A cross-cultural study of the construct of forgiveness: Britain, Greece and Cyprus

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ABSTRACT Two trends during the current decade have contributed towards a new attitude to the study of forgiveness. The first has been the demand for empirically tested material for use in forgiveness therapy. The second, the movement away from viewing forgiveness as primarily an intrapsychic phenomenon to an interpersonal strategy for dealing with damaged relationships. One area which has received little attention is the effect of culture on an individual's understanding of forgiveness. The present study addresses this particular issue. The Scobie Forgiveness Scale (SFS) was administered to 564 undergraduate students in Britain, Greece, and Cyprus. A comparative factor analysis of the British and Greek-speaking samples indicated a number of significant differences in response to some of the focus phrases. However, the underlying structure and components were similar in both the forgiver and forgiven mode, but the variable load and composition showed a number of differences which are discussed in the paper. A multivariate analysis of variance of the three national groups, for the forgiveness components and mode (forgiver or forgiven) revealed some interesting findings. Most differences were between the British and Cypriot samples, and relatively few between the British and Greek and the Greek and Cypriot groups.

Keywords: Cross-cultural, Forgiveness, Interpersonal relationships.

Introduction

There are few cross-cultural studies associated with forgiveness research. Those that have been undertaken concentrate more on the process of forgiveness that the forgiver experiences than forgiveness per se.

Huang (1990) for her dissertation compared a Chinese population with an American population to study the therapeutic effect of forgiveness on the physiological responses of participants. She looked first at the stage model of forgiveness proposed by Enright, Santos, and Al-Marbuk (1989). She found that in Chinese society an apology is demanded and some form of compensation, even for those who have reached the more intrinsic stages of Enright et al.'s forgiveness model. However, this kind of demand was not observed in the American sample. Her study focuses on therapy and so relates to what Scobie and Scobie (1998) describe as the Health Model perspective of forgiveness and does not address the understanding of the construct.

Park and Enright (1997) examined the development of forgiveness along Kholbergian lines using a sample of adolescents in Korea. The emphasis is on the process of forgiveness and understanding the construct in moral develop-

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ment terms. The study continues the work of Al-Mabuk, Enright, and Cardis (1995), Enright and the Human Development Study Group (1994), and Enright, Gassin, and Wu (1992). Understanding forgiveness was determined using the Heinz dilemma scenario from Kohlberg's moral judgement interview and a friendship dilemma (Selman, 1980).

For many years there has been a close link between forgiveness and Christianity so much so that forgiving was often seen as an exclusively religious phenomenon. More recently this association has gradually been widened to include to seeing forgiveness as a strategy within interpersonal relations in general (Hargrave, 1994; Scobie & Scobie, 1998; Walrond-Skinner, 1998). However, in the West, Christian values seem to have been absorbed into the culture, despite a decline in active support for the Church. As a consequence, the general understanding of the concept is still profoundly influenced by a religious perspective.

There are few cultures in which forgiveness is not practised (Droll, 1984). However, not all societies see forgiveness in solely personal relationship terms. For many cultures the community is involved in forgiveness through symbolic acts, rather than leaving it to the individuals involved to work through the process. Thus, societies which do not have a delineated system of forgiveness tend to stand out as distinctive and different, e.g., the Auca Indians of South America prior to Christian missionary activity. If forgiveness is a universal phenomenon then one would expect certain features to be shared by all societies.

Scobie and Scobie (1996) have identified seven components of the construct of forgiveness. Some of these may be less influenced by culture, e.g., core components namely, Healing, Relationships, New Beginning and Guilt Release. The three remaining components (non-core), Religious, Legal and Condoning, may be more susceptible to the type of justice system and the behavioural mores that prevail in a given society.

The Religious component is complex. While there is some evidence of a universal theme, the different religious perspectives within a society may profoundly effect an individual's response to this component.

Condoning is a rather different component. Unlike the other components it focuses on behaviour control rather than the act of forgiveness per se (as a consequence it is sometimes referred to as pseudoforgiveness). In essence it is the need to set conditions before forgiveness is offered. One would therefore expect religion and culture to have a significant effect in determining the extent that a forgiver may wish to set conditions for forgiveness.

The Legal component is in some respects the "other side of the coin" to the Religious component. Both have a link with a moral code, but whereas Religious foregoes any punishment or restitution and offers forgiveness as a free "gift" (Enright & The Human Development Study Group, 1994) the Legal component requires a just recompense for the transgression and the consequence for the offended.

The input from socio-cultural norms may significantly effect these non-core components. For example, 90% of Greeks and Cypriots claim to be members of the Greek Orthodox Church and the dogma, festivals, and religious rites of the Church permeate the society. Thus, the non-core components will be affected by the role of religion in the Greek and Cypriot societies.

