

THE MESSAGE OR THE MEDIUM? AN EMPIRICAL INVESTIGATION OF THE  
SITUATIONAL CRISIS COMMUNICATION THEORY AND THE EFFECTS OF MEDIA  
CHOICE IN AN ATHLETIC CONTEXT

by

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The Message or the Medium? An Empirical Investigation of the Situational Crisis  
Communication Theory and the Effects of Media Choice in an Athletic Context

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The Message or the Medium? An Empirical Investigation of the Situational Crisis  
Communication Theory and the Effects of Media Choice in an Athletic Context

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Crises are inherent in almost all aspects of society – occurring on individual, interpersonal, and organizational levels. While theories such as Situational Crisis Communication Theory have produced many practical implications, the research using SCCT has largely neglected media's role in the overall process. Additionally, studies have typically applied the theory to large, business corporations, while ignoring other contexts in which crises most certainly exist (e.g. universities and sports environments). This study evaluated media effects on the drug scandal that occurred at Texas Christian University in February 2012. The study utilized a 2 (attack medium: print and video source) x 2 (response medium: print and video source) experimental design. Participants ( $n = 272$ ) were first exposed to an attack source (either a mock newspaper article or a news clip from *NBCDFW*), and then exposed to a response source (either a mock press release or a video of a press conference from Chancellor Victor Boschini). After receiving both an attack and a response condition, participants then completed a survey instrument that was designed to assess their perceptions of organizational reputation, their emotional reactions, and their behavioral intentions. Based on the richness literature, it was predicted that a video response preceded by a print attack would produce the most favorable outcomes, while a print response preceded by a video attack would produce the least favorable outcomes. Statistical analyses produced insignificant results on the three main outcome

variables. This might imply that media choice may not be an important factor in the crisis communication process. Such an implication would suggest that it is important to consider other factors (e.g. timing of response) in the response process rather than media choice.

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## Introduction

Crisis events have undoubtedly always been a part of global culture, occurring both at individual and corporate levels. However, the field of research concerned with successfully managing and communicating during crises has only recently gained widespread attention (Avery, Lariscy, Kim, & Hocke, 2010; Benoit, 1995a; Coombs, 1995; Murphy, 1996; Weick, 1998). Coombs (2015) stated, “In the United States, crisis communication emerged as a practice in the late 1980s. However, serious research on crisis communication did not appear until the 1990s” (p. 147).

Although research on the domain of crisis communication is still relatively new, several different aspects have already been examined. Studies have analyzed image repair tactics on both the individual and organizational levels (for individual, see Benoit, 1997b; 2006; Benoit & Brinson, 1999; Benoit & Hanczor, 1994; Liu, 2007; Nelson, 1984; for organizational, see Benoit, 1995b; Benoit & Brinson, 1994; Blaney, Benoit, & Brazeal, 2002; Brinson & Benoit, 1996; 1999; Coombs & Schmidt, 2000; Jeong, 2009; Williams & Treadaway, 1992). Additionally, research has looked at the different phases of crises, both pre-crisis and post-crisis. Although most of the literature has focused on post-crisis communication (Avery et al., 2010), some have examined pre-crisis planning and found mixed results (Benoit & Dubra, 2013; Cloudman & Hallahan, 2006). Overall, the majority of research has examined how different situational factors – such as crisis types, response strategy, and crisis history – have affected three general outcome variables – perceived reputation, stakeholder emotions, and potential supportive behavior (Benoit & Czerwinski, 1997; Claeys & Cauberghe, 2012; Claeys, Cauberghe, & Vyncke, 2010; Coombs, 1998; 2006; Coombs & Holladay, 2006; 2009; Jeong, 2009; Spence et al., 2011).



Such research has focused primarily on message content – analyzing *what* messages should be broadcasted. Although this has certainly produced theoretical insights and practical findings, scholars have yet to thoroughly explore media choice – examining *how* messages should be delivered. Today’s technological society offers numerous channels through which a message can be conveyed. Emails, newspapers, and press releases are all print sources that can be used to respond to crisis situations. Additionally, press conferences and live interviews are video sources that can be utilized to deliver a crisis response. Print and video sources offer different affordances, which may affect the success of a response strategy. Crisis communication research has ultimately failed to investigate how these affordances might impact desired outcomes. To address this issue, this experimental study utilized situational crisis communication theory to directly assess the effects of media choice within a university context.

### **Literature Review**

Although crisis communication research did not emerge until the 1990s, its origin comes from an array of previous theoretical frameworks. The field of crisis communication gained its initial roots from both the facework (Goffman, 1967) and impression management (Brown & Levinson, 1978) literature. It was suggested that organizations are expected to defend their face when attacked. Chaos (Murphy, 1996) and sensemaking (Weick, 1988; 1998) perspectives were also considered; however, crisis scholars ultimately ended up settling on attribution theory (Kelley, 1967). Coombs (1995) initially used the theory as a framework for analyzing crisis events in terms of locus, stability, and controllability; however, as applications of attribution theory to crisis management grew, researchers tended to combine the three dimensions into one, overarching focus – crisis responsibility (Coombs, 2004; Coombs & Holladay, 2002; Coombs & Schmidt, 2000; Dean, 2004; Ki & Brown, 2013). The assumption was that determining public

perceptions of responsibility would lead to better crafted response strategies. Several studies have reported strong correlations between crisis responsibility and organizational reputation (Coombs, 2004; Coombs & Holladay, 2002; Coombs & Schmidt, 2000; Dean, 2004). This idea of matching crisis type (based on levels of attributed responsibility) to response strategy provided the foundation for two of the most prominent crisis management theories – image restoration discourse and situational crisis communication theory.

