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Crisis Situations, Communication Strategies, and Media Coverage

A Multicase Study Revisiting the Communicative Response Model

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This study focuses on the relationships among crisis situations, crisis response strategies, and media coverage. The author examines four political crisis situations and the strategies used to manage them; adopts a comparative, multicase, holistic research design; uses typical content analysis procedures for data analysis; and applies pattern-matching logic to compare the data against a theoretical model, the corporate communicative response model. More than 1,220 news articles covering four political figures' crises are examined. Results indicate that the use of denial in a commission situation, justification in a standards situation, and concession in an agreement situation increased positive media coverage. The results also suggest that for all but the agreement situation, a combination of crisis communication strategies was the most effective strategy to employ. This study has theoretical and practical implications for the symbolic approach in general and for crisis communicative responses in particular.

Keywords: *crisis situation; communication strategies; media coverage; Taiwan*

Accusations of unethical behavior force political or corporate crisis managers to offer public responses. During the past two decades, the symbolic approach to impression management has provided valuable insights into this issue. This perspective uses a variety of rhetorical and account-giving concepts to examine how organizations and political figures use communication to protect their images during a crisis (e.g., Coombs, 1995). The two main assumptions of this perspective are that crises threaten organizations' or political figures' images (Allen & Caillouet, 1994; Benoit, 1995) and that crisis response strategies are symbolic resources that managers employ to protect or repair their images (Coombs, 1998).

Although several varieties of the symbolic approach have been fruitful, the relationships among crisis situations, crisis response strategies, and their effects have just begun to be investigated (Benoit, 1995; Coombs, 1998; Coombs & Holladay, 1996). Coombs (1998) held that the characteristics of each crisis situation would call for the use of certain crisis communication strategies (CCSs) and the avoidance of others. That is, the crisis manager should select one or more CCSs in accordance with the configuration of

elements in the crisis situation. With so little known about the relationships among crisis situations, communication strategies, and the effects associated with the strategies (Coombs, 1998), the purpose of this study is to refine a system for analyzing these relationships. I adopted Bradford and Garrett's (1995) corporate communicative response model, which conducts an experiment and focuses on how actors use communication strategies in particular kinds of crises, as a theoretical framework. I tested this model in four independent cases that contained accusations against Taiwanese political figures alleging extramarital affairs. Although each case concerned a particular politician's actions, they had important implications for the political parties that the individuals represented and, hence, provided an appropriate test of the model. Moreover, considering different research methods, I made several necessary conceptual respecifications of and methodological modifications to the model so it would better represent the actual conditions of the cases examined.

Conceptualization

Bradford and Garrett's (1995) corporate communicative response model serves as a theoretical framework in this study. The fundamental attribution error and discounting principle form the theoretical foundations for the model. The fundamental attribution error is regarded as a pervasive tendency for observers to attribute the responsibility for negative actions to stable personal dispositions of the involved actor, such as dishonesty, greed, selfishness, and irresponsibility (Jones & Nisbett, 1971). Bradford and Garrett emphasized that observers tend to focus on the negative action or event, whereas the context in which the event occurred often fades into the background. Unless the actor, whose actions are being evaluated, provides observers with a response that furnishes situational information (i.e., extenuating circumstances surrounding the action) and/or positive dispositional information (i.e., values, intentions, standards, remorse), observers may misattribute the responsibility for the action to the actor's negative dispositions.

The discounting principle suggests that actors can present information so as to influence external observers' perceptions when evaluating events involving these actors. Despite the tendency of fundamental attribution, any real negative dispositions for an offensive action may be discounted if other plausible explanations for the effect are also present (Kelley, 1973). Thus, if an accused actor provides an appropriate explanation for an allegedly offensive behavior, observers may use this information to refute the negative nature of the allegations.

Response Path: Four Types of Response

Based on the discounting principle, Bradford and Garrett (1995) proposed four distinct communicative responses in their model. Bradford and Garrett held that actors accused of improper behavior might offer

Denials: Statements that deny the occurrence of the questionable event or that deny that the accused organization is the cause of the event.

Excuses: Statements that argue that the accused organization should not be held responsible for the occurrence and/or impact of the questionable event because certain factors limited the organization's control of the occurrence and/or impact of the event.

Justifications: Statements that argue that although the accused organization is responsible for the questionable event, the standards being used by the accusers to evaluate the impact of the questionable event are inappropriate.

Concessions: Statements that agree that the questionable event did occur, that the accused organization caused the event, that the accused organization had control of the occurrence and/or impact of the event, and that the evaluative standards being used by the accusers are appropriate (p. 878).

Four Crisis Situations Corresponding to the Four Communication Responses

Bradford & Garrett (1995) further identified four crisis situations, on the grounds that analyzing crisis situations is an important step toward understanding the effective use of crisis responses:

1. Commission situation: No evidence of corporate commission.
2. Control situation: Evidence of corporate commission, but no evidence of corporate control.
3. Standards situation: Evidence of corporate commission and control, but questionable standards of assessment.
4. Agreement situation: Evidence of corporate commission and control, and appropriate standards of assessment (p. 877).

Bradford and Garrett (1995) empirically tested the relationships among crisis situations, response strategies, and the effects associated with them. The findings indicate that corporate executives or crisis managers must not only respond but also select an appropriate communicative response if they hope to protect their organization's image. Bradford and Garrett further asserted in their model that

1. When an accused actor can provide evidence that he or she did not commit an allegedly unethical action (commission situation), this actor should use a denial.
2. When an accused actor can provide evidence that he or she did not have control of the occurrence and/or impact of an allegedly unethical action (control situation), this actor should use an excuse.
3. When an accused actor can provide evidence that inappropriate standards are being used to evaluate this allegedly unethical action (standards situation), this actor should use a justification.
4. When an accused actor concludes that the allegations raised are valid (agreement situation), the actor should use a concession (pp. 878-879).

Among the four CCSs, Bradford and Garrett's (1995) study further shows the comparative effectiveness of the use of concession; they held that "perhaps the most striking finding in our study was the general robustness of the concession as an effective communicative response option" (p. 885). In their empirical findings, concession was the optimal communicative response in every situation except the control situation. They concluded that concession might not only protect and maintain corporate image but also actually enhance it.