It is the contention of this paper that forgiveness is a multivariate construct with seven components representing an individual's understanding of forgiveness, across cultures (Scobie & Scobie, 1996). These components are prerequisites for an act of forgiveness. Individuals, whether acting in the role of forgiver or forgiven will utilise these components when addressing a transgression.

In secular societies like Britain, religion will be seen to have little relevance, unless the person is experiencing a life-threatening event, e.g., cancer. Thus, the scores on the non-core compo-

nents will be more affected by cultural values whereas the scores for Healing, Relationships, New Beginning and Guilt Release will be similar for all groups. If this proves to be correct, then religion does play a part in forgiveness but only in those societies where religion itself is accepted and plays a significant ongoing role in the culture. In this respect Greece may be characteristic of a religious "Christian" country whereas Britain would have a less all prevailing religious ethos. The non-core components would be mainly influenced by the historical links to Christianity which now are only re-enforced for the minority of the population that attend church.

Christianity may exert an influence on the willingness of individuals to forgive. In an overtly Christian society there may be more pressure to consider the forgiveness option. Therefore, the prediction would be that the Greek and Cypriot samples would show a significantly greater willingness to forgive than the British group.

If the three groups do show the same understanding of the construct, with differences only on the non-core components, then some confidence can be placed in the assertion that forgiveness is not just a Christian concept but is a universal construct which acts as a social facilitator for dealing with interpersonal transgressions and damage. Conversely, if differences are identified in the core components then the role of culture may play a more significant role in shaping a society's understanding of the construct. This would be in line with Moscovici's (1984) social representation theory which states that society is a powerful medium for transmitting beliefs and attitudes. "Social representations refer to the stock of common knowledge and information which people share in the form of common-sense theories about the social world." (Augoustinos & Walker, 1995, p. 135).

To date there has been no significant gender differences identified in forgiveness literature (Park & Enright, 1997; Scobie & Scobie, 1996, 1997) although some studies only focus on females (Freedman, 1994) rather than a mixed sample. If forgiveness is a universal construct, with a functional role in interpersonal relations perhaps gender differences should not be expected. The erosion of traditional sex stereotypes in the West may further reduce potential differences. However, because the Greek and Cypriot society are perceived as more patriarchal and protective of their womenfolk than the British culture, gender differences may emerge.

Hypotheses

1. There will be no difference between the factor structures of the Scobie Forgiveness Scale (SFS) for the British and Greek-speaking groups.
2. There will be no significant group differences for the core components, however, cultural effects are expected to produce significant differences in the non-core components of the SFS.
3. There will be a difference in willingness to forgive between the three groups.
4. There will be no significant gender differences between the three groups for the seven forgiveness components in each mode, i.e., the forgiver and the forgiven mode.

Method

Sample

The British sample (315 students; 98 males, 211 females, and 6 who did not indicate their gender) completed the questionnaire in English. The Greek (130 students; 38 males, and 92 females) and Cypriot (119 students; 47 males, and 72 females) completed a Greek translation of the SFS. All the participants were students at the University of Glasgow, the University of Athens and the University of Cyprus. The majority were under twenty five years of age. Therefore, one can not generalise, without reservations, to the population as a whole.

Demographics

Age. In the British sample 52.3% were under 20 years old, 21% of the Greek sample was under 20 and 75.4% between 20-25. The Cypriot group was similar to the Greeks with 25.2% under 20 years and 73.9% between 20-25.

Religion. In the British group 39% had no religion, 26.3% were Church of Scotland (the established church), 19.2% Roman Catholics and 12.7% "other". The Greek and Cypriot sample were homogeneous with 93.7% and 99.1% belonging to the Greek Orthodox tradition.

Church Attendance. The response to the question about frequency of attendance at a place of worship indicated that the British sample had the highest non-attendance rate (48.9%) compared with the Greek (7.7%) and Cypriot (2.5%) populations. The Cypriots recorded the highest attendance rates (weekly, 20.2%; monthly, 21.0%), the Greeks (weekly, 10%; monthly, 13.8%), and the British (weekly, 18.6%, monthly 3.6%).

Religiosity. The Cypriots regarded themselves as the most religious (very religious, 3.4%; religious, 69.5%; non-religious, 20.3; anti-religious, 5.1%). The British were least religious (very religious, 3.2%; religious, 36%; non-religious, 50%; anti-religious, 10.4%). The Greek group was slightly less religious than the Cypriots (very religious, 8%; religious, 58.5%; non-religious, 28.5%; anti-religious, 5.4%).