### **Prominent Crisis Communication Theories**

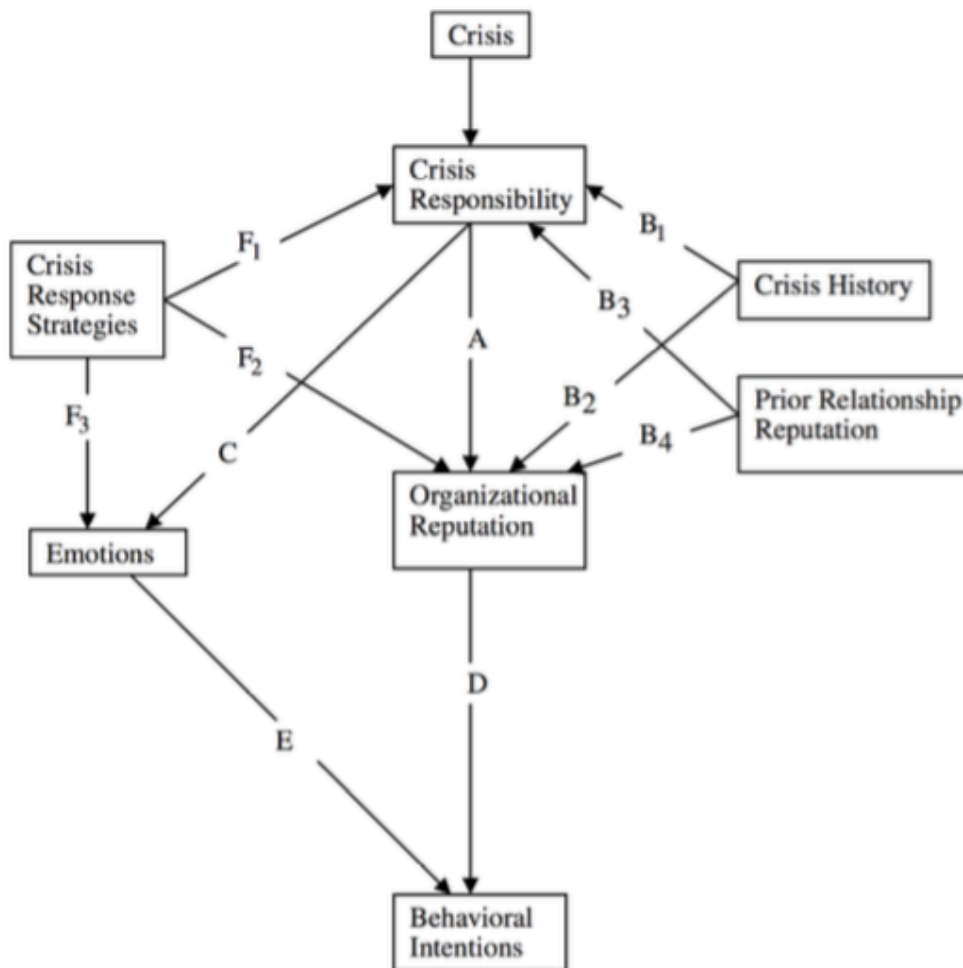
Benoit's (1995a; 1997a) image restoration discourse and Coomb's (1995) situational crisis communication theory are the two most recognized theories among crisis communication scholars. Although other models have been proposed (e.g., Bradford & Garrett, 1995; Marra, 1998), Benoit's and Coomb's theories have generated the most research. Kim, Avery, and Lariscy (2009) confirmed this in a quantitative content analysis they conducted on public relations research, finding image restoration discourse and situational crisis communication theory as the two most dominant theories used in the literature. This section provides an overview of both theories.

**Image restoration discourse.** Benoit (1995a) developed image restoration discourse (also referred to as image restoration theory or image repair theory) primarily as a means for analyzing case studies of crisis scenarios. Unlike other theories that explain different crisis types or crisis processes, this theory focuses on message options. After assessing an accusation, crisis managers then typically choose from five macro-categories of response strategies – denial, evasion of responsibility, reducing offensiveness of act, corrective action, or mortification. Of these five macrostrategies, three (denial, evasion of responsibility, and reducing offensiveness)

are further broken down creating a total of fourteen different response strategies (for an explanation of these strategies, see Benoit, 1997a).

Although this theory provides practitioners with a thorough list of different repair strategies, it has often been criticized for lacking predictive value (Avery et al., 2010; Coombs, 2007a; Coombs & Schmidt, 2000; Marra, 1998). The bulk of studies have utilized image restoration theory in a descriptive manner – by analyzing cases of crises, identifying the strategies used, and then drawing speculative conclusions about the strategies' effectiveness. While case studies are certainly a useful tool, they are limited in their ability to generalize claims. Fortunately, Coombs (1995) recognized this need for experimental research and developed situational crisis communication theory.

