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The Role of Humility in Promoting Forgiveness Through Expressive Writing

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Walden University

College of Social and Behavioral Sciences

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Henrika M. Marshall-Youquoi

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Walden University
2017

Abstract

The Role of Humility in Promoting Forgiveness Through Expressive Writing

by

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MS, Bethel Theological Seminary, 2006

BS, University of Minnesota Twin Cities, 2002

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

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Abstract

Forgiveness is an important characteristic of a healthy relationship. Several factors have been shown to be connected to forgiveness, but other factors may play a significant role in the forgiveness process. Little is known about how humility affects forgiveness in the context of an interpersonal conflict. Expressive writing, when combined with humility, may help counselors and other mental health providers in understanding how to better foster forgiveness among individuals and help them cope with stressful events and relational problems. The primary purpose of this study was to examine whether expressive writing involving humility regarding a minor offense leads to increased forgiveness compared to expressive writing that does not involve humility. The theoretical framework was based on the REACH model of forgiveness and Pennebaker's writing paradigm. The focus of the primary research question was on what role, if any, humility plays in forgiveness-based expressive writing. A randomized experimental design involving 4 groups was used. Each group received slightly different instructions, with 1 group having a humility (self-criticism) aspect. Forgiveness was measured using the TRIM-12 item questionnaire. Planned contrasts within a 1-way ANOVA were conducted along with a t test for analysis. The results of this research study were non-significant regarding the role of humility in increasing forgiveness in expressive writing. Regarding positive social change, this study adds to the literature by providing knowledge concerning what factors do not affect forgiveness in expressive writing and supports the need for future research on humility and forgiveness.

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Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to my three wonderful children, Jordan, Jayven, and Gabriell. First to my Jordan, who always reminds me to enjoy life and to laugh often. Next to my Jayven, whose love for knowledge at such a young age is so inspiring. Finally, to my Gabriell, who I see so much of myself. You have shown me that Jehovah God does indeed answer prayers. I love you all. Always remember to forgive and be humble.

I also want to dedicate this dissertation to my parents for all they have sacrificed for me, and to my wonderful husband, James, for all his love and support.

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Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

Forgiveness is an important psychological attribute for intra and interpersonal relationships. According to Freeman, Chuan, and Chang (2010), forgiveness can be a very effective tool for emotional healing. The willingness to forgive others is also one of the characteristics of a healthy long-term relationship. Several factors including empathy have been linked to forgiveness. Humility is another factor that may play a role in forgiveness, yet little is known regarding how humility affects forgiveness in the context of an interpersonal conflict or transgression. This lack of knowledge may partly be due to misconceptions about forgiveness as well as problems with regard to defining forgiveness and humility in context (Wade and Worthington, 2005; Davis, Worthington, Hook, 2010). As Freeman, Chuan, and Chang (2010) noted, properly defining forgiveness can reduce misconceptions and promote better understanding of its use in counseling.

Properly defining forgiveness and humility in expressive writing could further support the usefulness of these attributes in counseling and therapy. Numerous studies support that expressive writing benefits mental and physical health. Several researchers have used expressive writing that included empathy as a factor to increase forgiveness (Romero, 2008). According to researchers, the efficacy of expressive writing as an intervention can be further understood by examining other factors such as humility in forgiveness-based expressive writing. My goal in conducting this study was to examine the role of humility in promoting or increasing forgiveness in expressive writing. Studying this issue could have important social change implications. With better

understanding of forgiveness and the efficacy of expressive writing as an intervention, mental health providers can better help people cope with stressful events and relational problems.

This chapter provided an overview of the current study. In the chapter, I examined the general research literature on forgiveness and humility, stated the research problem and discussed the need for this study, and provided my research questions and hypotheses. I also provided an overview of the theoretical framework, the nature of the study, and key definitions. In addition, I considered assumptions, the scope and delimitations, and limitations. I concluded the chapter with a discussion of the study's significance and a summary of key points.

Background

The ability of individuals to forgive others as well as themselves can have positive emotional effects (Freeman, Chuan, & Chan, 2010). Forgiveness enables healing, according to Wade and Worthington (2005), who also noted that forgiveness can be a powerful therapeutic tool. However, in order for mental health and other providers to use forgiveness in therapy, it is important that forgiveness is properly defined. Forgiveness can be controversial in regard to its meaning because of various perspectives. Freeman, Chuan, and Chan (2010) explained that properly defining forgiveness could contribute to a better understanding of its use. I believe, many times, forgiveness is seen through a religious context. By examining forgiveness in nonreligious

contexts and properly defining it, researchers and clinicians can broaden their perspective on forgiveness and better understand its use for positive social change.

Researchers have found evidence showing that humility is associated with pro-social behaviors such as forgiveness. Powers, Nam, Rowatt, and Hill (2007) found self-reported humility to be positively associated with forgiveness while other researchers have found it to be positively correlated with more positive emotional responses such as gratitude, relationship quality, and cooperative behavior (Exlines, 2012; Hilbig & Zettler, 2009; Peters, Rowatt, & Johnson, 2011). In recent research, humility has been defined as having both intrapersonal and interpersonal aspects (Zhang et al., 2015). An important aspect of humility is having an accurate view of self. This element of humility requires some degree of self-criticism, which may aid in forgiveness. Humility can be a very important element in promoting forgiveness, and its use in forgiveness-based expressive writing, I believe, may help to explain the efficacy of expressive writing.

The positive effects of expressive writing on health and well-being are well documented and support that confronting upsetting events through expressive writing is beneficial (Krantz & Pennebaker 1996; Pennebaker, 1997, 2007; Pennebaker, Kiecolt-Glaser, & Glaser, 1988; Ramirez-Esparza & Pennebaker, 2006). Several researchers have also found that benefit finding increases forgiveness. Researchers who conducted randomized studies that assigned participants to different groups to see if changes in behaviors were a result of a treatment such as writing about the interpersonal conflict and benefit-finding from the transgression found that these studies produced positive

behavioral changes toward forgiveness (Landry, Rachal, Rachal, & Rosenthal, 2005; McCullough, Root, & Cohen, 2006; Romero, 2008). While these findings are encouraging, I believe they leave room for future research in this area specifically examining factors that can aid the writing process and how they can promote forgiveness.

In the current study, I examined forgiveness-based expressive writing in regard to humility. While researchers continue to add evidence of the efficacy for expressive writing for mental and behavioral well-being, there are still questions with regard to what factors lead to greater forgiveness in expressive writing. In my investigation, I sought to bridge this gap in the literature by examining whether expressive writing involving humility with regard to a minor offense leads to greater forgiveness than expressive writing that does not have this attribute. I also sought to answer the following question: Does humility that involves self-criticism (humility) in a relational context foster greater forgiveness?

Problem Statement

Research supports that expressive writing has positive effects on physical and mental health including the promotion of greater forgiveness (Boals, Banks, Hathaway, & Schuettler, 2011; Kline & Boals, 2010; Ramirez-Esparza & Pennebaker, 2006; Sloan & Marx, 2004). Researchers have found positive associations between self-reported humility and forgiveness (Romero, 2008; Boals, Banks, Hathaway, & Schuettler, 2011). They have also found evidence linking humility to pro-social behaviors such as relationship quality and gratitude (Powers et al., 2007; Boals et al., 2011; Exlines, 2012).

However, studies on humility and forgiveness are still minimal. Results from this study may help to fill the gap in the current literature about the possible role of writing that involves humility to promote greater forgiveness. It could further support that forgiveness is a powerful tool for healing, that humility may promote greater forgiveness, and that expressive writing has positive effects for individuals.

Purpose of the Study

I used a quantitative approach involving a randomized experimental design to examine whether humility that involves self-criticism affects forgiveness in expressive writing. I sought to bridge the gap in the literature by examining whether expressive writing involving humility with regard to a minor offense leads to greater forgiveness as compared to expressive writing that does not involve humility. The independent variable was the writing instructions for the four conditions. The dependent variable was forgiveness. In the first condition (labeled the 150 words control condition), participants wrote objectively and in detail about the events of their day in 150 words. The second condition (labeled the 300 words control writing condition) wrote objectively and in detail about the events of their day in 300 words. The third condition (labeled the offense description condition) wrote about their feelings and thoughts in regard to a minor offense and the offender in 150 words. The last condition (labeled the humility condition) involved two writing tasks. The first writing task was the same as the task in the offense description condition. The second writing task included a self-criticism aspect relating to

humility where participants wrote in 150 words about what they saw as their shortcomings as it relates to the minor offense.

Research Questions and Hypotheses

RQ1: Does writing about self-criticism (humility) help to increase forgiveness?

Hypothesis 1: Participants in the humility condition (writing about the offense, offender and self-criticism) will experience more forgiveness than those in the offense description condition (writing about the offense and offender).

Null Hypothesis 1: There will be no difference in forgiveness between participants in the humility condition (writing about the offense, offender, and self-criticism) and those in the offense-description condition (writing about the offense and offender).

Hypothesis 2: There will be greater forgiveness in the humility condition than the 300 words control condition.

Null Hypothesis 2: There will be no difference in forgiveness in the humility condition and the 300 words control condition.

RQ 2: Does writing about the offense and offender increase forgiveness?

Hypothesis 3: There will be greater forgiveness in the offense description condition than the 150-words control condition.

Null Hypothesis 3: There will be no difference in forgiveness in the offense description condition and the 150-words control condition.

