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Forgiveness-Granting Communication as a Facework Phenomenon

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FORGIVENESS-GRANTING COMMUNICATION
AS A FACEWORK PHENOMENON

A Thesis
Presented to
The Faculty of the Department of Communication
Western Kentucky University
Bowling Green, Kentucky

In Partial Fulfillment
Of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts

By
Ryan Cummings

August 2013

FORGIVENESS-GRANTING COMMUNICATION
AS A FACEWORK PHENOMENON

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I dedicate this thesis to my beloved wife, Jessica, who has supported me
constantly throughout this endeavor. Also, I dedicate this to my
Heavenly Father, who has provided me the
perfect example of forgiveness.

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FORGIVENESS-GRANTING COMMUNICATION
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This study sought to conceptualize forgiveness-granting communication as a facework phenomenon through utilizing the concepts of face concerns, degree of face loss, and facework strategies. Participants from public speaking courses ($N = 248$) completed a self-report survey questionnaire asking them to recall a recent forgiveness episode. Statistical analyses were conducted to discover the relationship between face and forgiveness-granting communication. The results of this study indicated the following important findings: (a) the greater one's self-face concern, the less likely one's forgiveness-granting communication is to be direct; (b) self-face concern positively predicted conditional forgiveness-granting communication; (c) degree of face loss was a positive predictor of non-expressive forgiveness-granting communication; and (d) facework strategies were the best predictors of forgiveness-granting communication. This study revealed face as a useful theoretical paradigm for understanding forgiveness-granting communication. Although the sample was fairly homogenous and three scales had undesirable reliabilities, this study has provided greater understanding of both the role of face within the forgiveness process and how communicators choose certain strategies to grant forgiveness. Based on this study, future directions were also discussed.

Key words: forgiveness-granting communication; facework; face concerns

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Forgiveness-Granting Communication as a Facework Phenomenon

The current state of the world appears unforgiving (Worthington, 2005). This last century saw two world wars and various other international skirmishes. While not as high as the 1990s, the divorce rate remains high in the United States (Yen, 2011). It appears a national and international trend that forgiveness is simply not popular. However, forgiveness plays a crucial role in relational wellness and transformation after conflicts (Merolla & Zhang, 2011). Scholars have recognized the necessity of forgiveness within interpersonal relationships (Waldron & Kelly, 2008). Proper forgiveness has the power not only to restore broken relationships but also to strengthen them.

The majority of the scholarly investigation about forgiveness has come from psychologists. While this research has established a clear relationship between forgiveness and psychological well-being (McCullough, Pargament, & Thorsen, 2000), communication scholars have lent more focused attention to the role of forgiveness within interpersonal relationships. For relationships to be restored after a transgression, relational partners must communicate forgiveness effectively. Furthermore, the role of communication within the forgiveness process, especially the meaningful communication of that forgiveness, proves important to the outcome of the conflict and the transformation of the relationship (Morse & Metts, 2011). For example, Kelley (1998) found that the proper communication of forgiveness between marital partners aided in resolving conflicts.

Thus, both psychological and communication research recognize the importance of forgiveness and the correct communication of it to relational outcomes. However, little research has examined what factors predict how communicators will express forgiveness (Waldron & Kelley, 2008). Just as understanding how forgiveness-granting strategies impact the relationship, discovering what factors impact the choice of the strategies is necessary. Scholarly work has examined the outcomes of these forgiveness-granting strategies (Waldron & Kelley, 2005), yet very limited research (Waldron & Kelley, 2008) has examined the predictors of these strategies. If communicators can understand how their interaction leading up to the granting of forgiveness affects their strategies, they can begin early relational repair even before the granting of forgiveness. Understanding what factors predict which strategy they use to grant forgiveness will give communicators not only knowledge of why they choose a certain strategy but also an ability to craft messages that positively influence the relationship within the conflict. Therefore, this study sought to understand what factors predict which forgiveness-granting strategy communicators use

To understand the predictors of forgiveness-granting strategies, this study utilized a facework perspective (Ting-Toomey, 2005). Cummings and Chai (2012) discovered that face strongly predicted whether communicators would forgive, so this study will examine if face explains how communicators forgive. Thus, this study obtained a glimpse into how interactions within the conflict influence the forgiveness-granting episode. This study pragmatically aided in understanding the importance of communicative episodes preceding the granting of forgiveness to transformed relational wellbeing within both platonic and romantic relationships

Specifically, this study sought to conceptualize and operationalize forgiveness-granting communication (Waldron & Kelley, 2005) as facework strategies. This study not only tested the relationship between forgiveness-granting strategies and face concerns, but it also sought to understand how well facework strategies within the conflict predict the forgiveness-strategy one will use.

This study contains 5 chapters. This chapter has given a basic rationale for and introduction to the study. Chapter 2 overviews relevant literature and offers the hypotheses and research questions. Chapter 3 provides the methodology for the study, detailing procedures and participants. Chapter 4 details the results of the analyses for each hypothesis and research question. Chapter 5 closes by discussing the results in light of previous literature from a scholarly perspective.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter will provide a theoretical introduction to face and forgiveness-granting communication. First, various definitions of forgiveness will be overviewed, offering one that provides a communicative perspective. Then this chapter will offer a brief history of forgiveness research, especially within the field of Communication. After discussing the forgiveness process, particular attention will be given to forgiveness-granting communication. Face—as it relates to face concerns, degree of face loss, and facework—will then be examined, finally proposing six hypotheses and two research questions.

Defining Forgiveness

Separating forgiveness from related concepts has proved an important task for forgiveness scholars (Enright & Coyle, 1998). McCullough et al. (2000) expounded on such similar phenomena:

...forgiveness should be differentiated from “pardoning” (which is a legal term), “condoning” (which implies a justification of the offense), “excusing” (which implies that the offender had a good reason for committing the offense), “forgetting” (which implies the memory of the offense has simply decayed or slipped out of conscious awareness), and “denying” (which implies simply an unwillingness to perceive the harmful injuries that one has incurred). (p. 8)

Agreeing on a conceptual definition of forgiveness has served as a difficult task for scholars. Worthington (2005) reviewed over thirty existing definitions of forgiveness, concluding that many academic definitions of forgiveness lacked coherence.

Worthington, however, noticed that most definitions emphasized one of two ideas: the cognitive aspects of forgiveness or the social norms surrounding it.

Because forgiveness research has resided mainly within psychology and the related discipline of counseling, most definitions of forgiveness have conceptualized forgiveness as a cognitive and behavioral phenomenon (DiBlasio, 1998). McCullough et al. (2000), for example, defined forgiveness as an “intra-individual, prosocial change toward a perceived transgressor that is situated within a specific interpersonal context” (p. 9). This definition emphasizes the emotional, intrapersonal aspects of forgiveness. Exline, Worthington, Hill, and McCullough (2003) conceptualized forgiveness as two distinct yet not mutually exclusive events: decisional forgiveness and emotional forgiveness. Decisional forgiveness occurs when “one will seek to behave toward the transgressor like one did prior to the transgression” (Worthington & Scherer, 2004, p. 386). With decisional forgiveness comes a change in one’s behavior toward the offender. Emotional forgiveness is “an internal experience of replacing negative, unforgiving emotions with positive, other-oriented emotions” (Hook, Worthington, & Utsey, 2009). Emotional forgiveness is an intrapersonal event that can precede or follow decisional forgiveness.

Although psychologists (Worthington, 2005) have utilized the emotional and decisional conceptualizations of forgiveness, both definitions have weaknesses. Decisional forgiveness assumes that the relationship returns to the same state as before, yet forgiveness often results in a transformed rather than restored relationship (Kelley, 1998). Rather than returning to normal, the relationships often create a new normal. Emotional forgiveness, while a useful concept, fails to recognize the interactional nature

of forgiveness. Neither definition looks at the relational nature of forgiveness, rather emphasizing the behavioral and affective aspects of it.

Communication scholars have worked to offer a nuanced definition of forgiveness that utilizes the psychological findings while also paying attention to the relational and interactional aspects of forgiveness. Kelley and Waldron (2006) offered the following definition of forgiveness:

a relational process whereby harmful conduct is acknowledged by one or both partners; the harmed partner extends undeserved mercy to the perceived transgressor; one or both partners experience a transformation from negative to positive psychological states, and the meaning of the relationship is renegotiated, with the possibility of reconciliation. (p. 305)

Overall, this definition provides a more communicative approach to forgiveness. Not only does it conceptualize forgiveness as a relational, as opposed to psychological, phenomenon, but it also emphasizes the communication between the transgressor and the forgiver about the conflict. Furthermore, it recognizes that forgiveness does not require a restoration of the relationship but a transformation. Not only do the parties' emotions and behaviors transform, but the relationship itself does too. Forgiveness not only requires communication; it is communication.

The History of Forgiveness Research

The phenomenon of forgiveness has traditionally been studied from theological and philosophical perspectives (Sandage, 1999). Throughout the early and mid-20th century, many scholars did not deem forgiveness worthy of scientific investigation (McCullough, Pargament, & Thoresen, 2000). Within the past 2 decades, this sentiment

has changed, and the empirical study of forgiveness has resided mainly within psychology, with researchers examining mainly the cognitive aspects of it (Worthington, 2005). Within more recent years, communication scholars have engaged the study of forgiveness (Waldron & Kelley, 2008).

