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Sorry seems to be the hardest word

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Abstract

Is sorry really the hardest word in the contemporary mentality? 123 participants took part of this study and filled in a questionnaire consisting of the Proclivity to Apologize measure (Howell, 2011) and the PrSCS-ISA measure, the self-reflection and insight scale (Grant & Langford, 2002). According to this study, and several other studies of face loss, people sometimes have a hard time to apologize because of the fear of face loss. Furthermore, the expectation was that the less responsible someone felt, the harder it is for that person to apologize. It was also expected that the higher the power of an individual, the harder it is for that person to apologize. Finally, a relation between self-reflection, religiousness and difficulties in apologizing is studied. Results showed that more difficulties in saying sorry are associated with a greater extend of taking responsibility. No significant results were found for the relation of power and difficulties in apologies. Also, no significant results were found for the relation between self-reflection, religiousness and apologies. Although several significant results were found, it is argued why some results are rejecting previous literature.



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Introduction

Conflicts are always present, in social relationships and at work. To resolve a conflict, an apology can be an option. However, some people are not able to say sorry easily, which will delay a reconciliation. This study will focus on why people are having a hard time to say 'I am sorry'.

The attention for this subject arose when someone in the train complained about another passenger's behavior. Instead of apologizing, the other passenger replied angrily and yelled some brutal words. The question arose; why is that other passenger having a hard time to say 'I'm sorry'? Nowadays, these situations are very common in everyday life and it seems like fewer people are saying sorry. Also, Riezebos (2013) wrote an article about the behavior of travellers which is a reflection of the contemporary mentality. Noisy passengers are disturbed by comments or even glimpses towards them. Instead of apologizing, they react disrespectfully. Thus, it seems to be that sorry is the hardest word nowadays. What are possible explanations for this? Perhaps the fear of face loss will make it hard for someone to apologize. Or maybe someone is not even aware of his own flaws and mistakes, so why should he or she apologize? This study is conducted to explain why sorry seems to be the hardest word.

Apologies

A definition of an apology is an acknowledgement of harm and admission of responsibility (Okimoto, Henzel & Hedrick, 2013), including some expression of remorse (Tedeschi & Norman, 1985). When is an apology successful? According to Lazare (1995), a successful apology requires empathy and the security and strength to admit fault, failure and weakness. Fehr and Gelfand (2010) distinguished three



types of apologies: Apologies as *offers of compensation* are focused on the restoration of equity through exchange. That is, they are focused on correcting the balance of a relationship through some type of action, for example: “If there is any way I can make it up to you please let me know!” Apologies as *expressions of empathy* focus on relational issues. They demonstrate recognition of the situation and concern for the victim’s suffering. For example: “I feel really sorry for what I have done. I know how you feel now.” Apologies as *acknowledgements of violated rules/norms* expand the scope to the group context. This involves recognition that behavior is bound by rules and norms which must be followed. For example, an apology of a soldier: “I failed my duties, my mission to protect and defend.” Besides, just saying ‘sorry’ and really mean that you are sorry with feelings of true remorse are two different things. We can make it ourselves very easy with just saying ‘I’m sorry’. But this is not a true apology (HFACHE, 2012). True apology is much more than regret. It is taking responsibility and saying ‘I’m sorry I did this to you.’ (Lazare, 2004). In this study, I focused on saying sorry as the virtues of honesty and humility.

In the past years, several studies showed that apologizing might work positively for interpersonal relationships and for interpersonal communications. Mungan (2012) stated that offenders who convincingly assert that they are remorseful very early in the trial are given a reduction in penalty. An apology can also improve the speaker’s image in the eyes of others, especially when the speaker wants to show that a transgression was ‘out of character’, and thus not to be taken as a true reflection of his/her self (Deutschmann, 2003). This may be a strong motivation for some apologies. Furthermore, a simple apology can redirect distrustful or angry negotiators back to focusing on underlying interests and the



search for mutually compatible deals (Maddux Kim, Okumura & Brett, 2011).