A manipulation check measure was used to determine whether the humility writing in the humility condition actually increased humility. I used the TRIM-12 item

forgiveness measure, which was derived from the Wade forgiveness scale (Wade-Brown et al., 2001). Two subscales make up the Transgression-Related Interpersonal Motivation (TRIM) scale (McCullough et al., 1998). Most researchers who have used the WADE Forgiveness scale have focused on these two subscales (Romero, 2008). These two subscales are used to measure avoidance behaviors and revenge and have high reliability, according to Romero (2008).

Theoretical Framework

The theory used in this research was based on inhibition and the assumption that not expressing oneself with regard to an important psychological event can be a form of inhibition (Pennebaker, 1997). This assumption was the basis of Pennebaker's writing paradigm, which is built on the foundation that expressive writing can help people make meaning out of stressful events, understand conflict, and move toward positive processes such as forgiveness (Boals et al., 2011; Klein, & Boals, 2010; Romero, 2008; Slatcher & Pennebaker, 2006). The current study was also based on inhibition theory. I used Pennebaker's writing paradigm to investigate whether humility-based expressive writing can promote greater forgiveness. I explored whether humility that involves self-criticism can play a role in increasing forgiveness where a minor transgression occurs as it relates to forgiveness-based expressive writing.

The REACH model of forgiveness offers another theoretical perspective on forgiveness and the steps necessary to increase forgiveness. According to Wade and Worthington (2005), the model was developed by Enright and colleagues and was based

on a 17-step model of forgiveness (Enright et al., 1991). Cognitive, affective, and behavioral aspects were included (Wade and Worthington, 2005). The REACH model evolved through further investigations into a pyramid in which individual move from one step of the model to another in order to reach forgiveness (McCullough & Worthington, 1995; McCullough, Worthington, & Rachal, 1997; Worthington, 2001). The steps of the model include defining forgiveness, helping the offended person remember the offense, building empathy, helping the offended person acknowledge his or her own past offenses, and encouraging the offended person to commit to forgive the offender (Wade & Worthington, 2005).

I used the REACH model (Wade and Worthington, 2005) in my investigation. In this study, humility writing was conceptualized as involving self-criticism. According to Davis, Worthington, and Hook (2010), humility involves both an intrapersonal and interpersonal component. Zhang et al. (2015) further explained that the intrapersonal aspect of humility allows individuals to have an accurate view of self. This aspect provides them with an awareness of their limitations. The interpersonal aspect of humility allows individuals to be other-oriented and less self-focused. Because self-criticism enables individuals to examine their own faults and humility allows them to see others' perspective or be other-oriented, humility involving self-criticism may, therefore, help to increase individuals' capacity for forgiveness. The possible effect of humility on forgiveness is explored in more detail in Chapter 2.

Nature of the Study

I used a randomized experimental design, which was applied in several studies with regard to forgiveness-based expressive writing (Romero, 2008), in the current study. Random assignment of participants allowed me to assign participants to four conditions so that I could examine whether there is a causal relationship between humility-based expressive writing and forgiveness. The independent variable was the writing instructions. The dependent variable was forgiveness. Four groups were given slightly different instructions on what to write. However, only the offense description and humility group were asked to write about a minor offense where someone had made a rude or insensitive comment. Participants were recruited from a Qualtrics survey pool. Qualtrics is an online research and survey company. Participants were randomly placed in one of four writing conditions. There were two control conditions. In the first condition, participants wrote 300 words; in the second condition, participants wrote 150 words. The offense description condition, which is the expressive writing group, wrote about the offense and offender. The humility group wrote about a minor offense involving the offender and also completed a writing task involving self-criticism. Data were analyzed using planned contrasts within a one-way ANOVA program in SPSS to address the hypotheses.

Definitions

The following definitions are used in this study:

Empathy: The ability of an individual to understand and acknowledge others' emotions and why they feel that way (Burns, 1999).

Forgiveness: The process in which one acknowledges an interpersonal hurt, works through the hurt in order to let go of the hurt and the need to avoid or seek retaliation, recognizes the humanity of others, and feels good will towards the offender (Wade & Worthington, 2005)

Humility: The quality of not being proud because one is aware of his or her own faults and can understand the perspective of others (Davis et al., 2013, 2015; Davis & Hook, 2014).

Inhibition: "A nervous feeling that prevents you from expressing your thoughts, emotions, or desires"

Pro-social behavior: Certain traits that may promote group harmony (Chan & Harris, 2011).

Self-criticism: The ability to acknowledge one's own personal shortcomings (Merriam-Webster Dictionary).

Assumptions

The current study assumed that all participants could read, understand and honestly respond to the research questions. The current study also assumed that the instruments used in this study were valid and reliable based on their use in other studies, and that the participants who would be used in the participation of this study through Qualtrics participation pool were 18 years of age and could be generalized to a broader

population. The study also assumed that the participants had experienced a minor offense and remembered it clearly enough to write an account.

Scope and Delimitations

In regard to external validity and generalizability, the study tried to use a sample that reflected both genders equally, but this may be difficult. If the sample is homogeneous in regard to religion or gender, this may affect responses and perceptions of forgiveness, as women may respond differently than men and certain religious groups may perceive forgiveness in different ways (Worthington et al, 2000; Rye et al., 2000). Also, this study did not explore the intrapersonal process that occurs for both parties involved in a minor transgression. Instead, it only got the perspective of one individual involved in the offense.

Participants of this study were obtained only through the Qualtrics online participant pool. Advertisement for the current study was limited to those who had access to this pool. The study was open to all within this pool who met the criteria of being 18 years of age.

Limitations

The current study had some methodological limitations. Due to limitations with regard to completing this study at a traditional university, it was completed through Qualtrics. Qualtrics is an online survey and research company that allows users to complete data collection and analysis. Also, because the study was completed online, there was no way to control the environment in which the participants completed the

measures and writing tasks. The sample for this study was recruited from Qualtrics panel partner membership. Participants had to be 18 years of age in order to participate. Other limitations of this study included no follow-up measures after the study. Therefore, this study did not provide evidence to determine if expressive writing involving humility creates permanent changes in forgiveness over time. The results of this study may not be generalized to major offenses that could more intensely affect individuals.

Significance

The current study could add to the current literature on humility and forgiveness, and to the understanding and efficacy of expressive writing. It could contribute further with regard to humility and its role in forgiveness. It could also have important implications for healing emotional hurts with regard to interpersonal relationships, relationship satisfaction, writing life stories, or writing memoirs. The findings in this study could lead to changes in how we think about the role of humility and forgiveness. The findings could help in explaining the efficacy of expressive writing including specific writing that uses humility involving self-criticism. Results would also aid in developing more effective ways to implement forgiveness based expressive writing. Findings could help to heal emotional hurts due to minor offenses by contributing to the development of interventions that include writing such as narrative therapies, couples counseling, journaling or memoirs.

Summary

Past research has linked expressive writing to positive health and emotional well-being. However, research is still needed about the efficacy of expressive writing and forgiveness. While empathy has been linked to forgiveness, there may be other factors that influence forgiveness or that may increase forgiveness even more after a minor transgression as occurred. Thus, this study attempted to examine whether expressive writing involving humility led to greater forgiveness as compared to expressive writing that did not involve humility. In the second chapter, a review of the literature and the current study is provided.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

There is a large body of research supporting the positive effects of expressive writing on physical and mental health (Boals et al., 2011; Kline & Boals 2010; Ramirez-Esparza & Pennebaker, 2006; Sloan & Marx, 2004). While research supports the positive effects of expressive writing on health and well-being, it is inconclusive regarding how expressive writing affects forgiveness in the context of an interpersonal conflict (Romero, 2008) or the role of humility in expressive writing. There has been an increase in humility research, generally, and research regarding the role of humility in forgiveness, specifically, in the past few years. The slow rise is likely due in part to humility being difficult to measure and the lack of instruments that effectively measure humility and its role in interpersonal conflict to promote forgiveness.

In his chapter, I examined the history of expressive writing to promote health, well-being, and promote forgiveness. I examined the efficacy of expressive writing. I also provide an overview of my theoretical foundation and key variables and concepts in the literature. In the present study, I aimed to bridge the gap in the literature by asking if expressive writing involving humility leads to greater forgiveness as compared to expressive writing that does not involve humility.

Literature Search Strategy

I accessed Walden University, University of Minnesota, and University of South Florida library databases and search engines for this literature review. These database and search engines included PsycINFO, PsycArticles, Academic Search Complete, Taylor

and Francis Online, Thoreau Multi-Database Search, and Google Scholar. Key search terms used included forgiveness, expressive writing, humility and promoting forgiveness, and pro-social behavior. Most of the literature reviewed was peer-review articles. The scope of literature review started from 2002 to 2015. Other literature I reviewed focused on the history and theoretical foundations and concepts that started from the early to mid-eighties.

Theoretical Foundation

A group of interventions were developed by McCullough and Worthington that has evolved into the pyramid known as the REACH model (Worthington, 2001). The model includes five steps for reaching forgiveness (Worthington, 2001). Each step represents a letter of the REACH model. R equals recall the offense. During this first step, participants recall the offense in a nonjudgmental manner. Empathy is the next step, and is thought that it is developed by having participants imagine the thoughts and feelings of the offender before and during the traumatic event, E equals Empathy with regard to the offender. In the third step, A equals Give an Altruistic Gift of forgiveness. At this step, participants remember a time when they were forgiven and what that experience was like in order to develop humility and gratitude. Doing so leads to a greater likelihood of forgiveness, according to Wade and Worthington (2005). The current study was based on this model. In the fourth step, C equals Commit to forgiveness. Participants commit to publically forgive others through writing or oral

communication. This step leads to the last step, H equals Hold on to forgiveness. (Harper et al., 2014; Wade & Worthington, 2005).