Ramsey (2003) identified two main periods of empirical forgiveness research: 1932 to 1980 and 1980 to the present. The first period of forgiveness research began with Piaget's (1932) research into the connection between children's forgiveness and ethical judgments, finding that children were able to forgive late in adolescence as they developed independent moral judgments. Throughout the rest of the first period, most of the empirical forgiveness research examined the therapeutic impact of forgiveness (Angyal, 1952) and the impact of forgiveness within social psychological contexts. Overall, the scientific study of forgiveness was limited (McCullough, et al., 2000).

The second main period of forgiveness research began in 1980 (Ramsey, 2003). Enright and his team deeply impacted the empirical study of forgiveness within psychology in the 1980s, initially building up on Piaget's work but continuing to examine interpersonal aspects of forgiveness, too (Enright, Gassin, & Wu, 1992). Clinical psychologists examined the impact of forgiveness on mental health, which has remained an important line of research even to today (Hope, 1987). McCullough and Worthington (1994) have also arisen as leading forgiveness researchers, giving much attention to the conceptualizations of forgiveness and their impact on the study of forgiveness.

The history of forgiveness research within communication. Although communication scholars have lent much attention to the study of conflict (Wilmot & Hocker, 2011), forgiveness has remained an understudied phenomenon within

communication, with forgiveness communication scholars calling for a need for more research (Kelley & Waldron, 2006). Kelley's (1998) initial investigation into the communication of forgiveness paved the way for future communication research into forgiveness. Recognizing the lack of communication literature about forgiveness, his work built upon social psychological findings on the interpersonal aspects of forgiveness related to both interpersonal interactions and forgiveness outcomes in his study. His study offered a preliminary understanding of the strategies people use on in daily interactions to communication forgiveness. Kelley and Waldron (2005) have critiqued this inductively created list through quantitative analysis and have remained the leading scholars of the communication of forgiveness (Waldron & Kelley, 2008).

Other communication scholars have also contributed to the understanding of the communication of forgiveness. Kelley and Waldron (2006) traced the history of forgiveness studies within communication, showing that most research, like *apologia*, has examined not the communication of forgiveness but forgiveness-related phenomena. The lack of communicative research into forgiveness has changed over the last decade. For example, Carr and Want (2012) recently have examined the complex nature of forgiveness from a dialectical perspective within the family setting, showing the importance of forgiveness on family relationships. Forgiveness has also been examined within crisis communication (Moon & Rhee, 2012). Paul (2012) examined the social construction of forgiveness, comparing how different groups conceptualize forgiveness by comparing the Amish and English views of forgiveness. Morse and Metts (2011) looked at communicative factors that predict forgiveness, finding that remedial communication strategies can influence communication. Other studies have also

examined the relationship between communication-related variables and forgiveness (Kingsley Westerman, Madlock, & Jacobi, 2008; Sidelinger & Booth-Butterfield, 2007; Sidelinger, Frisby, & McMullen, 2009).

Forgiveness Communication

The aforementioned definition of forgiveness (Kelley & Waldron, 2006) emphasizes the need for understanding the communication involved in forgiveness episodes. Kelley's (1998) initial investigation into forgiveness communication has led to deeper inquiry into the topic over the last decade. Kelley (1998), in reviewing past forgiveness research proposed an initial model of the forgiveness process: "The forgiveness models described previously identify four major components that influence the forgiveness process: the nature of the relationship, motivation, strategy, and relational consequences" (p. 258). The first component, the nature of the relationship, examines not only the type of relationship, like dating or family, but also the tone of the relationship before the transgression. Motivation, although studied typically from the forgiver's perspective, concerns the attitudes of both the offender and the one granting forgiveness. Strategy examines the tactics that the offender uses in seeking forgiveness and that the forgiver uses in granting forgiveness. Finally, relational consequences relates to how the forgiveness episode impacts the relationship between the two communicators.

The current study will examine the third component of Kelley's (1998) model, strategy, because it remains the most understudied of the four parts of the model (Waldron & Kelley, 2008). Furthermore, the strategies communicators use to seek and grant forgiveness play a crucial role in the forgiveness episode because forgiveness

cannot occur without them. Kelley's inductive analysis revealed three types of strategies that communicators use both to seek and to grant forgiveness: direct, indirect, and conditional. An offender may seek forgiveness using direct strategies like apology, indirect strategies like humor and nonverbal displays such as hugging, and conditional strategies by offering possible conditions that he or she will meet to gain forgiveness. The forgiver may grant forgiveness directly through explicit verbal expressions of forgiveness, indirectly through behavior, and conditionally if the offender will agree to certain prerequisite conditions.

Forgiveness-Seeking Communication

Kelley and Waldron (2005) expanded on Kelley (1998) original findings into forgiveness communication through a quantitative study. They developed 28 survey questions, based upon Kelley's qualitative discoveries, which related to forgiveness-seeking communication. Through factor analysis, Kelley and Waldron identified five forgiveness-seeking strategies: explicit acknowledgement, nonverbal assurance, compensation, explanation, and humor. Explicit acknowledgement concerns verbal behaviors that directly apologize, take responsibility for the action, and show remorse for the transgression. Nonverbal assurance involves four nonverbal behaviors: eye contact, hugging, niceness, and facial expressions. Compensation occurs with gift giving, repeated attempts to seek forgiveness, and seeking to correct the wrong. Explanation can happen with the telling not only of the context and the motivation for the offense but also the discussion of the offense. Finally, humor occurs when joking about the offense.

Literature offers some understanding of how forgiveness-seeking communication relates to relational outcomes. Kelley and Waldron (2005) also examined the relationship

between forgiveness-seeking strategies and perceived relational change. They found that even when transgression severity was controlled, forgiveness-seeking communication influenced relational change. Furthermore, explicit acknowledgement and nonverbal assurance positively correlated with perceived change while explicit acknowledgement, nonverbal assurance, and compensation related to intimacy. Explanation and humor did not have a significant effect on the relational change.

Forgiveness-Granting Communication

According to Waldron and Kelley's (2008) model of the forgiveness episode, the next communicative event to follow forgiveness-seeking communication is forgiveness granting, in which the offended offers forgiveness to the transgressor. Waldron and Kelley (2005) adapted Kelley's (1998) qualitative findings into survey questions and, through factor analysis, discovered five distinct communication strategies that people use to grant forgiveness: nonverbal displays, conditional forgiveness, minimizing the offense, discussion, and explicit acknowledgement.

Nonverbal displays. Nonverbal displays occur when individuals initiate behaviors that implicitly state the forgiveness. Nonverbal displays can occur through positive action, like hugging, and negative action, like ceasing to act angry. Returning to behavior patterns as before the transgression can also constitute nonverbal displays.

Conditional forgiveness. Conditional forgiveness occurs when the forgiver puts provisions on the forgiveness; it typically occurs within an if/then situation. For example, a wife may forgive if the husband promises to be faithful.

Minimizing. Communicators use minimizing strategies when they play down the severity of the offense. Often forgivers will express that the offense was “not a big deal,” even if it were.

Discussion. Discussion is a direct strategy in which the transgressor and the forgiver engage in discourse about the offense. Both parties engage in meaningful conversation about the transgression and its ramifications. For example, a romantic couple may converse about how to recover their relationship after one party lies; the discussion serves as a medium for reconsidering relational rules and norms.

Explicit acknowledgement. Explicit acknowledgement is a more concise forgiveness-granting strategy. Communicators may use short statements like “I forgive you” to express the forgiveness.

While these five strategies provide a useful taxonomy for understanding forgiveness-granting strategies, they are not mutually exclusive (Waldron & Kelly, 2005). Often the strategies can accompany one another. For example, while a forgiver may use explicit acknowledgement through verbal communication, he or she may complement this message with facial expressions or other nonverbal displays. These five strategies, while conceptually distinct, still function together to form the three previously offered categories: direct, indirect, and conditional (Merolla & Zhang, 2011). These three categories constitute conceptually distinct and exclusive categories yet explain the wide range of forgiveness-granting strategies.

Direct, Non-Expression, & Conditional Forgiveness

Merolla, Zhang, and Sun (2011) examined how well the five forgiveness-granting strategies fit into the initial taxonomy of direct, indirect, and conditional forgiveness.

They concluded that the overall the three-fold taxonomy (i.e., direct, non-expression, conditional) served as a useful heuristic for organizing the five categories.

Direct Forgiveness. Communicators utilize direct forgiveness when they utilize explicit messages, whether verbal or nonverbal. For example, hugging so as to indicate forgiveness or bluntly stating “I forgive you” both constitute direct forgiveness. From Waldron and Kelley’s (2005) five types of forgiveness-granting strategies, discussion, explicit acknowledgement, minimizing, and some items from nonverbal displays factored into direct forgiveness. Within nonverbal displays, facial expressions and touch messages that communicated forgiveness constituted direct forgiveness.