Image Coverage in the Media

This study attempts to explore the effect of CCSs by investigating how political figures' images are presented in media coverage during crises, which has been demonstrated as influential on the public's perceptions of political actors, issues, and events (e.g., Yioutas & Segvic, 2003). Scholars have suggested that image represents the sum of beliefs, attitudes, and impressions that a person or in most cases, a group of stakeholders has regarding an object (Gotsi & Wilson, 2001). In contrasting reputation and image, Gotsi and Wilson (2001) defined *reputation* as a stakeholder's overall evaluation of an object "over time" (p. 29), whereas *image* was defined as an evaluation of the object at a certain point in time or for a specific period of time. Moreover, Gotsi and Wilson further speculated that the evaluation is based on the stakeholder's "direct experiences with the company," as well as with "any other form of communication and symbolism that provides information about the firm's actions and/or a comparison with the actions of other leading rivals" (p. 29).

Applying the above reasoning to this study, I focus on examining a political figure's image as perceived by various stakeholders such as opinion leaders, reporters, the governors, and so forth. The underlying assumption is that with the passage of time, the aggregation of the images held by various stakeholders could influence an organization's or political figure's overall reputation (Fombrun, 1996).

Model Respecification: Response Type and Crisis Situation

Type of response. Although providing definitions of four types of responses, Bradford and Garrett (1995) did not speculate on the specific techniques used in each response. For developing a better coding scheme that could accord the principles of model comprehensiveness (to reflect the reality as accurately as possible) and parsimoniousness (to avoid adding a new category, if possible), I consulted the scholars who used the same theoretical orientation with Bradford and Garrett and developed similar lists of organizational responses ranging from denial, excuse, and justification to corrective action (Benoit, 1995, 1997; Coombs, 1999) for placing response to type. Two types of responses need further respecification.

First, adopting Coombs's (1998) perspective, I incorporated corrective action and full apology into the concession response. Coombs defined *corrective action* as a response in which "crisis managers seek to repair the damage from the crisis, take steps to prevent a repeat of the crisis, or both" (p.180). Technically, the practice of corrective action could include both actual action and the verbal promise of future action: compensation, rectification, proactive works, and a change of corporate policy (Coombs, 1995). Moreover, Coombs defined *full apology* as a response in which the "crisis manager publicly states that the organization takes full responsibility for the crisis and asks forgiveness for the crisis" (p. 180).

Second, with respect to specific techniques used in the strategy of justification, I include responses that stressed the positive characteristics or records of the accused person (coded as the substrategy of bolstering), redefined the facts of a case (coded as the substrategy of differentiation), or reframed the facets of a case in a larger context (coded as the substrategy of transcendence). Among the substrategies, it is debatable as to whether bolstering should be included in justification. On one hand, Coombs (1999) suggested that bolstering could serve as a separate strategy to support other CCSs and be applied to various kinds of crisis situations. On the other hand, Benoit (1995, 1997) suggested including bolstering in justification. Moreover, Huang, Lin, and Su (2005) showed a factor analysis revealing that the above substrategies were loaded clearly on the factor of justification.

Responding to inconclusive viewpoints, I decided to include bolstering in justification for two reasons. The first concerns the principles of model comprehensiveness and parsimoniousness. Secondly, for definition, bolstering should fit Bradford and Garrett's (1995) category of justification to a great extent because assertion of an accused person's positive characteristics or previous records can serve as a viable standard for evaluation, with an attempt to offset the offensive action by increasing positive affect for the perpetrator and, thus, to neutralize the attacks from other standards.

Crisis situation. The definition of *control situation* should be reconsidered for model testing in this current study. Bradford and Garrett (1995) defined *control situation* as a scenario with "evidence of corporate commission, but no evidence of corporate control" (p. 877). In reality, however, no evidence of corporate control could exist in two forms (i.e., natural laws and human malice). The first situation concerns natural law. For example, Bradford and Garrett manipulated a "control situation" in an experiment using the claim that "this just happened to be one of the rare cases where the young man's immune system reacted to the drug" (p. 888), which suggests that the cause of the event was natural law.

The second situation involves malice of other people; for example, a forged tape in a case examined in this study. The second situation involves malice of other people; for example, a forged tape in a case examined in this study. The case does not fit a typical crisis situation in Bradford and Garrett (1995) because it exhibits no true evidence of

corporate commission nor control. Moreover, because discrepant perceptions toward crisis situations could exist between crisis managers and their stakeholders,² such a case can be regarded as a mixture of commission and control situations. Crisis managers would perceive the situation as commission and use denial as a response strategy. On the other hand, the stakeholders could perceive it as control and, thus, an excuse response should be used to achieve the best effect. Responding to the variation of crisis situations, and to better fit the case to its corresponding type, I define such a case involving human malice as a mixed type and hereafter refer to it as a commission/ control situation.

Hypotheses

Grounded in Bradford and Garrett's (1995) corporate communicative response model, this study explores political figures' images in association with their chosen CCSs that appear in the media during a crisis. Two subhypotheses are applied to each of the four types of crisis situations. Moreover, I posit a hypothesis about the relationship between media coverage and the concession communicative response in particular:

Hypothesis 1a: In a commission situation, actors would be more likely to use the denial communicative response than any of the other responses.

Hypothesis 1b: In a commission situation, actors using a denial communicative response would receive positive media coverage and would receive it more so than they would by using any of the other responses.

Hypothesis 2a: In a mixed commission/control situation, actors would be more likely to use the denial communicative response than they would any other responses.

Hypothesis 2b: In a mixed commission/control situation, actors using an excuse communicative response would receive positive media coverage and would receive it more so than they would by using any of the other responses.

Hypothesis 3a: In a standards situation, actors would be more likely to use the justification communicative response than they would any other responses.

Hypothesis 3b: In a standards situation, actors using a justification communicative response would receive positive media coverage and would receive it more so than they would by using any of the other responses.

Hypothesis 4a: In an agreement situation, actors would be more likely to use the concession communicative response than other responses.

Hypothesis 4b: In an agreement situation, actors using a concession communicative response would receive positive media coverage and would receive it more so than they would by using any of the other responses.

Hypothesis 5: The concession communicative response will result in positive media coverage across all four cases.

Last, while exploring the answers to the above hypotheses, the question of whether media coverage is affected when different combinations of strategies are used in each crisis situation is also addressed.

Method

Research Method

In this study, I used a comparative case study approach to examine the relationships among the examined variables. I chose this method for two reasons. First, it is obvious that a complex contextual phenomenon such as a political figure's alleged unethical behavior could be better understood if the context of the action were also studied. By providing the kind of information that experimental methods cannot, case studies offer the prospect of new insights into the connections between the pertinent variables (see Eisenhardt, 1989). Second, the use of multiple cases allows for cross-case analysis, which could significantly enhance the investigation of the research hypotheses in this study.