On the other hand, apologies may have negative effects. In the past, several researchers gathered opinions about apologies, stating that they are cheap, because they are easy to provide (Okimoto et al, 2013), they are 'beneath the dignity of any gentleman' (Baroness Emmuska Orczy, 1906), they show a sign of a weak character (Lazare, 2012) or that they are being regarded as cheap talk (Mungan, 2012). Furthermore, receiving an apology will not always give people a better feeling. A news article on 27th of January 2011 stated that 'saying sorry is overrated'. In this research, De Cremer (2011) studied the expectancy that apologizing will give people a better feeling and let them forget the bad things someone have done to them. He concludes that this expectancy is overrated; after having a wrong committed against them participants who imagined receiving an apology were more satisfied than people who actually got one.

Most examples of apologizing involve a certain amount of face loss. Goffman (1955) defined face as "the positive social value a person effectively claims for himself by the line others assume he has taken during a particular contact". According to the psychologist Maslow (1967), and much subsequent research, the need to be accepted and to feel that you belong to a group is fundamental to humanity. (Deutschmann, 2003). When this belonging is threatened and there is a risk of face loss, an uneasy feeling of emotional arousal, such as embarrassment, shame, shyness, anger, anxiety, and self-blame may arise (Bond & Hwang, 1986). This can be a cause why people sometimes feel reluctant to apologize (Deutschmann, 2003). Taking all these elements together, the first hypothesis of this study is:

- 1. The bigger the fear of face loss, the harder it is for that person to apologize.**



By apologizing we admit that we are at fault and somehow responsible for an event. As mentioned before, an apology is an acknowledgement of harm and admission of responsibility (Okimoto et al, 2013). Therefore, the expectation is that when someone feels responsible for his or her actions, the easier that person will apologize. The second hypothesis of this study is:

2. The less likely a person feels responsible for his or her actions, the harder it is for that person to apologize.

However, differences in situations will affect the apology behavior of individuals as well. An element that is often related with apologies is power. Due to differences in power, people may differ in their ways of apologizing towards each other. When reconciliation has to be initiated in a conflict, a solution can be that at least one of the harm doers should apologize. A high power position of a person may be threatened if this person has to apologize, because of the possible face- and status loss. As a consequence, they might refuse to apologize. Okimoto et al (2013) stated that when people refuse to give an apology, it fosters greater feelings of power and control in people. By refusing to apologize, the person in the higher power position retains dominance over person in the low power position (Regehr & Gutheil, 2002). Thus, it can be more likely for people with higher power to experience difficulties in stating an apology, to maintain their higher status. Thus, the third hypothesis is:

3. The higher the power of an individual, the harder it is for that person to apologize.

Face loss, taking responsibility and power are not the only elements that can influence stating an apology. As mentioned by Riezebos (2013), the current



mentality of people involves difficulties of stating an apology and an increase of inappropriate behavior. Perhaps the connection between the decrease in religiousness and the difficulties in apologizing can be found. In the paragraph below, a connection between apologies and confessing in church will be explained. It will be argued that a lack of self-reflection due to lower levels of religiousness will make it harder for someone to apologize.

Confessions

Confessing in church is inseparably connected to penance. The ritual of confession consist of three elements; confession, amercement and atonement, and truly remorse (Ordo Paenitentiae, 1974). In other words; taking full responsibility and feel remorseful for your actions. Thus, the comparison between apologies and confessions can be made.

Nowadays, Koolen (2014) suggests that there is practically no confession anymore in church; the confessionals have become just storage places. According to Koolen (2014), a cause for this phenomenon can be that religion is playing an increasingly smaller role in people's lives and in the society as a whole. In the late 19th century and the early 20th century, Catholics commonly confessed their flaws and mistakes to their priest in order to maintain their relation with God. This resulted in self-reflection and thinking about your own mistakes and most importantly; apologizing for what you had done. Amercement and sin created a fraction in the relation with God and only true remorse could restore this relationship (Koolen, 2014).