Non-Expression Forgiveness. Non-expression occurs when the forgiver offers no explicit message that forgiveness has occurred; the transgressor induces forgiveness from the social context of the relationship. The offender recognizes forgiveness through the forgiver’s behavior. Some items from nonverbal displays constituted this item.

Conditional Forgiveness. Conditional forgiveness matches the same category from Waldron and Kelley’s (2005) typology. Conditional forgiveness occurs when the forgiver says that he or she will forgive either if the offense does not happen again or if he or she will agree to certain terms of the relationship.

Merolla (2008) examined forgiveness-granting strategies, direct, indirect, and conditional, as they relate to personal relationships. In contrast to previous findings (Waldron & Kelley, 2005), he investigated if communicators use indirect strategies more than direct and conditional strategies, yet no significant difference existed. Because no research has conclusively established which forgiveness-granting strategy communicators use most, the following research question is proposed:

RQ1: Which forgiveness-granting communication strategy will communicators use most?

Forgiveness-Granting Communication as Facework

Past forgiveness research has recognized the importance of face within forgiveness episodes (Geist, 2007; Kelley & Waldron, 2005; Merolla, Zhang, & Sun, 2011; Sheldon & Honeycutt, 2011). The research, while recognizing the theoretical importance of face within forgiveness episodes, has yet to establish an empirical connection between face concerns and forgiveness-granting strategies. The four aforementioned articles all recommended face and face concerns as possible extensions of their research and tied their own research theoretically to face, yet none of them actually measured face. Only Geist (2007) sought to operationalize face, yet she did so through politeness theory (Brown & Levinson, 1987) rather than through face negotiation theory. Geist's study measured items related to politeness as it impacts face rather than face itself. This study will pay more direct attention to face concerns and seek to measure them. Thus, this study seeks to build upon this theoretical relationship between face and forgiveness-granting communication through establishing an empirical link between the two concepts. Furthermore, this study seeks to understand and conceptualize forgiveness-granting communication as a facework phenomenon. Both the concepts of face concerns and facework strategies, as they relate to forgiveness granting, are examined.

Face Concerns

The concept of face comes from ancient China (Hu, 1944). Face consisted of two main ideas: *mien*, worldly prestige, and *lien*, moral worth. Goffman (1967) utilized the concept of face in his sociological studies. Goffman (1967) adopted the concept of face

into his study of social interaction. Goffman (1967) offered the following definition of *face*: “the positive social value a person effectively claims for himself by the line others assume he has taken during a particular contact” (p. 5). To understand this definition, one must first understand Goffman’s (1967) definition of *line*: “a pattern of verbal and nonverbal acts by which he expresses his view of the situation and through this his evaluation of the participants, especially himself” (p. 5). Actors enact a positive face when they perform what they believe others expect of them, their line.

Ting-Toomey’s face negotiation theory (Ting-Toomey, 1988; Ting-Toomey, 2005) utilizes face in explaining conflict styles. The theory proposes that communicators’ face concerns mediate the relationship between individualism-collectivism and conflict style (Ting-Toomey & Kurogi, 1998). The theory distinguishes between three types of face concern (Oetzel & Ting-Toomey, 2003). While self-face concerns represent one’s concern for one’s own positive social image, other-face concerns represent one’s concern for the other communicator’s positive social image. Third, communicators with mutual-face concerns care for the social images of both communicators. Face can complicate conflicts because of its emotional connections to communicators’ personal identities (Ting-Toomey, 2005).

This study adapts face negotiation theory’s findings on conflict communication to forgiveness communication to test empirically the previously established theoretical relationship between the concepts (Waldron & Kelley, 2005). Doing so not only extends face negotiation theory beyond conflict episodes to forgiveness episodes but also provides a richer understanding of the individual factors that influence forgiveness communication. Face negotiation theory (Ting-Toomey, 2005) claims that those with

self-face concerns use more direct conflict strategies while those with other-face and self-face concerns use more avoiding conflict styles. Past theoretical and empirical research has verified a connection between self-face concerns and dominating conflict strategies (see Oetzel & Ting-Toomey, 2003). In short, when one maintains self-face concerns in the conflict, he or she typically will use direct messages to save face. Applying this finding about self-face concerns to Merolla and Zhang's (2011) three-fold typology of forgiveness-granting strategies, it is proposed that just as communicators with self-face concerns use direct, dominating styles to save face within the conflict, communicators will use direct forgiveness-granting messages to save face during the forgiveness episode. Although this relationship has been conceptually discussed (e.g. Ting-Toomey, 2005), there is no empirical evidence. Thus, this study empirically tests this relationship with the following hypothesis:

H1: Self-face concerns will be positively related to direct forgiveness.

Furthermore, scholars have recognized a theoretical link between conditional forgiveness and self-face concerns although scholars have yet to test this connection empirically. Although face negotiation research has not examined conditional communication strategies, past forgiveness research (e.g., Guerrero & Bachman, 2010; Merolla, 2008) has shown that conditional forgiveness granting places the emphasis of the episode on the forgiver. Theoretically, when one forgives conditionally, he or she utilizes preventative facework behaviors (Goffman, 1967) to save face, although this connection has not received empirical testing. When one forgives conditionally, he or she puts a protection on himself or herself. Based on the theoretical link between

conditional forgiveness and self-face concerns, the following hypothesis is offered for empirical testing:

H2: Self-face concerns will be positively related to conditional forgiveness.

Face negotiation theory claims that those with other-face and mutual-face concerns utilize indirect, avoiding strategies in conflict scenarios to save the other communicator's face. This relationship has been verified empirically (Ting-Toomey, 2005). Just as there is a theoretical relationship between direct conflict strategies and direct forgiveness-granting, there is a strong theoretical relationship between avoiding conflict styles and non-expressive forgiveness-granting strategies. In both, the communicator avoids conversing with the other party, rather relying on social context for support. Merolla et al. (2011) found that Chinese utilized non-expressive strategies more than Americans. While they attributed this difference to Hofstede's (1980) national individualism-collectivism, research on face negotiation theory has shown that face concerns are a stronger predictor of avoiding communication styles than cultural individualism-collectivism (see Oetzel & Ting-Toomey, 2003). In connecting face concerns to non-expressive forgiveness granting, the following hypothesis is offered:

H3: Other-face and mutual-face concerns will be positively related to non-expression forgiveness.

Degree of Face Loss

Scholars have discovered the importance of degree of face loss within forgiveness scenarios (Hui & Bond, 2009). However, the effect of degree of face loss on forgiveness communication remains understudied. Merolla (2008) discovered that communicators reported higher use of indirect and conditional strategies and the lower use of direct

strategies as the severity and blameworthiness of the transgression rose. In adapting this research on severity of the transgression, which examines the offense, to the degree of face loss, which concerns the relationship, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H4: As face loss increases, the use of direct forgiveness-granting strategies will decrease.

H5: As face loss increases, the use of (a) non-expression forgiveness and (b) conditional forgiveness will increase.

Furthermore, the random sampling techniques of face negotiation theory have shown that face concerns serve as a significant predictor of conflict strategy even after other cultural and situational features, such as individualism-collectivism, ethnicity, gender, and conflict topic, are considered (Ting-Toomey, 2005). Morse and Metts (2005) discovered that remedial strategies predicted forgiveness even after severity of the offense was considered. In adapting this finding to face concerns, the following hypothesis is offered:

H6: Offender's face concerns will be a significant predictor of forgiveness-granting strategy used even after variance attributable to the degree of face loss has been removed.

Facework

This section will seek to conceptualize forgiveness-granting strategies as facework strategies. Ting-Toomey and Kurogi (1998) defined facework as "a set of communicative behaviors that people use to regulate their social dignity and to support or challenge the other's social dignity" (p. 188). While facework encompasses conflict styles, it also examines the relational impact of communication. Scholars have identified three overarching styles of facework: dominating, avoiding, and integrating (Oetzel et al.,

2011). While defensive communicators with self-face concerns utilize dominating facework strategies, collaborative communicators with other- and mutual-face concerns use integrating facework strategies. Competitive strategies typically result in a hostile communicative climate while integrating styles can lead to constructive conflict. Avoiding strategies either ignore the conflict or seek help from an outside party. Because all communicators desire to maintain face within conflict situations, they will use facework strategies to maintain face within the conflict (Domenici & Littlejohn, 2006).

Beyond the triad category of facework behaviors, scholars have identified eleven specific facework strategies communicators use within conflict (Oetzel et al., 2008). Avoiding facework strategies consist of giving in, pretending, and third-party. The dominating facework strategies included aggression, defending, and expressing emotion. The integrating facework strategies include apologizing, private discussion, remaining calm, problem solving, and respect.

Facework strategies also share connections with face concerns (Oetzel, Garcia, & Ting-Toomey, 2008). Other-face shares a positive relationship with remaining calm, apologizing, private discussion, giving in, and pretending and a negative relationship with expressing emotion. Self-face has a positive relationship with defending while mutual-face has a negative relationship with aggression.

Forgiveness-granting, which occurs toward the end of the conflict, is inherently a facework phenomenon. When communicators grant forgiveness to offenders, they utilize communicative strategies that affect both parties' faces. Although past research has recognized that forgiveness granting involves face (Geist, 2007), no research has examined how facework strategies relate to and influence forgiveness-granting strategies.

