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THE ROLES OF APOLOGIES
AND FORGIVENESS IN REGAINING
LOST TRUST BETWEEN LEADERS
AND FOLLOWERS*

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Résumé

Cet article examine le rôle médiateur que joue le pardon du subordonné dans la restauration de la confiance (ou pas) lorsque le supérieur hiérarchique a violé la confiance. S'appuyant sur divers courants théoriques, nous trouvons que les excuses permettent d'obtenir le pardon des subordonnés puis de restaurer la confiance dans la relation, mais uniquement pour certains types de violations de confiance. Plus précisément, nous constatons que les supérieurs hiérarchiques peuvent présenter des excuses pour des violations modérées (en termes de gravité) et si le supérieur hiérarchique en est responsable (intentionnalité). Dans ce cas de figure, il pourra obtenir le pardon et potentiellement regagner la confiance du subordonné. Les données sont tirées d'une enquête de 286 collaborateurs qui ont subi des violations de confiance de la part de leurs supérieurs hiérarchiques. L'article montre le rôle central du pardon dans le processus de restauration de confiance.

Mots-clés

Violation de confiance, restauration de confiance, relations entre supérieurs hiérarchiques et subordonnés, pardon, excuses

Abstract

This paper examines the mediating role that follower forgiveness plays in rebuilding trust (or not) when leaders have violated followers' trust. Drawing on disparate theoretical streams, we predict and find that apologies work to gain forgiveness and ultimately rebuild trust in some, but not all, kinds of violations. Specifically, we find that leaders can apologize for moderate violations in terms of severity and whether the leader is responsible (intentionality), in order to gain forgiveness and ultimately earn back trust. Data are drawn from a survey of 286 workers who had encountered trust violations from their supervisors. The paper demonstrates the central importance of forgiveness in the trust recovery process.

Keywords

Trust violation, trust recovery, relationships, followers, leaders, forgiveness, apology

The Roles of Apologies and Forgiveness in Regaining

Lost Trust between Leaders and Followers

Scholars have begun to examine how trust develops between leaders and followers because trust is crucial to that relationship. Previous research has prompted the importance of trust (Dirks & Ferrin, 2002; Liden & Maslyn, 1998), conditions of trust recovery (Boles, Croson, & Murnighan, 2000; Schweitzer, Hershey, & Bradlow, 2006), types of violations and their likelihood of recovery (Kim, Ferrin, Cooper, & Dirks, 2004), and the role of apologies following violations (Basford, Offermann, & Behrend, 2014). The present paper examines under what conditions leaders' apologies serve to gain forgiveness and recover trust, focusing on the role of forgiveness as an active follower construct.

Trust has a long history as endemic to leadership. Charismatic and transformational leadership theories posit that trust develops in followers as a result of leader behavior that encourages followers to engage with the leader (Bass, 1985; Conger, 1989; Shamir, House, & Arthur, 1993). Trust is a cornerstone of leader-member exchange (LMX) theory (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995), and Dirks and Ferrin's (2002) meta-analysis of 40 years of research demonstrates the importance of trust in leadership to positive outcomes.

Despite its obvious importance, leaders violate their followers' trust in myriad ways. These violations can be intentional or unintentional and vary dramatically in their severity, which relates to whether followers willingly seek to restore trust. Recent research differentiates between recoverable and irrecoverable trust violations (Grover, Hasel, Manville, & Serrano Archimi, in press). Recoverable trust violations are small, commonplace behaviors such as the leader making mistakes and changing his/her mind frequently that make it difficult to rely on the supervisor. Followers are generally willing to re-establish trust, however, following these kinds of incidents unless they continue for a long period of time. In contrast, irrecoverable trust violations are so strong that followers are unwilling to engage in any kind of trust recovery and are likely to withdraw physically or psychologically (Grover et al., in press). Apologies are a way of acknowledging that trust has been violated and moving the relationship forward (Ren & Gray, 2009), and apology is an effective way to rebuild the leader-follower relationship (Basford et al., 2014). Apology, however, is not a panacea that immediately repairs trust, and sometimes even reduces the