Since the 1960's, a decreased number of Catholics going to church is noticed, resulting in a decrease of confessions. However, the decrease of Catholics going to



church is not the same as the decrease of the confessions. Marriage and communion of Catholics is still happening in church, only the confessing part has lost its popularity (Koolen, 2014). The common confession is not usual anymore, whereas people are no longer forced to take part in self-reflection. Perhaps this diminished self-reflection and the decrease of religion in people's lives is resulting in having a hard time in stating apologies, because a person may not have the idea that he or she is doing something wrong. Because of the scarce research about apologies in relation with religion, the expectancy is to find the same results within different religions. This leads to the fourth and final hypothesis;

4. Lower levels of self-reflection, due to lower levels of religiousness, will make it harder for that person to apologize.

Current research

To explore why sorry seems to be the hardest word, a questionnaire is conducted with items of the Proclivity to Apologize measure (Howell, 2011) and the PrSCS-ISA measure, the self-reflection and insight scale (Grant & Langford, 2002). The expectancy is that the bigger the fear of face loss, the harder it is for that person to apologize ([Hypothesis 1](#)), the less likely a person feels responsible for his or her actions, the harder it is for that person to apologize, ([Hypothesis 2](#)) and the higher the power of an individual, the harder it is for that person to apologize ([Hypothesis 3](#)). Finally, the expectancy is that lower levels of self-reflection, due to lower levels of religiousness, will make it harder for that person to apologize ([Hypothesis 4](#)).



Method

Participants

This study was conducted through online questionnaires; 123 people started the survey. 95 people completed the survey. This means that 28 incomplete surveys got deleted from the analysis. 28 men and 67 women participated. The mean age was 34 years. The participants were recruited through social networks of Facebook and LinkedIn. Also, the questionnaire was sent to friends and family through email. To attract participants, two VVV cheques of 25,- euro were raffled. Table 1 shows the distribution of the respondents.

Table 1. Descriptions of the sample

		Sample results
Gender	Male	28
	Female	67
	Total	95
Age	Mean in years	33.99
	Min. in years	15
	Max. in years	81
Religion	Protestant	4
	Catholic	5
	Islam	2
	Different	2
	Total	13

Materials

The questionnaires consisted of the Proclivity to Apologize measure (Howell, 2011) and the PrSCS-ISA measure, the self-reflection and insight scale (Grant & Langford, 2002).

To test the first and the second hypothesis, the fear of face loss and taking responsibility, some items of the Proclivity to Apologize Measure (PAM) have been used. The items alluded to personality processes that facilitate or inhibit apology (Howell et al., 2011). To make a distinction between items that measure fear of face loss and taking responsibility, a Principal Component Analysis (PCA) was



conducted. The PCA showed that two components have an eigenvalue higher than 1.

Table 2 displays the rotated (varimax) loadings on the two components.

Table 2. Rotated (varimax) Component Matrix of the PAM

	Component	Component
	1	2
1. I tend to downplay my wrongdoings to the other person, rather than apologize.		.573
2. I tend not to apologize because I could get into trouble for confessing.		.812
3. If I think no one will know what I have done, I am likely not to apologize.		.612
4. By not apologizing, it allows me to continue to behave as I want to behave.		.548
5. To avoid feeling incompetent, I tend not to apologize.	.626	
6. I don't apologize very often because I don't like to admit that I'm wrong.	.769	
7. I don't like to apologize because it lets the other person feel superior to me.	.830	
8. My continued anger often gets in the way of me apologizing.	.644	

The items that are related to component 1 are items 5,6,7 and 8. This component will be called and used as the Fear of Face loss measure, on the basis of the definition of fear of face loss of Goffman (1955); “the positive social value a person effectively claims for himself by the line others assume he has taken during a particular contact”. This measure has a good reliability, Cronbach's alfa = .727. The items that are related to component 2 are items 1,2,3 and 4. This component will be called and used as the Taking Responsibility measure, on the basis of the definition of taking



responsibility of Okimoto et al, (2013). This measure has an acceptable reliability, Cronbach's $\alpha = .603$. The items were rated on 7-point scales with endpoints 1 (strong disagreement) and 7 (strong agreement). The higher the score on the Fear of Face loss measure, the more a participant is experiencing fear of face loss. High scores on the Taking Responsibility measure is showing that the participant is taking a lot of responsibility for his or her actions.