Although one strategy, apology, applies only to the offender, the other facework behaviors relate to the larger conflict scenario (Domenici & Littlejohn, 2006). This study seeks to understand how well facework strategies predict which forgiveness-granting strategy communicators use. Because of the unclear relationship between forgiveness-granting and facework strategies in the current literature, a deductive hypothesis cannot be proposed. Thus, the following research question is offered:

RQ2: Do facework strategies predict forgiveness-granting strategy?

This chapter has synthesized a brief history of forgiveness communication research, empirical observations about forgiveness-granting communication, and theoretical conceptualizations of face and facework to propose six hypotheses and two research questions. The overall purpose of these hypotheses and research questions is not only to gain further understanding of the role of face in forgiveness-granting communication but also to conceptualize forgiveness-granting as a facework phenomenon. The next chapter will propose a sound methodology for testing the hypotheses and answering the research questions.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

This chapter discusses the study's methodology by which the hypotheses were tested and research questions answered. First, this chapter overviews the participants of the study, providing a rationale for the sampling technique and detailing descriptive statistics about the participants. Next this chapter details the procedures for the study, paying special attention to the measurements utilized within the survey. Finally, this chapter provides the statistical techniques used within descriptive and inferential analysis.

Participants

Past forgiveness communication research (e.g., Kelley, 1998; Kelley & Waldron, 2005; Waldron & Kelley, 2005) that has recruited samples of varying ages, from 18 to 83, has shown that forgiveness communication remains fairly consistent across different stages of life. Cross-cultural research on forgiveness-granting strategies (Merolla, Zhang, & Sun, 2011), however, has demonstrated that forgiveness communication varies with culture. Thus, this study focused on one culture, and the study population was adult U.S. Americans. Sampling frame was students in introductory public speaking classes.

In securing a sample to infer findings to the population (Henry, 1990), a list of all 26 sections of COMM 145, Fundamentals of Public Speaking served as a sampling frame. The researcher asked professors of all 26 sections permission to give the survey to their students; professors teaching 16 sections allowed the researcher to administer the survey to their students in class. Thus, convenience sampling was utilized. The researcher attended the 16 sections. Most participants averaged about 10 minutes to complete the survey. All students in attendance agreed to take the survey.

A total of 248 participants completed the survey. There were 103 males and 141 female who participated in the study; 4 participants did not report their gender. The average age (in years) corresponded with that of typical college freshman ($M = 19.64$, $SD = 2.97$). Participants also reported the gender of the person whom they had forgiven: 125 participants reported they had forgiven a male while 116 reported they had forgiven a female, and 4 did not report it. Thus, the gender of those who had forgiven and those whom they had forgiven was somewhat evenly distributed. The majority of participants were white ($n = 177$) while 5 Hispanics, 7 Asian/Pacific Islanders, 5 Native Americans, 39 African Americans, 8 of other ethnicities, and 7 unreported also completed the survey. Also, following Kelley and Waldron (2005), the survey asked participants to recall how well they remembered the episode in which they had forgiven the other person on a scale of 1 (Not very well) to 5 (Very well). Overall, participants recalled the episode well ($M = 3.98$, $SD = 1.04$).

Procedures

After obtaining IRB approval, the researcher administered paper and pencil surveys in each class. The surveys consisted of 78 questions. Only participants who could remember a situation in which they had forgiven a friend or romantic partner were asked to complete the survey (Merolla et al., 2011).

Measurement

The instrument first asked respondents to remember a recent situation in which they have forgiven a close friend or romantic partner. Respondents were then asked to complete 73 items about the episode. The final section of the instrument contained

demographic questions and a question asking participants to recall how well they remembered the episode.

Forgiveness-granting communication. Merolla et al.'s (2011) 11-item modified adaptation of Waldron and Kelley's (2005) scale was used to measure forgiveness-granting communication. The 8-point Likert-type scale measures the extent to which communicators used a particular strategy. A 0 rating indicates no use while a 1 rating will indicate "very slight use" and a 7 rating indicate "very extensive use." Merolla et al.'s (2011) scale measures three forms of forgiveness-granting communication: direct, non-expressive, and conditional. Six items measured direct forgiveness, 3 items measured non-expressive forgiveness, and 2 items measured conditional forgiveness. The Cronbach's alphas were not as high as desirable but still satisfactory for the study ($\alpha = .83$ for direct forgiveness, $\alpha = .64$ for non-expressive forgiveness, and $\alpha = .76$ for conditional forgiveness). Two items, questions 72 and 73, were removed from the direct forgiveness scale as they did not factor in with the other items. Table 1 offers the descriptive statistics and reliability alphas for all variables.

Face concerns. Ting-Toomey and Oetzel's (2001) face concerns scale was utilized to measure face concerns. The 22-item measure uses a 5-point Likert-type scale with intervals from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The 11-item other-face concern had the strongest reliability ($\alpha = .91$) while the 4-item mutual-face concern ($\alpha = .76$) and the 7-item self-face concern ($\alpha = .87$) had high reliabilities, too.

Degree of face loss. Hui and Bond's (2006) 7-item scale was utilized to measure degree of perceived face loss. The scale is measured on a 7-point Likert-type scale on a

range of 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). The reliability alpha was high for this study ($\alpha = .89$).

Facework strategy. Baranova's (2010) abbreviated 33-item version of the 63-item facework strategies scale was used to measure the 11 categories (Ting-Toomey & Oetzel, 2001). The scale utilizes a 5-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Three items measured each of the 11 strategies.

Reliability alphas were strong for many dimensions: aggression ($\alpha = .76$); problem solve ($\alpha = .76$); defend ($\alpha = .60$); respect ($\alpha = .79$); apologize ($\alpha = .80$); pretend ($\alpha = .69$); third party ($\alpha = .74$); expression ($\alpha = .58$); remain calm ($\alpha = .71$); private discussion ($\alpha = .71$); and give in ($\alpha = .75$). To improve some of the reliabilities, one item, "I pretended not to be hurt," was removed from the pretending scale, and one item, "I expressed myself in a somewhat vague manner," was removed from the expression scale. The final reliabilities for these were more desirable, $\alpha = .77$ for pretending and $\alpha = .75$ for expression.

Data Analysis

After data collection was complete, all data were entered into Excel. The data were then analyzed using Statistical Analysis Software (SAS).

Preliminary analysis. Once the researcher entered data into SAS, he first constructed testing variables. Average scores were calculated for each variable and used throughout analysis. For example, all items related to self-face concerns were averaged together so that a new column was created, which was used for the analysis of self-face concerns in later statistics.

To examine the normality of each variable, histograms were observed, along with examining descriptive statistics like mean, standard deviation, skewness, and kurtosis.

The researcher examined the histograms for the normal curve, and the variables had essentially normal curves (Jaeger, 1990). Once normality was confirmed, the researcher examined the reliabilities of the scales by looking at Chronbach's alpha for each scale. Furthermore, the researcher ran a confirmatory factor analysis on each of the scales to examine the factor clusters of each of the scales. Finally, the researcher constructed a correlation matrix for all of the variables to examine bivariate relationships between variables.

Hypotheses testing. Statistical tests were used to answer the two research questions and to test six hypotheses.

RQ1. RQ1 concerned which forgiveness-granting strategy communicators will use the most. To answer this question, mean scores were first examined. Frequency distributions were also examined.

H1-H3. Hypotheses 1-3 concerned positive relationships between face concerns and forgiveness-granting communication strategy. One-tailed Pearson's product-moment correlation was used to test the relationship. The data met the assumptions to use this parametric statistic. The assumptions are: (a) both variables are interval-level data and (b) the data are relatively normal.

H4-H5. Hypotheses 4 and 5 predicted the positive relationships between forgiveness-granting strategies and degree of face loss. Both variables are interval-level data. As they are a relatively normal distribution, bivariate linear regression was used to test both of these one-tailed hypotheses.

H6. Hypothesis 6 tested a particular forgiveness-seeking strategy communicators use is based upon face concerns, controlling for degree of face loss. A hierarchical

regression analysis was utilized after collinearity was examined. As collinearity among variables does not exceed .8 (Field & Miles, 2010), a multiple regression analysis was used. Correlations among variables are in Table 2. The first block was face concerns, and the second was degree of face loss. The outcome variable was forgiveness-granting strategy.

RQ2. Research Question 2 explored the ability of facework strategies to predict which forgiveness-granting strategy communicators use. The researcher first examined the multicollinearity of the variables. Correlation among independent variables did not exceed .8, so multiple regression analysis was used. Correlations among all variables are in Table 8.

This chapter overviewed the participants, procedures, measures, and analytic strategies of this study. Although three reliability alphas were lower than desired, this methodology provided a satisfactory mechanism for hypotheses testing and answering the research questions. The next chapter will provide the results of the analyses.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS

After constructing variables and running reliability analysis on the scales, the researcher examined correlation among all variables. As all scaled variables were interval-level data, Pearson's r was utilized. The correlation matrix proved important not only for testing H1 through H5 but also in examining before conducting regression analysis. An abbreviated correlation matrix excluding facework variables is in Table 2. Statistical analysis was used for each hypothesis and research question. Results are reported below by hypothesis or research question.