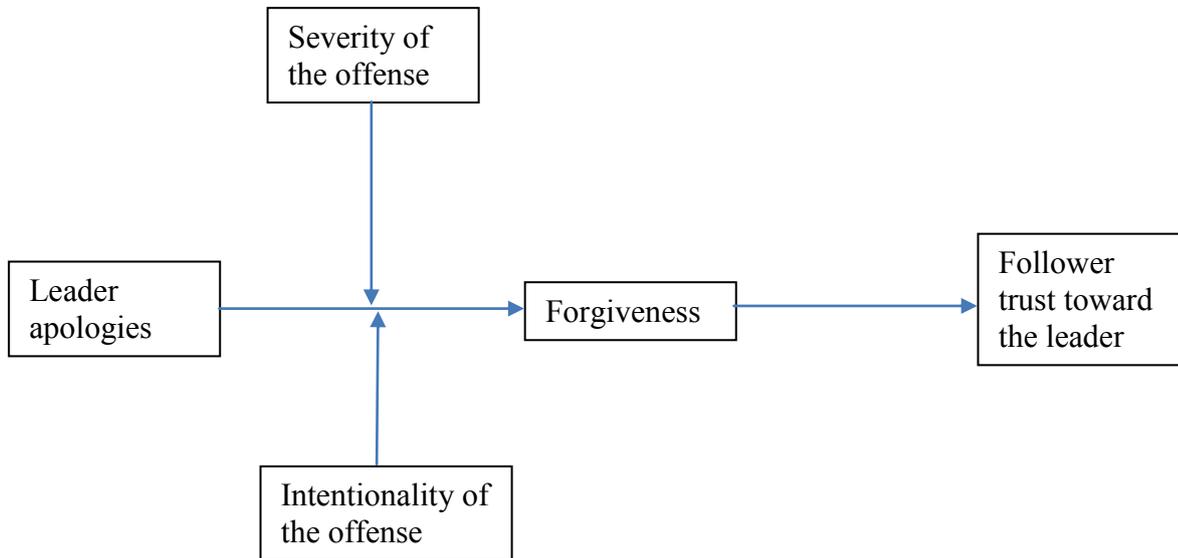
propensity for forgiveness (Struthers, Eaton, Santelli, Uchiyama, & Shirvani, 2008). Apology effectiveness depends on the preliminary state of trust. Followers are more likely to respond positively to apologies from leaders they trusted at the outset compared to those in whom they had less trust (Basford et al., 2014). The quality of the apology is also important, with followers reacting positively to sincere apologies and reacting even more negatively if they perceive the apology as insincere (Basford et al., 2014). The apology literature suggests that apology sincerity includes a number of elements, such as taking responsibility for the event, expressing empathy and demonstrating that one attempts to improve oneself (Fehr & Gelfand, 2010; Koesten & Rowland, 2004; Ren & Gray, 2009). Apologies may initiate forgiveness, which is “a deliberate decision by the victim to relinquish anger, resentment, and the desire to punish a party held responsible for inflicting harm” (Aquino, Tripp, & Bies, 2001: 53). According to Enright (1994), forgiveness is a form of mercy in which the victim acknowledges that harm has occurred and makes the decision to continue or restore the relationship with the offending party nonetheless. Accordingly, forgiveness is a precursor to trust restoration following violations, and the decision to forgive may hinge on the nature of the violation. People are much more likely to grant forgiveness following apologies and for offenses that are less severe and unintentional according to a meta-analysis of 175 psychology studies (Fehr, Gelfand, & Nag, 2010). Accordingly, followers are more likely to forgive leaders for violations that have less impact on the follower and are outside the control of the leader.

THEORETICAL MODEL & HYPOTHESIS

Previous research regarding trust violation and trust recovery in leadership relationships indicates a) that the violation characteristics influence whether or not it is recoverable; b) that apologies sometimes engender forgiveness; and c) that forgiveness is a vehicle that moves toward restoring trust in the relationship. The nature of these inter-relationships, however, has not been established. The present study seeks to further examine the mechanism by which apologies recover trust and to turn the theory toward the follower, using forgiveness as an explanatory mechanism as shown in Figure 1.

FIGURE 1

Theoretical Model of the Aftermath of Leader Trust Violation



Followers are expected to vary in their propensity to forgive based on the type of offense that has occurred. Severe trust violations that are intentionally imparted by the leader violate trust to a greater extent and engender more negative emotion (Basford et al., 2014; Byrne, Barling & Dupré, 2014; Grover et al., in press; Tomlinson, 2011). Intentionality relates to forgiveness because it represents the level of blame or responsibility for the action (Aquino et al., 2001). Apologies assuage the emotional damage and allow a forgiveness process when the violations are not too severe but are unlikely to be accepted when the violation is more severe (Fehr et al., 2010). Similarly, apologies following a trust violation considered as intentional by the victim do not always lead to forgiveness (Struthers et al., 2008).