Instruments

This study used the Scobie Forgiveness Scale (SFS) which was developed over a number of years (see Scobie & Scobie, 1996, 1997). The Cronbach alpha values for the current study were .90 for the full scale, .80 for the forgiver, and .84 for the forgiven. The SFS consists of 24 focus phrases which are given in both the forgiver and the forgiven mode.

The participant is asked to indicate on a five-point Likert scale the extent to which they agree or disagree that each of the 24 focus phrase represents their understanding of forgiveness. First they respond in the role of forgiver and second, using the same focus phrases, as one forgiven. In the forgiver mode the question is introduced by "How YOU feel when you are forgiving SOMEONE ELSE:" while in the forgiven mode the instruction is: "How YOU feel when SOMEONE ELSE is forgiving you:". The following instructions are then common to both modes.

Please put a 'x' on the line to indicate your own understanding of forgiveness.

--1---2---3----4-----5--

Strongly agree | Agree | Neutral | Disagree | Strongly disagree

1. Patch up a broken relationship

.....1..... 2 ..... 3 ..... 4 5

This phrase was followed by the remaining 23 focus phrases using the same format in both the forgiver and forgiven mode.

Procedure

Participants initially filled in a section designed to focus their attention on a specific event in their own lives when they experienced forgiving someone or being forgiven, in order to elicit the participant's forgiveness schema. Park and Enright's (1997) study supports Droll's (1984) suggestion that a schema is a necessary first step in the area of forgiveness. If the participant is unable to think of a personal event, they are asked to recall an event involving a friend or relative, or an event in fiction. If they are unable to respond positively to any of these three types of events, they are asked to use their own understanding of forgiveness and answer the section on the focus phrases.

Those who could think of a personal event are asked to assess the severity of the transgression, i.e., minor, moderate, severe, and very severe. A question was asked about the indi-

vidual's relationship with the transgressor/person offended: "Who did you forgive?" (Forgiver mode) and "Who forgave you?" (Forgiven mode), followed by a list of relationships from which to choose, e.g., mother, father, sister, male friend, etc. Other questions asked about the willingness of the participant to give or receive forgiveness, the perceived severity of the damage inflicted by the other person, or themselves; and who was responsible for the transgression.

The original questionnaire was in English and was translated by one of the authors into Greek. During the translation considerable time and attention was devoted by the three co-authors to the wording of the focus phrases, especially those based on idioms in the English language, e.g., *bury the hatchet* (Guilt Release component). There was a danger that some phrases would lose their original meaning when they were translated, e.g., *remit the penalty* (Legal component). As a consequence, the latter focus phrase was changed to *cancel the punishment* as it was easier to translate and used less technical language. It was felt that although there may not always be a direct match, each language has similar phrases for expressing various symbolic acts such as *burying the hatchet.* There is an implicit difference in the symbolism of *patch up a broken relationship,* and *restore a broken relationship* (Relationship component) which will be influenced by the individual's own understanding of the construct. Another difficulty is that the same words or phrases may have different implications for each mode. For example, *ignoring* or *overlooking* (condoning focus phrases) have different consequences when one is forgiving or being forgiven. In addition, some words have a number of meanings or nuances. For example, *pardon* can mean releasing someone from guilt or be a legal declaration such as a royal edict. The comparison of groups from different cultures exaggerates these effects and it is not always obvious which nuances of meaning are favoured by a culture, in a forgiveness situation. An attempt was made to take all these factors into account in the translation of the questionnaire. Examples of focus phrases for the other components are: *wipe the slate clean* (New Beginning), *no longer hurting* (Healing), and *love keeps no record of wrongs* (Religious).

Language is an integral part of culture, it is one of the channels by which culture is transmitted from one generation to the next. In using language, "we don't just de-code words or sentences in isolation: we apply the knowledge of the world that we already have, to make sense of the information." (Hayes, 1994, p. 117). The original focus phrases were taken from an extensive review of forgiveness literature, and many phrases are quoted by authors as an example of forgiveness, e.g., *kiss and make up* (Walrond-Skinner, 1998). Care was taken in compiling the focus phrases to ensure that they represented all the ideas both symbolic and active, associated with forgiveness in the literature. As Hayes (1994) points out "the links between language and thinking are many and deep" (p. 119).

It is worth observing that Cypriot society is influenced by both Greek and British culture. The Greek culture plays a significant part in its language and customs, while for more than 100 years Cyprus was part of the British Empire. Therefore, one would anticipate that Cypriot responses would represent a mid-way position between British and Greek cultures.

