
**The Identification and Measurement
of Barriers to Forgiveness
Following an Interpersonal Transgression**

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Contents

Abstract	1
Declaration	3
Acknowledgements	4
Chapter 1: Forgiveness and the failure to overcome interpersonal conflict	5
1.1 The benefits, and costs, of social living	6
1.2 Forgiveness: A pro-social response to interpersonal conflict.....	7
1.2.1 Physical, psychological, and relational benefits of forgiveness	8
1.3 A beneficial, yet difficult, process.....	9
1.4 Investigating the causes of unforgiving victim responses	10
1.4.1 The need to investigate unforgiving victim rationalisations	11
1.4.2 Investigating unforgiving victim responses	12
1.5 Overview and thesis aims.....	13
1.6 Identification of potential barriers to forgiveness.....	14
1.6.1 Attributed causes of victims' unforgiving responses.....	14
1.6.2 Theoretical barriers to forgiveness	20
1.6.3 Potential barriers to forgiveness.....	27
1.7 Overview of studies	28
Chapter 2: The development and validation of the BTF	30
2.1 Chapter overview.....	31
2.2 Operationalising the barriers to forgiveness	31
2.2.1 The BTF: A first-person, self-report measure of state unforgiving responses	31

2.2.2 Barrier measurement	32
2.2.3 Barrier interrelations.....	34
2.3 Study 1	34
2.3.1 Study design: Recall methodology	34
2.3.2 Investigating the construct validity of the BTF	34
2.3.3 The BTF and socially desirable responding	42
2.3.4 Summary of hypotheses	43
2.3.5 Research questions	44
2.4 Method	45
2.4.1 Design.....	45
2.4.2 Participants	45
2.4.3 Materials	47
2.4.4 Procedure	53
2.5 Results	54
2.5.1 Statistical analyses.....	55
2.5.2 Initial instrument refinement	56
2.5.3 Model identification	57
2.5.4 Factor content	65
2.5.5 BTF interrelationships	66
2.5.6 BTF descriptive statistics and differences in barrier endorsement	67
2.5.7 Investigating the construct validity of the BTF.....	69
2.6 Discussion.....	74
2.6.1 Development of a preliminary BTF measure.....	74
2.6.2 Investigating the validity of the BTF	77
2.6.3 Addressing Study 1’s research questions	79

2.6.4 Summary: BTF measurement and replicability.....	84
Chapter 3: Replicating the BTF across independent samples	86
3.1 Chapter overview.....	87
3.2 Barrier expansion	87
3.3 Determining the stability of the BTF: Validating the model against two independent samples	88
3.3.1 Investigating the factorial invariance of the BTF.....	88
3.3.2 Unforgiven transgressions within obligated and non-obligated relationships.....	89
3.4 Investigating BTF construct validity across two independent samples	90
3.4.1 Measuring “silent” forgiveness	90
3.4.2 Additional validity variables that may inhibit forgiveness.....	91
3.4.3 Additional validity variables that may facilitate forgiveness	96
3.4.4 Situational variables relevant to <i>Impression Management</i> and <i>Vengeful Desires</i>	97
3.5 Summary of hypotheses.....	99
3.6 Research questions.....	101
3.7 Method	103
3.7.1 Design.....	103
3.7.2 Participants	103
3.7.3 Materials.....	106
3.7.4 Procedure.....	114
3.8 Results	115
3.8.1 Statistical analyses.....	116
3.8.2 Baseline model identification.....	117

3.8.3 Investigating BTF configural invariance	122
3.8.4 Identifying a model for the Non-obligated sample	123
3.8.5 The BTF across samples	127
3.8.6 Differences in state and trait measures across the samples	130
3.8.7 Investigating BTF construct validity across Obligated and Non-obligated samples.....	133
3.9 Discussion	141
3.9.1 Replicating and expanding upon Study 1's BTF	141
3.9.2 Assessing BTF configural invariance	142
3.9.3 Validating the BTF across the two samples	147
3.9.4 Addressing Study 2's research questions	152
3.9.5 Improving the BTF's nomological network	162
Chapter 4: Reconceptualising the barriers within a hierarchical framework ..	163
4.1 Chapter overview	164
4.2 The BTF: Operationalising active versus reactive barriers to forgiveness	164
4.2.1 The reactive inability to forgive: "I can't forgive you"	166
4.2.2 The active withholding of forgiveness: "I won't forgive you"	170
4.3 Operationalising <i>Can't Forgive</i> and <i>Won't Forgive</i> within the BTF	176
4.4 <i>Offender Response</i> : A barrier, or predictor, of the BTF?	176
4.5 Predicting endorsement of <i>Can't Forgive</i> and <i>Won't Forgive</i>	177
4.6 The effects of <i>Can't Forgive</i> and <i>Won't Forgive</i> on victim forgiveness	179
4.7 Summary of hypotheses.....	180
4.8 Research questions.....	182
4.9 Method	182
4.9.1 Participants	182

4.9.2 Materials.....	183
4.10 Results	183
4.10.1 Statistical analyses.....	184
4.10.2 Investigating the existence of a dual-factor <i>Can't Forgive-Won't Forgive</i> hierarchical model	185
4.10.3 <i>Offender Response</i> within the BTF	189
4.10.4 The <i>Can't Forgive</i> and <i>Won't Forgive</i> superordinate barriers.....	191
4.10.5 Predicting endorsement of <i>Can't Forgive</i> and <i>Won't Forgive</i>	192
4.10.6 Predicting victim forgiveness from endorsement of <i>Can't Forgive</i> and <i>Won't Forgive</i>	196
4.11 Discussion	200
4.11.1 Investigating the existence of a dual <i>Can't Forgive-Won't Forgive</i> hierarchical BTF structure	200
4.11.2 Predicting endorsement of <i>Can't Forgive</i> and <i>Won't Forgive</i>	204
4.11.3 Predicting unforgiving motivations towards the offender	210
4.11.4 Research question: <i>Offender Response</i> as a barrier, or predictor, of the BTF?	214
4.11.5 Study 3: Investigating the impact of transgression severity on barrier endorsement within an experimental setting	216
Chapter 5: Investigating barrier endorsement within an experimental paradigm.....	218
5.1 Chapter overview.....	219
5.2 Barrier endorsement within an experimental paradigm	219
5.2.1 Devising a scenario to assess transgression severity	220
5.3 Vengefulness as a covariate to barrier endorsement	221

5.4 The impact of barrier endorsement on unforgiving victim emotions and motivations	222
5.5 Summary of hypotheses.....	223
5.6 Method	225
5.6.1 Design.....	225
5.6.2 Participants	225
5.6.3 Materials	226
5.6.4 Procedure	229
5.7 Results	231
5.7.1 Statistical analyses.....	232
5.7.2 Descriptive statistics and one-way ANOVAs across severity conditions	232
5.7.3 The effect of the manipulation and trait vengeance on barrier endorsement	235
5.7.4 Predicting victim forgiveness from barrier endorsement	237
5.8 Discussion.....	240
5.8.1 Predicting endorsement of <i>Can't Forgive</i> and <i>Won't Forgive</i> in an experimental setting.....	240
5.8.2 Predicting offender-focused motivations within a standardised setting ..	243
5.8.3 The limitations and implications of study findings.....	245
Chapter 6: General discussion.....	249
6.1 Overview	250
6.2 Summary of studies.....	250
6.3 Operationalising the barriers to forgiveness	253
6.3.1 The seven-factor BTF	253

6.3.2 The barriers within a <i>Can't Forgive-Won't Forgive</i> hierarchical structure	256
6.3.3 Summary of the BTF	262
6.4 Secondary aims of investigating barriers to forgiveness.....	263
6.4.1 Investigating barrier determinants	263
6.4.2 Investigating barrier salience to unforgiving victims	269
6.4.3 Investigating the impact of barrier endorsement on unforgiving reactions towards the offender	274
6.5 Limitations	279
6.5.1 Limitations of BTF development.....	279
6.5.2 Limitations of study designs and data collection	280
6.5.3 Benefits of the study designs	283
6.6 Therapeutic applications of thesis findings	285
6.7 Pertinent questions and future directions	290
6.8 Concluding remarks.....	293
References.....	297
Appendix.....	337

List of Tables

Table 2.1. <i>Study 1 BTF barriers and sample scale items</i>	48
Table 2.2. <i>Raw Data Eigenvalues for Top Nine Components and 95th Percentile Eigenvalues Based on 1000 Permutations of the Reduced Raw Data Set</i>	59
Table 2.3. <i>Reduced Seven-Factor Model: EFA Factor Loadings with Geomin Rotation</i>	63
Table 2.4. <i>EFA Factor Correlation Matrix for Study 1 Barriers</i>	66
Table 2.5. <i>Means, Standard Deviations, and Internal Reliabilities for Study 1 Barriers</i>	67
Table 2.6. <i>Means and Standard Deviations for Study 1 Validity Measures and Social Desirability</i>	69
Table 2.7. <i>Correlations between Study 1 Barriers and Forgiveness Measures</i>	70
Table 2.8. <i>Correlations between Study 1 Barriers and Variables that Impede Forgiveness</i>	72
Table 2.9. <i>Correlations between Study 1 Barriers, Variables that Facilitate Forgiveness, and Social Desirability</i>	73
Table 3.1. <i>Baseline Seven-Factor Model: Factor Loadings for Exploratory Factor Analysis with Geomin Rotation</i>	118
Table 3.2. <i>Baseline Model: EFA Factor Correlation Matrix</i>	122
Table 3.3. <i>Non-obligated Sample Five-Factor Model: Factor Loadings for Exploratory Factor Analysis with Geomin Rotation</i>	124
Table 3.4. <i>Means, Standard Deviations, and Internal Consistency Reliabilities for Study 2 Obligated and Non-obligated Sample Barriers</i>	128
Table 3.5. <i>Descriptive Statistics, Effect Sizes, and Independent Samples t-tests for Differences between Obligated and Non-obligated Samples on Validity Measures</i>	131
Table 3.6. <i>Correlations between Obligated and Non-obligated Sample Barriers and Forgiveness Measures</i>	134
Table 3.7. <i>Correlations between Obligated and Non-obligated Sample Barriers and Dispositional Variables that Impede Forgiveness</i>	135

Table 3.8. <i>Correlations between Obligated and Non-obligated Sample Barriers and Situational Variables that Impede Forgiveness.....</i>	136
Table 3.9. <i>Correlations between Obligated and Non-obligated Sample Barriers and Variables that Facilitate Forgiveness.....</i>	138
Table 3.10. <i>Correlations between Obligated and Non-obligated Sample Barriers and Identity-Related Situational Variables.....</i>	140
Table 4.1. <i>Comparison of Single- and Dual-Factor Hierarchical CFA Models across Samples.....</i>	186
Table 4.2. <i>Number of Items, Means, Standard Deviations, and Internal Reliabilities for Can't Forgive and Won't Forgive across the Two Samples.....</i>	192
Table 4.3. <i>Pearson Correlations and Standardised Multiple Regression Predicting Endorsement of Study 1 and Obligated Can't Forgive and Won't Forgive from Validity Variables.....</i>	193
Table 4.4. <i>Pearson Correlations and R² values for Can't Forgive and Won't Forgive and Unforgiving Outcome Variables.....</i>	197
Table 4.5. <i>Standardised Multiple Regressions Predicting Unforgiving Reactions from Endorsement of Study 1 and Obligated Can't Forgive and Won't Forgive.....</i>	198
Table 5.1. <i>Descriptive Statistics and one-way ANOVAs for Manipulation Variable, Covariate, Outcome Variables and Barrier Endorsement across Conditions.....</i>	233
Table 5.2. <i>Partial Correlations and R² for Can't Forgive and Won't Forgive and Outcome Variables across Conditions, Controlling for Manipulation Category.....</i>	238
Table 5.3. <i>Hierarchical Multiple Regressions for Can't Forgive and Won't Forgive on Outcome Variables, Controlling for Severity Manipulation.....</i>	239

Abstract

Research has revealed forgiveness to be a useful pro-social tool for responding to interpersonal transgressions, with a multitude of intra- and interpersonal benefits for both victims and offenders. Despite this, many victims experience difficulty overcoming transgressions and moving towards forgiveness. Thus, to enable and encourage the process in applied and personal settings, it is important to investigate *why* such individuals do not forgive. To date, ample research has investigated the various social-cognitive, relational, and individual difference variables that may inhibit forgiveness, yet few studies have directly examined the *rationalisations* behind the unforgiving response, an oversight that presents a substantial gap in the literature. By investigating the reasons victims provide for not forgiving their offenders, research may shed light on barriers to forgiveness that transcend information provided by forgiveness predictors alone. Such research may improve treatment outcomes within applied settings by helping facilitators identify and target the specific cognitions underlying their client's unwillingness, or inability, to forgive.

Accordingly, this thesis aimed to identify salient barriers to forgiveness following interpersonal transgressions, based on past theoretical and qualitative work, and operationalise them into a valid and reliable self-report *Barriers to Forgiveness* (BTF) measure. The BTF was developed across three studies, utilising 894 participants. Studies 1 and 2 involved the development and refinement of a seven-factor BTF, and the assessment of the measure's reliability and validity against theoretically-relevant state and trait variables. In addition, Study 2

investigated the factorial invariance of the seven-factor BTF against two independent samples differing in the obligatory nature of the victim-offender relationship. Results from the two studies suggested that the barriers may differ in the purposeful nature of the unforgiving response, with three barriers reflecting an inability to forgive the offender, caused by their blameworthy role in perpetrating a severe, immoral norm violation; and three others reflecting an intentional withholding of forgiveness, in order to punish the offender and protect themselves from future harm and ego damage. Accordingly, the three data sets were reanalysed within Chapter 4 to determine the accuracy of this hierarchical *Can't Forgive-Won't Forgive* structure in explaining BTF interrelationships, and identify the variables that best predict endorsement of the two superordinate barriers. Study 3 investigated endorsement of the superordinate barriers within an experimental setting, manipulating the severity of the transgression—theorised to differentiate the two barriers—and investigating the impact of barrier endorsement on victim forgiveness.

Results across the studies suggested that both the seven-factor BTF and the hierarchical *Can't Forgive-Won't Forgive* model are valid and reliable self-report measures of situational barriers to forgiveness, which effectively assess unforgiving cognitions. Results also indicated that the barriers may be differentially related to transgression characteristics and vengeful victim characteristics, and may differentially impact forgiveness outcomes. Findings from this thesis therefore shed light on the causes of unforgiving responses and the impact of known predictors on their endorsement. These findings may help practitioners better understand the cognitions underlying clients' unforgiving responses and accordingly target their approach, for more successful treatment outcomes.

Declaration

I certify that this work contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in my name at any university or other tertiary institution and, to the best of my knowledge and belief, contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference has been made in the text. In addition, I certify that no part of this work will, in the future, be used in a submission in my name for any other degree or diploma in any university or other tertiary institution without the prior approval of the University of Adelaide and where applicable, any partner institution responsible for the joint award of this degree.

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Heather Pearce

27/3/2014

Date

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Chapter 1

Forgiveness and the failure to overcome interpersonal conflict

1.1 The benefits, and costs, of social living

As social animals, humans rely on the ability to live harmoniously within groups and dyads, a crucial survival strategy that requires adherence to norms of conduct (Baumeister & Leary, 1995; Buss, 1990, 1995; Gold & Davis, 2005). By dictating how individuals can, and should, act according to societal and interpersonal roles, norms permit trust-building within interpersonal relationships and maintain relationship health (Cialdini, Reno, & Kallgren, 1990; Gold & Davis, 2005; Thibaut & Kelley, 1959).

Due to the desire, and need, to maintain social bonds, conduct within interpersonal relationships will usually involve adherence to the relationship's norms (Baumeister & Leary, 1995). However, the proximity within which we live to others and the frequency of our interpersonal contact, combined with the potential benefits of exploitative behaviour, mean that these norms will inevitably be broken and interpersonal conflict will consequently arise (Burnette, McCullough, Van Tongeren, & Davis, 2012; Buss & Duntley, 2008).

Reactions to norm violations will often involve negative patterns of affect, cognitions, and behaviours towards the offender (Finkel, Rusbult, Kumashiro, & Hannon, 2002; Gordon & Baucom, 1998; Holman & Silver, 1998; McCullough et al., 1998). Although common in the aftermath of a transgression, such reactions become problematic if persisting over time, with research revealing the adverse impact of prolonged conflict on the health of the individuals involved (e.g., Maltby, Macaskill, & Day, 2001; Miller, Smith, Turner, Guijarro, & Hallet, 1996; Witvliet, Ludwig, & Bauer, 2002; Worthington, Witvliet, Pietrini, & Miller, 2007) and their interpersonal relationship (e.g., Fincham, Beach, & Davila, 2004; Gordon, Hughes, Tomcik, Dixon, & Litzinger, 2009).

Because norm violations and interpersonal conflict are unavoidable aspects of social living, relationship continuation and health will be largely dependent upon the individuals' willingness and ability to overcome conflict and work to repair the damage caused (Exline, Baumeister, Bushman, Campbell, & Finkel, 2004).

Forgiveness, with its focus on positive, constructive responses to transgressions, is one response through which this end may be achieved.

1.2 Forgiveness: A pro-social response to interpersonal conflict

The past three decades have seen a change in the conceptualisation of forgiveness from a theoretical construct within philosophy and theology to an empirically-studied area of psychology. Forgiveness research has been prolific in this time, investigating a range of areas including: the predictors of forgiveness (Boon & Sulsky, 1997; Fehr, Gelfand, & Nag, 2010; McCullough et al., 1998), third-party and self-forgiveness (R. P. Brown, Wohl, & Exline, 2008; Exline, Root, Yadavalli, Martin, & Fisher, 2011; Fisher & Exline, 2010), the development of forgiveness models (Enright, 2001; McCullough et al., 1998; Strelan & Covic, 2006), and the application of forgiveness to various intra- and interpersonal settings (Ahmed & Braithwaite, 2005; Aquino, Tripp, & Bies, 2001; Exline, Worthington, Hill, & McCullough, 2003; Hebl & Enright, 1993).

Researchers generally agree that forgiveness consists of three core elements: [1] forgiveness is a pro-social change, involving at least a decrease in negative offender-focused emotions, cognitions, and behaviours, and at most, an increase in such responses; [2] forgiveness is usually multi-dimensional, involving some level of both intra- and interpersonal change; and [3] forgiveness does not

imply condoning, excusing, pardoning, or forgetting a transgression, nor reconciliation with the offender (Baumeister, Exline, & Sommer, 1998; Exline et al., 2003; McCullough & Hoyt, 2002).

1.2.1 Physical, psychological, and relational benefits of forgiveness

Forgiveness has been strongly linked to physical health improvements, including reductions in physiological stress responses and better post-stress recovery for victims (Harris et al., 2006; K. A. Lawler et al., 2003; Orcutt, 2006; Whited, Wheat, & Larkin, 2010; Witvliet, Ludwig, & Vander Laan, 2001) and offenders (Hannon, Finkel, Kumashiro, & Rusbult, 2012; Witvliet et al., 2002), along with better victim sleep quality (Lawler-Row, Hyatt-Edwards, Wuensch, & Karremans, 2011; K. A. Lawler et al., 2005). Forgiveness is also associated with improved victim health habits, including reduced medication use, and alcohol and tobacco consumption (Lawler-Row, Karremans, Scott, Edlis-Matityahou, & Edwards, 2008; Seybold, Hill, Neumann, & Chi, 2001).

Forgiveness may additionally improve psychological health, reducing victim stress, depression, vulnerability to substance use, and negative affect (R. P. Brown & Phillips, 2005; Hebl & Enright, 1993; Hirsch, Webb, & Jeglic, 2011; Lin, Mack, Enright, Krahn, & Baskin, 2004); and increasing self-esteem, hope, and well-being (Bono, McCullough, & Root, 2008; Coyle & Enright, 1997; Freedman & Enright, 1996; Karremans, Van Lange, Ouwerkerk, & Kluwer, 2003). Psychological benefits may also extend to a generalised pro-social orientation, increasing charitable contributions and willingness to volunteer, as well as overall feelings of relatedness to others (Karremans, Van Lange, & Holland, 2005).

Finally, forgiveness may benefit the victim-offender relationship, increasing positive affect and relational satisfaction (Fincham & Beach, 2007; Gordon & Baucom, 2003; Harris et al., 2006; Paleari, Regalia, & Fincham, 2009), and alleviating marital distress (Gordon, Baucom, & Snyder, 2005; Greenberg, Warwar, & Malcolm, 2010). Forgiveness may also improve conflict resolution abilities and future conflict management (Ahmed & Braithwaite, 2005; Fincham et al., 2004; Fincham, Beach, & Davila, 2007; K. A. Lawler et al., 2005), both within the relationship and in the victim's interactions with others (Hebl & Enright, 1993). Accordingly, forgiveness may provide closure for the individuals involved, leading to the potential desire for reconciliation and the restoration of relational closeness (Gordon & Baucom, 2003; McCullough et al., 1998; McCullough & Worthington, 1995).

1.3 A beneficial, yet difficult, process

Because forgiveness is a useful pro-social tool for responding to transgressions and contributes to successful interpersonal relationships (Gold & Davis, 2005; Hebl & Enright, 1993; Rusbult et al., 2002), enabling and encouraging the forgiveness process in both professional settings and everyday life is an important venture.¹

¹ Forgiveness may be detrimental to victims in some situations, however, including romantic relationships with violent or abusive offenders (Gordon, Burton, & Porter, 2004; Katz, Street, & Arias, 1997), or when forgiving unrepentant offenders (Luchies, Finkel, McNulty, & Kumashiro, 2010) or repeat offenders (McNulty, 2008, 2010, 2011). While forgiveness may still benefit victims in these

Despite its benefits, however, forgiveness is a process that may be easier said than done (McCullough, Bono, & Root, 2007; McCullough, Fincham, & Tsang, 2003). Indeed, research on the persistence of negative reactions to traumatic events points to the great difficulty many victims experience overcoming interpersonal transgressions and moving towards forgiveness (e.g., Leary, Springer, Negel, Ansell, & Evans, 1998; Orcutt, Pickett, & Pope, 2005, 2008; Reed & Enright, 2006). Given the potential benefits of forgiveness and the negative impact of prolonged conflict on all involved, it is therefore important to examine *why* victims may experience difficulties forgiving following interpersonal transgressions.

1.4 Investigating the causes of unforgiving victim responses

Research has identified various social-cognitive and dispositional predictors of forgiveness, such as: offender apology and low internal causal attributions (Boon & Sulsky, 1997; Darby & Schlenker, 1982; Weiner, Graham, Peter, & Zmuidinas, 1991), empathic perspective-taking (Exline, Baumeister, Zell, Kraft, & Witvliet, 2008; McCullough et al., 1998), and trait agreeableness and forgivingness (Fehr et al., 2010). Situational and dispositional variables that may impair forgiveness have also been identified, including: trait vengefulness and narcissistic entitlement (R. P. Brown, 2004; Exline et al., 2004; McCullough, Bellah, Kilpatrick, & Johnson, 2001), severe transgressions (Boon & Sulsky, 1997; Hayashi et al., 2010; Williamson & Gonzales, 2007), state rumination (McCullough, Bono, et al., 2007; Paleari,

situations, it may also contribute to the victim returning to or remaining in the relationship, thus coming at the cost of greater exposure to future offending and potential harm.

Regalia, & Fincham, 2005), and attributions of intentionality and blame (Bradfield & Aquino, 1999; Gold & Weiner, 2000; Gonzales, Haugen, & Manning, 1994; Zechmeister & Romero, 2002).

Because this research has already identified the factors that prevent forgiveness, it may seem as though there is little to learn by investigating unforgiving victim reactions. However, this research does not address *why* victims do not forgive; more specifically, it has tended not to address the ways in which victims may *rationalise* their unforgiving responses. Such research may provide additional insight into the forgiveness experience not afforded by predictors alone.

1.4.1 The need to investigate unforgiving victim rationalisations

Humans are naive psychologists, and we are motivated to understand and assign causality for our own and others' behaviour in order to make sense of our social environments and effectively manage the events in our lives (Heider, 1958; Kelley, 1973; Weiner, 1985). Consequently, knowing the *reasons* victims provide for not forgiving their offenders may be just as beneficial as knowing the *circumstances* that reduce forgiveness, such as the severity of the transgression or the personality of the unforgiving individual. Such research may reveal rationalisations that transcend the state and trait variables that predict unforgiving responses; that is, barriers to forgiveness that may not be evident when looking solely at the facilitators of forgiveness.

For example, research has highlighted the negative impact of poor reparative efforts on forgiveness (Williamson & Gonzales, 2007; Zechmeister & Romero, 2002), but knowing the way in which this variable inhibits forgiveness—by communicating disrespect and thus increasing the identity threat associated with

forgiving the offender, for instance—provides additional insight into barriers to forgiveness that may not be apparent when simply looking at the variable alone. Research into the reasons victims do not forgive may thus shed light on the ways in which victims process the social-cognitive information available, within the context of their dispositional characteristics, and use it to rationalise their unforgiving response.

With forgiveness the focus of many therapeutic interventions (Baskin & Enright, 2004; Enright, 2001; Gordon & Baucom, 2003; Hill, 2010; Worthington, Jennings, & DiBlasio, 2010), such research may benefit treatment outcomes by helping practitioners to identify the specific cognitions underlying the victim's unwillingness or inability to forgive and tailor their treatment accordingly. Research that investigates potential barriers to forgiveness may also help to improve theoretical understandings of the construct itself, contributing to a nomological network concerning the causes of unforgiving victim responses and aiding in the development of a larger conceptual network regarding forgiveness and its constituents (McCullough, Hoyt, & Rachal, 2000).

1.4.2 Investigating unforgiving victim responses

To date, only a small body of work has directly addressed why victims may not forgive, comprising theoretical research on beneficial grudge-holding and the potential costs of forgiving (Baumeister et al., 1998; Exline & Baumeister, 2000; Lamb & Murphy, 2002; Rapske, Boon, Alibhai, & Kheong, 2010), and qualitative research investigating the reasons unforgiving victims provide for their lack of forgiveness (Rapske et al., 2010; Younger, Piferi, Jobe, & Lawler, 2004). From this

work, a number of potential reasons victims may not forgive their offenders can be ascertained, as detailed in section 1.6 below, providing a foundation for the development of a theory concerning barriers to forgiveness following interpersonal transgressions.

This thesis will consequently build upon these findings by identifying salient barriers to forgiveness and using a quantitative methodology to operationalise them into a self-report *Barriers to Forgiveness* (BTF) measure. In investigating the explanations victims provide for not forgiving their offenders, the current work aims to shed light on the ways in which different victims utilise the available social-cognitive information to rationalise their unforgiving responses. Doing so will provide insight into barriers to interpersonal forgiveness over and above research on predictors of unforgiving victim responses.

1.5 Overview and thesis aims

The basic premise of this thesis is that, while a vast literature now exists to demonstrate the various social-cognitive, relational, and individual difference variables that may inhibit forgiveness (cf. Fehr et al., 2010; McCullough et al., 1998), researchers and practitioners may also be served by a better understanding of victims' *rationalisations* for not forgiving. Regardless of—or over and above—the personal and situation-specific information provided by a transgression, what are the *reasons* people provide for not forgiving?

The primary aims of the thesis are to therefore identify salient barriers to forgiveness following interpersonal transgressions and to subsequently develop and refine a BTF measure, for future applied and theoretical use. In validating the

measure, relationships between the barriers and relevant situational and dispositional variables will be examined, in the hopes of identifying key variables that influence barrier endorsement and shedding light on the potential ways in which the barriers may inhibit forgiveness. Results may also reveal which barriers are most relevant to unforgiving victims.

1.6 Identification of potential barriers to forgiveness

Potential barriers to forgiveness were identified based on past research addressing the causes of unforgiving victim responses following real-life transgressions (Rapske et al., 2010; Younger et al., 2004), and the hypothetical costs of forgiving or benefits of not forgiving an interpersonal transgression (Baumeister et al., 1998; Exline & Baumeister, 2000; Lamb & Murphy, 2002; Rapske et al., 2010). These research areas are discussed below.

1.6.1 Attributed causes of victims' unforgiving responses

Rapske et al. (2010) and Younger et al. (2004) utilised open-ended questions to ascertain the attributed causes of unforgiving victim responses following an interpersonal transgression. Although slight differences were observed between the two studies,² the following four factors largely represented unforgiving responses in both studies.

² Unforgiving victims in Rapske et al.'s (2010) study also reported not forgiving due to self-concept or "face" damage, power dynamics, and offender recidivism. These results support theorising on the potential costs of forgiving/benefits of not forgiving, as discussed in section 1.6.2.

1.6.1.1 Lack of offender reparative work

Participants in both studies reported not forgiving due to the offender's poor reparative efforts, including both the failure to display positive, conciliatory behaviours following the transgression, such as apology or remorse; and displaying *negative* behaviours, such as denial of wrongdoing.

Attribution theory may explain the impact of an offender's post-transgression behaviour on forgiveness. As previously discussed, individuals strive to assign causality for life events, to better understand their environments and devise strategies to address these events on future occasions (Weiner, 1985). A positive event outcome may lead to reinstating the causal network when next the situation occurs, but a negative outcome may lead to altering the causal network to produce a different, more positive effect in future (Weiner, Graham, & Reyna, 1997). In the aftermath of a transgression, a victim will similarly attempt to understand the offender's behavioural motivation and make causal inferences that affect their reaction. If the victim makes negative causal attributions about the offender's behaviour, attributing it to a dispositional characteristic, they may alter their relationship in order to prevent future negative interactions (Boon & Sulsky, 1997; Takaku, 2001; Weiner et al., 1991; Weiner et al., 1997). Consequently, these victims may not forgive.

Offenders may engage in impression management strategies to prevent negative attributions, such as accepting responsibility, apologising for the behaviour, or offering restitution (Weiner et al., 1991). These reparative efforts facilitate forgiveness by increasing offender-focused empathy (McCullough et al., 1998; McCullough, Worthington, & Rachal, 1997), reducing negative dispositional

attributions (Gold & Davis, 2005; Takaku, 2001), improving character perceptions (Darby & Schlenker, 1982; Weiner et al., 1991), and reducing punishment desires (Ohbuchi, Kameda, & Agarie, 1989).

Conversely, negative behaviours, such as insincere or absent apologies, denial of wrongdoing, or a lack of remorse, affirm internal causal attributions and reinforce judgements of the offender's moral character and recidivism potential (J. R. Davis & Gold, 2011; Gold & Weiner, 2000; Weiner et al., 1991), thus impairing forgiveness (Gold & Weiner, 2000; Williamson & Gonzales, 2007; Zechmeister, Garcia, Romero, & Vas, 2004; Zechmeister & Romero, 2002). These behaviours may also increase the identity threat or damage caused by the transgression, thereby making forgiveness more costly (Gonzales et al., 1994; Luchies et al., 2010). Consequently, an offender's lack of reparative work may constitute a significant barrier to victim forgiveness.

1.6.1.2 Transgression or offender immorality

A prominent reason in both studies for the unforgiving response regarded judgements of transgression or offender immorality. Victims had difficulty forgiving transgressions thought to be “unforgivable”, with idiosyncratic variation as to what constituted an unforgivable transgression.³ The moral denunciation extended to the

³ While some offences such as rape, murder, or child abuse may be universally considered so severe and morally-reprehensible as to be unforgivable (Macaskill, 2005a; Wiesenthal, 1998; Younger et al., 2004), a victim's personal experiences and attitudes exert a strong influence on the moral principles they consider unbreachable. Accordingly, idiosyncratic variation will often be observed in the behaviours deemed “unforgivable” (Baumeister et al., 1998).

offender, with negative judgements of offender morality limiting victims' willingness or ability to forgive.

Research on negative judgements of transgressions supports these findings. Research by Darley and colleagues (Carlsmith, Darley, & Robinson, 2002; Darley, Carlsmith, & Robinson, 2000; Darley & Pittman, 2003) suggests that responses to an offence will often be governed by the amount of moral outrage experienced, a moral reaction involving a reasoning component, and an emotional component comprising anger, disgust, and contempt (Rozin, Lowery, Imada, & Haidt, 1999). The strength and experience of moral outrage is determined foremost by the severity and wrongfulness of the behaviour (Carlsmith et al., 2002). Thus, victims of severe, morally-reprehensible transgressions may experience a strong sense of moral outrage towards the offender and make lasting negative character judgements, which substantially impair their ability to forgive.

Judgements of severity and immorality, and the subsequent experience of moral outrage, may be governed by the size and importance of the violated norm, with substantial violations resulting in greater damage to the victim and evoking a more aversive response (Alter, Kernochan, & Darley, 2007; Finkel et al., 2002; Gordon & Baucom, 1998; Kam & Bond, 2009; A. P. McGraw & Tetlock, 2005). The violation of norms that are important to the victim or society may result in particularly strong immorality judgements, as these are the norms which hold the greatest moral weight to the victim and by which they expect all individuals to adhere (Tetlock, 2003; Tetlock, Kristel, Elson, Green, & Lerner, 2000). The offender's ability to break such a crucial rule may therefore result in the inability to separate the act from the agent, with the offender considered to be as morally abhorrent as their behaviour (Baumeister, 1996; Exline et al., 2008; Exline et al.,

2003). Consequently, the offence, and thereby the offender, may be considered unforgivable.

1.6.1.3 *Betrayal and trust dissolution*

A prominent reason for not forgiving in both studies regarded the offender's violation of relationship-relevant norms. In these instances, the offender's failure to meet expectations of relational conduct, or their active violation of relationship rules, led to a strong sense of betrayal and the perception of the dissolution of trust within the relationship, thus hindering forgiveness.

Research on reactions to violations of relationship-relevant norms supports these findings. Due to the length and frequency of interactions within interpersonal relationships, relationship norms usually take on the characteristics of moral obligations (Finkel et al., 2002; Rusbult et al., 2002; Thibaut & Kelley, 1959). The closer the relationship, the stronger the moral obligation to behave appropriately, and the violation of these relationship-relevant norms consequently results in the experience of betrayal (Finkel et al., 2002). Betrayal incidents are particularly damaging for victims and hard to overcome (Shackelford & Buss, 1996; Snyder, Baucom, & Gordon, 2008; Williamson & Gonzales, 2007; Zechmeister & Romero, 2002) due to their destructive effect on the trust in the relationship.

Trust evolves from positive past experience and interaction between individuals, and develops as a relationship strengthens (Rempel, Holmes, & Zanna, 1985). Trust is defined by feelings of confidence and security in the caring response of the other individual and the strength of the relationship, and the assurance that the other person will be responsive to the individual's needs, even when conflicting

with their own preferences (Rempel, Ross, & Holmes, 2001). When these assumptions are violated, as in betrayal incidents, they may call into doubt a victim's beliefs about the offender and their relationship, dissolving the certainty that the offender will act positively towards them across situations (Gordon & Baucom, 1998).

Betrayals consequently result in intense negative affect at the realisation that the offender could violate the relationship's norms, accompanied by feelings of defencelessness, helplessness, and vulnerability to future harm (Gordon, Baucom, & Snyder, 2001). Victims may also feel that the transgression irreparably damaged the trust in the relationship, changing their perception of the offender in such a way as to make reconciliation all but impossible (Baumeister et al., 1998). As trust is fundamental to the continuation of close relationships (Rempel et al., 1985), the dissolution of trust as a result of a betrayal may impair a victim's willingness or ability to forgive.

1.6.1.4 Continuation of adverse transgression effects

Finally, victims in the two studies attributed their difficulty forgiving to the continuation of negative physical, emotional, or psychological consequences of the transgression; or their inability to move past the transgression due to its ongoing impact in their lives.

Research has highlighted the detrimental impact of lingering transgression consequences on a victim's ability to overcome a transgression (Leary & Leder, 2009; Orcutt et al., 2008; Zechmeister et al., 2004). Victims will often experience aversive reactions in the aftermath of a transgression that make forgiveness difficult (e.g., Gordon & Baucom, 2003; Leary et al., 1998; McCullough, Bono, et al., 2007;

McCullough, Worthington, et al., 1997), but many will continue to suffer consequences long afterwards (Holman & Silver, 1998; Leary et al., 1998; Witvliet, Phipps, Feldman, & Beckham, 2004). According to Baumeister et al. (1998), when an individual continues to suffer the negative consequences of a transgression it remains relevant in their life, making it extremely difficult to bury in the past and move towards forgiveness. This may be pertinent to particularly severe or hurtful transgressions, which have enduring consequences and may thus be harder to overcome (Boon & Sulsky, 1997; Holman & Silver, 1998; Orcutt et al., 2008).

Alternatively, some transgressions may have lasting physical or financial costs for the victim, or be ongoing in nature, as with legal battles. For these victims, the transgression remains open and relevant due to its continued influence on their present and future lives (Baumeister et al., 1998; Freedman & Chang, 2010; Orcutt et al., 2005; Zechmeister et al., 2004). Such victims may accordingly find themselves unable to put the transgression behind them and move towards forgiveness.

1.6.2 Theoretical barriers to forgiveness

The theoretical and qualitative work on perceived benefits of an unforgiving response (Baumeister et al., 1998; Rapske et al., 2010) and the potential costs of forgiving (Exline & Baumeister, 2000; Lamb & Murphy, 2002) point to the existence of four additional barriers that may impair forgiveness.

1.6.2.1 Desires to prevent future victimisation

Following an interpersonal transgression, a victim may utilise their unforgiving response as a tool to deter offender recidivism. Victims must consider the possibility that forgiving may open the door to future transgressions, increasing the likelihood of offender recidivism and leaving the victim vulnerable to additional harm (Baumeister et al., 1998; Exline & Baumeister, 2000; Lamb, 2002), a particularly pertinent concern if the offender's past behaviour suggests recidivism is likely (Williamson & Gonzales, 2007; Zechmeister & Romero, 2002). In these instances, victims may fear that forgiveness will be interpreted as condoning or accepting the offender's actions, or as a sign that their behaviour was relatively inoffensive (Rapske et al., 2010; Wallace, Exline, & Baumeister, 2008), thus reducing feelings of guilt or regret and perceptions of harm, and potentially encouraging future offences.

Research on the communication of forgiveness and lay beliefs regarding forgiveness constituents suggests that fears of conflating forgiveness with condoning or minimising a transgression may be valid. Lay people regularly confound forgiveness with excusing or condoning the transgression, and often believe it requires forgetting about the transgression and reconciling with the offender (Freedman & Chang, 2010; Kanz, 2000; Kearns & Fincham, 2004; Mullet, Girard, & Bakhshi, 2004). Moreover, the often-implicit, non-confrontational means by which victims regularly communicate forgiveness—via minimising statements like, “that’s ok” and, “it’s no big deal”, or by resuming contact with the offender—may inherently communicate condoning or acceptance of the hurtful behaviour

(Exline & Baumeister, 2000). As Exline and Baumeister explain, it is easy to imagine how these responses might increase the risk of future transgressions.⁴

Victims may therefore withhold forgiveness in the hope of exerting influence over the offender's future behaviour and protecting themselves from future harm. In refusing to forgive, the victim can communicate the hurtful and unacceptable nature of the transgression to the offender, and send a message regarding their unwillingness to tolerate such behaviour (Rapske et al., 2010; Wallace et al., 2008). Moreover, by withholding forgiveness, the victim can continue to remind the offender of the transgression, encouraging offender guilt and negative affect and thus increasing the ability to exert influence over the offender's future behaviour (Baumeister et al., 1998; Baumeister, Stillwell, & Heatherton, 1995). In this way, an unforgiving victim response may prevent future harm at the hands of the offender.

1.6.2.2 *Desires to prevent ego damage*

Some victims may withhold forgiveness following ego-threatening transgressions, in order to maintain a favourable social image and prevent negative character evaluations. Research suggests that people strive to maintain and

⁴ Consensus cannot be reached from the small number of studies examining offender recidivism as to whether or not forgiveness actually encourages re-offending, with the variable increasing recidivism in some studies (McNulty, 2010, 2011), while discouraging it in others (Wallace et al., 2008). Despite this lack of consensus, the potential for offender recidivism and the vulnerability to future harm is perceived to be a very real cost of forgiveness (Kearns & Fincham, 2004; Macaskill, 2005a; Rapske et al., 2010; Strelan, Crabb, Chan, & Jones, 2013; Williamson & Gonzales, 2007; Zechmeister & Romero, 2002).

enhance favourable concepts of themselves, and are driven by self-presentation concerns to create a public image that will support these self-concepts (Baumeister, 1982b, 1998; Baumeister & Cairns, 1992; Black, 2006). As interpersonal transgressions often result in some threat or damage to the victim's public or private identity, victims may be motivated to protect against any potential harm the transgression may cause—a motivation that may increase as the ego threat intensifies (Baumeister, 1997, 1998; Bushman & Baumeister, 1998; Leary & Kowalski, 1990). Accordingly, when faced with transgressions that threaten their self-concepts, some victims may respond defensively and withhold forgiveness until they perceive that the ego threat has been nullified.

Self-concept threats may come from the offender or third parties. If a transgression involves an explicit self-esteem blow, the victim may fear that forgiveness could be perceived by the offender as “backing down” from the conflict, and thus a sign of weakness that can be exploited to maximum future benefit (Baumeister et al., 1998; Exline & Baumeister, 2000; Kearns & Fincham, 2004; Nisbett, 1993; Wallace et al., 2008). To maintain an image of pride or strength, the victim may therefore withhold forgiveness.

Alternatively, a victim may fear that forgiveness could be interpreted by third parties as ignoring the transgression or letting the offender get away with their behaviour. This, in turn, could lead to lowered opinions of the victim and a potential loss of face, effects that directly combat self-presentation motivations (Baumeister, 1982b; Exline & Baumeister, 2000; Rapske et al., 2010). Research on public conflict suggests that the presence or knowledge of an audience lends a social reality to transgressions, making them much harder for victims to ignore (Baumeister & Cairns, 1992; Baumeister et al., 1998; B. R. Brown, 1968; Cohen,

Nisbett, Bowdle, & Schwarz, 1996; Leary & Kowalski, 1990). People also experience great distress when presented with the information that others perceive them negatively (Leary, 2005) and are motivated to respond in ways that alter these negative perceptions, even when detrimental to themselves (Baumeister, 1997; B. R. Brown, 1968). Consequently, if a victim fears that a lenient response may jeopardise their status and reputation, they may be motivated to withhold forgiveness to prevent negative evaluations.

1.6.2.3 *Desires to maintain victim status*

Some victims may withhold forgiveness to maintain victim status and reap the accompanying benefits. According to Baumeister and colleagues (Baumeister et al., 1998; Exline & Baumeister, 2000), a transgression creates a debt insofar as the offender is indebted to the victim for their wrongful conduct. To forgive is to cancel the debt, relinquishing any claims on the debt and thus sacrificing any material or practical benefits that not forgiving may provide. Victims may therefore withhold forgiveness to continue to receive such benefits.

The “victim” label bestowed upon offended individuals, which holds substantial power within society, may provide these benefits (Baumeister, 1996; Exline & Baumeister, 2000). Victim status enables a moral high ground due to the harm suffered at the hands of the offender, and provides victims with a number of rewards that would be relinquished upon forgiving. For example, victim status provides considerable leverage within the relationship, enabling the extraction of reparations and restitution, and allowing the victim to influence the offender’s future behaviour (Baumeister, Stillwell, & Heatherton, 1994; Baumeister et al., 1995). By

reminding the offender of—and reproaching them for—their hurtful behaviour, the victim may be able to induce or amplify guilt, triggering a sense of debt or obligation for the hurt caused and increasing future compliance and concessions (Baumeister et al., 1998; Baumeister et al., 1994). Victims may also use offender indebtedness as justification for their own negative behaviour, taking advantage of the offender's increased forgivingness and engaging in otherwise-forbidden acts (Exline & Baumeister, 2000).

Victim status additionally provides the victim with a position of moral superiority over the offender. Baumeister (1996) argues that victims within Western society are often viewed with compassion and consideration, while offenders are viewed as wrong and immoral. In society's eyes, the offender has hurt the victim and must carry the accompanying burden of guilt or shame, whereas the victim is presumed to be innocent and therefore entitled to positive treatment for their suffering (Baumeister et al., 1998). Victim status may consequently enable the victim to elicit support and sympathy from others, while bestowing guilt and shame upon the offender (Baumeister et al., 1998; Baumeister, Stillwell, & Wotman, 1990; Rapske et al., 2010). In addition, victim status may justify ongoing emotions such as anger or righteous indignation, which may provide victims with a sense of personal power (Exline & Baumeister, 2000).

These benefits of the victim role would be lost if victim status were relinquished. Indeed, victims who forgive but continue to bring up the transgression may sacrifice their moral high ground, as they are essentially going back on their word (Baumeister et al., 1998). Thus, victims may withhold forgiveness to maintain the advantageous moral position victim status provides.

1.6.2.4 Desires for punishment

Finally, some victims may withhold forgiveness due to desires for vengeance or retribution. These victims may wish to penalise the offender to some extent for their behaviour and may withhold forgiveness until the offender has been satisfactorily punished. The justification for this punishment response, and thus the desired level of punishment inflicted, may vary according to whether the unforgiving response is motivated by retributive justice sensibilities or more vengeful desires (cf. Strelan & Van Prooijen, 2013).

The retributive justice stance focuses on ideas of just desserts, equity, and reciprocity, emphasising the need to punish the offender in proportion to the moral gravity of the harm caused (Carlsmith et al., 2002). The punishment may restore justice by both degrading the offender's power or status, and re-establishing social consensus regarding the rules and values the offender violated (Darley & Pittman, 2003; Strelan, Feather, & McKee, 2008; Vidmar, 2002; Wenzel & Thielmann, 2006). From this perspective, forgiving an unpenalised offender effectively releases them from the debt created by the transgression, thus leaving the scales of justice unbalanced (Exline & Baumeister, 2000; McCullough, Sandage, & Worthington, 1997). Only after the offender is perceived to have suffered to the deserved extent is balance thought to be restored and forgiveness possible (Enright, Santos, & Al-Mabuk, 1989; Kelln & Ellard, 1999; Mullet, Houdbine, Laumonier, & Girard, 1998; Strelan & Van Prooijen, 2013).

Conversely, revenge is considered to be an aggressive, emotional, irrational response to an interpersonal injustice (Bradfield & Aquino, 1999; Stillwell, Baumeister, & Del Priore, 2008; Tripp, Bies, & Aquino, 2002). In these instances, the victim experiences an intense emotional reaction to being wronged and is

strongly motivated to inflict retaliatory harm on the offender, which is often of greater severity and intensity than the initial transgression (Boon, Alibhai, & Deveau, 2011; Boon, Deveau, & Alibhai, 2009; Rapske et al., 2010). The vengeful response works to alleviate the victim's negative feelings and encourages the experience of positive emotions, such as satisfaction at feeling vindicated (Boon et al., 2011; Boon et al., 2009; Strelan & Van Prooijen, 2013; Stuckless & Goranson, 1992).

Unlike retribution, research suggests that revenge may not enable forgiveness (Strelan & Van Prooijen, 2013), and may instead contribute to the escalation of conflict (Stillwell et al., 2008; Stuckless, Ford, & Vitelli, 1995). Nonetheless, both desires for justice and desires for revenge may impede a victim's willingness or ability to forgive (Bradfield & Aquino, 1999; R. P. Brown, 2004; Enright et al., 1989; Lucas, Young, Zhdanova, & Alexander, 2010; McCullough et al., 2001; Rapske et al., 2010).

1.6.3 Potential barriers to forgiveness

The above literature review identifies a number of potential barriers to forgiveness, which could be operationalised into a self-report BTF measure. From this work, the following eight barriers may be proposed:

1. *Offender Response*: Not forgiving due to the offender's poor reparative efforts.

2. *Trust Dissolution*: Not forgiving due to the dissolution of trust within the relationship as a result of the transgression.

3. *Morality Judgements*: Not forgiving due to the moral magnitude of the transgression or the violation of the victim's principles.

4. *Enduring Effects*: Not forgiving due to the continuation of aversive transgression consequences.

5. *Recidivism Prevention*: Not forgiving to deter future transgressions perpetrated by the offender.

6. *Impression Management*: Not forgiving to prevent loss of face or evaluations of weakness from the offender or third parties.

7. *Victim Status*: Not forgiving to maintain a position of moral superiority over the offender and reap any accompanying benefits.

8. *Punishment Desires*: Not forgiving due to the desire for revenge or retribution.

1.7 Overview of studies

Based on these eight barriers, the BTF was constructed, revised, and tested across three studies. Chapter 2 presents the data from Study 1, describing the initial development of the BTF and the preliminary assessment of its validity and reliability, utilising a retrospective survey design. Chapter 3 presents the findings from Study 2, a retrospective survey study that utilised two data sets: unforgiving victims in obligatory and non-obligatory relationships with their offenders. In addition to replicating the BTF and further assessing its validity, the focus of the study was on investigating the relationship between relational obligation and barrier endorsement.

Chapter 4 explores the potential division of the barriers into a dual-factor hierarchical structure. Within the chapter, the aforementioned data sets were reanalysed to investigate empirical support for the new structure, identify the

variables that best predict endorsement of the superordinate factors, and determine which of the two barriers best predict unforgiving victim motivations. Chapter 5 presents the findings from Study 3, which aimed to investigate endorsement of the superordinate barriers within an experimental setting, utilising hypothetical scenarios to manipulate transgression severity, a variable theorised to differentiate the two barriers. The study also aimed to investigate the barriers' effects on unforgiving victim motivations within a standardised transgression. Chapter 6 concludes the thesis with a summary of the findings across the studies and a discussion of the implications of the work.

Chapter 2

The development and validation of the BTF

2.1 Chapter overview

The current chapter presents findings from Study 1, which aimed to operationalise the identified barriers into a BTF measure. In investigating the descriptive characteristics of the barriers, Study 1 also examined differences in barrier endorsement, to identify which of the barriers were most important to unforgiving participants. Finally, Study 1 involved the initial assessment of the BTF's construct validity, investigating the relationships between the barriers and relevant measures of situation-specific forgiveness, as well as variables shown to influence forgiving responses.

2.2 Operationalising the barriers to forgiveness

2.2.1 The BTF: A first-person, self-report measure of state unforgiving responses

To maximise its relevance and applicability to unforgiving victims, the BTF was designed as a first-person, self-report measure of unforgiving responses to interpersonal transgressions. Because victim responses to transgressions will often be governed by the situational characteristics of the offence and may vary according to the individual event (e.g., Fehr et al., 2010; McCullough et al., 1998; McCullough, Worthington, et al., 1997), the BTF was designed to measure state unforgiving responses. Focusing on specific unforgiven transgressions instead of general response patterns should increase the relevance of the measure to applied settings.

2.2.2 Barrier measurement

Due to the multi-faceted nature of the barriers, each barrier was operationalised with multiple scale items designed to assess its many aspects. Item wording was based on key phrases and language used within the relevant literatures, with an emphasis on colloquial phrasing to maximise relevance.

2.2.2.1 Revising the BTF

An initial effort to operationalise the eight barriers identified in Chapter 1 was undertaken as part of the researcher's Honours thesis, resulting in a 34-item BTF.⁵ Following the honours study, a comprehensive revision of barrier theory and operationalisation was conducted prior to Study 1, to expand upon this preliminary BTF. A broader literature review for each barrier was first performed, to refine conceptualisations and identify overlooked aspects. In accordance with Clark and Watson's (1995) recommendations, a large, overly-inclusive item pool was created to measure each content area, to ensure accurate assessment and representation of all aspects of the latent variables and enable stringent model refinement.

The revised barriers were then presented to ten experts in relevant fields, including psychology researchers, practitioners, social workers, teachers, and theologians, for feedback on operationalisation, item wording, and the existence of additional barriers. From this process, 14 of the original 34 items were discarded

⁵ In accordance with the University of Adelaide's 2014 Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) Academic Program Rules, these results are not provided in this thesis.

and 55 new items were written, resulting in a revised 75-item BTF measure representing the eight barriers.