Hypothesis 1. Followers are less likely to forgive leaders' offenses that are considered severe and/or intentional.

Hypothesis 2. Followers are more likely to forgive leaders who apologize for the offense.

The hypotheses above are derived from previous research and the contribution of the present study lies in examining how forgiveness acts as the mediator between the offense and

subsequent trust reconciliation. Granting forgiveness is a victim activity – the victim has the volitional choice about whether to grant forgiveness or not, and the psychic freedom that comes from forgiving the perpetrator moves the victim toward the ability to restore trust (Aquino, Grover, Goldman, & Folger, 2003; Exline, Yali, & Lobel, 1999). Once followers have decided to forgive, they are free to move the relationship forward – to take the steps of repairing trust – because granting forgiveness provides the follower with inner peace (DeCaporale-Ryan, Steffen, Marwit, & Meuser, 2013; Freedman & Enright, 1996). Specifically, forgiveness reduces cognitive ruminations about the episode and allows the follower the resource capacity and frame of mind to pursue a more positive relationship.

Hypothesis 3. Forgiveness serves as a mediator between apologies and trust recovery following trust violations.

Combining the forgiveness and apology literatures with the leader trust recovery literature, followers are expected to entertain forgiveness for some violations but not for others. Followers might consider re-building trust and continuing the relationship after violations which might be severe or intentional but not both. Therefore the leader apologizing and giving the follower the opportunity to forgive should lead to greater subsequent trust, but only for those types of violations and not for violations which are both severe and intentional. Figure 1 illustrates the model we test.

Hypothesis 4. The mediating role of forgiveness between apologies and trust is moderated by violation type such that the mediation occurs for moderate violations but not severe and intentional violations.

METHOD

Sample and procedure

Data were collected from 286 participants using web questionnaires administrated via SurveyMonkey. The sample was restricted to full-time employees who reported to a direct supervisor. Using the critical incident technique (Bradfield & Aquino, 1999), participants were first asked to write a short description of an event that occurred within the last six months in which their current direct supervisor offended them. Demographically, 77% were women; average age was 40 years; average organizational tenure was 8 years, and average tenure with the supervisor was 2.5 years. Most of the participants worked in the service industry (66%) and have non-supervisory functions (N=65.5%).

Measures

Trust toward the leader. Four items from Mayer & Davis' (1999) scale measured trust in the direct supervisor. A sample item for this scale is "If I had my way, I wouldn't let my supervisor have any influence over issues that are important to me." This scale demonstrated a satisfactory reliability in this study ($\alpha=0.72$). Unless otherwise specified, all variables were assessed using a 7-point Likert-type scale (1=strongly disagree; 7=strongly agree).

Apology. In order to capture the multi-faceted nature of apology, we measured the degree to which the supervisor displayed empathy, accepted responsibility, and offered compensation with five eight items drawn from Fehr and Gelfand (2010). Four items developed by Byrne and colleagues (2014) and followed their recommendations in distinguishing public and private acknowledgement of responsibility. Sample items are "My supervisor offered to compensate me for what happened," and "My supervisor publicly admitted responsibility of what happened."

The exploratory factor analysis revealed that a one-factor apology scale explained more than 68% of the variance (see Table 1 for factors loading). To validate the structure of the apology construct, we examined as second-order confirmatory model (using LISREL and the maximum-likelihood method of estimation) in which empathy, acknowledgement of responsibility and compensation were defined as first-order factors that loaded onto apology. This model yielded a good fit to the data, $\chi^2(66) = 7943.93$; NNFI = .99; CFI = .99; RMSEA = .07; SRMR = .03). Loading of the first-order factors on apology were: .86 for empathy; .88 for acknowledgement of responsibility and .90 for compensation. Our confirmatory analysis provided support for a one factor scale as in the Byrne et al. (in press) study. This scale demonstrated strong reliability in this study ($\alpha=0.96$).

Intentionality. Three items were used to measure intentionality: "My supervisor offended me purposely," "My supervisor offended me intentionally" and "My supervisor offended me accidentally". This scale demonstrated strong reliability in this study ($\alpha=0.89$).

Severity. Severity was measured with Bradfield and Aquino's (1999) item, "How would you rate the offense you described?", using a 10 points index (0 = Not at all serious; 10 = Extremely serious).

Forgiveness. To assess how much the follower forgave the leader following the offense, we used the four item scale of Aquino et al. (2006). A sample item is "I let go of the

resentment I felt toward my supervisor.” This scale demonstrated strong reliability in this study ($\alpha=0.90$).