**Situational crisis communication theory.** Although underdeveloped initially, situational crisis communication theory (SCCT) was a revolutionary idea at the time of its inception, as hypotheses regarding crisis communication strategies could be empirically tested in experimental designs. The initial theory had several different concepts and many other complexities present (Coombs, 1995); but, over time, revisions were made and a more parsimonious version of the theory has since emerged (see Figure 1; Coombs, 2007a).

**Figure 1.***Crisis Situation Model of SCCT*

*Note.* Taken from Coombs (2007a).

In order to effectively minimize or repair reputational damage, SCCT suggests that crisis managers need to take three things into consideration – crisis type, performance history, and response strategy. According to SCCT, the crisis type is determined by the amount of responsibility that stakeholders attribute to the organization. Coombs (1995) initially proposed four crisis types that were based on the attribution dimensions of locus and controllability (i.e.

faux pas, accidents, transgressions, and terrorism). After further tests, Coombs and Holladay (2002) found that crisis types formed three clusters – victim, accidental, and preventable.

The victim cluster attributes minimal crisis responsibility and views the organization itself as a victim of the crisis, along with their stakeholders. Example crises from the study included natural disasters, rumors, workplace violence, and product tampering. The accidental cluster attributes moderate crisis responsibility and views the crisis as an unintentional action by the organization. Examples included challenges, megadamage, technical breakdown-accidents, and technical breakdown-recalls. The preventable cluster attributes the most crisis responsibility and views organizational actions as either avoidable error or purposeful, inappropriate, and knowingly putting stakeholders at risk. Cases included human breakdown accidents, human breakdown recalls, organizational misdeeds-management misconduct, organizational misdeed with no injuries, and organizational misdeeds with injuries. It is important for management teams to accurately determine this initial level of crisis responsibility even though these perceptions may be completely false.

After assessing initial crisis responsibility, Coombs (2007a) indicated that the next step in evaluating the reputational threat is to consider the organization's performance history. Coombs (2004) divided performance history into two components – crisis history and relationship history. Crisis history refers to the number of similar previous crises an organization has had, whereas relationship history is an organization's record of good or bad behavior toward stakeholders. Much empirical evidence has supported the claim that an organization's performance history plays an intensifying role on perceived reputation (Coombs, 1998; 2004; Coombs & Holladay, 1996; 2001; 2002; 2006; Jeong, 2009; Sisco, Collins, & Zoch, 2010). When an organization has a positive performance history and they are viewed as more trustworthy, their justification is

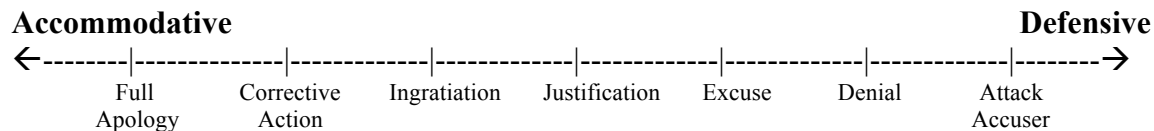
quickly accepted, or they are easily forgiven, a *halo effect* is said to have transpired (Coombs, 1995; Coombs & Holladay, 2001). Conversely, Coombs and Holladay (2001) discussed the possibility of a *velcro effect* where negative performance history “attracts and snags additional reputational damage” (p. 335). When no performance history exists prior to a crisis, it appears to be an advantage for the accused organization for two reasons. First, stakeholders typically give organizations the benefit of the doubt and assume a positive history even when one is nonexistent (Coombs & Holladay, 2001). Second, the crisis functions as a starting point for the organization which gives them complete control to craft their own performance history (Coombs, 1995); however, this does put immense pressure on management teams. Understanding the intensifying effects that performance history possesses is critical when trying to reduce reputational damage.

Once crisis type has been determined and performance history assessed, crisis managers can then consider their response options. Coombs (1995) originally proposed five general categories of response options – nonexistence, distance, ingratiation, mortification, and suffering. These strategies were viewed as tools that crisis managers could use to protect the organization’s image. Following subsequent tests of the theory, Coombs (1998) argued that the selection of a crisis response strategy should correspond with the public’s perceived level of crisis responsibility. Coombs (1998) thus created the accommodative-defensive continuum (see Figure 2), an adapted form of the mitigation-aggravation continuum (from McLaughlin, Cody, and O’Hair, 1983). Response strategies toward the accommodative side should be employed during crises with strong perceptions of responsibility, as they show greater concern for affected stakeholders and pose a larger threat of reputational damage. Conversely, defensive strategies

should be utilized during crises with weak perceptions of responsibility, as they are more concerned with denying accusations and protecting the organization's image.

**Figure 2.**

*Accommodative-Defensive Continuum*



*Note.* Retrieved from *Coombs (1998)*.