RQ1

RQ1 sought to discover which forgiveness-granting communication strategy communicators used most frequently. Mean ratings revealed direct forgiveness granting as the most used strategy, $M = 3.95$, $SD = 1.73$. Conditional forgiveness granting had the second highest frequency, $M = 3.56$, $SD = 1.98$ while non-expressive forgiveness granting had the lowest frequency, $M = 2.63$, $SD = 1.62$.

H1-H3

H1 predicted a positive correlation between self-face concerns and direct forgiveness granting. This hypothesis was not supported, $r(237) = -.02$, $p = .76$. Unexpectedly, however, direct forgiveness had a positive relationship with both mutual-face concerns, $r(238) = .32$, $p < .001$, and other-face concerns, $r(231) = .32$, $p < .001$. The results of all correlations are listed in Table 2.

H2 predicted a positive correlation between self-face concerns and conditional forgiveness granting. This hypothesis was supported, $r(237) = .21$, $p < .01$. Conditional

forgiveness also had a significant relationship with other-face concerns, $r(232) = .16, p = .02$, yet was not significantly related with mutual-face concerns, $r(238) = .05, p = .43$.

H3 predicted a positive correlation between other-face and mutual-face concerns with non-expressive forgiveness granting. This hypothesis was not supported. Non-expressive forgiveness had an insignificant relationship with mutual-face concerns, $r(237) = -.03, p = .66$, and other-face concerns, $r(230) = .12, p = .06$. Self-face concerns, however, had a positive relationship with non-expressive forgiveness, $r(236) = .17, p < .01$.

In summary, self-face concerns had a positive relationship with both non-expressive forgiveness and conditional forgiveness granting yet did not have a significant relationship with direct forgiveness granting. Mutual-face concerns was positively related to direct forgiveness granting yet had no significant relationship with either non-expressive forgiveness granting or conditional forgiveness granting. Other-face concerns had a significant relationship with direct and conditional forgiveness granting yet lacked a significant relationship with non-expressive forgiveness granting.

H4-H5

H4 predicted that an increase in degree of face loss would predict a decrease in the use of direct forgiveness granting. Initial Pearson's correlation was examined, revealing no significant relationship between the two variables, $r(235) = .02, p = .71$. Regression results to H4 can be viewed in Table 3. Thus, H4 was not supported.

H5 predicted that an increase in degree of face loss would predict an increase in the use of non-expressive forgiveness granting and conditional forgiveness granting. Pearson's correlation revealed a significant positive relationship between degree of face

loss and non-expressive forgiveness granting, $r(234) = .26, p < .001$, yet no significant relationship between degree of face loss and conditional forgiveness granting was found, $r(235) = .11, p = .08$. Regression confirmed degree of face loss as a significant positive predictor of non-expressive forgiveness, $b = .30, t(234) = 4.18, p < .001$. Degree of face loss explained a small portion of variance in non-expressive forgiveness granting communication, $F(1, 234) = 17.47, R^2 = .07, p < .001$. Degree of face loss was an insignificant predictor of conditional forgiveness granting, $b = .09, t(235) = 1.75, p = .08$. Thus, H5 was partially supported. Regression results to H5 are shown in Table 3. In summary, degree of face loss was a positive predictor of non-expressive forgiveness yet had an insignificant relationship with direct forgiveness and conditional forgiveness.

H6

H6 claimed that face concerns would predict which forgiveness-granting strategy communicators would use, even after controlling for degree of face loss. As the hypotheses claimed degree of face loss would not significantly change the predictive power of face concerns, multiple regression analyses were first conducted without controlling for degree of face loss. Results are in Table 4. After this analysis, which is reported in the next three paragraphs, multiple regression, controlling for degree of face loss, was conducted.

The multiple regression analyses showed face concerns as significant predictors of which forgiveness-granting strategy communicators would choose. Face concerns explained more variance for direct forgiveness granting, $F(3, 227) = 14.99, R^2 = .17, p < .001$, than for the non-expressive forgiveness granting, $F(3, 226) = 3.70, R^2 = .05, p <$

.05, or conditional forgiveness granting, $F(3, 228) = 3.70, R^2 = .06, p < .01$. All three models were statistically significant.

All three face concerns were significant predictors of direct forgiveness granting. While self-face concern was a negative predictor of direct forgiveness granting, $b = -.35, t(237) = -2.44, p < .05$, mutual-face concerns, $b = .73, t(237) = 3.64, p < .001$, and other-face concerns, $b = .59, t(237) = 3.36, p < .001$, were positive predictors of direct forgiveness granting. Face concerns explained a portion of variance in direct forgiveness granting, $F(3, 227) = 14.99, R^2 = .17, p < .001$.

Self-face concern was the only significant predictor of non-expressive forgiveness, $b = .33, t(226) = 3.73, p < .05$. Mutual-face concerns and other-face concerns were insignificant predictors of non-expressive forgiveness granting. Self-face concern was, likewise, the only significant predictor of conditional forgiveness, $b = .47, t(237) = 2.73, p < .01$. Face concerns explained a low portion of variance in non-expressive forgiveness-granting, $F(3, 226) = 3.70, R^2 = .05, p < .05$.

After examining the multiple regression, hierarchical multiple regression analyses, controlling for degree of face loss, were conducted. Results are in Table 5. All three face concerns remained significant predictors of direct forgiveness, with their betas changing very little. Other-face concerns was a somewhat stronger predictor $b = .64, t(222) = 3.59, p < .001$, while mutual-face concerns remained the strongest predictor of direct forgiveness granting, $b = .71, t(222) = 3.54, p < .001$. Self-face concerns remained a negative predictor of direct forgiveness granting, $b = -.35, t(222) = -2.42, p < .05$. Face concerns still explained a portion of variance in direct forgiveness granting, $F(4, 222) =$

11.80, $R^2 = .20$, $p < .001$. Thus, degree of face loss did not change the relationship between face concerns and direct forgiveness granting.

Non-expressive forgiveness granting was the most changed variable by controlling for degree of face loss. Degree of face loss was a significant predictor for only non-expressive forgiveness, $b = .30$, $t(234) = 4.18$, $p < .001$, explaining a small portion of variance in the strategy, $F(1, 234) = 17.47$, $R^2 = .07$, $p < .001$. While a self-face concern was a significant positive predictor of non-expressive forgiveness in the initial regression model, it became an insignificant predictor after controlling for degree of face loss, $b = .22$, $t(221) = 1.54$, $p = .12$. This insignificance of self-face concern was the only change in the predicted model after controlling for degree of face loss in all three regression models.

The predictive power of conditional forgiveness, after controlling for degree of face loss, was essentially unchanged. While mutual-face concerns and other-face concerns remained insignificant predictors of conditional forgiveness granting, self-face concern remained a significant positive predictor of the outcome variable, $b = .49$, $t(223) = 2.82$, $p < .01$, $R^2 = .07$, $F(4, 223) = 4.38$, $p < .01$. Thus, H6 was supported.

RQ2

RQ2 sought to discover if facework strategies predicted forgiveness-granting communication strategies. Regression analyses discovered that facework strategies were the strongest predictors of forgiveness-granting communication, explaining more variance in the three styles than degree of face loss and face concerns. Regression analyses were conducted using all 11 strategies.

The multiple regression analysis predicting the forgiveness granting strategies from the 11 facework strategies revealed a few of the independent variables as strong predictors. The facework strategies explained the most variance in direct forgiveness granting, $F(11, 218) = 14.15, R^2 = .42, p < .001$. Interestingly, apology was the strongest predictor of direct forgiveness granting, $b = .56, t(218) = 4.75, p < .001$. Third-party help, $b = .22, t(218) = 2.14, p < .05$, respect, $b = .48, t(218) = 2.45, p < .05$, and expression, $b = -.26, t(218) = -1.93, p < .05$, were also significant predictors of direct forgiveness granting. All other independent variables were insignificant. Results are in Table 6.

The portion of variance explained in non-expressive forgiveness granting was lower than for direct forgiveness granting, $F(11, 216) = 4.23, R^2 = .18, p < .001$. Two facework strategies were significant predictors of non-expressive forgiveness granting. Give in was the strongest predictor, $b = .45, t(216) = 3.51, p < .001$, while third-party help, $b = .28, t(216) = 2.51, p < .01$, was also a positive predictor of non-expressive forgiveness granting.

The facework strategies also explained a portion of variance in conditional forgiveness granting, $F(11, 217) = 6.26, R^2 = .24, p < .001$. Defending was the strongest predictor of conditional forgiveness granting, $b = .94, t(217) = 5.48, p < .001$. Problem solve, $b = .51, t(217) = 2.23, p < .05$, and third-party help, $b = .27, t(217) = 1.98, p < .05$, also predicted conditional forgiveness granting.

Multiple regression, controlling for face concerns and degree of face loss, was conducted to test for the predictive power of the facework strategies for the forgiveness-granting strategies. Complete results are shown in Table 7.