To measure both power and the experienced difficulties in apologizing, the participants were asked to describe a recent situation where they apologized. With that situation in mind, the participants were asked how difficult it was for them to apologize. The answers were rated on a 5-point scale with endpoints 1 (not difficult at all) and 5 (very difficult). This variable is used as the dependent variable in all the hypotheses. Next, the participants were asked which party had more power. Options in answering the question were; 'You', 'the other party' or 'this was equal between the parties'. This is the variable that measured Power.

To test self-reflection, the PrSCS-ISA measure is used. The reliability of the PrSCS-ISA measure appeared to have a good internal consistency, $\alpha = .830$. This measure consists of two times 6 items, in the categories 'Engagement in self-reflection' and 'Need for self-reflection'. An example of 'Engagement in self-reflection' is 'I frequently examine my feelings'. An example of 'Need for self-reflection' is 'It is important for me to evaluate the things that I do'. Subsequently, the category 'Insight' consists of 8 items. An example is "I am usually aware of my thoughts". The items were rated on 7-point scales with endpoints 1 (strong disagreement) and 7 (strong agreement). High scores on the PrSCS-ISA measure reflected high levels of engagement in self-reflection. The complete PrSCS-ISA measure is added in Appendix B.



Finally, the participants had to answer questions about their demographic information, including questions about how religious they are. When participants indicated that they were religious, they could choose between options as ‘Catholic’, ‘Islam’, ‘Buddhism’ etc. The complete response options are added in Appendix A. The participants will remain anonymous.

Procedure

At the start of the questionnaire, the participants were informed through the ‘informed consent’ about the questionnaire and the issues that will be discussed. Also, the participants were asked to tick off a box if they understood the information that they just have read and if they would agree to participate to the study. After that, the questionnaire started. The participants were asked to describe a recent conflict situation where the participant apologized. With this situation in mind, the participants were asked how powerful they were in that situation. Subsequently, the participants had to answer the question if they had a hard time saying sorry. Thereafter, the PAM and the PrSCS-ISA measure had to be completed. The items were translated into Dutch.

When the questionnaire was almost completed, the participants were informed about the main research questions of the study. A debriefing form appeared the moment they completed the questionnaire. If they had any more questions or concerns, the participants had the opportunity to contact the coordinator of the study, Fieke Harinck. Her contact details were displayed in the debriefing form. At last, the participants had the possibility to fill in their email address, to have a chance to win one of the raffled VVV cheques.



Results

To measure the first hypothesis, ‘the bigger the fear of face loss, the harder it is for that person to apologize’, a simple linear regression was carried out to predict the fear of face loss based on how hard it is to apologize. The independent variable was the score on the Fear of Face Loss measure, conducted from the PAM. The dependent variable was the score of participants of how difficult it was for them to apologize in the described situation. A significant regression equation was found $F(1,93) = 30.67, p < .000$. A R^2 of .24 was found, indicating that 24% variance is explained. More difficulties in saying sorry are associated with more fear of face loss. Participants experienced more difficulties in saying sorry when there was more fear of face loss ($\beta = .49$). These findings are supporting the first hypothesis.

For the second hypothesis, the less a person feels responsible for his or her actions, the harder it is for that person to apologize; a simple linear regression was carried out. The independent variable used in this analysis was the Responsibility measure, conducted from the PAM. The dependent variable was the score of participants of how difficult it was for them to apologize in the described situation. A significant regression equation was found $F(1,93) = 11.23, p < .05$. A R^2 of .108 was found, indicating that 10.8% variance is explained. More difficulties in saying sorry are associated with a greater extend of taking responsibility. Participants experienced more difficulties in saying sorry when they felt more responsible for their actions ($\beta = .33$). These findings are rejecting the second hypothesis.