Results

Personal experience of forgiveness

In all three groups the vast majority of participants had experience of forgiving another person (British, 88.8%; Greek, 96.9%; Cypriot, 95.8%). The same was true of the forgiven mode with the majority having experience of being forgiven (British, 85.8%; Greek, 84.5%; Cypriot, 89.3%).

A chi-square test on the response of the participants to the questions " Who did you for-

give?" and "Who forgave you?" indicated a significant deviation of the observed from the expected frequencies for each group in both the forgiver and forgiven mode;

British group: FR, $x^2(9, N = 275) = 179.4, p < .01$; FN, $x^2(8, N = 262) = 189.9, p < .01$;

Greek group: FR, $x^2(11, N = 126) = 199.9, p < .01$; FN, $x^2(10, N = 109) = 105.9, p < .01$;

Cypriot group: FR, $x^2(10, N = 113) = 332.7, p < .01$; FN, $x^2(11, N = 105) = 226.8, p < .01$.

Tables 1 and 2 give the percentages for the main categories to enable some comparisons to be made. The main finding is that in all groups and modes both the male and female friend categories are selected well above the expected frequencies. Perhaps this is related to the relatively young age of the sample and the importance of friendships and pair bonding for these group. However, mother also has a higher than expected frequency but mainly in the forgiven mode. This is true for all three groups but less so for the Cypriots (8.7%) compared with the British (27.6%).

There was no significant difference between the three groups on the willingness to forgive or receive forgiveness. About the same majority of each group were willing to forgive (British, 46.9%; Greek, 43.2%; Cypriot, 45.6%) or be forgiven (British 50.6%; Greek 55.0%; Cypriot 47.8%).

About a third in each group strongly agreed or agreed that the damage to themselves was severe (British, 9.8%, 32.6%; Greek, 13.5%, 36.5%; Cypriot, 9.9%, 34.8%) in the forgiver mode. In the forgiven mode the figures are comparable (British 10.3%, 26.1%; Greek, 12.8%, 28.4; Cypriot, 5.4%, 30.4%). When the neutral and disagree/strongly disagree figures are taken on board it looks as if half the sample experienced severe transgressions and half did not.

Factor analysis. It was the original intention to compare a British and Greek sample but opportunity and expediency enabled the inclusion of Greek and Cypriot groups in the study. However, this produced a smaller group size, i.e., 130 Greeks and 119 Cypriots, thus it is doubtful whether two independent factor analyses should be undertaken for the groups. For example, Guidford (1956) argues for a minimum of 200 subjects for an analysis while Klein (1994) suggests 100 is sufficient. Another criterion employed is the ratio of subjects to variables. However, ratio figures vary from 10:1

Table 1
Relationship to transgressor (Forgiver mode)

Group	Male Friend	Female Friend	Mother	Father	Brother	Sister	Other
British	25.5%	24.0%	13.5%	8.4%	8.4%	6.5%	13.7%
Greek	34.1%	27.8%	2.4%	3.2%	3.2%	.8%	28.5%
Cypriot	45.1%	38.9%	1.8%	2.7%	1.8%	2.7%	7.0%

Table 2
Relationship to transgressor (Forgiven mode)

Group	Male Friend	Female Friend	Mother	Father	Brother	Sister	Other
British	20.9%	24.8%	27.6%	5.9%	5.1%	5.5%	10.2%
Greek	22.0%	25.7%	22.0%	7.3%	.9%	6.4%	15.7%
Cypriot	35.9%	34.8%	8.7%	5.4%	2.2%	4.3%	8.7%

to 2:1. Arrindel and van der Ende (1985) suggested that a subjects to factors ratio of 20:1 was more appropriate. The Greek and Cypriot groups meet some criteria but not others. A preliminary analysis of each of these groups indicated that not only did a number of trivial factors emerge (factors with only one or two major loadings) but the factors were difficult to interpret because of factor merging and splitting. As a consequence, it was decided to combine the two groups into a Greek-speaking group.

Confirmatory factor analysis might be appropriate when two different samples are being compared. However, a more precise prediction of the relationship between factors and larger samples are normally required (Loehlin [1987] suggests a sample size of 500 for a fairly complex model). As the investigation of forgiveness is still at an exploratory stage, neither of these two prerequisites could be met in the present study. Therefore the British and the Greek-speaking samples were separately analysed in both the forgiver and forgiven modes, using exploratory factor analysis. Klein's (1994) suggested technique for determining the number of factors to be extracted was used (eigen values, scree test, maximum likelihood analysis and structure evaluation to try and reduce factor merging or splitting). In the forgiven mode there was some discrepancy between the extraction of six or seven factors. However, after reviewing all the techniques listed above, a seven factor solution in both modes was the preferred option.