2.2.2.1.1 Revision of barrier conceptualisations

Results from the aforementioned Honours thesis and the revision process supported conceptualisations for six of the eight barriers proposed in section 1.6. The revision process highlighted the need to revise *Victim Status*, however, to focus on desires to reproach the offender for their behaviour and hold the offence against them to increase relationship power and behavioural compliance.

This process also emphasised the need to narrow the focus of *Trust Dissolution* from broader feelings of betrayal, to the core of the barrier: the lasting damage to the relationship as a result of the trust violation. Doing so raised questions about the existence of *Trust Dissolution* as a stand-alone barrier, however. As argued by Baumeister et al. (1998), severe trust violations may change perceptions of an offender so fundamentally that it may be impossible to revert to the prior relationship. The victim may feel that the transgression irreparably damaged the relationship, restricting their ability to trust the offender again and altering their opinion of the offender in such a way as to make them unforgivable. In highlighting the finality and pervasiveness of the trust damage, this argument suggests that betrayal and trust dissolution may be more appropriately conceptualised as facets of a barrier like *Morality Judgements* or *Enduring Effects*, rather than a stand-alone barrier to forgiveness.

In reducing *Trust Dissolution* to these core elements—irreparable trust and relationship damage, and changed opinions of the offender—Study 1 will therefore attempt to identify where betrayal and trust dissolution are best represented within

the BTF. Results may shed light on the rationale behind item endorsement and reveal their most appropriate location within the BTF.

2.2.3 Barrier interrelations

As evident in the previous section, the complex nature of interpersonal conflict means that victims will likely experience many hindrances to forgiveness, which may correspond to simultaneous endorsement of multiple barriers. Consequently, the barriers are not conceptualised as mutually-exclusive constructs; rather, weak-to-moderate overlap is expected.

2.3 Study 1

2.3.1 Study design: Recall methodology

Study 1 will utilise a retrospective recall design, a common practice in the early stages of forgiveness instrument design (e.g., R. P. Brown, 2003; McCullough et al., 1998; Rye et al., 2001; Thompson et al., 2005).

2.3.2 Investigating the construct validity of the BTF

According to Cronbach and Meehl (1955), an instrument's construct validity must be investigated when the attribute or quality being measured is not operationally defined, as is the case with the BTF. In addition to specifying a set of constructs and their interrelationships, and developing ways in which to measure them, construct validation requires the empirical testing of the hypothesised relations amongst constructs and their observable manifestations, demonstrating

that the measure relates to similar constructs in theoretically-predictable ways (Smith, 2005). Accordingly, it is necessary to demonstrate that the barriers, as measures of state unforgiving responses, share expected relationships with established forgiveness measures, as well as variables that impede or facilitate forgiveness (McCullough et al., 2000).

2.3.2.1 *Forgiveness measures*

Study 1 will investigate the relationships between the barriers and the Transgression-Related Interpersonal Motivations inventory (TRIM; McCullough, Fincham, et al., 2003; McCullough et al., 1998), a measure of state forgiveness that conceptualises the construct as a set of motivational changes leading to a reduction in vengeful and avoidant motivations and an increase in benevolent motivations towards an offender. In addition, Study 1 will assess barrier relationships with victim perceptions of having forgiven the offender. As measures of unforgiving responses, the barriers should correlate positively with revenge and avoidance motivations towards the offender, and negatively with benevolence motivations and perceptions of having forgiven.

2.3.2.2 Forgiveness determinants

McCullough et al. (1998) argue that forgiveness determinants can be divided into four conceptual categories:⁶ social-cognitive variables, regarding the way the victim thinks and feels about the offender and the transgression (e.g., state empathy, attributions of causality and blame); offence-level variables, relating to the nature of the transgression itself (e.g., transgression severity, offender apology); relationship-level variables, relating to the victim's interpersonal relationship with the offender (e.g., relationship closeness and satisfaction); and personality-level variables (e.g., trait agreeableness, trait vengefulness). BTF construct validity will accordingly be investigated in Studies 1 and 2 with a range of variables from these categories.

2.3.2.2.1 Variables that impede forgiveness

2.3.2.2.1.1 Trait vengefulness

Trait vengefulness is a disposition that orients people towards revenge following a perceived wrong, including both “(a) beliefs and attitudes about the morality or desirability of vengeful actions for attaining certain goals (e.g., restoring the moral balance, teaching an offender a lesson, saving face); and (b) self-reported use of vengeance as an interpersonal problem-solving strategy” (McCullough et al., 2001, p. 602). Accordingly, dispositionally-vengeful individuals

⁶ Although alternate structures for forgiveness determinants have been proposed (e.g., Fehr et al., 2010; Mullet et al., 1998), the similarities of these frameworks are greater than their differences. Consequently, McCullough and colleagues' system will be employed in this thesis.

display a tendency to harbour feelings of revenge and carry out their vengeful desires across time, situations, and relationships (Ysseldyk, Matheson, & Anisman, 2007). A growing body of work has revealed the strong negative impact of dispositional vengefulness on a victim's willingness or ability to forgive (R. P. Brown, 2004; McCullough et al., 2001; Thompson et al., 2005; Ysseldyk et al., 2007). As such, trait vengeance should be positively related to barrier endorsement.

2.3.2.2.1.2 Narcissistic entitlement

Narcissism is characterised by a grandiose and inflated sense of self, accompanied by a preoccupation with fantasies of power and success, a sense of entitlement and superiority, and an inability to tolerate criticism (Raskin & Terry, 1988). According to Exline et al. (2004), the entitlement dimension of narcissism emphasises the individual's expectations about how they should be treated—believing their superiority entitles them to preferential treatment—and their preoccupation with defending their rights. Entitled individuals are easily offended when wronged and quick to respond aggressively, in order to save face and protect their grandiose, though fragile, self-image (McCullough, Emmons, Kilpatrick, & Mooney, 2003; Sheppard & Boon, 2012). Moreover, entitled individuals are less concerned with the maintenance of positive social relationships than they are about collecting debts owed to them (Strelan, 2007).

With a heightened awareness of the interpersonal debt aspect of a transgression and the personal and pride-related costs of unconditional forgiveness, entitled narcissists see forgiveness as a costly and morally-unappealing option (Exline et al., 2004; Strelan, 2007). Consequently, entitled

individuals are less likely to forgive an interpersonal transgression, and should positively endorse the BTF barriers.

2.3.2.2.1.3 Transgression severity

A large body of research has demonstrated the strong negative link between judgements of transgression severity and forgiveness (Boon & Sulsky, 1997; Fincham, Jackson, & Beach, 2005; Girard & Mullet, 1997; McCullough, Fincham, et al., 2003; Williamson & Gonzales, 2007), with the construct emerging as one of the most important predictors of poor forgiveness responses (for a meta-analysis, see Fehr et al., 2010). Severe transgressions may inhibit forgiveness by increasing negative internal casual attributions, leading to the view that the abhorrent offender is undeserving of forgiveness (Baumeister, 1996; Exline et al., 2008). Severe transgressions also have a more pervasive influence on a victim's life than minor transgressions, often resulting in enduring consequences that remind the victim of the costs associated with interacting with the offender (McCullough, Fincham, et al., 2003).

Accordingly, victims of severe transgressions may be motivated to engage in self-protective behaviours, such as avoiding the offender or seeking revenge, to reduce the likelihood of future harm, rather than risk additional damage by forgiving. As such, increased transgression severity should accompany barrier endorsement.

2.3.2.2.1.4 Intentionality attributions

Of the attributions a victim may make regarding an offender's role in the transgression, judgements of intentionality, regarding the purposefulness of the

offender's actions (Shaver, 1985), are a key determinant of blameworthiness. Offenders who are judged to have intentionally perpetrated a transgression are considered personally responsible for the harm done to the victim, with their behaviour implying malice or indifference towards the victim's well-being despite knowledge that their actions may cause an adverse outcome (Alicke, 2000; Lagnado & Channon, 2008; Shaver, 1985). Intentional transgressions may consequently damage the victim's perceptions of the offender, thereby leading to an unwillingness, or inability, to forgive such an individual (Boon & Sulsky, 1997; Darby & Schlenker, 1982; Fehr et al., 2010; Girard & Mullet, 1997; Zechmeister & Romero, 2002).

2.3.2.2.1.5 State anger

Anger is a negative affective state involving judgements of the appropriateness of another's actions, aroused in response to a perceived misdeed or injustice (Averill, 1983; Berkowitz & Harmon-Jones, 2004). This other-oriented emotional state is characterised by feelings of irritation, annoyance, and resentment, and therefore often leads to approach, rather than avoidant, impulses, such as retaliation or displays of aggression (Berkowitz, 1990; McCullough, Bono, et al., 2007; Worthington & Wade, 1999). Angry individuals are often motivated to strike back against their antagonisers, and it is this affiliation with conflict-promoting behaviours that makes anger one of the main emotional barriers to interpersonal forgiveness (Barber, Maltby, & Macaskill, 2005; Barnes, Carvallo, Brown, & Osterman, 2010; Fehr et al., 2010; Huang & Enright, 2000; Zechmeister & Romero, 2002). As such, current anger towards the offender should correlate positively with the BTF barriers.

2.3.2.2.2 *Variables that facilitate forgiveness*

2.3.2.2.2.1 Current relationship quality

High-quality relationships are characterised by long-term orientation, intent to remain in the relationship, psychological attachment, and a collectivistic mentality that promotes a willingness to act in ways that benefit the relationship partner (McCullough et al., 1998; Rusbult, 1980a). Current relationship quality appears to share a positive, bi-directional relationship with forgiveness (Fincham & Beach, 2007; Finkel et al., 2002; McCullough et al., 1998; Paleari et al., 2005), potentially facilitating forgiveness due to cognitive dissonance or changes in self-perception that may accompany restored closeness without forgiveness (Tsang, McCullough, & Fincham, 2006). Individuals in committed relationships with their offenders are also more likely to perceive the offender's actions as less severe (Menzies-Toman & Lydon, 2005), and may find it easier to empathise with the offender (McCullough et al., 1998), factors which facilitate forgiveness. Accordingly, the barriers, as measures of unforgiving responses, should be negatively related to current relationship quality.

2.3.2.2.2.2 Empathic perspective-taking

Empathy is an other-focused reaction that comprises both an emotional concern for an individual and a cognitive ability to understand another's perspective (M. H. Davis, 1983). Within the forgiveness literature, situational empathy has arisen as one of the key mediators of victim forgiveness (R. P. Brown et al., 2008;

J. R. Davis & Gold, 2011; Fincham, Paleari, & Regalia, 2002; Konstam, Chernoff, & Deveney, 2001; Paleari et al., 2005; Toussaint & Webb, 2005); indeed, McCullough and colleagues (McCullough et al., 1998; McCullough, Worthington, et al., 1997) argue that offender-focused empathy is the central facilitative condition that leads to forgiveness. Although both the emotional and cognitive facets of situational empathy are important to forgiveness, it is the cognitive, perspective-taking aspect that is most relevant to the current study.

As highlighted previously, a victim may demonise their offender following a transgression, seeing the inexplicable behaviour as rooted in pure evil, and consequently react in a self-protective or retributive way antithetical to forgiveness (Baumeister, 1996; Baumeister et al., 1990). Victims who are able to understand the offender's motivations, however, and consider the potential factors contributing to the behaviour, are better able to reflect on their own transgressions and capability to act similarly, thereby making the offence seem more forgivable (Exline et al., 2008). With research demonstrating the strong positive link between empathic perspective-taking and forgiveness (Exline et al., 2008; Exline & Zell, 2009; Takaku, 2001; Takaku, Weiner, & Ohbuchi, 2001; Zechmeister & Romero, 2002), the variable should be negatively related to the BTF barriers.

2.3.2.2.2.3 Offender reparative work

Finally, a large body of research has demonstrated the strong positive relationship between reparative work and victim forgiveness (e.g., Darby & Schlenker, 1982; McCullough et al., 1998; Ohbuchi et al., 1989; Weiner et al., 1991; Zechmeister et al., 2004). Conciliatory gestures help to disassociate the offender from the transgression and decrease the victim's negative attributions of

behavioural stability (J. R. Davis & Gold, 2011; Gold & Davis, 2005; Gold & Weiner, 2000), whilst reducing offender blameworthiness and increasing victim empathy (Fehr et al., 2010). Moreover, by communicating that the offender both recognises and values the violated relationship rule, conciliatory gestures may help restore perceptions of the offender's moral character (Darby & Schlenker, 1982; Weiner et al., 1991). Finally, Exline et al. (2007) argue that conciliatory gestures respond to victim face needs, thereby helping to restore their sense of power and meeting justice concerns. Consequently, increased offender reparative work should correlate negatively with barrier endorsement.

2.3.3 The BTF and socially desirable responding

Social desirability bias refers to the tendency to present oneself in a favourable light for social approval and acceptance, irrespective of one's true cognitions or emotions (Crown & Marlowe, 1964, cited in Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Lee, & Podsakoff, 2003). As noted by Podsakoff and colleagues (Podsakoff et al., 2003; Podsakoff & Organ, 1986), socially-desirable responding is problematic to self-report studies because it both biases responses and masks true relationships between variables of interest.

There is potential for socially-desirable responding in the current work due to the nature of the research. Victims may be hesitant to report their true reasons for not forgiving their offenders, particularly if the unforgiving response is motivated by less socially-acceptable barriers, such as *Victim Status* or *Punishment Desires*, and consequently respond inaccurately to the study questions. Study 1 will therefore

include a measure of socially-desirable responding, to investigate its potential relation with barrier endorsement and validity analyses.

2.3.4 Summary of hypotheses

The BTF model

Exploratory factor analysis (EFA) will be used to investigate the measurement of the eight identified barriers. It is hypothesised that:

- The eight barriers will be effectively operationalised by an eight-factor model, with clear representation of each barrier, minimal significant cross-loadings, and weak-to-moderate factor correlations.

Relationships with theoretically-related variables

Correlation analyses will be used to explore the relationships between the barriers and theoretically-related measures. It is hypothesised that:

- i. The barriers will share meaningful⁷ relationships with forgiveness measures, correlating *positively* with revenge and avoidance motivations towards the offender, and *negatively* with benevolence motivations and perceptions of having forgiven.

⁷ In accordance with accepted practice for statistical significance in inferential statistics, probabilities $\leq .05$ will be considered “significant” in this thesis and reported throughout. In addition, however, findings that approach significance at $\leq .10$ will be treated as “meaningful”, on the basis that strict reliance on $.05$ has been criticised for increasing Type II error rates and failing to reflect the practical importance of findings that may approach significance (Carver, 1978; Field, 2005; Schmidt, 1996).

- ii. The barriers will share meaningful *positive* relationships with variables shown to impede forgiveness: trait vengeance, narcissistic entitlement, transgression severity, intentionality attributions, and state anger.
- iii. The barriers will share meaningful *negative* significant relationships with variables shown to facilitate forgiveness: current relationship quality, offender reparative work, and empathic perspective-taking.

2.3.5 Research questions

In addition to these hypotheses, Study 1 will address the following research questions.

Research question 1: To what extent does socially-desirable responding relate to barrier endorsement?

Due to the nature of the current research, social desirability may reduce the honesty of victim responses. Study 1 will therefore investigate the relation of socially-desirable responding to barrier endorsement.

Research question 2: To what extent are the barriers differentially important to unforgiving victims?

Following model identification, differences in unweighted barrier factor scores will be analysed using a one-way repeated-measures ANOVA. Results will shed light on the potential importance of each barrier to unforgiving victim responses.

Research question 3: To what extent are the barriers differentially related to situational and dispositional variables?

In correlating the barriers with validity variables, results may reveal important relationships between individual barriers and specific state or trait measures, providing a basis for determining the variables most important to predicting each barrier. Such information would be crucial to the development of a theory behind the causes and consequences of barrier endorsement.

2.4 Method

2.4.1 Design

The study utilised a self-report, retrospective recall survey design.

2.4.2 Participants

2.4.2.1 Sample recruitment

Eligibility criteria required participants to have been victim to an interpersonal transgression that they had not forgiven. Ecological validity was increased by providing participants with no definitions of forgiveness or its constituents, and allowing participants to report any unforgiven transgression without restrictions on severity, recency, or the nature of the victim-offender relationship.

Participants were recruited from the University of Adelaide first year Psychology participation pool and through a variation of snowball sampling (Goodman, 1961), in which calls for participation were made to the researcher's online social networks and distribution lists, consisting of approximately 400

individuals. Individuals were presented with the study information page and invited to participate if meeting the 'unforgiving victim' criterion, then asked to forward the invitation to their own social network groups and email distribution lists. Printed fliers advertising the study were distributed around the University of Adelaide campus to complement the sample. Incentive for external participation was provided in the form of entry into a voucher raffle.

2.4.2.2 Data cleaning

Data cleaning was undertaken to ensure all responses accurately represented unforgiving victims of interpersonal transgressions. The sample was cleaned of all error cases, responses belonging to third party individuals (e.g., friends, family of the victim), and any "forgiving" participants who selected four or five on either of two 'extent forgiven' five-point Likert-type items (whereby 5 = completely forgiven).

Data cleaning reduced the sample from $N = 299$ to 235. The cleaned sample comprised $N = 98$ first year undergraduate Psychology students at the University of Adelaide, participating in exchange for partial course credit, and $N = 137$ members of the wider community. The sample consisted of 184 (78.3%) females and 51 (21.7%) males, with a mean age of 27.28 years ($SD = 9.74$).

2.4.2.3 Unforgiven transgressions

A variety of transgressions were reported by participants, ranging from more common events such as gossiping or ostracism, to instances of sexual abuse and rape. However, offences largely involved sexual infidelity or betrayal by a romantic

partner; betrayal or insult by a friend; and rejection, neglect, or insult by a family member. Most transgressions were perpetrated by friends of the victim (31.9%), followed by romantic partners (22.1%), relatives (20%), work colleagues (7.7%), spouses (3.8%), and others (14.5%).

2.4.3 Materials

2.4.3.1 The BTF

The 75-item BTF comprised eight subscales (approximately nine items per subscale) operationalising the eight barriers. Participants were presented with the BTF after describing the transgression and responding to measures of transgression characteristics, prefaced by the following instructions:

You will now be asked about the specific reasons you have been unable to forgive the person who hurt you. Remember that there are no right or wrong answers and everyone will have different reasons for not forgiving, so try to answer as honestly as you can.

I haven't forgiven them because...

Participants then received the BTF and indicated their agreement with each item on five-point Likert-type scales (*1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree*). Table 2.1 presents sample scale items for the eight barriers.⁸

⁸ All items operationalising the barriers are providing in Table 2.3.

Table 2.1*Study 1 BTF barriers and sample scale items*

Barrier	Sample Item: I haven't forgiven them because...
Offender Response	They haven't apologised for what they did.
Trust Dissolution	What they did permanently severed all trust between us.
Morality Judgements	Some things just cannot and should not be forgiven.
Enduring Effects	I continue to suffer (e.g., physically/mentally/financially) because of their actions.
Recidivism Prevention	I don't want them to think it is ok to do it again.
Impression Management	Forgiving that person might make me lose face in front of others.
Victim Power	I want to be able to use what they did against them in the future.
Punishment Desires	I want to get back at them for what they did.

Scale item order was randomised prior to data collection, and then kept consistent for all participants.

2.4.3.2 Construct validity measures**2.4.3.2.1 Forgiveness measures***State forgiveness*

The TRIM (McCullough, Fincham, et al., 2003; McCullough et al., 1998) is an 18-item measure of state forgiveness comprising three subscales: a five-item Revenge subscale, measuring current vengeful motivations towards the offender; a seven-item Avoidance subscale, measuring current avoidant motivations; and a five-item Benevolence subscale, measuring current benevolent motivations. Items, rated on five-point Likert-type scales (*1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree*),

were summed and averaged for each subscale, with higher scores indicating greater endorsement of the motivation (α s = .88, .86, and .87 for Revenge, Avoidance, and Benevolence, respectively).

Perceptions of having forgiven the offender

Participants' perceptions of having forgiven their offenders were measured with two five-point Likert-type items: an item assessing the extent to which the victim feels they have forgiven the offender ("To what extent have you forgiven the person who hurt you?"; 1 = *not forgiven at all*, 5 = *completely forgiven them*), and the single-item forgiveness measure from the TRIM ("I forgive him/her for what he/she did to me"; 1 = *strongly disagree*, 5 = *strongly agree*). The items were summed and averaged, with higher scores indicating greater feelings of forgiveness ($r = .51$, $p < .001$).

2.4.3.2.2 Variables that impede forgiveness

Trait vengeance

The Vengeance Scale (Stuckless & Goranson, 1992) is a 20-item (10 negatively-coded) measure of dispositional vengefulness. Items, scored on seven-point Likert-type scales (1 = *strongly disagree*, 7 = *strongly agree*), measure participants' general responses to revenge-eliciting situations, and attitudes towards the appropriateness of taking vengeful action. Scores were summed and averaged, with greater scores indicating greater dispositional vengefulness ($\alpha = .91$).

Narcissistic entitlement

The Narcissistic Personality Inventory (NPI; Raskin & Terry, 1988) is 57-item, seven-subscale measure of dispositional narcissism. Because Study 1 was concerned with the impact of entitlement on unforgiving responses, only the six-item Narcissistic Entitlement subscale was used, which assesses the extent to which individuals believe they deserve preferential treatment from others.

In its original form, the NPI is presented as a forced-choice dyadic measure, with participants choosing between a narcissistic and non-narcissistic response to best describe their personalities. The scale of measurement was changed in the current study to a five-point Likert-type scale, with participants asked to rate the extent to which they agreed with the narcissistic responses (1 = *strongly disagree*, 5 = *strongly agree*). Scores were summed and averaged, with higher scores indicating greater dispositional entitlement. In its dyadic form, the Entitlement subscale has displayed low internal consistency reliability, e.g., $\alpha = .44$ (Exline et al., 2004). With the utilisation of the alternate scale of measurement, internal consistency reliability was better, $\alpha = .66$.

Intentionality attributions

Attributions of intentionality were measured with a single five-point Likert-type item assessing the extent to which victims felt the transgression was intentionally perpetrated (“How intentional do you think this person's behaviour was?”; 1 = *completely unintentional*, 5 = *completely intentional*).

Transgression severity

Transgression severity was measured with two five-point Likert-type items assessing the comparative hurtfulness of the transgression (“Try and compare this event with all the hurtful things that have happened in your life up to now. Compared with everything else, how hurtful was this particular event?”; 1 = *not very hurtful*, 5 = *extremely hurtful*) and the current painfulness (“How painful is this event for you *right now*?”; 1 = *not painful at all*, 5 = *worst pain I have ever felt*). The two items shared a weak positive correlation, $r = .26$, $p < .001$, so were included separately as single-item severity measures.

State anger

State anger was assessed with a single five-point Likert-type item measuring participants’ current anger towards their offenders (“Right now, how angry are you at the person who hurt you?”; 1 = *not angry at all*, 5 = *extremely angry*).

2.4.3.2.3 Variables that facilitate forgiveness

Perspective-taking

The Empathic Understanding scale (Exline et al., 2008) is a four-item measure of empathic perspective-taking. Items assess the extent to which the victim understands the offender’s behavioural motivations, and were measured in the current study on seven-point Likert-type scales (1 = *not at all*, 7 = *totally*). Scores were summed and averaged, with higher scores indicating greater perspective-taking ($\alpha = .85$).

Offender reparative work

Offender reparative efforts were measured with three five-point Likert-type items assessing the extent to which the offender provided an explanation for their behaviour (*1 = no explanation, 5 = full explanation for their behaviour*), tried to make amends (*1 = no attempt to make amends, 5 = full attempt to make amends*), and took responsibility for the transgression (*1 = took no responsibility, 5 = took full responsibility*). Scores were summed and averaged, with higher scores indicating greater reparative efforts ($\alpha = .73$).

Current relationship quality

Current relationship quality was measured with two five-point Likert-type items (*1 = not at all, 5 = extremely*) assessing the victims' current closeness with the offender ("How close are you right now to this person?") and the current importance of the relationship to them ("How important is this relationship to you right now?"). The items were summed and averaged, with higher scores indicating greater relationship quality ($r = .64, p < .001$).

2.4.3.3 Social desirability

Social desirability was measured using the 16-item (seven negatively-keyed) version of the Social Desirability Scale-17 (SDS-17; Stöber, 2001).⁹ The SDS-17 was designed as an updated version of the Marlowe-Crowne social desirability

⁹ In accordance with recommendations (Stöber, 2001), the item "I have tried illegal drugs (for example, marijuana, cocaine, etc.)" was removed, resulting in a 16-item measure.

scale (Crowne & Marlowe, 1960), with items considered to be more relevant to the current generation of potential study participants (Stöber, 2001). Items are presented in the traditional dichotomous true/false format, with each socially-desirable response awarded a score of one. Items were summed to provide a total social desirability score (ranging zero - 16), with higher scores indicating greater socially-desirable responding. Internal consistency reliability for the 17-item measure has been reported as .79 (Stöber, 2001), and in the current study was .70 for the 16-item version.

2.4.4 Procedure

The study was presented in an online format. Psychology undergraduate participants were recruited via a centrally-managed research participation website and email advertisements, and were provided with a hyperlink to the study that could be accessed at a time of their choosing. Participants recruited externally were provided with a direct link to the online study and could participate at any time.

The first page provided participants with an information sheet outlining the nature of the study, followed by a mandatory informed consent statement. Upon reaching the questionnaire, participants were presented with a brief summary of the study, outlining the self-report design. To reduce social desirability or response biases in accordance with recommendations (Podsakoff et al., 2003), the documentation attempted to minimise any negative thoughts or guilt participants may feel towards their unforgiving response, reminding them of the difficulty many experience moving towards forgiveness, the lack of "correct" answers to the items, and the necessity to answer honestly. Participants were also reminded of the

confidentiality and anonymity of their responses (with all identifying information filed separately), and their ability to withdraw at any time.

Participants were then presented with the following instructions:

There are a number of times in our lives when we feel that an individual has hurt us or treated us unfairly, and for some reason or other we just can't bring ourselves to forgive them. Please think of an event in your life where someone has really hurt you and you have not been able to forgive them. The event might have happened long ago or it could have happened very recently; it doesn't matter. For a moment, visualise in your mind the event and the person who hurt you, and try to recall what happened. Below is a set of questions about the person who hurt you and the event.

Upon providing a brief free-response account of the transgression, participants responded to the BTF scale items and validity measures. All items were mandatory for successful data submission.

2.5 Results

Results are presented in three sections. The first section focuses on the identification and refinement of the BTF model, examining factor content, internal consistency reliabilities, and factor correlations. The second section examines differences in barrier endorsement. The final section focuses on the relationships between the barriers, forgiveness measures, and constructs shown to influence a forgiving response.

2.5.1 Statistical analyses

2.5.1.1 Model identification

To determine the number of factors to extract in the model, parallel analysis (Horn, 1965b) was performed using the statistical software package IBM SPSS (Version 20). EFA was used for model identification and refinement, and was performed in the statistical modelling program Mplus v6.12 (L. K. Muthén & Muthén, 1998-2010). Scale items were treated as categorical variables; thus, in accordance with recommendations (Kline, 2011; B. O. Muthén, du Toit, & Spisic, 1997), the robust mean- and variance-adjusted weighted least squares (WLSMV) estimator was used, and modelling was based on polychoric correlations.¹⁰ Geomin rotation was used for all EFA models.

2.5.1.2 Descriptive statistics, barrier endorsement, and validity analyses

Descriptive statistics of validity measures were derived in SPSS. Unweighted factor scores¹¹ were calculated for barriers and validity measures in SPSS, and

¹⁰ Polychoric correlations are non-Pearson bivariate correlations for categorical variables with two or more levels (Olsson, 1979). The correlations are generalisations of tetrachoric correlations, and estimate what r would be if both variables were continuous and normally distributed (Kline, 2011). Because the BTF scale items are ordered categorical variables, polychoric correlations are the most appropriate type of bivariate correlation to illustrate relationships.

¹¹ Factor scores are estimates of the scores participants would receive on a measure had they been assessed directly (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2001). A commonly-used method for calculation, herein termed “unweighted factor scores” due to the equal weight attributed to all items, is to average raw scores on variables corresponding to a measure or factor, thereby retaining the scale

used for descriptive purposes and investigation of barrier endorsement. Barrier endorsement was investigated with a one-way repeated-measures ANOVA, performed in SPSS. Weighted factor scores for barrier subscales and all validity measures with a minimum of three items¹² were based on regression scores and derived in Mplus v6.12 using confirmatory factor analysis (CFA). These weighted scores were used for all correlation analyses.

2.5.2 Initial instrument refinement

The large item pool permitted stringent scale reduction criteria prior to factor extraction. Multicollinearity may have been present in the item pool due to the number of items and the conceptual similarities of the barriers (Kline, 2011; Tabachnick & Fidell, 2001); thus, a polychoric correlation matrix was produced to identify redundant variables whose removal would improve model parsimony. Pairs of items with correlations $\geq .70$ were examined for item content, with items that contributed little to the operationalisation of the latent variable removed from the

metric and providing ease of interpretation. Conversely, “weighted” factor scores are linear combinations of the variables that consider the shared variance between the item and the latent variable, and the error variance (DiStefano, Zhu, & Mindrila, 2009). Weighted methods produce scores that are highly correlated with the factor and more representative of the true factor score, while retaining relationships between the factors. As such, utilisation of weighted factor scores is preferable whenever feasible.

¹² Factor scores cannot be computed for measures with two or less items; thus, unweighted factor scores were used in correlation analyses for current relationship quality and perceptions of having forgiven.

data set. This process led to the removal of 18 items, reducing the item pool from 75 to 57 items.

Items were then assessed for variance contributed to the model, based on h^2 values. Items with h^2 values $< .04$ are those for which the factors explain little variance, and are thus largely unrelated to other items in the pool (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2001). Three competing models were produced in Mplus (six-, seven-, and eight-factor models) and h^2 values were examined to identify unrelated items. Seven items with h^2 values $< .4$ across the three models were identified and subsequently discarded, resulting in a final pool of 50 items for model identification.

2.5.3 Model identification

2.5.3.1 Factor extraction

Despite a priori expectations for an eight-factor solution, the exploratory nature of the study meant that empirical extraction methods should also be employed to determine the number of factors to retain. Traditionally, the retention methods of eigenvalues greater than one rule (Kaiser, 1960) and the Scree test (Cattell, 1966) have been used to determine the number of factors to extract; however, these methods have been criticised for a lack of reliability in estimation and interpretation (Fabrigar, Wegener, MacCallum, & Strahan, 1999; O'Connor, 2000a; Zwick & Velicer, 1986). Conversely, the parallel analysis method (Horn, 1965b) has demonstrated consistency as one of the most accurate methods available for assessing the number of factors in a model (Buja & Eyuboglu, 1992; Crawford et al., 2010; Reise, Waller, & Comrey, 2000; Zwick & Velicer, 1986), so was consequently utilised.

Parallel analysis involves the retention of factors based on a comparison of the eigenvalues of the raw data set and those of a randomly generated data set (Horn, 1965a). The method focuses on the number of components that account for more variance than the components derived from the random data, with factors retained if the raw data eigenvalue is greater than the eigenvalue corresponding to the desired percentile of the random data distribution (O'Connor, 2000a).

Using the SPSS syntax designed by O'Connor (2000a, 2000b), parallel analysis was conducted on the data set with principal axis factoring, and based on permutations of the raw data set.¹³ 1000 parallel data sets were generated, in addition to the eigenvalues corresponding to the 95th percentile of the distribution of these 1000 data sets. Table 2.2 presents the raw data eigenvalues for the first nine components and the 95th percentile eigenvalues for the 1000 permutations of the raw data set.

The eight component was the final component in the data set with an eigenvalue greater than the 95th percentile eigenvalue for the generated data (Raw data eigenvalue = .89; 95th percentile eigenvalue of permuted data = .83), thus suggesting that eight factors should be retained in the model. To enable the comparison of baseline models, however, six-, seven-, and eight-factor solutions were generated. To improve model interpretability, latent variables were standardised by setting their scale to one.

¹³ Due to the idiosyncratic nature of item endorsement, non-normal scale item distributions were possible. As such, parallel analysis was based on permutations of the raw data set, which provide more accurate and relevant results with non-normally distributed data than the normally-distributed random data generation method (O'Connor, 2000b).

Table 2.2

Raw Data Eigenvalues for Top Nine Components and 95th Percentile Eigenvalues Based on 1000 Permutations of the Reduced Raw Data Set

Root	Raw Data Eigenvalue	95 th Percentile Eigenvalue
1	13.71	1.38
2	4.89	1.25
3	3.55	1.15
4	1.76	1.07
5	1.69	1.00
6	1.32	0.95
7	0.93	0.89
8	0.89	0.83
9	0.72	0.78

2.5.3.2 Model estimation

2.5.3.2.1 Goodness of fit indices

The following model test statistics and goodness-of-fit indices were utilised to determine the effectiveness of each solution at representing the relationships within the data.¹⁴

¹⁴ When using the WLSMV estimator, Mplus provides the Weighted Root Mean Square Residual (WRMR) fit index as an alternative to the commonly-reported Standardised Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR) fit index. As Muthèn (2010) noted, however, the WRMR is an experimental test statistic that does not perform as well as expected, and thus its use is not recommended. Accordingly, neither fit index was reported in this thesis.

Model chi-square

The model chi-square is a test statistic assessing the correspondence between the correlations and covariances in the model and those of the sample.¹⁵ The statistic is scaled as a badness-of-fit index; higher values indicate worse correspondence between the model and the data, and a statistically significant test statistic may indicate poor model fit (Kline, 2011).

Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA; Steiger, 1990) and its 90% confidence interval

The RMSEA is a parsimony-adjusted absolute fit index that assesses how well an a priori model reproduces the sample covariance matrix (Hu & Bentler, 1999; Kline, 2011). Like the model chi square, the RMSEA is scaled as a badness-of-fit index: values range from 0 - 1.0, with higher values indicating poorer model fit. Generally, values less than .06 indicate close model fit, .06 to .08 indicate reasonable fit, and values above .10 indicate poor model fit (Hu & Bentler, 1999; MacCallum, Browne, & Sugawara, 1996).

¹⁵ Despite being one of the most commonly reported fit indices, the model chi square is both affected by sample size and sensitive to the size of the correlations between variables, so over-reliance on the test statistic may result in the rejection of true models (Kline, 2011). As such, supplementary fit statistics must also be considered.

Comparative Fit Index (CFI; Bentler, 1990) and the Tucker Lewis Index (TLI; Tucker & Lewis, 1973)

The CFI and the TLI are incremental fit indices which assess the relative improvement in the fit of a model when compared with a statistical baseline model of uncorrelated variables (Kline, 2011). CFI values range from 0 - 1.0, but unlike the previous test statistics higher values indicate better model fit, with values higher than .90 indicating good fit (Hu & Bentler, 1999; Marsh, Hau, & Wen, 2004).

The TLI is a non-normed fit index; as such, values can fall outside of the 0 - 1 range, making absolute values harder to assess (Hu & Bentler, 1999). Nonetheless, a value close to .95 may suggest a good fit between the model and the observed data, while values less than .90 usually mean that model fit could be substantially improved (Hu & Bentler, 1999; Marsh, Balla, & McDonald, 1988).

2.5.3.2.2 EFA model comparison

Consideration of the three solutions led to the decision to retain a seven-factor model. Despite a priori expectations, parallel analysis results, and good model fit, $\chi^2(853) = 1057.5, p < .001$, CFI = .98, TLI = .97, RMSEA = .032, CI⁹⁰ = (.025, .038), the eight-factor model poorly represented the relationships in the data set, with weak factors and a theoretically-unclear factor structure. Although the six-factor model also fit the data well, $\chi^2(940) = 1302.2, p < .001$, CFI = .97, TLI = .96, RMSEA = .040, CI⁹⁰ = (.035, .046), it was discarded due to its large factors and messy structure.

Conversely, the seven-factor solution presented an interpretable and theoretically-plausible structure, with clear factors and excellent model fit, $\chi^2(896) =$

1174.1, $p < .001$, CFI = .98, TLI = .97, RMSEA = .036, CI⁹⁰ = (.030, .042). Although the seventh factor in the model featured only two primary indicators, a number of items designed to operationalise the construct had high cross-loadings onto this factor and could thus potentially switch primary loadings with further scale reduction. Consequently, the seven-factor solution was chosen as the base model for further refinement.

2.5.3.2.3 Seven-factor model refinement

The seven-factor solution was refined to approximately seven indicators per factor. Items were evaluated for their statistical and theoretical contributions to their factors, with nine items removed due to notably low or high loadings across multiple factors or a lack of theoretical input. Removal of the items had little impact on model fit, $\chi^2(554) = 751.2$, $p < .001$, CFI = .98, TLI = .97, RMSEA = .039, CI⁹⁰ = (.032, .046), but improved factor dimensionality by altering the primary loadings of a number of items and consequently increasing Factor 7 primary indicators to six items. Although model refinement left Factor 1 with only three primary indicators, examination of factor content revealed a more logical and interpretable factor structure in line with theorising.

This final 41-item solution is presented in Table 2.3. For ease of interpretation, item loadings $\geq .3$ are emphasised in the table, with high item loadings on the hypothesised latent variable presented in bold and high loadings onto alternate factors presented in parentheses.

Table 2.3*Reduced Seven-Factor Model: EFA Factor Loadings with Geomin Rotation*

No.	Items	F1	F2	F3	F4	F5	F6	F7
11	What they did permanently severed all trust between us.	0.611	0.038	-0.002	[0.584]	-0.102	0.001	-0.013
2	Our relationship has been irreparably damaged by what they did.	0.477	-0.049	-0.118	[0.418]	0.011	0.141	0.110
30	My opinion of them has changed too much because of what they did.	0.403	0.096	0.125	0.262	-0.076	0.184	-0.013
21	They haven't apologised for what they did.	0.012	0.951	-0.004	0.047	0.024	-0.030	-0.292
29	They haven't taken responsibility for what happened.	-0.078	0.902	0.012	0.038	0.002	-0.003	0.036
14	They don't/didn't seem to feel guilty or bad about what they did.	0.211	0.875	0.030	-0.022	0.049	0.012	-0.162
34	They haven't tried to make up for what they did.	0.021	0.816	0.161	-0.058	-0.047	0.026	0.039
9	They are acting like they did nothing wrong.	0.198	0.685	-0.047	-0.034	-0.085	-0.050	0.016
54	I don't believe they are truly sorry for what they did.	0.012	0.672	-0.024	0.017	-0.098	0.039	[0.305]
38	They downplayed the severity of what they did.	-0.061	0.476	-0.067	0.092	0.040	0.070	0.279
24	It might make others perceive me as weak or foolish.	0.001	-0.039	0.871	-0.074	0.014	0.133	-0.004
51	Forgiving that person might make me lose face in front of others.	-0.122	-0.001	0.791	0.090	0.124	0.040	-0.044
12	I don't want them and/or other people to see me as a pushover.	0.204	0.082	0.742	-0.061	0.066	-0.007	0.067
33	It might be seen by them and/or others as backing down from the conflict.	0.038	0.054	0.685	-0.024	0.238	-0.057	0.001
15	I don't want other people to think I would let someone treat me like that.	0.068	-0.010	0.675	0.181	0.081	-0.080	0.072
46	I don't want the other person to think I can't or won't stand up for myself.	-0.086	0.114	0.620	-0.003	0.201	0.031	0.179
49	I don't want my willingness to forgive to be seen as a weakness to be exploited or manipulated.	-0.134	-0.019	0.620	0.000	-0.004	0.021	[0.296]
32	What they did was too wrong or reprehensible to forgive.	-0.028	0.014	-0.192	0.874	0.044	0.054	0.073
7	I could never forgive someone who could do something like that.	0.067	0.019	-0.040	0.789	0.109	-0.092	-0.175
41	Some things just cannot and should not be forgiven.	-0.220	0.014	0.038	0.769	-0.010	0.005	0.058
47	Forgiving would require me to compromise my principles/standards or myself.	[-0.313]	-0.019	0.152	0.703	-0.020	0.024	0.046

No.	Items	F1	F2	F3	F4	F5	F6	F7
13	I have too strong a stance against what they did.	0.137	-0.004	0.100	0.657	0.048	-0.029	-0.039
20	I am too disgusted by what they did.	0.092	0.123	0.001	0.657	-0.060	0.128	0.074
39	I couldn't respect myself if I did forgive them.	[-0.328]	-0.043	[0.393]	0.600	-0.131	0.030	0.006
48	I want to be able to use what they did against them in the future.	-0.058	0.010	-0.039	-0.084	0.938	0.181	-0.003
50	I want to get back at them for what they did.	-0.011	-0.033	0.032	-0.016	0.775	0.098	0.103
43	If I forgave, I would no longer be able to make them feel guilty or bad about what they did.	-0.068	-0.014	0.185	0.062	0.762	-0.023	-0.004
22	I want to be able to remind them that what they did was wrong.	0.222	0.017	0.147	-0.003	0.649	0.039	0.135
18	By not forgiving them, I am punishing them for what they did.	0.004	-0.049	0.236	0.267	0.587	-0.050	-0.144
37	I want them to know that there are consequences for their behaviour.	0.118	0.105	0.004	-0.008	0.537	-0.008	[0.484]
40	Forgiving them would cause me to lose power in the relationship.	-0.027	-0.038	[0.314]	0.112	0.525	0.011	-0.025
52	I can't move past the pain the other person and/or the event has caused me.	-0.053	-0.023	0.053	0.098	-0.009	0.884	-0.224
23	I continue to suffer (e.g., physically/mentally/financially) because of their actions.	0.057	0.001	0.225	-0.112	0.009	0.744	0.022
16	I continue to feel anger and resentment when I think about the other person and what they did.	0.117	0.196	-0.038	0.011	0.118	0.619	0.012
36	I am too upset/hurt/distressed by what they did to consider forgiveness.	-0.011	0.077	-0.085	[0.377]	0.067	0.602	0.019
42	I don't want them to think it is ok to do it again.	0.077	-0.026	-0.013	0.082	0.257	-0.025	0.747
56	To do otherwise might encourage them to do it again.	-0.052	0.077	0.094	-0.025	[0.305]	0.056	0.612
35	If I forgive, It might seem like I am accepting what they did.	-0.123	0.148	0.163	0.047	0.224	-0.020	0.464
10	I want to prevent the behaviour and/or the event from happening again.	[0.296]	0.016	0.167	0.147	0.004	-0.039	0.438
27	I don't want to give them the opportunity to hurt me again.	0.259	-0.072	0.283	0.055	-0.157	0.221	0.437
19	I don't want it to seem like I'm condoning or permitting the behaviour by forgiving it.	0.044	-0.004	0.250	0.238	0.225	-0.060	0.370

Note. Factor loadings $\geq .3$ on hypothesised latent variables are presented in bold and factor loadings $\geq .3$ on alternate factors presented in parentheses.

2.5.4 Factor content

Factor content revealed six factors in accordance with a priori expectations. The final factor (Factor 5) appeared to be a composite of the remaining two barriers, with item content revealing a logical grouping of items.

Factor 1 (*Trust Dissolution*): Although only three items, this factor represented the core component of *Trust Dissolution*—not forgiving due to the irreparable damage to the trust and respect within the relationship.

Factor 2 (*Offender Response*): Item loadings reflected not forgiving due to poor offender reparative work, and corresponded well to the proposed *Offender Response* barrier.

Factor 3 (*Impression Management*): Items emphasised not forgiving to prevent negative third-party evaluations and subsequent identity damage, in line with the proposed *Impression Management* barrier.

Factor 4 (*Morality Judgements*): In accordance with the proposed *Morality Judgements* barrier, items emphasised not forgiving due to judgements of transgression or offender immorality, and the desire to stand by one's principles.

Factor 5 consisted of items designed to operationalise *Punishment Desires* and *Victim Status*. Items emphasised not forgiving to vengefully use the transgression against the offender, thereby punishing them for their actions and controlling their future behaviour. This factor was consequently given the label *Vengeful Desires*.

Factor 6 (*Enduring Effects*): Items reflected the proposed *Enduring Effects* barrier, emphasising the inability to forgive due to the continuation of aversive transgression consequences.

Factor 7 (*Recidivism Prevention*): Items emphasised not forgiving to prevent offender recidivism or communicate encouragement of the offending behaviour, reflecting the proposed *Recidivism Prevention* barrier.

2.5.5 BTF interrelationships

Table 2.4 presents the factor correlation matrix for the seven barriers.

Table 2.4

EFA Factor Correlation Matrix for Study 1 Barriers

Factor	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Trust Dissolution						
2. Offender Response	.26***					
3. Impression Management	-.05	.03				
4. Morality Judgements	.15	.16*	.23**			
5. Vengeful Desires	-.18 ^a	.09	.55***	.19*		
6. Enduring Effects	.05	.18*	.15 ^b	.29**	.07	
7. Recidivism Prevention	.16	.30***	.45***	.50***	.23*	.31***

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$. ^a $p = .06$. ^b $p = .07$.

As hypothesised, the barriers generally shared weak-to-moderate correlations, although stronger idiosyncratic relationships were observed between barriers that may share conceptual bases, such as *Impression Management* and *Vengeful Desires*. All barriers besides *Trust Dissolution* shared significant relationships with at least four of the other barriers, while *Trust Dissolution* correlated with two. *Recidivism Prevention* appeared to share the greatest amount of variance with the other barriers in the model, correlating at approximately .3 with five of the six other barriers, followed by *Morality Judgements*.

2.5.6 BTF descriptive statistics and differences in barrier endorsement

Descriptive statistics and reliability estimates for the seven barriers are presented in Table 2.5. For ease of interpretation, barriers are presented in descending order of subscale means. Internal consistency reliabilities were assessed using Cronbach's alpha, and were adequate for all barriers, ranging from .73 to .91. Cronbach's alpha for the entire 41-item measure was .93.

Table 2.5

Means, Standard Deviations, and Internal Reliabilities for Study 1 Barriers

Barrier	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	α
Trust Dissolution	4.33	0.84	0.73
Offender Response	3.92	0.97	0.89
Recidivism Prevention	3.51	0.99	0.83
Enduring Effects	3.50	1.03	0.79
Morality Judgements	3.36	1.01	0.85
Impression Management	2.47	1.08	0.91
Vengeful Desires	2.30	1.00	0.88

Subscale means suggest differences in the importance of the barriers to participants, with *Trust Dissolution* and *Offender Response* the most endorsed barriers, and *Impression Management* and *Vengeful Desires* the least. A one-way repeated-measures ANOVA was conducted to determine the significance of these

differences.¹⁶ Mauchly's test indicated that the assumption of sphericity had been violated ($\chi^2(20) = 192.22, p < .001$); therefore, degrees of freedom were corrected using Huynh-Feldt estimates of sphericity ($\epsilon = .79$).

Results showed significant differences between barrier means, $F(4.74, 1109.51) = 188.22, p < .001$. Bonferroni post hoc tests revealed three distinct groupings reflective of mean differences. *Trust Dissolution* was the most endorsed barrier ($p < .001$), followed by *Offender Response*, which was significantly more endorsed than all other barriers besides *Trust Dissolution* ($ps < .001$). The second grouping featured *Recidivism Prevention*, *Enduring Effects*, and *Morality Judgements*, with no significant mean differences between the three barriers. The final grouping contained *Impression Management* and *Vengeful Desires*, which were significantly less endorsed than all other barriers ($ps < .001$). *Vengeful Desires* was the least endorsed barrier, with a lower subscale mean than *Impression Management* that approached significance ($p = .053$).

¹⁶ Independent samples *t*-tests were performed to determine if there were gender differences in barrier endorsement. Results revealed no significant gender differences in mean endorsement of *Offender Response*, *Morality Judgements*, *Recidivism Prevention*, or *Enduring Effects* (all $ps > .10$). Mean differences approached significance for the final three barriers, with males endorsing *Impression Management* (Male $M = 2.70, SE = .15$; Female $M = 2.40, SE = .08$), $t(233) = 1.76, p = .08$, and *Vengeful Desires* more than females (Male $M = 2.54, SE = .15$; Female $M = 2.24, SE = .07$), $t(233) = 1.89, p = .06$, while females endorsed *Trust Dissolution* more than males (Female $M = 4.39, SE = .06$; Male $M = 4.01, SE = .14$), $t(68.74) = 1.95, p = .06$. Nonetheless, gender-specific means reflected group means, with *Trust Dissolution* the most endorsed barrier for both men and women, followed by *Offender Response*, and *Impression Management* and *Vengeful Desires* the least endorsed.

2.5.7 Investigating the construct validity of the BTF

2.5.7.1 Descriptive statistics of validity measures

Table 2.6 presents the descriptive statistics for the validity measures included in Study 1, and the measure of social desirability.

Table 2.6

Means and Standard Deviations for Study 1 Validity Measures and Social Desirability

Variable Type	Construct	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Forgiveness measures	Revenge	2.00	0.99
	Avoidance	3.94	0.94
	Benevolence	2.26	0.97
	Forgiving perceptions	1.72	0.67
Impede forgiveness	Vengefulness	2.91	0.87
	Narcissistic entitlement	3.01	0.68
	Comparative hurtfulness	4.25	0.85
	Current painfulness	2.89	1.05
	Current anger	3.27	1.09
	Intentionality	4.17	1.04
Facilitate forgiveness	Perspective-taking	2.71	1.44
	Offender reparative work	1.80	0.91
	Current relationship quality	1.60	0.92
	Social desirability	7.82	3.15

As Table 2.6 shows, participants felt that they had largely not forgiven their offenders, and these ratings were supported by high desires to avoid their offenders

and low feelings of benevolence towards them, although participants were largely unmotivated to seek revenge for the transgression. As expected, participants shared non-close current relationships with their offenders, who were perceived to have made few conciliatory gestures in the aftermath of the transgression. Participants considered the offenders' actions to be intentional and incomprehensible, and perceived the transgression to be comparatively hurtful to other events in their lives. Finally, participants were generally not vengeful or entitled individuals, and were relatively unaffected by social desirability.

2.5.7.2 Correlations between BTF barriers and forgiveness measures

Pearson correlations were computed to investigate the relationships between the BTF barriers and forgiveness measures, with results presented in Table 2.7.

Table 2.7

Correlations between Study 1 Barriers and Forgiveness Measures

Barrier	Revenge	Avoidance	Benevolence	Forgiveness Perceptions
Trust Dissolution	.06	.57***	-.49***	-.50***
Offender Response	.20**	.37***	-.23***	-.36***
Impression Management	.52***	.13 ^a	.01	.01
Morality Judgements	.30***	.43***	-.40***	-.42***
Vengeful Desires	.63***	.17**	-.07	-.05
Enduring Effects	.24***	.31***	-.23***	-.37***
Recidivism Prevention	.50***	.33***	-.21**	-.26***

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$. ^a $p = .05$.

Results support hypotheses regarding the relationships between the barriers and forgiveness measures. As predicted, all meaningful relationships with avoidance and revenge motivations were positive, and all meaningful relationships with benevolence motivations and perceptions of having forgiven were negative. All barriers besides *Impression Management* and *Vengeful Desires* shared meaningful correlations with all four of the forgiveness measures, while those two barriers tended to be related only to revenge.

Of the barriers, *Vengeful Desires* shared the strongest positive relationship with revenge motivations, followed by *Impression Management and Recidivism Prevention*. Conversely, *Trust Dissolution* had the strongest relationships with avoidance, benevolence, and perceptions of having forgiven the offender, followed by *Morality Judgements*.