For the third hypothesis, the higher the power of an individual, the harder it is for that person to apologize; a One Way ANOVA was carried out. The differences in power were selected as the fixed factors of this analysis. No significant results were found, $F(2,92) = 2.08, p > .05$. No significant differences between the power groups,



‘other’ ($M = 2.33$, $SD = 1.41$), ‘equal between parties’ ($M = 1.82$, $SD = 1.04$) and ‘yourself’ ($M = 1.64$, $SD = 1.13$) were found.

For the fourth hypothesis, ‘lower levels of self-reflection, due to lower levels of religiousness, will make it harder for that person to apologize’, a stepwise regression was carried out. Figure 1 is showing the model.



Figure 1 Fourth hypothesis; lower levels of self-reflection, due to lower levels of religiousness, will make it harder for that person to apologize. According to the steps of Baron & Kenny (1986). Self-reflection is the mediator.

According to the steps of the Baron & Kenny mediation approach (1986), the first step was carried out to predict the regression of difficulties in apologies on the extend of religiousness, ignoring the mediator self-reflection. No significant results were found. Step 2 showed that the regression of difficulties in apologies scores on the mediator self-reflection was also not significant. Step 3 of the mediation process showed that the mediator self-reflection, controlling for the extend of religiousness, was also not significant. Step 4 of the analysis revealed that, controlling for the mediator self-reflection, religiousness was not a significant predictor of difficulties in apologies.

Discussion

In line with the findings of prior theory, this research confirms that the bigger the fear of face loss of someone, the harder it is for that person to apologize. This finding supports the idea of Deutschmann (2003), and can be a reason of why people sometimes feel reluctant to apologize. For example, the situation described in the introduction, where a person did not apologize for his impolite behavior. This person may not want to apologize because of the fear of face loss. As described by Bond & Hwang (1986), an uneasy feeling of emotional arousal, such as embarrassment, shame, shyness, anger, anxiety, and self-blame may arise when the troublemaker in the train should apologize for his behavior. As a result, an apology is avoided because he is having a hard time stating an apology.

Furthermore, by giving an apology, people feel responsible for an event that harmed someone. The second hypothesis was conducted to demonstrate this. The expectancy was that the less likely a person feels responsible for his or her actions, the harder it is for that person to apologize. However, results of this study show that this is not the case. According to the results of this study, when a person is feeling more responsible for his or her actions, the more difficult it is for that person to apologize. Thus, feelings of responsibility will make it for someone harder to apologize. This is not supporting the idea of Okimoto and his coworkers (2013). They stated that when someone apologized, it is a result of feelings that he or she is at fault and somehow feels responsible for his or her actions. On the other hand, when someone feels responsible for his or her actions, that person is aware of the fault they made. Perhaps the realization of someone that he or she did someone harm will make it harder for them to say sorry, because of the fear of face loss or other



negative effects of apologizing. Further research may be conducted to clear this view.

The third hypothesis, the higher the power of an individual, the harder it is for that person to apologize, was analyzed. No significant results were found.

The final and fourth hypothesis, lower levels of self-reflection, due to lower levels of religiousness, will make it harder for that person to apologize, was analyzed. No significant results were found. Neither effect of religiousness nor an effect of self-reflection was found on difficulties in apologizing. Causes for not finding significant results are described below.

Limitations and future research

Despite some significant findings that are in line with former research, some insignificant findings were found. First of all, 95 participants participated in this study. This amount is not generalizable enough to make bold statements. Furthermore, only 13 participants indicated that they are religious, with only 5 participants indicating that they are Catholic. This low amount of religious participants can be a cause of the insignificant results that were found for the third and fourth hypothesis. Besides, because of the spreading through Facebook and LinkedIn, a lot of people in my social network filled in the questionnaire. There are some psychologists in my network, which may have known the aim of the study. Therefore, it could have been asked at the end of the questionnaire, if any of the participants had an idea of the aim of the study. Also, the division of men and women who conducted the questionnaire was not that desirable. 28 men and 67 women participated. According to Holmes (1989), apologies may function differently for women and men. This may have influenced the results.