Several researchers have used the REACH model (Romero, 2008; Wade & Worthington, 2005; Harper et al., 2015) to effectively study forgiveness. For example, in a study on the promotion of forgiveness through writing, participants who empathized with the offender and were able to identify benefits of forgiveness showed a decrease in avoidance behaviors (Romero, 2008). In another recent study, forgiveness was increased when a workbook that was self-directed, adapted from the REACH model was used (Harper et al., 2015). These studies suggest that the REACH model has the potential to promote forgiveness. The current study builds on the REACH model by building on more recent work on the role of humility to promote forgiveness.

According to Pennebaker (1988), confronting upsetting experiences through expressive writing is beneficial for individuals. Some of the efficacy of expressive writing can be linked to the idea that writing allows people to make meaning out of stressful events, understand conflict, and move toward positive processes such as forgiveness (Boals et al., 2011; Klein, & Boals, 2010; Pennebaker, 1997; Romero, 2008; Slatcher & Pennebaker, 2006). Pennebaker's theory was the basis of my investigation of whether humility based expressive writing could promote greater forgiveness. According to Pennebaker (1997), the assumption was that nondisclosure placed stress and strain on the body that could lead to illnesses resulting from the stress.

The idea behind the writing paradigm is that writing about your inner thoughts, reactions, and feelings about an event can improve your health and well-being. In a study on the social effects of writing, participants were more likely to stay in their relationships when they engaged in expressive writing. The increased use of emotional words associated with writing was found to partially mediate the relationship between writing and relationship stability (Slatcher & Pennebaker, 2006). Writing may encourage the meaning making-process (Boals et al., 2011). Furthermore, writing involving empathy decreases behaviors such as avoiding the offender and increases perspective-taking (Romero, 2008).

These studies support the notion that writing about an offense or conflict can have positive effects. The foundation of the current study is established in the original theory that inhibition can lead to strain and stress and that disclosure such as writing can reduce stress and promote health and well-being (Pennebaker,). I used Pennebaker's writing paradigm to examine the role of humility in forgiveness-based expressive writing. The research questions related to the theory by building on the REACH model of forgiveness as well as the use of Pennebaker's writing paradigm to examine the role of humility in forgiveness-based expressive writing.

I measured how humility affects expressive writing using a randomized quantitative experimental design trial. I examined whether humility writing that involves self-criticism led to greater forgiveness. The questions posed in the current study were,

Does writing about self-criticism (humility) help to increase forgiveness? and Does writing about the offense and offender increase forgiveness?

Literature Review Related to Key Variables and Concepts

Forgiveness has been studied over the years. However, the first documented considerations of forgiveness research go back to the 1930s (Glaeser, 2008). Since then, forgiveness research and interest in forgiveness and its relevance have continued to grow. Freeman, Chuan, and Chang (2010) emphasized the importance of defining concepts such as forgiveness in order to reduce misconceptions. In my study, I drew, in part, on Wade and Worthington's (2005) definition of forgiveness as the process in which one acknowledges that an interpersonal hurt has occurred and is able to work through the offense and let go of the hurt and ill feelings including revenge and avoidance. Forgiveness has also been described as a pro-social behavior. A pro-social behavior can be defined as certain traits that may promote group harmony (Chan & Harris, 2011).

Humility is understudied because it is not well understood and it is difficult to define what it is not (Davis, Worthington, & Hook, 2010). This lack of clarity has contributed to its slow rise in research. Researchers have worked to distinguish humility from modesty in an attempt to study it more closely. While past understandings of humility provided unclear knowledge as to what qualities constitutes the core of humility or how to measure humility, current research and researchers agree that humility has both interpersonal and intrapersonal factors, and involves an accurate self view (Davis & Hook, 2014; Rowden, Harris & Wickel, 2014, Davis et al., 2015).

The relationship between humility and forgiveness provides promising associations between the two. Research by Davis, Worthington, et al. (2011) examined evidence for how judgments of humility affect relationships where conflict exists. Findings from this study show that where perceived humility was greater, there was greater forgiveness and empathy shown toward the offender including greater positive emotions. Most recently, Zhang et al. (2015) found that intellectual humility and perceived intellectual humility were associated with forgiveness. They defined this type of humility as, “[h]aving an accurate view of one’s intellectual strengths and weaknesses as well as the ability to negotiate different ideas between individuals respectfully” (Zhang et al., 2015).

According to Wade and Worthington (2005), researchers agree that forgiveness is a helpful method for coping with an interpersonal hurt or offense. They also agree that forgiveness leads to a reduce resentment, anger and bitterness. It is important to note that forgiveness is not necessarily reconciliation and it is not tolerating, condoning, or excusing hurtful behavior. Freeman, Chuan and Chang (2010) emphasized the importance of defining forgiveness in order to reduce these misconceptions. According to Romero (2008) most of the research has focused broadly on major offenses that have occurred, but newer studies are focusing on relational conflict and promoting forgiveness (McCullough et al., 2006; Romero, 2008; Zhang et al., 2015; Exline et al., 2008;). The current study builds on this foundation by examining the role of humility in forgiveness based expressive writing.

Expressive Writing and Benefits

In the mid-eighties, Pennebaker and colleagues began to do studies examining whether writing about stressful events actually promoted health in individuals.

Individuals who did not have health issues were assigned through a random design to write about traumatic events or less traumatic topics for about twenty minutes on 4 consecutive days, and Lymphocytes that were obtained were assessed for their blastogenic response to PHA and ConA (Pennebaker et al., 1988). The findings of the study showed that individuals writing about traumatic experiences showed improvements in their physical health that were involuntary. They also used the health centers less and were less distressed as compared to those in the control group. The positive affects of written language continued to be supported through other studies such as Krantz & Pennebaker (1996), where students were randomly assigned to express their traumatic experiences using several methods including only bodily movements, bodily movements and written language, or exercise for a number of days. The group that used bodily movements and written language showed significant improvements in physical health and grade point average.

Researchers also found that cognitive processes were occurring that aided the efficacy of writing about stressful events. Pennebaker (1997) found that the processes by which we use emotional words such as *happy* and *sad* and insight words such as *understand* and *realize* could predict improvements in physical health. The construction of narratives from poorly organized descriptions to coherent stories also predicted

improved health (Pennebaker, 1997). Also, the act of translating the traumatic or stressful event into written language was found to be important for emotional well-being (Pennebaker, 2007; Ramirez-Esparza & Pennebaker, 2006). These findings may explain some of the efficacy of expressive writing.

Several studies further found that writing about an interpersonal offense or conflict may increase well-being and possibly increase forgiveness. Landry, Rachal, Rachal & Rosenthal (2005) conducted a study where participants who had experienced interpersonal conflict, who did not receive professional counseling and who were willing to participate in three consecutive writing sessions were recruited. They were assigned to one of two groups to write about interpersonal conflict or a trivial topic, scheduled for three days. They were given slightly different writing instructions for each group and completed several instruments including the Impact of Events Scale (IES). This scale measure intrusive thoughts and avoidance behaviors (Horowitz, Wilner & Alarez, 1979). The Positive and Negative Affect Schedule (PANAS) was also used. This scale measures positive and negative affect (Watson, Clark & Tellegen, 1988). Lastly, the Transgression Related Interpersonal Motivations Inventory (TRIM). The TRIM is a measure of motivation to forgive an individual (McCullough et al., 1998). Both groups experienced increased positive affects and decreased negative affects and rumination, but the group that wrote about interpersonal conflict showed a significant difference in how they felt and thought about their experience through changes in the writer's thoughts and feelings about what the experimental group's writing instructions may have been too general and

individual differences may have also limited the study since females outnumbered males and males seem to benefit more than females.

Research continued with other studies such as McCullough, Root and Cohen (2006). This study examined the benefits of expressive writing on forgiveness when an offense occurs. Participants in this study were assigned to 3 writing groups and wrote for 20-minutes. Some wrote about the traumatic details of the most recent interpersonal offense they experienced. Others wrote about some of the benefits that came from the offense. A third group wrote about a topic that did not related to the offense they had experienced. The group that wrote about the benefits from the offense became more forgiving toward their offender as measured by the TRIM, than did the other two groups. Limitations to this study included self-reported measures. The study was also limiting in regard to how long the effects were of finding benefits from the offense and the mediators responsible for the connection between finding benefits and forgiveness. The study failed to show if the results would lead to positive changes in mental and physical health outcomes that were seen in past forgiveness research (McCullough, Root & Cohen, 2006).

The association between expressive writing and forgiveness was examined through a study done by Romero (2008), where participants were assigned to one of three writing groups. Participants either wrote about the events of their day; participants wrote about their thoughts and feelings with regard to the unforgiving offense and offender or they wrote about identifying potential benefits of forgiveness to self and their offender.

The participants wrote for twenty minutes. According to Romero (2008), results found that participants who wrote about the benefits of forgiveness experienced less avoidance behaviors and increases in perspective taking for the offender, which are aspects of intrapersonal forgiveness. Limitations to this study were similar to McCullough, Root & Cohen's study in regard to self-report measurements, but also included not examining the length of time since the offense took place, exploring religious traditions or looking at interpersonal aspects of forgiveness.

The current literature on forgiveness-based writing is very promising with several studies supporting writing interventions such as the use of finding benefits for the individual and use of emotion and insight words may be linked to more willingness to forgive. But could other factors influence forgiveness more? Findings from these studies only support the need for more research on forgiveness and what might influence forgiveness in expressive writing.