Control variables

We controlled for age, gender, dispositional trust and trait forgiveness as prior research found them to correlate with forgiveness (Fehr et al., 2010; Miller, Worthington, & McDaniel, 2008) and dispositional propensity to trust (Dirks & Ferrin, 2002; Gill, Boies, Finegan, & McNally, 2005). We also asked the participants their tenure with the supervisor and to point out how often their direct supervisor had committed similar offenses, because the number of transgressions the supervisor has committed in the past might influence how subordinates will perceive and react to their supervisors’ apologies and substantive trust repair actions (Byrne et al., 2014; Miller et al., 2008). In the same vein, we asked the participants to indicate the number of months that have elapsed since the offense (McCullough, Fincham, & Tsang, 2003).

Trait Forgiveness. Brown and Phillips’ (2005) four item scale assessed trait forgiveness. A sample item for this scale is: “I tend to get over it quickly when someone hurts my feelings.” This scale demonstrated a strong reliability in this study ($\alpha=0.84$).

Dispositional Trust. We used the five items scale from the International Personality Items Poll (2001) to measure dispositional trust. A sample item for this scale is “I trust others.” This scale demonstrated a strong reliability in this study ($\alpha=0.89$).

RESULTS

Table 2 presents the means, standard deviations, correlations and alpha reliabilities of all the variables in the study. Trust toward the leader was positively linked to forgiveness ($r = .39, p < .01$), to apologies ($r = .40, p < .01$) and was negatively related to the intentionality ($r = -.45, p < .01$) and the severity of the offense ($r = -.35, p < .01$). Forgiveness was positively related to apologies ($r = .30, p < .01$) and negatively to the intentionality ($r = -.32, p < .01$) and to the severity of the offense ($r = -.18, p < .01$).

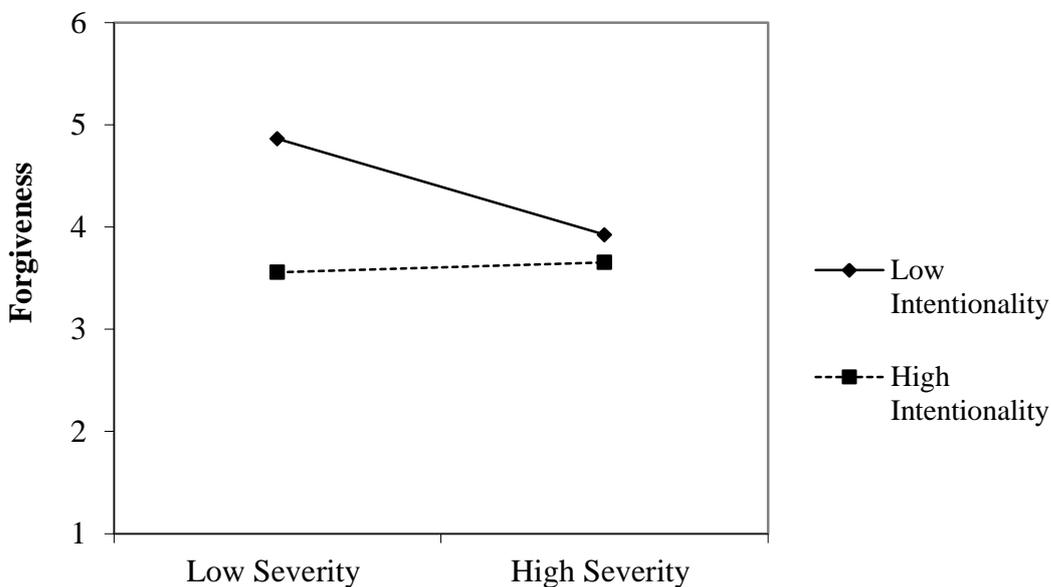
The model illustrated in Figure 1 was tested using a moderated mediation analysis (Preacher, Rucker, & Hayes, 2007). The first step of the model was to examine the impact of the independent variables on forgiveness and the results are shown in Table 3. Control variables were entered at Step 1 and then direct effects were entered at Step 2 (apology, severity, and intentionality of the offense). As expected, the direct effect of apology and

intentionality on forgiveness were significant, showing that people were more likely to forgive trust violations of their supervisors when they apologized and less likely to forgive when they intentionally violated trust. Contrary to expectations, the main effect of severity was not significant.