The materials that were used may have influenced the results as well. Conducting a questionnaire through Qualtrics is cheap, easy and does not take much time. The downside of the use of a questionnaire through Qualtrics is that the participants are not studied in real life. Participants answer questions of how they would react in specific situations. This is not a true reflection of how they would really react in real life. So this can cause some discrepancy between saying how you will react and actually doing. Furthermore, the materials used in this research consisted of sufficient internal reliability, except for the Responsibility measure. This measure was conducted from items of the PAM, which resulted in a low internal reliability. This is indicating that the findings of this study can be completely different when running the same test again. This can be a cause of getting some findings that rejects former research. The Fear of Face Loss measure is also conducted from items of the PAM, but this did not result in a low internal reliability. Future research should use approved measures to measure feelings of responsibility and fear of face loss. Also, some participants may have experienced some difficulties in completing the questionnaire with full attention. Because of the high amount of items, the participants might experience some fatigue, were annoyed because they were impatient, or got distracted. This may have affected the result of this study.

Relating to the content, some results got influenced as well. First of all, in this research, the main focus was the true remorse apology, as a virtue of honesty and humility. However, a lot of participants described situations where they apologized because of small flaws, like bumping into each other. Although the main goal was to focus on true apologies which Lazare (2014) described, most of the situations did not include these true apologies. Future research should focus on this thin line of demarcation between apologies and true apologies. Finally, the decrease of



confessions in church has been described. As a result, it was expected that this decrease in religiousness ensure a decrease in self-reflection. As a result, the current society is having a hard time to apologize. However, Koolen (2014) also stated that the decrease of Catholics going to church is not the same as the decrease of the confessions. Perhaps instead of confessing, people are praying nowadays. Therefore, they could still be asking for forgiveness and remorse of god and therefore still engage in self-reflection.

Conclusion

Overall, it can be concluded that the fear of face loss will make it harder for someone to apologize. Although some results are not consistent with the results of previous research, this research showed that higher feelings of responsibility led to more difficulties in stating an apology. The relation between self-reflection, religion and apologies has not been proved with this research; however, future research may expand the study by investigating different religions. To conclude, Elton John was right; “what do I say when it’s all over; sorry seems to be the hardest word.”



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Appendix

Appendix A: Complete and translated questionnaire in Qualtrics:

‘Sorry seems to be the hardest word’

Instemmingsformulier voor deelname aan onderzoek “Sorry seems to be the hardest word”

Welkom bij dit onderzoek! Allereerst wil ik u bedanken voor uw deelname. In de komende 10 tot 15 minuten zult u mee gaan doen aan een onderzoek naar verontschuldigen en zelfreflectie. Tijdens dit onderzoek krijgt u een vragenlijst met vragen over deze beide zaken. **Voordat het onderzoek kan beginnen...**

...wil ik uw toestemming vragen voor het gebruik van uw gegevens. Alle informatie die in het kader van dit onderzoek wordt verzameld, wordt strikt vertrouwelijk behandeld. Alle gegevens worden in anonieme vorm verwerkt en bewaard. Er is voor gezorgd dat onbevoegden geen inzage krijgen in de gegevens en dat de gegevens niet tot personen zijn terug te leiden. Er is geen vergoeding voor dit experiment. Wel worden er twee VVV bonnen verloot onder de deelnemers, ter waarde van € 25,-. U kunt dan aan het eind van dit onderzoek uw email adres invullen om kans hierop te maken. Deelname aan dit onderzoek is geheel vrijwillig en vrijblijvend. Dit betekent dat u te allen tijde, zonder opgaaf van reden, kunt besluiten om uw deelname aan het onderzoek te beëindigen. Coördinatie: Dit onderzoek wordt gecoördineerd door dr. Fieke Harinck van de Universiteit Leiden (telefoon: 071 – 527 5344; email: sharinck@fsw.leidenuniv.nl). Indien u vragen of klachten heeft over dit onderzoek, kunt u met haar contact opnemen. Door het onderstaande vak aan te klikken, geeft u aan dat u bovenstaande uitleg hebt gelezen, begrijpt en akkoord gaat met deelname aan dit onderzoek.

☐ Ik heb bovenstaande gelezen en ga hiermee akkoord



Eerst een paar algemene vragen: Wat is uw leeftijd?