Case Selection

Four political figures' alleged extramarital affairs were investigated. This context is an appropriate test for Bradford and Garrett's (1995) model. First, the theoretical foundations for this model (i.e., the fundamental attribution error and discounting principle) are not limited to corporate contexts but are broad based, addressing public attributions to unethical behaviors in a general manner. Second, a politician's indiscretions affect both the politician and his or her party. Political figures' acting in the public domain, as organizations do, essentially drives them to meet the social expectations, such as social responsibility, social accountability, and public interests.

The multiple-case design used in this study more closely resembles a quasi experiment than a random sampling strategy. The sampling criteria for this study are that the cases should be similar in some aspects, to control possible extraneous variations, but different in others, to allow cross-case comparisons to be made.

With respect to the differences among cases, this study relies on theoretical sampling: Cases were chosen for theoretical reasons (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Specifically, the crisis situations considered for case selection varied in terms of the available evidence of wrongdoing and the applied standards of assessment, a process that affords their accordance with Bradford and Garrett's (1995) classification of the four crisis situations. The four case studies are described below.

Case A, fitting the commission situation that is defined as no evidence of corporate commission, was a case involving the charges that Taipei Mayor Shui-Bian Chen toured Macao as a sex tourist during the 1998 Taipei mayoral election campaign. In this case, no evidence of the alleged sex tour had been presented by the accuser.

Case B, identified as a mixed commission/control situation, which involved controversial evidence of corporate commission but no evidence of corporate control, was a crisis involving a cassette tape recording concerning Kaoshiung Mayor Dun-Yi Wu's extramarital affair in 1998. In this case, the accuser provided the tape, but the mayor

claimed that it was forged and that the forgery was out of his control. Two-and-a-half years later, a news release confirmed that the tape was indeed forged.

Case C was designated as a standards situation with evidence of corporate commission and control but questionable standards of assessment. In this case, a senior journalist, Yu-Kou Chou, claimed that she had dated Yi-Chiao Huang, the spokesperson for the Taiwan provincial government and chief lieutenant for the Taiwan Province Governor, for more than 2 years. Ms. Chou accused Mr. Huang of having deceived her about his marital status and about having another lover during the time he was dating her. Moreover, she claimed that this deception forced her to have a nonvoluntary abortion. Mr. Huang admitted that he had dated Chou but claimed that Ms. Chou and he had different perceptions about their relationship.

Case D was specified as an agreement situation with evidence of corporate commission, control, and appropriate standards of assessment. In this case, a daily newspaper reported a love note faxed to the paper. This note was written by Hsiao-Yen Chang, who had recently been transferred from his post as secretary general of the Kuomintang to be secretary general of the office of the president. This note revealed an extramarital affair. Chang admitted that he wrote the note and made a public announcement apologizing for his wrongdoing.

Similarity was another critical factor considered for case comparison and for controlling possible extraneous variations because of environmental factors. First, I controlled key environmental variations by limiting the cases to accusations of political figures' extramarital affairs. Second, I chose four cases in which the degree of the perceived crisis responsibility of the political figures in question was similar (see Table 1, which highlights the major features of the cases; more details about the cases can be obtained by contacting the author). Coombs (1998) defined *crisis responsibility* as the perception that the organization is responsible for the crisis and identified three elements believed to affect such perceptions: attribution dimension, the history of organizational performance, and severity of the crisis. These three elements involving crisis responsibility in the four cases are described below.

The first factor is attribution dimension. Coombs (1998) identified two dimensions explaining basic crisis attributions: external control and personal control/locus of causality. Personal control/locus of causality is concerned with the degree to which the organization itself could control the crisis event, whereas external control is the degree to which external agents could control the crisis event (Coombs, 1995). Stronger perceptions of personal control/locus of causality would increase crisis responsibility and image damage if the organization or political figures had the capacity to prevent the crisis or event. In contrast, perceptions of external control should lessen crisis responsibility and image damage if it is shown that the organization or the accused person could do little or nothing to prevent the crisis, as in the case of a natural disaster (Coombs, 1998). In this study, the nature of the crisis that concerns extramarital affairs in all four cases is characterized as personal control/locus of causality.

Table 1
Major Features of the Four Cases

	Case A	Case B	Case C	Case D
Position of the political figure when the event occurred	Mayor of Taipei	Mayor of Kaoshiung	Spokesperson for the Taiwan provincial government and chief lieutenant for the Taiwan Province governor	Secretary general of the office of the president
Marital status of the political figure	Married	Married	Divorced when the event occurred but married when the affair started	Married
Nature of the crisis/accusation	Extramarital affair/sex tour	Extramarital affair	Simultaneous extramarital affairs	Extramarital affair
Element 1 of crisis responsibility: Attribution	Personal control/locus	Personal control/locus	Personal control/locus	Personal control/locus
Element 2 of crisis responsibility: Performance history	Good	Good	Good	Good
Element 3 of crisis responsibility: Severity of damage	Personal reputation and the upcoming election	Personal reputation and the upcoming election	Personal reputation and career appointment	Personal reputation and career appointment
Crisis situation	Commission situation: No evidence of commission	Control/Commission situation: no true evidence of commission (a forged tape due to human malice) and no evidence of control; a mixture of commission and control situation	Standards situation: Partial evidence of commission (evidence of dating but no evidence of abortion as accused) and questionable standards of assessment	Agreement situation: Evidence of commission, control, and appropriate standards of assessment
Outcome	Failure in the mayoral election 1 month later but victory in the presidential election 1.5 years later	Failure in the mayoral election	Demoted from his current position but elected as a congressman 3 years later	Resigned from his current position but elected as a congressman 2 years later

The second element of crisis responsibility concerns the performance history of the people or organizations in question. In this study, the four political figures in question had favorable performance histories. None of them had been known to engage in such misconduct before.

The third element related to crisis responsibility is the severity of the crisis. All four cases involved accusations of extramarital affairs. The damage involved the political figures' images, and might, in turn, severely affect public perception and judgment of their fitness as public servants.