Following even more empirical testing, the theory continued to evolve into its present state. Coombs (2006) suggested that crisis response strategies no longer be viewed on a continuum, but should be grouped into three general categories instead – deny, diminish, and rebuild (also called “deal” in some studies). Although the format changed from a continuum to categories, the underlying assumption remained the same – that crisis managers should use responses that matched stakeholders’ perceptions of responsibility. Coombs (2006) recommended that the three response strategies would correspond with the three clusters of crisis types highlighted in previous research (Coombs & Holladay, 2002). Deny strategies (e.g. attack accuser, denial, and scapegoat) would be most appropriate for victim crisis types; diminish strategies (e.g. excuse and justification) would be most fitting for accidental crises; and rebuild strategies (e.g. compensation and apology) would be best suited for preventable crisis types (see Table 1). This matching principle set forth by Coombs has produced much research, and results have shown positive support for the recommendation (Claeys et al., 2010; Cooley & Cooley, 2011; Coombs, 2006; Sisco, 2012; Sisco et al., 2010). In addition to these three primary crisis

response strategies (deny, diminish, and rebuild), Coombs (2007a) also proposed bolstering as a fourth category (e.g. reminder, ingratiation, and victimage), but warned “bolstering strategies are best used as supplements to the three primary strategies” (p. 172).

**Table 1.**

*Response Strategy Based on Crisis Type*

<b>Crisis Cluster</b>	<b>Recommended Response Strategy</b>
VICTIM	DENY ( <i>attack accuser, denial, scapegoat</i> )
ACCIDENTAL	DIMINISH ( <i>excuse, justification</i> )
PREVENTABLE	REBUILD ( <i>compensation, apology</i> )

*Note.* From Coombs (2006).

Coombs (2007a) also recognized the ethical responsibilities organizations have during crises. While repairing reputation is the ultimate, long-term goal, Coombs (2007a) stated, “the first priority in any crisis is to protect stakeholders from harm, not to protect the reputation” (p. 165). This obligation of protecting stakeholders from harm includes both physical and psychological harm, which can be done by supplying them with instructing information and adjusting information, respectively. Instructing information gives stakeholders the basic information about the crisis and what they need to do to protect themselves from *physical* harm. Examples would include telling them to evacuate an area or not to eat a contaminated product. Additionally, adjusting information must also be provided, which helps stakeholders cope with the *psychological* stress that a crisis causes. Examples include expressions of sympathy and concern for the stakeholder, as well as corrective actions being taken to prevent similar crises in



the future (Coombs, 2006; 2007a; 2015). The main objectives of these two types of information are to ensure public safety and provide psychological comfort to stakeholders. Once these types of information are provided, crisis managers can then move on to reputation repair.

Situational crisis communication theory provides crisis management teams with the most comprehensive, empirically-sound framework to date (for guidelines and best practices, see Coombs, 2007a; 2007b; 2015). As the theory suggests, managers must first meet ethical responsibilities (by providing instructing and adjusting information) before turning their attention to image restoration. Then they must determine stakeholders' perceived level of responsibility and consider their organizations' performance history. Only after these are assessed, a corresponding response strategy can then be enacted. SCCT has shifted the descriptive nature of previous theories to a more prescriptive focus that researchers and practitioners have yearned. This evidence-based system has already demonstrated tremendous theoretical and practical value. However, one area has been relatively overlooked – media choice. Examining the effects of media choice may bring the theory to new heights.

### **Significance of Media Choice**

The neglect of media choice in crisis communication research is problematic because media choice has been found to be a significant predictor of many variables in other lines of research. Personal satisfaction, brand reputation, perceived competence, consumer attitudes, and behavioral intentions are a few variables that scholars have found to be significantly affected by media choice (Dahlen, Granlund, & Grenros, 2009; Dimmick, Kline, & Stafford, 2000; King & Xia, 1997; Stephens & Rains, 2011; Westmyer, DiCioccio, & Rubin, 1998). Various theoretical perspectives have been offered as a means to explicate media effects.

The richness perspective has been one of the most prominent perspectives throughout the literature. Daft and Lengel (1986) originally coined the 'richness' term; however, several other scholars have proposed similar ideas with minor modifications – media naturalness (Kock, 2004), the interactivity principle (Burgoon et al., 2002), media synchronicity theory (Dennis & Valacich, 1999), and vividness effects (Kisielius & Sternthal, 1984; 1986; Shedler & Manis, 1986). The general premise behind this perspective is that a medium's richness significantly impacts the effectiveness of a message. Daft and Lengel (1986) suggested that rich media included capabilities to portray multiple cues simultaneously, allowed for rapid feedback, and utilized natural language.

Although this theoretical stance was first proposed thirty years ago, it continues to receive much empirical support. Saat and Selamat (2014) discovered a significant relationship between corporate social responsibility communication and consumer attitude, where richer websites were rated more positively than leaner websites. Richness has been found to interact with likability as well, as Chaiken and Eagly (1983) found that likable communicators were more persuasive in videotaped and audio conditions, while unlikeable communicators were more persuasive in written conditions. This perspective has extended internationally as well (Lan, Hung, & Hsu, 2011; Lu, Kim, Dou, & Kumar, 2014). Lan et al. (2011) found that media richness predicted positive attitudes towards writing in terms of motivation, enjoyment, and anxiety. Lu et al. (2014) found that richness also significantly impacted behavior, including intentions to recommend or visit a fitness center. All of these findings highlight the importance of richness, which may imply that crisis managers should employ rich media for their response message.