2.5.7.3 Correlations between BTF barriers and variables that impede forgiveness

Table 2.8 presents the correlations between the barriers and variables known to impede forgiveness. As hypothesised, all meaningful relationships between the barriers and variables that impede forgiveness were positive, besides a single negative relationship between *Vengeful Desires* and comparative hurtfulness. The barriers also appeared to share idiosyncratic relationships with validity variables. *Vengeful Desires* and *Impression Management* were most related to dispositional vengeance and narcissistic entitlement, and largely unrelated to transgression characteristics. Conversely, *Enduring Effects*, *Trust Dissolution*, and *Offender Response* were most related to the situational characteristics of the transgression and largely unrelated to dispositional vengeance or narcissistic

entitlement. *Morality Judgements* and *Recidivism Prevention* were comparatively associated with both state and trait measures.

Table 2.8

Correlations between Study 1 Barriers and Variables that Impede Forgiveness

Barrier	Trait Vengeance	Narcissistic Entitlement	Comparative Hurt	Current Pain	Current Anger	Intent
Trust Dissolution	-.05	.10	.33***	.09	.28***	.21**
Offender Response	.01	.11 ^c	-.01	.20**	.33***	.22**
Impression Management	.47***	.32***	-.06	.13*	.09	.04
Morality Judgements	.23***	.20**	.24***	.10	.23***	.12 ^c
Vengeful Desires	.53***	.33***	-.11 ^d	.09	.11 ^e	.08
Enduring Effects	.12 ^c	.12 ^b	.25***	.44***	.46***	.04
Recidivism Prevention	.35***	.26***	.02	.18**	.24***	.13 ^a

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$. ^a $p = .05$. ^b $p = .06$. ^c $p = .08$. ^d $p = .09$. ^e $p = .10$.

2.5.7.4 Correlations between BTF barriers, variables that facilitate forgiveness, and socially-desirable responding

Finally, Table 2.9 presents the correlations between the barriers, variables known to facilitate forgiveness, and social desirability. Results generally supported hypotheses about the relationships between the barriers and variables that facilitate forgiveness. All meaningful relationships between the barriers, empathic perspective-taking, and current relationship quality were negative, as expected, and only *Impression Management* and *Vengeful Desires* did not correlate with perspective-taking or relationship quality. Relationships with offender reparative

work were less consistent, however, with *Impression Management*, *Vengeful Desires*, and *Recidivism Prevention* sharing positive relationships with reparative work, and only *Offender Response* sharing a negative relationship.

Table 2.9

Correlations between Study 1 Barriers, Variables that Facilitate Forgiveness, and Social Desirability

Barrier	Perspective-taking	Current		
		Relationship Quality	Reparative Work	Social Desirability
Trust Dissolution	-.39***	-.42***	-.03	.19**
Offender Response	-.28***	-.18**	-.44***	.08
Impression Management	-.04	.01	.15*	-.06
Morality Judgements	-.34***	-.23***	.09	.16*
Vengeful Desires	-.004	-.05	.11 ^a	-.05
Enduring Effects	-.17**	-.04	.01	.02
Recidivism Prevention	-.24***	-.13*	.11 ^a	.06

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$. ^a $p = .09$.

Finally, *Trust Dissolution* and *Morality Judgements* were the only barriers to share meaningful relationships with social desirability. Partial correlations were conducted to re-examine the relationships between these two barriers and all validity variables after controlling for social desirability. Controlling for social desirability did not affect relationships between the barriers and the validity measures, with relationships identical to their bivariate counterparts or differing .01 - .03 in strength. Thus, social desirability was not addressed further in analyses.

2.6 Discussion

2.6.1 Development of a preliminary BTF measure

The primary aim of Study 1 was to operationalise the eight identified barriers into a BTF measure. It was hypothesised that analyses would produce an eight-factor model that effectively operationalised each barrier, with minimal overlap and a clear structure representative of theorising.

This hypothesis was largely supported. EFA led to the identification of a seven-factor model with excellent model fit, high factor loadings, minimal significant cross-loadings, and an interpretable factor structure. Six of the proposed barriers were effectively represented in the measure: *Offender Response*, *Morality Judgements*, *Enduring Effects*, *Recidivism Prevention*, *Impression Management*, and a three-item factor representative of *Trust Dissolution*. The final factor in the model was an amalgamation of the remaining two barriers, *Punishment Desires* and *Victim Status*, which was named *Vengeful Desires* in accordance with factor content. Internal consistency reliabilities were acceptable for the seven factors, and factor correlations were weak-to-moderate in size, providing support for the conceptualisations of the barriers as distinct, though related, constructs.

Considering the exploratory theoretical and methodological process upon which the barriers were identified and operationalised, the strong representation of six of the original eight barriers in the final model is promising. Nonetheless, results indicate that four barriers require expansion in Study 2: *Vengeful Desires*, *Trust Dissolution*, *Recidivism Prevention*, and *Enduring Effects*. These barriers are discussed below.

2.6.1.1 Vengeful Desires

In the current study, *Victim Status* combined with *Punishment Desires* to form a new factor, an amalgamation that may be due to their shared emphasis on desires for revenge and control. Although efforts were made to represent justice and restitution elements within *Punishment Desires*, the low h^2 values and weak endorsement of these items suggested that the facets were largely irrelevant to participants and the other BTF items. The items were consequently removed from the model during instrument refinement, which resulted in the reduction of *Punishment Desires* to its core revenge element, a facet closely related to *Victim Status*. Accordingly, the remaining *Punishment Desires* and *Victim Status* items grouped together to form a new factor, named *Vengeful Desires*, which emphasised desires to retributively hold the transgression against the offender to punish their actions and control their future behaviour.

Vengeful Desires had a strong factor structure operationalised by only *Punishment Desires* and *Victim Status* items, and displayed excellent psychometric properties, suggesting that participants viewed the barriers as one and the same. Moreover, barrier content reflects past research on the benefits of vengeful post-transgression responses, such as the restoration of equity and lost power within the relationship, and the inducement of guilt (Baumeister et al., 1998; Baumeister et al., 1995; Boon et al., 2011; Stillwell et al., 2008). Consequently, *Vengeful Desires* will be retained as a BTF barrier in future iterations of the measure. Study 2 will attempt to improve its operationalisation with additional scale items.

2.6.1.2 Trust Dissolution

To provide *Trust Dissolution* with a more specific focus prior to Study 1, the barrier was reduced to its core elements, concerning the pervasiveness of the trust damage and the altered opinion of the offender. Due to the emphasis on continued, lasting damage, it was theorised that these elements may be better measured within similar barriers, such as *Morality Judgements* or *Enduring Effects* rather than in a stand-alone barrier. EFA indicated, however, that *Trust Dissolution's* elements should comprise their own barrier, with the three core facets of the barrier—irreparable trust and relationship damage, and changed opinions of the offender—grouping together strongly to form an independent three-item factor unrelated to either *Morality Judgements* or *Enduring Effects*. Consequently, additional scale items will be written for *Trust Dissolution* in Study 2 to bolster its representation in the BTF.

2.6.1.3 Recidivism Prevention and Enduring Effects

As discussed in section 2.5.3.2.2, the initial seven-factor solution featured a seventh factor—*Recidivism Prevention*—with only two primary items. Model refinement led to four additional items switching primary loadings onto this factor, producing a six-item *Recidivism Prevention* factor with good internal consistency reliability. This barrier may have capitalised on chance variance within the sample, however, and may consequently not replicate across samples (MacCallum, Roznowski, & Necowitz, 1992). Conversely, *Enduring Effects* displayed a robust factor structure in the initial seven-factor model and maintained its composition during model reduction. This factor was comprised of only four items, however,

where seven were desired. Additional scale items will therefore be written for *Recidivism Prevention* and *Enduring Effects* in Study 2, to increase the possibility that their subscales will be both replicable and generalisable to the population.

2.6.2 Investigating the validity of the BTF

The second aim of Study 1 was to continue the investigation of BTF construct validity by demonstrating that the barriers relate to measures of similar constructs in expected ways. It was hypothesised that the barriers would share meaningful relationships in the expected direction with forgiveness measures, whilst sharing positive relationships with variables shown to impede forgiveness and negative relationships with variables shown to facilitate forgiveness.

These hypotheses were largely supported. Results provided strong support for the conceptual similarity of the BTF to measures of forgiveness. As expected, only positive relationships were observed between the barriers and vengeful and avoidant motivations towards the offender, and only negative relationships observed with benevolent motivations and perceptions of having forgiven the offender. All barriers shared meaningful relationships with at least two of the measures, and four barriers—*Offender Response*, *Morality Judgements*, *Enduring Effects* and *Recidivism Prevention*—shared meaningful relationships with all four forgiveness variables.

In addition, all but one of the meaningful relationships with variables shown to impede forgiveness were in the expected direction, with only positive relationships observed between the barriers and trait vengeance, narcissistic entitlement, intentionality attributions, current painfulness of the transgression, and current anger towards the offender. *Only Vengeful Desires* behaved unexpectedly,

sharing a negative relationship with comparative hurtfulness, but all other meaningful relationships with the variable were positive.

Less consistent relationships were observed between the barriers and variables that facilitate forgiveness, however. As expected, all meaningful relationships with current relationship quality and empathic perspective-taking were negative, and all barriers besides *Vengeful Desires* and *Impression Management* correlated significantly with at least one of the two variables. Contrary to expectations, though, only *Offender Response* shared a significant negative relationship with reparative work, while *Impression Management*, *Vengeful Desires*, and *Recidivism Prevention* shared *positive* correlations with the variable.

As an offender's reparative efforts appear to increase forgiveness (e.g., Darby & Schlenker, 1982; McCullough et al., 1998; Ohbuchi et al., 1989; Weiner et al., 1991; Zechmeister et al., 2004), positive relationships were not anticipated. Moreover, the variable failed to correlate with *Morality Judgements*, *Enduring Effects*, or *Trust Dissolution*. Poor reparative efforts may strengthen dispositional causal attributions and reinforce negative character judgements (J. R. Davis & Gold, 2011; Gold & Davis, 2005; Gold & Weiner, 2000), and thus linear relationships between the construct and these barriers should theoretically have occurred.

Because the offender's reparative efforts were measured with only three items, which did not measure many of the key elements of conciliatory gestures, such as remorse or apology, it is possible that these anomalous relationships were due to the variable's inadequate assessment in the current study. To determine the reliability of these findings, Study 2 will consequently include a more comprehensive assessment of the offender's conciliatory gestures.

Considering the preliminary state of the BTF, correlations provide support for the validity of the BTF as a measure of rationalisations for unforgiving victim responses. Study 2 will attempt to replicate these relationships, as well as measuring additional variables of interest, in order to investigate the nature of these relationships further and provide additional evidence for the barriers as unforgiving responses to interpersonal transgressions.

2.6.3 Addressing Study 1's research questions

In addition to the aims discussed above, Study 1 addressed the following three research questions. First, the relationship between social desirability and barrier endorsement was investigated, to determine whether socially-desirable responding related to any particular unforgiving response. Second, differences in barrier endorsement were examined, to shed light on the comparative importance of the barriers to participants' unforgiving responses. Finally, Study 1 investigated the specific relationships between the barriers and validity variables, to identify variables that may be key to each barrier's endorsement and assist in the development of a theory behind the barriers to forgiveness. These issues are addressed below.

2.6.3.1 Research question 1: To what extent does socially-desirable responding relate to barrier endorsement?

Due to the nature of the current work, the likelihood for socially-desirable responding was high, with participants potentially failing to endorse their true

reasons for not forgiving and responding to barrier scale items in more ego-flattering ways (Podsakoff et al., 2003). Despite this, results indicated that the barriers were largely uncontaminated by social desirability. Correlations revealed only *Trust Dissolution* and *Morality Judgements* to share weak positive relationships with socially-desirable responding, indicating minimal contamination by social desirability. Partial correlations revealed socially-desirable responding to have little impact on the relationship between these barriers and validity measures, with relationships remaining largely unchanged after controlling for social desirability. The barriers therefore appear to be accurate reflections of participants' true reasons for not forgiving their offenders.

2.6.3.2 Research question 2: To what extent are the barriers differentially important to unforgiving victims?

Analyses were conducted to determine whether the barriers were differentially important to participants. Results revealed three distinct groupings in barrier endorsement. First, *Trust Dissolution* was the most endorsed barrier, followed closely by *Offender Response*. Second, *Recidivism Prevention*, *Enduring Effects*, and *Morality Judgements* were all moderately endorsed by participants, with no significant differences between the three barriers. Third, *Vengeful Desires* and *Impression Management* were least representative of participants' unforgiving responses, with *Vengeful Desires* significantly less endorsed than all other barriers. Participants therefore saw the irreparable damage to the trust in the relationship and the lack of offender reparative efforts as key to their unforgiving responses. In

contrast, participants did not feel that desires to prevent ego damage or to vengefully control the offender represented their reasons for not forgiving.

When combined with the lack of relationships between *Impression Management*, *Vengeful Desires*, and social desirability, and TRIM descriptive statistics (Table 2.6) indicating that participants were not motivated to seek revenge against their offenders, results suggest that victims were generally not vengeful individuals holding a grudge to punish their offenders and save face. Instead, unforgiving victims may generally be individuals too hurt by the offender's betrayal or lack of conciliatory behaviours following the transgression to forgive, findings that are consistent with past research involving unforgiving victims (Rapske et al., 2010; Williamson & Gonzales, 2007; Zechmeister & Romero, 2002). To determine the consistency of these findings, Study 2 will once again assess differences in barrier endorsement.

2.6.3.3 Research question 3: To what extent are the barriers differentially related to situational and dispositional variables?

Finally, correlations shed light on the nature of the relationships between the barriers and variables shown to influence forgiveness, revealing a potential division of the barriers into those more purposeful in nature, seemingly influenced by vengeful or dominant victim characteristics, and those more reactive in nature, influenced by the lasting, negative consequences of the transgression.

Correlations present a profile of *Impression Management* and *Vengeful Desires* as more purposeful barriers underpinned by vengeful, entitled victim traits. These two barriers shared the strongest positive correlations with trait vengeance, narcissistic entitlement, and revenge motivations towards the offender, and were

the only barriers unrelated to benevolence motivations or perceptions of having forgiven the offender. Conversely, *Impression Management* and *Vengeful Desires* tended to be unrelated to the situational characteristics of the transgression. Although each shared positive correlations with offender reparative work, and *Vengeful Desires* was related to current anger and comparative hurtfulness,¹⁷ while *Impression Management* shared a positive correlation with current painfulness, these relationships were much weaker than those between the two barriers and the aforementioned trait measures. *Impression Management* and *Vengeful Desires* also shared their strongest factor correlations with each other and weak or non-significant correlations with the other barriers (besides *Recidivism Prevention*), suggesting a shared conceptual basis.

Alternatively, correlations suggest that *Trust Dissolution*, *Enduring Effects*, and, to a lesser extent, *Offender Response*, may be more reactional barriers, underpinned by the characteristics of the transgression itself. These barriers shared strong relationships with transgression severity, current anger towards the offender, and empathic perspective-taking, and their endorsement was associated with

¹⁷ This negative relationship suggests that victims who do not forgive to retributively wield the transgression against the offender do so following less severe transgressions. *Vengeful Desires* focuses on punishing the offender in future interactions and affecting their future behaviour, suggesting a potential intention to continue the relationship. Because research has highlighted the strong negative link between transgression severity and reconciliation (Leary et al., 1998; McCullough, Fincham, et al., 2003; Schultz, Tallman, & Altmaier, 2010), it may be that vengeful victims of less severe transgressions are more likely to endorse barriers that involve teaching the offender how to behave towards them in future, following eventual reconciliation (cf. Boon et al., 2009) .

stronger desires to avoid the offender, and lower feelings of goodwill and perceptions of having forgiven. *Trust Dissolution* was unrelated to either trait vengeance or narcissistic entitlement, and though *Enduring Effects* and *Offender Response* shared positive correlations with the measures, these relationships were much weaker than those between the barriers and the situational characteristics of the offence.

Unlike the other barriers, *Morality Judgements* and *Recidivism Prevention* were associated with both the situational characteristics of the transgression and the vengeful characteristics of the victim. These barriers shared moderate relationships with all forgiveness measures, as well as weak-to-moderate relationships with trait vengeance and narcissistic entitlement and many of the situational variables measured. *Morality Judgements's* relationships were more reflective of the *Trust Dissolution* grouping, however, sharing stronger correlations with the situational characteristics of the transgression than *Recidivism Prevention* (besides current anger and current painfulness¹⁸), and stronger relationships with avoidance, benevolence, and perceptions of having forgiven.

Conversely, *Recidivism Prevention*, like *Vengeful Desires* and *Impression Management*, shared stronger relationships with trait vengeance, narcissistic entitlement, and revenge motivations. Thus, although the strong factor correlation between the two barriers suggests a common conceptual basis, *Morality Judgements* may better reflect the *Trust Dissolution* grouping, while *Recidivism*

¹⁸ Although *Morality Judgements* and current painfulness correlated positively at $p = .11$, which arguably constitutes a meaningful relationship.

Prevention may be more reflective of *Impression Management* and *Vengeful Desires*.

Results therefore highlight a potential division within the BTF, into those barrier more intentional and purposeful in nature, and those that are more reactive. Study 2 will attempt to replicate these results by remeasuring the validity variables measured in the current study and assessing additional variables that may be relevant to these rationalisations. Such an investigation will provide a more comprehensive picture of unforgiving victims and identify additional elements that may be important to barrier endorsement. As the BTF is conceptualised as a situation-specific measure of unforgiving responses, Study 2 will also focus on identifying and assessing additional characteristics of the transgression and the victim-offender dynamic that may influence endorsement of the barriers, particularly those that seem to be more purposeful in nature and vengefully-driven.

2.6.4 Summary: BTF measurement and replicability

Study 1 provides encouraging support for the existence of the proposed barriers as motivating factors behind unforgiving victim responses, and evidence for the construct validity of the self-report measure. The BTF demonstrated a number of desirable psychometric properties, which Study 2 will attempt to replicate using two independent samples. Doing so will enable investigation of the structural stability of the BTF, examining the extent to which the BTF displays measurement invariance across independent samples and is thus generalisable to the population (MacCallum et al., 1992).

Study 1 results also raise an interesting point about the impact of the victim-offender relationship on unforgiving responses and the comparative importance of the barriers. Ample research indicates that victims are more likely to forgive romantic or family offenders than acquaintances (Cota-McKinley, Woody, & Bell, 2001; Girard & Mullet, 1997; Williamson & Gonzales, 2007; Younger et al., 2004), yet, as evident in section 2.4.2.3, many victims in the current study shared these relationships with their offenders yet had not forgiven them for their actions. What, then, are the causes of the unforgiving response when such close offenders are not forgiven? Do these results differ depending on the victim's relationship with the offender and whether or not they are obligated to persist with the relationship (as is the case with family members or spouses)? Research has not directly examined the relationships between relational closeness and unforgiven transgressions, and such an examination may provide important information about the differing causes of unforgiving responses.

In testing BTF measurement invariance, Study 2 will therefore investigate the nature of unforgiving responses across victim-offender relationships. This will be achieved by utilising two independent samples of unforgiving victims—those in invested, obligatory relationships with their offenders, and those in non-invested or non-obligatory relationships with their offenders—and comparing differences in barrier endorsement.

Chapter 3

Replicating the BTF across independent samples

3.1 Chapter overview

The current chapter presents data from Study 2, which aimed to further refine the BTF scale items and replicate Study 1's BTF structure. Study 2 additionally aimed to investigate the factorial invariance of the BTF, cross-validating the model against two samples differing in the obligatory nature of the victim-offender relationship. In doing so, the study explored differences in BTF factor structure, barrier endorsement, and transgression characteristics across the two samples. Finally, Study 2 aimed to further the investigation of BTF construct validity, providing a more comprehensive picture of unforgiving victims whilst measuring additional situational variables theoretically-relevant to the more purposeful barriers.

3.2 Barrier expansion

Results from Study 1 indicated that four barriers required revision or expansion: *Trust Dissolution*, which was operationalised with only three items; *Vengeful Desires*, an amalgamation of *Punishment Desires* and *Victim Status* that required more focused scale items; *Recidivism Prevention*, with its unstable factor structure; and *Enduring Effects*, which was underrepresented in the model. Additional scale items were therefore written for each of the four barriers, expanding the item pool from 41 to 65 items.

3.3 Determining the stability of the BTF: Validating the model against two independent samples

Accordingly to MacCallum, Roznowski, and Necowitz (1992), a model that is identified and modified based on results obtained from a particular sample may be susceptible to capitalisations on chance sample characteristics. With idiosyncratic sample variation potentially influencing the modifications made to a model, it is possible that the model will not replicate across samples nor generalise to the population. This issue is pertinent to the BTF, due to the lack of pre-existing operational definitions to guide barrier measurement and revision. To determine the stability of Study 1's BTF, it is therefore necessary to cross-validate the model with two independent samples.¹⁹ Doing so will permit invariance testing, as well as the investigation of group differences in barrier endorsement.

3.3.1 Investigating the factorial invariance of the BTF

For the BTF to be utilised in applied settings it must display measurement invariance, in which relationships between a variable and its indicators are invariant across groups (Widaman & Reise, 1997). If scores are not comparable across groups, any group differences observed may be artifactual, and consequently, unreliable (Reise, Widaman, & Pugh, 1993). BTF measurement invariance will

¹⁹ Although the issue of capitalisation on chance will remain pertinent in future studies due to the additional scale items included in the current study, all Study 1 BTF items were retained in Study 2 and three of the barriers remained unmodified. Accordingly, investigating the replicability of this structure may still be appropriate.

therefore be determined in Study 2 through assessment of the measure's factorial invariance: measurement invariance within factor analytic models. To examine patterns of fixed and free loadings across the two models without imposing additional constraints on model parameters, Study 2 will investigate the most basic form of factorial invariance, configural invariance (Widaman & Reise, 1997). The BTF will display configural invariance, and thus be comparable across distinct populations, if each barrier's indicators have invariant quantitative relationships with their latent variables across the two samples (cf. Meredith, 1993).

3.3.2 Unforgiven transgressions within obligated and non-obligated relationships

As discussed in Chapter 2, victims are more likely to forgive family members and partners than acquaintances or other, more distant, relationships (Cota-McKinley et al., 2001; Girard & Mullet, 1997; McCullough et al., 1998; Williamson & Gonzales, 2007; Younger et al., 2004). However, these victims do not inherently forgive close offenders, with Study 1's offenders running the gamut of invested relationships, from parents and spouses to casual acquaintances. With the restoration of relationship harmony a motivating factor behind forgiveness within invested relationships (Finkel et al., 2002; Karremans & Van Lange, 2004), why, then, are such victims unforgiving, and do their reasons differ to those of unforgiving victims within non-invested relationships?

To investigate this issue, Study 2 aimed to analyse the structure and importance of the barriers across two groups unseparated thus far: unforgiving victims in obligatory, invested relationships with their offenders, such as current romantic partners or close family members; and unforgiving victims in non-

obligatory relationships with their offenders, such as friends and acquaintances. Results will shed light on the causes of unforgiving responses in these relationships and provide information on the stability and importance of the barriers across interpersonal contexts.

3.4 Investigating BTF construct validity across two independent samples

Study 1 demonstrated relationships between the barriers and state forgiveness measures, as well as forgiveness-inhibiting or facilitating variables that could theoretically differentiate barrier endorsement. Study 2 will re-examine these relationships to determine their stability across populations. Study 2 will also examine relationships with additional validity variables that may differentially relate to the barriers, in order to expand upon the emerging profiles of purposeful barriers more related to vengeful victim characteristics, and reactive barriers more related to the situational characteristics of the transgression. These variables are outlined below.

3.4.1 Measuring “silent” forgiveness

As highlighted by Exline and colleagues (Baumeister et al., 1998; Exline & Baumeister, 2000; Exline et al., 2003), some victims may experience the cessation of negative affect that comes with forgiveness but neglect to express this in their behaviour towards the offender, particularly if they feel that communicating forgiveness may be risky. This idea is relevant to the current work, where victims may withhold a forgiving response for fear of communicating acceptance of

negative treatment or behavioural endorsement. With research suggesting lay people often believe forgiveness requires forgetting about a transgression and reconciling with the offender (Fincham, Hall, & Beach, 2006; Kanz, 2000; Kearns & Fincham, 2004; Macaskill, 2005b; Mullet et al., 2004; Younger et al., 2004; Zechmeister & Romero, 2002), victims may feel that they have not forgiven if they have not reconciled, despite feelings of internal forgiveness.

Thus, in addition to the TRIM, BTF validity will be assessed with a component of forgiveness unmeasured thus far: the victim's internal feelings of forgiveness.

3.4.2 Additional validity variables that may inhibit forgiveness

3.4.2.1 State rumination

Rumination is a coping strategy characterised by a “passive and repetitive focus on the negative and damaging features of a stressful transaction” (Skinner, Edge, Altman, & Sherwood, 2003, pg. 242). Rumination impedes forgiveness by causing the victim to relive the transgression and its negative consequences, thereby intensifying distress and inhibiting the ability to overcome the transgression (Holman & Silver, 1998; Paleari et al., 2005), while increasing angry emotions and promoting a vengeful or avoidant response towards the offender (Denson, Pedersen, Friese, Hahm, & Roberts, 2011; Fehr et al., 2010; McCullough et al., 2001; McCullough, Bono, et al., 2007; McCullough et al., 1998; Wade, Vogel, Liao, & Goldman, 2008). Consequently, rumination about the transgression should be positively related to barrier endorsement.

3.4.2.2 Judgements of transgression immorality

As discussed in Chapter 1, a victim's judgements of transgression immorality may limit their ability to forgive. Wrongfulness judgements are intrinsically linked to the size and importance of the norm violation, with stronger judgements and more intense negative reactions resulting from the violation of norms most important to the victim (Fiske & Tetlock, 1997; Rucker, Polifroni, Tetlock, & Scott, 2004; Tetlock, 2003). Such violations need not be especially hurtful to the victim, with research suggesting that offensive yet relatively harmless norm violations, or transgressions driven by wrongful intentions that cause little eventual harm to the victim, evoke strong judgements of moral wrongfulness and behavioural condemnation (Alter et al., 2007; Gromet & Darley, 2009; Haidt, 2001; Haidt, Koller, & Dias, 1993).

In addition to motivating just dessert punishment desires (Carlsmith et al., 2002), morally wrong transgressions evoke outrage at the offender's ability to act in such a way, reducing the victim's ability to separate the offender from their actions (Baumeister, 1996; Exline et al., 2008; Exline et al., 2003). Accordingly, judgements of transgression wrongfulness should be positively related to barrier endorsement.

3.4.2.3 Power motivational values

Feather (1996, p. 222) defines values as "beliefs about desirable or undesirable ways of behaving, or about the desirability or otherwise of general goals". Values transcend situations, influencing an individual's thoughts, actions, and interpretations of situations, and are ordered by relative importance to the individual (McKee & Feather, 2008; Strelan, Feather, & McKee, 2011). Schwartz (1992) identified 10 distinct motivational types of values, two of which are notably

relevant to interpersonal forgiveness: the self-enhancement value of power, and the self-transcendent value of benevolence.²⁰

Power values focus on self-esteem and reflect an individual's need for dominance and control, with the central goals being the attainment of social status or prestige, and control or dominance over resources and other individuals (Schwartz, 1992). According to Strelan et al. (2011), power values reflect a concern for maintaining authority and serving one's own interests at the expense of others, with little comparative concern for others' welfare. Thus, individuals for whom this value is important are more likely to experience vengeful motivations towards their offender following a transgression, due to desires to restore loss of status in the eyes of others and preserve their social position (McKee & Feather, 2008), and are less likely to forgive (Strelan et al., 2011). Consequently, power motivational values should be positively related to barrier endorsement.

3.4.2.4 Trait dominance

According to Gough (2000), dominant personalities are characterised by confidence, assertiveness, self-assurance, and desires for status and authority over others in interpersonal situations. Dominant individuals tend to be overbearing and domineering, desiring to control and influence the behaviour and opinions of others in their interpersonal interactions (Buss & Craik, 1980; Gough, McClosky, & Meehl, 1951). Although the relationship between victim trait dominance and forgiveness has not been directly assessed, past research has highlighted the link between

²⁰ Benevolence motivational values are discussed in section 3.4.3.2 below.

dominance and other constructs that may decrease forgiveness, such as defensive power-seeking (Assor, 1988), hostility and distrust (Gurtman, 1992), narcissism (Bradlee & Emmons, 1992; R. P. Brown & Zeigler-Hill, 2004), face or status concerns (Fletcher, 2010), and the predisposition to act negatively towards threatening others (Operario & Fiske, 2001; Wink, 1991). Accordingly, trait dominance should be positively related to barrier endorsement.

3.4.2.5 Fear of negative evaluations

Fear of negative evaluations (FNE) is a component of social evaluative anxiety involving feelings of apprehension about others' evaluations, and concern with being perceived or evaluated unfavourably (Watson & Friend, 1969). Due to the fear of loss of social approval, individuals high in FNE are more likely to behave in ways that avoid the possibility of negative evaluations, and are consequently more responsive to acting in ways that will prevent negative judgements (Leary, 1983). Although the link between FNE and forgiveness has not received direct attention within the literature, research suggests that individuals often respond defensively or aggressively to a perceived insult or injury if they fear others will evaluate them negatively (Baumeister, 1982b; B. R. Brown, 1968). Similarly, victims who are concerned with being perceived or evaluated negatively by others may withhold a forgiving response if they fear it may result in unfavourable character judgements. As such, FNE should share positive relationships with the BTF barriers.

3.4.2.6 *Attributions of causality and blame*

The attributions a victim makes regarding the offender's role in the transgression may restrict their ability to forgive. Fincham and Bradbury (1992), in accordance with Shaver's (1985) theorising, argue that attributions can be divided along two dimensions: attributions of causality, concerning who or what caused the transgression; and attributions of responsibility, concerning the offender's accountability, and subsequent blameworthiness, for the transgression.

Within these dimensions, four attributions are key to judgements of blame: 1) intentionality, involving judgements of the offender's intention in bringing about the transgression; 2) foreseeability, concerning the offender's prior knowledge or anticipation of transgression consequences; 3) stability, concerning the persistence of the behavioural cause over time; and 4) responsibility, regarding judgements of personal responsibility for the transgression and its consequences. The greater the victim's attributions of intentionality, foreseeability, and stability, the greater the blame assigned for the transgression and the more the offender—specifically, their internal character—is considered the cause of the hurtful outcome (Alicke, 2000; Kelley, 1973; Lagnado & Channon, 2008; Shaver, 1985).

Study 1 results highlighted the positive relationship between intentionality attributions and the BTF. However, ample research has also established the strong negative link between these other attributional elements and victim forgiveness (e.g., Bradfield & Aquino, 1999; Darby & Schlenker, 1982; J. R. Davis & Gold, 2011; Gold & Weiner, 2000; Weiner et al., 1991; Zechmeister & Romero, 2002). Accordingly, greater attributions of causality and blame should be positively related to barrier endorsement.

3.4.3 Additional validity variables that may facilitate forgiveness

3.4.3.1 *Capability for similar wrongdoing*

As highlighted in Chapter 2, substantial research has demonstrated the strong link between empathy for an offender and victim forgiveness (e.g., R. P. Brown et al., 2008; J. R. Davis & Gold, 2011; Exline & Zell, 2009; Fehr et al., 2010; Konstam et al., 2001; McCullough et al., 1998; Paleari et al., 2005; Toussaint & Webb, 2005). In Study 1, empathic perspective-taking, the construct utilised to assess situational empathy, shared negative relationships with the BTF barriers; however, research by Exline and colleagues (Exline et al., 2008; Exline & Zell, 2009) suggests that offender-focused empathy would be best measured by additionally assessing victim personal capability for similar offences.

According to the Exline et al. (2008, p. 496), personal capability increases victim forgiveness by: a) reducing perceptions of offence severity (cf. Baumeister et al., 1990; Stillwell & Baumeister, 1997), b) facilitating empathic understanding for the offender's behaviour, and c) increasing the sense of similarity and common humanity with the offender. Consequently, barrier endorsement should be negatively related to victims' capability for similar wrongdoing.

3.4.3.2 *Benevolence motivational values*

As opposed to power values, benevolence values focus on an individual's concern for close others in their daily interactions, with the central motivational goal being the preservation and enhancement of the welfare of these close others (Schwartz, 1992). Due to its emphasis on inclusiveness and concern for significant others, elements that are also closely linked to forgiveness, it is unsurprising that

individuals who hold benevolence values as important to their lives are more forgiving (Strelan et al., 2011). Benevolence values should therefore be negatively related to barrier endorsement.

3.4.4 Situational variables relevant to *Impression Management* and *Vengeful Desires*

In Study 1, *Impression Management* and *Vengeful Desires* were largely unrelated to the situational variables measured, and were instead related to underlying vengeful dispositions. As the BTF is conceptualised as a situation-specific measure of unforgiving responses, it is important to identify situation-specific variables that may encourage endorsement of these barriers. Measuring the relationships between the two barriers and theoretically-relevant situational variables may provide information on the extent to which these barriers are situationally- or dispositionally-driven.

Impression Management and *Vengeful Desires* are governed by the desire to prevent evaluations of weakness, or to punish the offender and thereby communicate intolerance of the hurtful behaviour. Victims who endorse these barriers are concerned with maintaining a positive identity and standing up for themselves, with victims who endorse *Vengeful Desires* additionally concerned with the need to maintain or increase power in the relationship with the offender. Accordingly, the following identity-related situational variables should be relevant to endorsement of these barriers:

Third party opinions of forgiveness. Victims who are concerned with the opinions of others may withhold a forgiving response if people in their lives do not think they should forgive. As the presence or knowledge of an audience may inhibit

forgiveness by making transgressions more difficult to ignore (Baumeister & Cairns, 1992; Cohen et al., 1996; Leary & Kowalski, 1990), such effects may be amplified when combined with audience opinions on whether or not the victim *should* forgive. Victims who forgive in the face of others' opposition may risk stronger evaluations of weakness or letting the offender get away with the transgression. These victims may consequently withhold a forgiving response to prevent such an outcome.

Ego damage. Victims of ego-threatening transgressions may withhold forgiveness for *Impression Management* or *Vengeful Desires* reasons. As individuals strive to maintain favourable self-concepts and create complementary public images (Baumeister, 1982a, 1998; Baumeister & Cairns, 1992; Black, 2006), some victims may respond defensively to a perceived identity threat in order to protect against damage to these conceptualisations (Bushman & Baumeister, 1998; Leary & Kowalski, 1990). As the ego threat increases, such as in humiliating or insulting transgressions, so too may the victim's motivation to respond defensively, withholding forgiveness and retaliating in order to prevent ego damage and convey the message that the victim will not accept such treatment.

Relationship power. Finally, higher-power victims may be motivated to withhold forgiveness for *Impression Management* or *Vengeful Desires* reasons, if they feel that the transgression threatened or decreased their power in the relationship. Ronfeldt, Kimerling, and Arias (1998, p. 70) conceptualise power within interpersonal relationships as the ability to affect the outcomes of the other individual and to persuade them to act in accordance with one's wishes. Research suggests that high-power individuals are more likely to be dominating in their relationships with low-power others, using retribution and coercion to establish and maintain a sense of personal power (Bentley, Galliher, & Ferguson, 2007; Kim,

Smith, & Brigham, 1998; E. J. Lawler & Yoon, 1993; Ronfeldt et al., 1998). Such individuals may see an interpersonal transgression as damaging to their relationship power and status, and perceive forgiveness as a form of yielding that may further decrease their power (Bentley et al., 2007). Consequently, these victims may withhold forgiveness to punish the offender for their actions, preventing evaluations of weakness and teaching the offender how they can and cannot behave. In this way, high-power individuals may re-establish or reinforce their position of power in the relationship.

As variables that may inhibit forgiveness, these constructs should theoretically be related to all barriers, albeit to differing levels. Nonetheless, if *Impression Management* and *Vengeful Desires* are, indeed, barriers that may be differentially evoked depending on the characteristics of the transgression, these situational variables should display relationship trends with the two barriers akin to their relationships with vengeful dispositional measures.

3.5 Summary of hypotheses

BTF expansion and replication

EFA will be used to assess the stability of the three unrevised barriers and the impact of item pool expansion on the four remaining barriers. It is hypothesised that:

- i. The three barriers effectively operationalised in Study 1—*Morality Judgements, Offender Response, and Impression Management*—will be replicated.

- ii. Barrier expansion will improve operationalisation of the remaining four barriers, resulting in four additional representative factors in the model.

Factorial invariance of the BTF

EFA will be used to assess the configural invariance of the BTF. It is hypothesised that:

- The BTF will display configural invariance across two independent samples, exhibiting the same pattern of relationships between the barriers and their scale items.

Relationships with theoretically-related variables

Correlation analyses will be used to explore the relationships between the barriers and theoretically-related variables across the samples. It is hypothesised that:

- i. Both samples' barriers will replicate past relationships with forgiveness measures, correlating *positively* with revenge and avoidance motivations towards the offender, and *negatively* with benevolence motivations and perceptions of having forgiven.
- ii. The barriers will replicate past relationships with variables shown to impede forgiveness, correlating positively with trait vengeance, narcissistic entitlement, intentionality attributions, transgression severity, and state anger. Further, the barriers will share positive relationships with state rumination, wrongfulness judgements, power motivational values, trait

dominance, fear of negative evaluations, and attributions of causality and blame.

- iii. The barriers will replicate past relationships with variables shown to facilitate forgiveness, correlating negatively with empathic perspective-taking and current relationship quality. Further, the barriers will share negative relationships with offender reparative work, victim capability for similar wrongdoing, and benevolence motivational values.

The barriers and identity-related situational variables

Correlation analyses will be used to investigate the relationships between the barriers and situational variables measuring constructs similar to *Impression Management* and *Vengeful Desires*. It is hypothesised that:

- *Impression Management* and *Vengeful Desires* will correlate in the expected direction with identity-related situational variables, sharing positive relationships with ego damage and relationship power, and negative relationships with third party opinions of forgiveness.

3.6 Research questions

In addition to the above hypotheses, the current study will address the following research questions.

Research question 1: To what extent does barrier endorsement differ depending on the nature of the victim-offender relationship?

Due to differences in the victim-offender relationship, victims within each sample may endorse alternative barriers as important to their unforgiving responses. One-way repeated-measures ANOVAs will consequently be performed on both samples' unweighted barrier factor scores to determine the consistency of Study 1 results across the samples.

Research question 2: To what extent do victims in invested and non-invested relationships with their offenders differ in situational and dispositional characteristics?

Independent samples *t*-tests and investigation of effect sizes will be conducted on the validity variables to identify group differences in situational or dispositional characteristics. Such analyses may shed light on the variables' potential contribution to unforgiving responses within invested and non-invested relationships.

Research question 3: To what extent are the barriers differentially related to situational and dispositional variables?

Study 1 results highlighted a potential division of the barriers into those more purposeful in nature and those that may be more reactive, with each group differentially related to the situational characteristics of the transgression and the vengeful dispositional traits of the victim. In examining correlations between the barriers and validity variables across the two samples, Study 2 will investigate trends in barrier-validity relationships to determine the consistency of these findings

and identify differences that may be dependent upon the obligatory nature of the victim-offender relationship. Such results may assist in the expansion of the nomological network underlying barrier endorsement.

3.7 Method

3.7.1 Design

The study utilised the same retrospective recall design as Study 1.

3.7.2 Participants

3.7.2.1 Sample recruitment

Two independent samples were collected: unforgiving victims of transgressions perpetrated by offenders with whom they share an obligated relationship (i.e., close family members or current partners), and unforgiving victims of transgressions perpetrated by offenders with whom they share a non-obligated relationship (i.e., non-family members or ex-partners).²¹ As in Study 1, restrictions were not placed on transgression severity or recency, with the only participation

²¹ It is unarguable that some friendships may constitute obligatory relationships, with these victims feeling a sense of obligation or expectation to continue the relationship with their offenders. Conversely, some close family relationships would involve no sense of obligation on the victim's part to continue the relationship with the offender. However, to reduce subjectivity in participant judgements of relationships and ensure a parsimonious sample division, the sample was split according to these specifications.

criteria being the unforgiven nature of the transgression and the victim's relationship with the offender.

Participants were recruited from the University of Adelaide's undergraduate Psychology participation pool, the School of Psychology postgraduate students, and online support groups and discussion boards. Postgraduate Psychology students were contacted via the School of Psychology distribution lists and were presented with a summary of the study and an invitation to participate if the 'unforgiving victim' criterion was met. All individuals were provided with hyperlinks for the two versions of the questionnaire and instructions on the correct version to complete.

Online communities of interest were identified via search engines and perusal of victimisation groups and general interest forums, with emphasis placed on identifying groups or organisations who deal with ongoing relationships or interpersonal conflict (e.g., Relationships Australia, Stepfamilies Australia, Centacare). This process led to the identification of 26 eligible organisations and groups, who were contacted via email and provided with the study information sheet and questionnaire hyperlinks. Four of these 26 groups additionally offered to advertise the study on their webpages and within their quarterly newsletters. Entry into a voucher raffle was again offered to external participants as incentive for participation.

3.7.2.2 Sample descriptive statistics

3.7.2.2.1 Obligated sample

The Obligated sample consisted of $N = 253$ individuals. Removal of error cases, third party transgressions, and forgiving victims reduced the sample to $N = 211$ individuals. This sample comprised $N = 118$ first year undergraduate Psychology students at the University of Adelaide, participating in exchange for partial course credit, and $N = 93$ members of the wider community. The total sample consisted of 160 females (75.8%) and 51 males (24.2%), with a mean age of 25.33 years ($SD = 10.94$).

Most transgressions reported by this sample were perpetrated by a parent/step-parent (44.5%), followed by current partners (22.3%), siblings (15.2%), and extended family members (14.7%). Offences largely involved sexual infidelity or betrayal by a romantic partner; betrayal or insult by a family member; and physical, psychological, or sexual abuse by a close family member.

3.7.2.2.2 Non-obligated sample

The Non-obligated sample consisted of $N = 219$ individuals. Data cleaning, as above, reduced the sample to $N = 192$ individuals, comprising $N = 161$ undergraduate Psychology students participating in exchange for partial course credit, and $N = 31$ members of the wider community. The total sample included 151 females (78.6%) and 41 males (21.4%), with a mean age of 22.92 years ($SD = 9.09$).

The vast majority of transgressions within this sample were perpetrated by friends (46.9%) and ex-partners (33.9%), followed by ex-spouses (5.7%), work

colleagues (4.7%), and others (8.9%). Unforgiven offences largely involved sexual infidelity by a romantic partner, and betrayal or insult by a friend.

3.7.3 Materials

3.7.3.1 The BTF

The 65-item BTF comprised seven subscales (each approximately nine items) operationalising the seven barriers. As in Study 1, participants were presented with the BTF after describing their unforgiven transgression and responding to measures of transgression characteristics. After receiving the same scale instructions used in Study 1 (see section 2.4.3.1), participants were presented with the BTF and indicated their agreement with each item on a five-point Likert-type scale (*1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree*). Scale item order was again randomised prior to data collection and then kept consistent for participants. BTF psychometric properties within each of the two samples are provided in Table 3.4.

3.7.3.2 Construct validity measures

3.7.3.2.1 Forgiveness measures

Barrier relationships with forgiveness measures were again assessed with the Revenge (Obligated $\alpha = .88$; Non-obligated $\alpha = .87$), Avoidance (Obligated $\alpha = .90$; Non-obligated $\alpha = .88$), and Benevolence ($\alpha = .87$) subscales of the TRIM (McCullough, Fincham, et al., 2003; McCullough et al., 1998). In addition, a two-item forgiveness index was again created, comprising the TRIM forgiveness item and a seven-point Likert-type item assessing intrapersonal forgiveness, similar to

that used by Exline et al. (2004) (“Regardless of how you behave towards the person who hurt you, to what extent have you *privately* forgiven them for what they did?”; 1 = *not at all*, 7 = *totally*). Due to the items’ alternate scales of measurement, a weighted average was calculated for the index, with greater scores indicating greater perceptions of having forgiven the offender (Obligated $r = .59$, $p < .001$; Non-obligated $r = .47$, $p < .001$).

3.7.3.2.2 *Variables that impede forgiveness*

Barrier relationships with variables that may impede forgiveness were again investigated with the Vengeance Scale (Obligated $\alpha = .92$, Non-obligated $\alpha = .91$; Stuckless & Goranson, 1992), the single-item measure of current anger, and the Narcissistic Entitlement subscale of the NPI (Raskin & Terry, 1988). The latter was assessed with the original forced-choice dyadic scale of measurement. The six items were summed to provide a total entitlement score (ranging six - 12), with higher scores indicating greater narcissistic entitlement. The dyadic form of the Entitlement subscale has displayed low internal consistency reliability in the past, $\alpha = .44$ (Exline et al., 2004), and in the current study was similarly low, Obligated $\alpha = .42$; Non-obligated $\alpha = .35$.

Transgression severity

A three-item transgression severity index was created, utilising the two hurtfulness items measured in Study 1 and an additional seven-point Likert-type item measuring comparative transgression seriousness (“On the following scale, where would you rate the seriousness of what you experienced, where 1 = for example, someone pushing ahead of you in a line, and 7 = for example, sexual

abuse, or murder of a family member?”). A weighted average was calculated, with higher scores indicating greater severity judgements (Obligated $\alpha = .77$; Non-obligated $\alpha = .70$).

State rumination

Rumination was measured with the eight-item State Rumination scale (McCullough, Orsulak, Brandon, & Akers, 2007), which assesses the extent to which participants had experienced a range of ruminative thoughts or behaviours about the transgression within the previous fortnight, on six-point Likert-type scales (0 = *not at all*, 5 = *extremely*). Items were summed and averaged, with greater endorsement indicating greater state rumination ($\alpha = .96$ and $.97$ for the Obligated and Non-obligated samples, respectively).

Trait dominance

An 11-item dispositional dominance scale (one negatively-coded) from the International Personality Item Pool (IPIP; Goldberg et al., 2006) was used to measure trait dominance. All items were measured on five-point Likert-type scales (1 = *very inaccurate*, 5 = *very accurate*) and were summed and averaged, with higher scores indicating greater dominant tendencies (Obligated $\alpha = .82$; Non-obligated $\alpha = .80$).

Fear of negative evaluations

Leary's (1983) Brief-FNE scale is a 12-item (four negatively-coded) version of the 30-item Fear of Negative Evaluation (FNE) scale (Watson & Friend, 1969).

The measure assesses the extent to which individuals experience apprehension at the prospect of being evaluated negatively by others. Items are measured on five-point Likert-type scales (*1 = not at all characteristic of me, 5 = extremely characteristic of me*) and were summed and averaged, with greater scores indicating greater general concerns about being perceived and evaluated negatively by others (Obligated $\alpha = .90$; Non-obligated $\alpha = .91$).

Power motivational values

The Schwartz Value Survey (SVS; Schwartz, 1992) is a 57-item instrument consisting of 57 values representing 10 value types, each accompanied by a brief definition of the value's associated motivational goals. Participants are asked to rate the importance of each value as a guiding principle in their life, on a nine-point Likert-type scale (*-1 = opposed to my values, 7 = of supreme importance*). In the current study, only the four-item Power and Benevolence value types were measured (see section 3.7.3.2.3 below for the Benevolence value type).

The definition and specific values of the four-item Power value type as specified by Schwartz (1992) are as follows: definition—social status and prestige, control, or dominance over people and resources; specific values: social power, wealth, authority, preservation of public image. Scores for the four specific Power values were summed and averaged, with higher scores indicating greater importance of power-related values to the participant's life (Obligated $\alpha = .75$; Non-obligated $\alpha = .69$).

Moral wrongfulness

Moral wrongfulness was measured with a single five-point Likert-type item assessing judgements of the moral wrongfulness of the offender's behaviour ("How morally wrong do you consider their behaviour to be?"; 1 = *not wrong at all*, 5 = *extremely wrong*).

Causality and blame attributions

Participants' attributions of causality and blame were measured with four five-point Likert-type items. Intentionality attributions were measured with the intentionality item utilised in Study 1. Attributions of behavioural stability and foreseeability were respectively assessed with single items measuring expectations of offender recidivism ("How likely is it that they will act in a similar way towards you in the future?"; 1 = *not at all likely*, 5 = *extremely likely*) and judgements of the offender's prior knowledge of transgression hurtfulness ("To what extent do you think they would have known you'd be hurt before they acted as they did?"; 1 = *would not have known at all*, 5 = *would definitely have known*).

Attributions of offender blameworthiness were measured with a single item assessing the extent to which the victim held the offender responsible for the transgression ("How responsible do you hold this person for what happened?"; 1 = *not responsible at all*, 5 = *completely responsible*). The alpha for the four items was inadequate across the two samples, Obligated $\alpha = .33$; Non-obligated $\alpha = .46$. Consequently, the items were retained as single item measures of causality and blame attributions.

3.7.3.2.3 Variables that facilitate forgiveness

Empathic perspective-taking was again measured with the Empathic Understanding scale (Obligated $\alpha = .87$, Non-obligated $\alpha = .90$; Exline et al., 2008). Current relationship quality was measured with the two items utilised in Study 1 and an additional five-point Likert-type item assessing the comparative closeness of the current relationship (“Relative to what you know about other people’s close relationships, how would you characterise your current relationship with this person?”; *1 = not close at all by comparison, 5 = extremely close by comparison*). Scores on the three items were summed and averaged, with greater scores indicating greater current relationship health (Obligated $\alpha = .90$; Non-obligated $\alpha = .84$).

Offender reparative work was measured with the three items utilised in Study 1, as well as five new items (one negatively-coded) assessing additional aspects of the offender’s reparative response: apology (“How apologetic is this person for what they did?”), remorse (“To what degree have they expressed remorse for what they did?”), guilt (“To what degree do they appear to feel guilty for what they did?”, and “To what extent have they expressed guilt for what they did?”), and victim-blaming (“To what degree have they blamed you for what happened?”, reverse-coded). All items were measured on five-point Likert-type scales (*1 = not at all, 5 = completely*) and were summed and averaged, with higher scores indicating greater reparative efforts ($\alpha = .92$).

Victim capability for similar wrongdoing

Participants’ judgements of their capability for similar offending behaviour were measured with three items derived from Exline et al.’s (2008) four-item

measure of personal capability: “Thinking about what this person did to you, to what extent have you engaged in similar behaviour in the past?”; “Given the right circumstances, could you see yourself committing a similar offence to what happened to you (i.e., just as wrong or damaging)?”; and “Thinking back over your entire life, do you think you have ever done anything as bad as what the other person did?”. Items were measured on seven-point Likert-type scales (*1 = not at all, 7 = totally*) and were summed and averaged, with higher scores indicating greater capability for similar wrongdoing (Obligated $\alpha = .65$; Non-obligated $\alpha = .77$).

Benevolence motivational values

The definition and specific values of the four-item²² Benevolence value type as specified by Schwartz (1992) are as follows: definition—preservation and enhancement of the welfare of people with whom one is in frequent personal contact; specific values: honest, loyal, helpful, responsible. As with the Power value type, participants were asked to rate the importance of each value as a guiding principle in their life on a nine-point Likert-type scale (*-1 = opposed to my values, 7 = of supreme importance*). Scores were summed and averaged, with higher scores indicating greater importance of benevolence values to the participant’s life (Obligated $\alpha = .70$; Non-obligated $\alpha = .80$).

²² In its original form, the benevolence value type includes a fifth value, *forgiving*. To prevent inflated relationships between the value type and the barriers, this specific value was removed from the measure, as recommended by Strelan et al. (2011).