Data Collection

This study selected *China Times*, *United Daily News*, and *Liberty Times* for observation of the four cases, as these are Taiwan's top three dailies in terms of circulation. Because the cases examined have a political context, the political positions of the newspapers also were considered in the selection of newspapers. These three newspapers formed a balanced group in terms of their political positions (Li, 1996; Su, 1997). It should be noted that in Cases A and B, in which the 1998 Taipei and Kaoshiung mayoral elections were involved, two more newspapers were added for observation. *Independence Morning News*, a local paper that leans toward one of the two political parties, was added in an attempt to include local news angles and news coverage. *Central Daily*, which leans toward the other party, was then added to balance the political position of *Independence Morning News*.

Data Coding, Intercoder Reliability, and Data Analysis

To obtain the maximum coverage of individual issues, each case was coded during its critical discourse moment, the period when there was a large amount of reporting and commentary on the issue as it developed. Each news coverage item that pertained directly to the case served as a basic unit of analysis and was coded; this included news releases, commentaries, interviews, special issues, poll reviews, readers' comments, and cartoons. Other items, such as personnel announcements and general feature articles, were not examined.

The dependent variable was the positivity or negativity of the image coverage of the political figures in question, as deciphered from the coded news articles. Operationally, the perspectives of the reporter and other information sources (opinion leaders, neighbors, colleagues, and so on) in each news article were coded separately and then combined.

The operational procedure measuring image coverage in the media was developed as follows. First, in addition to coding the reporter and author of each news article, all the information sources were first identified. Then, judgments were made based on the theme shown in the statement(s) made by various information sources as well as on the overall theme covered in the entire news article by the reporter/author. A codebook

containing coding guidelines was provided for the coders. When disagreements occurred among coders, the researcher continually discussed the discrepancies with them until they determined a resolution for coding discrepant items. The coder judged the image conveyed to be negative (-1), neutral (0), or positive (+1). Positive means the presence of positive descriptors about the political figures in question in the media coverage, such words or phrases connoting *responsible, ethical, reliable, or respectable*. Commentary to the contrary (*irresponsible, unethical, immoral*) was coded as negative. Last, the final score of the dependent variable for each news article, essentially treated as a repeated measure, was assigned by summing those from various relevant information sources and the reporter/author of the news article. For example, if two information sources quoted in an article were coded (-1), and the author of the article was also coded (-1), then the final score for the dependent variable for that news article was (-3).

Three research assistants each coded 15% of the samples in Cases A and C—the two cases randomly chosen among the four cases. The reliability coefficients involving the number of sources present in news articles were .96, .94, and .95 (the composite reliability among three coders was .98) for Case A and .96 for Case C. The reliabilities about the valence of what the sources said were .93, .93, and .97 in Case A and .95 in Case C.³ With respect to the image coverage by reporters and/or authors, the Cohen's kappas were .60, .65, and .70 for Case A and .62 for Case C.

The independent variables are the four crisis communicative strategies as specified in the Conceptualization section above. Table 2 shows the definitions of the CCSs provided for the coders, as well as some examples of these CCSs from the cases.

Statements involving the uses of these CCSs made by the political figures within each news article were coded by calculating the total number of each CCS adopted. The coefficients of the composite reliability for denial, excuse, justification, concession, and total CCSs in Case A are .91, .99, .97, .99 and .98, respectively. The relevant reliability coefficients in Case C were .98, .99, .98, .99 and .99, respectively. Moreover, reasoning that the number of instances of image coverage in a news release might be a function of its length (Abrahamson & Park, 1994), I entered the space amount of each article, in square centimeters, as a control variable. The newspaper in which the article was published was also entered in the regression analyses as control for the possible influence of media on news frames (Glascock, 2000; Winfield, 1997).

Results

Basic Sample Information

Newspaper coverage on the case when and after the story became public was analyzed. Of the 1,221 coded articles, 234 (19%) were sampled from Case A, 458 (37%)

Table 2
Definitions and Examples of Crisis Communication Strategies

Crisis Communication Strategy	Definition	Example
Denial	Statements that deny the occurrence or existence of the questionable event or deny that the person is the cause of the event.	<p>Case A: Wen-Chia Lo, spokesperson for Mayor Chen Shui-Bian's election headquarters, stated that Mayor Chen had never gone to Macao or transferred his flight there. "It's puzzling that he is accused of going to Macao 11 times!" said Lo. (Central Daily, November 3, 1998, p. 4; United Daily News, November 3, 1998, p. 3)</p> <p>Case B: Mayor Dun-Yi Wu's first statement at his press conference was, "I absolutely am not having an affair." (Independence Morning News, November 29, 1998, p. 3)</p> <p>Case C: Yi-Chiao Huang stated, "Since we didn't have any sexual relationship, how could there have been an abortion?" (China Times, February 4, 1998, p. 24)</p> <p>Case D: (no denial was used).</p>
Excuse	Statements that argue that the accused person should not be held responsible for the occurrence and/or impact of the questionable event because certain factors limited the person's control of the occurrence and/or impact of the event.	<p>Case A: A spokesperson at the Shui-Bian Chen election headquarters stated, "The United Daily should look into the fact that Rei-Tu Lin [the accuser] did this for the Ying-Jeou Ma election camp [the opponent's election team]." (Independence Morning News, November 3, 1998, p. 4)</p> <p>Case B: Major Dun-Yi Wu claimed that the tape, with its vague and ambiguous content, was apparently forged. (Independence Morning News, November 19, 1998, p. 2)</p> <p>Case D: Hsiao-Yen Chang, referring to the note, stated that he wrote it under abnormal circumstances. (United Daily News, December 22, 1998, p. 1)</p>
Justification	Statements that argue that although the accused person is responsible for the questionable event, the standards being used by the accusers to evaluate the impact of the questionable event are inappropriate. Also, statements that stress the positive characteristics or record of the accused person (coded as a	<p>Case A: Shui-Bian Chen's election headquarters presented an article in a magazine alleging Rei-Tu Lin's [the accuser's] previous relations with Ying-Jeou Ma [the opponent]. (China Times, November 6, 1998, p. 18)</p> <p>Case B: Ms. Tsei (Mrs. Wu) said, with tears in her eyes, that she entirely understood how hard Dung-Yi Wu had been working and</p>

(continued)

Table 2
(continued)