Wat is uw woonplaats?

Wat is uw geslacht?

- ☐ Man (1)
- ☐ Vrouw (2)

Geef aan in hoeverre u religieus bent

	Helemaal niet religieus (1)	Niet echt religieus (2)	Neutraal (3)	Beetje religieus (4)	Erg religieus (5)
In hoeverre bent u religieus?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Welke religie hangt u aan?

- ☐ Protestantisme (1)
- ☐ Rooms-katholicisme (2)
- ☐ Islam (3)
- ☐ Jodendom (4)
- ☐ Hindoeïsme (5)
- ☐ Boeddhisme (6)
- ☐ Atheïsme (7)
- ☐ Anders (8)

Beschrijf een recente situatie waarin uzelf uw excuses heeft aangeboden aan iemand:

Met deze situatie in het achterhoofd, welke van de betrokken personen had meer macht/status?

- ☐ Uzelf (1)
- ☐ De ander(en) (2)
- ☐ Dit was gelijk tussen de betrokken personen (3)

Vond u het lastig/moeilijk om sorry te zeggen?

	Helemaal niet lastig (1)	Niet echt lastig (2)	Neutraal (3)	Beetje lastig (4)	Heel erg lastig (5)
Vond u het lastig/moeilijk om sorry te zeggen?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



**Geef aan in hoeverre u het eens bent met de volgende stellingen. Antwoord
mogelijkheid 1 (sterk mee oneens) t/m 7 (sterk mee eens).**

	Sterk mee oneens (1)	Mee oneen s (2)	Beetje mee oneens (3)	Neutr aal (4)	Beetje mee eens (5)	Mee eens (6)	Sterk mee eens (7)
Ik heb de neiging om mijn wandaden af te schuiven op de andere persoon, in plaats van dat ik mijzelf verontschuldigd. (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Ik probeer mij niet te verontschuldigen want ik kan hierdoor in de problemen komen. (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Als toch niemand doorheeft wat ik heb gedaan, zal ik mij ook niet verontschuldigen. (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Door mij niet te verontschuldigen kan ik mij blijven gedragen zoals ik mij zou willen gedragen. (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Ik heb de neiging mij niet te verontschuldigen om te voorkomen dat men mij incompetent vindt. (5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Ik verontschuldig mijzelf niet graag omdat ik het niet prettig vind om toe te geven dat ik fout zit (6)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Ik verontschuldig mijzelf niet graag omdat het de andere persoon het gevoel geeft dat hij/zij superieur is aan mij (7)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Mijn aanhoudende woede staat vaak een verontschuldiging in de weg (8)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



Geef aan in hoeverre u het eens bent met de volgende stellingen. Antwoord mogelijk 1 (sterk mee oneens) t/m 7 (sterk mee eens).

	Sterk mee oneens (1)	Mee oneens (2)	Beetje mee oneens (3)	Neutraal (4)	Beetje mee eens (5)	Mee eens (6)	Sterk mee eens (7)
Ik denk niet vaak aan mijn gedachten (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Ik besteed weinig tijd aan zelfreflectie (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Geregeld denk ik na over mijn gevoelens (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Ik denk er niet echt over na waarom ik me op een bepaalde manier gedraag (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Geregeld neem ik de tijd om na te denken over mijn gedachten (5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Ik denk vaak na over hoe ik me voel bij bepaalde dingen (6)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Ik ben niet echt geïnteresseerd in het analyseren van mijn gedrag (7)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Het is voor mij belangrijk om de dingen die ik doe te evalueren (8)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



**Geef aan in hoeverre u het eens bent met de volgende stellingen. Antwoord
mogelijkheid 1 (sterk mee oneens) t/m 7 (sterk mee eens).**

	Sterk mee oneens (1)	Mee oneens (2)	Beetje mee oneens (3)	Neutraal (4)	Beetje mee eens (5)	Mee eens (6)	Sterk mee eens (7)
Ik ben erg geïnteresseerd in het analyseren waarover ik denk (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Het is voor mij belangrijk om te begrijpen wat mijn gedachten betekenen (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Ik vind het absoluut nodig om te begrijpen hoe mijn gedachten werken (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Het is voor mij belangrijk om te begrijpen waar mijn gedachten vandaan komen (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Ik ben me meestal bewust van mijn gedachten (5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Ik ben vaak verward over de manier hoe ik mij voel over dingen (6)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



Geef aan in hoeverre u het eens bent met de volgende stellingen. Antwoord mogelijkheid 1 (sterk mee oneens) t/m 7 (sterk mee eens).