3.7.3.2.4 Identity-related situational variables

Ego damage

Participants' perceptions of transgression ego damage were measured with three five-point Likert-type items ($1 = \textit{not at all}$, $5 = \textit{extremely}$) assessing damaged pride ("To what extent was your pride wounded by what happened?"), the level of embarrassment experienced ("How embarrassed were you by what happened?"), and perceptions of transgression disrespectfulness ("To what extent do you feel disrespected by what this person did to you?"). Items were summed and averaged, with higher scores indicating greater potential damage to the victim's self-concept (Obligated $\alpha = .67$; Non-obligated $\alpha = .61$).

Relationship power

Participants' perceptions of damage to their power in the relationship were measured with two five-point Likert-type items ($1 = \textit{not at all}$, $5 = \textit{completely}$) assessing the extent to which they felt the transgression caused them to lose relationship power ("To what extent do you feel that you lost power in the relationship as a result of what happened?"), and gave the offender an advantage in the relationship ("To what extent do you feel that the event gave the other person an advantage over you in the relationship?"). The items were summed and averaged, with higher scores indicating greater perceived loss of relationship power (Obligated $r = .65$, $p < .001$; Non-obligated $r = .53$, $p < .001$).

Third party beliefs about forgiveness

Third party opinions of forgiveness were measured with a single five-point Likert-type item assessing the extent to which relevant third parties felt that the

victim should forgive the offender (“To what extent do the people in your life think you should forgive this person for what they did?”; 1 = *should not forgive at all*, 5 = *should definitely forgive*).

3.7.4 Procedure

The procedure was similar to Study 1. Participants were asked to recall a transgression in which they had been directly hurt by an individual and had not forgiven. Depending on whether they accessed the Obligated or Non-obligated survey, participants were reminded that the unforgiven transgression had to be respectively perpetrated by either a family member or their current partner, or a non-family member or ex-partner. Participants were then presented with the following instructions (emphasis utilised within surveys):

Obligated survey

There are often times in our lives when a family member or relationship partner hurts us or treats us unfairly, and for some reason or other we just can't bring ourselves to forgive them. Please think of an event in your life when a **close family member or current relationship partner** deeply offended, harmed, or hurt you and you **haven't forgiven them for it**. The event might have happened long ago or it could have happened very recently; it doesn't matter. What matters is that **you have an ongoing relationship with this person and maintain regular contact with them, whilst still not forgiving them for what they did**.

Non-obligated survey

There are often times in our lives when **non-family members and our (now) ex-partners** hurt us or treat us unfairly. Sometimes, for some reason or other, we just aren't able to forgive these people for their behaviour. Please think of an event in your life when a **non-family member** (e.g., friend, acquaintance, work colleague, team-mate, etc.) or an **ex-partner** deeply offended, harmed, or hurt you and you haven't forgiven them for it. The event might have happened long ago or it could have happened very recently; it doesn't matter.

Upon providing a brief free-response account of the unforgiven transgression, participants responded to the BTF scale items and validity measures. All items were mandatory for successful data submission.

3.8 Results

Results are presented in three sections. The first section focuses on BTF replication using the combined Obligated and Non-obligated samples, followed by the investigation of BTF factorial invariance across the two individual data sets. The second section examines the endorsement of the barriers across the two samples, investigating differences in barrier saliency and transgression characteristics. The final section continues the investigation of BTF construct validity across the samples, examining the relationships between the barriers and important forgiveness-relevant variables to determine the consistency of past findings across independent samples.

3.8.1 Statistical analyses

3.8.1.1 BTF cross-validation

EFA based on polychoric correlations was used for model identification and invariance testing, performed in Mplus v6.12 (L. K. Muthén & Muthén, 1998-2010). Scale items were treated as categorical variables, with the WLSMV estimator used with geomin rotation.

3.8.1.2 Descriptive statistics, barrier endorsement, sample descriptive differences, and validity analyses

Barrier and validity variable descriptive statistics were derived in IBM SPSS (Version 20). Unweighted factor scores were calculated in SPSS and used for descriptive purposes and investigation of barrier salience across samples.²³ Barrier endorsement within each sample was investigated with one-way repeated-measures ANOVAs, whilst differences in transgression characteristics were investigated with independent samples *t*-tests and Cohen's *d*, derived in SPSS.²⁴ As in the previous studies, weighted factor scores for barrier subscales and all

²³ Items within the two-item forgiveness index and the three-item severity index utilised alternate scales of measurement, so weighted averages were calculated by multiplying each measure's items by its number of Likert points, summing the multiplied items, and dividing the summed score by the total number of Likert points.

²⁴ When the assumption of homogeneity of variances was violated, Welch's *F* test within one-way ANOVA was alternatively utilised to investigate group differences.

validity measures with three or more items²⁵ were derived in Mplus v6.12 using CFA, and were used for SPSS correlation analyses.

3.8.2 Baseline model identification

The first step in investigating BTF factorial invariance was to identify a baseline model that adequately fit the data, to serve as a benchmark against which each sample's model could be compared (Widaman & Reise, 1997). The two samples were therefore combined and EFA was performed on the data set. A seven-factor model was generated in accordance with a priori expectations and presented an interpretable and theoretically-plausible solution, with a clear factor structure featuring at least seven primary indicators per factor and good model fit, $\chi^2(1646) = 2505.8, p < .001, CFI = .97, TLI = .96, RMSEA = .036, CI^{90} = (.033, .039)$. This model was then refined to seven items per factor, based on inter-item correlations, wording clarity, and factor contributions. As a result of this process, 16 items were removed from the model, leaving a 49-item, seven-factor solution with good model fit, $\chi^2(854) = 751.2, p < .001, CFI = .97, TLI = .96, RMSEA = .040, CI^{90} = (.036, .044)$, which effectively represented BTF theorising.

The 49-item Baseline model is presented in Table 3.1. As in Study 1, item loadings $\geq .3$ are emphasised, with high loadings on hypothesised latent variables presented in bold and high loadings on alternate factors presented in parentheses.

²⁵ Weighted factor scores could not be calculated for narcissistic entitlement, due to the poor psychometric properties of the measure within both data sets. The summed Entitlement score was therefore used in correlation analyses.

Table 3.1*Baseline Seven-Factor Model: Factor Loadings for Exploratory Factor Analysis with Geomin Rotation*

No.	Items	F1	F2	F3	F4	F5	F6	F7
23	They haven't apologised for what they did.	0.935	-0.016	-0.092	-0.025	0.005	0.013	0.020
15	They don't seem to feel guilty or bad about how they treated me.	0.926	-0.017	-0.048	-0.001	0.023	-0.012	0.027
32	They haven't taken responsibility for what happened.	0.851	0.030	0.047	0.017	-0.013	-0.074	0.017
7	They are acting like they did nothing wrong.	0.851	0.025	0.099	-0.007	-0.076	-0.051	-0.073
37	They haven't tried to make up for what they did.	0.812	-0.020	-0.006	-0.001	0.065	0.070	0.003
64	I don't believe they are truly sorry for what they did.	0.728	0.117	0.075	0.062	0.054	0.076	0.024
41	They downplayed the severity of their actions.	0.451	0.074	0.271	0.090	0.114	-0.053	-0.023
10	What they did permanently severed all trust between us.	0.030	0.818	-0.067	0.030	0.081	-0.071	0.104
4	Our relationship has been irreparably damaged by what they did.	-0.113	0.784	0.004	0.114	0.075	-0.111	-0.015
42	In acting as they did, they've proven that they're not trustworthy.	0.023	0.761	0.238	-0.022	-0.051	0.123	-0.084
33	My opinion of them has changed too much as a result of how they acted.	-0.057	0.753	-0.048	0.019	0.051	0.035	0.118
1	I can't rely on them anymore after what they did.	0.111	0.723	0.090	-0.011	-0.105	0.054	-0.113
38	I can no longer believe anything they say to be true.	0.105	0.704	0.002	-0.002	0.022	0.176	0.018
16	I don't want a relationship with someone I can't depend on.	0.030	0.573	0.144	-0.136	0.023	-0.069	0.110
51	I don't want them to think it's ok to do it again.	0.032	-0.035	0.738	0.023	0.079	-0.015	0.179
65	To do otherwise might encourage them to repeat the behaviour in the future.	0.147	-0.018	0.668	-0.020	-0.010	0.079	0.173
40	I want them to know that there are consequences for their behaviour.	-0.053	0.104	[0.664]	0.045	0.047	0.280	-0.092
3	If I forgave them, they might think that what they did was ok.	0.103	0.025	0.659	0.077	0.112	-0.004	-0.046
20	I don't want it to seem like I am condoning or permitting the behaviour by forgiving it.	0.037	-0.070	0.653	-0.020	0.169	0.032	0.146
9	I want to prevent the behaviour and/or the event from happening again.	-0.010	0.074	0.633	0.230	-0.168	-0.242	0.111

No.	Items	F1	F2	F3	F4	F5	F6	F7
24	By not forgiving, I am communicating to them that I won't put up with such hurtful behaviour.	-0.007	0.115	0.582	-0.160	0.141	0.150	0.071
56	I haven't been able to put what happened behind me.	0.003	-0.101	-0.023	0.787	0.133	0.101	-0.015
43	The event is still really relevant in my life.	0.002	-0.003	0.154	0.776	-0.051	-0.031	0.028
28	I continue to suffer the consequences (e.g., physical/psychological/financial) of their actions.	-0.012	0.055	0.002	0.765	-0.018	-0.086	0.120
8	The event is still too distressing to me.	-0.049	0.018	-0.001	0.760	0.003	-0.155	0.134
59	I am still too upset about what happened to consider forgiveness.	0.013	0.014	-0.048	0.711	[0.309]	0.122	0.006
46	I am currently too bitter about what they did.	0.059	-0.029	0.012	0.613	0.291	0.212	-0.061
18	I continue to feel anger and resentment when I think about the other person and/or what they did.	0.081	0.111	0.087	0.499	0.243	0.071	-0.128
35	What they did was too wrong or reprehensible to forgive.	-0.016	0.233	0.000	0.055	0.715	0.064	-0.039
50	Some things just cannot and should not be forgiven.	-0.063	0.096	0.091	-0.005	0.665	0.085	0.057
45	I couldn't respect myself if I did forgive them.	0.049	0.011	0.044	0.002	0.589	0.033	[0.344]
14	I have too strong a stance against what they did.	0.036	0.119	0.135	-0.026	0.580	-0.129	0.009
22	I am too disgusted by what they did.	0.078	0.229	0.099	0.126	0.541	-0.077	0.002
5	I could never forgive someone who could do something like that.	-0.019	[0.392]	-0.019	0.003	0.534	-0.040	0.113
57	Forgiving would require me to compromise my principles/standards or myself.	-0.001	-0.057	0.278	0.056	0.524	-0.051	0.181
60	I want to get back at them for what they did.	0.115	0.099	-0.104	0.062	-0.015	0.806	0.113
55	I want to be able to use what they did against them in the future.	0.089	-0.030	0.008	0.021	-0.019	0.832	0.067
52	If I forgave, I would no longer be able to make them feel guilty or bad about what they did.	-0.020	-0.012	0.244	-0.021	0.052	0.733	0.037
62	Not forgiving enables me to influence their behaviour in our relationship.	-0.152	-0.074	0.221	0.041	0.007	0.616	0.193
34	Withholding forgiveness gives me a level of control over them.	-0.093	0.005	0.253	-0.072	-0.043	0.615	0.116
12	I want to get something out of them for what they did to me.	-0.013	-0.006	0.074	0.096	-0.070	0.580	0.148
19	By not forgiving them, I am punishing them for what they did.	-0.230	0.048	[0.382]	-0.004	0.078	0.539	-0.040

No.	Items	F1	F2	F3	F4	F5	F6	F7
29	It might make others perceive me as weak or foolish.	-0.111	0.011	0.063	0.067	-0.007	0.060	0.797
61	Forgiving that person might make me lose face in front of others.	-0.048	0.003	-0.058	-0.016	0.174	0.197	0.721
17	I don't want other people to think I would let someone treat me like that.	0.003	0.096	0.189	-0.046	0.033	0.054	0.614
11	I don't want them and/or other people to see me as a pushover.	0.100	0.079	0.202	0.055	-0.165	-0.034	0.587
58	I don't want my willingness to forgive to be seen as a weakness to be exploited or manipulated.	0.043	-0.015	[0.301]	0.031	0.053	0.066	0.555
54	I don't want the other person to think I can't or won't stand up for myself.	0.031	-0.039	[0.429]	-0.024	-0.038	0.074	0.510
36	It might be seen by them and/or others as backing down from the conflict.	0.043	0.028	0.172	-0.062	0.055	0.291	0.465

Note. Factor loadings $\geq .3$ on hypothesised latent variables are presented in bold and factor loadings $\geq .3$ on alternate factors are presented in parentheses.

3.8.2.1 Baseline model factor content

Factor content revealed seven factors in line with the seven barriers: *Offender Response* (Factor 1), *Trust Dissolution* (Factor 2), *Recidivism Prevention* (Factor 3), *Enduring Effects* (Factor 4), *Morality Judgements* (Factor 5), *Vengeful Desires* (Factor 6), and *Impression Management* (Factor 7). The factor structures of the three barriers unrevised in the current study—*Offender Response*, *Morality Judgements* and *Impression Management*—were identical to their Study 1 manifestations, providing strong support for the internal validity of these barriers. Item pool expansion was successful in improving the representation of the remaining four barriers, with each barrier containing seven primary indicators representative of the barrier's multiple facets.

3.8.2.2 Baseline model factor correlations

Table 3.2 presents the factor correlation matrix for the Baseline model. The barriers shared larger factor correlations than their Study 1 counterparts, although trends observed in the previous study were replicated. All barriers besides *Vengeful Desires* shared significant relationships with at least four of the other barriers, and *Recidivism Prevention* and *Morality Judgements* shared significant relationships with all six. Barrier expansion appeared to improve the strength and definition of barrier relationships, particularly for *Trust Dissolution*, which shared significant relationships with all barriers besides *Vengeful Desires* (as opposed to two relationships in Study 1).

Table 3.2*Baseline Model: EFA Factor Correlation Matrix*

Factor	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Offender Response						
2. Trust Dissolution	.37***					
3. Recidivism Prevention	.28***	.42***				
4. Enduring Effects	.25***	.28***	.22***			
5. Morality Judgements	.21***	.45***	.48***	.36***		
6. Vengeful Desires	-.07	.02	.38***	.10	.27***	
7. Impression Management	.08	.18*	.52***	.12 ^a	.25**	.49***

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$. ^a $p = .07$.

3.8.3 Investigating BTF configural invariance

EFA was then conducted on the individual data sets to determine whether the Baseline model would replicate across samples. The model presented a good fit to the Obligated sample, $\chi^2(854) = 1119.2$, $p < .001$, CFI = .97, TLI = .96, RMSEA = .040, CI⁹⁰ = (.032, .044), with a near-identical factor structure to the Baseline model²⁶ and factor correlation of a similar size. This model and its factor correlations are presented in the Appendix (Table A1 and Table A2, respectively).

²⁶ The only structural difference was in the loading of Item 54 ("I don't want the other person to think I can't or won't stand up for myself"), which switched primary loadings from *Impression Management* to *Recidivism Prevention*. CFA revealed the model to fit the Obligated data well when this indicator was specified to load onto *Impression Management*, $\chi^2(1106) = 1824.0$, $p < .001$, CFI = .93, TLI = .93, RMSEA = .055, CI⁹⁰ = (.051, .060), and thus it was retained as an *Impression Management* scale item. As CFA was accordingly used to produce Table A2's factor correlations, values are larger than those reported for the other samples.

Conversely, the seven-factor model poorly explained the relationships in the Non-obligated sample. Although model fit was good, $\chi^2 (854) = 1111.6$, $p < .001$, CFI = .97, TLI = .97, RMSEA = .040, CI⁹⁰ = (.033, .046), factor content revealed the structure to be notably different to that of the Baseline model, with several primary indicators switching factors and no primary item loadings on the seventh factor. Results therefore indicate that the seven-factor BTF model failed to display configural invariance across the two samples.

3.8.4 Identifying a model for the Non-obligated sample

To identify the most appropriate model to represent the relationships within the Non-obligated sample, five- and six-factor solutions were generated. Although fit statistics for the six-factor solution were good, $\chi^2 (897) = 1204.9$, $p < .001$, CFI = .97, TLI = .96, RMSEA = .042, CI⁹⁰ = (.036, .048), the model was rejected due to the lack of primary items operationalising the sixth factor. Conversely, examination of the five-factor solution revealed good model fit, $\chi^2 (941) = 1333.1$, $p < .001$, CFI = .96, TLI = .95, RMSEA = .047, CI⁹⁰ = (.041, .052), and a clear structure with interpretable factors. Factor content revealed three factors identical to their Baseline counterparts: *Offender Response*, *Enduring Effects*, and *Vengeful Desires*. The final two factors in the model were an amalgamation of the remaining four barriers, with all items from *Trust Dissolution* and *Morality Judgements* grouping together to form one composite factor, and all *Impression Management* and *Recidivism Prevention* items forming a second composite factor. This five-factor model is provided in Table 3.3 (factor correlations are provided in the Appendix, Table A3).

Table 3.3*Non-obligated Sample Five-Factor Model: Factor Loadings for Exploratory Factor Analysis with Geomin Rotation*

No.	Items	F1	F2	F3	F4	F5
35	What they did was too wrong or reprehensible to forgive.	0.803	-0.090	-0.038	0.219	0.136
22	I am too disgusted by what they did.	0.793	-0.055	-0.041	0.203	0.119
5	I could never forgive someone who could do something like that.	0.749	-0.115	0.025	0.137	0.005
4	Our relationship has been irreparably damaged by what they did.	0.733	-0.018	-0.042	0.082	[-0.344]
42	In acting as they did, they've proven that they're not trustworthy.	0.727	0.115	0.121	-0.153	-0.206
38	I can no longer believe anything they say to be true.	0.681	0.185	-0.008	-0.057	-0.061
14	I have too strong a stance against what they did.	0.676	-0.009	0.079	0.055	-0.059
33	My opinion of them has changed too much as a result of how they acted.	0.617	0.039	0.080	0.017	-0.292
10	What they did permanently severed all trust between us.	0.610	0.134	-0.010	0.000	[-0.450]
50	Some things just cannot and should not be forgiven.	0.591	-0.144	0.231	0.103	0.140
1	I can't rely on them anymore after what they did.	0.571	0.278	0.005	-0.132	-0.270
45	I couldn't respect myself if I did forgive them.	0.505	-0.137	[0.354]	0.155	0.021
57	Forgiving would require me to compromise my principles/standards or myself.	0.471	-0.080	[0.393]	0.155	0.016
16	I don't want a relationship with someone I can't depend on.	0.414	0.196	0.218	-0.109	[-0.404]
23	They haven't apologised for what they did.	-0.041	0.924	-0.059	0.030	0.100
15	They don't seem to feel guilty or bad about how they treated me.	-0.090	0.921	0.058	0.002	-0.006
7	They are acting like they did nothing wrong.	-0.008	0.861	0.044	-0.048	-0.103
37	They haven't tried to make up for what they did.	0.102	0.826	-0.072	0.060	0.104
32	They haven't taken responsibility for what happened.	0.199	0.791	-0.063	0.053	0.026
64	I don't believe they are truly sorry for what they did.	0.119	0.664	0.170	0.152	-0.003

No.	Items	F1	F2	F3	F4	F5
41	They downplayed the severity of their actions.	0.266	0.494	0.210	0.070	-0.101
29	It might make others perceive me as weak or foolish.	-0.173	-0.164	0.869	0.127	-0.024
54	I don't want the other person to think I can't or won't stand up for myself.	0.008	-0.004	0.798	-0.012	0.027
17	I don't want other people to think I would let someone treat me like that.	0.033	-0.096	0.781	-0.014	-0.014
58	I don't want my willingness to forgive to be seen as a weakness to be exploited or manipulated.	0.142	-0.065	0.742	0.063	0.02
61	Forgiving that person might make me lose face in front of others.	-0.064	-0.124	0.742	0.115	0.149
51	I don't want them to think it's ok to do it again.	0.251	0.090	0.717	0.001	-0.068
36	It might be seen by them and/or others as backing down from the conflict.	0.006	0.087	0.711	-0.009	0.174
11	I don't want them and/or other people to see me as a pushover.	-0.037	-0.022	0.653	-0.001	-0.113
65	To do otherwise might encourage them to repeat the behaviour in the future.	0.219	0.191	0.601	-0.015	0.066
20	I don't want it to seem like I am condoning or permitting the behaviour by forgiving it.	[0.337]	0.034	0.598	-0.024	0.034
24	By not forgiving, I am communicating to them that I won't put up with such hurtful behaviour.	[0.443]	0.073	0.457	-0.143	0.097
40	I want them to know that there are consequences for their behaviour.	[0.400]	0.058	0.430	-0.001	0.187
9	I want to prevent the behaviour and/or the event from happening again.	[0.304]	0.077	0.424	0.039	-0.267
3	If I forgave them, they might think that what they did was ok.	[0.373]	0.120	0.419	0.030	-0.045
59	The event is still really relevant in my life.	0.242	0.035	-0.030	0.816	0.074
56	I haven't been able to put what happened behind me.	-0.006	0.019	0.032	0.804	0.065
28	I continue to suffer the consequences (e.g., physical/psychological/financial) of their actions.	0.042	0.005	0.100	0.792	-0.197
43	I am still too upset about what happened to consider forgiveness.	-0.035	0.089	0.195	0.783	-0.131
8	The event is still too distressing to me.	-0.011	-0.025	0.029	0.754	-0.232
46	I am currently too bitter about what they did.	0.166	0.062	0.061	0.712	0.110
18	I continue to feel anger and resentment when I think about the other person and/or what they did.	[0.450]	0.066	-0.115	0.569	-0.002
60	I want to get back at them for what they did.	0.054	0.160	0.167	0.080	0.734

No.	Items	F1	F2	F3	F4	F5
55	I want to be able to use what they did against them in the future.	-0.069	0.182	[0.354]	-0.001	0.716
52	If I forgave, I would no longer be able to make them feel guilty or bad about what they did.	0.131	0.086	[0.395]	-0.041	0.667
12	I want to get something out of them for what they did to me.	-0.066	0.020	0.219	0.048	0.607
62	Not forgiving enables me to influence their behaviour in our relationship.	-0.002	-0.153	[0.440]	0.117	0.569
34	Withholding forgiveness gives me a level of control over them.	0.071	-0.006	[0.463]	-0.109	0.484
19	By not forgiving them, I am punishing them for what they did.	[0.313]	-0.272	[0.325]	-0.109	0.412

Note. Factor loadings $\geq .3$ on hypothesised latent variables are presented in bold and factor loadings $\geq .3$ on alternate factors are presented in parentheses.

3.8.5 The BTF across samples

3.8.5.1 Barrier descriptive statistics

Table 3.4 presents the descriptive statistics and internal consistency reliabilities for the barriers within the Obligated and Non-obligated samples. For ease of interpretation, barriers are presented in descending order of subscale means. Internal consistency reliabilities for the 49-item measures were high across the two samples (Obligated $\alpha = .94$; Non-obligated $\alpha = .95$). Reliabilities for the individual barriers were improved for all barriers besides *Impression Management* in the Obligated sample ($\alpha = .91$ in Study 1), ranging from .86 - .91 in the Obligated sample and .88 - .92 in the Non-obligated sample.

3.8.5.2 Differences in barrier endorsement across the samples

As evident in Table 3.4, subscale means reflect differences observed in Study 1. Despite the amalgamation of the four barriers within the Non-obligated data set, subscale means reveal little divergence in barrier endorsement between the two samples, with similar barrier means across the groups. Due to the differing factor structures, the significance of mean differences between the groups could not be analysed; however, one-way repeated-measures ANOVAs were conducted on both samples to determine the significance of mean differences within each sample.

Table 3.4

*Means, Standard Deviations, and Internal Consistency Reliabilities for Study 2
Obligated and Non-obligated Sample Barriers*

Sample	Barrier	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	α
Obligated	Offender Response	3.82	1.12	0.91
	Trust Dissolution	3.70	0.93	0.87
	Enduring Effects	3.49	0.98	0.87
	Recidivism Prevention	3.47	1.02	0.88
	Morality Judgements	3.27	1.00	0.86
	Impression Management	2.65	1.06	0.89
	Vengeful Desires	2.10	1.03	0.90
Non-obligated	Trust Dissolution/ Morality Judgements	3.88	0.78	0.90
	Offender Response	3.82	1.07	0.91
	Impression Management/ Recidivism Prevention	3.31	0.94	0.92
	Enduring Effects	3.22	1.07	0.90
	Vengeful Desires	2.20	1.01	0.88

3.8.5.2.1 Repeated-Measures ANOVA: Obligated sample

Mauchly's test indicated that the assumption of sphericity had been violated ($\chi^2(20) = 217.59, p < .001$); therefore, degrees of freedom were corrected using Huynh-Feldt estimates of sphericity ($\epsilon = .73$). Results revealed significant differences between barrier means, $F(4.37, 917.03) = 123.34, p < .001$. Bonferroni post hoc tests revealed three distinct groupings in barrier endorsement, reflective of those observed in Study 1: *Trust Dissolution* and *Offender Response* were again the most endorsed barriers, significantly more endorsed than all other barriers ($ps < .05$) but with no significant differences between the two ($p = 1.00$). The second

grouping included *Recidivism Prevention, Morality Judgements, and Enduring Effects*, with no significant mean differences observed between these three barriers. The last grouping again contained *Impression Management and Vengeful Desires*, with these barriers significantly less endorsed than all others ($ps < .001$). As in Study 1, *Vengeful Desires* was the least endorsed barrier in the model ($p < .001$), significantly less endorsed than all other barriers.

3.8.5.2.2 Repeated-Measures ANOVA: Non-obligated sample

Mauchly's test indicated that the assumption of sphericity had been violated ($\chi^2(9) = 132.07, p < .001$); therefore, degrees of freedom were corrected using Huynh-Feldt estimates of sphericity ($\epsilon = .79$). Results showed significant differences between barrier means, $F(3.16, 603.26) = 139.10, p < .001$. Bonferroni post hoc tests revealed three distinct groupings in barrier endorsement, similar to those observed in Study 1 and the Obligated sample: *Trust Dissolution/Morality Judgements* and *Offender Response* were the most endorsed barriers, significantly more endorsed than all other barriers ($ps < .001$), and with no significant mean difference between the two ($p = 1.00$). The second grouping included *Impression Management/Recidivism Prevention* and *Enduring Effects*, which did not differ significantly in endorsement ($p = 1.00$). Finally, as in Study 1 and the Obligated sample, *Vengeful Desires* was the least endorsed barrier, significantly less endorsed than all other barriers ($ps < .001$).

3.8.6 Differences in state and trait measures across the samples

Table 3.5 presents the descriptive statistics, independent samples *t*-tests,²⁷ and effect sizes for differences between the validity variables across the two samples. Samples did not differ significantly in vengeful personality traits, or in the importance of power or benevolence values. Offenders displayed little reparative work, and were held equally responsible for transgressions they knew would hurt their victims. Victims in both samples judged the transgression to be wrong, and felt that they could not commit similar hurtful acts themselves. Although both groups did not continue to ruminate strongly about the transgressions, participants generally felt that they had not forgiven their offenders.

Obligated victims found the transgression to be substantially more severe, nursed substantially more anger towards their offenders, and felt that their offenders were much more likely to behave in a similar way in future than Non-obligated victims. However, Obligated victims also experienced substantially more empathic understanding towards their offenders, maintained a markedly better relationship with them than Non-obligated victims, and experienced far more benevolent motivations towards them. Conversely, Non-obligated victims experienced significantly greater revenge and avoidance motivations towards their offenders, attributed significantly more intentionality to the offending behaviour, experienced greater ego damage following the transgression, and felt that the transgression damaged their power in the relationship substantially more than Obligated victims.

²⁷ Welsh's *F* within one-way ANOVA was used when the assumption of homogeneity of variance was violated.

Table 3.5

Descriptive Statistics, Effect Sizes, and Independent Samples t-tests for Differences between Obligated and Non-obligated Samples on Validity Measures

Sample	Construct	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Sample	Construct	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Independent Samples <i>t</i> -test	<i>d</i>
Forgiveness measures									
Obligated	Revenge	1.74	0.91	Non-obligated	Revenge	1.96	0.98	$t(401) = 2.42, p = .016$	.23
	Avoidance	3.14	1.07		Avoidance	3.84	0.99	$t(401) = 6.78, p < .001$	.68
	Benevolence	3.23	1.03		Benevolence	2.44	0.99	$t(401) = 7.90, p < .001$	.78
	Forgiven?	2.72	1.27		Forgiven?	2.68	1.36	$t(401) = 0.27, p = .791$	.03
Variables that inhibit forgiveness									
Obligated	Vengeance	3.11	1.11	Non-obligated	Vengeance	3.14	1.00	$t(401) = 0.25, p = .801$	.03
	Entitlement	7.54	1.32		Entitlement	7.60	1.27	$t(401) = 0.53, p = .596$	.05
	Dominance	2.82	0.66		Dominance	2.77	0.61	$t(401) = 0.68, p = .495$	.08
	Power value	2.40	1.50		Power value	2.35	1.40	$t(401) = 0.33, p = .741$	.03
	FNE	3.12	0.82		FNE	3.16	0.79	$t(401) = 0.50, p = .616$	.05
	Severity	4.03	0.96		Severity	3.67	0.99	$t(401) = 3.64, p < .001$	.37
	Rumination	3.04	1.42		Rumination	2.90	1.51	$t(401) = 0.92, p = .360$	.10
	Current anger	3.20	1.07		Current anger	2.94	1.17	$t(401) = 2.39, p = .017$	.23
	Wrongfulness	4.30	0.98		Wrongfulness	4.38	0.90	$t(401) = 0.87, p = .384$	.09
	Stability	3.36	1.40		Stability	2.73	1.47	$t(401) = 4.39, p < .001$	.44
	Intentionality	3.82	1.21		Intentionality	4.06	1.12	$t(401) = 1.99, p = .047$	.21

Sample	Construct	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Sample	Construct	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Independent Samples <i>t</i> -test	<i>d</i>
	Foreseeability	4.12	1.22		Foreseeability	4.26	1.10	$t(401) = 1.22, p = .222$	.12
	Blameworthiness	4.35	0.85		Blameworthiness	4.28	0.94	$t(401) = 0.08, p = .433$	.08
Variables that facilitate forgiveness									
Obligated	Perspective-taking	3.02	1.55	Non-obligated	Perspective-taking	2.70	1.58	$t(401) = 2.02, p = .044$	.20
	Pre-offence quality	4.05	0.98		Pre-offence quality	4.19	0.97	$t(401) = 1.46, p = .145$	.14
	Current quality	2.65	1.20		Current quality	1.66	0.88	$F(1, 383.55) = 90.20, p < .001^a$	.94
	Reparative work	2.31	1.12		Reparative work	2.27	1.12	$t(401) = 0.34, p = .733$	.04
	Capability for similar behaviour	2.27	1.26		Capability for similar behaviour	2.20	1.31	$t(401) = 0.51, p = .608$	.05
	Benevolence value	5.53	1.02		Benevolence value	5.54	1.11	$t(401) = 0.07, p = .947$	.01
Situational identity variables									
Obligated	Ego damage	3.78	0.98	Non-obligated	Ego damage	3.98	0.82	$F(1, 398.43) = 5.14, p = .024^b$	.22
	Relationship power	3.21	1.36		Relationship power	3.65	1.23	$F(1, 400.97) = 90.20, p = .001^c$	.34
	Others forgive?	3.01	1.15		Others forgive?	2.31	1.16	$t(401) = 6.05, p < .001$	.61

Note: *d* = Cohen's *d*. ^aWelch's *F* utilised, as assumption of homogeneity of variances was violated, $F(1,401) = 35.62, p < .001$. ^bWelch's *F* utilised, as assumption of homogeneity of variances was violated, $F(1,401) = 8.99, p = .003$. ^cWelch's *F* utilised, as assumption of homogeneity of variances was violated, $F(1,401) = 3.86, p = .05$.

3.8.7 Investigating BTF construct validity across Obligated and Non-obligated samples

3.8.7.1 Correlations between the barriers across samples and forgiveness measures

Pearson correlations were computed to investigate the relationships between the BTF barriers and state forgiveness measures across the two samples.²⁸ Results are presented in Table 3.6. As predicted, only positive relationships were observed between the barriers across the samples and revenge and avoidance motivations, and only negative relationships were observed with benevolence motivations and perceptions of having forgiven the offender. All barriers across the two samples, besides the Non-obligated *Vengeful Desires*, correlated significantly with at least three of the four forgiveness measures, and no substantial group differences were observed in barrier relationships.

²⁸ The current study also investigated relationships between the barriers and social desirability (M-C Form C; Reynolds, 1982). Results revealed only three meaningful relationships between the barriers across the two samples and socially-desirable responding, with the variable sharing a weak negative relationship with the Non-obligated *Vengeful Desires* ($r = -.13, p = .07$), and weak positive relations with the Obligated sample's *Trust Dissolution* and *Morality Judgements* ($r_s = .13, p_s = .06$ and $.05$, respectively). As in Study 1, however, social desirability had little impact on the relationships between the three barriers and the validity measures, with partial correlations controlling for social desirability identical to their uncontrolled counterparts, or differing only .01 - .03 in strength.

As in Study 1, *Vengeful Desires* shared the strongest positive relationship with revenge motivations across the samples, followed by *Impression Management* and *Recidivism Prevention*. *Trust Dissolution* again had the strongest relationships across the samples with avoidance, benevolence, and perceptions of having forgiven the offender, followed by *Morality Judgements*.

Table 3.6

Correlations between Obligated and Non-obligated Sample Barriers and Forgiveness Measures

Sample	Barrier	Revenge	Avoidance	Benevolence	Forgiveness Perceptions
Obligated	Offender Response	.10	.47***	-.37***	-.37***
	Trust Dissolution	.35***	.58***	-.50***	-.45***
	Morality Judgements	.35***	.40***	-.39***	-.47***
	Impression Management	.51***	.27***	-.20**	-.06
	Recidivism Prevention	.44***	.34***	-.24***	-.21**
	Enduring Effects	.26***	.36***	-.30***	-.42***
	Vengeful Desires	.65***	.25***	-.15*	.02
Non-Obligated	Offender Response	.19**	.45***	-.37***	-.32***
	Trust Dissolution/ Morality Judgements	.35***	.57***	-.48***	-.50***
	Impression Management/ Recidivism Prevention	.41***	.33***	-.17*	-.28***
	Enduring Effects	.30***	.38***	-.14 ^a	-.38***
	Vengeful Desires	.60***	.08	.05	-.11

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$. ^a $p = .06$.

3.8.7.2 Correlations between the barriers across samples and variables that inhibit forgiveness

Table 3.7 and Table 3.8 present the correlations between the samples' barriers and dispositional and situational variables that may inhibit forgiveness, respectively.

Table 3.7

Correlations between Obligated and Non-obligated Sample Barriers and Dispositional Variables that Impede Forgiveness

Sample	Barrier	Trait Vengeance	Narcissistic Entitlement	Trait Dominance	Power Values	Fear of Negative Evaluations
Obligated	Offender Response	-.01	-.06	-.13 ^b	.04	.03
	Trust Dissolution	.21 ^{**}	.04	.00	.11 ^d	-.05
	Morality Judgements	.31 ^{***}	.10	.08	.18 ^{**}	.01
	Impression Management	.42 ^{***}	.12 ^c	.13 ^a	.25 ^{***}	.21 ^{**}
	Recidivism Prevention	.38 ^{***}	.11	.09	.24 ^{***}	.14 [*]
	Enduring Effects	.21 ^{**}	.001	.03	.07	.04
	Vengeful Desires	.55 ^{***}	.20 ^{**}	.18 ^{**}	.33 ^{***}	.22 ^{**}
Non-obligated	Offender Response	-.05	-.14 [*]	-.06	-.07	-.05
	Trust Dissolution/ Morality Judgements	.15 [*]	-.01	.12	.10	-.11
	Impression Management/ Recidivism Prevention	.25 ^{***}	.07	.13 ^b	.18 [*]	-.02
	Enduring Effects	.10	-.01	.08	.09	.16 [*]
	Vengeful Desires	.51 ^{***}	.17 [*]	.22 ^{**}	.27 ^{***}	.07

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$. ^a $p = .06$. ^b $p = .07$. ^c $p = .09$. ^d $p = .10$.

Table 3.8

Correlations between Obligated and Non-obligated Sample Barriers and Situational Variables that Impede Forgiveness

Sample	Barrier	Severity	Anger	Rumination	Wrongfulness	Stability	Intent	Foresee	Blame
Obligated	Offender Response	.31***	.42***	.19**	.30***	.41***	.29***	.05	.18**
	Trust Dissolution	.49***	.56***	.46***	.44***	.22**	.33***	.20**	.19**
	Morality Judgements	.50***	.48***	.46***	.45***	.14*	.29***	.18**	.29***
	Impression Management	.05	.19**	.32***	.19**	.18**	.08	.11	.17*
	Recidivism Prevention	.21**	.30***	.35***	.31***	.20**	.12 ^c	.14*	.25***
	Enduring Effects	.59***	.51***	.54***	.32***	.20**	.22**	.12 ^c	.21**
	Vengeful Desires	-.004	.13 ^b	.27***	.09	.09	.00	.06	.15*
Non-obligated	Offender Response	.07	.30***	-0.03	.21**	.23**	.36***	.06	.25***
	Trust Dissolution/ Morality Judgements	.36***	.43***	.17*	.51***	.10	.27***	.24**	.36***
	Impression Management/ Recidivism Prevention	.27***	.33***	.26***	.30***	.12	.15*	.14 ^a	.25**
	Enduring Effects	.53***	.63***	.42***	.24**	.22**	.11	.15*	.09
	Vengeful Desires	.15*	.24**	.28***	.05	.05	.02	.03	.03

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$. ^a $p = .06$. ^b $p = .07$. ^c $p = .08$.

Results supported hypotheses. Almost all meaningful relationships across the samples with state and trait variables were positive, as expected (*Offender Response* shared weak negative relationships with trait dominance and entitlement). Although slight group differences were observed in barrier relationships, correlations revealed greater consistency than inconsistency, though with stronger correlations generally observed within the Obligated sample.

Idiosyncratic relationships were again observed between the barriers and specific validity variables. *Vengeful Desires* and *Impression Management* shared the strongest relationships with vengeful, power-oriented victim traits, and smaller, less consistent relationships with situational characteristics. Conversely, *Trust Dissolution*, *Enduring Effects*, and *Offender Response* were most related to situational characteristics and largely unrelated to vengeful, socially-dominant characteristics. Once again, *Morality Judgements* and *Recidivism Prevention* were associated with both state and trait measures.

3.8.7.3 Correlations between the barriers across samples and variables that facilitate forgiveness

Table 3.9 presents the correlations between the barriers across the studies and variables that may encourage forgiveness.

Table 3.9

Correlations between Obligated and Non-obligated Sample Barriers and Variables that Facilitate Forgiveness

Sample	Barrier	Perspective-taking	Current Relationship Quality	Reparative Work	Capability for Similar Wrongdoing	Benevolence Values
Obligated	Offender Response	-.31***	-.44***	-.73***	-.25***	.25***
	Trust Dissolution	-.37***	-.54***	-.19**	-.39***	.19**
	Morality Judgements	-.43***	-.30***	-.15*	-.40***	.20**
	Impression Management	-.16*	-.05	.01	.04	-.05
	Recidivism Prevention	-.24***	-.13 ^a	-.05	-.13 ^b	.06
	Enduring Effects	-.29***	-.26***	-.17*	-.35***	.24***
	Vengeful Desires	-.06	.00	.22**	.12 ^d	-.16*
Non-obligated	Offender Response	-.16*	-.39***	-.71***	-.23**	.27***
	Trust Dissolution/ Morality Judgements	-.36***	-.35***	-.12 ^c	-.41***	.29***
	Impression Management/ Recidivism Prevention	-.22**	-.08	.06	-.20**	.19**
	Enduring Effects	-.08	-.04	-.14 ^a	-.30***	.22**
	Vengeful Desires	-.04	.13 ^b	.17*	.02	-.02

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$. ^a $p = .05$. ^b $p = .06$. ^c $p = .09$. ^d $p = .10$.

Results generally supported hypotheses. Only negative meaningful relationships were observed between the barriers across the samples—besides *Vengeful Desires*—and all measures besides benevolence values. Despite a larger number of group differences, relationships across the samples continued to display

greater consistency than inconsistency, although the Obligated sample displayed stronger, more numerous meaningful relationships than its Non-obligated counterpart. Of the barriers, only *Vengeful Desires* and *Impression Management* correlated in the expected direction with just one variable (*Vengeful Desires* with benevolence values, in the opposite direction to the other barriers, and *Impression Management* with perspective-taking) and, contrary to expectations, all other meaningful relationships with *Vengeful Desires* were positive.

3.8.7.4 Correlations between the barriers across samples and identity-related situational variables

Finally, Table 3.10 presents the correlations between the barriers and identity-related situational variables. Hypotheses were moderately supported. All meaningful relationships were in the expected direction, with only positive relationships observed between the barriers across the studies and both ego damage and relationship power, and only negative relationships observed with others' thoughts of forgiveness. As with the previous analyses, few group differences were observed between the Obligated and Non-obligated samples in relationship direction or strength, with far greater consistency evident than inconsistency, although stronger correlations were generally observed within the Non-obligated sample.

Table 3.10

Correlations between Obligated and Non-obligated Sample Barriers and Identity-Related Situational Variables

Sample	Barrier	Ego Damage	Relationship Power	Third Party Forgiveness
Obligated	Offender Response	.15*	.26***	-.10
	Trust Dissolution	.21**	.18**	-.30***
	Morality Judgements	.28***	.15*	-.27***
	Impression Management	.21**	.15*	-.13 ^a
	Recidivism Prevention	.18**	.16*	-.18*
	Enduring Effects	.24***	.19**	-.19**
	Vengeful Desires	.10	.03	-.09
Non-obligated	Offender Response	-.06	.21**	-.21**
	Trust Dissolution/ Morality Judgements	.18*	.14 ^a	-.42***
	Impression Management/ Recidivism Prevention	.20**	.21**	-.34***
	Enduring Effects	.22**	.31***	-.06
	Vengeful Desires	.12 ^c	.14*	-.13 ^b

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$. ^a $p = .06$. ^b $p = .07$. ^c $p = .09$.

The three identity variables were moderately successful in identifying situational aspects relevant to *Impression Management* and *Vengeful Desires*. Each variable shared a meaningful correlation in the expected direction with both samples' *Impression Management* and the Non-obligated *Vengeful Desires*. No meaningful relationships were observed between the variables and *Vengeful Desires* in the Obligated sample, however.

3.9 Discussion

3.9.1 Replicating and expanding upon Study 1's BTF

Study 2 had two primary aims. First, Study 2 aimed to replicate Study 1's BTF whilst effectively expanding four of the barriers. This aim was met. EFA conducted on the combined sample led to the identification of a seven-factor model with excellent model fit and a factor structure in accordance with theorising. Model refinement resulted in a 49-item seven-factor measure with seven primary items per factor and few cross-loadings greater than .3. The three unrevised Study 1 barriers—*Offender Response*, *Morality Judgements* and *Impression Management*—were effectively replicated within the model, displaying factor structures identical to their Study 1 counterparts and loadings of comparable strength. Item pool expansion improved the representation of the remaining four barriers in the model, with more distinct factor structures, higher loadings and fewer significant cross-loadings than in Study 1, and each barrier's indicators derived from its own item pool.

Revision of *Trust Dissolution*, *Enduring Effects*, *Vengeful Desires*, and *Recidivism Prevention* resulted in more numerous BTF interrelationships, with every barrier besides *Offender Response* correlating with a greater number of barriers than in Study 1 (*Offender Response* correlated with the same four barriers). Nonetheless, idiosyncratic trends in barrier relationships were once again observed. All substantial Study 1 relationships were replicated, such as those between *Impression Management*, *Recidivism Prevention*, and *Vengeful Desires*, and barrier revision also resulted in stronger relationships between *Morality Judgements*, *Enduring Effects*, and *Trust Dissolution*, reflecting the theoretical

similarity of the constructs. Study 2 was therefore successful in producing a BTF measure that effectively represents the barriers' theoretical constructs and displays structural validity across studies.

3.9.2 Assessing BTF configural invariance

Study 2 also aimed to assess BTF measurement invariance across two independent samples. It was hypothesised that the BTF would demonstrate configural invariance, displaying the same patterns of relationships between the barriers and their scale items across the Obligated and Non-obligated samples.

This hypothesis was not supported. EFA revealed the Baseline seven-factor model to effectively represent the relationships in the Obligated data set, with good model fit and only one factor indicator switching primary loadings. Factor correlations were comparable to the Baseline model, and no substantial relationship differences were observed. The seven-factor model was a poor fit to the Non-obligated data set, however, with a less interpretable factor structure and a poorly-defined seventh factor. EFA revealed a five-factor model to best represent the relationships in this sample, with four of the barriers—*Impression Management*, *Recidivism Prevention*, *Trust Dissolution*, and *Morality Judgements*—amalgamating into two larger factors. The BTF therefore did not display configural invariance across two independent samples.

3.9.2.1 The five-factor BTF within the Non-obligated sample

Factor content of the Non-obligated sample's five-factor model revealed three factors identical to their Baseline counterparts: *Offender Response*, *Enduring*

Effects, and *Vengeful Desires*. The fourth and fifth factors in the model were an amalgamation of the remaining four barriers: one, a composite of *Trust Dissolution* and *Morality Judgements*, with all indicators from both barriers; the other, a composite of *Impression Management* and *Recidivism Prevention*, also with all barrier indicators. With no change to the composition of the model besides the consolidation of these four barriers, Non-obligated victims apparently considered not forgiving due to the immorality of the offender/their behaviour and the dissolution of relationship trust to be the same construct, and not forgiving to prevent evaluations of weakness and offender recidivism to be another single construct. These factorial differences are discussed below.

3.9.2.1.1 Amalgamation of *Trust Dissolution* and *Morality Judgements*

As discussed previously, victims who judge a transgression to be immoral and despicable may form negative character judgements of the offender, believing them to be just as despicable and immoral as their behaviour (Baumeister, 1996). Such offenders may also be perceived as malicious and untrustworthy, and thus their relationship with the victim is terminated due to their ability to willingly violate a taboo norm and cause that level of harm to the victim (Baumeister et al., 1990; Gonzales et al., 1994).

This rationale may explain the consolidation of *Trust Dissolution* and *Morality Judgements* within the Non-obligated sample. The link between immorality and untrustworthiness does not extend to Obligated victims, however; examination of the sample's seven-factor model (Appendix, Table A1) reveals that four of the seven *Morality Judgements* items loaded $> .150$ onto *Trust Dissolution*, supporting

the above rationale, yet six of the seven *Trust Dissolution* items loaded at $< .080$ onto *Morality Judgements*, suggesting it did not extend in the other direction.

In the current study, Non-obligated victims were less close to their offenders, experienced significantly lower empathic perspective-taking, and attributed significantly greater intentionality to their offenders' behaviour than Obligated victims (see Table 3.5). Thus, the combination of untrustworthiness and immorality within the Non-obligated sample may be due to participants' comparative lack of knowledge of the extenuating circumstances of the transgression, which increase feelings of moral outrage and judgements of internal wickedness (Carlsmith et al., 2002), and their higher attributions of behavioural intentionality.

By seeing the offender as intentionally committing an abhorrent transgression and receiving little information on justifiable causes of the behaviour, Non-obligated victims may consequently perceive them to be an untrustworthy individual as abhorrent as their behaviour. Conversely, by being closer to their offenders, having a greater understanding of the causes of their behaviour, and seeing the actions as less intentional, Obligated victims may have been better able to separate the trustworthiness of the offender from judgements of transgression immorality.

3.9.2.1.2 Amalgamation of Impression Management and Recidivism Prevention

Barrier definitions may also reveal why Non-obligated victims who do not forgive to prevent face loss may likewise fear that forgiveness could encourage offender recidivism, and vice versa. As discussed, interpersonal transgressions usually involve threat or damage to the victim's identity, and victims are often

motivated to minimise any damage done (Baumeister, 1982b; Leary & Kowalski, 1990). Following a transgression, some victims may fear that forgiveness could be interpreted as backing down from or accepting the transgression, a sign of weakness that makes them vulnerable to future exploitation and harm (Wallace et al., 2008). These victims may consequently withhold a forgiving response to project an image of pride and strength and communicate intolerance of the offending behaviour, thereby reducing the chances of future transgressions.

Within the Obligated sample's five-factor model, five of the seven *Impression Management* items loaded at $> .200$ onto *Recidivism Prevention*, supporting the above argument, but all seven *Recidivism Prevention* items loaded at $< .130$ onto *Impression Management*, indicating that the argument does not extend in the opposite direction. Examination of transgression characteristics and ANOVA results reveal that Obligated victims who had not forgiven to prevent offender recidivism may have been relatively unthreatened by potential identity damage. Obligated victims experienced significantly less ego damage and loss of relationship power than their Non-obligated counterparts, had far better current relationships with their offenders, and more people in their lives who felt that the victim should forgive. The combination of these elements would reduce the identity threat that may accompany forgiveness (Leary & Kowalski, 1990). Moreover, ANOVA results revealed *Impression Management* to be significantly less representative of Obligated participants' unforgiving responses than *Recidivism Prevention*.

With Obligated victims comparatively unthreatened by identity damage, these individuals may therefore have found the concept of not forgiving for impression management reasons to be relatively unimportant to, and separate from, not forgiving to prevent offender recidivism. Conversely, as victims of more

intentional transgressions that constituted a substantial ego threat and reduced their power within the relationship, Non-obligated victims may have perceived no difference between not forgiving to prevent evaluations of weakness or loss of face, and not forgiving to communicate behavioural intolerance and prevent future offending.

Despite these differences in barrier composition, results reflect trends in barrier relationships and theorising from Study 1 and within the Obligated sample. In both samples, *Recidivism Prevention* and *Impression Management* shared a strong positive correlation, indicating that the barriers share an underlying conceptual basis. Moreover, although *Trust Dissolution* and *Morality Judgements* failed to correlate significantly in Study 1, the barriers shared a strong positive correlation in the Obligated data set and share such a similar conceptual basis that questions were raised prior to Study 1 as to whether the barriers should be combined.

Thus, although the seven-factor BTF failed to replicate across the two independent samples, the composition of the two amalgamated factors and their similarities to barrier relationships observed in alternate samples provides tentative support for the structural stability of the BTF across samples. Results also provide support for the conceptual division of the BTF barriers that was evident in Study 1. This division is discussed further in section 3.9.4.3.

3.9.3 Validating the BTF across the two samples

The secondary aim of Study 2 was to continue the investigation of the BTF's construct validity across the samples. It was hypothesised that the barriers across both samples would replicate previous relationships, correlating significantly in the expected direction with state forgiveness measures, whilst correlating positively with variables that impede forgiveness and negatively with variables that facilitate forgiveness.

These hypotheses were largely supported. Despite the different victim-offender relationships and factor structures, correlations revealed few major differences in the size or importance of relationships across the samples, with far greater consistency than inconsistency observed. Stronger correlations were generally observed within the Obligated sample, which could be due to the increased relevance of the concept of forgiving, or not forgiving, to close interpersonal relationships (McCullough et al., 1998; McCullough, Worthington, et al., 1997). These victims may consequently be more cognizant of their unforgiving responses than Non-obligated victims in more distal, or less important, relationships with their offenders.