This chapter has offered the results of the statistical analyses for the six hypotheses and two research questions. The next chapter will interpret the quantitative findings in light of the forgiveness and face theories.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION

This study sought to discover the relationship between facework and forgiveness-granting communication by examining whether face concerns, degree of face loss, and facework strategies were related to and predicted which forgiveness-granting communication strategy one would use. The important findings of this study are as follows: (a) the greater one's self-face concern, the less likely one's forgiveness-granting communication is to be direct; (b) self-face concern positively predicted conditional forgiveness-granting communication; (c) degree of face loss was a positive predictor of non-expressive forgiveness-granting communication; and (d) facework strategies were the best predictors, of all independent variables, of forgiveness-granting communication. Each result is discussed in detail below:

Face Concerns

As predicted in Hypothesis 6, face concerns (Ting-Toomey, 2005) were significant predictors of which forgiveness-granting strategy communicators would use. Self-face concern positively predicted both non-expressive forgiveness granting and conditional forgiveness granting yet was a negative predictor of direct forgiveness granting. Other-face concerns positively predicted direct forgiveness. Mutual-face concerns, like other-face concerns, positively predicted direct forgiveness granting. Thus, the less concerned about one's own face, the more likely the communicator is to use direct forgiveness granting, which was an unexpected finding because past studies found self-face concerns as related with direct communication (Ting-Toomey & Oetzel, 2003). Brown and Levinson's (1987) discernment between positive and negative face

may help to make sense of this finding as Park et al. (2012) found that self-negative face and other-positive face were positively related to direct communication. This study did not measure positive and negative face, so the difference between the two types of face concern may account for the unexpected relationship between self-face concern and direct forgiveness-granting communication. The relationship between self-face concerns and conditional forgiveness granting was expected as both variables have been discovered as destructive to the forgiveness process (Cummings & Chai, 2012; Merolla & Zhang, 2011). Therefore, this study, while demonstrating the utility of the three-fold conceptualization of face concerns, extended the understanding of face concerns by demonstrating their predictive power of forgiveness-granting communication.

Degree of Face Loss

As predicted in Hypotheses 4 and 5, degree of face loss was unrelated to and an insignificant predictor of direct and conditional forgiveness granting. However, it was a significant predictor of non-expressive forgiveness granting. An increase in degree of face loss predicted an increase in the use of non-expressive forgiveness granting. This result supported Merolla's (2008) finding that as severity of transgression rose, the use of indirect forgiveness granting strategies increased. Merolla (2008), however, found that as severity of the transgression rose, the use of direct forgiveness granting strategies decreased; this finding was not supported in this study in reference to degree of face loss. This unexpected finding may result from the theoretical differences between transgression severity and degree of face loss (Hui & Bond, 2009). While severity of transgression concerns the conflict, degree of face loss concerns the relationship. Although this study did not find a relationship between degree of face loss and direct

forgiveness granting, it did not test for transgression severity; future research should investigate the theoretical differences between the two constructs. This study revealed that although degree of face loss may not influence forgiveness-granting communication as much as face concerns and facework strategies, it still impacts the forgiveness process. Furthermore, degree of face loss should not be equated with transgression severity as findings of each differ in respect to predicting forgiveness-granting strategies.

Facework Strategies

As posed in Research Question 2, this study found that facework strategies explained the most variance in forgiveness granting communication strategies. Dominating strategies were overall poor predictors of forgiveness granting communication strategies. Aggression did not significantly predict any strategy. Defending, however, was a strong positive predictor of conditional forgiveness granting; this made theoretical sense as both typically relate to a self-face concern (Oetzel et al., 2008). Unexpectedly, expression was a negative predictor of direct forgiveness granting. This finding revealed the complexity of the forgiveness process (Waldron & Kelley, 2008). While communicators may use direct communication strategies in the conflict leading up to the granting of forgiveness, other variables may cause communicators to shift their strategies in the forgiveness-granting episode. Thus, a direct facework strategy in the conflict does not predict a direct forgiveness-granting strategy.

Avoiding strategies had both intuitive and counterintuitive results. As expected, give in was a positive predictor of non-expressive forgiveness granting. Both strategies are indirect in nature (Merolla et al., 2011). Pretending did not significantly predict any forgiveness granting strategy. Interestingly, third-party help was a positive predictor of

all three forgiveness granting strategies. Although Oetzel et al. (2008) classified third-party help as an avoiding facework strategy, this study revealed that it may be an exclusive strategy and not inherently avoiding.

The integrating strategies had intuitive predictive relationships with forgiveness granting communication. Although remaining calm and private discussion were insignificant predictors of any strategy, problem solve was the only predictor of conditional forgiveness granting, having a positive relationship. Apologizing and respect were both positive predictors of direct forgiveness granting. Interestingly, these two integrating strategies were stronger predictors of direct forgiveness granting than the dominating facework strategies. This result again illustrated the complexity of facework (Ting-Toomey & Oetzel, 2001). As the dominating facework strategies were expected to be stronger predictors than the integrating strategies of direct forgiveness granting, this result illustrated that communicators can change their level of directness throughout the forgiveness process. In addition, communicators may change their strategies throughout the process, shifting from integrating to dominating. This study, however, did not measure to discover what variables cause communicators to change their strategies.

After controlling for face concerns and degree of face loss, the only major change in the prediction of forgiveness granting strategy by facework strategies occurred with the prediction of conditional forgiveness granting from third-party help. Although third-party help was considered a predictor of conditional forgiveness granting, it was insignificant after including the controls of face concerns and degree of face loss. This result showed that degree of face loss affected the relationship between third-party help and conditional forgiveness granting. Thus, overall communicators who seek third-party

help use a conditional strategy to grant forgiveness. However, this result does not remain constant once considering for degree of face loss. For example, a communicator with a high degree of face loss who seeks third-party help may utilize non-expressive forgiveness granting while another communicator who seeks third-party help with a low degree of face loss may utilize conditional or direct strategies. Thus, it is more difficult to predict which forgiveness-granting strategy communicators will use when controlling for degree of face loss. All other facework variables (i.e., giving in, pretending, aggression, defending, expressing emotion, apologizing, private discussion, remaining calm, problem solving, and respect) changed very little after including the controls. Facework strategies remained the strongest predictors of forgiveness-granting communication strategy. This study extended the understanding of facework strategies by illustrating their importance within the communication of forgiveness granting.

Forgiveness-Granting Communication

This study revealed the facework perspective (Goffman, 1967) as a useful theoretical paradigm by which to understand forgiveness granting communication. While facework strategies were the strongest predictors of forgiveness granting strategy, face concerns and degree of face loss were also significant predictors of the strategies.

Direct forgiveness granting, the most used strategy, had the most variance explained by the face-related predictors of all three strategies. From a face concerns perspective, lower concern for one's own face predicts a higher use of direct forgiveness granting. The strongest predictors of direct forgiveness granting were the integrating facework strategies, which have been found to relate to other and mutual-face concerns (Oetzel et al., 2008). Thus, communicators are likely to use direct forgiveness granting

when they have other and mutual-face concerns, while also utilizing integrating facework strategies.

Non-expressive forgiveness granting was best predicted by degree of face loss and avoiding facework strategies. In all models, degree of face loss was a positive predictor of non-expressive forgiveness granting. Thus, the more the transgressor causes face loss of the other communicator and the more the forgiver uses avoiding strategies, the more likely the forgiver is to be indirect in the forgiveness granting episode.

Conditional forgiveness granting was positively predicted by self-face concerns, defending, and unexpectedly respect. Merolla et al. (2011) found conditional forgiveness granting as the most harmful to the relationship of the three strategies. Likewise, defending and self-face concerns (Oetzel et al., 2008) are harmful to the relationship. The positive relationship between respect and conditional forgiveness granting is counterintuitive as respect seeks to recognize the face of the other communicator while conditional forgiveness granting is related to self-face concerns. This result showed, as with other results, the complexity of the forgiveness process and the variations in communication that can occur throughout it. Therefore, communicators are most likely to use conditional forgiveness granting when they have a self-face concern. The facework strategies of defending and respect also predict the use of conditional forgiveness granting. Overall, this study extended forgiveness communication research by demonstrating the facework perspective as empirically significant in understanding forgiveness-granting communication.

Limitations

While this study has extended the understanding of forgiveness-granting communication as a facework phenomenon, a few limitations exist. The reliability alpha of non-expressive forgiveness granting was undesirably low, so future research should begin by improving the reliability of this scale. On the facework scale, the finalized defending scale also had too low reliability, as did the initial pretending and expression scales before removing items. The sample's homogeneity allows for generalization of the quantitative results to American college-aged students, but future research should examine the role of face within the forgiveness-granting episode within other cultures. The self-report data asked participants to recall multiple stages of a conflict leading up to and including their granting of forgiveness. However, research has found that participants' introspective ability and memory of the episodes may be skewed (Schacter, 1999). Thus, the responses may lack validity as to what actually occurred within the conflict. To overcome this limitation, future research should seek to study participants' actual behavior within the conflict rather than in retrospect and also the perceptions of the transgressors within the conflict, to measure both parties' views of the conflict and the forgiveness. A longitudinal study, for example, would assist in understanding the dynamic nature of face within the forgiveness phenomenon and in measuring participants' perceptions within the forgiveness process rather than after the fact. Furthermore, interpretive research would aid in understanding how communicators enact face within the forgiveness process and how face and forgiveness shape one another (Arundale, 2006).

