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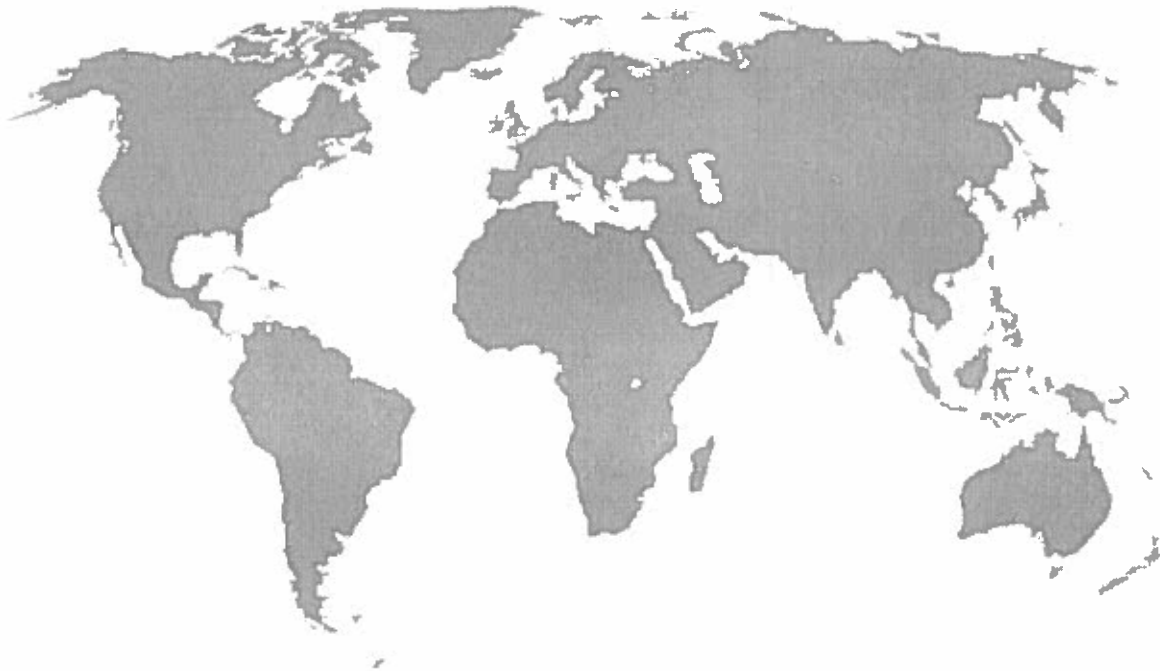
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Perceptions of the Effectiveness of Apology in Reconciliation among Respondents from Japan, South Korea, and the United States

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In response to a multi-part item on the Personal and Institutional Rights to Aggression and Peace Survey, respondents from Japan, Korea, and the United States have provided their views on the extent to which apology can contribute to reconciliation in the international arena. On a seven-point rating scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree, the Japanese and Korean participants showed significantly higher agreement than European Americans did concerning the role of apology in aiding reconciliation. In qualitative explanations of their views, Japanese and Korean respondents again emphasized the necessity of apology following aggression whereas the European Americans were more likely to say that the effectiveness of apology depended on the circumstances.

Since World War II, there has been considerable interest in the role of apology in repairing relations between nations and other groups following aggression (e.g., invasion) of one nation or group against another (Barkan & Karn, 2006; Govier & Verwoerd, 2002; Philpot & Hornsey, 2008). This interest is part of a greater attention to reconciliation among previously hostile states and non-state parties, and growing interest in truth and reconciliation processes (e.g., Nagy, 2004). Understanding the processes that lead to international reconciliation and the maintenance of peace, including the role of apology, is of great relevance to international psychologists, particularly members of the American Psychological Association Division 52—a division dedicated to research “producing knowledge that enhances the understanding and positive interactions of people around the world” (Division of International Psychology, 1997, p. 4). Moreover, although the importance of being mindful about cultural differences in psychological processes has been recognized (cf. Markus & Kitayama, 1991), only limited attention has been paid to cultural differences between nations in perceptions of apology. Because any cultural discrepancies in viewpoints will certainly hinder intergroup reconciliation, our current study has the potential for making an important contribution to the field of international psychology by shedding light on the ways in which citizens from three nations think about the role of apologies in international relations. These three countries—Japan, South Korea, and the United States—differ greatly both in regards to acts of international aggression conducted by their governments and pervasive cultural orientations.

According to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, the Japan-Republic of Korea Joint Declaration (1998) acknowledged that Japan’s colonization of Korea (1910-1945) caused suffering, expressed deep remorse, and offered an apology.