	Sterk mee oneens (1)	Mee oneens (2)	Beetje mee oneens (3)	Neutraal (4)	Beetje mee eens (5)	Mee eens (6)	Sterk mee eens (7)
Ik heb meestal een goed idee waarom ik me heb gedragen op een bepaalde manier (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Ik ben me vaak bewust van een gevoel, maar vaak weet ik niet precies wat het is (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Mijn gedrag verward me vaak (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Denken aan mijn gedachten maakt mij vaak meer verward (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Ik vind het vaak moeilijk om een logische verklaring te vinden voor hoe ik me voel over bepaalde dingen (5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Meestal weet ik waarom ik mij voel zoals ik mij voel (6)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



Debriefing onderzoek “Sorry seems to be the hardest word”

Bedankt voor uw deelname aan het onderzoek! Met dit onderzoek onderzoeken wij de manier en mate van verontschuldigen. Mede door uw hulp hopen wij in kader te brengen of mensen zich minder snel verontschuldigen door de angst voor ‘face-loss’, gezichtsverlies. Ook zullen we met uw antwoorden onderzoeken of mensen die zich minder verantwoordelijk voelen voor hun daden zich ook minder snel zich zullen verontschuldigen. Daarnaast zijn wij benieuwd naar de relatie tussen de mate van zelfreflectie en de mate van verontschuldigen, en of mensen met meer macht eerder of minder snel sorry zullen zeggen.

Om het onderzoek niet te beïnvloeden hebben wij het doel van het onderzoek niet eerder vermeld. Mocht u toch nog vragen hebben over het onderzoek of informatie willen kunt u contact opnemen met Fieke Harinck, 071-527 5344, email: sharinck@fsw.leidenuniv.nl. Om kans te maken op de VVV bonnen die verloot gaan worden kunt u hieronder uw email adres invullen. Vergeet niet om op het vinkje verder te klikken, hierna worden de antwoorden opgeslagen!



Appendix B: Original measures

Proclivity to Apologize Measure:

1. I tend to downplay my wrongdoings to the other person, rather than apologize.
2. I tend not to apologize because I could get into trouble for confessing.
3. If I think no one will know what I have done, I am likely not to apologize.
4. By not apologizing, it allows me to continue to behave as I want to behave.
5. To avoid feeling incompetent, I tend not to apologize.
6. I don't apologize very often because I don't like to admit that I'm wrong.
7. I don't like to apologize because it lets the other person feel superior to me.
8. My continued anger often gets in the way of me apologizing.

PrSCS-ISA measure

Engagement in self-reflection

1. I don't often think about my thoughts (R)
2. I rarely spend time in self-reflection (R)
3. I frequently examine my feelings
4. I don't really think about why I behave in the way that I do (R)
5. I frequently take time to reflect on my thoughts
6. I often think about the way I feel about things



Need for self-reflection

1. I am not really interested in analysing my behaviour (R)
2. It is important for me to evaluate the things that I do
3. I am very interested in examining what I think about
4. It is important to me to try to understand what my feelings mean
5. I have a definite need to understand the way that my mind works
6. It is important to me to be able to understand how my thoughts arise

Insight

1. I am usually aware of my thoughts
2. I am often confused about the way that I really feel about things (R)
3. I usually have a very clear idea about why I have behaved in a certain way
4. I am often aware that I am having a feeling, but I often don't quite know what it is
5. My behaviour often puzzles me (R)
6. Thinking about my thoughts make me more confused (R)
7. Often I find it difficult to make sense of the way I feel about things (R)
8. I usually know why I feel the way I do