Second order interaction terms were entered at Step 3, and in order to reduce the multicollinearity associated with the use of interaction terms, we mean-centered the independent variables before creating the interaction terms (Aiken & West, 1991). The second order interaction analyses resulted in a significant severity x intentionality effect on forgiveness. To understand the form of this interaction, we plotted the means for forgiveness one standard deviation below and above the mean of severity and intentionality of the offense (Figure 2) (Aiken & West, 1991). Intentionality had no effect on forgiveness for severe offenses, but intentionality had a strong effect for less severe incidents. The combined effects of severity and intentionality therefore further supports hypothesis 1 in a precise way.

FIGURE 2

Two-way interaction effects of severity and intentionality of the offense on forgiveness



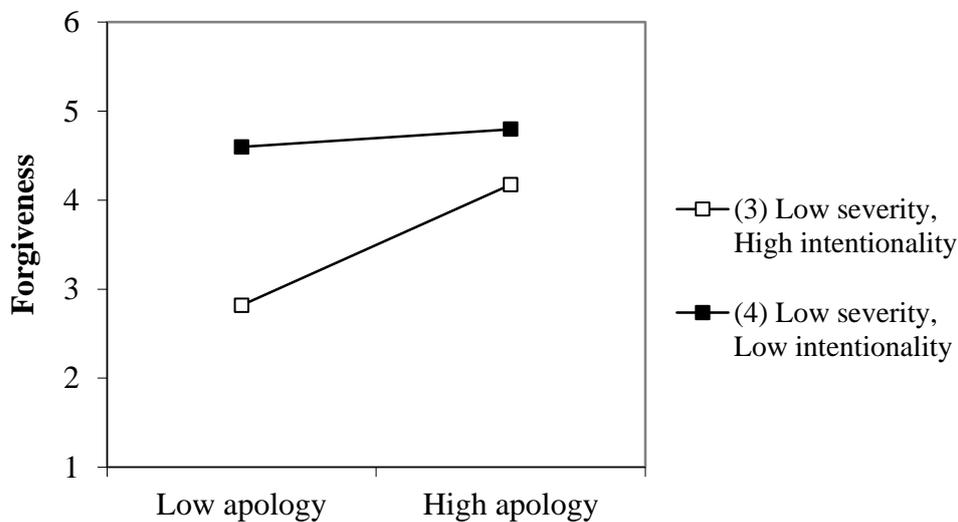
Slopes of the lines are significantly different from each other

More important to the present study, however, is how apologies work with these different types of offenses assessed by the triple interaction term in Step 4. The apology x severity x intentionality effect was significant as indicated by the significant change in R^2 from Step 3 to Step 4 ($B = -.15, p < .05$). The nature of this interaction is illustrated in Figures 3a and 3b: For clarity, the graphs of the relationship between apology and forgiveness for different values of severity and intentionality are presented on two different figures. Figure 3a describes the moderating effect of intentionality on the relationship between apology and forgiveness at low level of severity. Figure 3b describes the moderating effect of intentionality on the relationship between apology and forgiveness at high level of severity.

FIGURE 3

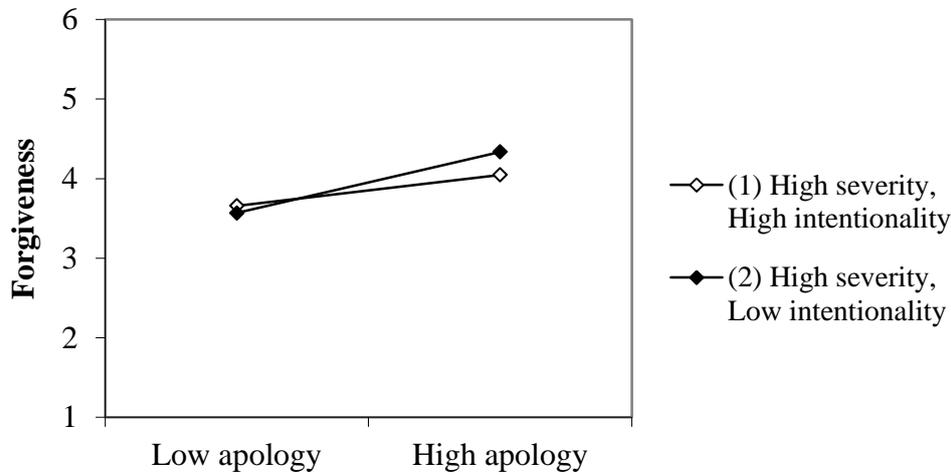
Three-way interaction effects of apology, severity and intentionality of the offense on forgiveness