Stronger correlations were observed within the Non-obligated sample for the identity-related situational variables, however, which may reflect the greater ego damage and loss of relationship power experienced by these participants, and the increased relevance of identity concerns to victims in more distal relationships with their offenders (Aquino & Douglas, 2003; Cohen & Nisbett, 1994; Leary & Kowalski, 1990). Nonetheless, with similar patterns of relationships in the expected directions observed across the two samples, results provide strong support for the validity of

the BTF as a measure of unforgiving victim responses. The specific relationships with each type of validity measure are discussed below.

3.9.3.1 The barriers across the samples and situational forgiveness measures

Study 1 correlations with state forgiveness measures were replicated across the two samples, with only positive meaningful relationships observed between both samples' barriers and revenge and avoidance motivations, and only negative relationships observed with benevolence motivations and perceptions of having forgiven the offender. All barriers besides *Vengeful Desires* correlated with at least three of the four validity measures across the samples, while *Morality Judgements*, *Recidivism Prevention*, and *Enduring Effects* replicated their Study 1 relationships by correlating significantly with all validity variables.

3.9.3.2 The barriers across samples and variables that inhibit forgiveness

Results also replicated Study 1 findings regarding the relationships between the barriers and variables that may inhibit forgiveness. Despite the increased number of variables measured and the mixture of state and trait variables, the vast majority of meaningful relationships were positive, as expected, including all relationships with Study 1 variables. The only negative meaningful relationships observed were between *Offender Response* and measures of trait dominance (within the Obligated sample) and narcissistic entitlement (within the Non-obligated sample), and these were weak in strength.

3.9.3.3 The barriers across the samples and variables that facilitate forgiveness

Relationships were less consistent with variables that may facilitate forgiveness. As in Study 1, all meaningful relationships between the barriers across the samples, besides *Vengeful Desires*, and both empathic perspective-taking and current relationship quality were negative, as were those with capability for similar wrongdoing. Moreover, as opposed to Study 1 findings, all relationships with offender reparative work—again, besides those shared with *Vengeful Desires*—were negative. Each of the barriers theorised to be more associated with transgression characteristics shared significant negative relationships with the construct across the two samples, thus indicating that efforts to better measure reparative efforts were successful.

Contrary to expectations, only positive meaningful relationships were observed between the barriers—again, besides *Vengeful Desires*—and benevolence values, hypothesised to correlate negatively with the barriers due to its positive relationship with forgiveness (Strelan et al., 2011). Based on the barriers that shared these positive relationships, however—*Offender Response*, *Trust Dissolution*, *Morality Judgements*, and *Enduring Effects*—results are less surprising. These barriers appear to be largely reactive in nature, evoked in response to the transgression and its characteristics. Each is highly correlated with severity, state rumination, moral wrongfulness, and current anger towards the offender, whilst less related to power or dominance measures, or the more vengeful barriers of *Impression Management* and *Vengeful Desires*.

As discussed previously, the central motivational goal of benevolence is the preservation and enhancement of the welfare of significant others (Schwartz,

1992), and individuals who hold this value as important to their lives are likely to expect the same from others. With the expectation that others will behave in respectful, caring ways towards them, such victims may find themselves unable to forgive following an immoral transgression, or one which broke their trust or caused substantial, lasting pain. Similarly, victims who are concerned with the welfare of others may find themselves unable to forgive an offender who failed to respect them by taking responsibility for the transgression and apologising.

Conversely, *Vengeful Desires* appears to be a vengeful, dominant barrier motivated by power concerns and the desire to punish and control the offender, and less related to the situational characteristics of the transgression. With such a foundation, it is unsurprising that victims who endorsed this barrier were less likely to hold benevolence values as important to their lives.

3.9.3.4 Situational variables related to Impression Management and Vengeful Desires

Study 2 also aimed to identify situational variables that may encourage endorsement of *Impression Management* and *Vengeful Desires*. It was hypothesised that the two barriers would correlate positively with measures of ego damage and relationship power, and negatively with third party opinions of forgiveness.

These hypotheses were generally supported. As anticipated, all meaningful relationships between the variables and all barriers across the samples were in the expected direction. Both samples' *Impression Management* barriers and the Non-obligated *Vengeful Desires* barrier shared meaningful correlations in the expected

direction with all three measures, although these relationships were smaller than relationships with many of the other barriers. *Vengeful Desires* in particular appeared to be largely unrelated to the three variables, sharing only weak relationships that approached significance with the measures in the Non-obligated sample and sharing no significant correlations in the Obligated sample. These results complement other correlations within the current study, which indicate that *Vengeful Desires* may be less influenced by the situational characteristics of the transgression than *Impression Management*, despite their shared vengeful, dominant basis.

Nonetheless, correlations suggest that the current study was successful in identifying situational aspects that may influence endorsement of these vengeful, socially-dominant barriers. Moreover, the relevance of the three constructs to the other barriers indicate that the identity threat of the transgression, the damage to the victim's power in the relationship, and the extent to which important others believe the victim should forgive may all be effective situational measures of BTF construct validity.

Overall, results across the three samples provide strong support for the construct validity of the BTF as a measure of unforgiving victim responses. The barriers consistently shared relationships in the expected direction with forgiveness measures, and largely behaved in predicted ways with theoretically-related constructs, sharing predominantly positive relationships with a range of variables shown to inhibit forgiveness, and predominantly negative relationships with variables that may facilitate forgiveness.

Correlations also demonstrate trends in barrier relationships with theoretically-relevant variables, such as the positive relationships between

Enduring Effects and rumination, *Morality Judgements* and perspective-taking, or *Vengeful Desires* and power values, thus indicating that the individual barriers behave as expected with similar, established constructs. As such, correlations complement factor analysis results in establishing BTF construct validity as a measure of situational unforgiving responses.

3.9.4 Addressing Study 2's research questions

In addition to the above aims, Study 2 addressed the following three research questions. First, the study investigated differences in barrier endorsement across the two samples, to determine the impact of the victim-offender relationship on reasons for not forgiving. Second, the study investigated differences in transgression and victim characteristics across the samples, to shed light on the different features of unforgiven transgressions across relationships. Third, the study continued the investigation of the relationships between the barriers and validity variables across samples, to identify variables key to barrier endorsement and investigate the prevalence of past relationship trends across different victim-offender relationships. Each of these issues is discussed below.

3.9.4.1 Research question 1: To what extent does barrier endorsement differ across victim-offender relationships?

In Study 1, *Trust Dissolution* and *Offender Response* were the barriers most representative of participants' unforgiving responses, while *Impression Management* and *Vengeful Desires* were relatively unimportant to unforgiving victims. Study 2 aimed to examine the consistency of these findings across two

independent samples differing in the victim-offender relationship. Moreover, as research suggests that victims are more forgiving of family members and romantic partners than more distal offenders (Finkel et al., 2002; Girard & Mullet, 1997; Younger et al., 2004), Study 2 aimed to examine whether explanations for unforgiving responses vary when the victim shares an obligated, invested relationship with the offender, a facet unexamined to date.

The invested nature of the victim-offender relationship had little impact on barrier salience across samples. Besides differences in barrier order caused by the alternate factor structures, results were relatively uniform, with near-identical barrier endorsement observed within the Obligated and Non-obligated samples that reflected Study 1 results. Across the samples, *Trust Dissolution*, or *Trust Dissolution/Morality Judgements*, and *Offender Response* were the most endorsed barriers, followed by *Recidivism Prevention*, *Enduring Effects*, and *Morality Judgements* in the Obligated data set, and *Impression Management/Recidivism Prevention* and *Enduring Effects* in the Non-obligated data set. The final grouping comprised *Impression Management* and *Vengeful Desires* in the Obligated sample, and *Vengeful Desires* alone in the Non-obligated sample. As in Study 1, *Vengeful Desires* was significantly less endorsed than all other barriers across the two samples.

In light of past research, it is unsurprising that *Trust Dissolution* and *Offender Response* were the most salient barriers for victims across a range of victim-offender relationships, while *Vengeful Desires* and *Impression Management* were comparatively unimportant. Betrayal incidents are extremely common within interpersonal relationships, comprising a substantial proportion of unforgiven transgressions in past studies (Elangovan & Shapiro, 1998; Gordon et al., 2005;

Hannon, Rusbult, Finkel, & Kamashiro, 2010; Rapske et al., 2010), and the experience of betrayal appears to be significant enough to restrict victim forgiveness across a range of transgressions and interpersonal relationships (Williamson & Gonzales, 2007; Younger et al., 2004). With betrayal incidents having lasting, pervasive effects on the victim (Gordon & Baucom, 1998; Rusbult et al., 2002), it is therefore unsurprising that *Trust Dissolution* represented many victims' unforgiving responses across the two samples.

Just as important appears to be the offender's reaction in the aftermath of the transgression. Research has consistently highlighted the importance of offender reparative work to a victim's willingness or ability to forgive, as well as the general reluctance of offenders to accept blame and responsibility for a transgression (Baumeister et al., 1990; Gonzales, Manning, & Haugen, 1992; Stillwell & Baumeister, 1997). Although the closeness of the victim-offender relationship has been shown to increase the likelihood of offender apology (McCullough et al., 1998; McCullough, Worthington, et al., 1997), Table 3.5 indicates that reparative efforts were poor in both samples, irrespective of the victim-offender relationship. It is therefore understandable that *Offender Response* was highly representative of participants' unforgiving responses.

Conversely, desires for power and influence, or self-presentation concerns, appear to be unimportant to unforgiving responses across interpersonal relationships. Although power and status desires have been theoretically proposed as potential benefits of not forgiving (Baumeister et al., 1998; Exline & Baumeister, 2000; Rapske et al., 2010), past research utilising unforgiving victims has revealed these constructs to be relatively unimportant to unforgiving responses (Rapske et al., 2010; Williamson & Gonzales, 2007; Younger et al., 2004; Zechmeister &

Romero, 2002). Results suggest that endorsement of these barriers may be more influenced by the vengeful, dominant characteristics of the victim, thus limiting their applicability to many unforgiving victims, irrespective of their relationship with their offenders.

It is possible, however, that the lack of differences in barrier salience across groups may be the result of offender division within the current study, with the majority of Non-obligated offenders comprising friends or ex-partners of the victims. As the potential for relationship investment and obligation within this group was therefore large (Rusbult, 1980b), results may have presented an artificial representation of barrier salience in uninvested relationships. Thus, victims of transgressions perpetrated by more distal offenders, such as work colleagues or casual acquaintances, may respond differently to interpersonal transgressions, withholding forgiveness to communicate behavioural intolerance, for example (cf. Aquino, Tripp, & Bies, 2006). Although recruiting such a sample of participants was beyond the scope of the current study, future research could benefit from examining barrier salience within these more uninvested relationships.

Despite this potential limitation, results across the samples provide strong support for the comparative importance of the barriers to unforgiving victims, and indicate that the observed differences in barrier endorsement may be representative of hurtful unforgiven transgressions within interpersonal relationships. Results strongly indicate that, within most relationships, unforgiving victims feel that they have not forgiven their offenders due to the dissolution of the relationship's trust as a result of a betrayal, and the offender's lack of reparative work.

3.9.4.2 Research question 2: To what extent do victims in invested and non-invested relationships exhibit differences in situational and dispositional characteristics?

Independent samples *t*-tests were conducted and effect sizes calculated to identify group differences in victim and transgression characteristics. Results revealed differences in situational characteristics that may hint at forgiving outcomes within these relationships.

Although Obligated victims felt that their transgressions were much more severe than Non-obligated victims, experienced greater anger towards their offenders, and made stronger attributions of behavioural stability, they also experienced significantly greater understanding of the offender's behavioural motivation, had considerably better ongoing relationships with their offenders, and experienced far greater motivations to act benevolently towards them. Individuals in Obligated victims' lives were also much more likely to feel that the victim should forgive their offender. Conversely, Non-obligated victims felt that the offender's behaviour was significantly more intentional than Obligated victims, perceived that the transgression constituted a much greater threat to their ego and relationship power, and were substantially more motivated to avoid their offenders, while slightly more motivated to seek revenge for the transgression.

Thus, while both samples remained unforgiving of their offenders, results suggest that Obligated victims may actually be closer to forgiveness than their Non-obligated counterparts. Obligated victims shared much closer and more committed current relationships with their offenders, which increase forgiveness due to the long-term orientation and collectivist mentality that motivates victims to overlook hurts for the preservation of the relationship (Finkel et al., 2002; Karremans & Van

Lange, 2004; McCullough et al., 1998). This is particularly pertinent within invested relationships, such as family or romantic relationships, where considerable resources are invested and interdependence is high, as relationship dissolution would come at a significant personal cost to the victim (Fehr et al., 2010; Rusbult, Verette, Whitney, Slovik, & Lipkus, 1991; Van Lange et al., 1997) .

Moreover, although Obligated victims appeared to experience a more aversive reaction to the transgression, harbouring greater levels of hurt and anger towards their offenders, such experiences are common in reaction to transgressions within close relationships (Finkel et al., 2002; Williamson & Gonzales, 2007). However, Finkel et al. found that the closeness of the relationship led to the formation of benign interpretations of the offender's behaviour over time and increased benevolent actions towards the individual (Finkel et al., 2002). These trends were evident in the current study, with Obligated victims holding significantly lower intentionality attributions than Non-obligated victims and experiencing significantly greater empathic perspective-taking towards their offenders, which may increase offender relatability and reduce internal causal attributions, thereby making the offence, and the offender, more forgivable (Exline et al., 2008).

Obligated victims also experienced significantly greater benevolence motivations and significantly lower revenge and avoidance motivations towards their offenders than Non-obligated victims. These three motivational changes—a reduction in revenge and avoidance motivations, and an increase in benevolence motivations—are considered fundamental to interpersonal forgiveness (McCullough, Fincham, et al., 2003; McCullough & Hoyt, 2002; McCullough et al., 1998; McCullough, Worthington, et al., 1997), and indicate that Obligated victims

had greater pro-social orientations towards their offenders than Non-obligated victims.

Thus, while remaining unforgiving, with high endorsement of many variables shown to reduce forgiveness, the shared history between Obligated victims and their offenders, and the greater access to the offender that accompanies close relationships, may have resulted in Obligated victims being closer to forgiveness than their Non-obligated counterparts.

3.9.4.3 Research question 3: To what extent are the barriers differentially related to situational and dispositional variables?

Finally, correlations across the two samples provide support for the potential division of the barriers observed in Study 1. Correlations once again present a profile of *Vengeful Desires* and *Impression Management* as more purposeful barriers, strongly associated with the vengeful, dominant aspects of the victim's personality. As in Study 1, these barriers across the samples had the strongest correlations with trait vengeance, narcissistic entitlement, and revenge motivations, and also had the strongest relationships with additional social-dominance variables measured in Study 2: trait dominance, fear of negative evaluations, and power motivational values.

Although greater divergence was observed between the two barriers in the current study, with *Impression Management* in particular correlating with a larger number of situational variables, and *Vengeful Desires* sharing unique directional relationships with capability for similar behaviour, reparative work, current relationship quality, and benevolence values, the barriers both shared stronger,

more numerous relationships with the socially-dominant variables than the situational measures. Moreover, BTF intercorrelations reflected Study 1 results, with *Impression Management* and *Vengeful Desires* replicating their strong positive relationship and comparatively weak correlations with *Enduring Effects*, *Trust Dissolution*,²⁹ and *Offender Response*. Results therefore support theorising that *Impression Management* and *Vengeful Desires* share a conceptual basis.

Conversely, correlations again present an impression of *Trust Dissolution* and *Enduring Effects* as reactional barriers, influenced more by the situational characteristics of the transgression itself. Across the samples, these barriers shared the strongest correlations with situational characteristics of the transgression and the victim-offender relationship, and their endorsement was again associated with stronger desires to avoid their offenders, and lower feelings of goodwill and perceptions of having forgiven, as well as comparatively low desires to seek revenge. Moreover, both *Trust Dissolution* and *Enduring Effects* shared positive relationships with benevolence values across the samples, indicating that victims who endorsed these barriers were more likely to be characterised by their concern and respect for close others.

Although the barriers shared a small number of relationships with vengeful, dominant victim characteristics, these relationships were largely inconsistent across samples and much weaker than the relationships shared with situational measures. Finally, factor correlations between the two barriers were stronger than those observed in Study 1 and distinct from those shared with *Impression Management* or

²⁹ Larger relationships were observed between the barriers and *Trust Dissolution/Morality Judgements* in the Non-obligated sample, due to their greater relevance to *Morality Judgements*.

Vengeful Desires. These results therefore suggest that *Trust Dissolution* and *Enduring Effects* may share an underlying basis.

As in Study 1, *Morality Judgements* and *Recidivism Prevention* were associated with both vengeful, dominant victim traits and situational measures; however, *Morality Judgements* once again shared stronger correlations with situational characteristics than *Recidivism Prevention*, in addition to sharing positive relationships with benevolence values across the two samples, and was again associated with greater desires to avoid the offender, lower feelings of benevolence, and lower perceptions of having forgiven. Conversely, *Recidivism Prevention* shared stronger, more numerous relationships with the vengeful trait variables measured than *Morality Judgements*, and again shared a much stronger relationship with revenge motivations.

Factor correlations also reflected Study 1 results, with *Morality Judgements* sharing stronger correlations with *Trust Dissolution* and *Enduring Effects* than with *Impression Management* or *Vengeful Desires*, while *Recidivism Prevention* exhibited similar relationships with *Impression Management* and *Vengeful Desires*. Indeed, *Morality Judgements* and *Recidivism Prevention* shared such strong conceptual bases with *Trust Dissolution* and *Impression Management*, respectively, that the four barriers became two within the Non-obligated sample. Thus, as in Study 1, results suggest that *Morality Judgements* may share greater conceptual and methodological similarities with *Trust Dissolution* and *Enduring Effects*, while *Recidivism Prevention* may share a stronger conceptual and methodological basis with *Impression Management* and *Vengeful Desires*.

3.9.4.3.1 Offender Response within the BTF

As in Study 1, *Offender Response's* correlations across the samples generally mirrored those of *Trust Dissolution* and *Enduring Effects*, sharing significant relationships with the situational variables measured but largely failing to correlate with the dispositional characteristics of the victim. Factor correlations indicate that *Offender Response* may not fit so clearly within the *Trust Dissolution* and *Enduring Effects* grouping, however, with the barrier sharing weak-to-moderate correlations with all other barriers besides *Vengeful Desires*, and seemingly less relevant to endorsement of *Enduring Effects*.

Based on the specific nature of the barrier, it is unsurprising that *Offender Response* may not share a conceptual basis with any particular barrier. Indeed, from a conceptual standpoint, the barrier may instead function as a *predictor* of BTF endorsement, rather than a stand-alone barrier in its own right. Poor offender reparative efforts strengthen internal causal attributions and reinforce negative character judgements (Carlsmith et al., 2002; Gold & Weiner, 2000; Weiner et al., 1991; Zechmeister et al., 2004), in addition to increasing the threat to a victim's identity and reinforcing recidivism fears (Gold & Weiner, 2000; Gonzales et al., 1994; Lamb & Murphy, 2002; Luchies et al., 2010). It is therefore understandable that *Offender Response* would share positive correlations with *Trust Dissolution*, *Morality Judgements*, *Enduring Effects*, and *Recidivism Prevention*, as well as *Impression Management* (although this relationship was only evident within the Obligated sample). However, this research also suggests that endorsement of *Offender Response* may *increase* endorsement of these other barriers. Chapter 4 will therefore investigate *Offender Response's* placement within the BTF structure, to determine whether the barrier may be better conceptualised as an overarching

predictor of unforgiving victim responses, leading to endorsement of the other barriers.

3.9.5 Improving the BTF's nomological network

Cronbach and Meehl (1955) argue that construct validation of a new measure requires the development of a nomological network representing a measure's constructs of interest and their interrelations, which should be enriched with research progression to provide a more elaborate framework within which the construct occurs. In the context of the current research, the lack of established barrier criterion measures resulted in a broad initial nomological network with few specified barrier relationships. Correlations and the theory underlying each barrier have revealed clear patterns in BTF relationships and determinants, however, suggesting that the theoretical framework proposed in Chapter 1 should be expanded.

Across the studies, the barriers appear to cluster within two broader categories, suggesting the presence of two superordinate BTF factors, one involving more intentional, purposeful unforgiving responses that may reflect vengeful, dominant characteristics of the victim; and the other involving more reactive, unintentional unforgiving responses that may better reflect the situational characteristics of the transgression and the victim-offender relationship. Chapter 4 will therefore explore this potential division of the barriers, as well as *Offender Response's* location within this structure.

Chapter 4

Reconceptualising the barriers within a hierarchical framework

4.1 Chapter overview

Results from Studies 1 and 2 suggest that the BTF barriers could be conceptualised as sub-barriers of two superordinate barriers differing in the purposeful nature of the unforgiving response, rather than individual barriers to forgiveness. The current chapter presents the development of a conceptual framework to explain these relationships, and the reanalysis of the collected samples to provide support for this theorising. The current analysis will also investigate the variables that may best predict endorsement of each high-order barrier, and identify which of these barriers best predicts unforgiving motivations towards the offender.

4.2 The BTF: Operationalising active versus reactive barriers to forgiveness

The scale items operationalising *Trust Dissolution*, *Morality Judgements*, and *Enduring Effects* emphasise a lack of forgiveness brought about by the transgression itself, with each unforgiving response ostensibly a reaction to the negative characteristics of the transgression and the victim's relationship with their offender. Thus, victims who endorse these barriers seemingly find themselves unable to forgive their offenders in the aftermath of the transgression, based on the continuation of negative transgression consequences, the immorality of the offender's behaviour, and the dissolution of trust within the relationship. In turn, these cognitions may be brought about by the severity and wrongfulness of the transgression, attributions of offender causality and blame, and an inability to

understand the offender's behavioural motivation, as well as the victim's expectations of pro-social treatment from others.

Conversely, the scale items operationalising *Impression Management*, *Recidivism Prevention*, and *Vengeful Desires* seem to emphasise a purposeful withholding of forgiveness to achieve some end. Victims who endorse these barriers may be actively refusing to forgive in order to hold the transgression over the offender for personal gain, inhibit recidivism desires, and prevent loss of face. In turn, these goals may be influenced by the vengeful, entitled nature of the victim, their desires for power and control within their interpersonal relationships, and their fears of loss of social approval.

Accordingly, it is proposed that these six barriers³⁰ may be conceptualised as sub-barriers of two broader unforgiving responses. The first group of barriers, encompassing *Trust Dissolution*, *Morality Judgements*, and *Enduring Effects*, represent a reactive unforgiving response to the transgression, characterised by the victim's inability to forgive the offender for their behaviour. Hereafter dubbed *Can't Forgive*, the barriers within this grouping are retrospectively focused on the transgression, and endorsement may be governed by the severity of the norm violation and the victim's attributions of offender blameworthiness. The second group of barriers, encompassing *Recidivism Prevention*, *Impression Management*, and *Vengeful Desires*, appear to represent a more purposeful unforgiving response, characterised by the victim's active withholding of forgiveness from the offender.

³⁰ See section 4.4 for a discussion regarding *Offender Response*'s location within the BTF structure.

Hereafter dubbed *Won't Forgive*, these barriers are prospectively focused on post-transgression events, and may be motivated by self-protection desires. Each of these superordinate barriers is discussed below.³¹

4.2.1 The reactive inability to forgive: “I can’t forgive you”

Following an interpersonal transgression, some victims may feel incapable of forgiving their offenders for their behaviour. This reactive unforgiving response is focused on the transgression itself, and may be governed by the victim’s moral judgement of the offence, particularly perceptions of severity and immorality, and their attributions of offender blameworthiness. In these instances, severe norm violations for which the offender is deemed personally responsible result in moral outrage towards the offender and negative character judgements, thereby inhibiting victim forgiveness.

Research by Darley and colleagues (Carlsmith et al., 2002; Darley et al., 2000; Darley & Pittman, 2003; Gromet & Darley, 2009) on the “just deserts theory” of punishment may illustrate this rationale. These researchers argue that punishment assigned to an offender will be proportionate to the amount of moral outrage experienced, a moral reaction towards a norm violation characterised by feelings of contempt, anger, and disgust (Darley & Pittman, 2003; Rozin et al.,

³¹ Personal communication with Susan Boon (S. Boon, personal communication, July 18, 2011) revealed a similar focus on the nature of unforgiving responses within her University of Calgary lab. For a similar conceptualisation of unforgiving responses as decisionally- or emotionally-motivated, based on Worthington’s (2006) theory of emotional and decisional forgiveness, see Ross and Boon (2010).

1999). The experience and strength of a victim's moral outrage is determined by: a) the offence's magnitude of intended harm (encompassing the severity and moral wrongfulness of the transgression), and b) the existence of contextual factors that mitigate or exacerbate judgements of offender blameworthiness (Carlsmith et al., 2002; Darley et al., 2000).

Individuals who interpret an offence to be severe, morally wrong, and intentionally-perpetrated will experience a strong sense of moral outrage towards the offender and a consequent desire to punish them for their actions. Similarly, when faced with a transgression judged to be severe, immoral, and blameworthy, a victim may experience a strong sense of moral outrage in reaction to the wrongdoing and make lasting negative character judgements, leading to the feeling that the victim cannot forgive such an individual.

4.2.1.1 Judgements of harm magnitude

An individual's judgements of a transgression's magnitude of harm may be governed by the strength and importance of the norm violated by the offender. Societal norms and worldviews are usually absorbed early in an individual's development and are subjectively accepted as reality, forming the fundamental basis for how an individual comprehends their environment (Darley & Pittman, 2003). Humans have developed strong moral reasoning abilities to ensure norm adherence, making automatic, affective moral judgements about the actions of others by evaluating their behaviour against societal values (Greene & Haidt, 2002; Haidt, 2001; Rozin et al., 1999; Tetlock et al., 2000). When an offender perpetrates a transgression, they display a lack of respect for these virtues, resulting in

disapproval and condemnation from others and a desire to defend the threatened standard (Schnall, Haidt, Clore, & Jordan, 2008; Tangney, Stuewig, & Mashek, 2007; Tetlock, 2003; Tetlock et al., 2000).

Norm adherence is particularly important within close relationships, as relationship-relevant rules are crucial to building, and maintaining, interpersonal trust (Gordon et al., 2005; Rempel et al., 1985). When an offender transgresses against a close other they violate the norms that govern their relationship and interaction with the victim, resulting in strong negative affective reactions and judgements of behavioural immorality (Gordon & Baucom, 1998; Rusbult et al., 2002). The larger or more severe the norm violation, the greater the damage to the victim, and thus the more negative the moral judgement and affective and behavioural response (Alter et al., 2007; Finkel et al., 2002). Hence, the violation of norms strongly upheld by the victim or society lead to the most pronounced immorality judgements, with the offender's ability to violate such an important rule conveying condemning information about their moral character (Gutierrez & Giner-Sorolla, 2007; Schnall et al., 2008; Tetlock, 2003).

4.2.1.2 Judgements of offender blameworthiness

A victim's interpretation of a severe, morally wrong transgression, and the subsequent level of moral outrage they experience, will be tempered by mitigating or exacerbating circumstances that affect attributions of causality and blameworthiness (Carlsmith et al., 2002; Darley et al., 2000; Darley & Pittman, 2003). Attribution theorists (Heider, 1958; Kelley, 1987; Shaver, 1985; Weiner, 1985) assert that, following a transgression, a victim will consider the relative

contributions of environmental and personal factors in assessing the offender's causal responsibility for the negative outcome. The level of responsibility assigned will be proportionate to the degree of personal input the offender is thought to have had in the transgression and the immorality of their behavioural motivations (Alicke, 1992).

According to Gonzales and colleagues (Gonzales et al., 1994; Gonzales et al., 1992), offences fall along a blameworthiness continuum, ranging from unforeseen accidents to the intentional pursuit of a harmful event. Each successive level reflects increasing intent and prior knowledge of harm to the victim, and consequently escalate judgements of personal responsibility and blameworthiness (Heider, 1958). Thus, perpetrators of accidental or negligent acts may be attributed little personal responsibility and blame for the transgression, in contrast to perpetrators of intentional, purposeful harm, who are attributed the greatest amount of responsibility and blame for voluntarily choosing to engage in actions they knew would harm the victim (Boon & Sulsky, 1997; Gonzales et al., 1994).

As such, a severely hurtful, morally wrong transgression that is also considered foreseeable, unjustifiable, and intentionally-perpetrated will be elevated in the blameworthiness hierarchy, leading to strong judgements of offender responsibility and suggesting defective character traits (Carlsmith et al., 2002; Gonzales et al., 1992). By willingly ignoring their victims' feelings and expectations of behavioural conduct for their own personal gain, these offenders have demonstrated a marked lack of moral character and disregard for the victim's wellbeing (Baumeister et al., 1990; Darley & Pittman, 2003; Gonzales et al., 1994; Zechmeister & Romero, 2002). Consequently, their behaviour is likely to be attributed to internal, stable factors, such as personality deficits, rather than

external, situational factors (Gold & Weiner, 2000; K. M. McGraw, 1987; Weiner et al., 1997), generating feelings of moral outrage in the victim.

The stronger the norm violation and the victim's attributions of offender blameworthiness, the greater the level of moral-emotional arousal provoked by the transgression,³² and thus the more aversive the victim's behavioural and emotional response to the offender (Darley & Pittman, 2003). Hence, severe, wrong transgressions may result in offender demonisation, effectively eliminating the distinction between the act and the agent and presenting the offender to be as morally abhorrent as their behaviour (Baumeister, 1996; Darley et al., 2000; Exline et al., 2008; Tetlock et al., 2000). A victim of such a transgression may therefore feel that they cannot associate with, nor forgive, such a cruel, immoral individual.

4.2.2 The active withholding of forgiveness: "I won't forgive you"

Alternatively, some victims may actively withhold forgiveness from their offenders in the aftermath of a transgression. In contrast to the reactive inability to forgive, this purposeful unforgiving response is focused on post-transgression events, and involves an intentional refusal to forgive in order to punish the offender for their behaviour and, in doing so, communicate intolerance of the hurtful,

³² Research by Rozin and colleagues (Rozin et al., 1999) suggests that the strength of the three emotional components of moral outrage—contempt, anger, and disgust—may be dependent upon the characteristics of the transgression. Specifically, anger is associated with insults, transgressions, and rights violations; disgust is triggered by situations in which the offender behaves without dignity, or strips others of their dignity; and contempt is linked to hierarchy and social evaluation, involving feelings of disapproval and moral superiority towards another.

disrespectful treatment. Accordingly, the withholding of forgiveness may be motivated by the victim's desire for self-protection, both from future harm at the hands of others and from damage to their self-concept.

4.2.2.1 Protection from future harm

The rationale behind withholding forgiveness to protect oneself from future harm is similar to the "deterrence theory" of punishment (Bentham, 1962, cited in Carlsmith et al., 2002, p. 285). Deterrence theory holds that punishment for a crime should be severe enough to prevent future occurrences of the offence, inhibiting offender recidivism by altering the comparative costs and benefits of the transgression, and working as a general deterrent for potential third party offenders (Carlsmith et al., 2002; Darley & Pittman, 2003; Weiner et al., 1997).

While deterrence theory is often conceptualised within legal frameworks, the same rationale works for interpersonal transgressions: as punishment is administered to reduce the frequency and likelihood of future offences against society, so too may the withholding of forgiveness be utilised by victims to prevent future transgressions. Within this context, however, it is the unforgiving response itself that functions as the punishment, with the consequences aimed to be disproportionately costly in comparison to the benefits of offending so as to reduce the likelihood of future transgressions.

The victim's withholding of forgiveness may punish the offender by both robbing them of the positive intra- and interpersonal effects of receiving forgiveness (e.g., Gassin, 1998; Hannon et al., 2012; Witvliet et al., 2002), and subjecting them to the varied negative consequences of transgressing against the victim, such as:

retaliatory aggression, the enactment of concessions, ostracism from the victim or third parties, and costs associated with bearing the Offender label (Aquino et al., 2001; Baumeister et al., 1998; Crick & Grotpeter, 1995; Exline & Baumeister, 2000; McCullough et al., 1998; McNulty, 2010).

Although these effects alone may be sufficiently costly to reduce recidivism, the unforgiving stance additionally ensures the transgression and its hurtful effects remain salient in the offender's mind, elements often downplayed or overlooked by offenders in a transgression's aftermath (Baumeister et al., 1990; Leary et al., 1998; Stillwell & Baumeister, 1997; Zechmeister & Romero, 2002). Consequently, the unforgiving stance may induce or amplify offender guilt, which in turn may promote relationship-enhancing, and prevent relationship-damaging, future behaviour from the offender (Baumeister, 1998; Baumeister et al., 1994, 1995). By instilling such penalties for the transgression, the victim's withholding of forgiveness may therefore maximise the probability that the offender will learn from their punishment and behave pro-socially towards the victim in the future.

In addition to punishing the offender, the victim's refusal to forgive functions as a communication device, informing both the offender and other individuals of the expected consequences of transgressing against the victim, and letting them know that such behaviour will not be willingly tolerated (French, 2001; Gordon & Baucom, 1998; Rapske et al., 2010; Wallace et al., 2008). In making an example of the offender, the unforgiving response sends the message that individuals cannot expect to transgress against the victim without some form of penalty or retaliation for their actions. In this way, the victim increases the potential costs associated with offending against them, and thus minimises the risk of future transgressions.

4.2.2.2 Protection from self-concept damage

Withholding forgiveness may also help to protect against self-concept damage. As discussed previously, individuals strive to establish and maintain favourable self-concepts, and are motivated to create public images that reflect their ideal selves (Baumeister, 1982b, 1998; Baumeister & Cairns, 1992; Leary & Kowalski, 1990). Thus, in the face of interpersonal transgressions, which threaten or damage one's private or public self, some victims may defensively withhold a forgiving response to countermand the ego threat.

Research by Cohen, Nisbett, and colleagues (Cohen & Nisbett, 1994, 1997; Cohen et al., 1996; Nisbett & Cohen, 1996) on the Southern US culture of honour illustrates this rationale. The researchers found that Southern US males tend to display greater aggression following perceived insults than their Northern counterparts, doing so due to their "culture of honour". For these individuals, disputes are considered contests for social status, requiring retribution to protect the individual's reputation for strength and "toughness", and thus maintain the respect of their peers (Cohen & Nisbett, 1994).

Defence of one's honour is therefore an important part of defence of their self: backing down from an insult indicates that the individual is weak and an easy target for future exploitation, so standing up for oneself becomes a matter of honour. Retribution warns the offender and community that the individual will not be pushed around or affronted without retaliation, and is thus not one to be trifled with. Accordingly, retribution serves a self-protection function, helping the individual defend or re-establish their reputation and social status, and preventing face loss (Nisbett, 1993).

Similarly, in the aftermath of a transgression some victims may feel that failing to respond to the inherent insult may threaten their face needs and increase future exploitation, and thus withhold forgiveness to nullify the ego threat. Forgiveness, particularly if unwarranted, may be perceived by the offender or third parties as “backing down” from the conflict, a sign of weakness that could be exploited for future gain (Exline & Baumeister, 2000). This concern may be particularly pertinent when the offender is unrepentant, due to the lack of esteem-lowering behaviours that may minimise the ego threat and the failure to indicate an intention to refrain from recidivism (Baumeister et al., 1998; Exline & Baumeister, 2000; Lamb & Murphy, 2002; Wallace et al., 2008). As such, forgiving unrepentant individuals may increase the victim’s potential face loss.

Third party perceptions that the forgiving victim had ignored, or let the offender get away with, the transgression may also lead to lowered opinions of the victim and additional face loss, directly combating self-presentation motivations (Baumeister, 1982a). Individuals often experience great distress when presented with the information that others perceive them negatively, and are strongly motivated to respond in ways that will alter these negative perceptions, even when personally detrimental (Baumeister, 1997; B. R. Brown, 1968; Leary, 2005). Thus, if a victim fears that their status and reputation may be jeopardised if they do not respond defensively to their offender, they may be motivated to withhold forgiveness to prevent negative evaluations.

Finally, some victims may feel that forgiving an ego threat is tantamount to accepting it, and with it the downward revision of one’s self-appraisals. Baumeister (1997, 1998) argues that when faced with an ego threat, the victim has to choose between accepting the bad evaluation inherent in the disrespectful treatment,

consequently lowering their self-appraisals and subjecting them to the accompanying anxiety and depression, or maintaining their self-esteem by discrediting the threat in some way. With most people reluctant to revise their self-appraisals downwards (Baumeister, Twenge, Millon, & Lerner, 2003), some victims may refuse to accept the negative identity implications of forgiving their offender by withholding forgiveness.

Refusing to forgive may nullify the ego threat in two ways. First, it may enable the victim to convey an image of pride and strength, communicating that they will not be pushed around nor make an easy target for future exploitation (Cohen et al., 1996; Nisbett, 1993). This stance may help to prevent evaluations of weakness or foolishness that might otherwise accompany forgiveness, whilst minimising any negative evaluations resulting from the transgression itself.

Second, while refusing to forgive, the victim may be able to elicit concessions or esteem-lowering behaviours from their offender, thereby restoring lost status and rebalancing the power in the relationship. Researchers (e.g., Exline et al., 2003; Murphy, 2002; Strelan et al., 2008; Vidmar, 2002; Wenzel & Okimoto, 2010) argue that transgressions lower a victim's status and position relative to that of the offender; by breaking the rules of the relationship, the offender has degraded the victim and appropriated power and status over them, leaving an inequitable state in which the offender is over-benefitted by the transgression at the victim's expense. If offenders receive premature expressions of forgiveness in the absence of status-levelling behaviours, this inequity may be magnified (Murphy, 2002). Thus, victims may withhold forgiveness to prompt status-levelling behaviours from their offenders, such as apologies and restitution, or to submit them to some form of punishment for their behaviour. In doing so, the victim is able to reduce ego

damage by humbling the offender, whilst rebalancing relationship power and status (Exline et al., 2003; Gordon & Baucom, 1998; Wenzel & Thielmann, 2006).

4.3 Operationalising *Can't Forgive* and *Won't Forgive* within the BTF

To determine whether this nomological network of two superordinate factors effectively explains BTF interrelationships, CFA will be performed on each of the BTF models produced in the three data sets from the previous studies, investigating the comparative fit of single- versus dual-factor hierarchical models.

With the complexity of interpersonal transgressions and victim-offender relationships, it is unlikely that the *Can't Forgive* and *Won't Forgive* second-order barriers will be mutually-exclusive; indeed, factor correlations across the previous studies suggest that simultaneous barrier endorsement is highly likely.

Nonetheless, as results have highlighted differential relationships between each grouping's barriers, as well as their relationships with state and trait validity variables, clear distinction between *Can't Forgive* and *Won't Forgive* is expected.

4.4 Offender Response: A barrier, or predictor, of the BTF?

Despite *Offender Response's* strong endorsement across the past studies, the barrier's unique nature and its applicability to many of the other BTF barriers raises questions regarding its appropriateness as an individual BTF barrier. The theoretical bases underlying *Can't Forgive* and *Won't Forgive* suggest that poor reparative efforts may predict *both* superordinate barriers, increasing endorsement

of *Can't Forgive* by reinforcing internal causal attributions, and increasing endorsement of *Won't Forgive* by increasing the identity threat to the victim and reinforcing recidivism fears (Gold & Weiner, 2000; Gonzales et al., 1994; Luchies et al., 2010; Weiner et al., 1991). The current analysis will therefore investigate *Offender Response's* location within the BTF, to determine whether the construct can be effectively operationalised within either of the *Can't Forgive-Won't Forgive* superordinate barriers, or whether it may be better conceptualised as an important predictor of BTF barrier endorsement.

4.5 Predicting endorsement of *Can't Forgive* and *Won't Forgive*

The current chapter will also investigate which state and trait variables best predict endorsement of *Can't Forgive* and *Won't Forgive*. Across the past studies, results have indicated that some variables, such as trait vengefulness and narcissistic entitlement, low perspective-taking, or judgements of transgression wrongfulness, share sizeable relationships with many BTF barriers across the two groupings. As such, these variables will likely predict endorsement of both *Can't Forgive* and *Won't Forgive*.

Nonetheless, past results and the theoretical arguments outlined above indicate that certain victim and transgression characteristics may have stronger predictive effects on one higher-order barrier over the other. Specifically, because victims who endorse *Can't Forgive* may be unable to forgive due to the strength and severity of the transgression's norm violation and the offender's causal role in bringing about the transgression, situational characteristics that increase perceptions of harm magnitude and offender blameworthiness should better predict

endorsement of *Can't Forgive* than *Won't Forgive*: transgression severity, moral wrongfulness, empathic perspective-taking, and attributions of intentionality and foreseeability.

Results from Study 2 also suggest that endorsement of *Can't Forgive* may be related to benevolence values. Benevolence values focus on an individual's concern for close others in their daily interactions; the preservation and enhancement of their welfare (Schwartz, 1992). Individuals for whom this value type is important hold loyalty and honesty in high regard, and thus such victims who have not forgiven may feel that they cannot forgive their offender due to their hurtful, immoral actions that dissolved the trust in the relationship. Accordingly, benevolence values should better predict endorsement of *Can't Forgive* than *Won't Forgive*.

Alternatively, the three proposed *Won't Forgive* barriers share stronger relationships with socially-dominant personality traits than measures of transgression characteristics, and thus these victims may be vengeful, entitled individuals with expectations of preferential treatment and a preoccupation with social status and prestige. Accordingly, victims who endorse *Won't Forgive* may be affronted that the offender transgressed against them at all, so withhold forgiveness to defend their rights, communicate behavioural expectations, and prevent negative evaluations from others (cf. Baumeister et al., 2003; Exline et al., 2004; Nisbett, 1993). Vengeful, power-oriented victim characteristics that may increase identity concerns and punishment desires—trait vengeance, narcissistic entitlement, power motivational values, and fear of negative evaluations—should therefore better predict endorsement of *Won't Forgive* than *Can't Forgive*.

Moreover, as victims who endorse *Won't Forgive* should be influenced by expectations of future misconduct and the identity ramifications of forgiving in these situations (Exline & Baumeister, 2000), attributions of behavioural stability should also predict greater endorsement of *Won't Forgive* than *Can't Forgive*.

4.6 The effects of *Can't Forgive* and *Won't Forgive* on victim forgiveness

Finally, with this thesis aiming to produce a self-report instrument that may assist in moving victims towards forgiveness, it is important to investigate the impact of endorsement of *Can't Forgive* and *Won't Forgive* on unforgiving motivations towards the offender. In examining the differential impact of barrier endorsement on unforgiving victim reactions, such an analysis may shed light on which of the two superordinate barriers may constitute a greater overall hindrance to interpersonal forgiveness.

As discussed previously, victim motivations of revenge, avoidance, and benevolence towards the offender are key components of state forgiveness (McCullough, Fincham, et al., 2003; McCullough et al., 1998), and correlations across the past studies accordingly indicate that the majority of barriers share substantial relationships with the three forgiveness measures. As such, it is expected that both *Can't Forgive* and *Won't Forgive* will significantly predict endorsement of revenge, avoidance, and benevolence motivations, as well as perceptions of having forgiven the offender.

Nonetheless, correlations from Studies 1 and 2 and the theoretical arguments outlined above suggest that the two superordinate barriers may

differentially predict each unforgiving variable. Specifically, as a retributive, power- and identity-based barrier, *Won't Forgive* is expected to better predict vengeful motivations towards the offender than *Can't Forgive*. Alternatively, as a barrier governed by the transgression's magnitude of harm and offender blameworthiness, *Can't Forgive* is expected to have a stronger predictive effect on avoidant and benevolent motivations towards the offender and perceptions of having forgiven.

4.7 Summary of hypotheses

Investigating the existence of a dual-factor hierarchical BTF structure

CFA will be used to assess the appropriateness of the proposed dual-factor hierarchical model across the three samples. It is hypothesised that:

- i. A dual-factor hierarchical model will explain the relationships between the barriers within each of the three samples more effectively than a single-factor hierarchical model.
- ii. The dual-factor model will comprise a *Can't Forgive* second-order factor effectively operationalised by *Trust Dissolution*, *Enduring Effects*, and *Morality Judgements*; and a *Won't Forgive* second-order factor effectively operationalised by *Recidivism Prevention*, *Impression Management*, and *Vengeful Desires*.

Predicting endorsement of *Can't Forgive* and *Won't Forgive*

Correlation and regression analyses will be used to identify the variables that best predict endorsement of *Can't Forgive* and *Won't Forgive* across the samples. It is hypothesised that:

- i. Transgression characteristics that increase perceptions of harm magnitude and offender blameworthiness will better predict endorsement of *Can't Forgive* than endorsement of *Won't Forgive*: transgression severity, moral wrongfulness, attributions of behavioural intentionality and foreseeability, and low perspective-taking. In addition, *Can't Forgive* will be significantly predicted by benevolence values.
- ii. Victim characteristics that increase punishment desires and identity concerns will better predict endorsement of *Won't Forgive* than *Can't Forgive*: trait vengefulness, narcissistic entitlement, fear of negative evaluations, and power values. In addition, *Won't Forgive* will be significantly predicted by attributions of behavioural stability.

Predicting unforgiving motivations towards the offender and perceptions of forgiveness

Correlation and regression analyses will be used to identify which of the two second-order barriers best predict each unforgiving motivation towards the offender and victim perceptions of having forgiven. It is hypothesised that:

- i. Both *Can't Forgive* and *Won't Forgive* will significantly predict all four unforgiving reactions.

- ii. *Won't Forgive* will better predict increased revenge motivations towards the offender.
- iii. *Can't Forgive* will better predict increased avoidant motivations towards the offender, decreased benevolent motivations, and decreased perceptions of having forgiven the offender.

4.8 Research questions

In addition to the above hypotheses, the current analysis will address the following research question.

Research question: Offender Response—A predictor or barrier within the BTF?

Past research and theoretical arguments suggest that *Offender Response* may be better conceptualised as a predictor of *Can't Forgive* and *Won't Forgive* than an individual barrier within the BTF. Consequently, the current analysis will explore *Offender Response's* position within the BTF and reparative work's ability to predict endorsement of the two second-order barriers, to determine whether the construct is best represented as a BTF barrier or important predictor.

4.9 Method

4.9.1 Participants

The current analysis utilised each of the three samples collected in the previous studies: Study 1 ($N = 235$), Study 2's Obligated sample ($N = 211$), and Study 2's Non-obligated sample ($N = 192$).

4.9.2 Materials

The current analysis utilised the following variables measured in both Studies 1 and 2: the TRIM (McCullough, Fincham, et al., 2003; McCullough et al., 1998), Exline et al.'s (2008) Empathic Understanding scale, the Vengeance Scale (Stuckless & Goranson, 1992), and the single-item measure of intentionality.

From Study 1 alone: the Narcissistic Entitlement subscale of the NPI (Raskin & Terry, 1988) with the alternate five-point Likert-type scale of measurement, the two-item forgiveness index, the three-item reparative work index, and a single-item measure of comparative transgression hurtfulness.

Finally, from Study 2 alone: Leary's (1983) Brief-FNE scale; the SVS power and benevolence value types (Schwartz, 1992); the NPI Narcissistic Entitlement subscale with the original forced-choice dyadic scale of measurement; the two-item forgiveness index; the three-item transgression severity index; the eight-item reparative work index; and single-item measures of moral wrongfulness, attributions of behavioural stability, and foreseeability attributions. Psychometric properties for the Study 1 and Study 2 measures are provided in sections 2.4.3.2 and 3.7.3.2, respectively.

4.10 Results

Results are presented in four sections. The first section focuses on testing a hierarchical CFA model with two second-order factors against the three samples, to determine whether the model effectively represents BTF interrelationships and investigate *Offender Response's* inclusion within the BTF. The second section

presents the psychometric properties of the second-order barriers across the samples, and in doing so investigates mean differences in endorsement of *Can't Forgive* and *Won't Forgive*. The third section examines the prediction by key state and trait variables of *Can't Forgive* and *Won't Forgive*, identifying the variables most important to each superordinate barrier. Finally, the fourth section examines *Can't Forgive* and *Won't Forgive*'s ability to predict unforgiving motivations towards the offender and victim perceptions of having forgiven.

4.10.1 Statistical analyses

4.10.1.1 Testing the Can't Forgive-Won't Forgive hierarchical factor structure

CFA based on polychoric correlations was used for hierarchical model testing, performed in Mplus v6.12 (L. K. Muthén & Muthén, 1998-2010). Scale items were treated as categorical variables, using the WLSMV estimator.

4.10.1.2 Descriptive statistics, barrier salience, predicting barrier endorsement and victim forgiveness

Weighted factor scores for the second-order factors were derived in Mplus using CFA, and were used for correlation and regression analyses. Unweighted factor scores for the second-order factors³³ were calculated in IBM SPSS (Version

³³ Information on weighted and unweighted factor scores for validity measures is presented in the variables' respective chapter sections: section 2.4.3.2 for Study 1 variables, and section 3.7.3.2 for Study 2 variables.

20) and were used for descriptive purposes, internal consistency reliability, and barrier salience across samples. Differences in endorsement of *Can't Forgive* and *Won't Forgive* were investigated with paired-samples *t*-tests, while relationships between the two barriers and validity variables were investigated with Pearson correlations (both of which were performed in SPSS). Linear multiple regressions were used to predict endorsement of *Can't Forgive* and *Won't Forgive*, and offender-focused motivations and perceptions of having forgiven. These were performed in Mplus.

4.10.2 Investigating the existence of a dual-factor *Can't Forgive-Won't Forgive* hierarchical model

CFA was performed on the three samples to determine whether the proposed dual-factor hierarchical model would better represent barrier relationships than a single-factor model. To improve model interpretability, latent variables were standardised by setting their scale to one and items were prevented from cross-loading onto the alternate second-order factor.³⁴

Results are presented in Table 4.1. Within these initial models, *Offender Response* was specified to load on the *Can't Forgive* factor and was then alternated onto the *Won't Forgive* factor for model comparison (see section 4.10.3 for discussion of these results).

³⁴ Although the prevention of item cross-loadings may worsen model fit, the goal of the current analysis was to produce a conceptually-related though methodologically-distinct hierarchical BTF measure. It was therefore prudent to restrict items from measuring more than one hierarchical barrier.

Table 4.1*Comparison of Single- and Dual-Factor Hierarchical CFA Models across Samples*

Single-factor Hierarchical Model				Dual-factor Hierarchical Model			
Sample	Barrier	Loading	SE	Sample	Barrier	Loading	SE
Study 1	Recidivism Prevention	0.945	0.021	<i>r</i> = .63, <i>p</i> < .001	Recidivism Prevention	0.958	0.023
	Impression Management	0.826	0.029		Impression Management	0.851	0.029
	Vengeful Desires	0.804	0.027		Vengeful Desires	0.825	0.027
	Morality Judgements	0.633	0.047		Morality Judgements	0.864	0.066
	Trust Dissolution	0.473	0.065		Trust Dissolution	0.634	0.068
	Enduring Effects	0.499	0.060		Enduring Effects	0.622	0.066
	Offender Response	0.300	0.063		Offender Response	0.367	0.069
Study 2 Obligated	Recidivism Prevention	0.896	0.025	<i>r</i> = .57, <i>p</i> < .001	Recidivism Prevention	0.986	0.026
	Impression Management	0.808	0.028		Impression Management	0.887	0.024
	Morality Judgements	0.797	0.038		Vengeful Desires	0.763	0.035
	Vengeful Desires	0.690	0.039		Morality Judgements	0.954	0.045
	Trust Dissolution	0.682	0.038		Trust Dissolution	0.793	0.034
	Enduring Effects	0.604	0.046		Enduring Effects	0.703	0.043
	Offender Response	0.407	0.060		Offender Response	0.475	0.061

Single-factor Hierarchical Model				Dual-factor Hierarchical Model			
Sample	Barrier	Loading	SE	Sample	Barrier	Loading	SE
Study 2 Non-obligated	Impression Management/ Recidivism Prevention	0.918	0.028	Study 2 Non-obligated $r = .61,$ $p < .001$	Impression Management/ Recidivism Prevention	1.070	0.039
	Trust Dissolution/ Morality Judgements	0.802	0.032		Vengeful Desires	0.669	0.040
	Vengeful Desires	0.623	0.047		Trust Dissolution/ Morality Judgements	0.959	0.042
	Enduring Effects	0.560	0.056		Enduring Effects	0.587	0.056
	Offender Response	0.447	0.059		Offender Response	0.486	0.060

Note. Loading = standardised factor loading. SE = standard error of standardised factor loading.