Humility

The literature is still unclear as to what promotes forgiveness in expressive writing. Associations have been found between empathy and forgiveness (Romero, 2008). Recently, the understudied virtue of humility has sparked several studies with regard to its role in forgiveness. Humility has been shown to be associated with pro-social behaviors such as forgiveness. Powers, Nam, Rowatt & Hill (2007) conducted a study on the associations between humility, spirituality and forgiveness. They recruited more than a hundred college students to complete a printed survey and implicit

association tests. Measures included the humility scale, the humility semantic differentials scale, the tendency to forgive scale, attitude toward forgiveness scale and the transgression narrative test of forgiveness. They found that there were several positive associations between self reported humility and forgiveness including the tendency to forgive and attitude toward forgiveness. The Hill's humility scale significantly and positively correlated with the forgiveness short form, tendency to forgive and attitude toward forgiveness (Powers, Nam, et al, 2007). Findings showed that individuals who reported high levels of humility reported being more likely to forgive an offender.

The link between humility and forgiveness was examined further by Exlines (2012). This research supports that humility is linked to the willingness to forgive and predict pro-social behaviors such as forgiveness. The study involved 217 undergraduate students who participated in a larger study about giving and receiving. Participants were asked to recall through an essay, an act of kindness that was done for them and rate their emotional response, humility, psychological entitlement, religiosity, narcissistic entitlement, Big five, self-esteem, trait gratitude and social desirability. It was found that humility was associated with more positive emotional responses and pro social behavior such as gratitude.

Humility has not only been linked to positive emotional responses including forgiveness but also relationship quality. Peters, Rowatt & Johnson (2011) conducted two studies with college students with regard to humility and social relationship quality. In both studies, self and other humility was assessed using a scale that assessed humility

independently from honesty. Findings from this study showed there was a positive correlation between self-reported and other-reported humility and social relationship quality. When other factors were statistically controlled such as impression management and gender, there was still a significant correlation with social relationship quality.

Cooperation is also related to humility and is cited in Hilbig & Zettler (2009) study on economic and cooperative behavior. The study was a web based correlational study to explore the predictive power of the proposed sixth personality dimension, Honesty-Humility using the dictator and ultimatum game. Humility was assessed using a 100-item German version of the HEXACO-PI and they found that individuals high in honesty-humility showed more cooperative behavior, and were less likely to take advantage of others and had more of a tendency to choose more fair solutions. In another correlational study, the HEXACO model of personality which distinguishes between the two factors predicting complimentary aspects of pro-social behavior, Honesty-Humility and Agreeableness were assessed using the dictator game and it was found that Honesty-Humility and not Agreeableness predicted active cooperation (Hilbig, Zettler, et al., 2013).

Researchers agree that an accurate view of self is part of the intrapersonal aspect of humility (Zhang et al. 2015; Davis & Hook, 2014). The current study argues that self-criticism is an element of humility and in order to have an accurate view of one- self, there needs to be some degree of self-criticism. Several measures used in humility research include accurate self-view or awareness of one's faults as parts of the subscales

used for humility measurements. Davis et al. (2011) used the Relational Humility Scale (RHS) when conceptualizing and measuring humility as a personality judgment. Cronbach's alpha for the full scale including the accurate view of self was .90. The RHS has also been used in several humility studies (Davis et al. 2011; Exlines, 2012; Davis et al. 2015; Davis & Hook, 2014; Hook et al. 2015). Another scale known as the intellectual humility scale, measures 4 aspects of humility and includes a scale with regard to openness to revising one's viewpoint. This scale was found to have good internal consistency and test-retest analyses (Krumrei-Mancuso & Rouse, 2016). Self-criticism is an element of humility and it may be an important aspect that influences an individual's willingness to forgive.

A number of studies have positively linked humility with pro-social behaviors such as gratitude, cooperation and willingness to forgive. Findings showed several positive associations between self reported humility and forgiveness. When individuals reported high levels of humility, they were more likely to forgive an offender, and there was a positive correlation between humility and the quality of social relationships when individuals reported self and other reported humility. Researchers also agree that an accurate view of self is one component of humility with regard to the intrapersonal aspect of humility. An accurate view of self to some degree requires self-criticism, so it can be said that self-criticism is related to humility.

While there were several limitations to some of these studies, including generalizability and self-reported measures of humility, they all share in affirming

humility as an important factor in pro social behaviors that include forgiveness. It should be noted that these studies were also correlational, so causal conclusions cannot be made based on these findings. So, it remains unclear about the influence of humility in forgiveness based expressive writing. This is why more research needs to be done on the role of humility and the importance of the current study.

Summary and Conclusions

Forgiveness is important for healing, but learning how to effectively forgive and heal requires looking at the process to promote forgiveness. Empathy has been found to be an important aspect as well as the use of emotion and insight words. Cognitive processes that include focusing on the benefits have also been shown to be underlying mechanisms that influence forgiveness. There is also a need for more research in areas of instruments used for measurements, time since the offense, and other factors that may be responsible for promoting forgiveness.

It is well documented that expressive writing about trauma and conflict has positive effects for health and well-being. Research also supports that expressive writing about an interpersonal conflict can increase forgiveness and several factors can possibly facilitate forgiveness such as the writing instructions, interventions that build empathy and the use of emotion and insight words. Previous research to date has only provided correlational data in regards to research on the association between humility and forgiveness. They have addressed associations between variables but have not found a causal role between humility and forgiveness. Therefore, the original contribution of this

study was to examine whether increasing a sense of humility may increase forgiveness in expressive writing.

Chapter three addressed the methodology of the study. It covered research design and rationale, procedures, instrumentation and operationalization constructs, data analysis plan, threats to validity and ethical issues. The chapter concludes with a summary.

Chapter 3: Research Method

The purpose of this study was to use a randomized experimental design to examine expressive writing involving humility as it relates to forgiveness of a minor offense and to determine if expressive writing involving humility leads to greater forgiveness as opposed to expressive writing that does not involve humility. In this chapter, I discussed the research design and rationale, target population and sample, and the sampling procedures used in this study. I also covered the procedures I used for recruitment of participants, data collection, the intervention, and instrumentation. The operationalization of constructs and each variable, along with the data analysis plan used to answer the different hypotheses, is described. Threats to validity are also explained. A summary concludes the chapter.

Research Design and Rationale

In a randomized experiment, the researcher must assign participants to each group in a random fashion and be able to manipulate the independent variable (Gliner, Morgan, & Leech, 2010). The variables in the current study consisted of the independent variable (the writing instructions involving the four conditions) and the dependent variable (forgiveness). Because of my focus on examining the causal effect of expressive writing involving humility on forgiveness, I considered an experimental design to be appropriate. Participants in each of the four conditions were given different writing instructions. In the first condition (labeled the 150 words control condition), participants wrote objectively and in detail about their day in 150 words. In the second condition (labeled the 300 words

control writing condition), participants wrote objectively and in detail about the events of their day in 300 words. In the third condition (labeled the offense description condition), participants wrote about their feelings and thoughts in regard to a minor offense and the offender in 150 words. The last condition (labeled the humility condition) involved two writing tasks. The first writing task was the same as the task in the offense description condition. The second writing task included a self-criticism aspect relating to humility where participants wrote in 150 words about what they saw as their shortcomings as it relates to the minor offense. Each participant completed the study in one online session, which lasted approximately 20 minutes. After reading and agreeing to the consent statement, participants proceeded to the writing task. They completed a demographic questionnaire after the forgiveness measure.

This design attempted to answer the following research questions: Does writing about self-criticism (humility) increase forgiveness? and Does writing about the offense and offender increase forgiveness? One question was used as a manipulation check to determine whether humility increased in the humility writing condition. Participants in all writing conditions were asked to rate, from 1 to 5, the following question: To what extent does the word “humble” describe you right now?

Several researchers have used randomized experimental designs to examine the role of expressive writing on forgiveness. McCullough, Root, and Cohen (2006) used this design to examine expressive writing about an interpersonal offense on forgiveness.

Romero (2008) also used it to examine the role of empathy. Both researchers were able to

provide evidence as to how expressive writing can contribute to forgiveness. Romero provided important evidence about the role of empathy in promoting forgiveness. In this study, I examined whether humility plays a role in forgiveness, in the hope of advancing knowledge for the efficacy of expressive writing. Romero examined the role of empathy and used prospective taking, which is an important aspect of empathy. I examined the role of humility and used self-criticism, which is an aspect of humility.

Methodology

Population

The target population for the current study was a sample of approximately 180 participants who were randomly assigned to one of the four conditions. A randomized experimental design strategy was chosen because it allowed the researcher to randomly assign individuals to each of the writing conditions in order to determine whether a writing task involving humility promotes forgiveness in expressive writing. The sample was drawn from a pool of participants who met the inclusion criteria of being at least 18 years of age.

Sample Size and Power Analysis

A power analysis using G*Power (Faul, Erdfelder, Buchner, & Lang, 2014) was conducted in order to determine the total sample size that was required. G*Power 3.1.9 was used to calculate an appropriate sample size using a power of .8, an alpha of .05, and a medium effect size. Based on these parameters, using a one-way ANOVA with four

groups, a sample of at least 180 participants from all writing conditions was needed to produce statistically reliable results.