Crisis Communication Strategy	Definition	Example
	substrategy of bolstering), redefine the facts of the case (coded as a substrategy of differentiation), or reframe the facets of a case in a larger context (coded as a substrategy of transcendence) to neutralize the attack.	<p>how dedicated he was to the city of Kaoshiung, because she and he had been together for more than 20 years. (Independence Morning News, November 20, 1998, p. 2)</p> <p>Case C: Yi-Chiao Huang said, "I regret the fact that we had different perceptions [about the relationship between Ms. Chou and him]. However, things are never entirely clear in an affair." (China Times, February 4, 1998, p. 24)</p> <p>Case D: Hsiao-Yen Chang said that "my carelessness in making friends resulted in this lapse." (Liberty Times, December 22, 1998, p. 4)</p>
Concession	Statements that agree that the questionable event did occur, that the accused person caused the event, that the accused person had control of the occurrence and/or impact of the event, and that the evaluative standards being used by the accusers are appropriate. Also, statements that the person apologizes, asks for forgiveness and/or will take or has taken corrective actions.	<p>Case B: Dung-Yi Wu said that he would offer NT\$200,000 (about US\$57,143) to anyone who could provide the original tape for investigation. (Central Daily, December 1, 1998, p. 3)</p> <p>Case C: Yi-Chiao Huang stated, "I made it clear that I admit my own share of the fault for our different perceptions [between himself and Ms. Chou]." (Liberty Times, February 3, 1998, p. 3)</p> <p>Case D: Hsiao-Yen Chang said, "This is my own irreparable mistake. My wife has been very understanding since my confession." (China Times, December 22, 1998, p. 2)</p> <p>Case D: Chang Shiao-yan stated in his news release, "I have to honestly admit that I made this critical mistake and must take responsibility for it. I have resigned today, and the President has accepted my resignation." (United Daily News, December 23, 1998, p. 2)</p>

from Case B, 351 (29%) from Case C, and 178 (15%) from Case D. The durations of the cases observed were from November 1 to 10, 1998, for Case A; from November 19 to December 3, 1998, for Case B; from February 2 to 17, 1998, for Case C; and from December 22 to 30, 1999, for Case D. Each of these time spans

represents the major block of time in which the cases were generating wide media coverage up to their resolution.

The Results of the Four Individual Cases

The results involving the four cases are discussed with respect to three aspects. The first concerns the frequencies of the CCSs reported in use. The second and third are related to the hypotheses positing that certain CCSs in certain crisis situations would receive positive media coverage, and furthermore, that they could have the strongest positive effect on media coverage. Multiple regression models were run for each case, investigating the relationship between the predictor variable and the dependent variable, with the other independent variables and controlled variables held constant. In separate hierarchical regression equations, the criterion variable was regressed on the covariates in Step 1, which include two control variables and the particular CCS hypothesized to be most effective in responding to a particular crisis situation. In Step 2, the scores of the criterion variables on the other three CCSs were added to test whether these measures could account for variance in media image coverage above and beyond that accounted for at the first stage.

Case A (Hypotheses 1a and 1b). In Case A, which fits a commission situation with no evidence of corporate commission, the two research subhypotheses, Hypotheses 1a and 1b, were mostly supported. As expected, the denial communicative response was reported as the most frequently used strategy ($n = 47, 47.5\%$), and this strategy had a positive impact on image coverage in the newspapers ($b = .229, p < .001$). The second subhypothesis positing that the denial strategy had the strongest effect on positive image coverage in the commission crisis situation, however, was only partially supported. The results reveal that the regression weight of denial was ranked as the second highest ($b = .229, p < .001$), following justification ($b = .294, p < .001$). Table 3 presents the frequencies and percentages of the four CCSs being used. Table 4 reports the regression coefficients that test the relationships between the predictor variable and the independent variables. For a further test, a hierarchical regression analysis was then conducted by entering control variables and the denial communicative response at the first stage. The overall model was significant at this stage, $R^2 = .116, F(6, 227) = 4.977, p < .001$, indicating that denial accounted for a significant and unique portion of the variance in media effect. In the second stage, the R^2 increment that resulted from the adding of the other three CCSs was also significant, $F_{\text{change}}(3, 224) = 8.426, p < .001$ (see Table 5).

Case B (Hypotheses 2a and 2b). There are differing levels of support for the hypotheses involving Case B, identified as a mixed commission/control situation. In this situation, the denial communicative response, as expected, was the dominant strategy used, followed by justification and excuse (see Table 3). The excuse communicative response had a statistically significant relationship with positive media

Table 3
Frequencies and Percentages of the Four Crisis Communication Strategies in Response to Four Crisis Situations

Crisis Communication Strategy	Case A (%)	Case B (%)	Case C (%)	Case D (%)	Chi-Square Test
Denial	47 (47.47)	284 (52.01)	17 (34.69)	0 (0.00)	$\chi^2 = 567.803$ $df = 9$ $p < .001$
Excuse	2 (2.02)	8 (1.47)	2 (4.08)	1 (1.33)	
Justification	45 (45.45)	248 (45.42)	27 (55.10)	6 (8.00)	
Concession	5 (5.05)	6 (1.10)	3 (6.12)	68 (90.67)	
Total	99 (100.00)	546 (100.00)	49 (100.00)	75 (100.00)	

Table 4
Multiple Regression Analyses

Variable	Case A (<i>n</i> = 233)		Case B (<i>n</i> = 456)		Case C (<i>n</i> = 350)		Case D (<i>n</i> = 177)	
	β	<i>SE</i>	β	<i>SE</i>	β	<i>SE</i>	β	<i>SE</i>
Newspaper								
<i>United News</i>	-.112	.21	.045	.41	.190**	.00	-.591	.19
<i>China Times</i>	-.028	.74	.006	.92	.104	.07	-.461	.27
<i>Liberty Times</i>	.038	.65	-.074	.18			-.375	.22
<i>Central Daily News</i>	-.004	.97	.048	.38				
Article space amount	.115	.07	-.047	.31	-.123*	.02	.134	.07
Denial	.224***	.00	.220***	.00	.074	.23		
Excuse	.016	.79	.085*	.05	-.003	.96	-.085	.33
Justification	.290***	.00	.176**	.00	.142*	.02	.027	.80
Concession	.056	.36	-.013	.77	.120*	.02	.429***	.00
Adjusted R^2	.203		.121		.080		.208	
<i>F</i>	6.452***		8.002***		5.332***		7.645***	

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

coverage ($b = .085$, $p = .05$); however, this CCS was ranked as the third strongest predictive power for positive media image coverage, following denial and justification (see Table 4). The hierarchical regressions demonstrated that the overall model at the first stage was not significant, $R^2 = .024$, $F(6, 450) = 1.861$, $p = .086$. Although the overall model at the first stage did not account for a significant portion of the variance in media image coverage, the excuse response accounted for an almost significant and unique portion of the variance of media effect ($b = .088$, $p = .06$). In the second stage, the other three CCSs were added to the model. The results showed that they account for additional variance in media coverage; the R^2 increment was significant, $F_{\text{change}}(3, 447) = 19.819$, $p < .001$.