A Direct Oblimin Principal Axis factor structure matrix was used to identify and compare the factors for the two groups. A table giving the principal component and axis variance explained by each factor and the variable loadings for the factors are given in Table 3A-3D. The top 5 loadings for each factor are given, unless a loading is less than .30 (a salient loading according to Klein, 1994). The criteria were chosen because these loadings, with an appropriate weighting for size, are the ones used to help identify the factors. Similar factors in each analysis were found for Healing, Relationships, Religious, New Beginning, and Guilt Release, although there was some variation in the factor loadings and the explained variance especially as the order of extraction was different for each analysis. The two remaining factors of Condoning and Legal showed much greater variation between the British and Greek-speaking groups. Making effective comparisons of factors across mode and group is quite difficult in a cross-cultural study. However, it is often possible to identify the emphasis of a particular phrase for a group by the nature of the rest of the variables loaded on the factor under consideration.

Analysis of variance. Seven scales for each of the components in each mode have been produced (Scobie & Scobie, 1997) using the factor loadings from the factor pattern matrix in the University of Glasgow standardisation sample. An individual's scores on each of these scales was computed by summing the products of the focus phrase response rating multiplied by its factor loading (derived from the standardisation sample) for each focus phrase in the scale and dividing the total by the sum of the factor loadings used for the scale. Scores were calculated for all individuals in the British, Greek and Cypriot groups.

The first repeated measure multivariate analysis for group (3) by sex by component (7) indicated no significant differences. A second repeated measures multivariate analysis of the relationship between the three groups, two modes and seven components revealed some interesting findings. Significant differences between subjects and within subjects were found for all combinations except group by mode (for *F* values and significance levels see Table 4)

Post-hoc tests (Tukey) provide information about significant differences between the three groups of participants for each of the components in the forgiver and forgiven modes. No significant differences were found for Healing (forgiver [FR] and forgiven [FN]) and New Beginning (forgiven [FN]).

Table 3A
The structure of SFS of the British group in the forgiver mode (Factor loadings)

Items	Factors 1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. Patch up a			.76				
2. Wipe the slate clean				.36		-.38	
3. No longer hurting	.73						
4. Set free from guilt	.59						
5. Turning a blind eye		.64					
6. Remit..../ Cancel.....		.37					
7. We must forgive				.65			
8. Restore a broken.....			.84				
9. A new start	.36		.37	.34		-.48	
10. Broken wounds....	.57						.39
11. Pardon					-.40		
12. Ignoring		.67					
13. Amnesty					-.62		
14. God forgives us.....				.68			
15. Shake hands					-.33	-.47	
16. As if it never.....		.46					
17. Feeling better						-.44	
18. Bury the hatchet						-.56	.31
19. Overlooking		.64				-.37	
20. Acquit							.50
21. Love keeps no				.50			.34
22. Cease to feel	.41						.63
23. Set free	.44						.49
24. Kiss and make up			.37			-.45	
Eigen value	4.34	2.41	1.63	1.54	1.34	1.21	1.20
% of variance PC/PA	18.1/15.6	10.1/7.8	6.8/4.7	6.4/4.0	5.6/3.1	5.0/2.6	5.0/2.4

Note. Loadings below .30 are omitted (What Kline [1994] describes as a salient loading). PC = Principal Component, PA = Principal Axis Factor Analysis.

Discussion

The demographic section suggests that there is more diversity as regards religious affiliation in the British group and it is generally a less religiously orientated sample. Both the Greek and Cypriot groups are homogeneous owing to overwhelming allegiance to the Greek Orthodox Church. The Cypriots appears to regard themselves as more religious and have higher attendance rates then either of the other two groups.

Hypothesis 1 and 2. The first hypothesis states that there will be no difference between the factor structures for the three populations. The

Table 3B
The structure of SFS of the Greek-speaking group in the forgiver mode (Factor loadings)

Items	Factors 1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1.Patch up a		.45					
2. Wipe the slate clean			.71				
3. No longer hurting			.68	.37		.34	
4. Set free from guilt							
5. Turning a blind eye		.65			-.31		
6. Remit..../ Cancel.....		.61					
7. We must forgive	.32			.34		.40	.32
8. Restore a broken.....				.58		.34	
9. A new start				.64			
10. Broken wounds....	.32		.31	.63			
11. Pardon	.63		.36	.46		.40	
12. Ignoring	.47	.37	.70	.41	-.44		
13. Amnesty	.57		.42	.44	-.39	.42	
14. God forgives us.....			.34		-.34	.36	.57
15. Shake hands	.47			.42	-.34	.39	.39
16. As if it never.....	.40	.36	.63	.37	-.54		.43
17. Feeling better	.43			.40		.57	
18. Bury the hatchet	.62						
19. Overlooking	.50	.31	.56	.33	-.59	.32	
20. Acquit	.35			.31	-.66	.37	
21. Love keeps no					-.68	.32	.36
22. Cease to feel	.45		.35	.30	-.35	.62	
23. Set free			.33	.47	-.33	.78	
24. Kiss and make up				.36	-.57		
eigen value	6.96	1.79	1.45	1.30	1.22	1.08	1.02
% of variance PC/PA	29.0/26.9	7.4/5.2	6.2/4.0	5.4/3.1	5.1/2.7	4.5/2.2	4.2/2.1