Procedures

Participants were invited to participate in the study through Qualtrics panel recruitment feature. Potential participants met the eligibility criteria of being at least 18 years of age. Qualtrics sent an invitation to panelist through their panel partner membership and provide information about the survey length and incentives provided. A brief description of the study was provided in the consent form. Qualtrics provided survey incentives paid out to participants who fully completed the survey. Partial incentives were provided for attempting the survey but failing to qualify. In surveys administered via Qualtrics, incentives are usually paid out in the form of online points or currency that can be redeemed for gift cards or prizes. Qualtrics screened potential participants who met the eligibility criteria and allowed them to move forward with the online survey. The initial page of the online survey contained the consent form with a basic description about the study. Potential participants initiated their participation by agreeing to the consent form.

The demographic form (see Appendix D) and measure was completed after the forgiveness measure. Participants were randomly assigned to one of four conditions through the use of Qualtrics random assignment feature. Some participants wrote in the space provided in 150 words while other participants wrote within the space provided in 300 words until they completed the writing instructions, as Qualtrics does not have a

character limit. Also, participants were not informed when they reached the maximum word count. Those in the humility condition completed the second portion of the writing session.

Participants in each condition were given specific instructions about what to write. Those in the *control conditions*, which consisted of two conditions (150 and 300 words), wrote about the events of their day in an objective and detailed manner. Those in the *offense description* condition wrote about their feelings and thoughts in regards to a minor offense and the offender in 150 words. Finally, those in the *humility condition* followed the same instructions as the offense description condition (150 words) wrote about their humility using self-criticism (150 words). Data collection took approximately 20 minutes and was completed during one quarter or semester. In order to decrease possible confounding variables that could occur in the writing instructions between groups, I decided to have participants write a certain amount of information as described rather than write for a certain amount of time. Participants were instructed to complete the TRIM-12, derived from the Wade Forgiveness Scale (WFS; McCullough et al., 1998). This measure was completed immediately after completing the writing task. The manipulation check (Appendix C) occurred after all other questionnaires were completed. The debriefing statement occurred after the manipulation check (Appendix A).

Instrumentation and Operationalization of Constructs

The four conditions were given different instructions. The first (150-words) control condition required participants to write objectively and in detail about the events

of their day. This group served as a neutral (control) condition. Participants received the following writing instructions:

I want you to write in the space provided in 150 words, about what you have done today and what you plan to do for the rest of your day. Focus on the facts and details, and not about your feelings or thoughts. Do not be concern about misspelling or grammatical errors.

The second condition was the same as the 150-words control condition except they were instructed to write 300 words. This (300-words) events control condition wrote write objectively and in detail about the events of their day. This group served as a neutral (control) condition. Participants received the following writing instructions:

I want you to write in the space provided in 300 words, about what you have done today and what you plan to do for the rest of your day. Focus on the facts and detail, and not about your feelings or thoughts. Do not be concern about misspelling or grammatical errors.

The offense description condition involved writing about their feelings and thoughts in regards to a minor offense and the offender. For the offense description condition, participants received the following writing instructions:

I would like for you to write in the space provided in 150 words about a minor offense in which someone made a rude and insensitive comment to you. Write about your thoughts and feelings about this minor offense and the person who

made the rude and insensitive comment. Do not be concern about misspelling or grammatical errors. Just write your thoughts and feelings.

Finally, the humility condition involved self-criticism. In order to facilitate humility, participants were required to write about self-criticism. For the humility condition, participants first received the following writing instructions (which are the same instructions as the offense description condition):

I would like for you to write in the space provided in 150 words about a minor offense in which someone made a rude and insensitive comment to you. Write your thoughts and feelings about this minor offense and the person who offended you. Do not be concern about misspellings or grammatical errors. Just write your thoughts and feelings.

The second portion of the writing task directed participants to follow these instructions:

I would like for you to write in the space provided in 150 words about what you see as your shortcomings as it relates to this type of offense. Do not be concern about misspellings or grammatical errors.

Those in the control conditions (150 words and 300 words) received the following instructions for the forgiveness measure: For the following questions, please indicate your current thoughts and feelings about a minor offense in which someone made a rude and insensitive comment to you. Use the following scale to indicate your agreement with each of the questions, 1=strongly agree, 2=Disagree, 3=Neutral, 4=Agree, 5=Disagree

Those in the offense description and humility condition received the following instructions: For the following questions, please indicate your current thoughts and feelings about the person you previously wrote about who made the rude or insensitive comment. Use the following scale to indicate your agreement with each of the questions, 1=strongly agree, 2=Disagree, 3=Neutral, 4=Agree, 5=Disagree. After completing this task, participants were debriefed and thanked for their participation in the study.

TRIM 12-Item

The 12-item Transgression-Related Interpersonal Motivation scale (TRIM) was used in the current study as it most accurately measures forgiveness as defined in this study, and as it relates to forgiveness of a minor offense. The TRIM is also a well-documented and validated measure used to measure forgiveness (Romero 2008; McCullough et al., 2006; Zhang et al., 2015). According to Romero (2008) the TRIM 12-item measure avoidance and revenge motivations. These items are believed to govern an individual's responses to interpersonal offenses. The changes in scores on the TRIM are strongly correlated with single-item measures of forgiveness. The TRIM-12 item version was also appropriate in regard to the 20-minute time allotted for the current study.

The TRIM-12 item was the dependent measure for this study. It was derived from two subscales of the self-reported assessment of forgiveness (Wade Forgiveness Scale - WFS). Permission to use and modify the instructions of the WFS was granted by Dr. Susan Wade Brown (Appendix B). The full Wade Forgiveness Scale is an 83-item measure of interpersonal forgiveness pertaining to the emotional, cognitive, and

behavioral aspects (Brown, Gorsuch, Rosik, and Ridley, 2001). The Wade Forgiveness Scale was developed as a more comprehensive, empirically derived scale for the measurement of forgiveness and was based on an extensive development of operational definitions of forgiveness and un-forgiveness created by Wade (Wade-Brown, Gorsuch, Rosik and Ridley, 2001). Factors for the three areas of cognitions, affect and behaviors showed high reliability with forgiveness factors including revenge at .91, positive vs. negative feelings at .95 and avoidance at .91. A meta-analysis of the overall Wade Forgiveness Scale showed that the instrument had an average Cronbach's alpha of .91 (Rainey, 2009). According to Wade-Brown et al., (2001), when analysis was used to determine if forgiveness could best be measured to be a single higher order factor, correlations were high. Construct validity was assessed by Sarinopoulos (1996) through the correlation of the WFS with the Enright Forgiveness Inventory (EFI; Subkoviak et al., 1995). The study found the WFS and EFI correlated with the constructs of behavior, cognition, and affect, with each scale having a Cronbach's alpha of .97 and .99, respectively.

According to Romero (2008), the Wade Forgiveness Scale is a measure of forgiveness that is multidimensional, and most of the studies that use its subscales have focused on the scales regarding revenge and avoidance. These two subscales make up the Transgression-Related Interpersonal Motivation (TRIM) scale, which is well validated. Romero (2008) used the full WFS including the TRIM items. The use of the TRIM items was with regard to a single, specific offender. Reliability for the two subscales that will

be used in the study was high with Cronbach's alpha for revenge being .89 for the baseline, .91 for post intervention, and .93 for the follow-up. Cronbach's alpha for avoidance at the baseline was .92, at post-intervention it was .93 and .94 at the follow-up. Items were also used from the TRIM in Landry et al. (2005). The TRIM was used to evaluate changes in participants' forgiveness as a result of writing with internal reliability for total scores for pre and posttest at Cronbach .94.

The 18-item version (TRIM-18) was used in McCullough et al. (2006) to measure motivational changes toward a transgressor. Both had high internal consistency, with Cronbach's alphas greater than or equal to .85 with moderate test-retest stability (McCullough, 2006). This study used the 12-item version (TRIM-12).

A 5-point Likert scale was used to rate the questions from 1= "strongly disagree" to 5 = "strongly agree", on a range of 12-60 with the sum of scores indicating a higher level of un-forgiveness. Scoring will be reverse coded for interpretation purposes; higher scores will indicate higher forgiveness. Example items from the TRIM-12 item include "I wish that something bad would happen to them;" "I'm going to get even;" "I'll make them pay," "I keep as much distance between us as possible;" "I don't trust them;" and "I cut off the relationship with them."

Data Analysis Plan

SPSS was used for data analysis. SPSS is a tool used for conducting various data analysis in the social sciences. Demographic information in regards to age, race/ethnicity,

sex, marital status and religion will be collected from participants on the specific date of the study. Tables were used to organize and simplify the data from the four conditions.

The data was screened for outliers and any missing data through the use of descriptive statistics. This study also used frequency distributions. Standardized values were examined to test the presence of outliers. Standardized values and cases were examined for values that fall above 3.29 and below -3.29 (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2012). In order to describe the sample demographics and the research variables used in the analysis, descriptive statistics were conducted. It was important to calculate frequency and percentages for nominal data and means. Standard deviations were calculated for continuous data (Howell, 2013).

This study examined the role of humility in promoting forgiveness through expressive writing.

RQ1: Does writing about self-criticism (humility) help to increase forgiveness?

Hypothesis 1: Participants in the humility condition (writing about the offense, offender and self criticism) will experience more forgiveness than those in the offense description condition (writing about the offense and offender).

Null Hypothesis 1: There will be no difference in forgiveness between participants in the humility condition (writing about the offense, offender and self criticism) and those in the offense description condition (writing about the offense and offender).

Hypothesis 2: There will be greater forgiveness in the humility condition than the 300 words control condition.

Null Hypothesis 2: There will be no difference in forgiveness in the humility condition and the 300 words control condition.

RQ2: Does writing about the offense and offender increase forgiveness?