Table 5
Hierarchical Regression Analyses

Predictor Variable	Step 1					Step 2				
	R^2	R^2 change	F change	β	sr	R^2	R^2 change	F change	β	sr
Case A ($n = 233$)										
<i>United News</i>	.116	.116***	4.977***	-.126		.206	.090***	8.426***	-.112	
<i>China Times</i>				-.014					-.028	
<i>Liberty Times</i>				.041					.038	
<i>Central Daily News</i>				.006					-.004	
Space				.172					.115	
Denial				.234***					.224***	
Excuse					.028				.016	
Justification					.313***				.290***	
Concession					.111				.056	
Case B ($n = 456$)										
<i>United News</i>	.024	.024	1.861	.044		.139	.115***	19.819***	.045	
<i>China Times</i>				-.006					.006	
<i>Liberty Times</i>				-.076					-.074	
<i>Central Daily News</i>				.056					.048	
Space				.054					-.047	
Denial					.313***				.220***	
Excuse				.088					.085*	
Justification					.295***				.176**	
Concession					.013				-.013	
Case C ($n = 350$)										
<i>United News</i>	.094	.094***	5.970***	.190**		.098	.004	1.457	.190**	
<i>China Times</i>				.110					.104	
<i>Liberty Times</i>										
<i>Central Daily News</i>										
Space				-.122*					-.123*	
Denial					.065				.074	

(continued)

Table 5
(continued)

Predictor Variable	Step 1				Step 2					
	R^2	R^2_{change}	F_{change}	β	sr	R^2	R^2_{change}	F_{change}	β	sr
Excuse				-.003					-.003	
Justification				.180**					.142*	
Concession				.126*					.120*	
Case D ($n = 177$)										
<i>United News</i>	.235	.235***	10.564***	-.593		.239	.004	.500	-.591	
<i>China Times</i>				-.456					-.461	
<i>Liberty Times</i>				-.367					-.375	
<i>Central Daily News</i>										
Space				.129					.134	
Denial										
Excuse									-.085	
Justification									.027	
Concession				.407***					.429***	

Note: β = standardized regression coefficient; sr = semipartial correlation.

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

Case C (Hypotheses 3a and 3b). Case C is identified as a standards situation with evidence of corporate commission and control but questionable standards of assessment. In this case, all three subhypotheses were supported. As expected, the justification communicative response was the most frequently used strategy ($n = 185, 55.1\%$). This particular strategy not only was positively related with media coverage ($b = .142, p < .05$) but also appeared as the strongest predictor, followed by concession ($b = .120, p < .05$). In the hierarchical regressions, the overall model at the first stage was significant, $R^2 = .094, F(6, 344) = 5.970, p < .001$. In the second stage, the R^2 increment that resulted from the adding of the other three CCSs was not significant, $F_{\text{change}}(1, 343) = 1.457, p = .23$. It should be noted that although the overall model of the second stage does not account for a significant portion of the variance in media image coverage, the concession response indeed demonstrated its significant impact on positive media image coverage ($b = .120, p < .05$).

Case D (Hypotheses 4a and 4b). Case D embodied an agreement situation, specified as evidence of corporate commission and control and appropriate standards of assessment. All four subhypotheses were supported. The concession communicative response was reported as the dominant strategy in use ($n = 68, 90.7\%$). Moreover, multiple regression showed that it had the strongest impact on media image coverage ($b = .429, p < .001$) and that the other strategies demonstrated no statistically significant effects.⁴ The hierarchical regression was then conducted. The overall model in the first stage was significant, $R^2 = .235, F(5, 172) = 10.564, p < .001$, indicating that concession accounted for a significant and unique portion of the variance of media coverage. In the second stage, the R^2 increment was not significant, $F_{\text{change}}(2, 170) = .500, p = .608$, indicating that the other three CCSs did not predict a significant portion of the variance in favorable media image coverage, apart from that accounted for by the constructs entered at the first stage.

Hypothesis 5 posits that the concession communicative response would result in positive media coverage across cases. This hypothesis was partially supported. Cases C and D confirmed the expectations, with beta coefficients of .119 and .409, respectively. The other two cases, A and B, did not confirm the expectations. It is worth noting, given the statistically significant relationship in Cases C and D, that except in Case D, the concession response was barely ever used. Specifically, the percentages of instances of the use of concession as a communicative response in Cases A, B, and C were 5.1%, 1.1%, and 6.1%, respectively. It was 90.7% in Case D.

Discussion and Conclusions

Summary of the Findings: The Results Across Four Cases

The first series of research hypotheses, Hypotheses 1a, 2a, 3a, and 4a, posited that the actors in four different crisis situations would each tend to use a particular CCS in responding to a particular kind of crisis. The chi-square test on contingency table (see

Table 3) first indicated an existence of a certain pattern of relationship between crisis situation and uses of crisis responses, $\chi^2 = 567.80$, $df = 9$, $p < .001$; $\phi = .859$, $p = .000$. Then, standardized residuals were calculated as a follow-up test to see if the frequency within the cells was greater than would be expected by chance. Taking into account that Case B is a modified crisis situation and that the frequencies of excuse were consistently small across four cases (see Table 3), Case B and the excuse response were dropped from the analysis to allow for a more accurate calculation of model fit. The results revealed that the largest standardized residuals, all being positive and statistically significant, are found in the cells along the diagonal (3.5 for the cell of Case A–denial, 2.5 for Case C–justification, and 8.3 for Case D–concession), which indicated that the diagonal does not fit the “independence model” well. On the contrary, off diagonals are either nonsignificant or negative and significant. In summary, the results indicate a clear pattern in the ways in which certain CCSs were used in response to certain crisis situations, the control situation and excuse response being the exception.