The uses and gratifications perspective is another notable approach some scholars have embraced. Unlike the richness perspective that contends people are passively affected by media, Blumler and Katz (1974) argue that people actively choose media forms that satisfy their needs. This claim has led to further media debates, with some scholars suggesting that media forms compete with one another (Dimmick et al., 2000; Dimmick & Rothenbuhler, 1984; Ramirez, Dimmick, Feaster, & Lin, 2008), while others indicate media channels complement one another (Dutta-Bergman, 2004a; 2004b; Ruppel & Burke, 2015). Scholars that embrace the competing perspective argue that people substitute one media form for another that serves a similar function (e.g. using the Internet to read the news would replace reading an actual newspaper. On the other hand, scholars that adopt a complementarity perspective suggest that the use of one media form should be associated to similar media forms that satisfy the same needs or desires.

Evidence has been provided for both sides of the argument. Li (2001) found strong competition between news obtained via television and newspapers, with television being reported as superior. More recently, Min and Kim (2012) examined both traditional media (e.g. radio, postal mail, and television) and new media technologies (e.g. email and websites), and found that new media was perceived to be competitively superior and provide more gratifications in extending public mobilization than were traditional media forms. Contrarily, Dutta-Bergman (2004a) discovered that people who used the Internet to retrieve information on a specific topic (e.g. sports or politics) were more likely to seek information from traditional media sources than non-Internet users. Ruppel and Burke (2015) extended this idea by finding that social competence was a moderator of channel complementarity. Taken together, these findings and the U&G approach highlight the importance of media preference. Thus, crisis managers may

need to consider which media forms are most popular among their consumer base before broadcasting a response.

Only a few scholars have explored the effects of response medium used by crisis managers, but those that have done so have found that medium choice produced stronger effects on outcome variables than other situational factors (Schultz, Utz, & Goritz, 2011; Utz, Schultz, & Glocka, 2013). This ultimately suggests that the medium crisis managers use to respond to an attack may actually matter more than the content of the message itself. Considering these findings and the aforementioned media perspectives, it becomes imperative to elucidate the role that media plays in the crisis communication process. Doing so will help determine if media choice significantly affects the main outcome variables (reputation, emotions, and behavioral intentions).

### **Hypotheses**

As previously discussed, some research has found response medium to be more important than response content and crisis type in terms of effects on the outcome variables (Schultz et al., 2011; Utz et al., 2013). Although this is clearly of value, their methodological designs must be considered. These studies failed to examine the relationship between the media used in a crisis attack and its consequent response strategy. Scholars have either grouped attack media and response media together in their manipulations or only manipulated response media (Coombs & Holladay, 2009; Schultz et al., 2011; Utz et al., 2013). This study manipulated both the attack medium and the response medium as a means to further delineate a possible relationship between attack media, response media, and desired outcome variables.

Prior research has linked media that offer increased cues to favorable relational outcomes. Westmyer et al. (1998) found that people viewed oral channels more competently

than written channels when attempting to satisfy interpersonal needs. Similarly, Ramirez and Burgoon (2004) presented results that suggested “richer modes may aid in the creation of a sense of relationship by fostering greater receptivity, understanding, & connectedness between partners in initial encounters ... and may be one means of enhancing initial interactions online” (p. 440-442). Speaker credibility is another component that research has found to be significantly affected by a medium’s richness. Burgoon, Blair, and Strom (2008) controlled for message content and discovered that the addition of nonverbal vocal and visual cues increasingly led participants to evaluate senders’ answers as truthful. Similarly, Appiah (2006) found commercial websites and products that used audio/visual testimonials were rated significantly more favorably than sites that used text/picture testimonials or no testimonials.

Although order effects of attack media and response media have been neglected in previous research, Stephens, Barrett, and Mahometa (2013) studied order effects of emergency response notifications. They found that people who received redundant notifications through at least one synchronous channel (i.e. face-to-face or phone) perceived the situation to be significantly more urgent than people who received redundant notifications through all asynchronous channels (i.e. text messages). Scholars have also studied order effects in competitive marketing contexts (Unnava, Burnkrant, & Erevelles, 1994; Unnava & Sirdeshmukh, 1994). Unnava and Sirdeshmukh (1994) found that it was more beneficial to repeat advertising in different modalities than to repeat it in any single modality.

This study manipulated both the attack medium and the organization’s response medium in a crisis situation. Both mediums were manipulated in such a way to represent either a lean medium (i.e. print) or a rich medium (i.e. video). Rich media are perceived to offer more social cues than lean media, which is believed to improve a message’s effectiveness. Therefore, a rich

response (i.e. video) following a lean attack (i.e. print) signifies an increase in the amount of available social cues, which should bolster the effectiveness of the message overall. Similarly, a lean response following a rich attack signifies a decrease in the amount of available social cues, which should hinder the effectiveness of the message. When the medium is the same (i.e. the attack and response both use a print source or both use a video source), there is neither an increase nor decrease in the amount of social cues; therefore the effectiveness of the message should not be impacted.

Considering both the richness and order presentation findings together, it was predicted that a video response following a print attack would produce the most positive relational outcomes in the organization-stakeholder relationship, while a print response following a video attack would produce the least positive relational outcomes:

H1a: The print attack–video response condition will produce the most positive evaluations of organizational reputation.

H1b: The print attack–video response condition will elicit the least amount of negative stakeholder emotional reactions.

H1c: The print attack–video response condition will produce the most positive stakeholder behavioral intentions.