Hypothesis 3: There will be greater forgiveness in the offense description condition than the 150-words control condition.

Null Hypothesis 3: There will be no difference in forgiveness in the offense description condition and the 150-words control condition.

Planned contrast within the one-way ANOVA program in SPSS was conducted to address the hypotheses. A manipulation check determined whether humility writing actually increases humility. A t-test will be conducted for this manipulation check that will involve comparing the humility condition and offense description condition.

Threats to Validity

External Validity

Threats to external validity included whether findings generalize to people who are different from participants in this study. Participants were screened based on age thus allowing for a more diverse population and external validity.

Internal Validity

Threats to internal validity included instrumentation, maturation and others. However, for a study such as this one, threats to statistical conclusion are determined by

the reliability and validity of the instruments used, the procedures of data collection, and the variables included. These threats were addressed by the selection of instruments with past psychometric properties and reliable measures, a use of random assignment method of participants, and selected variables, which capture most of the effect of interest. The addition of a fourth condition will help to address possible confounding variables such as whether participants make a judgment of forgiveness on the quantity of writing.

Ethical Issues

Care was taken to ensure and protect the safety of participants of the current study. Prior to signing up for the study, participants were informed that only one session is required. Participation will be voluntary. Although this study did not pose any major risk, it could be viewed as a minimum risk study because writing about a minor offense may result in a minor unpleasant reaction. This study received approval through Walden's IRB before any data collection. Participants were required to read the consent statement. Participants could withdraw without penalty. They also had access to the results of the study after the study was completed. At the conclusion of the study, all participants were debriefed and had the opportunity to contact the researcher to discuss their experiences.

Summary

The current study examined the role that humility played in forgiveness based expressive writing. The proposed experimental design of this study involved 180 participants with 45 participants in each of four conditions. The four conditions included

two control conditions, offense description condition, and humility condition. The participants completed their assigned condition in one online session including signing the informed consent document and collection of demographic information. The TRIM-12 item was used to measure forgiveness. Care was taken to protect the safety of participants and to reduce any threats to validity. The current study used SPSS for data analysis and planned comparisons for data inquiry. The fourth chapter examined data collection, ethical procedures, intervention fidelity and results of the study.

Chapter 4: Results

Using a randomized experimental design, I addressed the following questions and hypotheses in this quantitative study:

RQ1: Does writing about self-criticism (humility) help to increase forgiveness?

Hypothesis 1: Participants in the humility condition (writing about the offense, offender and self criticism) will experience more forgiveness than those in the offense description condition (writing about the offense and offender).

Null Hypothesis 1: There will be no difference in forgiveness between participants in the humility condition (writing about the offense, offender and self criticism) and those in the offense description condition (writing about the offense and offender).

Hypothesis 2: There will be greater forgiveness in the humility condition than the 300 words control condition.

Null Hypothesis 2: There will be no difference in forgiveness in the humility condition and the 300 words control condition.

RQ 2: Does writing about the offense and offender increase forgiveness?

Hypothesis 3: There will be greater forgiveness in the offense description condition than the 150-words control condition.

Null Hypothesis 3: There will be no difference in forgiveness in the offense description condition and the 150-words control condition.

Data were analyzed using SPSS. This chapter presents the data collection conducted in the current study. The preliminary data management and descriptive statistics are reported. The findings of the reliability testing are also included. The results of the manipulation check, planned contrast analysis, and exploratory analysis are also detailed in the chapter.

Data Collection

Primary data were obtained using Qualtrics, a survey and research company. Data from the TRIM-12 item was used for analysis. Those who qualified were directed to the link through Qualtrics and completed the informed consent form. The entire survey was estimated to take 20 minutes but actually took participants, on average, 8 minutes to complete. The study was posted and available for participants over a 2-day period, during which 206 participants completed the survey. The survey remained open until a total of at least 45 responses per condition were collected. Because of the random function design used in data collection, the groups were not equal, which resulted in uneven sample sizes in the conditions. However, the targeted number of participants ($n = 45$) was met. At the final close of the survey, there was a total of 67 participants and responses in the 150 words control condition, 46 participants and responses in the 300 words control condition, 48 participants and responses in the offense description condition, and 45 participants and responses in the humility condition. The sample consisted of mostly White and female participants; therefore, the population was not representative of the larger population.

Preliminary Data Management

Prior to conducting the analysis, the uploaded dataset was imported into SPSS version 24 for management and organization. The dataset was screened for missing values. Participants missing data for the forgiveness measure were removed from the dataset. Three participants were removed from the control group (150 words), two participants from the offense group, and three participants from the humility group. No participants were removed from the control group (300 words). Composite scores were calculated for the TRIM instrument by summing the items on the scale. The item responses were reverse scored so that higher scores reflected an increased willingness to forgive. Standardized values were calculated for the composite scores. These scores were examined to determine if outliers were present in the dataset. Standardized values greater than 3.29 units from the sample mean were considered evidence of outlier values (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2012). There were no values that exceeded the 3.29 threshold; therefore, no outliers were removed from the dataset. The final dataset included data for 198 individuals.

Descriptive Statistics

The responses for age group were varied; however, the most frequently observed category of age was 20-24 years ($n = 40$, 20%). Female participants comprised the majority of the sample ($n = 133$, 67%). White participants ($n = 143$, 72%) also constituted the majority of participants. Slightly more than half of the sample was

composed of unmarried participants ($n = 103$, 52%). Most participants in the sample were Christian ($n = 128$, 65%). Frequencies and percentages are presented in Table 1.

Table 1

Frequencies and Percentages of Participants by Age, Gender, Race/Ethnicity, Marital Status, and Religion

Variable	<i>N</i>	%
Age		
Under 20 years	10	5
20–24 years	40	20
25–29 years	33	17
30–34 years	38	19
35–39 years	17	9
40–44 years	14	7
45–49 years	15	8
50–54 years	10	5
55 years or more	21	11
Gender		
Male	63	32
Female	133	67
Race/Ethnicity		
African American/Black	17	8
White	143	72
Hispanic or Latino	20	10
American Indian or Alaskan Native	1	1
Multiracial	3	2
Asian	12	6
Other	1	1
Marital status		
Married	95	48
Unmarried	103	52
Religion		
Christian	128	65

Jewish	7	4
Muslim	2	1
Hindu	1	1
Other	16	8
No religion	44	22

Note. Due to rounding errors, percentages sometimes do not equal 100%.

Mean and standard deviation was calculated for forgiveness scores by condition.

Table 2 presents descriptive statistics for the forgiveness scores by condition.

Table 2

Descriptive Statistics by Condition

	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>SE</i>	95% C.I.		<i>Min</i>	<i>Max</i>
					Lower	Upper		
Control (150)	64	35.13	9.63	1.20	32.72	37.53	12.00	60.00
Control (300)	46	36.78	8.17	1.21	34.36	39.21	24.00	60.00
Offense	46	34.33	10.88	1.60	31.10	37.56	14.00	60.00
Humility	42	35.62	10.11	1.56	32.47	38.77	13.00	60.00

Reliability

A reliability analysis was conducted to assess how reliably and consistently the items included in the TRIM scale assessed forgiveness. Cronbach's alpha of reliability was calculated for forgiveness. According to George and Mallery (2016), the Cronbach's alpha was evaluated using the guidelines developed where alphas of $> .9$ indicate excellent reliability, $> .8$ indicate good reliability, $> .7$ indicate acceptable reliability, $> .6$ indicate questionable reliability, $> .5$ indicate poor reliability, and $< .5$ indicate unacceptable reliability. The forgiveness measure exhibited good reliability ($\alpha = .88$).

Manipulation Check

For the manipulation check, the most frequent response for humility was somewhat humble ($n = 77, 39\%$). An independent samples t -test was conducted to assess a statistically significant difference in the humility scores of participants in the offense and humility groups. Before the analysis, the assumptions of normality and homogeneity of variance were assessed. According to Razali & Wah (2011), a Shapiro-Wilk test was completed in order to verify whether humility scores could have been produced by a normal distribution. The results of the Shapiro-Wilk test were significant, $W = 0.91, p < .001$. This suggests that the humility data is not likely to have been produced by a normal distribution; thus, it would be unlikely to assume normality. According to the Central Limit Theorem (CLT), that the mean of any random variable will be approximately normally distributed as sample size increases. Therefore, according to Stevens (2009), with a sufficiently large sample size ($n > 50$), deviations from normality will have little effect on the results. Because the sample size exceeds that benchmark, the assumption is considered robust to a violation of this assumption. The Levene's test did not provide significant results, $F(1, 86) = 0.03, p = .874$, revealing that the assumption of homogeneity of variance was met.

The independent sample t test did not provide significant results, $t(86) = 0.27, p = .785$. This finding suggests that the mean of humility was not significantly different between participants in the offense and humility groups. Table 3 presents the results of the independent sample t test.

Table 3

Results of the Independent Samples t-Test for Humility by Offense and Humility Groups

Variable	Humility		Offense		<i>t</i>	<i>P</i>	<i>d</i>
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>			
Humble	3.26	1.11	3.33	1.10	0.27	.785	0.06

Note. Degrees of Freedom for the *t*-statistic = 86. *d* represents Cohen's *d*.

Assumption Testing

Prior to the planned comparisons, the assumption of homogeneity of variance was examined. According to Levene (1960), the Levene's test for equality of variance was used to assess whether the homogeneity of variance assumption was met. In order to accomplish this, the homogeneity of variance assumption requires the variance of the dependent variable in each group be approximately equal. The result of Levene's test was not significant, $F(3, 194) = 0.73, p = .535$, indicating that the assumption of homogeneity of variance was met.