The second series of hypotheses posited first that the use of a certain CCS in a certain type of crisis situation would have a positive effect on media coverage, and furthermore, in a particular type of crisis situation, a particular CCS would have a stronger positive effect on media coverage than would any of the other three CCSs. Two of the four subhypotheses with respect to Case C and Case D were supported. Specifically, justification in a standards situation (Case C) and concession in an agreement situation (Case D) had the strongest predictive power for positive media coverage. Contrary to expectations, in Case A, a commission situation, the impact of denial on media coverage ranked not first but second ($b = .224$, $p < .001$), slightly lower than justification ($b = .290$, $p < .001$). In Case B, a mixed commission/control situation, the effect of denial on media coverage ranked first ($b = .220$, $p < .001$), followed by justification ($b = .176$) and excuse ($b = .085$, $p = .05$).

The results of hierarchical regressions (see Table 5) revealed that in commission and mixed commission/control crisis situations, the addition of one or more of the other CCSs could account for additional and significant portions of variance in media coverage, apart from those accounted for by the constructs entered at the first stage. However, the addition of other CCSs did not account for additional and significant portions of variance within media coverage for standards and agreement crisis situations.

Discussion and Theoretical Implications

This study has theoretical implications for Bradford and Garrett’s (1995) corporate communicative response model in particular and the symbolic approach in general.

Implications to the Model

Crisis situation as an effective moderator. The findings of this study lend additional support to a claim of validity for Bradford and Garrett’s (1995) model in that they demonstrate that crisis situations influence the relationship between CCSs and

media coverage. The empirical findings suggest that appropriate uses of CCSs in certain crisis situations are indeed positively correlated to more positive media coverage of the crisis—more particular, denial in a commission situation, justification in a standards situation, and concession in an agreement situation, with the strongest predictive powers falling within the last two crisis situations.

Reconsideration of the definition of a crisis situation. Given the support of crisis situation as an important factor in crisis communication, crisis situation should be further defined for advancing the model. First, a control situation should be specified with respect to its sources of control because natural law and malice have different implications for CCSs and their effects on image coverage in the media. Second, a mixed crisis situation that involves discrepant perceptions between an organization and its stakeholders should be considered when planning for the best CCS responses. For example, with respect to the mixed commission/control situation in the current study, crisis managers could perceive the situation as commission, which could explain why denial was used most by the alleged political figure. On the other hand, from the stakeholders' perspective, the results revealed that the combined uses of denial to refute the commission, excuse to provide rationales of uncontrollability, and justification to enhance credibility were the most effective in terms of media effect.

The relationship between concession and media coverage. In contrast to Bradford and Garrett's (1995) assertions regarding the comparative coverage of concession as a response option across four different situations, this study only partially replicated their findings. That is, the standards and agreement crisis situations confirmed their expectations, but the commission and mixed commission/control situations did not. The discrepancy in these findings might be related to the nature of the research methods and measurements used in each. The concession communicative response is a socially desirable option, and the respondents in Bradford and Garrett's experiment might have responded to it for that reason. In contrast, that construct was measured in this study by means of coders' judgments of the positions taken in the newspaper coverage. It could be argued that by investigating actual cases, this study might have provided information that experimental methods could have missed.

Another aspect of concession worth pointing out is that except in Case D, an agreement situation, the incidence of concession's use as a response strategy was less than 10%. These findings might indicate that crisis managers are unwilling to yield to protesters' demands (Garrett, 1987) because of the potential loss of face, as well as the potential for monetary losses.

Justification as a popular communicative response and its cultural implications. Except for Case D, justification was used from 45% to 55% across three cases. Two factors could contribute to the justification response's coverage across various crisis

situations. First, the actual coding revealed that justification covers a wide spectrum of substrategies, which included bolstering, differentiation, and transcendence (for relevant definitions, see Benoit & Brinson, 1999).

Second, the technique of transcendence as a substrategy of justification merits discussion from the Chinese cultural perspective. Hearit (1997) held that transcendence appeals feature three forms of dissociation: opinion/knowledge, business interests/societal interests, and current/future. He further emphasized that all three functions are used to redefine the context in which organizational or personal acts are understood. Chinese culture in general and Chinese political culture in particular are especially pertinent to Hearit's concept of "redefinition." Specifically, general Chinese culture, which favors high-contextual and indirect communication styles (Gudykunst et al., 1996), and Chinese political culture, which values a higher ground of morality and appreciates more abstract, lofty, and essentially idealistic future- and eternity-oriented rhetorical themes (Pye, 1990), both contribute to the assertion that people are likely to use redefinition, reframing, and dissociation, all substrategies of transcendence, as response strategies.

Moreover, the fact that Chinese political culture places a large emphasis on face and harmonious relationships (Pye, 1990, 1995) also makes the technique of transcendence particularly relevant. For example, in Case C, Huang did not directly attack the accuser but used the fact/perception dissociation technique, saying that he felt sorry for Ms. Chou and that he had had a different perception of their relationship. On one hand, Huang's statement implied that he possessed a true understanding of the facts (in contrast to the other party's perception). On the other hand, he attempted to save face for the other party and not to create further disharmony.

Separate and/or combined uses of CCS and justification as an effective strategy. This study extends Bradford and Garrett's (1995) model by demonstrating the relationship between the combined use of CCS and media coverage. Most notable, for all but the agreement situation, a combination of CCSs appeared to be the most effective. Specifically, the results suggest that in a commission situation, the combination of using denial and justification would exert the most positive effect. The mixed commission/control situation requires the combination of denial, justification, and excuse communicative responses. The addition of concession in these cases would not be recommended in either commission or control situations, however, because concession is, by nature, contradictory to denial and excuse (see Ihlen, 2002). Moreover, in a standards situation, justification is the strongest predictor of positive media coverage, followed by concession. The two responses are compatible, and using them in combination could enhance their individual impacts. In an agreement situation, concession is the only communicative response that contributes to positive media coverage. In summary, the results revealed the robustness of justification as an effective strategy in combined CCS uses across cases.

Bolstering as a separate response, and the post hoc analyses of its unique and relative effects on media coverage. A note should be made about the popularity of bolstering in justification (i.e., 64% in Case A, 76% in Case B, and 37% in Case C). For example, in Case A, Mayor Chen reminded the public of his past policies in favor of sexual morality. In Case B, Mrs. Wu spoke up for her husband and assured the public of his longtime dedication to their family. In Case C, Huang stressed that he had never taken one day off during his 4-year public appointment in the Taiwan provincial government.