(3a) Apology by intentionality at low severity^a



^a Slopes of the lines are significantly different from each other

(3b) Apology by intentionality at high severity^b



^b Slopes of the lines are not significantly different from each other

We conducted simple slope analysis and slopes difference tests to analyze the effect of apologies on forgiveness. These analyses revealed that apologies had the greatest effect on forgiveness in the moderate conditions of a) high severity and low intentionality and b) low severity and high intentionality, which had statistically significant regression coefficients ($B = .72^{**}$, $p < .01$ and $B = .37^*$, $p < .05$, respectively). *Followers were likely to forgive leaders' offenses that were not considered as severe even if it might be seen as intentional, or were considered as intentional even if they were seen as severe by the follower.*

We next examined the hypothesized mediation role of forgiveness between apologies and trust following the procedure of Edwards and Lambert (2007). To examine these conditional indirect effects, we used bootstrap procedures to construct 95% interval confidence around the indirect effects at both level of severity and intentionality (See Table 4). The confidence interval for the indirect effect of apology on trust toward the leader through forgiveness excluded zero for low severity and high intentionality (.05; .25) and for high severity and low intentionality (.02; .13), indicating that that the indirect positive effect of apology on trust toward the leader is mediated by forgiveness only when the offense is low on severity but high in intentionality or when the offense is high on severity but low on intentionality. Therefore, forgiveness does serve as the mediator between apologies and trust, but only at moderate levels of offense.

DISCUSSION

The purpose of this paper is to explore how forgiveness mediates the relation of apologies and subsequent trust when leaders have violated followers' trust. The results show that forgiveness facilitates trust redevelopment following an event, but only in situations that allow forgiveness and subsequent trust repair. Followers were more likely to engage in forgiveness when apologies ensued and less likely to the extent that they believed that either the leader intentionally offended them or the offense was severe. Therefore, apologies were ineffectual for both severe and intentional violations but apologies were effective in case of moderate offenses. The mediation model shows that forgiveness leads to trust recovery, and more specifically that such trust recovery is only possible under those conditions in which followers are prepared to forgive their leaders' actions.

Explanations

Apologies are most powerful for relatively minor transgressions for which the leader was responsible. People can easily enact forgiveness when they have not been severely harmed. By apologizing, the leader has begun a process by which the follower benefits from forgiveness, both by continuing a relationship with the leader who holds a power position and from the psychic benefit of releasing negative emotions (Exline et al., 1999).

Forgiveness is more difficult when the victim has suffered severely. People granting forgiveness realize they have been wronged and decide to move forward in a positive manner with the relationship nonetheless (Enright, 1994). Forgiveness involves compartmentalizing negative emotions and moving away from them. Granting forgiveness, therefore, is much more difficult when feelings are too strong to detach.

Theoretical Implications

The major contribution of this study is testing the role of forgiveness as a mediator between leader apologies and subsequent trust. Parts of the sequence have received previous research attention, but the mediating role of forgiveness has not. Quite a bit of research has established that apologies relate to forgiveness (Fehr & Gelfand, 2010). The outcomes of forgiveness and its specific role in restoring trust, however, have not been investigated. The mission of the present paper was to explore the role of the follower whose trust has been violated as an active ingredient in restoring trust through the process of forgiveness. The process of forgiveness allows the follower to replace the negative emotional ruminations with positive feelings and to create a productive working relationship. Basford and colleagues'

(2014) study of follower responses to apologies was similar, and the present study has extended their findings to show that forgiveness is the active mediating variable that contributes to positive trust recovery.

These findings fit with and extend recent research on trust recovery in the leader-follower relationship. Grover and colleagues (in press) identified a schism between trust violations for which followers willingly seek to restore and those that sever any ongoing relationship. They found that integrity violations in which leaders abuse their power to the detriment of followers were likely to so severely destroy trust in followers that they would no longer engage with the leader or seek to re-establish the relationship. Similarly, Kim and colleagues (2006; 2004) conducted a series of experiments that showed people were more likely to trust someone who had engaged in a competence-based as opposed to integrity-based trust violation. In their paradigm, the competence-based violation is an accounting mistake and the integrity violation is the same behavior made for intentional gain. Struthers and colleagues (2008) also found an interaction between the intent of the harming party and the their apology in predicting forgiveness.

At the core of these disparate findings lies the notion of agency. Humans can more easily forgive failures that have less agency, and contrastingly, have difficulty forgiving trust violations that are intentional (Fehr et al., 2010). The present findings advance this notion of agency to show that it lies also at the heart of negative leader-follower conflicts and their subsequent resolution.