4.10.2.1 Study 1

As evident in Table 4.1, the dual-factor hierarchical model effectively explained the relationships between the Study 1 barriers, $\chi^2 (771) = 1655.5$, $p < .001$, CFI = .90, TLI = .90, RMSEA = .070, CI⁹⁰ = (.065, .075), with high loadings on both second-order factors in line with a priori expectations and a strong positive correlation between the two factors. In comparison, the single-factor solution presented a worse fit of the data, $\chi^2 (772) = 1887.5$, $p < .001$, CFI = .88, TLI = .87, RMSEA = .078, CI⁹⁰ = (.074, .083), and weaker factor loadings for *Offender Response* and the three *Can't Forgive* barriers.

4.10.2.2 Study 2: Obligated sample

As with Study 1, the dual-factor hierarchical model effectively explained the relationships between the Study 2 Obligated sample's barriers, with excellent fit statistics and strong factor loadings in accordance with expectations, $\chi^2 (1119) = 1901.1$, $p < .001$, CFI = .92, TLI = .92, RMSEA = .058, CI⁹⁰ = (.053, .062). The two second-order factors shared a strong positive correlation. In comparison, the single-factor hierarchical model presented a substantially worse fit of the data, $\chi^2 (1120) = 2526.7$, $p < .001$, CFI = .86, TLI = .86, RMSEA = .078, CI⁹⁰ = (.074, .083), and barrier factor loadings were weaker than their dual-factor counterparts.

4.10.2.3 Study 2: Non-obligated sample

Unlike the aforementioned data sets, the dual-factor hierarchical model poorly explained the relationships between the five barriers that emerged in the

Non-obligated sample, resulting in an inadmissible solution with negative residual variance on the *Impression Management/Recidivism Prevention* factor. The single-factor hierarchical model better represented barrier relationships, $\chi^2 (1122) = 2440.1$, $p < .001$, CFI = .87, TLI = .86, RMSEA = .078, CI⁹⁰ = (.074, .082), revealing a second-order factor operationalised by both *Impression Management/Recidivism Prevention* and *Trust Dissolution/Morality Judgements*.

Results therefore indicate that the *Can't Forgive-Won't Forgive* superordinate factor structure effectively represented barrier relationships within the Study 1 and Study 2 Obligated samples, but failed to explain barrier relationships within the Study 2 Non-obligated sample. Because all further analyses in the current chapter are at the dual-factor level, only the Study 1 and Study 2 Obligated samples will be utilised hereupon. The failure of the dual-factor hierarchical structure within the Non-obligated sample will be addressed in section 4.11.1.1.

4.10.3 Offender Response within the BTF

As evident in Table 4.1, *Offender Response's* factor loadings were markedly lower than all other barriers within both the single- and dual-factor hierarchical models, indicating that the barrier was poorly operationalised within both structures. A second set of CFAs were performed to identify whether specifying *Offender Response* to load onto the alternate *Won't Forgive* factor would improve barrier operationalisation and model fit. Results indicated that loading the barrier onto *Won't Forgive* reduced model fit, both within Study 1, $\chi^2 (771) = 1702.7$, $p < .001$, CFI = .90, TLI = .89, RMSEA = .072, CI⁹⁰ = (.067, .076), and the Study 2 Obligated

model, $\chi^2(1119) = 2167.3$, $p < .001$, CFI = .90, TLI = .89, RMSEA = .067, CI⁹⁰ = (.062, .071), and decreased *Offender Response*'s factor loadings from .367 to .295 in Study 1 and .475 to .397 in the Obligated sample. Thus, in accordance with expectations, *Offender Response* appears to poorly represent both the *Can't Forgive* and *Won't Forgive* latent variables.

4.10.3.1 Removal of Offender Response at the item and barrier level

Further CFAs were performed to identify whether removing *Offender Response* from the BTF would improve the Study 1 and Study 2 Obligated sample's model fit.³⁵ Before removing the barrier from the hierarchical structures, however, it was necessary to determine whether *Offender Response* removal would impact BTF structure at the item level. Thus, *Offender Response* items were removed from the two data sets and EFAs were performed to examine changes to the base BTF structures. Results revealed *Offender Response* removal to improve barrier distinction in Study 1's BTF model, with excellent model fit, $\chi^2(372) = 540.3$, $p <$

³⁵Similar analyses were conducted on the Study 2 Non-obligated sample to determine whether *Offender Response* removal would improve the factor structure. Results indicated that barrier removal improved the Non-obligated BTF model, resulting in a five-factor model with good model fit, $\chi^2(661) = 972.8$, $p < .001$, CFI = .97, TLI = .95, RMSEA = .050, CI⁹⁰ = (.043, .056), fewer significant cross-loadings, and an interpretable factor structure featuring only one composite barrier (the formerly-combined *Morality Judgements* and *Trust Dissolution* barriers were individually represented within the model). Despite this improved factor structure, the dual-factor model again failed to converge when applied to this revised model, with negative residual variance persisting on the *Impression Management/Recidivism Prevention* factor.

.001, CFI = .98, TLI = .97, RMSEA = .044, CI⁹⁰ = (.036, .052), identical primary item loadings, and fewer significant cross-loadings.

Although *Offender Response* removal did not similarly improve barrier distinction within the Study 2 Obligated model, the impact of barrier removal was minimal, with a near-identical factor structure that fit the data very well, $\chi^2(624) = 877.7$, $p < .001$, CFI = .97, TLI = .96, RMSEA = .044, CI⁹⁰ = (.037, .041). Only one change in primary item loadings was observed, with Item 36 (“It might be seen by them and/or others as backing down from the conflict”) switching primary loadings from *Impression Management* to *Vengeful Desires*. As this item had effectively operationalised *Impression Management* in both Study 1 and the Study 2 Baseline model, it was retained as an *Impression Management* indicator.

Results indicated that subsequently removing *Offender Response* from the Study 1 dual-factor hierarchical model improved parsimony and fit, $\chi^2(520) = 1205.4$, $p < .001$, CFI = .92, TLI = .91, RMSEA = .075, CI⁹⁰ = (.069, .080), while maintaining the strong positive correlation between the two second-order factors ($r = .59$, $p < .001$). Similarly, barrier removal improved the Study 2 Obligated sample’s model fit, $\chi^2(812) = 1435.6$, $p < .001$, CFI = .93, TLI = .93, RMSEA = .060, CI⁹⁰ = (.055, .065), while retaining the strong positive correlation between the two factors ($r = .58$, $p < .001$). Consequently, these two *Offender Response*-free dual-factor models were retained as the models of choice for all subsequent analyses.

4.10.4 The *Can’t Forgive* and *Won’t Forgive* superordinate barriers

Table 4.2 presents the descriptive statistics and internal consistency reliabilities for *Can’t Forgive* and *Won’t Forgive* within the Study 1 and Study 2

Obligated samples. Internal consistency reliabilities were similarly for *Won't Forgive* ($\alpha = .94$), but differed somewhat for *Can't Forgive* (Study 1 $\alpha = .86$; Study 2 Obligated $\alpha = .94$) due to the lower number of scale items operationalising *Can't Forgive* in Study 1 (see section 2.5.4).

Table 4.2

Number of Items, Means, Standard Deviations, and Internal Reliabilities for Can't Forgive and Won't Forgive across the Two Samples

Sample	Higher-order Barrier	N of Items	M	SD	α
Study 1	Can't Forgive	14	3.60	0.76	0.86
	Won't Forgive	20	2.72	0.90	0.94
Study 2 Obligated	Can't Forgive	21	3.49	0.81	0.92
	Won't Forgive	21	2.74	0.90	0.94

As evident in Table 4.2, *Can't Forgive* had a substantially higher mean than *Won't Forgive* across the two samples, reflecting barrier-level differences observed in the previous studies. Paired-samples *t*-tests revealed these mean differences to be significant, with *Can't Forgive* significantly more endorsed than *Won't Forgive* in both Study 1, $t(234) = 15.73, p < .001$, and the Study 2 Obligated sample, $t(210) = 12.00, p < .001$.

4.10.5 Predicting endorsement of *Can't Forgive* and *Won't Forgive*

Pearson correlations and multiple regression were performed to determine the predictive effects of victim and transgression characteristics on endorsement of *Can't Forgive* and *Won't Forgive*. Results are presented in Table 4.3.

Table 4.3

Pearson Correlations and Standardised Multiple Regression Predicting Endorsement of Study 1 and Obligated Can't Forgive and Won't Forgive from Validity Variables

Predictor	Can't Forgive			Won't Forgive		
	<i>r</i>	β	SE β	<i>r</i>	β	SE β
Study 1						
Comparatively Hurtful	.24***	.21**	.06	-.03	-.04	.06
Intentionality	.12 ^b	.06	.06	.09	.10 ^c	.06
Perspective-taking	-.33***	-.32***	.06	-.15*	-.17**	.06
Reparative Work	.08	.11 ^b	.06	.15*	.15**	.06
Narcissistic Entitlement	.21**	.12*	.06	.30***	.14*	.06
Vengefulness	.24***	.21***	.06	.44***	.39***	.06
Intercepts		-1.32***	.36		-.22	.36
<i>R</i> ²		.25***	.05		.27***	.05
<i>df</i>		15				
Study 2 Obligated						
Perspective-taking	-.42***	-.17***	.05	-.21**	-.09	.07
Severity	.53***	.39***	.05	.17*	.11 ^d	.07
Wrongfulness	.45***	.18**	.05	.27***	.19**	.07
Foreseeability	.19**	.03	.05	.14*	.06	.06
Intentionality	.30***	.10*	.05	.10	-.006	.06
Reparative work	-.14*	-.01	.05	.02	.06	.07
Benevolence Values	.19**	.10 ^a	.05	.003	.02	.06
Narcissistic Entitlement	.10	-.01	.05	.13 ^b	-.06	.07
Vengefulness	.32***	.34***	.06	.43***	.39***	.07
Power Values	.18**	.08	.06	.26***	.09	.07
Fear of Negative Evaluations	.01	-.03	.05	.17*	.10	.06
Behavioural Stability	.16*	.08	.05	.18**	.13*	.06
Intercepts		-1.35**	.42		-1.02	.53
<i>R</i> ²		.56***	.05		.32***	.05
<i>df</i>		25				

Note. *r* = Pearson correlation. β = standardised regression coefficient. SE β = standard error of standardised regression coefficient.

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$. ^a $p = .05$. ^b $p = .06$. ^c $p = .07$. ^d $p = .10$.

Of the two data sets, the Obligated sample's predictors accounted for substantially more variance in endorsement of *Can't Forgive* than the Study 1 predictors, accounting for 56% of variance as opposed to Study 1's 25%. In contrast, the studies' predictor variables were of similar importance to endorsement of *Won't Forgive*, accounting for 27% of the variance in Study 1 and 32% of the variance in the Study 2 Obligated sample.

4.10.5.1 Predicting endorsement of *Can't Forgive*

Correlations largely supported hypotheses on the variables most important to endorsement of *Can't Forgive*, with transgression severity, moral wrongfulness, low perspective-taking, benevolence values, and, to a lesser extent, intentionality attributions sharing substantially stronger relationships with *Can't Forgive* than *Won't Forgive*. When entered together in regression analyses, severity and perspective-taking emerged as the strongest predictors of *Can't Forgive* across the studies, having a much stronger predictive effect on the barrier than on endorsement of *Won't Forgive*.

Attributions of intentionality and benevolence values had small predictive effects on endorsement of *Can't Forgive*, while foreseeability attributions had no significant influence on the barrier. Moreover, despite sharing a stronger relationship with *Can't Forgive* than *Won't Forgive*, transgression wrongfulness emerged as a less important predictor of *Can't Forgive* than *Won't Forgive* in the Obligated regression model. Finally, trait vengefulness and, to a much lesser extent, narcissistic entitlement predicted increased endorsement of *Can't Forgive*, with both variables sharing small relationships with the barrier in Study 1 and

vengefulness sharing a weak-to-moderate relationship with *Can't Forgive* in the Obligated sample.

4.10.5.2 Predicting endorsement of *Won't Forgive*

Correlations also supported hypotheses on the variables most important to endorsement of *Won't Forgive*, with narcissistic entitlement, trait vengefulness, power values, fear of negative evaluations, and stability attributions sharing stronger relationships with *Won't Forgive* than *Can't Forgive*. In regression analyses, vengefulness was by far the strongest predictor of *Won't Forgive*, having a much larger effect on *Won't Forgive* than *Can't Forgive* in Study 1, and a slightly larger effect in the Obligated sample. To a lesser extent, narcissistic entitlement and stability attributions significantly predicted greater endorsement of *Won't Forgive* than *Can't Forgive*

Neither power values nor fear of negative evaluations predicted increased endorsement of *Won't Forgive*; however, perspective-taking and wrongfulness judgements were important to the barrier's endorsement. In addition, transgression severity and intentionality attributions had small effects on endorsement of *Won't Forgive* that approached significance, although intentionality failed to correlate significantly with the barrier across the two studies and had no significant predictive effect in the Obligated sample.

4.10.5.3 Predicting endorsement of *Can't Forgive* and *Won't Forgive* from offender reparative work

The current analysis also investigated the relationship between the two barriers and offender reparative work, to determine the importance of the variable to barrier endorsement. Offender reparative work shared a weak positive correlation with Study 1's *Won't Forgive* and significantly predicted increased endorsement of the barrier. Although the variable failed to correlate with Study 1's *Can't Forgive*, it had a small predictive effect on the barrier that approached significance. The more comprehensive reparative work measure did not impact barrier endorsement in the Study 2 Obligated sample, however, sharing a weak negative correlation with *Can't Forgive* and no significant relationship with *Won't Forgive*, and having no significant predictive effect on either barrier.

4.10.6 Predicting victim forgiveness from endorsement of *Can't Forgive* and *Won't Forgive*

Finally, Pearson correlations and multiple regression were performed to investigate the prediction of vengeful, avoidant, and benevolent motivations, and perceptions of having forgiven from endorsement of *Can't Forgive* and *Won't Forgive*. Due to the strong positive correlation between the two barriers and the amount of variance shared (as evident in Table 4.1), simultaneously measuring the barriers in regressions may provide an inaccurate reflection of the relationships between each barrier and the outcome variables. R^2 values were therefore

calculated from correlation coefficients to reveal the amount of variability in the outcome variables explained by each barrier.³⁶ Results are provided in Table 4.4.

Table 4.4

Pearson Correlations and R² values for Can't Forgive and Won't Forgive and Unforgiving Outcome Variables

Sample	Barrier		Won't Forgive	Revenge	Avoidance	Benevolence	Forgiveness Perceptions
Study 1	Can't Forgive	<i>r</i>	.59***	.33***	.44***	-.39***	-.43***
		<i>R</i> ²	.35	.11	.20	.16	.19
	Won't Forgive	<i>r</i>		.56***	.26***	-.13*	-.15*
		<i>R</i> ²		.32	.07	.02	.02
Study 2 Obligated	Can't Forgive	<i>r</i>	.58***	.38***	.43***	-.40***	-.47***
		<i>R</i> ²	.34	.14	.19	.16	.22
	Won't Forgive	<i>r</i>		.50***	.31***	-.23**	-.16*
		<i>R</i> ²		.25	.10	.05	.02

Note. *r* = Pearson correlation. *R*² values derived by squaring correlation coefficients.
* *p* < .05. ** *p* < .01. *** *p* < .001.

In line with theorising, both *Can't Forgive* and *Won't Forgive* shared significant relationships with all outcome variables across the samples in the predicted direction, increasing vengeful and avoidant motivations towards the offender, and decreasing benevolent motivations and perceptions of having forgiven the offender. At an individual level results supported hypotheses, with *Won't Forgive* sharing a much stronger positive correlation and accounting for substantially more variance in revenge across the samples than *Can't Forgive*.

³⁶ As *R*² values were calculated in this way, the statistical significance of the values is not provided.

Conversely, *Can't Forgive* shared stronger correlations and accounted for greater variance in avoidance, benevolence, and perceptions of having forgiven than *Won't Forgive*.

Multiple regression was then performed to identify which of the two barriers would emerge as the stronger predictor of the outcome variables when entered together. Results from the standardised regression models are presented in Table 4.5.

Table 4.5
Standardised Multiple Regressions Predicting Unforgiving Reactions from Endorsement of Study 1 and Obligated Can't Forgive and Won't Forgive

Predictor	Revenge		Avoidance		Benevolence		Forgiveness Perceptions	
	β	SE β	β	SE β	β	SE β	β	SE β
Study 1								
Can't Forgive	-.11	.07	.50***	.07	-.57***	.07	-.61***	.07
Won't Forgive	.64***	.07	-.09	.08	.25**	.08	.27**	.08
Intercepts	.06	.05	-.02	.06	.03	.06	5.26	.13
<i>R</i> ²	.32***	.05	.20***	.05	.19***	.05	.23***	.05
<i>df</i>	9							
Study 2 Obligated								
Can't Forgive	.07	.08	.41***	.08	-.46***	.08	-.67***	.07
Won't Forgive	.46***	.08	.004	.08	.09	.09	.29***	.08
Intercepts	.07	.06	-.003	.06	-.01	.06	2.16	.12
<i>R</i> ²	.26***	.05	.19***	.05	.17***	.05	.27***	.05
<i>df</i>	14							

Note. β = standardised regression coefficient. SE β = standard error of standardised regression coefficient.

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

As evident in Table 4.5, the barriers accounted for similar amounts of variance in each outcome variable across the two samples, accounting for approximately 30% of the variance in revenge, 20% of the variance in avoidance and benevolence, and 25% of the variance in perceptions of having forgiven the offender.

In general, results supported hypotheses on the barrier most important to each outcome variable. As predicted, when measured together *Won't Forgive* emerged as the most important predictor of revenge motivations towards the offender, while *Can't Forgive* had no individual impact. Also in line with expectations, *Can't Forgive* emerged as the most important predictor of avoidance across the samples, while *Won't Forgive* had no individual effect. Finally, results supported hypotheses on the importance of *Can't Forgive* to benevolence motivations and perceptions of having forgiven the offender, with the barrier having a stronger predictive effect on the two variables than *Won't Forgive*.

The simultaneous measurement of *Can't Forgive* and *Won't Forgive* influenced the directional relationships between *Won't Forgive* and both benevolence motivations and perceptions of having forgiven, however. *Won't Forgive* shared weak negative correlations with both variables across the two samples, but when measured with *Can't Forgive* in regression analyses the direction of these relationships changed, with *Won't Forgive* predicting *increased* benevolence motivations in the Study 2 Obligated sample, and greater perceptions of forgiveness within both samples. Nonetheless, at the zero-order level results supported hypotheses on the impact of *Can't Forgive* and *Won't Forgive* on unforgiving motivations and perceptions of forgiveness towards the offender.

4.11 Discussion

4.11.1 Investigating the existence of a dual *Can't Forgive-Won't Forgive* hierarchical BTF structure

The primary aim of the current chapter was to investigate the presence of superordinate factors within the BTF, assessing the appropriateness of a dual *Can't Forgive-Won't Forgive* hierarchical structure in explaining BTF interrelationships. The dual model was predicted to comprise a superordinate *Can't Forgive* factor operationalising *Trust Dissolution, Enduring Effects, and Morality Judgements*; and a *Won't Forgive* factor operationalising *Recidivism Prevention, Impression Management, and Vengeful Desires*.

This hypothesis was largely supported. CFA revealed the dual-factor model to effectively represent barrier relationships in two of the three samples: Study 1, and Study 2 Obligated. Within the samples, fit statistics indicated that the dual-factor structures better represented the relationships between the barriers than their single-factor counterparts. Moreover, first-order barrier factor loadings across the two samples were higher within the dual-factor models than the single-factor models, suggesting that the barriers were more representative of the latent variables when specified to load onto their hypothesised second-order factors.

In accordance with expectations, model parameters within each sample revealed a *Can't Forgive* latent variable operationalised by *Morality Judgements, Trust Dissolution, and Enduring Effects*; and a *Won't Forgive* latent variable operationalised by *Recidivism Prevention, Impression Management, and Vengeful Desires*, with the second-order factors sharing strong positive correlations. Internal consistency reliabilities for these second-order barriers were high across the two

samples, providing support for the existence of the dual-factor structure. Results therefore indicate that, within the Study 1 and Study 2 Obligated samples, the six individual barriers may be effectively conceptualised as sub-barriers within a dual-factor *Can't Forgive-Won't Forgive* hierarchical structure.

In contrast, the dual-factor structure was unsupported within the Study 2 Non-obligated sample, with the model failing to converge. In light of barrier trends across past studies and the support for the dual-factor structure within the other two samples, it is necessary to examine whether this lack of convergence was the result of methodological shortcomings or underestimated barrier relationships.

4.11.1.1 The unsuccessful representation of *Can't Forgive and Won't Forgive* within the Study 2 Non-obligated sample

Within the Study 2 Non-obligated sample, efforts to specify a dual-factor *Can't Forgive-Won't Forgive* hierarchical model were unsuccessful, resulting in negative residual variance on the *Impression Management/Recidivism Prevention* factor. The Non-obligated sample's model parameters for the single-factor hierarchical model revealed a latent variable strongly operationalised by both *Impression Management/Recidivism Prevention* and *Trust Dissolution/Morality Judgements*, with lower factor loadings for the remaining barriers. The inadmissible *Can't Forgive-Won't Forgive* structure may thus have been the result of specifying *Recidivism Prevention* and *Morality Judgements* to load onto alternate second-order factors.

Results across the previous studies have revealed consistent similarities between *Morality Judgements* and *Recidivism Prevention*, which share strong

positive correlations and exhibit similar patterns of relationships with both victim and transgression characteristics. In light of the scale items operationalising the two barriers (see section 3.8.2, Table 3.1), these similarities are understandable.

Recidivism Prevention's scale items emphasise not forgiving to prevent future offending, predominantly due to the fear of communicating behavioural acceptance or tolerance and thereby permitting similar future acts from the offender.

Although *Morality Judgements's* scale items emphasise not forgiving due to the immorality of the offending behaviour and the desire to stand by one's values, both barriers emphasise not forgiving due to the unsavoury nature of the transgression and the victim's unwillingness to communicate behavioural endorsement. As such, victims who have not forgiven due to perceptions of transgression immorality and offensiveness may also fear that forgiveness would communicate behavioural acceptance or endorsement, and thus simultaneously endorse the two barriers.

Nevertheless, past results and the theoretical arguments outlined in section 4.2 support the respective separation of *Morality Judgements* and *Recidivism Prevention* into *Can't Forgive* and *Won't Forgive*. Across the studies, *Morality Judgements* shared stronger correlations and displayed more consistent relationship trends with *Trust Dissolution* and *Enduring Effects* than *Impression Management* and *Vengeful Desires*, while the opposite was true for *Recidivism Prevention*. Within the context of the proposed *Can't Forgive* and *Won't Forgive* structure, *Morality Judgements* and *Recidivism Prevention* also make the most theoretical sense separated onto their respective factors.

Victims who endorse *Can't Forgive* experience an aversive reaction to their offenders' blatant, severe norm violations, leading to perceptions of irreparable

relationship damage. This conceptualisation, supported by past research on reactions to norm violations (e.g., Baumeister, 1996; Gordon & Baucom, 1998; Tetlock, 2003), requires the inclusion of *Morality Judgements*. Similarly, victims who endorse *Won't Forgive* are withholding forgiveness to protect themselves from future harm at the hands of others, or damage to their public or private selves. With *Recidivism Prevention* conceptualised as withholding forgiveness due to the fear of encouraging repeat offending (cf. Exline & Baumeister, 2000), it is clear that this barrier is key to the theoretical basis of *Won't Forgive*. Thus, from a theoretical and empirical standpoint, the two barriers should effectively represent their proposed latent variables.³⁷

Finally, the *Can't Forgive-Won't Forgive* hierarchical structure failed to converge within the sample that produced a structurally-poor BTF model, with Study 1's seven-factor BTF similarly failing to converge within Study 2's Non-obligated sample despite strong support for the model structure in both Study 1 and Study 2's Obligated sample. Accordingly, the lack of convergence of the dual-factor hierarchical model may be due to the sample's methodological shortcomings, rather than conceptual issues with barrier division.

³⁷ Further CFAs were conducted on the Study 1 and Study 2 Obligated data sets to determine whether a hierarchical model with three second-order factors—*Impression Management* and *Vengeful Desires* on F1; *Recidivism Prevention* and *Morality Judgements* on F2; and *Trust Dissolution* and *Enduring Effects* on F3—would better explain barrier relationships than a dual-factor model. In both samples, the three-factor HO model failed to converge due to a non-positive definite covariance matrix for the three latent variables, suggesting a dependency amongst variables in different factors (B. O. Muthén & Muthén, 2005). Results therefore do not support operationalising *Recidivism Prevention* and *Morality Judgements* within their own individual factor.

Despite the lack of representation of the dual-factor structure within this sample, results provide encouraging support for the existence of two superordinate factors within the BTF and the effectiveness of the proposed *Can't Forgive-Won't Forgive* structure in explaining BTF interrelationships. Across Study 1 and the Study 2 Obligated samples, the dual-factor hierarchical models were more representative of barrier relationships than their single-factor counterparts, displaying better psychometric properties and more accurately reflecting the theoretical underpinnings of the barriers than the single-factor models. Although the stability of the dual-factor hierarchical structure needs to be investigated further across a range of unforgiving participants, the identification of the two superordinate BTF factors achieves a necessary objective in the refinement of this self-report instrument, providing a nomological network within which the sub-barriers may be effectively conceptualised (Cronbach & Meehl, 1955; Smith & McCarthy, 1995).

4.11.2 Predicting endorsement of *Can't Forgive* and *Won't Forgive*

The second aim of the current chapter was to identify the variables that best predict endorsement of *Can't Forgive* and *Won't Forgive*. Based on past results, it was expected that trait vengefulness, narcissistic entitlement, perspective-taking, and wrongfulness judgements would significantly predict endorsement of both *Can't Forgive* and *Won't Forgive*. However, it was hypothesised that transgression characteristics that increase perceptions of harm magnitude and offender blameworthiness would better predict endorsement of *Can't Forgive*, while power-oriented victim characteristics that increase punishment desires and identity concerns would better predict endorsement of *Won't Forgive*.

These hypotheses were largely supported. In accordance with expectations, trait vengeance, moral wrongfulness, perspective-taking and, to a lesser extent, narcissistic entitlement, significantly predicted both superordinate barriers. As vengeful and entitled individuals are generally less forgiving of interpersonal offences (R. P. Brown, 2004; Exline et al., 2004; McCullough et al., 2001; Strelan, 2007), it is understandable that such victims may endorse many *Can't Forgive* and *Won't Forgive* sub-barriers as relevant to their unforgiving response. Entitled individuals also expect preferential treatment from others, and are quick to take offence at perceived slights (Exline et al., 2004; McCullough, Emmons, et al., 2003). Thus, such victims may be more likely to interpret any transgression against them as immoral and incomprehensible, so withhold forgiveness to teach the offender how they can, and will, be treated.

Similarly, in addition to increasing perceptions of harm magnitude and offender demonisation, the lack of insight into an offender's behavioural motivation, or the immorality of the offending behaviour, may strengthen internal causal attributions, increasing uncertainty about the offender's potential for future transgressions and the identity risk associated with forgiving such an individual (cf. Baumeister, 1996; Exline et al., 2008). Consequently, these victims may feel that they cannot forgive the immoral offender for their behaviour, and also actively withhold forgiveness in order to punish the offender and protect themselves from future harm.

4.11.2.1 Predicting endorsement of *Can't Forgive*

As hypothesised, transgression characteristics that increase perceptions of harm magnitude and offender blameworthiness shared stronger relationships with *Can't Forgive* than *Won't Forgive*, with transgression severity and low perspective-taking emerging as the strongest situational predictors of *Can't Forgive*, yet having a comparatively small effect on endorsement of *Won't Forgive*. In contrast to findings by Alter et al. (2007) that wrongfulness has a stronger impact than harmfulness on victim judgements of an offence, wrongfulness was less important to victims who endorsed *Can't Forgive* than the severity of the offence, although wrongfulness remained an important predictor of the barrier.

Finally, in line with theorising, benevolence values significantly predicted increased endorsement of *Can't Forgive* but had no impact on endorsement of *Won't Forgive*. Thus, although research indicates that benevolent individuals may be more forgiving of interpersonal transgressions (Strelan et al., 2011), these results suggest that when benevolent victims, who are concerned with honesty, loyalty, and preserving and enhancing the welfare of important others (Schwartz, 1992), find themselves unable to forgive, it may be due to the offender's hurtful, severe norm violation that caused lasting damage to the victim and the relationship. Conversely, these individuals are relatively unmotivated by the desire to withhold forgiveness to punish the offender and protect themselves from future harm and ego damage.

Contrary to expectations, attributions of intentionality and foreseeability had fairly minor effects on endorsement of *Can't Forgive* across the samples, with intentionality failing to influence barrier endorsement in Study 1 and having only a small effect in the Study 2 Obligated sample, while foreseeability attributions had no

individual impact on barrier endorsement across the samples. As intentionality and foreseeability attributions increase judgements of offender blameworthiness (Boon & Sulsky, 1997; Carlsmith et al., 2002; Darley et al., 2000; Gonzales, 1992), which, in turn, increase moral outrage and decrease forgiveness, the variables' effect on *Can't Forgive* may have been partialled out due to variance shared with similar, stronger predictors in the model, such as empathic perspective-taking, or severity and wrongfulness judgements.

Victims who judge their transgression to be both severe and morally wrong and who cannot understand the offender's behavioural motivation are also likely to make negative judgements of offender blameworthiness, demonising the offender and believing them to have intentionally committed the transgression and foreseen its harm (Darley & Pittman, 2003; Gromet & Darley, 2009). Consequently, intentionality and foreseeability may exhibit little unique variance once the variance shared with these other, more important predictors is controlled.

Also somewhat contrary to expectations, trait vengeance emerged as a notably important predictor of *Can't Forgive*, having a strong predictive effect on the barrier that was second only to transgression severity. Because Studies 1 and 2 restricted participation to victims who had not forgiven their offenders, with no limits on transgression recency, results could suggest that unforgiving victims across the studies were generally prone to vengeful tendencies, whatever the barrier most pertinent to their unforgiving response. Descriptive statistics do not support this proposition, however, with participants across the samples indicating that they were generally not vengeful individuals (Max = 7; Study 1 $M = 2.91$, $SD = 0.87$; Study 2 Obligated $M = 3.11$, $SD = 1.11$).

Moreover, vengeance shared only weak-to-moderate correlations with *Can't Forgive* across the studies, comparable in size to intentionality or narcissistic entitlement, yet emerged as a much stronger predictor of the barrier than these other variables. Thus, the importance of vengeance to endorsement of *Can't Forgive* may be due to the conceptual distinctiveness of the variable in comparison to the other important, primarily situational, predictors of *Can't Forgive*, with its unique variance potentially inflating its importance to barrier endorsement.

4.11.2.2 Predicting endorsement of *Won't Forgive*

Also in line with expectations, results revealed vengeful, socially-dominant personality traits that increase punishment desires and identity concerns to share stronger relationships with *Won't Forgive* than *Can't Forgive*. When measured in regression analyses, trait vengefulness emerged as the best predictor of *Won't Forgive* across the samples, increasing barrier endorsement far more than any other predictor in the models. Of the other personality variables measured, only narcissistic entitlement had a significant predictive effect on barrier endorsement, although this effect was only observed in Study 1.³⁸

In addition to wrongfulness and perspective-taking, transgression severity and intentionality attributions had predictive effects on endorsement of *Won't Forgive* that approached significance. These findings are in accordance with past research that hurtful, intentional offences may increase identity threats and

³⁸ The psychometrically-weak entitlement measure utilised in Study 2 may have been responsible for the variable's lack of impact within the Obligated sample.

punishment desires to deter future offending (Cohen et al., 1996; Darley et al., 2000; Exline & Baumeister, 2000). However, results reflect findings by Darley et al. that severity is less important to deterrence than stability attributions, with expectations of future harm having a greater effect on endorsement of *Won't Forgive*.

Contrary to expectations, power motivational values and the fear of negative evaluations had no significant effect on endorsement of *Won't Forgive* in the Study 2 Obligated sample, despite sharing weak-to-moderate correlations with the barrier and reflecting its theoretical underpinnings. Their failure to predict *Won't Forgive* may therefore be due to the amount of variance they share with trait vengeance.

Individuals who hold power values as important to their lives are concerned with social status, prestige, and preserving their public image (Schwartz, 1992), and act in accordance with these goals. Similarly, individuals who fear loss of social approval are motivated to avoid the possibility of negative evaluations from others, and are consequently prone to acting in ways that will prevent negative judgements (Leary, 1983). McCullough et al. (2001) argue that vengeful individuals display positive attitudes towards the use of vengeance to save face and communicate expectations of behavioural conduct, a belief system that evidently overlaps with the motivational goals of the aforementioned variables. Thus, with trait vengeance such a strong predictor of *Won't Forgive* across the studies, it is likely that power values and fear of negative evaluations retained little unique variance once the variance shared with vengeance was controlled.

Overall, results highlight the complexities of interpersonal transgressions, and the consequent difficulty in determining the individual impact of state and trait

variables on forgiveness, particularly within the context of retrospective studies. Nonetheless, results suggest that it may be the strength and severity of the norm violation that differentiates endorsement of *Can't Forgive* from *Won't Forgive*, with the severity of the transgression notably relevant and important to endorsement of *Can't Forgive* across the studies but comparatively unimportant to endorsement of *Won't Forgive*. Conversely, the vengeful, power-oriented nature of the victim may separate those who strongly endorse *Won't Forgive* from those who find *Can't Forgive* more relevant. Study 3 will examine these relationships further.

4.11.3 Predicting unforgiving motivations towards the offender

The third aim of the current chapter was to investigate the predictive effects of *Can't Forgive* and *Won't Forgive* on victim forgiveness. As measures of cognitions underlying unforgiving responses, it was expected that both *Can't Forgive* and *Won't Forgive* would significantly predict the three components of interpersonal forgiveness, as well as feelings of forgiveness towards the offender. Nonetheless, based on past results and the theoretical arguments underlying barrier endorsement, it was hypothesised that endorsement of *Won't Forgive* would better predict revenge motivations towards the offender, while endorsement of *Can't Forgive* would better predict avoidance and low benevolence motivations towards the offender, and lower perceptions of having forgiven.

These hypotheses were supported. Both *Can't Forgive* and *Won't Forgive* shared significant correlations in the expected direction with all outcome variables across the two samples, correlating positively with vengeful and avoidant motivations towards the offender and correlating negatively with benevolent

motivations and feelings of forgiveness. On an individual basis results supported hypotheses, with *Won't Forgive* seemingly more important to revenge motivations than *Can't Forgive*, sharing a much stronger positive correlation with the variable and accounting for substantially more variance in desires for revenge. Conversely, *Can't Forgive* appeared to be more important to the remaining outcome variables, sharing stronger correlations and accounting for greater variance in avoidance and benevolence motivations and perceptions of having forgiven the offender than *Won't Forgive*.

These hypotheses were also supported when the two barriers were measured together in regression analyses. After the shared variance was controlled, *Won't Forgive* emerged as the better predictor of revenge motivations, with *Can't Forgive* failing to significantly predict the motivational state across the two samples. Conversely, *Can't Forgive* emerged as the better predictor of avoidance and benevolence motivations and feelings of forgiveness, with *Won't Forgive* failing to significantly predict avoidance.

The inclusion of both barriers in the model had an anomalous effect on the relationship between *Won't Forgive* and both benevolence motivations and perceptions of having forgiven, however, with barrier endorsement predicting *increased* benevolence motivations in Study 2 and greater feelings of forgiveness towards the offender across both samples. As *Won't Forgive* shared weak negative relationships with the two outcome variables at the zero-order level, results suggest that the inclusion of *Can't Forgive* in the regression models altered *Won't Forgive's* relationships with the variables. Thus, these positive relationships with *Won't Forgive* may be artifactual, instead resulting from the substantial variance shared between *Can't Forgive* and *Won't Forgive*, and the conceptual distinctness of *Won't*

Forgive that led to its retainment of greater unique variance after the shared variance was removed from the model.

Despite these anomalous findings, results provide support for theorising on the relationships between the barriers and victim responses to transgressions. In line with past research (Carlsmith et al., 2002; Darley et al., 2000; Darley & Pittman, 2003), results indicate that victims who experience moral outrage in reaction to a severe norm violation are motivated to punish their offenders, in order to enforce the violated norm and reassert the importance of its status. These desires appear to be weaker than those of victims who are actively withholding forgiveness due to desires for self-protection, however. As *Won't Forgive's* self-protection goals are proposed to be *achieved* through punishment of the offender (Carlsmith et al., 2002; Cohen & Nisbett, 1994; Darley & Pittman, 2003; Nisbett, 1993), it is no surprise that such victims, who also appear to be vengeful, power-oriented individuals, may be more motivated to seek revenge than victims who have reactively not forgiven their offenders.

Victims who endorse *Won't Forgive* were also motivated to avoid their offenders, consistent with past research that avoidance may serve a self-protection function by preventing future harm (McCullough, Fincham, et al., 2003; McCullough et al., 1998; McCullough, Worthington, et al., 1997), as well as a retributive function, reinforcing the offender's pain and awareness of rejection and ostracism (Barnes, Brown, & Osterman, 2009; Baumeister & Leary, 1995; Crossley, 2009; Stillman et al., 2009).

Nevertheless, greater avoidance motivations, and lower benevolence motivations, were evident for victims who endorsed *Can't Forgive*, in line with research by Tetlock and colleagues (Fiske & Tetlock, 1997; A. P. McGraw &

Tetlock, 2005; Tetlock et al., 2000) that severe norm violations may result in indignation and social ostracism of the offender, due to the desire to morally cleanse oneself through physical and emotional distance. Moreover, victims who endorse *Can't Forgive* are plagued by persistent negative affect and cognitions, a response which reminds the victim that it is in their best interest to take a self-protective stance against the offender (Leary et al., 1998; McCullough, Bono, et al., 2007; McCullough, Fincham, et al., 2003; Zechmeister & Romero, 2002). As such responses may be strengthened in the presence of the offender (Orcutt et al., 2005; Reddy, Pickett, & Orcutt, 2006), victims may be motivated to avoid them to prevent this outcome.

Finally, both *Can't Forgive* and *Won't Forgive* significantly predicted decreased perceptions of having forgiven the offender, although endorsement of *Can't Forgive* had the stronger impact on the outcome variable. These results complement the barriers' significant relationships with the three TRIM motivations, and support the existence of both barriers as legitimate reasons for not forgiving. When combined with paired-samples *t*-test results that *Can't Forgive* was significantly more representative of unforgiving reactions across the two samples than *Won't Forgive*, results suggest that *Can't Forgive* may lead to greater, more lasting unforgiving impulses than *Won't Forgive*, and thus may constitute a more pervasive barrier to victim forgiveness. Study 3 will investigate the replicability of these effects within a standardised transgression, to determine their consistency when contextual factors of the transgression are controlled.

4.11.4 Research question: *Offender Response* as a barrier, or predictor, of the BTF?

Finally, the current chapter aimed to examine *Offender Response*'s measurement within the BTF, to determine whether the barrier would be effectively operationalised within the *Can't Forgive-Won't Forgive* hierarchical structure, or whether its removal would theoretically and empirically improve the BTF.

Results indicated that *Offender Response* may be poorly operationalised within the BTF structure, both as a stand-alone barrier and a subordinate barrier within *Can't Forgive* or *Won't Forgive*. As evident in Table 4.1, *Offender Response* displayed low factor loadings within all single and dual-factor hierarchical models across the samples, despite efforts to load the barrier onto both *Can't Forgive* and *Won't Forgive* within the dual-factor models. *Offender Response* removal at the item and barrier level had little impact on factor structures within the Study 1 and Study 2 Obligated samples, and improved model fit within both samples. Moreover, although removing *Offender Response* at the barrier level did not result in convergence of the dual-factor hierarchical structure within the Study 2 Non-obligated sample, barrier removal did improve model clarity at the item level, resulting in a five-factor model with individual *Morality Judgements* and *Trust Dissolution* factors.

The current analyses additionally aimed to investigate whether the empirical importance of offender reparative work as a BTF predictor reflected its theoretical import. Despite the variable's theoretical importance to endorsement of *Can't Forgive* and *Won't Forgive* (Carlsmith et al., 2002; Gold & Weiner, 2000; Gonzales et al., 1994; Lamb & Murphy, 2002; Luchies et al., 2010; Weiner et al., 1991;

Zechmeister et al., 2004), reparative work was relatively unrelated and unimportant to endorsement of *Can't Forgive* and *Won't Forgive*.

Within the Study 1 data set, the variable shared a weak positive correlation with *Won't Forgive* and predicted *increased* barrier endorsement. Reparative work failed to correlate significantly with *Can't Forgive* within this sample, but also had a positive effect on barrier endorsement that approached significance. Despite Study 2's more exhaustive measure of reparative work, the variable failed to have an impact in the expected direction on barrier endorsement within the Obligated data set, sharing a weak negative correlation with *Can't Forgive* but failing to correlate significantly with *Won't Forgive*, and failing to predict endorsement of either barrier.

The variable's positive impact on *Won't Forgive* in Study 1 reflects barrier-level correlations observed in Table 2.9. These results could be interpreted as greater reparative efforts potentially leading to judgements of offender guilt and blameworthiness for the transgression, which may increase expectations of future offending and intensify the identity threat of the transgression (Gonzales et al., 1994; Gonzales et al., 1992; Weiner et al., 1991; Zechmeister et al., 2004). Alternatively, victims who endorse *Won't Forgive* may be withholding forgiveness from their repentant offenders due to the desire to prolong and intensify their experience of guilt, an aversive and unpleasant experience that may punish the offender for their actions, even the emotional imbalance caused by the transgression, and encourage future compliance (Baumeister et al., 1994, 1995).

Nonetheless, the lack of relationships in the expected direction between reparative work, a variable strongly shown to reduce victim forgiveness, and the two superordinate barriers is puzzling. Barrier endorsement across the previous studies and past research on the causes of unforgiving victim responses (Rapske et al.,

2010; Williamson & Gonzales, 2007; Younger et al., 2004; Zechmeister & Romero, 2002) suggest that the offender's lack of reparative work is one of the most important elements to a victim's unforgiving response. Thus, it is possible that its lack of impact on barrier endorsement may be due to its conceptual distinctness from the other BTF barriers; the offender's poor reparative efforts in and of themselves may be the sole reason a victim has not forgiven, and may thus be comparatively irrelevant to perceptions of offence immorality, for example, or have little bearing on endorsement of the other barriers. Further research is needed to determine the accuracy of this proposition.

4.11.5 Study 3: Investigating the impact of transgression severity on barrier endorsement within an experimental setting

Results from the current analysis strongly indicate that transgression severity may be the variable that distinguishes endorsement of *Can't Forgive* from endorsement of *Won't Forgive*, yet causal relationships cannot be inferred from these correlational data (Smith, 2005). To investigate the accuracy of these relationship claims within a controlled environment, Study 3 will utilise a hypothetical scenario design to experimentally manipulate transgression severity and determine its impact, as well as that of trait vengefulness, on participants' unforgiving responses to an interpersonal transgression.

In standardising the transgression, Study 3 will reduce the impact of potential confounding variables on barrier endorsement. As Study 1 and 2 participants were permitted to recall any unforgiven transgression that they had suffered at some point, it is impossible to determine the considerations that informed participant

responses, such as the recency of the transgression, for example, or the fact that it was the only transgression the participant could recall, and no control was afforded over contextual factors that may have influenced the unforgiving reaction (Leary et al., 1998; McCullough et al., 2000). These elements introduce measurement error into the study designs and interfere with the ability to understand the true causes of barrier endorsement, consequently reducing the accuracy and generalisability of results (McCullough et al., 2000; Metts, Sprecher, & Cupach, 1993; Podsakoff & Organ, 1986).

Moreover, by utilising an experimental design, Study 3 will address some of the additional limitations of retrospective recall studies, such as the impact of heuristics and recall or perception biases on responses, and inaccuracies associated with event recollection (Leary et al., 1998; Metts et al., 1993; Podsakoff et al., 2003; Podsakoff & Organ, 1986; Rapske et al., 2010; Yoshimura, 2007). In standardising the transgression, results may thus provide a clearer picture of the relationship between the barriers and the variables proposed to underlie their endorsement.

Chapter 5

Investigating barrier endorsement within an experimental paradigm

5.1 Chapter overview

The current chapter presents data from Study 3, which aimed to investigate endorsement of *Can't Forgive* and *Won't Forgive* within an experimental setting, manipulating transgression severity to assess its differential impact on barrier endorsement. Study 3 additionally aimed to investigate the role of trait vengefulness in barrier endorsement, controlling for its effects in regression analyses to identify its relationship with the two superordinate barriers. Finally, Study 3 aimed to assess the impact of *Can't Forgive* and *Won't Forgive* on unforgiving motivations towards the offender within a controlled setting, to determine the consistency of barrier effects when applied to a standardised transgression.

5.2 Barrier endorsement within an experimental paradigm

Results across the past studies have provided tentative support for theorising on the variables most important to *Can't Forgive*, *Won't Forgive*, and their sub-barriers. Results indicate that *Can't Forgive* may be primarily influenced by the severity of the transgression, while this element appears to be relatively unimportant to endorsement of *Won't Forgive*. Moreover, while results indicate that the vengefulness of the victim may influence endorsement of both *Can't Forgive* and *Won't Forgive*, vengefulness appears to be more relevant to *Won't Forgive*, a barrier strongly influenced by the power-oriented, socially-dominant nature of the victim.

Due to the correlational nature of the past studies, causal relationships cannot be inferred from these data; thus, it is important to explore these relationships within an experimental paradigm. By utilising a standardised

interpersonal transgression within an experimental design, results will shed light on the causal link between transgression severity, trait vengeance and power-oriented variables, and barrier endorsement, while enabling control of the sources of variation that may have influenced unforgiving responses in the past.

Study 3 therefore utilised hypothetical scenarios to manipulate the severity of a transgression perpetrated against study participants, who would take the role of the victim, and assess cognitions underlying unforgiving responses to the transgression. It was hypothesised that high transgression severity would lead to increased endorsement of *Can't Forgive* but would have no significant impact on endorsement of *Won't Forgive*.

5.2.1 Devising a scenario to assess transgression severity

To identify a hypothetical transgression for manipulation, qualitative reports of unforgiven responses collected in Studies 1 and 2 were examined. As the *Can't Forgive-Won't Forgive* dual factor structure was only evident within Study 2's Obligated sample, the hypothetical offender needed to share a close relationship with the victim. Moreover, the transgression needed to be relevant to participants— young, predominantly Australian undergraduate university students—and serious enough at all levels of the manipulation to constitute a violation of relational norms (Boon & Sulsky, 1997). These criteria led to the decision to utilise an infidelity scenario involving a romantic partner, due to its universal relevance and the frequency of its occurrence.

Three hypothetical scenarios were constructed, in which participants would take the role of the victim and witness their partner engaging in some form of

relational betrayal with a third party. The experimental manipulation involved participants in the low severity condition witnessing their partners flirting with another individual, those in the moderate severity condition witnessing their partners kissing another individual, and those in the high severity condition witnessing their partners engaging in intercourse. The gender of the offender and the third party were intentionally ambiguous to ensure applicability to all genders and sexual orientations. To minimise confounding effects, transgressions were presented as though they had just occurred, and no information was provided on the offender's post-transgression behaviour.

The face validity of the experimental manipulation was assessed by piloting the three scenarios to 42 doctoral Psychology students and researchers, for feedback on phrasing, clarity, and manipulation effectiveness.

5.3 Vengefulness as a covariate to barrier endorsement

As discussed above, results from the past studies indicate that the power-oriented, socially-dominant nature of the victim may lead to greater endorsement of *Won't Forgive* over *Can't Forgive*, although the relationships between these variables and both barriers suggest that such personality traits may lead to general unforgiving response patterns. Accordingly, it was important to measure these elements in the current study to control for their impact on barrier endorsement, thereby providing a more powerful, accurate test of the manipulation's effect (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2001). Doing so would also reveal their relative importance to endorsement of *Can't Forgive* and *Won't Forgive*.

For the sake of parsimony, the dispositional vengefulness of the victim, which had the strongest impact on barrier endorsement in Chapter 4, was chosen to represent these dispositionally dominant elements. It was hypothesised that vengefulness would significantly predict endorsement of both barriers, but would contribute greater unique variance to endorsement of *Won't Forgive* than *Can't Forgive*. Moreover, it was expected that the experimental effect would persist after controlling for vengefulness, with *Can't Forgive* significantly more endorsed than *Won't Forgive* in the high severity condition.

5.4 The impact of barrier endorsement on unforgiving victim emotions and motivations

Results from Chapter 4 revealed both *Can't Forgive* and *Won't Forgive* to share significant, sizeable relationships in the expected direction with motivations for revenge, avoidance, and benevolence towards the offender, argued to be the constituents of state forgiveness (McCullough, Fincham, et al., 2003; McCullough et al., 1998; McCullough, Worthington, et al., 1997), as well as perceptions of having forgiven the offender. When measured simultaneously in regressions, the barriers were differentially related to the three motivational states and perceptions of having forgiven, in accordance with the theory underlying barrier endorsement: *Won't Forgive* predicted greater vengeful motivations than *Can't Forgive*, while *Can't Forgive* predicted greater avoidant motivations, less benevolent motivations, and lower perceptions of having forgiven the offender. To demonstrate the consistency of these predictive effects when applied to a standardised transgression, Study 3 will attempt to replicate these findings within an experimental setting.

Results also revealed the simultaneous measurement of the two higher-order barriers to alter the directional relationship between *Won't Forgive* and both benevolence and perceptions of having forgiven, with *Won't Forgive* positively predicting these two outcome variables. As *Won't Forgive* shared relationships in the expected direction with the variables at the zero-order level, the directional changes were attributed to methodological issues arising from the simultaneous measurement of *Can't Forgive* and *Won't Forgive* in regression analyses; however, further research is required to determine the accuracy of this conclusion. Accordingly, by remeasuring unforgiving victim reactions towards the offender, results will reveal the consistency of these relationships when applied to a standardised transgression.

By examining unforgiving emotions and motivations within a standardised setting, the current study will also shed light on which of the two higher-order barriers most hinders victim forgiveness. Based on past results and barrier content, it is expected that both barriers will significantly predict all unforgiving motivations towards the offender, but *Can't Forgive* will have a stronger overall impact on unforgiving victim reactions than *Won't Forgive*.

5.5 Summary of hypotheses

Endorsement of Can't Forgive and Won't Forgive across experimental conditions

Univariate analysis of covariance and paired-samples *t*-tests will be used to assess the endorsement of *Can't Forgive* and *Won't Forgive* across experimental conditions. It is hypothesised that:

- i. As severity increases, so too will endorsement of *Can't Forgive* over *Won't Forgive*, with participants in the high severity condition endorsing *Can't Forgive* more strongly than *Won't Forgive*.
- ii. No difference will be observed between endorsement of *Can't Forgive* and *Won't Forgive* in the low severity condition.
- iii. Participants in the higher severity conditions will endorse *Can't Forgive* significantly more than those in the low severity condition.
- iv. There will be no difference in endorsement of *Won't Forgive* across the three conditions.