Findings of Planned Contrast Analyses

To address the research questions, three planned comparisons were conducted. The planned comparisons were two-tailed. For the first planned comparison, the researcher assessed the presence of a statistically significant difference in forgiveness scores between the humility and offense groups. For the second planned comparison, the researcher assessed the presence of a statistically significant difference in forgiveness scores for participants in the 300-words control and humility groups. For the third planned comparison, the researcher assessed the presence of a statistically significant

difference in forgiveness scores for participants in the 150-words control and offense groups. The weights for the planned contrasts are presented in Table 4.

Table 4

Weights for the Planned Contrasts

Contrast	150-word Control	300-word Control	Offense	Humility
Hypothesis 1 Contrast	0	0	1	-1
Hypothesis 2 Contrast	0	1	0	-1
Hypothesis 3 Contrast	1	0	-1	0

For hypothesis 1 contrast, the researcher failed to reject the null hypothesis. For hypothesis 2 contrast, the researcher failed to reject the null hypothesis. For hypothesis 3 contrast, the researcher failed to reject the null hypothesis. The results of the planned comparisons for the 300-word control, offense, and humility groups are presented in Table 5. The means for the four groups included in the study were similar (Table 2).

Table 5

Results of the Planned Contrasts

	Contrast	Difference	SE	<i>t</i>	<i>Df</i>	<i>P</i>
Forgiveness	Hypothesis 1	-1.29	2.08	-0.62	194	.534
	Hypothesis 2	1.16	2.08	0.56	194	.576
	Hypothesis 3	0.80	1.88	0.43	194	.671

Ancillary Analysis

Because of the non-significant findings, an ancillary analysis was conducted as non-significant findings may reflect interactions with demographic or personality variables. So, to gain a better understanding of the findings concerning forgiveness, a 3-way ANOVA was conducted with gender, age (i.e., 29 years or younger and 30 years and older), and condition as factors, and the assumption of homogeneity of variance was examined. Prior to conducting the analysis, the assumption of homogeneity of variance was examined. The result of Levene's test was not significant, $F(15, 180) = 0.51, p = .930$, indicating that the assumption of homogeneity of variance was met.

The findings for the main effects of gender, $F(1, 180) = 0.05, p = .829$; group, $F(3, 180) = 0.69, p = .557$; and age, $F(1, 180) = 0.41, p = .521$ were not statistically significant. These results indicate that the null hypotheses could not be rejected. The interactions of gender x group, $F(3, 180) = 0.12, p = .950$, gender x age, $F(1, 180) = 0.62, p = .431$, and group x age, $F(3, 180) = 1.42, p = .237$ were not statistically significant. These results indicate that the null hypotheses could not be rejected. The interaction between gender x group x age was not statistically significant, $F(3, 180) = 0.94, p = .425$. This finding indicates that the null hypothesis could not be rejected. The means and standard deviations are presented in Table 6.

Table 6

Means, Standard Deviations, and Sample Size for Forgiveness by Gender, Group, and Age

Gender	Group	Age	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>N</i>
Male	150-word control	29 or younger	37.48	7.88	21
Male	150-word control	30 or older	35.40	9.12	10
Male	300-word control	29 or younger	34.47	11.52	19
Male	300-word control	30 or older	38.36	8.32	11
Male	Offense	29 or younger	34.86	10.54	22
Male	Offense	30 or older	34.91	9.22	22
Male	Humility	29 or younger	36.00	12.42	12
Male	Humility	30 or older	33.19	10.28	16
Female	150-word control	29 or younger	33.40	6.33	10
Female	150-word control	30 or older	42.75	9.74	4
Female	300-word control	29 or younger	33.29	9.30	7
Female	300-word control	30 or older	39.50	10.41	4
Female	Offense	29 or younger	37.00	8.55	10
Female	Offense	30 or older	34.30	10.68	10
Female	Humility	29 or younger	35.42	12.65	12
Female	Humility	30 or older	31.83	5.95	6

Summary

There were two research questions. The first question asked, Does writing about self-criticism (humility) help to increase forgiveness? The second question asked, Does writing about the offense and offender increase forgiveness? Statistical analysis conducted for this study failed to reject the null hypothesis for the first and second hypotheses, which stated that there will be no difference in forgiveness between participants in the humility condition (writing about the offense, offender and self-criticism) and those in the offense description condition (writing about the offense and

offender) and there will be no difference in forgiveness in the humility condition and the 300 words control condition. Statistical analysis failed to reject the null hypothesis for the third hypothesis, which stated that there would be no difference in forgiveness in the offense description condition and the 150-words control condition. Chapter 5 discussed these findings and examined their implications for this study.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

The ability to forgive others is one of the most important characteristics of a healthy long-term relationship. The primary purpose of this study was to examine the role of humility in forgiveness-based expressive writing. It also was an effort to address the lack of research on the role of humility in fostering forgiveness through expressive writing in the case of a minor offense. In this study, I sought to examine whether humility that involves self-criticism in a relational context could foster greater forgiveness. The findings of this study may have important implications for the healing of emotional hurts due to minor offenses.

I used a randomized experimental design method where the dependent variable (forgiveness) and independent variable (writing instructions) were used to examine the role of humility. Previous researchers have been able to establish a link between expressive writing and positive health and emotional well-being (Boals et al., 2011; Kline & Boals, 2010; Ramirez-Esparaz & Pennebaker, 2006; Sloan & Marx, 2004). However, a gap remains regarding what other factors may influence forgiveness or may increase forgiveness after a minor transgression has occurred. To address this gap, I examined whether another factor, humility, could play a greater role in forgiveness-based expressive writing.

I first examined whether writing about self-criticism (humility) helped to increase forgiveness. The means appeared to be very similar among participants who wrote about

humility (humility condition) and those who wrote about the offense and offender (offense description condition). As a result, the null hypothesis was not rejected.

I also examined whether writing about the offense and offender would increase forgiveness. The means appeared to be very similar among the offense description condition and the 150-word control condition. Therefore, this null hypothesis also was not rejected. As a result, the findings of this study provided no support for the role of expressive writing in increasing forgiveness after a minor offense.

Interpretation of Findings

Research Question 1

Does writing about self-criticism (humility) help to increase forgiveness?

The results of this study were non-significant regarding the manipulation of self-criticism and increased forgiveness. Previous researchers have found humility to be associated with pro-social behaviors such as forgiveness. For example, Davis et al. (2011) found humility to be associated with forgiveness, and Powers et al. (2007) found self-reported humility to be positively associated with forgiveness. In addition, Romero (2008) stated that most of the research on expressive writing and forgiveness has focused on major offenses. However, the results of this study indicate that self-criticism (humility) might not contribute to increased forgiveness in expressive writing after a minor offense.

The results of this study were most likely due to the non-significant manipulation of humility. Another explanation could be that self-criticism is not a good indicator of

humility and, therefore, does not influence forgiveness. Self-criticism may not be a good indicator of humility because, by itself, it does not properly define humility. Humility has both inter and intra personal aspects (Davis & Hook, 2014; Zhang et al., 2015), and it could be that humility needs both aspects to significantly influence forgiveness. Self-criticism is only one small element of the intrapersonal aspect of humility. In order to foster forgiveness, there may need to be another aspect such as empathy to have any significant influence. The findings in the current literature pertaining to the correlation between empathy and forgiveness are mixed; however, recent researchers have mostly found that individuals who are more empathetic toward their offender (i.e., who take into consideration the perspective of the offender, have a general concern for their offender, and lack personal distress) are more likely to forgive them (Swickert, Robertson, & Baird, 2016). In addition, there may be other elements that better define humility. Researchers have been able to link other indicators such as cooperation, spirituality, and honesty to humility (Hilbig & Zettler, 2009; Powers, Nam, Rowatt, & Hill, 2007).

Finally, many participants did not write about self-criticism. Specifically, only nine of the participants wrote about self-criticism. When asked to write about self-criticism, the majority of participants' responses varied. Examples of responses included, "I do not know," "I did not see any short-comings," "I am way too emotional," "n/a," and "Not sure what to write." Other responses to the self-criticism question included, "I did not see any shortcomings as it relates to this type of offense," "My shortcomings are that I am oversensitive to this type of comment...", "I can be difficult to live with but not to

that extent,” “I do not have any shortcomings, the other individual are stereotypical racist,” and “I have a tendency to stick my foot in my mouth and do not do enough research to justify my opinion.” It is unclear why few people wrote about self-criticism. At least seven participants wrote that they did not have any shortcomings. The low number of responses about self-criticism could be due to lack of understanding of the term or limited ability to self-reflect. It could also be that the timing of year or an online survey format does not lend itself to the self-reflection that was needed for this particular study. Based on the data gathered, it might be that the effect of self-criticism (humility) is inconclusive, which further highlights the need for future research regarding the role of humility.

Research Question 2

Does writing about the offense and offender increase forgiveness?

The positive effects of expressive writing on health and well-being are well documented and support that confronting upsetting events through expressive writing is beneficial (Krantz & Pennebaker 1996; Pennebaker, 1997, 2007; Pennebaker et al., 1988; Ramirez-Esparza & Pennebaker, 2006). In addition, Romero (2008) found that writing about the offense and offender (thoughts and feelings) did not help to increase forgiveness. The differences in forgiveness scores among participants in the 150-word control condition and offense condition were similar in my study. This finding is consistent with those in the current literature with regard to the second research question (i.e., that writing about the offense and offender did not help to increase forgiveness;

Boals et al., 2011; Pennebaker, 2007; Romero, 2008). It may be that there needs to be an added element such as empathy (Romero, 2008; Wade & Worthington, 2005) or a good indicator of humility to foster forgiveness. Adding an element such as empathy, which has been linked to forgiveness, (Romero, 2008), may elicit more significant results regarding increased forgiveness of an offense.