Although the Japanese apology included many of the elements considered necessary to an effective apology (acknowledgement of the wrongdoing, expression of remorse, and proper compensation), as described in Exline, et al. (2007), and Lazare (2004), South Koreans, in general, have not been won over by the apology (Pak, 2006). As to the U.S.-Japan relationship, Japanese Foreign Minister Michio Watanabe expressed deep remorse over Pearl Harbor (Washington Post, 1991 as cited in Asada, 1997), but this did not lead to a U.S. apology over the atomic bombs, an apology that many Japanese wanted more than anything else (Asada, 1997).

In addition to vast differences among these countries in conflict history, experiences with imperialism, and expression or receipt of apologies, major cultural differences also exist, particularly between the United States and the two East Asian nations. Both Japan and South Korea belong to collectivistic. East Asian cultures and their people share many psychological characteristics and values that are less predominant in the more individualistic European American culture of the United States (Markus & Kitayama, 1991; Triandis, 1989, 1996). For instance, collectivistic, East Asian cultural norms tend to emphasize interpersonal harmony, adherence to social roles, obligations toward others, and group-serving motivations. In contrast, individualistic cultures tend to value personal uniqueness and pursuit of personal goals. As an ethnically diverse society, the United States is far less homogeneous than Japan or Korea in its cultural values and beliefs. Thus, in order to make a clear comparison in the current study, our U.S. sample consisted solely of European Americans. Of course, there are also differences in beliefs and traditions among the collectivistic East Asian countries. In Japan, whether the apologizer acknowledges the wrongdoing and takes responsibility is not as important as the fact that an apology is offered (Wagatsuma & Rosett, 1986), and done so with formulaic expressions (Sugimoto, 1998). In Korea, how-

ever, the mere offering of an apology is insufficient; a more substantive effort is considered necessary (Lee, 2006). Based on the limited cross-cultural evidence relevant to apology, we predicted that Japanese and South Koreans would place greater stress on the role of apology in reconciliation than would European Americans, and South Koreans would make more references to three specific components of apology (acknowledgement of the wrongdoing, expression of remorse or sincerity, and proper compensation or action) in open-ended responses about apology than would Japanese respondents.

Method

Our final sample included 76 Japanese (48 female and 28 male participants), 95 South Koreans (41 female and 54 male participants), and 117 European Americans (58 female and 59 male participants), age 18 to 80, who completed the Personal and Institutional Rights to Aggression and Peace Scale (PAIRTAPS) (Malley-Morrison, Daskalopoulos, & You, 2006) either over the Internet (the Japanese and European American participants) or to a paper-and-pencil version of the survey conducted in South Korea (the South Koreans). The Japanese and Korean versions of the surveys were created through translation and back-translation procedures by members of the research team who were native speakers of Japanese and Korean. For purposes of analyses for this study, the responses from the Korean sample were translated by two previous collaborators, and the Japanese responses were translated by the first author of this paper. All the South Korean and European American participants responded in their native language (Korean and English respectively), and most of the Japanese participants responded in the Japanese language, although some responded in English. On average, the European Americans, Japanese, and South Koreans were between 29 and 34 years old, were middle to upper middle class, and had at least a high school education. There were no significant differences across national groups in age, self-reported social class, or education.

In this study, we focused on a three-part item from the PAIRTAPS. First, respondents were asked to indicate, on a scale of 1 to 7 (from totally disagree to totally agree), the extent to which they agreed with the statement, "If one country has in the past invaded, colonized, or exercised control over the governmental affairs of another country, an apology by the invading/colonizing/controlling country can improve the chances for reconciliation between the countries," and then to provide the reasoning behind their rating in their own words. Second, they were asked, "What steps or factors are necessary for an apology to succeed?" We coded every unit from the open-ended responses for the presence or absence of notable themes as well as the three criteria of an effective apology (i.e., acknowledgement of the wrongdoing, expression of remorse or sincerity, and proper compensation or action). To assess intercoder reliability, 30 randomly selected responses (10 per country, 5 per qualitative response) were coded independently by two coders (one Asian American and one European American). Across 17 coding categories used, Cohen's kappa coefficients ran from .63 to 1.0 with an average of .97.