Impact of trait vengefulness on barrier endorsement

Trait vengefulness will be included as a covariate in ANCOVA. It is hypothesised that:

- i. Trait vengeance will significantly predict endorsement of both *Can't Forgive* and *Won't Forgive*, but will have a stronger impact on endorsement of *Won't Forgive* than endorsement of *Can't Forgive*.
- ii. The experimental effect will persist after controlling for trait vengeance.

Predicting unforgiving motivations from barrier endorsement

Hierarchical regression will be performed to determine the impact of barrier endorsement on predicting unforgiving reactions towards the offender. It is hypothesised that, after controlling for the manipulation variable:

- i. Endorsement of *Can't Forgive* and *Won't Forgive* will significantly predict all four unforgiving reactions.

- ii. Endorsement of *Won't Forgive* will better predict increased revenge motivations towards the offender.
- iii. Endorsement of *Can't Forgive* will better predict increased avoidance motivations towards the offender, and decreased benevolence motivations and willingness to forgive.

5.6 Method

5.6.1 Design

The study utilised a between-groups experimental design.

5.6.2 Participants

Participants were recruited from the University of Adelaide first year Psychology participation pool and via online personal social networks. Removal of duplicates and error cases reduced the sample from $N = 123$ to 114. The sample comprised $N = 101$ first year undergraduate Psychology students at the University of Adelaide, participating in exchange for partial course credit, and $N = 13$ members of the wider community. Participants were randomly assigned to one of three experimental conditions (Low Severity: $N = 35$; Moderate Severity: $N = 40$; High Severity: $N = 39$). The sample included 83 (72.8%) females and 31 (27.2%) males, with a mean age of 22.56 years ($SD = 7.49$).

5.6.3 Materials

5.6.3.1 *Transgression scenarios*

Three hypothetical scenarios were devised, manipulating transgression severity across three conditions. The context for the transgression was kept consistent for each experimental condition, and is as follows:

You are in a long-term, committed relationship with your partner. One night you attend a party together. You each individually know a number of people there, so whilst at first you speak to people as a couple, you eventually socialise separately. As is often the case with such parties, you end up spending the majority of the night apart. You spot your partner quite often throughout the night, and are happy to see them enjoying themselves with other people. You notice that on a few of these occasions your partner has been speaking to one person in particular, an extremely attractive individual unknown to you, but you don't give the matter a lot of thought. A few hours later the party starts to lose momentum, so you decide to find your partner and go home. After failing to find your partner in any of the main rooms, you ask your host whether they've seen them in the house. Your host seems uncomfortable with the question, but tells you that they spotted your partner a while before in one of the back rooms.

Participants then received one of the following ending paragraphs, depending on their experimental condition:

i. Low severity: Upon locating the room, you find your partner sitting closely on a couch with the attractive individual you'd noticed them speaking to earlier. The two of them are absorbed in their conversation, seemingly unaware of anything going on around them, and it is clear from their behaviour that they are flirting with each other.

ii. Moderate severity: Upon locating the room, you find your partner sitting closely on a couch with the attractive individual you'd noticed them speaking to earlier. The two of them are kissing, seemingly unaware of anything going on around them.

iii. High severity: Upon locating the room, you find your partner with the attractive individual you'd noticed them speaking to earlier. They are having sex.

5.6.3.2 The BTF

The 42-item BTF produced in Study 3 (see section 3.8.2) was used in the current study, with *Offender Response* scale items omitted.³⁹ *Can't Forgive* and *Won't Forgive* subscale scores were derived by summing and averaging all items operationalising each superordinate barrier's sub-barriers (*Can't Forgive: Trust Dissolution, Morality Judgements, Enduring Effects; Won't Forgive: Impression Management, Recidivism Prevention, Vengeful Desires*), with higher scores indicating greater barrier endorsement. Internal consistency reliabilities for the 21-

³⁹ No information was provided to participants on the offender's post-transgression behaviour, so *Offender Response*'s items were irrelevant.

item *Can't Forgive* subscale and the 21-item *Won't Forgive* subscale were .94 and .92, respectively.

5.6.3.3 Manipulation checks

Transgression severity was measured with four five-point Likert-type items assessing the hurtfulness of the transgression (“Imagining yourself in this situation, how hurt are you by this event?”; 1 = *not hurt at all*, 5 = *very deeply hurt*), the comparative hurtfulness (“Try and compare this event with all the hurtful things that have happened in your life up to now. *Compared* with everything else, how hurtful is this particular event?”; 1 = *not hurtful at all*, 5 = *extremely hurtful*), the seriousness of the transgression (“Thinking of this particular event, where would you rate the seriousness of the incident involved on the following scale, where 1 = for example, someone pushing ahead of you in a line, and 7 = for example, sexual abuse, or murder of a family member?”), and the moral wrongfulness⁴⁰ of the behaviour (“How morally wrong do you consider the behaviour to be?”; 1 = *not wrong at all*, 5 = *extremely wrong*). A weighted average was calculated for the four items, with higher scores indicating greater judgements of transgression severity ($\alpha = .81$).

⁴⁰ Past research (Alter, Kernochan, & Darley, 2007; Carlsmith, Darley, & Robinson, 2002) and results from the previous studies suggest that severity and wrongfulness judgements are often treated as one and the same by individuals. Consequently, the two constructs were combined in the current study to form a joint measure of transgression severity.

5.6.3.4 Covariate: Trait vengefulness

Participants' dispositional vengefulness was measured with the Vengeance Scale ($\alpha = .92$; Stuckless & Goranson, 1992) utilised in previous studies.

5.6.3.5 Outcome variables

Participants' reactions to the hypothetical offender were measured with the Revenge ($\alpha = .87$), Avoidance ($\alpha = .88$), and Benevolence ($\alpha = .89$) subscales of the TRIM (McCullough, Fincham, et al., 2003; McCullough et al., 1998).

Participants' willingness to forgive the offender was measured with the TRIM forgiveness item and a five-point Likert-type item assessing participants' judgements of whether they would forgive ("Imagining that this event has just happened to you, to what extent do you think you would forgive your partner?"; 1 = *would not forgive at all*, 5 = *would completely forgive*). The items were summed and averaged to provide a measure of hypothetical forgiveness ($r = .64$, $p < .001$).

5.6.4 Procedure

The study was presented online as per the previous studies. Participants were randomly assigned to one of three severity conditions and received the following study instructions:

There are a number of times in our lives when our romantic partners don't act as we expect them to. This study attempts to measure one such situation and look at how people generally respond to unexpected behaviour from a romantic partner. Below is a hypothetical scenario detailing

unexpected actions from your romantic partner. Please read the scenario and really try to put yourself in this situation, imagining how you would think and feel if you were this person in this exact situation, and your romantic partner was acting in this way. We would like your response to this hypothetical scenario to accurately reflect the way you would actually respond if presented with this situation in real life. Therefore, it is extremely important that you try to imagine the events depicted in as much detail and as vividly as possible, even if you have no personal experience of the situation, and focus on what you would think and feel if you were this exact person.

After reading the scenario, you will be presented with a number of questions assessing your reaction to the events. Please remember that we are interested in your personal opinion, so there are no right or wrong answers. Try to answer each question as honestly as you can, without dwelling on any particular question or agonising over your response, and please refrain from going over your responses. If you are unsure of a response, choose an answer that you feel is generally representative of your attitudes and emotions.

Participants were then presented with the scenario corresponding to their experimental condition. After reading the scenario, participants were told to imagine that they were the individual in the scenario and the transgression had just happened to them, then responded to all manipulation and outcome variables besides the TRIM and Vengeance Scale. Participants then received the BTF, prefaced with the following instructions:

Regardless of whether you would personally forgive your partner for their behaviour if the above scenario actually happened to you, we want you

to imagine that you're currently in this situation and you haven't forgiven your partner for what they did. Focus on what you'd think and feel if you were this exact person and this scenario had just happened to you. Imagining this, please use the items below to indicate why you haven't forgiven your partner.

Following the BTF, participants responded to the TRIM and the Vengeance Scale. All items within the study were mandatory for successful data submission.

5.7 Results

Results are presented in three sections. The first section presents the descriptive statistics and manipulation checks for the variables assessed in the current study. The second section focuses on hypothesis testing, investigating whether the experimental manipulation was successful in differentiating endorsement of *Can't Forgive* and *Won't Forgive*, and evaluating the impact of trait vengeance on barrier endorsement. The final section assesses the predictive effects of *Can't Forgive* and *Won't Forgive* on unforgiving motivations towards the hypothetical offender.

5.7.1 Statistical analyses

5.7.1.1 Descriptive statistics, manipulation checks, and hypothesis testing

All analyses were performed in IBM SPSS (Version 20). Unweighted factor scores for all measured variables⁴¹ were calculated in SPSS and used for all analyses. Manipulation checks were performed with one-way ANOVA. Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA) and paired-samples *t*-tests were used for hypothesis testing.

5.7.1.2 Predicting victim forgiveness from barrier endorsement

Hierarchical regression was used to investigate *Can't Forgive* and *Won't Forgive's* ability to predict unforgiving offender-focused motivations. The effect of the severity manipulation was controlled at the first step.

5.7.2 Descriptive statistics and one-way ANOVAs across severity conditions

Table 5.1 presents the descriptive statistics and one-way ANOVA results for the manipulation variable, outcome variables, and the covariate across the three conditions, as well as endorsement of *Can't Forgive* and *Won't Forgive*. Unless otherwise stated, Tuckey HSD post hoc tests were used to investigate significant ANOVAs.

⁴¹ As in Study 2, a weighted factor score was created for transgression severity due to the items' alternate scales of measurement. Each item was multiplied by its number of Likert points, which were then summed and subsequently divided by the total number of Likert points.

Table 5.1

Descriptive Statistics and one-way ANOVAs for Manipulation Variable, Covariate, Outcome Variables and Barrier Endorsement across Conditions

Variable Type	Variable	Low	Moderate	High	One-way ANOVA
		Severity (<i>N</i> = 35)	Severity (<i>N</i> = 40)	Severity (<i>N</i> = 39)	
		<i>M</i> (<i>SD</i>)	<i>M</i> (<i>SD</i>)	<i>M</i> (<i>SD</i>)	
Manipulation check	Severity	3.71 (0.71)	4.58 (0.57)	4.86 (0.44)	$F(2, 111) = 38.96, p < .001$
Covariate	Vengeance	2.39 (0.52)	2.27 (0.66)	2.53 (0.68)	$F(2, 111) = 1.77, p = .175$
Outcome	Revenge	2.05 (0.90)	2.13 (1.04)	2.27 (0.91)	$F(2, 111) = 0.52, p = .601$
	Avoidance	2.96 (0.76)	3.60 (0.84)	3.76 (0.90)	$F(2, 111) = 9.41, p < .001$
	Benevolence	3.38 (0.80)	2.60 (0.92)	2.42 (1.02)	$F(2, 111) = 11.21, p < .001$
	Willingness to forgive	3.17 (0.87)	2.25 (1.06)	2.00 (0.75)	$F(2, 111) = 16.82, p < .001$
Barrier	Can't Forgive	3.16 (0.78)	3.76 (0.68)	3.95 (0.67)	$F(2, 111) = 12.33, p < .001$
	Won't Forgive	3.01 (0.77)	3.13 (0.72)	3.11 (0.73)	$F(2, 111) = 0.26, p = .768$

Manipulation check. The manipulation of transgression severity was successful, with participants in the low severity condition judging the transgression to be significantly less severe than those in the moderate severity and high severity conditions ($ps < .001$). No significant difference was evident between the moderate and high severity conditions on perceptions of transgression severity ($p = .089$), although mean differences approached significance, with participants in the moderate severity condition judging the transgression to be less severe than participants in the high severity condition.

Dispositional vengeance. Participants across conditions did not differ significantly in dispositional vengeance.

Revenge motivations. Participants across conditions did not differ significantly in revenge motivations towards the offender.

Avoidance motivations. Significant differences were observed across conditions in avoidance motivations, with participants in the low severity condition significantly less motivated to avoid the offender than those in the moderate severity ($p = .004$) and high severity conditions ($p < .001$). No significant differences were observed between the moderate severity and high severity conditions ($p = .656$).

Benevolence motivations. Significant differences were observed across conditions in benevolent motivations, with participants in the low severity condition experiencing significantly greater benevolence motivations towards their offenders than those in the moderate severity ($p = .001$) and high severity conditions ($p < .001$). No significant differences were observed between the moderate severity and high severity conditions ($p = .679$).

Willingness to forgive. Finally, significant differences were observed across conditions in willingness to forgive, with participants in the low severity condition significantly more willing to forgive the offender than those in the moderate and high severity conditions ($ps < .001$). No significant differences were observed between the moderate severity and high severity conditions ($p = .442$).

Results therefore indicate that the manipulation was successful in increasing the severity of the norm violation, with participants in the higher severity conditions experiencing greater unforgiving motivations towards the offender than those exposed to the least severe transgression.

5.7.3 The effect of the manipulation and trait vengeance on barrier endorsement

Results supported all hypotheses regarding differences in barrier endorsement across the conditions and the impact of trait vengeance on barrier endorsement. Results are described below (see Table 5.1 for more information).

Hypothesis 1: Participants in the high severity condition will endorse Can't Forgive significantly more than Won't Forgive.

Paired-samples *t*-tests revealed participants in the high severity condition to endorse *Can't Forgive* significantly more than *Won't Forgive*, $t(38) = 6.88$, $p < .001$. In addition, participants in the moderate severity condition endorsed *Can't Forgive* significantly more than *Won't Forgive*, $t(39) = 7.58$, $p < .001$.

Hypothesis 2: No difference will be observed between endorsement of Can't Forgive and Won't Forgive in the low severity condition.

Paired-samples *t*-tests revealed no significant differences in barrier endorsement between participants in the low severity condition, $t(34) = 1.45$, $p = .156$.

Hypothesis 3: Participants in the higher severity conditions will endorse Can't Forgive significantly more than those in the low severity condition.

One-way ANOVA (Table 5.1) indicated that participants differed significantly in endorsement of *Can't Forgive* across the three conditions, with participants in the low severity condition endorsing *Can't Forgive* significantly less than participants in the moderate and high severity conditions ($p = .001$ and $< .001$, respectively). No significant difference was observed between the moderate and high severity conditions in endorsement of *Can't Forgive* ($p = .477$).

Hypothesis 4: There will be no difference in endorsement of Won't Forgive across the three conditions.

One-way ANOVA (Table 5.1) revealed no significant difference in endorsement of *Won't Forgive* across the three conditions.

Hypothesis 5: Trait vengeance will significantly predict endorsement of both barriers, but will have a stronger impact on endorsement of Won't Forgive than Can't Forgive; Hypothesis 6: The experimental effect will persist after controlling for vengeance.

ANCOVA revealed trait vengeance to have a significant impact on endorsement of *Can't Forgive*, $F(1, 110) = 8.59, p = .004; B = .30, t = 2.93, p = .004$, partial $\eta^2 = .07$. After controlling for vengeance, there was a significant effect of manipulation category on *Can't Forgive*, $F(2, 110) = 12.62, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .19$. Bonferroni post hoc tests revealed significantly lower endorsement of *Can't Forgive* in the low severity condition than in the moderate and high severity conditions ($ps < .001$). No significant difference was observed between the moderate and high severity conditions ($p = 1.00$).

ANCOVA revealed trait vengeance to have a much stronger impact on endorsement of *Won't Forgive*, $F(1, 110) = 27.51, p < .001; B = .53, t = 5.25, p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .20$. After controlling for vengefulness, no significant effect of manipulation category on endorsement of *Won't Forgive* was observed, $F(2, 110) = 0.90, p = .408, \eta_p^2 = .02$.

5.7.4 Predicting victim forgiveness from barrier endorsement

Finally, partial correlations and hierarchical regressions were performed to investigate the predictive effects of *Can't Forgive* and *Won't Forgive* on unforgiving motivations towards the offender after controlling for the manipulation category. As in Chapter 4, R^2 values for each partial correlation between the barriers and the outcome variables were calculated to reveal the amount of variability in the outcome variables explained by each barrier. Results are provided in Table 5.2.

Table 5.2

Partial Correlations and R² for Can't Forgive and Won't Forgive and Outcome Variables across Conditions, Controlling for Manipulation Category

Barrier		Won't				Willingness to Forgive
		Forgive	Revenge	Avoidance	Benevolence	
Can't Forgive	<i>R</i>	.62***	.34***	.68***	-.53***	-.62***
	<i>R²</i>	.38	.12	.46	.28	.38
Won't Forgive	<i>R</i>		.54***	.40***	-.30***	-.48***
	<i>R²</i>		.29	.16	.09	.23

Note. *r* = Pearson correlation. *R²* values derived by squaring partial correlation coefficients.

*** *p* < .001.

As predicted, both *Can't Forgive* and *Won't Forgive* shared significant relationships with all forgiveness measures in the expected direction after controlling for the manipulation, sharing positive relationships with vengeful and avoidant motivations towards the offender, and negative relationships with benevolent motivations and willingness to forgive. On an individual basis, results support hypotheses: *Won't Forgive* shared stronger correlations and accounted for substantially more variance in revenge motivations than *Can't Forgive*; conversely, *Can't Forgive* shared stronger correlations and accounted for more variance in all other outcome variables.

Hierarchical regressions were then performed to identify which barrier would emerge as the stronger predictor of the outcome variables when measured simultaneously, after controlling for the manipulation category. Results are presented in Table 5.3.

Table 5.3

Hierarchical Multiple Regressions for Can't Forgive and Won't Forgive on Outcome Variables, Controlling for Severity Manipulation

Predictor	Revenge				Avoidance				Benevolence				Willingness to Forgive			
	β	sr^2	R^2	ΔR^2	β	sr^2	R^2	ΔR^2	β	sr^2	R^2	ΔR^2	B	sr^2	R^2	ΔR^2
Step 1			.01	.01			.13***	.13***			.15***	.15***			.21***	.21***
Manipulation	.09	.01			.36**	.13			-.38***	.15			-.46***	.21		
Step 2			.30***	.29***			.53***	.40***			.39***	.24***			.52***	.31***
Manipulation	.06	.00			.07	.00			-.15 ^a	.02			-.25**	.05		
Can't Forgive	.01	.00			.71***	.26			-.57***	.17			-.50***	.13		
Won't Forgive	.53***	.17			-.03	.00			.05	.00			-.15 ^b	.01		

Note. β = standardised regression coefficient. sr^2 = squared semi-partial correlation. ΔR^2 = change in R^2 caused by addition of *Can't Forgive* and *Won't Forgive* to the model.

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$. ^a $p = .07$. ^b $p = .08$.

In line with hypotheses, after controlling for the severity manipulation *Won't Forgive* emerged as the most important predictor of revenge motivations, accounting for 17% unique variance in the variable, while *Can't Forgive* had no individual impact. Conversely, *Can't Forgive* was the most important predictor of avoidance and benevolence motivations towards the offender (accounting for 26% and 17% unique variance, respectively), while *Won't Forgive* had no significant predictive effect. Finally, both *Can't Forgive* and *Won't Forgive* predicted less willingness to forgive the offender, although *Can't Forgive* had a much stronger impact on the variable (contributing 13% unique variance versus *Won't Forgive's* 5%).

5.8 Discussion

5.8.1 Predicting endorsement of *Can't Forgive* and *Won't Forgive* in an experimental setting

Study 3 was designed to investigate the link between transgression severity and endorsement of *Can't Forgive* and *Won't Forgive* within an experimental setting. It was hypothesised that increased severity would lead to increased endorsement of *Can't Forgive*, but would have no impact on endorsement of *Won't Forgive*. It was also hypothesised that barrier endorsement would not differ when transgression severity was low, but when severity was high participants would endorse *Can't Forgive* significantly more than *Won't Forgive*.

These hypotheses were supported. Participants in the low severity conditions judged *Can't Forgive* and *Won't Forgive* to be equally relevant to their reasons for not forgiving the offender; however, once the severity of the

transgression was increased, participants endorsed *Can't Forgive* as the reason behind their unforgiving reaction significantly more than *Won't Forgive*. ANOVA revealed significant differences in the endorsement of *Can't Forgive* across the severity conditions, with participants in the low severity condition endorsing *Can't Forgive* significantly less than participants in the moderate and high severity conditions. As expected, participants across the three conditions did not differ significantly in their endorsement of *Won't Forgive*.

These results therefore support theorising and findings from the previous studies that the severity of the transgression's norm violation leads victims to endorse *Can't Forgive* over *Won't Forgive*. In line with past research (Alter et al., 2007; Darley & Pittman, 2003; Gutierrez & Giner-Sorolla, 2007; Schnall et al., 2008; Tetlock, 2003), results indicate that severe, morally wrong norm violations perpetrated by close others result in strong negative affective reactions towards the offender, offender demonisation, and perceptions of irreparable damage to the victim-offender relationship. With no significant difference between endorsement of *Can't Forgive* in the moderate and high severity conditions, results are consistent with past research that the violation of important relationship norms—in this case, a violation of monogamy expectations—lead to increased judgements of behavioural immorality and perceptions of irreparable trust and relationship damage, regardless of the extent of the violation (Finkel et al., 2002; Gordon & Baucom, 1998; Hall & Fincham, 2006; Rusbult et al., 2002).

Conversely, victims who actively withhold forgiveness from their offenders to protect themselves from future harm and self-concept damage seem to be relatively unaffected by the strength and severity of the norm violation, which may be less relevant than the fact that the offender transgressed against the victim in the first

place and needs to be punished for their behaviour (Baumeister, 1982a; Exline & Baumeister, 2000; French, 2001). In line with this theorising, results from Studies 1 and 2 suggested that the victim's vengeful, socially-dominant personality traits may influence endorsement of *Won't Forgive* over *Can't Forgive*. Trait vengeance was included in Study 3 to represent these dispositional elements, and it was hypothesised that, while vengefulness would significantly predict endorsement of both superordinate barriers, the trait would be a much stronger predictor of *Won't Forgive* than *Can't Forgive*. This hypothesis was supported. ANCOVA revealed vengefulness to significantly predict endorsement of *Can't Forgive*, but the variable had a much stronger predictive effect on endorsement of *Won't Forgive*.

Results therefore indicate that victims who are dispositionally-oriented towards revenge following a transgression are much more likely to actively withhold forgiveness from their offenders than to reactively find themselves unable to forgive. Research on vengeance-seeking (Cota-McKinley et al., 2001; McCullough et al., 2001) suggests that such victims are often motivated to respond vengefully to transgressions in order to save face and communicate that the victim deserves respect, components that form the core theoretical basis of *Won't Forgive*. As such, it is unsurprising that vengeful victims identify more strongly with this barrier than *Can't Forgive*.

However, in accordance with past research in the area (e.g., McCullough et al., 2001; Thompson et al., 2005), results also suggest that dispositional vengefulness may increase general unforgiving response patterns, leading to endorsement of both superordinate barriers. McCullough et al. (2001) assert that trait vengefulness includes beliefs about the morality or desirability of vengeful actions for attaining certain goals, including the restoration of moral balance and

teaching the offender a lesson, and when considered from this angle it is understandable that vengeful individuals may simultaneously endorse both barriers. Nonetheless, as results across this thesis and past research (R. P. Brown, 2003, 2004; Rapske et al., 2010; Williamson & Gonzales, 2007) have highlighted, not forgiving does not equal a vengeful personality, and this appears to be the case for victims who endorse *Can't Forgive* as key to their unforgiving response more so than victims who endorse *Won't Forgive*.

Research by Brown (2004) suggests that narcissism may differentiate unforgiving vengeful individuals from unforgiving non-vengeful individuals, and it is possible that such personality traits may explain why victims who strongly endorse *Won't Forgive* may be higher in dispositional vengeance-seeking than their *Can't Forgive* counterparts. Although results from Chapter 4 (see section 4.10.5) provide some support for this argument, with entitlement and power values sharing stronger correlations with *Won't Forgive* than *Can't Forgive*, the lack of measurement of these variables in the current study prevents investigation into their causal impact on barrier endorsement. Nevertheless, results provide strong support for the more vengeful basis of *Won't Forgive* as a barrier to forgiveness, and lend credibility to the argument regarding the vengeful, socially-dominant nature of victims who endorse *Won't Forgive* as representative of their unforgiving responses.

5.8.2 Predicting offender-focused motivations within a standardised setting

Finally, Study 3 aimed to assess the relationship between barrier endorsement and unforgiving victim motivations towards the offender when utilising a standardised transgression, to determine the consistency of past results after

confounding variables are reduced. It was hypothesised that both *Can't Forgive* and *Won't Forgive* would significantly predict all four unforgiving motivations, but endorsement of *Won't Forgive* would better predict increased revenge motivations towards the offender, while endorsement of *Can't Forgive* would better predict greater avoidance motivations, lower benevolence motivations, and less willingness to forgive.

These hypotheses were supported. As in Chapter 4, *Can't Forgive* and *Won't Forgive* shared relationships in the expected direction with all four variables after controlling for the manipulation category, increasing vengeful and avoidant motivations towards the offender, and decreasing benevolent motivations and willingness to forgive. When measured individually, *Won't Forgive* shared a much stronger positive correlation and accounted for substantially more variance in revenge motivations than *Can't Forgive*, while *Can't Forgive* shared stronger correlations and accounted for more variance in the other three outcome variables.

These hypotheses were also supported when the two barriers were simultaneously measured in hierarchical regressions, replicating Chapter 4's results. After controlling for the manipulation category, *Won't Forgive* significantly predicted revenge motivations towards the offender, while *Can't Forgive* had no individual effect. Conversely, *Can't Forgive* significantly predicted increased avoidance motivations and decreased benevolence motivations, while *Won't Forgive* had no individual effect. Although willingness to forgive was significantly predicted by both *Can't Forgive* and *Won't Forgive*, *Can't Forgive* emerged as the stronger predictor of the variable, as hypothesised. Results also revealed the relationships between *Won't Forgive* and both benevolence motivations and

willingness to forgive to be in accordance with expectations, as opposed to the barrier's positive predictive effects observed in Chapter 4.

Results thus indicate that the barriers behave as expected when activated within a standardised transgression, and provide support for the differential effects of the two higher-order barriers on the components of state forgiveness. Moreover, results support theorising on the mechanisms proposed to underlie barrier endorsement, indicating that in both experimental and non-experimental settings, victims who endorse *Won't Forgive*, a purposeful, prospective barrier focused on punishing offenders, are strongly motivated to seek revenge against their offenders. Alternatively, victims who endorse *Can't Forgive*, a reactive, retrospective barrier activated by the moral repugnance of the offender and their intentional, reprehensible behaviour, are strongly motivated to avoid their offenders and harbor great ill-will towards the individual. As such, results provide support for theorising that endorsement of *Can't Forgive* may constitute a greater overall hindrance to forgiveness than *Won't Forgive*.

5.8.3 The limitations and implications of study findings

5.8.3.1 Limitations of Study 3

Before discussing the implications of these findings, it is important to acknowledge the limitations of the study design. Perhaps most important is the impact of forced unforgiven responses on barrier endorsement. Before responding to the BTF, participants across the three conditions were instructed to imagine that they had not forgiven their offender, irrespective of the extent to which they felt they

would personally forgive, and use the BTF items to indicate why they would not forgive.

Although participants in the high severity conditions were largely unforgiving of their offenders (see Table 5.1), descriptive statistics indicate that participants in the low severity condition were quite forgiving of the fictional offender. By forcing participants to choose a reason for not forgiving, regardless of whether or not they *would* forgive, the current study may therefore have increased the amount of deliberation and reflection undertaken by participants when responding to the BTF, instead of capturing the impulsive, instantaneous reaction to the transgression that was desired.

With no information collected on why participants responded to barrier items as they did, it is impossible to determine the considerations that influenced forgiving participants' responses. Although participants were asked to indicate the extent to which they would personally forgive the offender, the small sample prohibited investigation of within-condition differences in barrier endorsement between those who would and would not forgive. Future research should examine forgiving and unforgiving participant responses across a range of transgressions, to identify the schemas influencing forgiveness decisions and provide a more comprehensive understanding of the cognitions underlying barrier endorsement.

Second, the context of the hypothetical transgression may have impacted participant responses. Based on pilot study feedback and the necessity to present a norm violation at all levels of the manipulation, the hypothetical transgression was set in a public environment, at a friend's party. However, elements of this setting, such as the visibility of the offending behaviour or the host's uncomfortable reaction to the victim's query regarding the offender's location (see section 5.6.3.1), may

have increased the face threat of the transgression (Afifi, Falato, & Weiner, 2001) or the perceived severity of the offence. Accordingly, these characteristics may have inadvertently primed participants to potentially endorse some barriers more strongly than if the transgression had occurred in a less public environment. Alternatively, as the transgression was presented as though it had just occurred, the applicability of some *Can't Forgive* scale items, such as *Enduring Effects's* items, may have been limited. As such, these elements may have influenced the accuracy of experimental effects.

Finally, responses to the hypothetical scenarios required affective forecasting, a process of predicting one's emotional reactions to a future event that is prone to error (Wilson & Gilbert, 2005). Although research suggests that individuals are able to accurately predict the specific emotions they may experience, there is a strong propensity to overestimate the intensity and duration of the emotional reaction (cf. Wilson & Gilbert, 2003). Accordingly, participant reactions to the hypothetical scenario or the barriers they endorsed could inaccurately reflect their responses to similar real-life transgressions. Although the hypothetical transgression was chosen from qualitative accounts of unforgiven transgressions reported in the past studies to increase relevance to participants, the impact of such sources of error on response accuracy is unknown.

5.8.3.2 Implications of findings for understanding barriers to forgiveness

Despite these limitations, the current study provides strong support for the variables proposed to underlie barrier endorsement, and demonstrates that the barriers behave as expected within a standardised setting. By standardising the

hypothetical transgression and experimentally manipulating the severity of the offending behaviour, the current study was able to investigate the causal links between the barriers and their key variables while controlling for the potential sources of error that may have otherwise impacted victim responses.

These results strongly support the correlational data collected in the previous studies, replicating the relationships between the two superordinate barriers and the variables proposed to underlie their endorsement, and demonstrating that the barriers differentially predict unforgiving victim motivations towards the offender in expected ways. Thus, results provide strong support for the reliability and validity of past findings on the mechanisms that underlie barrier endorsement and their impact on interpersonal forgiveness.

Chapter 6

General discussion

6.1 Overview

The primary aim of this thesis was to identify and measure salient barriers to forgiveness following interpersonal transgressions, in order to produce a valid and reliable self-report BTF measure for future theoretical and applied work. In validating the BTF against variables known to be associated with forgiveness, the current work aimed to identify situational and dispositional variables that may be key to barrier endorsement, thereby providing information on the pathways through which the barriers may inhibit forgiveness. Analyses across the previous five chapters have provided strong support for the construct validity of the BTF as a situational measure of unforgiving victim responses, and in the process revealed a potential division of the barriers into two superordinate barriers differing in their purposeful nature. The current chapter will discuss these findings, along with the limitations and implications of the present work and recommendations for future research.

6.2 Summary of studies

This thesis has presented findings from three studies, designed to identify and operationalise barriers to forgiveness and establish the construct validity of the self-report BTF measure. Study 1 (Chapter 2) involved the initial effort to operationalise the eight barriers and begin assessment of BTF construct validity, investigating the relationships between the barriers and theoretically-similar measures, as well as differences in barrier endorsement. Results led to the identification of a seven-factor BTF measure reflective of theorising, with good

psychometric properties and anticipated correlations with theoretically-relevant variables.

Study 2 (Chapter 3) involved an expansion and replication of the BTF, and the investigation of the instrument's measurement invariance across two independent samples differing in the obligatory nature of the victim-offender relationship. In analysing these two samples, Study 2 also investigated group differences in barrier endorsement, state and trait characteristics, barrier relationships with validity variables.

The Study 2 measure effectively operationalised all seven barriers, whilst displaying structural stability across the Combined and Obligated data sets. The measure failed to display configural invariance across the Obligated and Non-obligated samples, however, with four barriers amalgamating into two within the Non-obligated data set. Nonetheless, the factor structure of the remaining three barriers was identical to the Baseline model and the two composite barriers were comprised solely of their individual counterparts, thus providing tentative support for the stability of the BTF across independent samples.

Trends across the two studies pointed to the potential division of the barriers into two superordinate barriers differing in the purposeful nature of the unforgiving response. Accordingly, Chapter 4 involved the development of a theoretical framework to explain these relationships and the re-analysis of the previously-collected data sets to provide empirical support for the hierarchical structure. In addition, Chapter 4 investigated the predictive effects of the relevant situational and dispositional variables on endorsement of the higher-order barriers, *Can't Forgive* and *Won't Forgive*, as well as the barriers' ability to predict unforgiving motivations towards the offender.

Results supported the division of the barriers into a dual-factor higher-order structure within two of the three data sets, as well as the removal of *Offender Response* from the hierarchical BTF model. As predicted, the severity of the norm violation and the lack of empathic perspective-taking best predicted endorsement of *Can't Forgive*, while vengeful victim characteristics best predicted endorsement of *Won't Forgive*. Although both barriers predicted unforgiving motivations towards the offender, *Won't Forgive* best predicted revenge motivations, while *Can't Forgive* best predicted avoidance and benevolence motivations and perceptions of having forgiven.

Chapter 4 results suggested that transgression severity may lead to the increased endorsement of *Can't Forgive* over *Won't Forgive*, while the victim's vengeful disposition may increase endorsement of *Won't Forgive* over *Can't Forgive*. Consequently, Study 3 (Chapter 5) aimed to experimentally investigate these relationships within a controlled setting, manipulating the severity of the transgression and measuring victim vengefulness to determine their differential impact on the superordinate barriers. In addition, Study 3 investigated the relationships between endorsement of these two barriers and unforgiving motivations towards the offender when applied to a standardised transgression. Results revealed past findings to be robust within an experimental setting, supporting theorising on the nature and determinants of the BTF barriers. The key findings of this thesis are discussed below.

6.3 Operationalising the barriers to forgiveness

6.3.1 The seven-factor BTF

Potential barriers to forgiveness were identified based on past qualitative and theoretical work in the area (Baumeister et al., 1998; Exline & Baumeister, 2000; Lamb & Murphy, 2002; Rapske et al., 2010; Younger et al., 2004). From this research, eight barriers were identified: *Offender Response*—not forgiving due to the offender’s poor reparative efforts; *Morality Judgements*—not forgiving due to judgements of transgression or offender immorality; *Trust Dissolution*—not forgiving due to the dissolution of trust in the relationship as a result of the betrayal; *Enduring Effects*—not forgiving due to the continuation of aversive transgression consequences; *Impression Management*—not forgiving to prevent ego damage; *Victim Status*—not forgiving to reap the benefits of the victim label; and *Punishment Desires*—not forgiving due to desires for revenge or retribution.

This thesis aimed to build upon the qualitative and theoretical work by using a quantitative methodology to operationalise the barriers into a self-report BTF measure. The lack of established criterion measures also necessitated investigation of BTF construct validity, to provide empirical evidence that the BTF effectively assesses its proposed constructs. Accordingly, this thesis aimed to demonstrate BTF construct validity in line with recommendations (cf. Cronbach & Meehl, 1955; Smith, 2005).

These aims were achieved. Across Studies 1 and 2, factor analysis produced a 41-item, seven-factor BTF measure that effectively operationalised the eight identified barriers—with *Victim Status* represented within the *Vengeful Desires* barrier—in accordance with the aforementioned past research. The measure

displayed excellent psychometric properties: good model fit; high primary item loadings for each factor, which were operationalised solely by items derived from that barrier's primary item pool; few significant cross-loadings; high internal consistency reliabilities; and moderate factor correlations. The BTF also displayed structural stability across Studies 1 and 2, replicating the Study 1 structure within Study 2 and increasing all barriers to seven-item factors in accordance with theorising.

Although the BTF failed to display configural invariance across Study 2's Obligated and Non-obligated samples, the content of the Non-obligated sample's two amalgamated barriers were identical to their individual counterparts within the Study 1, Baseline, and Obligated models, with no loss of primary items to alternate factors. The combination of the barriers also reflected their theoretical and empirical similarities, with *Trust Dissolution* and *Morality Judgements* sharing an emphasis on not forgiving due to the immorality and severity of the norm violation; and *Impression Management* and *Recidivism Prevention* sharing an emphasis on withholding forgiveness to defend one's honour and convey the message that the victim is not a weak, easy target for future exploitation. Similarities in barrier composition thus provided tentative support for the reliability of the seven-factor BTF structure.

Finally, correlations showed that the barriers behaved in predictable ways with theoretically-relevant variables. Across the three samples, all meaningful relationships with state forgiveness measures were in the expected direction, with only positive significant relationships observed with revenge and avoidance motivations towards the offender, and only negative significant relationships observed with benevolence motivations and victim perceptions of having forgiven.

Despite revision to barrier content, the barriers displayed consistency in their individual relationships with these variables, sharing relationships of similar size with the forgiveness measures across the three samples.

Similarly, the barriers correlated in the expected direction with variables shown to inhibit forgiveness. Despite the diverse range of state and trait measures, the overwhelming majority of the relationships across the samples were positive, as expected, and all barriers beside *Vengeful Desires* and *Impression Management* shared relationships with the majority of variables. Less consistent directional relationships were observed with variables shown to facilitate forgiveness, such as the positive relationships between *Vengeful Desires* and reparative work, or between the *Can't Forgive* barriers and benevolence values. However, these relationships may be due to the nature of the individual barriers themselves (as discussed in section 6.4.1), rather than an indication of the barriers' irrelevance to variables that may encourage forgiveness. Indeed, the majority of barriers shared negative correlations with situational variables considered key to forgiving responses: empathic perspective-taking and capability for similar behaviour (Exline et al., 2008), and offender reparative work (McCullough et al., 1998), thus providing support for their relevance to unforgiven situations.

In sum, a seven-factor BTF was effectively developed and refined across the three samples, with modelling techniques producing a robust measure that effectively operationalised potential barriers to forgiveness identified in the literature. The measure correlated in the expected direction with forgiveness measures and a range of state and trait variables shown to inhibit or facilitate forgiveness, indicating that the barriers are conceptually-similar to variables relevant to interpersonal forgiveness. Moreover, specific barriers shared strong

relationships with theoretically-similar constructs, such as *Enduring Effects* with rumination, or *Morality Judgements* with moral wrongfulness, indicating that the barriers may accurately assess their latent variables.

Although future research needs to investigate other sources of BTF validity, such as discriminant or predictive validity (Clark & Watson, 1995; Smith & McCarthy, 1995), results from the three samples provide strong support for the construct validity of the BTF as a situational measure of rationalisations behind unforgiving victim responses.

6.3.2 The barriers within a *Can't Forgive-Won't Forgive* hierarchical structure

Due to trends in BTF interrelationships and correlations with validity variables, as well as the theoretical similarities of particular barriers, a new BTF nomological network was proposed in Chapter 4. Results had indicated that the barriers could potentially be conceptualised as sub-barriers of two superordinate factors differing in their purposeful nature: *Impression Management*, *Vengeful Desires*, and *Recidivism Prevention* appeared to be purposeful barriers driven by desires to actively withhold forgiveness in order to protect the victim from future harm and ego damage; conversely, *Trust Dissolution*, *Enduring Effects*, and *Morality Judgements* appeared to be more reactive barriers, involving the inability to forgive due to the offender's blameworthy role in perpetrating a severe, morally wrong transgression.

Chapter 4 involved a re-analysis of the three data sets collected in Studies 1 and 2 to determine the effectiveness of this hierarchical structure in representing BTF interrelationships. CFA revealed the hypothesised structure to effectively

represent BTF interrelationships within the Study 1 and Study 2 Obligated data sets. Within these samples, model fit statistics and first-order barrier factor loadings indicated that the barriers better represented their latent variables when specified to load onto their hypothesised second-order barriers than when loaded together within the single-factor model. In line with expectations, the dual-factor models revealed a *Can't Forgive* latent variable effectively operationalised by *Morality Judgements*, *Trust Dissolution*, and *Enduring Effects*; and a *Won't Forgive* latent variable effectively operationalised by *Recidivism Prevention*, *Impression Management*, and *Vengeful Desires*.

In contrast, the dual-factor structure was unsupported within the Study 2 Non-obligated sample, with the model failing to converge. Model parameters for the sample's single-factor hierarchical model revealed a latent variable strongly operationalised by both *Impression Management/Recidivism Prevention* and *Trust Dissolution/Morality Judgements*, with lower factor loadings for the remaining barriers. Thus, the inadmissible *Can't Forgive-Won't Forgive* structure may have been caused by specifying *Recidivism Prevention* and *Morality Judgements* to load onto alternate second-order factors.

6.3.2.1 *Morality Judgements and Recidivism Prevention within the hierarchical BTF structure*

Results from Studies 1 and 2 revealed theoretical and methodological similarities between *Morality Judgements* and *Recidivism Prevention*, with both barriers emphasising not forgiving due to the desire to avoid communicating acceptance of the offensive behaviour, and displaying similar patterns of

relationships with situational and dispositional validity variables. Moreover, although results provided theoretical and empirical support for the specification of *Morality Judgements* and *Recidivism Prevention* onto their respective *Can't Forgive* and *Won't Forgive* factors, both barriers shared strong factor correlations with most of the other BTF barriers across the samples. When combined with similarities in barrier content, these findings suggest that the barriers may reflect unforgiving responses relevant to both *Can't Forgive* and *Won't Forgive*.

Morality Judgements operationalises the immorality and consequent unforgivability of the transgression, and thus, as theorised, barrier endorsement may reflect victims of severe, morally-reprehensible, and unjustifiable norm violations who reactively feel that they cannot forgive such an offender. However, *Morality Judgements's* emphasis on taking a stand against the offender's distasteful actions also suggests a purpose behind the unforgiving response, and thus the barrier is likely relevant to entitled, egotistical individuals who perceive any transgression against them as a morally-reprehensible action that requires punishment (McCullough et al., 2001; McCullough, Emmons, et al., 2003).

Similarly, *Recidivism Prevention* emphasises the desire to prevent future offences and communicate behavioural intolerance, and thus barrier endorsement reflects individuals who are withholding forgiveness from their offenders in order to punish their behaviour and prevent future harm (Nisbett, 1993; Rapske et al., 2010; Wallace et al., 2008). However, victims who have suffered a severe, hurtful, and incomprehensible transgression at the hands of a blameworthy offender may also fear that forgiveness would communicate acceptance of the behaviour and leave them vulnerable to future harm, an outcome such victims would be highly motivated

to avoid (Luchies et al., 2010; McNulty, 2011). As such, these victims may also endorse *Recidivism Prevention* as important to their unforgiving response.

Although it could therefore be surmised that *Recidivism Prevention* and *Morality Judgements* may be better measured within their own superordinate factor, relevant to both *Can't Forgive* and *Won't Forgive*, efforts to specify such a structure were unsuccessful. As evident in section 4.11.1.1, Footnote 37, this three-factor hierarchical model failed to converge within the Study 1 and Study 2 Obligated data sets due to a shared dependency between *Recidivism Prevention* and/or *Morality Judgements* and a barrier in one of the other second-order factors. Instead, as evident in Table 4.1, the *Can't Forgive* and *Won't Forgive* latent variables within these dual-factor models were strongly operationalised by *Morality Judgements* and *Recidivism Prevention*, respectively, suggesting that the barriers accurately reflect the underlying motivations of their superordinate factors.

Moreover, the dual-factor model failed to converge within the only sample that produced a structurally-poor BTF, which did not represent the seven barriers nor replicate trends in factor correlations (see Appendix, Table A3). As such, the lack of convergence within Study 2's Non-obligated sample could alternatively be due to its methodological shortcomings, rather than misspecification issues with BTF relationships. Whatever the cause of the lack of convergence, results do indicate that *Morality Judgements* and *Recidivism Prevention* share conceptual and empirical similarities that make them relevant to both higher-order barriers. Thus, further research is required to investigate the rationale behind their endorsement and determine where, exactly, they may best be operationalised within the hierarchical structure.

6.3.2.2 Offender Response within the hierarchical BTF structure

Finally, results indicated that *Offender Response* was ill-placed within the *Can't Forgive-Won't Forgive* hierarchical structure, and may be inappropriately measured within the seven-factor model itself. Across all datasets, the barrier displayed notably low factor loadings within both the single- and dual-factor models, irrespective of whether specified to load on *Can't Forgive* or *Won't Forgive*. Removing the barrier at the item level and barrier level improved model fit within both the Study 1 and Study 2 Obligated data sets, and had little bearing on factor structures. Moreover, barrier removal at the item level improved model structure within the Non-obligated sample, resulting in the separation of *Trust Dissolution* and *Morality Judgements* into individual factors that replicated their structures in the other data sets.

However, although these results indicate that *Offender Response* may be ill-placed within both manifestations of the BTF, the theoretical distinctness of the construct may be the cause of the barriers' lack of relevance to the other BTF barriers. Of the barriers, *Offender Response* is the only one contingent on the behaviour of another individual; all other barriers are largely intrapersonal in nature, concerning the victim's internal emotions and conceptualisations of the offence, and motivational considerations. *Offender Response*, however, is the only true *interpersonal* barrier: its endorsement is solely based on the actions of the offender and the victim's judgements of their efforts. Consequently, the barrier's conceptual distinctness may have led to its failure to emulate response patterns observed within the BTF.

As ANOVA results from Studies 1 and 2 and past research utilising unforgiving victims (Rapske et al., 2010; Williamson & Gonzales, 2007; Younger et

al., 2004) suggest that the offender's failure to display conciliatory behaviours in the aftermath of the transgression constitutes one of the main barriers to forgiveness, excluding the variable from a measure that assesses unforgiving victim responses would be clearly remiss. Accordingly, further research is needed to investigate the potential measurement of *Offender Response* as a single, stand-alone barrier within the BTF, and the ramifications for conceptualisations of the barriers within the *Can't Forgive-Won't Forgive* hierarchical structure.

Despite the lack of representation of the *Can't Forgive-Won't Forgive* structure within the Non-obligated sample, results provided support for the effectiveness of the hierarchical model in explaining relationships between the BTF barriers, at least within obligated relationships. Within the Study 1 and Study 2 Obligated data sets, the dual-factor models displayed excellent psychometric properties, and related in expected ways to validity variables proposed to be key to their latent structure, with *Can't Forgive* sharing stronger relationships with variables that increase judgements of transgression severity, wrongfulness, and offender blameworthiness; and *Won't Forgive* sharing stronger relationships with variables that increase punishment desires and awareness of ego threats.

As the BTF was revised between Studies 1 and 2, further research is required to determine the stability of the proposed structure across independent samples, particularly when applied to transgressions differing in the severity of the offence or perpetrated by more distal offenders. Such research may reveal nuances in barrier relationships that may not be evident when utilising more severe, pervasive transgressions, and shed light on the appropriateness of separating *Morality Judgements* and *Recidivism Prevention* within the hierarchical structure.

6.3.3 Summary of the BTF

Research (Cronbach & Meehl, 1955; Smith, 2005) indicates that BTF construct validity should be demonstrated by: developing a nomological network underlying barrier specification; developing appropriate research designs to measure the barriers; revising the constructs and the underlying theory based on study findings; and empirically testing barrier relationships with each other and theoretically-relevant variables, demonstrating that the barriers relate to measures of similar constructs in theoretically-predicted ways.

Based on these specifications, this thesis was largely successful in creating a self-report instrument that displayed construct validity as a measure of barriers to forgiveness following interpersonal transgressions. The barriers were identified from past theoretical and qualitative research on why victims may not forgive, and retrospective recall designs were utilised to produce a measure that best represented unforgiving victims of real-life transgressions. Modelling techniques were utilised to determine the relationships between the barriers within the data sets, resulting in a seven-factor BTF measure with good psychometric properties.

Across the studies, the measurement and conceptualisation of the barriers were revised based on study findings and content validity feedback, ultimately leading to the development and investigation of a new nomological network to explain trends in barrier relationships. Finally, correlations between the barriers across all manifestations of the BTF and theoretically-similar variables demonstrated that the barriers related in expected ways to existing state forgiveness measures and variables shown to inhibit or facilitate victim forgiveness.

Although further research is needed to determine the stability of both BTF structures and assess barrier composition using alternate research designs, results indicate that this thesis was therefore successful in identifying and operationalising barriers to forgiveness into a valid and reliable self-report measure of situational unforgiving responses.

6.4 Secondary aims of investigating barriers to forgiveness

This thesis had three secondary aims. First, in validating the BTF against state and trait variables shown to influence forgiveness, this thesis aimed to examine the specific relationships between the barriers and validity measures, in order to identify variables that may be determinants of barrier endorsement. Second, this thesis investigated differences in barrier endorsement across the samples, to reveal which barriers may be most and least representative of victims' rationalisations for their unforgiving responses. Finally, this thesis aimed to investigate the barriers' ability to differentially predict forgiveness outcomes, to shed light on the ways in which the barriers may inhibit forgiveness. The outcomes of these investigations are discussed below.

6.4.1 Investigating barrier determinants

As discussed in the previous section, results across the studies point to a conceptual division of the barriers into those more reactive in nature and those that may be more purposeful, with the two groupings seemingly differentially related to the situational characteristics of the transgression and the vengeful, dominant characteristics of victim.

Results from Studies 1 and 2 and Chapter 4 suggest that the three *Can't Forgive* barriers may represent reactive unforgiving responses in which victims find themselves unable to forgive their offenders due to the continuation of negative affect, the immorality of the offending behaviour, and the irreparable damage to the trust in the relationship. Accordingly, endorsement of these barriers was strongly influenced by the strength and severity of the norm violation, the offender's causal role in bringing about the transgression, and the victim's inability to understand the offender's behavioural motivation.

Conversely, the three *Won't Forgive* barriers appear to represent more purposeful unforgiving responses, in which victims actively withhold forgiveness from their offenders to punish them for their behaviour, in order to communicate behavioural condemnation and intolerance. Accordingly, endorsement of these barriers was influenced by the vengeful, socially-dominant nature of the victim, their desires for power and control within their interpersonal relationships, and their fears of loss of social approval.

These findings were consistent when investigated within an experimental setting. In accordance with expectations, Study 3 results revealed the increased severity of the norm violation to lead to increased endorsement of *Can't Forgive* but not *Won't Forgive*. Conversely, the vengeful nature of the victim had a much stronger influence on endorsement of *Won't Forgive* than *Can't Forgive*.⁴² As only

⁴² Although trait vengeance also contributed significance variance to endorsement of *Can't Forgive*, barrier endorsement was not mutually-exclusive across the studies and thus results suggest that traits like vengeance and entitlement may lead to general unforgiving response patterns (e.g., Bushman & Baumeister, 1998; McCullough et al., 2001; Thompson et al., 2005).

the severity of the transgression was manipulated in Study 3, causal links between vengefulness and endorsement of *Won't Forgive* cannot be established. Moreover, as *Won't Forgive* appears to be a purposeful barrier oriented towards achieving future goals, it is unlikely that trait vengeance, a variable that measures the tendency to display retributive behaviours, and attitudes regarding the benefits of such actions (McCullough et al., 2001), is the driving factor behind barrier endorsement.

Rather, power-oriented variables that encompass social dominance and impression management concerns, such as power motivational values or narcissism, may primarily motivate endorsement of *Won't Forgive*, variables which appear to share ample variance with vengeful dispositions. Indeed, research suggests that narcissism may be the factor that encourages people to respond defensively to interpersonal slights (Baumeister, Bushman, & Campbell, 2000; R. P. Brown, 2004; Bushman & Baumeister, 1998), particularly if those slights are public (Besser & Zeigler-Hill, 2010), and thus such socially-dominant variables may be the factors that lead to endorsement of *Won't Forgive* over *Can't Forgive*. Future research is needed to investigate these relationships.