The popularity of bolstering merits discussion in two respects. First, the results reveal that bolstering could serve as a separate fifth strategy beyond justification. Second, I therefore conducted a series of post hoc regression tests on bolstering's unique and relative contributions to positive media effect, compared with the other substrategy of justification. The results demonstrated that bolstering indeed is an important factor contributing to the effectiveness of justification. The role of bolstering, however, was not overriding or irreplaceable; the other three substrategies of justification also played an essential role in justification on media effects (More details about the tests can be obtained by contacting the author.).

Implications to the Symbolic Approach

This study adds another building block to a larger symbolic approach. Existing literature using the symbolic approach includes empirical research on the automotive, telecommunications, and chemical industries, as well research on accidents and product safety (see Brinson & Benoit, 1996; Hearit, 1994; Marcus & Goodman, 1991). Moreover, empirical research in these areas has also been limited largely to Western culture, where the main methodologies used include the experiment, the narrative evaluation, and the single-case study (Benoit & Brinson, 1999; Coombs, 1998).

This study extends the current symbolic approach to research with respect to research scope, methodology, cultural implications, and media coverage as variables. This study examines a type of crisis different than those discussed in the existing literature—political figures' extramarital scandals—that extends the research scope. With respect to methodology, the findings are especially noteworthy, given that the cases reflect, to a considerable degree, actual contextual situations. Essentially, this study provides insights into its methodology, a combination of literal replication (the observation of like outcomes from similar events) and theoretical replication (the occurrence of dissimilar outcomes because of the explainable causes of crisis situations).

Moreover, certain culture-specific phenomena were found in these data. For instance, the justification response deserves special attention in Chinese culture. This does not mean that justification is a unique Chinese cultural feature, because this response strategy also exists in other cultures.⁵ Rather, these data emphasize that Chinese culture in general and Chinese political culture in particular, which encourage a high-contextual and indirect communication style that is essentially idealistic

rhetoric with an orientation to the future and eternity (Gudykunst et al., 1996), offer greater opportunity than do other cultures to use the justification response and receive more favorable media coverage. Essentially, by a process of redefinition, diversion, and dissociation, a transcendence appeal allows a political figure to define the crisis situation in such a way that the act supercedes its narrow, transient, and current scope to reflect a more high-context, less direct, more permanent, and more future-oriented concern.

Pragmatically, this study, although limited with respect to the findings involving the mixed commission/control crisis situation, does provide useful insights into the analysis of crisis situations and the choice of CCS as an appropriate response. Crisis managers can benefit from this systematic approach when analyzing crisis situations and choosing their own appropriate response strategies.

Limitations and Future Research Directions

It should be noted that although the evidence derived from this study could build on the results from other research methods, the limitation of this study also is inherent in the nature of case study design. The results of this study should be viewed as suggestive because of three aspects of data collection. First, only the type of crisis involving political figures' extramarital affairs and a single exemplar case for each crisis situation were investigated, and factors beyond the control of the case study design, such as the real-time political climate and social context, could have had their unique effects. Second, media coverage can create its own bias and, thus, affect the relevant results. The third aspect involves issues of intercoder reliability, such as the imperfect Cohen's kappa values and that the formula (Holsti, 1969) used for calculating repeated measures has been criticized as not taking into account the extent of intercoder agreement that may result from chance (Bennett, Alpert, & Goldstein, 1954).

Given the above limitations, I believe that the evidence in this study is an adequate starting point for further research into the variables involved and into the relationships hypothesized. Further research is needed in the following seven areas. First, in addition to crisis situation and crisis responsibility, a variety of other factors influence the relationship between CCSs and their media effects, such as previous stakeholder relationships and political substance (Zaller, 1998). Second, as previously suggested, the control crisis situation should be further explicated conceptually and operationally. Third, a logical next step for future research would be to study the effects of sequenced strategies on media coverage within cases and to respond to the calls in Henry (1988), Heisey (1988), and Kramer and Olson (2002), which suggest the utility of studying the evolution of rhetorical accusations. Fourth, the results indicate that justification has a mild to moderate influence on media coverage across four cases, a phenomenon that should be considered theoretically, pragmatically, and culturally important enough to be worthy of further exploration. Fifth, the role of bolstering in crisis response, its relationship with other CCSs, and the related relationships with media coverage also

deserve further exploration. Sixth, the critical next step should be qualitative research to explore in-depth contextual and cultural information as the basis for further data interpretation (Marshall & Rossman, 1995; McCracken, 1988). The qualitative findings expected to “bring to life the nuances of work life and talk” (Sypher, 1990, pp. 3-4) should generate insight into questions drawn from this study: Why does the justification communicative response appear to be an effective strategy across four cases? How does the Chinese cultural characteristic of high-contextual style, in contrast to the Western low-contextual style (Gao & Ting-Toomey, 1998; Gudykunst et al., 1996), contribute to these findings? Moreover, the ways in which culture affects the communication strategy perception and preference of the receivers is also worthy of exploration. Finally, replication procedures are critical to further cross-validate the results obtained from this study. Concepts and relationships could be tested on different samples, cultures, and issues.

Notes

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2. Bradford and Garrett (1995) asserted this model assumes that “third parties do not immediately reject the potential validity of the allegation, . . . and are inclined to consider and evaluate the accusations leveled at a corporation. This model focuses on perceptions held by third parties” (p. 877). Namely, in addition to crisis managers, stakeholders' perception is important for the effectiveness of a crisis response.

3. For repeated measures, using Cohen's kappa test to assess the relevant reliability is unattainable because Cohen's kappa is used to assess interrater reliability when observing or otherwise coding qualitative/categorical variables. Thus, for reliability coefficient of repeated measures comparing two coders, I used the following formula from Holsti (1969): $C. R. = 2M/N1 + N2$.

In this formula, M is the number of coding decisions on which two coders are in agreement, and $N1$ and $N2$ refer to the number of coding decisions made by the two coders, respectively. This formula, however, has been criticized because it does not take into account the extent of intercoder agreement that may result from chance (Bennett, Alpert, & Goldstein, 1954). I make note of this point in the Limitations section.

For reliability coefficient that involved more than two coders, I used the following formula from Holsti (1969):

$$\text{Composite reliability} = \frac{N (\text{average intercoder agreement})}{1 + [(N - 1) (\text{average intercoder agreement})]}$$

where N is the number of coders.

4. It should be noted that no denial response was used in this case.

5. For example, in the Clinton/Lewinsky case, President Clinton, at the final stage of crisis, used this strategy to ask the public to evaluate the misconduct in light of special circumstances or a broader perspective—to turn away from Monicagate to mind other more important and urgent national works (Kramer & Olson, 2002).

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