveness is described here as something that is volitional, something an individual can choose to (or not to) do.

Factor 3 represented the process of forgiveness in the Japanese sample. Features such as *an act of love, buying the other person things, trust, and reconciling* comprised this factor. Factor 3 in the Japanese sample parallels Factor 4 in the American sample. Factor 4 represented the ongoing process of forgiveness in the American sample, and was comprised of features such as *accepting someone's apology, saying "I forgive you," being the bigger person, and not holding a grudge*. Although these factors represent processes of forgiveness in both

cultures, it is important to note that the features loading highly on these factors were different.

Factor 4 represented face in the Japanese sample. Features including *gives a good impression, nice, done to preserve the relationship, and a good characteristic to have* evidence the Japanese concern for maintaining face. Because the concept of face is not well-known or understood in Western society, it is not surprising that no such factor emerged in the American sample. Instead, the American focus on the individual is apparent, as Factor 3 was comprised of personality characteristics such as *understanding, listening, patience, and maturity*. Furthermore, a factor representing love and compassion emerged in the American sample, but not in the Japanese sample. Features such as *an act of love, compassion, and an act of kindness* demonstrate the importance of love in the American conceptualization of forgiveness.

One surprising result was the lack of emphasis on obligation in the Japanese sample. Given previous research (i.e., Janoff-Bulman & Leggatt, 2002), I expected obligation and features related to obligation (such as *something you are supposed to do*) to be rated highly in frequently and centrality. This was not the case; *something you are supposed to do* was originally generated only in the Kearns and Fincham (2004) American sample. Furthermore, this feature loaded moderately on Factors 1 (*Positive and negative consequences of forgiveness*) and 4 (*Face*), and received an average centrality rating of 3.98 on an 8-point scale in the Japanese sample.

How Can This Approach Aid Subsequent Forgiveness Research?

The numerous cultural differences found in the conceptualizations of forgiveness underscore the need for revisions to current forgiveness theories. The Japanese and American samples had different ideas of what features were most/least central to forgiveness, as well as exhibited different underlying structures. Thus, it appears that the Japanese characterize forgiveness differently. Forgiveness researchers should consider including different cultural concepts in their theories and scales (e.g., ideas/items related to adjustment, interpersonal harmony, and face).

Furthermore, a majority of the theories identified at the beginning of this paper may not map on to Eastern notions of forgiveness. For example, several of the forgiveness theories involve the transformation of emotion or motivation (e.g., Enright's process perspective [Enright & Fitzgibbons, 2000] and Worthington's transformation of emotion theory [see Worthington & Scherer, 2004]). Unlike the American conceptualization, emotion does not appear to be an important feature in the Japanese definition of forgiveness. Members of Eastern cultures are socialized to suppress and control their emotions (Kitayama, Karasawa, & Mesquita, 2004; Markus & Kitayama, 1991), and forgiveness theories fail to adequately recognize the seemingly more minor role of emotion among members of Eastern cultures.

In addition, cultural differences in dialectical and analytical thinking may affect the process of forgiveness in the previously mentioned theoretical perspectives. Because members of Eastern cultures think more dialectically than members of Western cultures, it is possible that after forgiving a transgressor, both positive and negative thoughts, feelings, and actions remain available for members of Eastern

cultures. Thinking dialectically allows an acceptance of seemingly contradictory ideas, and forgiving an offender may not automatically transform thoughts, feelings, and actions to be uniformly more positive or to be non-contradictory (as Americans might expect). As a consequence, however, holding both positive and negative thoughts toward an offender may make members of Eastern cultures more susceptible to becoming a hollow forgiver. Hollow forgiveness is hypothesized to occur when victims express forgiveness to an offender, but do not feel forgiveness privately (Baumeister, Exline, & Sommer, 1998). Future research should examine this possibility.

Furthermore, current forgiveness theories may not apply to members of Eastern cultures because of the constructs they emphasize. For example, avoidance and revenge motivations, central to McCullough et al.'s perspective of forgiveness (McCullough, Fincham, & Tsang, 2003), may not be salient forgiveness concepts to members of Eastern cultures. Because relationship harmony is important in Eastern cultures, it is possible that avoidance and revenge are not appropriate, distinct labels for the motivational processes involved in forgiving an offender for members of Eastern cultures. Instead, perhaps motivational labels such as *cooperation* and *tolerance* may be more appropriate for these individuals.

Of all the forgiveness theories outlined in this paper, the cognitive perspective (i.e., Gordon, Baucom, & Snyder, 2005) may be the most appropriate for use in Eastern cultures. In this perspective, forgiveness is characterized by thinking about the self, the other, and the relationship. Because members of Eastern cultures are socialized to be relatively other-oriented, it is likely that these individuals will

consider the transgressor and the relationship, as well as the situation and its circumstances, in the forgiveness process.

Limitations and Future Directions

Several limitations of the current research should be considered. First, these studies employed college students in Japan and the United States. It is possible that, due to differences in education systems and standards in the college admissions process, that there are qualitative differences between Japanese and American students. In addition, the sample sizes for the factor analyses in Study 3 were less than ideal. Due to limited resources, however, we were not able to obtain additional Japanese participants. Finally, this research is limited to the extent that we only sampled participants in two countries (Japan and the United States) that are believed to represent two distinct cultures (individualistic and collectivistic). As a consequence, results of this study may not be generalizable to all other individualistic or collectivistic cultures. Although this is a noteworthy limitation, we believe that the results of this study represent a significant first step in pursuing cross-cultural differences and similarities in forgiveness and should not be dismissed due to this limitation.

There are many routes to follow in extending this line of research. First, future research should attempt to replicate the forgiveness factor structure in other samples. If possible, research in other countries should be conducted to break out of the East-West comparison that tends to plague the cross-cultural literature. In addition, researchers should examine how forgiveness centrality ratings shift as a function of different situations and relationships. Because members of Eastern

cultures rely heavily on context, it is possible that asking East Asian participants to rate forgiveness features without specifying an individual or type of relationship is very difficult or even confusing. Future research needs to determine if different types of relationships (e.g., friends, family, co-workers, classmates) change the factor structure of forgiveness.

Final conclusions

It is my hope that this research inspires future cross-cultural forgiveness research. For the continued growth of the forgiveness literature, I believe it is critical for future theory development to acknowledge cultural differences. Considering differences between cultures, in definitions as well as processes, is imperative for advancement of the field.

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