Note. Loadings below .30 are omitted (What Kline [1994] describes as a salient loading). PC = Principal Component, PA = Principal Axis Factor Analysis.

eigen values for the factor extraction indicated a seven factor solution in the forgiver mode and a six factor solution in the forgiven mode. However, the scree plot indicated seven factors in each mode, also the analysis for structure and factor merging/splitting suggested seven factors in each mode. Although variable loadings differed between the analysis for British and Greek-speaking groups, most factors are clearly identifiable. In both modes the following factors were identified: Religious, Healing, Guilt Release, Relationships and New Beginning. There seem to be two factors which can be identified with condoning focus phrases. The first had high loadings on *turning a blind eye, cancel the punishment* and *patch up a broken relationship.*

Table 3C
The structure of SFS of the British group in the forgiven mode (Factor loadings)

Items	Factors 1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. Patch up a				.72			
2. Wipe the slate clean	.42			.40		-.47	-.30
3. No longer hurting	.84						
4. Set free from guilt	.67					-.41	-.38
5. Turning a blind eye		.74					
6. Remit..../ Cancel.....		.40			.39	-.35	
7. We must forgive			.71				
8. Restore a broken.....				.80			
9. A new start	.32			.52		-.53	
10. Broken wounds....	.56			.36		-.33	-.36
11. Pardon					.72		
12. Ignoring		.69					
13. Amnesty					.59		
14. God forgives us.....			.73				
15. Shake hands					.40		
16. As if it never.....		.43				-.43	-.56
17. Feeling better	.39					-.50	
18. Bury the hatchet						-.67	
19. Overlooking		.64					
20. Acquit					.32	-.41	
21. Love keeps no			.32				-.72
22. Cease to feel	.35						-.50
23. Set free	.48					-.47	-.49
24. Kiss and make up	.34			.52		-.38	-.32
Eigen value	5.48	2.42	1.77	1.39	1.28	1.13	1.00
% of variance PC/PA	22.8/20.6	10.1/7.9	7.4/5.4	5.8/3.7	5.3/3.2	4.7/2.6	4.2/1.9

Note. Loadings below .30 are omitted (What Kline [1994] describes as a salient loading). PC = Principal Component. PA = Principal Axis Factor Analysis.

The second had high loadings on: *ignoring, wipe the slate clean, as if it never happened,* and *overlooking*. This applies in both modes. The legal focus phrases, *amnesty, pardon, shake hands,* and *acquit* seem to be included in the New Beginning component and to a lesser extent in the Condoning components for the Greek-speaking group.

In as much as the factor analysis confirmed a seven factor solution in each mode for both the British group and the Greek-speaking group then Hypothesis 1 was confirmed. However, this does not mean that there was one-to-one correspondence of factors in the two groups nor that the expected factors were confirmed.

Thus, Hypothesis 2 was also confirmed, des-

Table 3D
The structure of SFS of the Greek-speaking group in the forgiven mode (Factor loadings)

Items	Factors 1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. Patch up a		.55					
2. Wipe the slate clean	.35	.39	.30	-.79	.37		-.42
3. No longer hurting	.44		.50	-.53	.40		-.34
4. Set free from guilt	.37	.31	.67	-.39	.31		
5. Turning a blind eye		.75		-.56			
6. Remit..../ Cancel.....		.68	.34		.31		
7. We must forgive	.40			-.43	.34	-.48	-.40
8. Restore a broken.....	.40			-.34	.75		
9. A new start	.48			-.37	.68		
10. Broken wounds....	.59			-.37	.64		
11. Pardon	.63			-.35	.61		-.31
12. Ignoring	.41	.34		-.83	.47		-.37
13. Amnesty	.48			-.57	.41		-.46
14. God forgives us.....	.47			-.48	.38	-.40	-.44
15. Shake hands	.65			-.39	.53		
16. As if it never.....	.44	.35		-.78	.38		-.47
17. Feeling better	.68			-.32	.42		
18. Bury the hatchet	.56			-.34	.42		
19. Overlooking	.44	.42		-.72	.37		-.48
20. Acquit	.47	.43		-.44	.39		-.57
21. Love keeps no				-.42			-.86
22. Cease to feel	.76			-.34	.47		-.45
23. Set free	.75		.30	-.36	.41		-.36
24. Kiss and make up	.32	.32		-.45	.31	.42	-.48
Eigen value	8.43	2.27	1.35	1.17	1.10	1.00	0.87
% of variance PC/PA	35.1/33.3	9.4/7.5	5.6/4.0	4.9/2.9	4.6/2.7	4.2/2.4	3.6/1.8