Directions for Future Research

Future research needs to investigate further the role of face and facework in the forgiveness process. While a relationship between face concerns and forgiveness-granting communication was found, future research should investigate why self-face concerns lacked a relationship with direct forgiveness granting. This result was not only unexpected but also disagreed with past conceptualizations of self-face concerns' relationship with direct communication (Ting-Toomey, 2005). Future research also should examine which face concern is most conducive to the relationship within a forgiveness episode. Also, future research should examine the interaction of the face concerns variables. For example, how does someone with self-face concerns enact direct forgiveness versus someone with other-face concerns? A qualitative approach would serve well for this inquiry. Also, as stated earlier, future research should examine the differences between positive and negative face as they may predict forgiveness-granting strategies better. Furthermore, other cultural variables, like individualism-collectivism, may mediate the relationship between face and forgiveness-granting communication.

Further, future research should investigate why degree of face loss was a positive predictor of non-expressive forgiveness because this finding was unexpected. Although facework strategies were significant, strong predictors of forgiveness-granting communication strategies, two unexpected findings emerged. First, third-party help was a significant predictor of all three forgiveness-granting communication strategies. Future inquiry should seek to understand the reason for this relationship. Second, respect was a positive predictor of conditional forgiveness-granting communication; future research should seek to understand this relationship, too. Future research should also expand these

findings to examine forgiveness-seeking communication strategies (Kelley & Waldron, 2005).

Conclusion

This study made theoretical contributions not only by situating forgiveness communication within face theories but also by showing the utility of understanding forgiveness-granting communication as a facework phenomenon. Although this is a useful first attempt, future studies are needed to understand forgiveness granting communication. Face should continue to be utilized to understand the complex phenomenon of forgiveness.

APPENDIX A: INFORMED CONSENT

FACE-TO-FACE INFORMED CONSENT DOCUMENT

Project Title: Forgiveness-Granting Communication as a Facework Phenomenon

Investigator: Ryan Cummings/ Communication Department/ 270-282-1719

Faculty Advisor: Dr. Kumi Ishii, Associate Professor, Communication, contact: kumi.ishii@wku.edu

You are being asked to participate in a project conducted through Western Kentucky University. The University requires that you give your agreement to participate in this project.

The investigator will explain to you in detail the purpose of the project, the procedures to be used, and the potential benefits and possible risks of participation. You may ask him any questions you have to help you understand the project. A basic explanation of the project is written below. Please read this explanation and discuss with the researcher any questions you may have.

If you then decide to participate in the project, please sign on the last page of this form in the presence of the person who explained the project to you. You should be given a copy of this form to keep. **If you are under 18, please stop now!**

1. **Nature and Purpose of the Project:** It is my understanding that the purpose of this project is to explore the relationship between facework and forgiveness through a survey.
2. **Explanation of Procedures:** It is my understanding that the researcher will administer surveys, taking about ten minutes to complete, through which I will be asked about a recent forgiveness episode with a close friend or romantic partner, specifically my face concerns, facework strategies, and forgiveness communication patterns. The survey will be completed face to face within the classroom.
3. **Discomfort and Risks:** It is my understanding that this study places me at little to no risk. The probability of harm anticipated is no greater than I would encounter in everyday life.
4. **Benefits:** I understand that my participation will give me the opportunity to give information about my forgiveness patterns, shedding light on the forgiveness process in general.
5. **Confidentiality:** The survey will not ask your name. In addition, all responses will be kept strictly confidential. Records will be viewed, stored, and maintained in private, secure files only accessible by the researcher and faculty advisor for three years following the study, after which time they will be destroyed.
6. **Refusal/Withdrawal:** Refusal to participate in this study will have no effect on any future services you may be entitled to from the University. Anyone who agrees to participate in this study is free to withdraw from the study at any time with no penalty.

You understand also that it is not possible to identify all potential risks in an experimental procedure, and you believe that reasonable safeguards have been taken to minimize both the known and potential but unknown risks.

Your continued cooperation with the study implies your consent.

THIS PROJECT HAS BEEN REVIEWED AND APPROVED BY
THE WESTERN KENTUCKY UNIVERSITY INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD
Paul Mooney, Human Protections Administrator
TELEPHONE: (270) 745-2129



APPENDIX B: SURVEY

Forgiveness Questionnaire

Thank you for participating in this anonymous survey. It consists of four sections. Please read the directions carefully and answer the questions as completely and truthfully as possible.

Please recall a recent time in which you forgave a close friend or romantic partner. Answer the following questions about your concerns and actions in the events leading up to your forgiveness of the person.

Please use the following scale:

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree				
1	2	3	4	5				
1	Relationship harmony was important to me.			1	2	3	4	5
2	Maintaining humbleness to preserve the relationship was important to me.			1	2	3	4	5
3	My concern was to act humble in order to make the other person feel good.			1	2	3	4	5
4	Maintaining peace in our interaction was important to me.			1	2	3	4	5
5	I didn't want to embarrass myself in front of the other person.			1	2	3	4	5
6	Helping to maintain the other person's pride was important to me.			1	2	3	4	5
7	I wanted to maintain my dignity in front of the other person.			1	2	3	4	5
8	A peaceful resolution to the conflict was important to me.			1	2	3	4	5
9	My primary concern was helping the other person to save face.			1	2	3	4	5
10	Preserving our mutual self-images was important to me.			1	2	3	4	5
11	Saving both of our faces was important to me.			1	2	3	4	5
12	My primary concern was protecting both of our feelings.			1	2	3	4	5

13	My concern was to help the other person maintain his/her dignity.	1	2	3	4	5
I was concerned with:						
14	...respectful treatment for both of us.	1	2	3	4	5
15	...maintaining the poise of the other person.	1	2	3	4	5
16	...not bringing shame to myself.	1	2	3	4	5
17	...protecting my self-image.	1	2	3	4	5
18	...maintaining my own poise.	1	2	3	4	5
19	...helping the other person maintain his/her credibility.	1	2	3	4	5
20	...not appearing weak in front of the other person.	1	2	3	4	5
21	...helping the other person to preserve his/her self-image.	1	2	3	4	5
22	...protecting my personal pride.	1	2	3	4	5
23	I pretended not to be hurt.	1	2	3	4	5
24	I listened to the other person to show respect.	1	2	3	4	5
25	I waited until we were by ourselves to talk about the problem.	1	2	3	4	5
26	I worked with the other to find a mutually acceptable solution.	1	2	3	4	5
27	I pretended as if the conflict didn't exist.	1	2	3	4	5
28	I gave into the other person's wishes.	1	2	3	4	5
29	I let the other person know clearly what I was thinking.	1	2	3	4	5
30	I insisted I was right.	1	2	3	4	5
31	I said bad things about the person behind his/her back.	1	2	3	4	5
32	I expressed myself in a somewhat vague manner.	1	2	3	4	5
33	I gave in, in order to end the conflict.	1	2	3	4	5
34	I admitted I made a mistake and apologized.	1	2	3	4	5
35	I insisted my position be accepted during the conflict.	1	2	3	4	5
36	I agreed with the other person to end the conflict.	1	2	3	4	5
37	I asked for forgiveness for my actions.	1	2	3	4	5
38	I suggested solutions which combined both of our	1	2	3	4	5

viewpoints.						
39	I apologized for what was happening.	1	2	3	4	5
I tried to:						
40	... defend my position.	1	2	3	4	5
41	... ignore the conflict and behaved as if nothing happened.	1	2	3	4	5
42	...ask a third party to intervene to help us settle the problem.	1	2	3	4	5
43	... remain calm.	1	2	3	4	5
44	... NOT discuss the problem in front of others.	1	2	3	4	5
45	... maintain my composure.	1	2	3	4	5
46	...be considerate to show respect for the person.	1	2	3	4	5
47	... ridicule the other person	1	2	3	4	5
48	...ask a third party to make a suggestion about how to settle the dispute.	1	2	3	4	5
49	... express my feelings in a straightforward manner.	1	2	3	4	5
50	... talk with the other person through an outside party.	1	2	3	4	5
51	...NOT get overtly angry.	1	2	3	4	5
52	...compromise with the other person.	1	2	3	4	5
53	... listen well to work on our problems.	1	2	3	4	5
54	...verbally insult him/her.	1	2	3	4	5
55	... keep our discussion private.	1	2	3	4	5

Now, consider about the actions of the person who hurt you. Think about how it affected you and made you feel. Answer these questions about the event.

Definitely Not						Definitely					
1	2	3	4	5	6	7					
56	The person's actions made you feel weak and unable to control what was happening.				1	2	3	4	5	6	7
57	The person's actions made you look weak and unable				1	2	3	4	5	6	7

	to control what was happening.								
58	The person's actions made you look intimidated to other people.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
59	The person's actions made you feel intimidated.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
60	What the person did damaged your reputation in the eyes of other people.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
61	What the person did damaged your self-image.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
62	The person's actions hurt your self-esteem.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	

Next, recall the extent to which you used these strategies when you granted forgiveness.