Nonetheless, past research supports these findings on the differential impact of severe norm violations and socially-dominant victim traits on endorsement of *Can't Forgive* and *Won't Forgive*. Research has highlighted the detrimental effect of severe norm violations, particularly those that are intentionally perpetrated, on a victim's opinion of an offender and their willingness to continue the relationship (Gordon & Baucom, 1998). Offenders who transgress against a close other knowingly violate relationship-relevant rules and cause harm to the victim in the process. The norm violation consequently results in strong negative affective

reactions and irreparable trust damage (Finkel et al., 2002; Hannon et al., 2010; Leary et al., 1998). The more severe the norm violation, the greater the damage to the victim, and the more aversive the victim's emotional and behavioural response to the offender (Alter et al., 2007; Gordon & Baucom, 1998; Rusbult et al., 2002).

Perpetrators of severe norm violations become intrinsically linked to the negative event, and are viewed to be as abhorrent as their offending behaviour, with such individuals considered rotten to the core and fundamentally different from the victim themselves (Baumeister, 1996; Exline et al., 2008). Accordingly, severe, morally wrong, indefensible, and intentionally-perpetrated transgressions may result in strong feelings of moral outrage towards the offender at their ability to commit such an act, and lasting negative character judgements (Baumeister et al., 1998; Carlsmith et al., 2002; Darley & Pittman, 2003; Gordon & Baucom, 1998; Tetlock, 2003). These victims may consequently be left feeling that they cannot forgive such an individual.

In addition, results indicate that unforgiving victims who hold values of benevolence may be motivated to endorse *Can't Forgive*. As benevolence values have been shown to increase forgiveness (Strelan et al., 2011), these results suggest that when pro-social individuals who value loyalty and honesty and are concerned with the welfare of close others in their lives (Schwartz, 1992) do not forgive their offenders, it is due to the hurtful, surprising nature of the norm violation and their feelings that the offender's behaviour irreparably damaged their relationship.

Research has also highlighted the substantial ego threat that accompanies interpersonal offences and the consequent necessity some victims may feel to seek retribution against their offenders, rather than forgive, in order to punish the

offender for their actions and communicate behavioural intolerance (Cohen & Nisbett, 1994; Cohen et al., 1996; Darley & Pittman, 2003; Exline & Baumeister, 2000; Rapske et al., 2010). Standing up for oneself in such a way may enable the victim to defend or re-establish their reputation and social status, thus preventing face loss and protecting themselves from future harm (Nisbett, 1993).

These concerns may be particularly pertinent to dispositionally-vengeful or narcissistic individuals, who may expect preferential treatment from others and see value in retaliating against an offender to save face and communicate expectations of respectful treatment (R. P. Brown, 2004; Bushman & Baumeister, 1998; Exline et al., 2004; McCullough et al., 2001; Stuckless et al., 1995). Research suggests that narcissists are overly sensitive to criticism, reacting with greater hostility and aggression towards offenders who have insulted them than non-narcissists (Bushman et al., 2009). Thus, narcissistic individuals may be highly motivated to punish their offenders to prevent ego damage. Similarly, power motivational values focus on control and dominance over others and attaining status or prestige (Schwartz, 1992). Individuals who hold such values are thus likely to be motivated to punish their offenders following a transgression, due to desires to restore loss status in the eyes of others and preserve their social position (McKee & Feather, 2008).

Based on these conceptualisations, it is understandable that the characteristics of the transgression, such as the hurtfulness of the behaviour, may be less important to power-oriented or socially-dominant individuals than the fact that they were subject to a perceived slight in the first place. Victims who fear that failing to respond defensively to a perceived insult could jeopardise their status and reputation may therefore withhold forgiveness until they have punished their

offenders and the ego threat has been nullified (Baumeister, 1982a; Exline & Baumeister, 2000; French, 2001).

Results across the studies thus provide strong support for the differential nature of the barriers, with *Impression Management*, *Vengeful Desires*, and *Recidivism Prevention* seemingly purposeful barriers influenced by the vengeful, power-oriented nature of the victim, and *Trust Dissolution*, *Enduring Effects*, and *Morality Judgements* seemingly more reactive in nature and influenced by the offender's blameworthy role in perpetrating a severe norm violation. With results reflecting similar theorising and qualitative work by Boon and colleagues (Rapske et al., 2010; Ross & Boon, 2010), these findings thus indicate that unforgiving victim responses may be conceptualised as an unwillingness versus an inability to forgive.

Perhaps not coincidentally, the division of the barriers also largely reflects barrier identification in Section 1.6, with the *Can't Forgive* barriers, as well as *Offender Response*, reflecting the attributed causes of unforgiving victim responses to real-life transgressions proposed in Section 1.6.1 (Rapske et al., 2010; Younger et al., 2004), and the *Won't Forgive* barriers reflecting the potential costs of forgiving and benefits of not forgiving proposed in Section 1.6.2 (Baumeister et al., 1998; Exline & Baumeister, 2000; Lamb & Murphy, 2002; Rapske et al., 2010).

Thus, it may be that the *Can't Forgive* barriers best represent victims' reasons for not forgiving their offenders, while the *Won't Forgive* barriers may be considered something of an "added bonus"—a benefit of not forgiving that may accompany the unforgiving response. As simultaneous barrier endorsement was not investigated in this thesis, such a proposition is purely speculative. Future research may benefit from such an investigation, to provide information on the extent to which the *Won't Forgive* barriers are, indeed, considered barriers to

forgiveness, or whether they are better conceptualised as secondary benefits of not forgiving the offender.

6.4.2 Investigating barrier salience to unforgiving victims

Across Studies 1 and 2, ANOVA results shed light on which of the individual barriers may be most representative of participants' unforgiving responses.

Irrespective of the victim's relationship with the offender, results suggest that unforgiving victims largely do not forgive due to the irreparable damage to the trust in the relationship and the offender's failure to display positive, conciliatory behaviours in the aftermath of the transgression. Conversely, desires for power or control over the offender and the desire to minimise ego damage appear to be less representative of unforgiving responses.

These findings are consistent with past research involving unforgiving victims, which suggest that revenge and face or power desires are low in salience to victims when compared to general feelings of hurt and betrayal in the aftermath of a transgression (Rapske et al., 2010; Williamson & Gonzales, 2007; Zechmeister & Romero, 2002). Indeed, the three studies that have directly assessed the cause of unforgiving victim responses each found that the failure to forgive was primarily attributed to the betrayal of relationship norms and the lack of offender reparative work (Rapske et al., 2010; Williamson & Gonzales, 2007; Younger et al., 2004), mirroring these findings.

The strong endorsement of *Trust Dissolution* and *Offender Response* may be due to the frequent occurrence of hurtful situations that elicit these barriers, particularly within close, interpersonal relationships. A large body of research has

revealed the common experience of betrayal incidents within a range of interpersonal relationships (e.g., Elangovan & Shapiro, 1998; Gordon & Baucom, 1998; Gordon et al., 2005; Hannon et al., 2010), with more than 30% of unforgiving participants in Rapske et al.'s (2010) study reporting a betrayal at the hands of the offender. The link between betrayal and interpersonal transgressions appears to be so prevalent that many researchers (e.g., Carmody & Gordon, 2011; Lawler-Row et al., 2008; K. A. Lawler et al., 2003; Luchies et al., 2010; Molden & Finkel, 2010) make little distinction between the two, conceptualising interpersonal transgressions as betrayal incidents.

Betrayals of trust are particularly pertinent to close relationships, due to the expectation of positive treatment and the strength of relationship-relevant norms (Finkel et al., 2002; Rusbult et al., 2002; Thibaut & Kelley, 1959). As evident in sections 2.4.2.3 and 3.7.2.2, the vast majority of participants across Studies 1 and 2 reported a transgression perpetrated by an offender with whom they shared a close relationship, including friends, family members, and current or ex-relationship partners.

A betrayal suffered at the hands of such an individual dispels feelings of confidence and security in the relationship, and assumptions about their caring response across situations (Gordon & Baucom, 1998; Rempel et al., 2001). The victim is left feeling defenceless and vulnerable to future harm, and experiences intense negative affect towards the offender at their ability to act in such a way (Gordon et al., 2001). Betrayal incidents within close relationships thus have a pervasive impact on victims, and are notably hard to overcome (Fife, Weeks, & Gambescia, 2008; Finkel et al., 2002; Gordon & Baucom, 1998; Hannon et al., 2010). As such, it is understandable that unforgiving victims across the samples

would endorse *Trust Dissolution* as most representative of their reason for not forgiving their offenders.

Ample research has also revealed the negative impact of poor conciliatory efforts on victim forgiveness. Unrepentant post-transgression behaviours strengthen internal causal attributions and negative judgements of the offender's moral character, while reducing offender-focused empathy (J. R. Davis & Gold, 2011; Gonzales et al., 1992; Weiner et al., 1991). Unremorseful actions also strengthen stability attributions (J. R. Davis & Gold, 2011; Gold & Weiner, 2000) and make forgiveness too costly for victims; forgiving an unremorseful offender may remove any need for positive, conciliatory behaviours on their part, thus providing the victim with no assurance that the offender will treat them respectfully in future (Exline & Baumeister, 2000).

Poor conciliatory efforts may also increase the identity threat associated with the transgression. Negative behaviours signal to the victim that they are not valued or highly regarded by the offender, nor safe from future offending. Forgiving such offenders may therefore represent a failure to stand up for oneself and consequently lead to diminished feelings of self-worth and self-respect (Gonzales et al., 1994; Luchies et al., 2010).

Despite this, research on victim-offender accounts suggests that offenders are often hesitant to display conciliatory behaviours in the aftermath of a transgression. Offenders often consider their behaviour to be justifiable and governed by external or mitigating circumstances, feeling that the victim at least partially caused the transgression and thereby shares blame (Baumeister et al., 1990; Kearns & Fincham, 2005; Stillwell & Baumeister, 1997; Zechmeister & Romero, 2002). Consequently, offenders may be hesitant to accept primary blame

and responsibility for the transgression, particularly if it presents a substantial threat to their face needs (Gonzales et al., 1992). Because conciliatory gestures often serve as admissions of fault and blameworthiness (Weiner et al., 1991), offenders may therefore be reluctant to express these behaviours towards victims.

Examination of reparative work means across the samples supports these findings (Table 2.6 and Table 3.5), with participants uniformly indicating that their offenders made little conciliatory effort in the aftermath of the transgression, irrespective of their relationship with the victim. As such, it is unsurprising that *Offender Response* was an important barrier to victim forgiveness across the samples.

In contrast, while victims may see identity protection or attainment of power and revenge as potential advantages of not forgiving (Baumeister et al., 1998; Rapske et al., 2010; Younger et al., 2004), unforgiving victim responses seem to be relatively uninfluenced by these goals. Less than 5% of victims in Rapske et al.'s study reported damage to their self-concept or personal power desires as the cause of their unforgiving responses, mirroring current findings. Accordingly, the low endorsement of *Vengeful Desires* and *Impression Management* across this thesis may be due to the specific nature of the two barriers, which limits their applicability to unforgiving victims.

The desire to withhold forgiveness to prevent ego damage or to punish the offender for their actions and attain personal power suggests social presentation and power concerns that motivate the victim to behave antisocially towards the offender; an assertion supported in psychological literature (Barnes et al., 2009; Baumeister et al., 2000; Nisbett & Cohen, 1996). As discussed in the previous section, victims who endorse these barriers may be vengeful, entitled, socially-dominant individuals, concerned with the opinions of others. The specific nature of

such a profile, and the focused goals of these unforgiving responses, may therefore mean that *Impression Management* and *Vengeful Desires* are comparatively unimportant to, and less representative of, unforgiving responses in everyday transgressions.

It is also possible that differences in barrier salience may have resulted from the primarily close victim-offender relationships measured in the studies, with the majority of offenders across the samples comprising friends or current/ex-partners of the victims. Research by Aquino and colleagues (Aquino & Douglas, 2003; Aquino et al., 2001, 2006) suggests that desires for revenge and ego threats may be pertinent to victims who share more distal relationships with their offenders, such as work colleagues or casual acquaintances, and thus differences in the rank importance of these barriers may be observed if investigated within such a sample.

Alternatively, the recruitment of individuals who specifically identify as having not forgiven their offenders, with no limits on the type of transgression or the recency or severity of the offence, may have inadvertently led to the recruitment of samples with long-standing unforgiven transgressions, primed towards more emotionally-charged barriers like *Trust Dissolution*. As noted above, betrayal events have lasting, pervasive effects on victims and are often extremely difficult to overcome (Fife et al., 2008; Finkel et al., 2002; Gordon & Baucom, 1998; Hannon et al., 2010), and thus may typify many unforgiven transgressions that have persisted over time. Conversely, revenge desires and awareness of ego threats may be emotional, irrational responses to a transgression in which the victim is motivated to retaliate for equity's sake, and to alleviate the victim's negative feelings (Boon et al., 2011; Boon et al., 2009; Nisbett, 1993; Stillwell et al., 2008).

Accordingly, such issues may be more pertinent to victims in the direct aftermath of a transgression.

Overall, the stability of results across the three samples indicate that the observed differences in barrier endorsement may be representative of hurtful unforgiven transgressions in close interpersonal relationships. However, future research should investigate the consistency of these differences when applied to more recent or less severe transgressions. Research indicates that revenge desires are pertinent, and common, to victims of interpersonal transgressions (Boon et al., 2011; Boon et al., 2009; Tripp et al., 2002; Yoshimura, 2007); thus, investigating more recent or less extreme transgressions may reveal the extent to which the importance of the barriers differ across interpersonal offences.

6.4.3 Investigating the impact of barrier endorsement on unforgiving reactions towards the offender

Finally, this thesis investigated the superordinate barriers' ability to predict victim forgiveness. Although both unforgiving responses were related to all forgiveness elements measured—revenge, avoidance, and benevolence motivations towards the offender, and perceptions of having forgiven—the barriers shared differential relationships with each variable. Across real-life transgressions and hypothetical scenarios, results indicated that victims who endorsed *Won't Forgive* were more motivated to seek revenge for the transgression than victims who endorsed *Can't Forgive*. Conversely, victims who endorsed *Can't Forgive* were more avoidant and less benevolent towards their offenders, and were more likely to feel that they have not forgiven them for their behaviour.

These results provide strong support for the theoretical bases of *Can't Forgive* and *Won't Forgive*. Victims who actively withhold forgiveness from their offenders to protect themselves from future harm and ego damage experience increased negative affect towards the offender and reduced goodwill, and are strongly motivated to avoid their offenders (Barnes et al., 2009; Exline & Baumeister, 2000). These findings are consistent with past research that avoidance may serve a self-protection function, preventing future harm to the victim (McCullough, Fincham, et al., 2003; McCullough et al., 1998; McCullough, Worthington, et al., 1997). Moreover, in line with theorising on the purpose of *Won't Forgive's* active withholding of forgiveness, research suggests that avoidance may serve a retributive function, reinforcing the offender's pain at rejection and ostracism, and ensuring the offence and the victim's reaction remain salient in the offender's mind (Barnes et al., 2009; Baumeister & Leary, 1995; Crossley, 2009; Stillman et al., 2009).

However, victims who endorse *Won't Forgive* are much more motivated to act vengefully towards the offender, reflecting research on victim punishment goals within interpersonal relationships (Boon et al., 2011; Boon et al., 2009; McCullough, Kurzban, & Tabak, 2010; Stillwell et al., 2008; Yoshimura, 2007). *Won't Forgive's* self-protection goals are proposed to be *achieved* through punishment of the offender, which increases the costliness of the transgression, communicates behavioural intolerance, and conveys an image of victim strength, whilst defending the victim's reputation and preventing face loss (Carlsmith et al., 2002; Cohen & Nisbett, 1994; Darley & Pittman, 2003; Nisbett, 1993; Nisbett & Cohen, 1996). Research suggests that such concerns may be particularly pertinent to vengeful, entitled individuals (Boon et al., 2011; R. P. Brown, 2004; Bushman & Baumeister,

1998; Exline et al., 2004), variables more important to endorsement of *Won't Forgive* than *Can't Forgive*. It is therefore understandable that vengeful victims who are actively withholding forgiveness to prevent future transgressions and identity damage would be more motivated to seek revenge than victims who have reactively not forgiven the offender.

On the other hand, while victims who reactively feel that they cannot forgive the offender for their painful, morally-reprehensible actions may harbor vengeful desires, they are much more motivated to avoid the offender in the aftermath of the transgression and experience strong feelings of ill-will towards them. These findings are consistent with research on the impact of moral outrage and severe, intentionally-perpetrated norm violations on avoidance of offenders (Barnes et al., 2009; Maltby et al., 2008; McCullough, Fincham, et al., 2003) and reduced feelings of goodwill (Leary et al., 1998; McCullough, Bono, et al., 2007).

Research by Tetlock and colleagues (Fiske & Tetlock, 1997; A. P. McGraw & Tetlock, 2005; Tetlock et al., 2000) suggests that severe norm violations and subsequent feelings of moral outrage and indignation lead to social ostracism of the offender, due to the moral contamination that accompanies association with such an individual and the desire to morally cleanse oneself through physical and emotional distance. Moreover, victims who endorse *Can't Forgive* are plagued by persistent negative affect and cognitions about the offence. This aversive reaction may reduce goodwill and desires for contact with the offender by ensuring the offence remains relevant to the victim's life, and reminding them that it is still in their best interest to take a self-protective stance against the offender (Leary et al., 1998; McCullough, Bono, et al., 2007; McCullough, Fincham, et al., 2003; Zechmeister & Romero, 2002). Such a reaction may resurface or be strengthened in the presence

of the offender (Orcutt et al., 2005; Reddy et al., 2006), and thus these victims may be motivated to avoid the offender to ensure such an outcome does not occur.

Finally, victims who endorsed *Can't Forgive* felt much less forgiving of their offenders than those who endorsed *Won't Forgive*. Although the current work did not investigate the long-term ramifications of each barrier's endorsement on the likelihood of victim forgiveness, results indicate that *Can't Forgive* may be more detrimental overall to victim forgiveness than *Won't Forgive*, impairing a victim's willingness or ability to forgive their offender to a much greater extent than victims for whom *Won't Forgive* is most representative.

Won't Forgive scale items and past research on vengeful or entitled individuals (Exline et al., 2004; McCullough et al., 2001; McCullough, Emmons, et al., 2003) suggest that victims who endorse *Won't Forgive* are focused on obtaining repayment of some sort for the transgression, particularly revenge. Thus, victims who endorse *Won't Forgive* may be more willing to forgive or reconcile with their offenders once the ego threat has been nullified and the intolerance of the offending behaviour has been communicated through punishment (cf. Strelan & Van Prooijen, 2013).⁴³

Conversely, *Can't Forgive's* scale items and research on the pervasiveness of offender demonisation and trust erosion (Baumeister, 1996; Finkel et al., 2002; Gordon et al., 2005; A. P. McGraw & Tetlock, 2005) suggest a more permanent

⁴³ Research does indicate, however, that retaliation for a transgression often leads to the escalation of conflict (Stillwell et al., 2008; Stuckless et al., 1995), and can be destructive for the relationship between the parties involved (Boon et al., 2011; Tripp et al., 2002). Thus, actual forgiveness outcomes following such acts may be low.

unforgiving reaction, with victims unwilling to reconcile their relationship with the offender. Victims who endorse *Can't Forgive* appear to have made a firm judgement regarding the offender's lack of moral character and unforgivability for the offence, harbouring greater desires to avoid the offender and substantially lower goodwill towards them. These individuals consider the offender's actions to be unforgivable and the trust in the relationship to be irrevocably damaged, suggesting a finality that is not evident within *Won't Forgive*. As such, *Can't Forgive* may constitute a greater overall hindrance to forgiveness than *Won't Forgive*, with victims who strongly endorse the barrier less likely to forgive the offender in the future.

Alternatively, research indicates that negative motivations towards the offender, particularly revenge desires, decrease over time, while increases in positive motivations are less impacted by temporal distance from the transgression (McCullough, Fincham, et al., 2003; McCullough et al., 1998). Thus, it is possible that endorsement of *Won't Forgive* reflects more recent transgressions, while endorsement of *Can't Forgive* reflects more lasting, damaging interpersonal offences. As offence temporality was not assessed within this thesis and results are based on cross-sectional data, this theorising is purely speculative. However, future longitudinal work should investigate the impact of barrier endorsement on unforgiving motivations over a prolonged period of time, to identify whether the barriers are differentially-endorsed based on the time since the transgression, and determine whether endorsement of *Can't Forgive* is, indeed, more detrimental to the interpersonal relationship.

6.5 Limitations

Before discussing the implications of the findings discussed above, it is important to acknowledge the potential limitations of the present research, including limitations in BTF development, study design, and data collection.

6.5.1 Limitations of BTF development

First and foremost is the unverified stability of the final BTF structure. The seven-factor BTF produced in Study 1 was altered in Study 2, due to the necessity to expand or revise four of the seven barriers. Although this revised BTF displayed internal validity within the Baseline and Obligated models, the measure did not display configural invariance across two independent samples. Consequently, this model may not generalise to the population (MacCallum et al., 1992; Smith & McCarthy, 1995).

The stability of the *Can't Forgive-Won't Forgive* hierarchical structure is similarly unknown, as efforts within Chapter 4 to fit the dual-factor model to the Non-obligated data set were unsuccessful and investigation of BTF structure was not possible in Study 3 due to the small sample. Accordingly, future research must evaluate the stability of both the seven BTF barriers and the *Can't Forgive-Won't Forgive* hierarchical structure against independent samples. In particular, as the BTF is designed for eventual applied work, replication of results within a clinical population would be beneficial. Results would help to determine the generalisability of the BTF models to different samples and the population at large.

Another limitation concerns the potential omission of important barrier elements from the BTF due to pre-defining constructs for participants. Due to the

lack of past empirical work on barriers to forgiveness, the barriers and their elements were identified via theoretical and empirical work on unforgiving victims (Baumeister et al., 1998; Exline & Baumeister, 2000; Rapske et al., 2010; Williamson & Gonzales, 2007; Younger et al., 2004; Zechmeister & Romero, 2002), and a literature review of relevant areas. Although the literature review was comprehensive and results support the existence of the identified barriers, it is possible that additional barriers exist that were not represented within the BTF measure.

Alternatively, some barrier elements were measured in the initial BTF item pools, such as justice-related items or not forgiving due to intolerance of the offender's repeated norm violations, but were removed from the measures due to their lack of relevance to their barrier's other items. Nonetheless, research suggests that these elements may be important to unforgiving victims (Exline & Baumeister, 2000; Kelln & Ellard, 1999; Mullet et al., 1998; Rapske et al., 2010), and should thus theoretically be measured in an inclusive instrument assessing causes of unforgiving victim responses. BTF development would therefore benefit from a qualitative investigation into unforgiving victim responses across a range of transgressions and victim-offender relationships, to determine the representativeness of the BTF and identify additional barriers or barrier elements that require measurement within the instrument.

6.5.2 Limitations of study designs and data collection

A limitation of the Study 1 and 2 research designs concerns the potential for systematic measurement error introduced by common method variance (Campbell

& Fiske, 1959; Podsakoff et al., 2003). Despite differences in methodology and sample characteristics, all four studies within this thesis utilised a self-report method of data collection. In themselves, self-report responses are unverifiable, with no means of cross-validating participants' descriptions of their feelings or intentions (Podsakoff & Organ, 1986). However, this thesis utilised self-report measures to assess numerous constructs across the studies and is therefore subject to a number of potential sources of error, including: consistency effects; the impact of the uncontrolled online response environment; the impact of permanent or transient mood states, acquiescence, interpretation of scale instructions/rating scales, implicit theories, and abstract reasoning on responses; the impact of scale length and fatigue effects; and the impact of scale order and consequent priming effects (Podsakoff et al., 2003; Podsakoff & Organ, 1986).

BTF development was also based on retrospective accounts of unforgiven transgressions, with no restrictions on the transgression recalled. As discussed by McCullough et al. (2000), when respondents are free to recall any transgression, no information is provided on the considerations that inform their choices, such as the recency, severity, or uniqueness of the transgression, the relationship with the offender, or the fact that the transgression may have been the only one the victim could recall. The subsequent measurement error thus reduces result accuracy and prevents generalisation of results to the population.

Due to the consistency in findings across Studies 1 and 2 despite differences in participants, BTF scale items, and validity variables, results provide support for the accuracy of the relationships observed across this thesis (Campbell & Fiske, 1959). Nonetheless, future research should adopt a multi-method approach to barrier measurement and validation, collecting numerous measures of the barriers

and their key predictors from multiple sources using a range of methods (Campbell & Fiske, 1959; Podsakoff & Organ, 1986), such as: victim, offender, and/or third party reports; collecting data over multiple periods of time, locations, and methods (e.g., face-to-face or phone interviews and behavioural observations); and utilising dyadic barrier measures to assess unforgiving responses to different transgressions (McCullough et al., 2000). Utilising different methods and sources of data collection would help to determine the proportion of covariance between the BTF barriers and key variables attributable to the common method, and that attributable to true relationships.

Another potential limitation concerns the lack of forgiveness definitions provided to participants. To increase ecological validity and assess reactions to a broad range of transgressions, Studies 1 and 2 did not define forgiveness or its unforgiving counterpart to participants, allowing individuals to freely interpret what constituted an unforgiven transgression. Accordingly, responses may have been influenced by conceptualisations of what forgiveness entails and what it means to have "not forgiven". As lay people often harbor misconceptions about forgiveness (Freedman & Chang, 2010; Kearns & Fincham, 2004), the lack of definitions may have produced an inaccurate reflection of true unforgiven transgressions and victim responses. Participants were not asked to explain their own conceptualisations of what it means to have not forgiven the offender, but future studies may benefit from such a process. Doing so would enable comparisons with expert definitions of forgiveness (Kearns & Fincham, 2004) and provide a more comprehensive understanding of the impact of lay conceptualisations on unforgiving responses.

Finally, although efforts to recruit external participants ensured the study samples were equally split between Psychology students and members of the

general public, the samples across the three studies consisted primarily of Western females in their 20s. The generalisability of findings to other genders, age groups, or cultural backgrounds—particularly collectivist societies—may therefore be limited. Further research is needed that explores unforgiving victim responses across different cultures and age groups, with a more even gender distribution, to determine the reliability of these results.

6.5.3 Benefits of the study designs

In spite of these limitations, the studies throughout this thesis employed a number of processes that increased the representativeness and accuracy of results. First, substantial efforts were made during the BTF design phase to maximise the construct validity of the measure in accordance with recommendations (e.g., Clark & Watson, 1995; Cronbach & Meehl, 1955; Smith & McCarthy, 1995). Hence, a comprehensive literature review was conducted to identify potential barriers to forgiveness, and detailed definitions for each barrier were developed; scale item design was based on this literature review, with face validity investigations conducted to review item wording and content (upon which scales items were revised); and modelling techniques were utilised to identify the most representative items to include in the BTF measures. This rigorous process ensured the BTF items retained in the final measure were as unambiguous as possible and representative of cognitions underlying unforgiving responses.

Second, Studies 1 and 2 restricted participation to unforgiving victims and then rigorously cleaned the samples of forgiving participants, error cases, acquiescent responses, and third party transgressions. This process resulted in the

removal of 133 participants across the three samples prior to data analysis, and thus ensured results were as representative of unforgiving victims as possible.

Concerted effort was also made to recruit diverse samples outside of the School of Psychology participant pool, to enable generalisability of results beyond a university population. Accordingly, a large number of online support groups, general interest groups, and organisations were contacted for research participation and snowball sampling was utilised within personal social networks. This process resulted in a large range of participants across the samples, varying in age (ranging from 16-72 years), country of origin, and occupational backgrounds, thus ensuring the samples captured individuals with a variety of life experiences. Most importantly, this process led to the measurement of a diverse range of unforgiven transgressions, thus increasing the generalisability of thesis results to unforgiving victims in the population.

Finally, content validity was assessed twice throughout the thesis with a variety of raters. External raters who were experts in relevant fields were utilised in Study 1 for feedback on BTF barriers and their scale items, and content was revised accordingly. Psychology researchers and doctoral students were then utilised in Study 3 to assess the face validity of the hypothetical scenarios and experimental manipulations, with feedback provided on phrasing, clarity, and manipulation effectiveness.

Thus, although this thesis may suffer from methodological flaws that could introduce measurement error, the utilisation of these validity processes permits greater confidence in the accuracy and representativeness of this thesis's findings.

6.6 Therapeutic applications of thesis findings

Due to the frequency of interpersonal transgressions, the pervasiveness of prolonged conflict, and the detrimental effects on those involved, it is no surprise that forgiveness had long been a feature of many therapeutic interventions (Baskin & Enright, 2004; Enright, 2001; Gordon & Baucom, 2003; Gordon et al., 2001, 2005; Gough, 1987; Hill, 2010; Worthington et al., 2010). Accordingly, the goal of this thesis was to identify why some victims experience difficulty forgiving their offenders following an interpersonal transgression, in order to assist in improving understandings of the forgiveness process within these settings and better move victims towards forgiveness. Findings from this thesis thus have important implications for the use of forgiveness interventions in applied settings, and could be utilised to improve treatment outcomes.

First, and most important, this thesis has produced a self-report instrument that can be utilised in treatment settings to assist in identifying why the victim has not forgiven the offender. By providing a tool through which practitioners can determine the rationalisations underlying unforgiving victim responses, this work permits a more informed investigation into the treatment plan that would be most effective for the individual client, and the state and trait elements that should be addressed in order to maximise relevance to the individual. The utilisation of such a tool may also minimise the impact of any potential misunderstandings the practitioner may have regarding the forgiveness process, and ensure the barriers most important to the victim's unforgiving response are not inadvertently ignored (Denton & Martin, 1998; Konstam, Marx, Schurer, Lombardo, & Harrington, 2002).

In addition, by enabling identification of the cognitions underlying a victim's unforgiving response, the BTF can be utilised to help offenders better understand

their victim's rationalisations following the transgression and potentially encourage conciliatory behaviours (Rapske et al., 2010). This benefit would be particularly pertinent to restorative justice practices, such as family conferencing or victim-offender mediation, which focus on repairing the relationships between the parties by enabling victim-offender dialogue and directly involving the victim in the justice process (Braithwaite, 2001; Okimoto, Wenzel, & Feather, 2009).

Autobiographical account research (Baumeister et al., 1990; Zechmeister & Romero, 2002) suggests that offenders often consider their offences to be relatively minor, justifiable transgressions, neither immoral nor deliberately hurtful, and without lasting, negative consequences for the victim. However, findings from this thesis indicate that victims largely perceive the converse to be true, feelings which significantly impair their ability to forgive. If an offender is able to understand the victim's interpretation of the offence and the lasting damage it caused, they may experience increased guilt for their actions. The experience of guilt has been shown to facilitate reparative efforts and restore emotional equity within the relationship, (Baumeister et al., 1994, 1995), which in turn may improve communication between the two parties and lead to more positive outcomes.

Moreover, in understanding that the victim has not forgiven them due to what the victim perceives as an incomprehensible, unjustifiable, and severely hurtful wrong, offenders may be able to provide a better explanation for the behavioural motivation. Doing so may help to facilitate empathic understanding in the victim, thereby increasing forgiveness (Exline et al., 2008). Accordingly, the utilisation of the BTF in such applied settings may increase the effectiveness of any attempts to help individuals overcome interpersonal conflict.

Second, results indicate that there are a number of different causes of unforgiving victim responses that may be differentially influenced by victim and transgression characteristics, of which practitioners need to be aware before embarking upon a treatment program. The effectiveness of any forgiveness intervention applied by a professional will therefore be strongly dependent upon the specific reason the victim has for not forgiving their offender. Accordingly, practitioners need to tailor the focus of their forgiveness interventions to the barrier most important to the unforgiving victim.

As discussed by Ross and Boon (2010), victims who are actively withholding forgiveness from their offenders have largely chosen to not forgive, and thus may be better able to move towards forgiveness. As such, victims who endorse the *Won't Forgive* barriers may be open to problem-based interventions that focus on the detrimental impact of revenge (Stuckless & Goranson, 1992) and propose less damaging strategies that may meet the victim's face needs whilst repairing the victim-offender relationship.

Conversely, victims who endorse the *Can't Forgive* barriers are more affected by the emotional impact of the transgression and perceptions of not being able to forgive due to judgements of offender blameworthiness and demonisation. Consequently, these victims may benefit most from an emotion-oriented approach that focuses on increasing empathic understanding towards the offender (Exline et al., 2008), whilst highlighting the intrapersonal benefits of forgiveness and the distinction between forgiveness and reconciliation (Macaskill, 2005b; Wade, Johnson, & Meyer, 2008). By therefore providing a detailed picture of the rationalisations victims make for their unforgiving responses and the impact of forgiveness predictors on their rationalisations, these findings may enable

practitioners to make more informed decisions regarding their approach towards helping victims forgive.

Third, results highlight the potential misconceptions victims may have regarding the constituents of forgiveness. Research has consistently shown that lay people regularly confound forgiveness with accepting, condoning, or excusing the transgression and reconciling with the offender (Fincham et al., 2006; Freedman & Chang, 2010; Kanz, 2000; Kearns & Fincham, 2004; Mullet et al., 2004; Younger et al., 2004; Zechmeister & Romero, 2002), and the endorsement of the *Won't Forgive* barriers in this thesis, particularly *Recidivism Prevention*, supports these findings. Fincham and colleagues (Fincham et al., 2006; Kearns & Fincham, 2004) argue that such misconceptions about forgiveness, many of which are also often held by practitioners (Butler, Dahlin, & Fife, 2002; Gordon et al., 2001), strongly influence victims' willingness to forgive their offenders and thus may limit willingness to engage in forgiveness processes.

Researchers maintain that forgiveness does not equate to accepting or condoning the transgression or reconciling with the offender (Baumeister et al., 1998; Exline et al., 2003; McCullough & Hoyt, 2002), and that promoting forgiveness in therapeutic settings is not the same as encouraging clients to overlook or justify a transgression (Wade, Johnson, et al., 2008; Wade & Worthington, 2005). Consequently, these results highlight the necessity for practitioners to a) first understand what forgiveness does and does not entail, and b) identify and disseminate any such misconceptions held by their unforgiving clients (Freedman & Chang, 2010; Kearns & Fincham, 2004). In examining the barriers important to each victim's unforgiving response, practitioners may be able to target these misconceptions in therapeutic interventions, providing victims with a

more accurate understanding of forgiveness whilst devising strategies to address these concerns (Enright & Fitzgibbons, 2000; Freedman & Chang, 2010).

Finally, results provide strong evidence for the comparative importance of some barriers over others, with *Trust Dissolution* and *Offender Response* emerging as the barriers most representative of victims' unforgiving responses, and *Impression Management* and *Vengeful Desires* emerging as the least representative. These results support qualitative work utilising unforgiving victims (Rapske et al., 2010; Younger et al., 2004) but contradict views held by some practitioners that forgiveness is a purely intrapersonal phenomena, or that contextual factors such as offender apology are unimportant to the forgiveness process (Denton & Martin, 1998; Konstam et al., 2000). Indeed, results demonstrate the importance of the interpersonal relationship and the victim/offender dynamic to forgiveness, and indicate that contextual factors, such as transgression severity or judgements of offender blameworthiness, are crucial to unforgiving victim responses.

Results therefore highlight the necessity for practitioners to first consider all elements of the transgression situation, whether or not they personally consider them to be important to forgiveness, before determining a treatment plan, and tailor their treatment accordingly. Doing so would reduce the potentially detrimental impact of practitioner misinformation or misconceptions on the effectiveness of the therapeutic intervention.

6.7 Pertinent questions and future directions

Due to the scarcity of research into unforgiving victim responses and the complexity of the area, findings from this thesis have revealed a number of avenues for future research that would benefit investigations into unforgiving victim responses.

First, future research needs to investigate the accuracy of the hierarchical *Can't Forgive-Won't Forgive* structure in explaining BTF interrelationships. Although results from Chapter 4 provide support for the stability of the structure and its effectiveness in explaining barrier relationships, factor correlations at both the individual and superordinate levels suggest that the sub-barriers across the groupings share ample variance. Moreover, although results indicate that *Offender Response* may not clearly fit within the BTF structure, findings from Studies 1 and 2 and past research (e.g., McCullough et al., 1998; Zechmeister et al., 2004) highlight the relevance of the construct to unforgiving victim responses, and thus its inclusion in a measure of unforgiving rationalisations is unquestionable. Accordingly, future research is needed that further investigates the relationships between the BTF barriers and identifies a conceptual and empirical framework within which all barriers and their relationships may be effectively represented.

Research into the operationalisation of the barriers within the dual-factor structure may also assist in reducing the number of BTF scale items. At 45 items, the current iteration of the BTF is comprehensive yet lengthy, and thus its utility in theoretical and applied settings may be limited. Future research should focus increasing the user-friendliness of the BTF, reducing the barriers to their core elements with the aim of producing a final BTF that is approximately 20 items in length.

Future research that investigates and refines the conceptual framework of the BTF may also shed light on some of the pertinent questions that have arisen over the course of this thesis. First, research needs to identify the defining factor/s that govern barrier separation within the BTF. It is proposed herein that the barriers may be conceptualised as purposeful/intentional versus reactive/unintentional in nature, but how accurate is this conceptualisation? Ross and Boon (2010) propose that unforgiving victim responses may alternatively be conceptualised as decisional versus emotional unforgiveness, a division that differs somewhat to the conceptualisations within this thesis. Thus, research should investigate whether this conceptualisation better represents BTF relationships. Alternatively, with the division of the hierarchical barriers mirroring the variables considered in past research to be causes of unforgiving responses versus potential benefits of not forgiving, it is possible that the BTF may be more appropriately conceptualised along these lines. Further research is needed to investigate these possibilities.

Second, research needs to investigate the factors that influence endorsement of the two hierarchical barriers; can the determinants of the barriers be conceptualised along situational versus dispositional lines, as results seem to suggest, and if so, how do pro-social dispositional traits, such as agreeableness, factor into the structure? Moreover, as the barriers are proposed as situational unforgiving responses, it is anticipated that their endorsement may vary depending on the characteristics of the situation; accordingly, research needs to investigate the consistency of the relationships between the important state and trait predictors and barrier endorsement, whilst measuring additional predictors that may influence the barriers, to provide a more comprehensive picture of the BTF across situations.

Third, research may benefit from an investigation into the extent to which the barriers are simultaneously endorsed across situations, and the rank order of their importance to participants, depending on the transgression. For example, results indicate that *Trust Dissolution* is pertinent to betrayal situations, but to what extent is *Recidivism Prevention* also important? Conversely, *Impression Management* may be endorsed within public transgressions, but is *Enduring Effects* also relevant to such victims? Finally, results indicate that *Trust Dissolution* and *Vengeful Desires* share little variance; thus, what are the situations that lead to strong endorsement of *Vengeful Desires* but low endorsement of *Trust Dissolution*? Such an investigation, which could potentially be conducted with the use of transgression vignettes, may help to expand the BTF nomological network that has developed over the course of this thesis.

Future research also needs to investigate the stability and applicability of the BTF across a range of applied settings. Forgiveness interventions have been utilised within developmental settings (Ahmed & Braithwaite, 2005; Coleman & Byrd, 2003), cross-cultural situations (Huang & Enright, 2000; Hui & Bond, 2009), organisational and management settings (Aquino et al., 2006; Struthers, Dupuis, & Eaton, 2005), and within inter-group conflict (Strelan & Lawani, 2010; Wohl, Hornsey, & Bennett, 2012). Thus, as a measure of unforgiving victim responses developed for theoretical and applied work, it is important to investigate barrier endorsement and applicability within such settings. Results may reveal the extent to which the BTF can be generalised across situations and populations.

Finally, future research into barriers to forgiveness would strongly benefit from a longitudinal study on interpersonal offences in everyday life. Such a design would permit investigation of the relationship and wellbeing outcomes of

endorsement of the two barriers, and provide information on the factors that lead unforgiving victims towards forgiveness. A longitudinal analysis may also shed light on the factors that differentiate forgiving victims and transgressions from their unforgiven counterparts. Most importantly, a longitudinal study would shed light on the permanence of the unforgiving responses, revealing which barrier may constitute a greater overall hindrance to forgiveness, and the role forbearance plays in outcomes of barrier endorsement (cf. McCullough, Fincham, et al., 2003).

6.8 Concluding remarks

Due to the intra-and interpersonal benefits of forgiveness, and the pervasiveness and detrimental impact of prolonged conflict (McCullough, Bono, et al., 2007; McCullough, Fincham, et al., 2003; Orcutt et al., 2008; Reed & Enright, 2006), this thesis aimed to investigate *why* many victims experience difficulty forgiving following interpersonal transgressions, an area largely ignored within the forgiveness literature to date.

At its core, this thesis aimed to identify salient barriers to forgiveness based on past theoretical and qualitative work in the area, and operationalise these into a self-report BTF measure for future theoretical and applied work. This aim was achieved. Across the three studies, results complemented the qualitative work by Rapske et al. (Rapske et al., 2010) and Younger et al. (Younger et al., 2004), and the theoretical work by Baumeister and colleagues (Baumeister et al., 1998; Exline & Baumeister, 2000) on potential causes of unforgiving victim responses to interpersonal transgressions, providing quantitative support for the existence of the seven potential barriers to forgiveness.

Rigorous modelling analyses produced a valid and reliable seven-factor BTF measure with excellent psychometric properties, which effectively operationalised the identified barriers and related in expected ways to theoretically-relevant constructs. Moreover, results indicated that six of the barriers could be further operationalised within a dual-factor hierarchical structure that similarly displayed construct validity as a measure of unforgiving victim responses. In producing a valid and reliable self-report BTF measure in two different manifestations, this thesis thus provides a comprehensive tool that may be utilised in theoretical and applied settings to assist in identifying the cognitions underlying unforgiving victim responses.

In accordance with Rapske et al.'s (2010) recommendation, results from this thesis also enrich the findings of the aforementioned studies by providing a nomological network, validated within an experimental setting, to explain a) when the unforgiving response reflects an unwillingness to forgive and when it reflects an inability, and b) the ways in which key predictors of forgiveness influence endorsement of these unforgiving responses. To the best of our knowledge, this thesis marks the first effort to produce such a comprehensive framework, which thus addresses a significant gap in the literature. In addition, by providing the first quantitative investigation into rationalisations for unforgiving victim responses and the factors that may influence these barriers, findings from this thesis provide insight into barriers to forgiveness that transcend research on the predictors of forgiveness, which comprise the bulk of research in the area to date.

Moreover, in investigating the psychometric properties of the seven-factor BTF, results provide strong evidence for the rank importance of the barriers to unforgiving victims. In accordance with work on unforgiving victims (Rapske et al.,

2010; Younger et al., 2004), participants across the datasets uniformly indicated that the dissolution of trust in the relationship and the offender's poor reparative efforts constituted the greatest barriers to forgiveness, whilst desires to vengefully control the offender's behaviour or prevent ego damage were relatively unimportant to unforgiving responses. Results therefore provide quantitative support for this qualitative work, which together present a convincing impression of the primary causes of unforgiving responses in close relationships.

Finally, in validating the BTF against established forgiveness measures, results provide strong evidence for the comparative importance of the two superordinate barriers to forgiveness outcomes. Across the studies, results indicated that *Won't Forgive* had a stronger influence on vengeful motivations towards the offender than *Can't Forgive*, while *Can't Forgive* had a stronger influence on avoidant and benevolent motivations towards the offender and perceptions of having forgiven, results that were replicated when applied to a standardised transgression. As these elements are considered the constituents of state forgiveness (McCullough, Fincham, et al., 2003; McCullough et al., 1998), results suggest that *Can't Forgive* may present a greater overall hindrance to forgiveness. In investigating these relationships, this thesis therefore provides the first empirical investigation into the potential outcomes of different unforgiving responses.

As results across this thesis have highlighted, the complexity of unforgiven situations and the scarcity of research in the area have left many important questions unanswered. However, findings from this thesis provide a solid basis for determining the nature and causes of unforgiving victim responses above and

beyond forgiveness predictors. This work thus paves the way for further theoretical and empirical investigations into unforgiving victim responses following interpersonal transgressions.

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Appendix

Obligated and Non-obligated sample FA tables

Table A1*Obligated Sample- Factor Loadings for Exploratory Factor Analysis with Geomin Rotation of Seven-Factor Model*

No.	Items	F1	F2	F3	F4	F5	F6	F7
4	Our relationship has been irreparably damaged by what they did.	0.801	-0.078	-0.009	0.010	0.118	-0.186	0.003
10	What they did permanently severed all trust between us.	0.798	0.062	-0.041	0.156	0.027	-0.046	0.105
42	In acting as they did, they've proven that they're not trustworthy.	0.762	0.044	0.246	-0.040	-0.028	0.084	-0.114
33	My opinion of them has changed too much as a result of how they acted.	0.749	-0.031	-0.105	0.035	0.036	0.018	0.207
1	I can't rely on them anymore after what they did.	0.693	0.121	0.031	-0.135	0.025	0.098	-0.113
38	I can no longer believe anything they say to be true.	0.644	0.132	0.055	0.008	0.026	0.098	0.034
16	I don't want a relationship with someone I can't depend on.	0.519	-0.009	0.242	0.073	-0.116	-0.021	-0.011
15	They don't seem to feel guilty or bad about how they treated me.	0.004	0.930	-0.144	0.089	0.013	-0.003	0.105
23	They haven't apologised for what they did.	0.050	0.907	-0.007	-0.013	-0.083	-0.025	-0.012
32	They haven't taken responsibility for what happened.	0.000	0.893	0.130	-0.093	0.001	-0.104	-0.035
7	They are acting like they did nothing wrong.	0.017	0.848	-0.033	-0.020	0.034	-0.054	0.054
64	I don't believe they are truly sorry for what they did.	0.170	0.807	0.018	0.046	0.010	0.102	-0.003
37	They haven't tried to make up for what they did.	-0.051	0.787	0.038	0.045	0.006	0.108	-0.012
41	They downplayed the severity of their actions.	0.077	0.429	0.211	0.161	0.105	-0.056	-0.023
65	To do otherwise might encourage them to repeat the behaviour in the future.	0.000	0.158	0.810	0.023	-0.039	0.051	0.008
9	I want to prevent the behaviour and/or the event from happening again.	-0.026	-0.038	0.768	-0.197	[0.369]	[-0.373]	0.079
51	I don't want them to think it's ok to do it again.	-0.005	0.062	0.727	0.217	-0.024	0.014	0.040
20	I don't want it to seem like I am condoning or permitting the behaviour by forgiving it.	-0.047	0.068	0.633	0.287	-0.066	0.025	0.067
3	If I forgave them, they might think that what they did was ok.	0.103	0.138	0.629	0.160	0.049	-0.010	-0.087
40	I want them to know that there are consequences for their behaviour.	0.158	-0.065	0.609	0.074	0.043	0.222	-0.055

No.	Items	F1	F2	F3	F4	F5	F6	F7
24	By not forgiving, I am communicating to them that I won't put up with such hurtful behaviour.	0.172	-0.048	0.545	0.229	-0.219	0.087	0.128
50	Some things just cannot and should not be forgiven.	0.157	-0.051	-0.057	0.765	-0.029	0.076	0.029
35	What they did was too wrong or reprehensible to forgive.	0.245	-0.029	-0.020	0.703	0.076	0.041	-0.121
14	I have too strong a stance against what they did.	0.030	-0.004	0.182	0.623	0.035	-0.132	-0.153
45	I couldn't respect myself if I did forgive them.	-0.081	0.109	0.030	0.608	0.093	0.171	0.230
57	Forgiving would require me to compromise my principles/standards or myself.	-0.016	-0.023	[0.299]	0.547	0.065	-0.040	0.031
5	I could never forgive someone who could do something like that.	[0.465]	0.000	0.020	0.514	-0.024	-0.091	0.043
22	I am too disgusted by what they did.	[0.299]	0.107	0.118	0.478	0.132	-0.257	0.029
56	I haven't been able to put what happened behind me.	-0.004	-0.018	0.035	0.081	0.781	0.096	-0.116
8	The event is still too distressing to me.	0.073	-0.030	-0.019	0.048	0.713	-0.144	0.179
28	I continue to suffer the consequences (e.g., physical/psychological/financial) of their actions.	0.105	0.040	-0.071	-0.054	0.699	-0.037	0.125
59	The event is still really relevant in my life.	0.029	-0.008	-0.078	[0.307]	0.683	0.102	0.019
43	I am still too upset about what happened to consider forgiveness.	0.196	-0.003	0.059	-0.010	0.616	-0.033	0.033
46	I am currently too bitter about what they did.	-0.027	0.070	0.028	0.262	0.615	0.268	-0.186
18	I continue to feel anger and resentment when I think about the other person and/or what they did.	0.104	0.097	0.138	0.110	0.515	0.079	-0.183
55	I want to be able to use what they did against them in the future.	-0.054	0.067	-0.037	-0.014	0.040	0.877	0.050
52	If I forgave, I would no longer be able to make them feel guilty or bad about what they did.	-0.058	-0.046	0.124	0.070	0.055	0.744	0.103
60	I want to get back at them for what they did.	0.123	0.102	-0.021	-0.013	-0.013	0.733	0.166
34	Withholding forgiveness gives me a level of control over them.	0.020	-0.127	0.159	-0.104	-0.004	0.662	0.183
19	By not forgiving them, I am punishing them for what they did.	0.117	-0.167	[0.317]	0.028	0.071	0.597	-0.004
62	Not forgiving enables me to influence their behaviour in our relationship.	0.049	-0.133	0.234	0.005	-0.087	0.581	0.235

No.	Items	F1	F2	F3	F4	F5	F6	F7
12	I want to get something out of them for what they did to me.	-0.016	-0.032	0.225	-0.005	0.112	0.438	0.193
29	It might make others perceive me as weak or foolish.	0.007	-0.006	0.110	0.057	0.030	0.080	0.780
61	Forgiving that person might make me lose face in front of others.	-0.012	-0.002	0.054	0.179	-0.028	0.245	0.629
11	I don't want them and/or other people to see me as a pushover.	0.011	0.216	[0.325]	-0.093	0.058	-0.039	0.526
17	I don't want other people to think I would let someone treat me like that.	0.063	0.089	0.270	0.159	-0.096	0.060	0.501
58	I don't want my willingness to forgive to be seen as a weakness to be exploited or manipulated.	0.018	0.119	[0.327]	-0.008	0.050	0.128	0.487
36	It might be seen by them and/or others as backing down from the conflict.	0.013	0.010	0.218	0.038	-0.025	[0.348]	0.388
54	I don't want the other person to think I can't or won't stand up for myself.	-0.061	0.092	[0.546]	-0.038	0.031	0.126	0.358

Note. Item loadings $\geq .3$ on hypothesised latent variables are presented in bold. Item loadings $\geq .3$ on alternate factors presented in parentheses.

Table A2*Obligated Sample: CFA Factor Correlation Matrix*

Factor	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Trust Dissolution						
2. Offender Response	.43***					
3. Recidivism Prevention	.52***	.39***				
4. Morality Judgements	.71***	.41***	.64***			
5. Enduring Effects	.58***	.37***	.41***	.69***		
6. Vengeful Desires	.30***	-.02	.70***	.40***	.25***	
7. Impression Management	.37***	.25***	.82***	.46***	.27***	.80***

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

Table A3*Non-obligated Sample: EFA Factor Correlation Matrix*

Factor	1	2	3	4
1. Trust Dissolution/ Morality Judgements				
2. Offender Response	.33***			
3. Impression Management/ Recidivism Prevention	.47***	.12*		
4. Enduring Effects	.25***	.15*	.28***	
5. Vengeful Desires	.42***	.27***	.20**	.40***

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