Note. Loadings below .30 are omitted (What Kline [1994] describes as a salient loading). PC = Principal Component, PA = Principal Axis Factor Analysis.

pite differences in variable loadings on factors; the core components were recognisable. The major difference lied in the order of factor extraction and the corresponding percentage of variance explained by each factor. In the British sample Healing was the first factor extracted in each mode and explains about 20% of the variance whereas in the Greek-speaking group the first factor extracted was New Beginning which explained about 30% of the variance in each mode. In addition, for the non-core components, namely Legal and Condoning but not Religious, there were some significant differences. Two condoning components are

Table 4
Analysis of Variance for group by mode by component

Source	*df*	*F*	*p*
Between subjects			
Group	2	6.66	.001
Error	475	(2.75)	
Within subjects (Wilks Lambda)			
Mode	1	6.37	.012
Group by mode	2	.64	.529
Group by component	12	27.00	.000
Component	6	137.45	.000
Mode by component.	6	13.10	.000
Mode by component by group	12	3.93	.000
Error (Mode)	475	(.357)	
Error (Component)	2850	(.448)	
Error (Mode by Component)	2850	(.143)	

Note. Values enclosed in parentheses represent mean square errors.
Group = British, Greeks, and Cypriots. Mode = Forgiver and Forgiven.
Component = Healing, Condoning, Relationships, Religious, Legal, New Beginning, and Guilt Release.

extracted for the Greek-speaking group and no Legal component. The legal focus phrases are included in the New Beginning and Condoning components. In contrast, the factor analysis of the British sample extracts one Condoning factor and a separate Legal factor. Despite these differences, it would appear that in general terms there is a basic underlying structure to the construct of forgiveness which is evident despite the influence of culture.

It seems that *patch up a broken relationship* is understood in a different way by the Greek-speaking group than the British group. The focus phrase may either be understood as "repair" or "cover over". The British group seems to favour the former and thus it is extracted as a variable in the Relationship component. While the Greek-speaking group favours "cover over" and thus the variable is included with condoning phrases such as *turning a blind eye and cancel the punishment.* A similar response seems to be associated with *wipe the slate clean* which is extracted as New Beginning for the British group and is associated with *ignoring, overlooking* and *as if it had never happened* in the Greek-speaking group.

The multivariate analysis of variance indicated that there were a number of differences between the three groups. Table 4 indicates that there were significant main effects for group, mode, and component. But there were also interaction effects for component by group, mode by component, and mode by component by group (Table 5 gives the means and SDs). Only the mode by group failed to indicate a significant finding. This suggests that while there are variations between the groups, participants seem to respond in a similar way in the forgiver and forgiven modes. Multiple post hoc (Tukey) comparisons (Table 5) indicated that there are significant differences between the groups for most of the components. The exception is the Healing component (in both modes) and New Beginning in the forgiven mode.

Table 5
Means, (*SD*) and Tukey Post Hoc Test between groups

Component	Means *(SD)* British (1)	Means *(SD)* Greeks (2)	Means *(SD)* Cypriots (3)	Between groups significance .05 level 1 x 2	1 x 3	2 x 3
			Forgiver			
Healing	2.77 (.69)	2.69 (.59)	2.69 (.62)	*ns*	*ns*	*ns*
Condoning	3.60 (.73)	3.55 (.79)	3.19 (.76)	*ns*	*s**	*s**
Relationships	2.32 (.71)	3.03 (.53)	2.89 (.57)	*s**	*s**	*ns*
Religious	2.88 (.75)	2.77 (.69)	2.38 (.76)	*ns*	*s**	*s**
Legal	2.84 (.49)	2.70 (.61)	2.57 (.57)	*ns*	*s**	*ns*
New Beg.	2.65 (.52)	2.59 (.50)	2.46 (.55)	*ns*	*s**	*ns*
Guilt Release	2.80 (.55)	2.55 (.65)	2.47 (.66)	*s**	*s**	*ns*
			Forgiven			
Healing	2.68 (.71)	2.66 (.71)	2.65 (.72)	*ns*	*ns*	*ns*
Condoning	3.43 (.70)	3.46 (.79)	3.16 (.71)	*ns*	*s**	*s**
Relationships	2.27 (.68)	3.02 (.59)	2.95 (.57)	*s**	*s**	*ns*
Religious	2.90(1.05)	2.53 (.96)	2.05 (.93)	*s**	*s**	*s**
Legal	2.78 (.57)	2.51 (.67)	2.45 (.59)	*s**	*s**	*ns*
New Beg.	2.66 (.55)	2.56 (.61)	2.51 (.64)	*ns*	*ns*	*ns*
Guilt Release	2.99 (.76)	2.75 (.78)	2.52 (.81)	*s***	*s**	*ns*