No Use	Very Slightly Use							Very Extensively Use	
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
63	The expression on my face said "I forgive you."	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
64	I did not say anything related to forgiveness to him/her.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
65	I told him/her I would forgive him/her only if things changed.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
66	I told them I forgive them.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
67	I forgave them but said nothing to him/her about it.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
68	I told him/her I would forgive him/her if the offense never happened again.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
69	I touched him/her in a way that communicated forgiveness.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
70	Nothing said or done. Forgiveness just happened.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
71	I gave him/her a look that communicated forgiveness.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

APPENDIX C: TABLE 1

Table 1
Descriptive Statistics and Reliability Alphas of Scaled Variables

	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>α</i>
<i>Face Concerns</i>				
Mutual Face Concerns	246	4.29	.61	.76
Self Face Concerns	244	3.78	.79	.87
Other Face Concerns	238	3.54	.73	.91
<i>Facework Strategies</i>				
<i>Dominating</i>				
Aggression	247	2.07	1.02	.76
Defend	247	3.53	.80	.60
Expression	245	4.09	.82	.75
<i>Avoiding</i>				
Give In	246	2.81	1.01	.75
Pretend	246	2.43	1.10	.77
Third Party	242	2.36	1.02	.74
<i>Integrating</i>				
Apologize	242	3.55	1.01	.80
Problem Solve	246	3.88	.80	.76
Respect	247	4.07	.76	.79
Remain Calm	247	3.79	.84	.71
Private Discussion	247	3.96	.83	.71
Degree of Face Loss	243	3.25	1.43	.89
<i>Forgiveness-Granting</i>				
Direct Forgiveness	242	3.95	1.73	.83
Non-Expression	241	2.63	1.62	.64
Conditional	242	3.56	1.98	.76

APPENDIX D: TABLE 2

Table 2

Summary of Intercorrelations for Face Concerns, Degree of Face Loss, and Forgiveness-Granting Strategies

Measure	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. Mutual Face Concerns	-						
2. Self Face Concerns	.22 ***	-					
3. Other Face Concerns	.50 ***	.40 ***	-				
4. Degree of Face Loss	.05	.20 **	.12	-			
5. Direct Forgiveness Granting	.32 ***	-.02	.32 ***	.02	-		
6. Non-Expressive Forgiveness Granting	-.03	.17 **	.12	.26 ***	-.06	-	
7. Conditional Forgiveness Granting	.05	.21 **	.16 *	.11	.29 ***	.15 *	-

*p < .05, two-tailed. **p < .01, two-tailed. ***p < .001, two-tailed..

APPENDIX E: TABLE 3

Table 3
Prediction of Forgiveness-Granting Communication by Degree of Face Loss

Variable	Forgiveness-Granting Communication Strategy		
	Direct	Non-Expressive	Conditional
	<i>b</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>b</i>
Constant	3.88 ***	1.62 ***	3.09 ***
Degree of Face Loss	.03	.30 ***	.16
R ²	.00	.07	.01
F	.14	17.47 ***	3.05

*p < .05. **p < .01. ***p < .001.

APPENDIX F: TABLE 4

Table 4

Prediction of Forgiveness-Granting Communication by Face Concerns

Variable	Forgiveness-Granting Communication Strategy		
	Direct	Non-Expressive	Conditional
	<i>b</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>b</i>
Constant	.05	1.72 *	1.20
Mutual-Face Concerns	.73 ***	-.30	-.09
Self-Face Concerns	-.35 *	.33 *	.47 **
Other-Face Concerns	.59 ***	.26	.27
R ²	.17	.05	.06
F	14.99 ***	3.70 *	4.57 **

*p < .05. **p < .01. ***p < .001.

APPENDIX G: TABLE 5

Hierarchical Multiple Regression Analyses Predicting Forgiveness-Granting Communication Style From Degree of Face Loss and Face Concerns

Predictor	Forgiveness-Granting Communication Strategy					
	Direct		Non-Expressive		Conditional	
	ΔR^2	<i>b</i>	ΔR^2	<i>b</i>	ΔR^2	<i>b</i>
Step 1	.00		.07***		.01	
Degree of Face Loss		.03		.30 ***		.16
Step 2	.18***		.03***		.06**	
Mutual-Face Concerns		.71 ***		-.27		-.15
Self-Face Concerns		-.35 *		.22		.49 **
Other-Face Concerns		.64 ***		.24		.09

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.

APPENDIX H: TABLE 6

Table 6
Prediction of Forgiveness-Granting Communication by Facework Strategies

Variable	Forgiveness-Granting Communication Strategy		
	Direct	Non-Expressive	Conditional
	<i>b</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>b</i>
Constant	-1.80 *	-.04	-3.62 **
Dominating			
Aggression	-.08	.05	-.02
Defend	.14	.13	.94 ***
Expression	-.26 *	-.08	-.03
Avoiding			
Give In	-.10	.45 ***	.14
Pretend	-.15	.11	-.06
Third-Party Help	.21 *	.28 **	.27 *
Integrating			
Apologize	.56 ***	-.21	-.11
Problem Solve	.29	-.15	.51 *
Respect	.48 *	.27	.46
Remain Calm	.16	.27	-.12
Private Discussion	.23	-.16	.04
R ²	.42	.18	.24
F	14.15 ***	4.23 ***	6.26 ***

*p < .05. **p < .01. ***p < .001.

APPENDIX I: TABLE 7

Table 7

Prediction of Forgiveness-Granting Communication by Facework Strategies, Degree of Face Loss, & Facework Strategies

Variable	Forgiveness-Granting Communication Strategy		
	Direct <i>b</i>	Non-Expressive <i>b</i>	Conditional <i>b</i>
Constant	-2.40 *	-.01	-3.58 **
Face Concerns			
Mutual-Face Concerns	.14	-.21	-.29
Self-Face Concerns	-.17	.24	.21
Other-Face Concerns	.09	.03	.21
Degree of Face Loss	.02	.20 *	.06
Dominating Facework			
Aggression	-.05	-.00	-.01
Defend	.19	-.01	.89 ***
Expression	-.20	-.09	.09
Avoiding Facework			
Give In	.12	.36 **	.05
Pretend	-.15	.11	-.05
Third-Party Help	.23 *	.23 *	.22
Integrating Facework			
Apologize	.57 ***	-.26	-.15
Problem Solve	.24	-.01	.40
Respect	.45 *	.31	.59 *
Remain Calm	.16	.27	-.25
Private Discussion	.26	-.24	.04
R ²	.42	.20	.28
F	9.93 ***	3.37 ***	5.14 ***

*p < .05. **p < .01. ***p < .001.

APPENDIX J: TABLE 8

Table 8
Summary of Intercorrelations for Face Concerns, Facework Strategies, Degree of Face Loss, and Forgiveness-Granting Communication Strategies

Measure	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18
1. Mutual Face Concerns	-																	
2. Self Face Concerns	.22 ***	-																
3. Other Face Concerns	.50 ***	.40 ***	-															
4. Aggression	-.28 ***	.17 **	-.05	-														
5. Defending	-.03	.42 ***	.03	.36 ***	-													
6. Expression	.17 **	.16 **	.03	-.07	.33 ***	-												
7. Give In	.11	.12	.36 ***	.17 **	.03	-.23 ***	-											
8. Pretend	-.07	.16 **	.19 **	.38 ***	.05	-.3 ***	.47 ***	-										
9. Third-Party Help	-.17 **	.05	-.01	.38 ***	.18 **	-.12	.09	.31 ***	-									
10. Apologize	.31 ***	.06	.46 ***	-.18 **	-.03	.08	.43 ***	.05	-.02	-								
11. Problem Solve	.48 ***	.00	.40 ***	-.29 ***	-.01	.29 ***	.22 ***	-.06	-.15 *	.56 ***	-							
12. Respect	.50 ***	-.01	.40 ***	-.35 ***	-.08	.22 ***	.10	-.12	-.18 **	.51 ***	.69 ***	-						
13. Calm	.32 ***	.09	.19 **	-.27 ***	-.09	.19 **	.03	-.07	.13 *	.30 ***	.43 ***	.54 ***	-					
14. Private Discussion	.38 ***	.18 **	.34 ***	-.25 ***	.01	.28 ***	.16 **	-.07	-.29 ***	.33 ***	.45 ***	.58 ***	.42 ***	-				
15. Degree of Face Loss	.05	.20 **	.12	.31 ***	.14 *	-.08	.34 ***	.25 ***	.19 **	.15 *	-.03	-.07	-.17 **	.09	-			
16. Direct Forgiveness	.32 ***	-.02	.32 ***	-.21 ***	-.00	.08	.15 *	-.06	.01	.54 ***	.50 ***	.54 ***	.36 ***	.37 ***	.02	-		
17. Non-Expressive Forgiveness	-.03	.17 **	.12	.23 ***	.11	-.14 *	.30 ***	.31 ***	.27 ***	.03	-.03	-.00	.06	-.06	.26 ***	-.06	-	
18. Conditional Forgiveness	.05	.21 ***	.16	.10	.39 ***	.18 **	.12	.02	.14* *	.14 *	.24 ***	.20 **	.06	.12	.11	.29 ***	.15 *	-

*p < .05, two-tailed. **p < .01, two-tailed. ***p < .001, two-tailed.

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