The nature of the apology is an important issue that has received less attention in previous studies. Full apology or atonement involves acknowledging one is wrong and attempting to redress the deficiency (Koesten & Rowland, 2004; Ren & Gray, 2009; Rowland & Jerome, 2004). Previous related studies have explored apology as dichotomous instead of looking at the deeper levels of how atonement or making amends influences forgiveness and trust resolution (Basford et al., 2014; Struthers et al., 2008). By examining apologies in this more extensive fashion, we have identified that followers respond to higher levels of apology, which, in the main, should prompt future research to examine apologies in this manner.

The present study provides clarity around trust recovery in the leader-follower relationship. Previous research has examined similar issues outside the leader-follower relationship (e.g., Aquino et al., 2001; Boles et al., 2000; Kim et al., 2006; Kim et al., 2004; Schweitzer et al., 2006), yet the dependency inherent in leader-follower relationships is unique and consequential. Followers often have a vested interest in repairing relationships with supervisors for their own benefit. The finding that intentional and severe violations on

the part of the supervisor precluded forgiveness and trust recovery is intriguing and creates a question worthy of future research. Followers presumably do not engage with leaders in these more extreme circumstances because they have little to gain and do not believe that resolving the relationship would promote trust in the future (Grover et al., in press). This finding is similar to Kim and colleagues' (2004, 2006) findings that integrity violations are more difficult to recover because people the flaw is inherent to the person as opposed to the situation. That is, people are not likely to trust or engage in a trust building process when they believe that the other party has no trust credibility, even when they are dependent on the individual as a supervisor.

Practical Implications

Because trust violations are ubiquitous, it is paramount for humans to gain the often invisible skills of repairing relationships and trust. The present study combined with other research begins to lay that groundwork. A clear distinction exists between those violations from which people can recover and those from which one cannot. For example, few of his colleagues any longer trust Dominique Strauss-Kahn, the former leader of the International Monetary Fund who was accused of raping a chambermaid in a New York hotel. Although those charges were dropped, a flood of sexual harassment charges followed to further taint his reputation ("DSK leader préféré", 9 September 2008), limiting the extent to which Strauss-Kahn can restore trust. At the opposite end of the continuum is the boss who loses the trust of followers by changing specific requests or strategic direction too often. Such behavior is frustrating to followers and reduces their trust in the leader, but that trust can be regained by taking some steps.

One of those steps is the sincere apology. The elements of sincerity include providing specific issues for which one apologizes and taking responsibility for those issues. Insincere apologies, such as the too simple "I'm sorry" – I'm sorry you were hurt; I'm sorry you feel that way; I'm sorry but I intended no harm – are ineffectual. In fact, Basford and colleagues (2014) have demonstrated that the insincere apology is more detrimental to a future supervisory relationship than no apology at all. Thorough apologies include the acceptance that one is wrong and the demonstrated effort to continually improve in the future (Koesten & Rowland, 2004; Rowland & Jerome, 2004).

A further practical implication at the heart of the present findings is that followers play a critical role in trust recovery. By considering forgiveness, we have shown how the harmed

followers themselves play active roles in recovering trust. This active role of forgiving is more common among some people compared to others as shown in the present study by tendency to forgive. The practical implication of this finding is that some followers engage in positive action to promote a working relationship following obstacles, and others might not have the mentality or skills to do so. The negative aspect of this finding is some followers could require much more external intervention to continue with the organization in a positive way after events have undermined their trust in their leaders.

Limitations

Several issues forewarn caution in interpreting our results. This is a retrospective study that raises concerns regarding the limit of human memory. Even though this method has been used in many (successful) studies (e.g. Aquino et al., 2001; Basford et al., 2014), the events reported by the participants may be faulty recall because time has elapsed since the offense. Nevertheless, important events, such as leader offenses and transgressions are considered as less influenced by this retrospective bias because people are more likely to recall emotionally laden events in their retrospective analysis (Schwarz, 1999). Moreover, we took the precaution to ask the participants to recall an event that occurred within the last six months.

Another limitation of our study is that it is cross-sectional. We have conducted mediation analyses using accepted statistical methods, even though the respondents reported these events at a single point in time. This method makes sense at this point in empirical discovery, but the results should in the future be triangulated with longitudinal or experimental studies in order to examine whether trust restoration processes occur after victims have at least cognitively engaged in forgiveness.