Results

In order to determine whether there were statistically significant differences among the three national groups in level of agreement that apology can contribute to reconciliation, we conducted a one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA). As expected, rating scale scores varied significantly across countries, $F(2, 285) = 11.03, p < .001$. The results of a priori contrast tests (contrast coefficients for Japan and Korea as 1 and for the U.S. as -2) indicated that both the Japanese ($M=5.17, SD=1.69$) and the Korean respondents ($M=5.63, SD=1.41$) scored significantly higher than the American respondents ($M=4.71, SD=1.79$), $t(285) = 4.28, p < .001$, effect size Cohen's $d = .51$. However, the Japanese and Koreans did not differ significantly from each other, $t(285) = 1.63, ns$. Thus, both the Japanese and the Koreans

Country	Apology is effective			Country	Steps/factors necessary		
	Japan	Korea	U.S.		Japan	Korea	U.S.
Number of responses	49	55	77	Number of responses	56	58	72
acknowledgement	12.2%	12.7%	6.5%	acknowledgement	17.9%	20.7%	5.6%
sincerity/remorse	6.1%	21.8%	9.1%	sincerity/remorse	25.0%	25.9%	26.4%
proper compensation/action	20.4%	20.0%	19.5%	proper compensation/action	28.6%	37.9%	52.8%
public apology	10.2%	10.9%	3.9%	public apology	12.5%	10.3%	5.6%
promise of no repeat	4.1%	1.8%	3.9%	promise of no repeat	3.6%	3.4%	6.9%
necessary	14.3%	12.7%	2.6%	understanding	26.8%	27.6%	9.7%
depends	0.0%	1.8%	14.3%	adequate historical education	3.6%	10.3%	2.8%
future oriented	10.2%	7.3%	0.0%	third party	3.6%	0.0%	4.2%
passage of time	6.1%	0.0%	2.6%				

Table 1: Percentages of Respondents by Country of the Notable Themes Identified

indicated a stronger belief that an apology could facilitate reconciliation than did the European Americans.

Table 1 summarized the numbers of participants in each country who answered the open-ended questions and the percentages of responses coded into each coding category. Contrary to our prediction, there were no significant differences among the three countries in themes emphasizing the importance of expression of remorse or sincerity and proper compensation or action; however, more Japanese and Koreans mentioned the importance of acknowledging wrongdoings than did European Americans, $\chi^2(2) = 7.89, p < .05$.

As compared to the European Americans, the Japanese and Koreans also gave significantly more responses arguing that an apology is necessary, $\chi^2(2) = 6.56, p < .05$. By contrast, the European Americans gave significantly more responses than the Japanese and Koreans that the effectiveness of an apology depended on circumstances, $\chi^2(2) = 12.83, p < .01$. Among the factors identified as necessary for a successful apology, both Japanese and Koreans mentioned having a mutual understanding more often than the European Americans, $\chi^2(2) = 8.30, p < .05$. Respondents from all three countries argued that apology must be public in order to be effective. There were no significant gender differences on the rating scale scores. Frequency of qualitative response categories did not vary by gender.

Discussion

In this examination of attitudes toward the role of apology in reconciliation, we found support for our hypothesis that Japanese and Koreans would agree more strongly than European Americans from the United States that apology has a positive effect on international reconciliation. It seems logical to consider East Asians' emphasis on harmonious interpersonal relationships and European Americans' focus on unique individualism as the source of this cultural variability regarding the role of apology in reconciliation. The analysis of the open-ended responses also provided support for this interpretation.

Our prediction that Koreans would mention three specific factors (i.e., acknowledging wrongdoing, expressing remorse or sincerity, and providing compensation) as important in a successful apology more frequently than Japanese or Americans was not supported. Lack of support for the hypothesis may stem from nuances in the meaning of the words used by the participants. In both Japanese and Korean languages, "sincerity" could be used as a euphemism for money, and "introspection" and "remorse" can have a similar meaning in some contexts. Thus, the three coding categories may not have adequately and precisely reflected the intended meaning of the participants or captured cultural differences in the use of words. Also, it is possible that our participants conceptualize intergroup apologies differently from interpersonal apologies and, therefore, may consider different requirements for reconciliation of intergroup as compared to interpersonal conflict. Previous research with Japanese participants (Ohbuchi, Kameda & Agarie, 1989) demonstrated that interpersonal apologies by a perpetrator inhibit aggression

among victims. It will be useful in future research to address the extent to which international apologies can also contribute to a reduction in retaliatory aggression.

As mentioned earlier, a great deal of interest in the role of apology in international reconciliation following international conflicts has emerged since World War II. Our current study indicates that there are cross-national differences in people's perspectives on apologies, including their assumptions concerning what factors are important and necessary for a successful apology. Such cross-national discrepancies in viewpoints will certainly hinder intergroup reconciliation, and it seems important to devise reconciliation strategies that incorporate effective apologies. The success of this undertaking may depend in part on promoting a more general perspective on apology and reconciliation that can reach across cultures.

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