The results of this study support the need for multiple factors to promote the forgiveness process. According to Romero (2008), in an interpersonal offense, it is helpful to consider both how the outcome might help oneself as well as how it may help the offender, which will most likely require perspective taking (empathy). Also, according to Landry et al. (2005), writing about a specific hurtful offense or a trivial topic was not related to changes in objective measures of forgiveness motivation.

Limitations of the Study

As discussed in Chapter 1, specific factors could impact the external validity and generalizability of the current study. While the study attempted to use a sample that reflected both genders equally, the majority of the sample was female, which may have affected responses and perceptions of forgiveness. In addition, age may have been a limiting factor in this study. The majority of the participants were between the ages of 20 and 34, which may have also influenced their perceptions of forgiveness. Participants were obtained through an online participant pool; therefore, the sample was limited to those who had access to the pool. There was no way to control the environment in which participants completed the measures or writing task. As such, this study cannot be

generalized to major offenses that may affect individuals more intensely. Additional limitations to this study pertained to time frame and the online survey. Time frame may have been a limitation because the study was done around the holidays, and there may have been distractions from family or other stresses associated with the holidays. The online survey may have been a limitation in this study because of the fact that it was a web format versus a paper format, which may have been troublesome for some of the participants. The quantitative approach may have been a limiting factor in this study as well because the surveys may not have collected thick, rich, descriptive data that is inherent to qualitative approaches. Finally, since many of the participants did not write about self-criticism, there is a limitation regarding the conclusions that can be drawn regarding the effectiveness of expressive writing and humility.

Recommendations

In light of the findings from the current study, several recommendations would be important for any future research. Females far outnumbered males in the current study. According to Landry, Rachal, Rachal, and Rosenthal (2005), it has been identified that there are significant effects with regard to writing outcomes that show that males tend to benefit more than females. Future research may benefit from a more heterogeneous group. Another recommendation would be to better control the environment in which participants complete the measures and writing task. Careful consideration to the time frame may also benefit future research. A paper format versus a web format may also make a difference for future research. A more effective manipulation of humility may

have yielded a different outcome with regard to the current study. The results of this study provide no clear evidence that self-criticism by itself would not increase forgiveness, so future research could better define self-criticism or may find a different writing task involving self-criticism helpful, for example, asking a different question involving self-criticism. Also, future research could use another manipulation of self-criticism, such as the use of various scenarios instead of a writing task. Finally, since most of the participants reported being humble, it may benefit future research to perform qualitative studies in order to explore specific details and characteristics of the varying levels of humbleness among the participants. In future studies, researchers should also perform pilot studies in order to determine a more effective manipulation check for humility. Manipulation checks allow researchers to assign or recruit participants with varying degrees of the manipulation. The bulk of the participants in the current study indicated that they were somewhat, very, and extremely humble. Future research would benefit from more carefully assessing humility and participants to ensure that humility could be properly assessed, which may lead to more significant findings.

Implications

The current study can affect positive social change in a number of ways. It adds to the literature on humility and forgiveness by providing knowledge on what indicators may or may not affect forgiveness in expressive writing. It may indicate that broader elements, such as empathy, may affect forgiveness-based expressive writing. The current study may also provide important implications for the use of forgiveness-based

expressive writing and its effectiveness regarding interpersonal relationships and relationship satisfaction. Researchers agree that humility has both inter and intra personal aspects. It is very important to examine other aspects of humility. In the current study, self-criticism, while an important aspect of humility, did not by itself effectively define humility. Perhaps defining self-criticism differently would have been more effective. Examining humility through multiple lenses should be seriously considered as it may have significant effects on forgiveness interventions. Findings from the current study suggest that future research is needed to understand the role of humility in forgiveness-based expressive writing in order to further develop effective interventions. Much research has been done in regard to the positive correlation of humility and forgiveness in relationships but not in regard to forgiveness-based expressive writing. In addition, expressive writing has been found to be an effective therapeutic approach. As such, if researchers could determine an effective way to integrate humility and forgiveness in the development of writing interventions, the writing interventions may be more effective in assisting individuals with forgiveness, which has been found to positively correlate with well-being. One-way would be developing writing interventions where a more holistic approach to humility is utilized requiring both the interpersonal and intrapersonal aspects of humility in the writing activity. This would include not only self-criticism but also empathy. Failure of the self-criticism manipulation may imply that forgiveness interventions using humility should consider factors that may affect the intervention such as the environment, format, and ability to self-reflect or even how the term is defined.

Conclusion

Research indicates that there is a link between humility and forgiveness. While previous research has found a link between forgiveness and humility (Exlines, 2012; Powers et al., 2007; Zhang et al., 2015), the results of this experimental study were unable to support these findings. The findings of this study may not support those of previous research because this study failed to successfully manipulate humility and the findings of this study do not offer any indications regarding causation. Future studies should sample more targeted populations as a result of a manipulation check in order to ensure that the data they collect is more heterogeneous. Expressive writing may be an effective tool in developing and implementing interventions that are able to successfully utilize narrative therapy. Because expressive writing may be beneficial in implementing interventions, it is recommended that future research continue to explore humility and the factors, such as empathy, that make individuals humble. Humility may be a more significant factor with regard to forgiveness when these factors are examined together. Further exploring these factors through qualitative and quantitative studies, may lead to researchers discovering effective approaches to assessing humility among individuals, and, as a result, the most effective style of writing intervention for fostering forgiveness. Self-criticism may not be the best way to define humility and the implications may mean that interventions that utilize humility have to include other aspects of humility as well as the format and environment. Humility is an important aspect with regard to forgiveness,

and further insight on humility can have significant implications for interventions that can affect an individual's health and well-being.

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Appendix A: Debriefing Statement

Thank you for completing this research. The researcher could not have accomplished this study without your help. The purpose of this study is to examine the role of humility in writing about a minor interpersonal event on forgiveness. Previous research has shown that when people write about a distressing event, they experience positive affects both mentally and physically. Previous has also found traits such as empathy increases the likelihood for forgiveness. We want to know if humility also plays a role. If you would like to know more about this area of research, you may contact the researcher.

Please be reminded that your responses are confidential. You have been given a code number and only the researchers will have access to the data. Once again thank you for your participation. It is greatly appreciated. If you have any further general questions please feel free to contact Henrika Marshall – Youquoi; E-mail: [redacted]mailto:.

Appendix B: Permission to Use Instruments

[Print](#)[Close](#)

RE: Permission Wade Forgiveness Scale

From: Susan ()
Sent: Thu 1/15/15 12:01 AM
To: henrika marshall ()

Hi Hendrika,
I am happy to have you use my scale and glad it has been helpful. Hope all goes well with your dissertation.
Thanks,
Dr. Susan Wade Brown

Sent from my Galaxy S4III

----- Original message -----

From: henrika marshall
Date: 01/14/2015 7:28 AM (GMT-08:00)
To:
Subject: Permission Wade Forgiveness Scale

Hello Dr. Wade Brown

My name is Henrika Marshall and I am a doctoral student at Walden university. I am working on my dissertation on promoting forgiveness through expressive writing and looking at the role of humility. Your research has been very helpful to me. I am currently on my third chapter (methodology). I was wondering how I would get written permission to use the Wade Forgiveness Scale in my study. Are you able to provide me with a contact in order to use the scale? I would very much appreciate your help.

Thanks

Henrika Marshall
PhD Candidate, Clinical Psychology
Tampa, FL
Eastern Time-Zone

https://outlook.live.com/mail.aspx?PrintMessages?hd=1&id=

3/6/15, 11:02 PM
Page 1 of 1

RE: Permission for use of Wade Forgiveness Scale

From: Susan ()
Sent: Thu 9/03/15 3:22 AM
To: henrika marshall ()

Hi Henrika,
Certainly!!
Thanks for asking,
Susan

Sent from my Galaxy S8III

----- Original message -----
From: henrika marshall
Date: 09/02/2015 8:01 PM (GMT-08:00)
To:
Subject: Permission for use of Wade Forgiveness Scale

Hi Dr. Brown

I am reaching out to you a second time to ask your permission to modify the instructions for the use of the Wade Forgiveness Scale. I will only use a few of the subscales for my dissertation research. I already have permission from you to use the scale. Please let me know if this is ok to do in my research.

Thanks so much

Henrika Marshall
PhD Candidate, Clinical Psychology
Tampa, FL
Eastern Time-Zone

Appendix C: Manipulation Check Measure

To what extent does the word “humble” describe you right now?

1 = not at all 2 = slightly 3 = somewhat 4 = very 5 = extremely

Appendix D: Demographic Form

Please check the box corresponding to your answer.

AGE GROUP

- Under 20 years
- 20–24 years
- 25–29 years
- 30–34 years
- 35–39 years
- 40–44 years
- 45–49 years
- 50–54 years
- 55 years or more

RACE/ ETHNICITY (You may select more than one)

- African American/ Black
- White
- Hispanic or Latino
- Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
- American Indian or Alaskan Native
- Multi-racial
- Asian
- Other _____

SEX

- Male
- Female

MARITAL STATUS

- Unmarried
- Married

RELIGION

- Christian
- Jewish
- Muslim
- Hindu
- Other
- No religion