Note: *$p < .01$. **$p < .05$.

The British seem to be different from the other two groups in terms of Relationships (FR & FN), Legal (FN), and Guilt Release (FR) and the Cypriots in terms of Condoning (FR & FN) and Religious (FR & FN). All three groups are different for Religious (FN). In addition, the British are different from the Cypriots in terms of New Beginning (FR). The suggestion was that the Cypriot group by virtue of cultural influences coming from both Greece and Britain would fall midway between the other two groups. This is not the case, it is the Greek group that is sometimes like the British and sometimes like the Cypriot group. With few exceptions the means for the Greek group fall between those of the British and the Cypriots.

There were relatively few differences between the Greek and Cypriot groups. The Cypriots are more inclined to agree with the religious focus phrases and less likely to disagree with the condoning phrases than their Greek counterparts. The Cypriots seem to be more religious as indicated by the demographic responses; this could explain the difference on the religious component. It is more difficult to explain the condoning finding. But why should there be any differences when these two groups have so much in common? Perhaps because Cyprus is an island and independent it may need to emphasise its own particular identity, especially as a consequence of the Turkish invasion.

Hypothesis 3. It was postulated in Hypothesis 3 that there would be significant differences between the three groups in willingness to forgive. This does not seem to be the case. One possible explanation for this is that participants are asked to identify a personal event and indicate their willingness to forgive in this situation.

As this is a highly personal decision the influence of culture may be less apparent than if participants were evaluating an abstract forgiveness scenario. Conversely, willingness may be a response which is common to people regardless of culture. In other words, it is an interpersonal response directed towards re-establishing the relationship.

Hypothesis 4. The multivariate analysis indicates no significant gender differences between the different groups for each component and mode. This finding is consistent with previous studies (Azar, Mullet, & Vinsonneau, 1999; Scobie & Scobie, 1996, 1997).

Conclusion

The number of different influences at work in any culture are many and varied. As a consequence, the fact that we have been able to identify similar factors in each culture confirms that the forgiveness construct with its respective components is quite robust. However, it is also clear that the effect of culture is quite profound. A detailed examination of the response to the focus phrases reveals many significant differences. Most of these indicate merely a shift in emphasis, i.e., all groups agree/disagree but the degree of agreement or disagreement may vary. However, there are four instances where there is a more profound difference (*patch up a broken relationship, wipe the slate clean* and *kiss and make up*) the mean of the British sample is in the agree category while the Greek-speaking groups tend to disagree. The opposite is true for the focus phrase *God forgives us so we must forgive other people* with the Greeks and Cypriots more in favour. These differences may indicate cultural variation. For example, the religious Greeks and Cypriots are more likely to agree with a religious focus phrase than the British group. While nuances of meaning may be lost in translation, as we saw in the *patch up a broken relationship* focus phrase.

Ellis, Becker, and Kimmel (1993, p. 133) comment that, "It is well known amongst test developers that the use of a test in a culture other than the one in which it was developed requires evidence of the test's reliability and validity in the new setting and, usually, the development of new cultural norms." The next stage would be to apply statistical methods based on item response theory to identify whether there are other items that function differently in the British and Greek-speaking cultures. In addition it may be necessary to try and make some allowance for the different response tendencies between cultures. For example, Hispanics make more extreme responses than non-Hispanics when using a 5-point Likert-type scale. However, there are no ethnic differences in choice of extreme responses when a 10-point Likert scale is used (Hui & Triandis, 1989).

In general terms, as with most research studies, more questions are raised than answers given. We still need to find out why and in what circumstances the components are influenced by culture. We also need to investigate whether other aspects in the environment or "boundary conditions for behaviour" (Bond & Smith, 1996, p. 209) can cause changes in the relative significance of a component when an individual is assessing a particular forgiveness scenario. At least two further areas need to be examined, how the forgiveness construct is acquired and whether the greater life experience of an older population will have a significant influence on how the construct is applied in a forgiveness situation.

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