H2a: The video attack–print response condition will produce the least positive evaluations of organizational reputation.

H2b: The video attack–print response condition will elicit the most amount of negative stakeholder emotional reactions.

H2c: The video attack–print response condition will produce the least positive stakeholder behavioral intentions.

H3: The video attack–video response condition will not affect any of the three outcome variables.

H4: The print attack–print response condition will not affect any of the three outcome variables.

### Study Context

Even though research on media choice is lacking, the growth of the crisis communication field over the past few decades is still encouraging. Research has been practically applied in political, transportation, nonprofit, and other corporate settings and has provided practitioners with helpful guidelines on how to utilize crisis repair strategies. Political and transportation contexts have been studied the most as of late (Avery et al., 2010). Among political contexts, many researchers have looked at how authoritative figures (i.e. President Bush, President Clinton, and Queen Elizabeth) have handled crises like the war on terrorism, Hurricane Katrina, sexual accusations, and a family death (Benoit, 2006; Benoit & Brinson, 1999; Blaney & Benoit, 2001; Liu, 2007). Scholars have also investigated the effectiveness of image repair tactics in several crises in the transportation industry – including oil spills, plane crashes, large explosions, bankruptcy, and product recalls – and findings have produced much practical and theoretical value (Benoit, 1995b; Benoit & Czerwinski, 1997; Blaney, Benoit, & Brazeal, 2002; Brinson & Benoit, 1999; Cooley & Cooley, 2011; Coombs, 2004; Coombs & Schmidt, 2000; Englehardt, Sallot, & Springston, 2004; Jeong, 2009; Williams & Treadaway, 1992).

Even with such support, the scope of crisis communication research has been limited to business corporations (e.g., Benoit & Dorries, 1996; Blaney et al., 2002; Hearit, 1994; Sellnow, Ulmer, & Snider, 1998). The extant research is helpful to practitioners in the political and transportation industries, but is of little value to practitioners who work in academic and athletic environments. This is problematic considering the influential role that athletic departments have on universities' social and economic welfares.

The tremendous economic impact that Division-I athletic programs have on their university and the surrounding communities has been well documented. Empirical support has

been found for both direct and indirect benefits of Division-I athletic programs (Anderson, 2012; Pope & Pope, 2009; Thompson, 2005). A scan of recent economic analyses shows some of the direct benefits produced by programs across America. An economic analysis conducted by consulting firm Tripp Umbach (2009) discovered that in the year 2009, the Penn State football program had a business volume impact on the state of Pennsylvania of \$161.5 million (over \$90 million for Centre county – the location of the university). That same report revealed that the football program had created 2,147 total jobs at the state level (1,731 of which were in Centre county). In the Midwest region, Thompson (2005) analyzed the economic impact for all home games at the University of Nebraska during the 2004-2005 season, and found that their athletic department had generated \$114.3 million in output and created 2,840 jobs. In the West Coast region, Beyers (2007) found that over \$211 million in revenue and 2,558 jobs could be attributed to the athletic programs at the University of Washington in 2007. While these aforementioned studies examined economic impact over the course of a year, Christiadi (2012) evaluated the impact of just one West Virginia University football game on the Monongalia County economy. Results from his study showed that a single home game in 2011 produced 649 jobs and had a total economic impact of \$1.6 million in business volume. Thus it is clear that Division-I athletic programs play a significant role in the growth and prosperity of their local communities.

While these athletic programs greatly contribute to their local communities, they also provide indirect benefits to the universities they represent. Pope and Pope (2009) found that universities who had successful football and/or men's basketball programs had a significant increase in application rates following those seasons. Even more intriguing in their study was that increased application rates allowed universities to be more selective in their admission requirements – meaning that these institutions improved both the quantity and quality of



incoming students. Chressanthis and Grimes (1993) provided additional support for this claim, as they found successful football programs attracted prospective students over a 21-year longitudinal study where traditional enrollment demand factors were controlled.

While increased application rates certainly ranks high on administrators' priority lists, perhaps the most important goal is maximizing alumni gifts and contributions. Research has shown that the success of athletic programs is one of the most prominent determinants of university donations (Anderson, 2012; Coughlin & Erekson, 1984; Sigelman & Bookheimer, 1983). Grimes and Chressanthis (1994) confirmed this, "after controlling for the population of alumni, student enrollment, state appropriations, and per capita income, [their] results indicate that contributions are positively related to the overall winning percentage of the intercollegiate sports program" (p. 27). Although studies have shown positive effects of successful athletic programs, some research has exposed negative effects such as decreased graduation rates (Tucker, 1992). However, an overwhelming majority of research has shown that the benefits of successful athletic programs outweigh the costs. Anderson's (2012) comprehensive summary of these benefits serves as a just example, "for FBS schools, winning football games increases alumni athletic donations, enhances a school's academic reputation, increases the number of applicants & in-state students enrollment, reduces acceptance rates, & raises average incoming SAT scores" (p. 18).