Conclusion

Trust research has historically considered how trust can be violated in the workplace and some of the negative consequences and only recently turned to the question of how to restore trust in working relationships generally and even less to the leader-follower relationship specifically. The present study builds on recent research that suggests recoverable and irrecoverable trust violations in the leader follower relationship. Specifically, we validate the distinction between recoverable and irrecoverable violations and extend that finding to show how apologetic actions by leaders can lead to restored trust because followers engaged in forgiveness.

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TABLE 1
Exploratory factor analysis

Items	Factor loading
My supervisor expressed great concern for my suffering	.86
My supervisor showed empathy toward me	.85
My supervisor said that he/she truly cares about how I feel	.80
My supervisor expressed tenderness toward me	.89
My supervisor expressed true sympathy for me	.88
My supervisor publicly admitted responsibility for what happened	.83
My supervisor publicly accepted that what happened was his/her fault	.82
My supervisor privately admitted responsibility for what happened	.81
My supervisor privately accepted that what happened was his/her fault	.79
My supervisor offered to compensate me for what happened	.79
My supervisor offered to do something specific to make up for what happened	.79
My supervisor suggested that he/she will reimburse me in some way	.82
Exploratory factor analysis results using varimax rotation	

TABLE 2
Descriptive statistics and correlations between variables

Variables	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
1. Age ^a	3.59	-	-											
2. Gender ^b	.77	-	.02	-										
3. Tenure with the supervisor	2.66	1.25	.08	.09	-									
4. Number of similar offense	2.32	1.12	.03	-.06	.03	-								
5. Number of months since the offense	5.62	7.52	.07	.03	.06	-.25**	-							
6. Trait forgiveness	4.08	1.27	-.07	.04	-.08	-.20**	-.01	(.84)						
7. Dispositional trust	4.26	1.13	.02	.12	-.03	-.12*	.00	.45**	(.89)					
8. Apologies	2.35	1.26	-.07	.01	.13*	-.26**	.01	.18**	.13*	(.96)				
9. Intentionality	3.68	1.63	.02	.05	-.07	.29**	.05	-.05	-.16**	-.35**	(.89)			
10. Severity	5.99	2.68	.09	.02	.06	.25**	.09	.00	-.08	-.16**	.47**	-		
11. Forgiveness	4.52	1.49	.07	.06	-.01	-.28**	.06	.34**	.29**	.30**	-.32**	-.18**	(.90)	
12. Trust toward the leader	3.67	1.26	-.11	.06	.12*	-.42**	.10	.23**	.23**	.40**	-.45**	-.35**	.39**	(.72)

Note. *N* = 265 (missing values). *a.* [18 to 24 years] = 1 [25 to 34 years] = 2 [35 to 44 years] = 3 [45 to 54 years] = 4 [55 to 64 years] = 5 [65 years and more] = 6.

b. 0 = male, 1 = female.

Alpha coefficients are reported in parentheses along the diagonal.

* *p* < .05; ** *p* < .01 (two-tailed tests).

TABLE 3**Results of moderated multiple regression analysis for forgiveness**

Step	Variables	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
1	Age	.01	.05	.05	.05
	Gender	.11*	.11*	.13*	.13*
	Tenure with the supervisor	.01	-.03	-.02	-.02
	Number of similar offenses	-.24***	-.13*	-.14*	-.14*
	Number of months since the offense	.01	.05	.03	.04
	Trait forgiveness	.22**	.22**	.22**	.22**
	Dispositional trust	.17**	.12*	.10	.10
2	Apologies (A)		.16*	.18**	.22***
	Severity (B)		-.06	-.01	-.06
	Intentionality (C)		-.18**	-.21**	-.22**
3	A × B			.04	-.03
	A × C			.04	.06
	B × C			.20**	.18**
4	A × B × C				-.15*
	ΔR^2	.21***	.07***	.03**	.01*
	R^2	.21***	.28***	.31**	.32*

Note: Except for the ΔR^2 row, entries are standardized regression coefficients.
 * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$

TABLE 4

Bootstrapping results for test of conditional indirect effects at specific values of the moderators (severity and intentionality)

Dependent variable	Levels of moderators		Conditional indirect effect	95% Confidence interval	
				Lower	Upper
	Severity	Intentionality			
Trust toward the leader	Low	Low	.02	-.01	.05
	Low	High	.13**	.05	.25
	High	Low	.07*	.02	.13
	High	High	.03	-.02	.11

Note. N=265 (missing values)

Entries represent unstandardized coefficients, and bias-corrected intervals, as obtained from 1000 bootstrap estimates, are provided in parentheses.

* p< .05; ** p< .01