Unfortunately, the rewards that successful athletic programs offer are often taken for granted. These benefits can disappear rather quickly when an athletic department experiences a crisis situation and that news is made public. Research has indeed supported this claim. Goff (2000) provided evidence that showed "football sanctions reduced contributions to the university by \$1.6 million per year" (p. 99). Goff also examined the effects of the "death penalty" imposed

on SMU in 1987-1988 and found that alumni contributions were reduced by \$31 million per year and application rates declined 7% on average per year. Overall, NCAA sanctions have been linked to decreased alumni donations and reduced enrollment rates (Chressanthis & Grimes, 1993; Grimes & Chressanthis, 1994). Thus it becomes imperative that university officials and administrators know how to effectively manage crisis situations when they manifest.

The driving force behind successful crisis management is communication. While eliminating every threat that a crisis scenario poses is nearly impossible, successful communication during these incidents can certainly mitigate the effects. Cooley and Cooley (2011) examined General Motors filing for bankruptcy in the summer of 2009. Using Coomb's (1995; 2007a) SCCT as the framework for their analysis, they found that GM followed the guidelines outlined in SCCT and were able to successfully manage reputation during a financial crisis. Sisco (2012) reported similar results when exploring the applicability of SCCT in a nonprofit organization, "The experimental investigation showed that Coombs' suggested crisis response strategies seem to reduce the reputational damage for a nonprofit organization" (p. 16).

Although these studies suggest promising results, their applicability remains limited to the corporate sector. Crisis communication research in athletic departments lacks empirical support, as studies have typically relied on interviews and textual analysis methodologies (Bruce & Tini, 2008; Hughes & Shank, 2005; 2008; Kelley & Chang, 2007). More experimental research is needed to advance causal claims on how crisis communication may effectively be implemented in this setting. Such research would ultimately help university officials and other administrators protect capital and the overall welfare of the university and its surrounding communities during a crisis event. One of the main objectives of this study was to do just that.

## Methods

### Participants

The participants of this study included undergraduates who were recruited from numerous communication courses at Texas Christian University ( $n = 272$ ). Participants were mostly female (61%), White (61%), and freshmen in college (61%). Students were given course credit for completing the assignment. The university's IRB committee approved the experiment and students provided consent before participating. Student names, IP addresses, and other identification components were removed prior to analysis to protect confidentiality.

### Design and Procedures

The entire experiment (both exposure to the stimulus and completing the survey instrument) occurred online. This study utilized a 2 (attack medium: print and video source) x 2 (response medium: print and video source) experimental design. A link to the study was posted on the participants' course website. Each participant who clicked on the link was randomly assigned to one of the four experimental conditions. Participants first (1) either watched a short video clip or read a brief newspaper article, and then (2) either watched a short press conference or read a brief press release. The study concluded after participants completed the research instrument.

### Stimuli

In February 2012, eighteen Texas Christian University students were arrested on charges for dealing multiple drugs. The story spread quickly from local news stations to national media outlets, putting the university in a crisis situation. Although only four of those arrested were student-athletes, the story made headline news on several sports broadcasts and was portrayed as

an athletic scandal (Durrett, 2012). This prompted responses from the university's chancellor, athletic director, and head football coach.

This study used a local news station that first reported the incident as the crisis *attack*. A short video clip of the coverage was used as the *video-attack* condition (see Appendix A). In order to control for effects of message content, the video clip was transcribed and formatted into a mock newspaper article that looked similar to ones the station had previously published. This was used as the *print-attack* condition (see Appendix B).

There were several responses from many university officials. However, given the recognition of the speaker, this study used a press conference with the university's chancellor as the crisis *response*. A short clip of the press conference was used as the *video-response* condition (see Appendix C). Similar to the attack, the clip was transcribed and formatted into a mock press release to control for message effects. This was utilized as the *print-response* condition (see Appendix D).

Video sources were relatively similar in length (attack: 1:22; response 1:11). Print sources were also reasonably similar (attack: 255 words; response 218 words).

## **Measures**

Three dependent variables were assessed – organizational reputation, stakeholder emotions, and stakeholder behavioral intentions. Organizational reputation was assessed using five items from Coombs and Holladay's (2002) Organizational Reputation Scale (an abbreviated version of their 10-item scale; see Coombs & Holladay, 1996). These five items focused on the university's perceived relationship with stakeholders, (e.g. "TCU is concerned with the well-being of its students, faculty, staff, alumni, and other community members.") and perceived trustworthiness (e.g. "Under most circumstances, I would be likely to believe what TCU says")

and “TCU is basically DISHONEST,” reverse-coded). These items were measured using a 7-point Likert scale ranging from “strongly disagree” to “strongly agree”. Additionally, a 1-item global evaluation of reputation was also included (“overall, my impression of TCU is...”). This global evaluation of reputation has been included in many previous studies and was assessed on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from “very unfavorable” to “very favorable” (Coombs & Holladay, 2006; 2008; 2009). This general scale (Appendix E) is an adapted version of McCroskey’s (1966) character measure. The scale displayed high reliability in this study ( $\alpha = .86$ ).

Stakeholder emotions were assessed using Jorgensen’s (1996) measure of negative emotion. This scale combines measures of anger toward the company (“very annoyed – not at all annoyed,” “not at all angry – very angry”) with reverse-scored measures of sympathy toward the company (“very sorry – not at all sorry,” “not at all sympathetic – very sympathetic”). These four items were assessed using a 7-point semantic differential scale. This measure (Appendix F) initially produced an unreliable score in this study ( $\alpha = .16$ ). The scale was then divided into two separate categories – positive emotion (sympathy/sorrow) and negative emotion (anger/annoyed). Both positive ( $\alpha = .82$ ) and negative ( $\alpha = .92$ ) scales produced reliable scores.

Stakeholder behavioral intentions were measured using Coomb’s (1999) and Coombs and Holladay’s (2008) scales of potential supportive behavior and negative word-of-mouth intention (Appendix G). Items taken from Coomb’s (1999) scale consisted of a list of actions that the organization might ask stakeholders to perform (e.g. “say nice things about TCU to other people,” “sign a petition in support of some action that TCU is trying to take,” and “attend a rally that TCU is putting on in support of some action they are advocating”). Three items were adapted from Coombs and Holladay’s (2008) scale: “I would encourage friends or relatives NOT

to attend TCU,” (reverse-coded), “I would say negative things about TCU and its administration to other people,” (reverse-coded), and “I would recommend TCU to someone asking my advice about which college to attend.” These seven items were assessed using a 7-point Likert scale ranging from “very unlikely” to “very likely,” and produced an acceptable reliability score in this study ( $\alpha = .76$ ).

All three measures (organizational reputation, stakeholder emotions, and stakeholder behavioral intentions) were adapted to accommodate the current crisis scenario by changing the wording of the questions (in most cases that just meant replacing “organization” with “TCU”). Supplementary demographics questions were asked to determine sex, age, ethnicity, and education level (Appendix H). Additional questions were included to examine respondents’ media preference and usage (Appendix I). Participants were asked to rank the following forms of media from highest (1) to lowest (6) in terms of preference – television, radio, social media, newspapers, websites (non-social media), and word-of-mouth. Participants were also asked to report their use of each media form in terms of total minutes per week. The means, standard deviations, reliabilities, and correlations of all four scales are included in Table 2.

**Table 2.***Means, Standard Deviations, Reliabilities, and Correlations of All Scales*

Scale	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>α</i>	<i>Behavior</i>	<i>Pos_Emo</i>	<i>Neg_Emo</i>	<i>Rep</i>
Reputation	5.96	.90	.86	.64**	-.02	-.43**	1
Negative Emotion	2.83	1.54	.92	-.29**	.36**	1	
Positive Emotion	3.47	1.49	.82	.08	1		
Behavioral Intentions	5.37	.88	.76	1			

\*\* =  $p < .01$ 

### Results

The focal interest of this study was to determine if there was a relationship between attack media and response media on the outcome variables outlined in SCCT. Four factorial ANOVAs were conducted to test between-subject effects on reputation, positive emotion, negative emotion, and behavioral intentions. The main effect for attack condition for reputation was not significant,  $F(1, 270) = .62, p > .05$ . The main effect for response condition for reputation was not significant,  $F(1, 270) = .14, p > .05$ . The interaction between attack condition and response condition for reputation was not significant,  $F(1, 270) = 1.35, p > .05$ .

The main effect for attack condition for positive emotion was also not significant,  $F(1, 270) = 2.00, p > .05$ . The main effect for response condition for positive emotion was not significant,  $F(1, 270) = 1.56, p > .05$ . The interaction between attack condition and response condition for positive emotion was not significant,  $F(1, 270) = 1.98, p > .05$ .

The main effect for attack condition for negative emotion was not significant as well,  $F(1, 270) = .09, p > .05$ . The main effect for response condition for negative emotion was also

not significant,  $F(1, 270) = .22, p > .05$ . The interaction between attack condition and response condition for negative emotion was also not significant,  $F(1, 270) = .01, p > .05$ .

Lastly, the main effect for attack condition for behavioral intentions was not significant,  $F(1, 270) = .08, p > .05$ . The main effect for response condition for behavioral intentions was not significant,  $F(1, 270) = .04, p > .05$ . The interaction between attack condition and response condition for behavioral intentions was not significant,  $F(1, 270) = .12, p > .05$ . Thus, the proposed hypotheses were not supported.

### **Post Hoc Analyses**

As a means to further probe the data, multiple univariate tests were run to determine if participants' media usage, preference, or demographics significantly affected any of the dependent variables. Positive emotion and web usage yielded a significant relationship,  $b = -.13, t(270), = -2.09, p < .05$ . The more participants used the web the less positive emotions they felt towards TCU. However, the amount of variance explained in this relationship was minimal,  $R^2 = .02, F(1, 270) = 4.38, p < .05$ .

A main effect of participant sex was found for reputation,  $F(1, 270), = 8.19, p < .01$ . Females ( $M = 6.08, SD = .78$ ) reported significantly higher levels of perceived organizational reputation than did males ( $M = 5.76, SD = 1.06$ ). Participant sex also was found to have a significant effect for behavioral intentions,  $F(1, 270) = 6.20, p < .05$ . Women ( $M = 5.48, SD = .81$ ) reported significantly higher levels of behavioral intentions than did men ( $M = 5.20, SD = .98$ ).

A main effect of participant ethnicity was found for reputation,  $F(5, 266) = 4.62, p < .01$ . Non-Hispanic White participants ( $M = 6.10, SD = .83$ ) reported significantly higher levels of perceived organizational reputation than did Hispanic-White ( $M = 5.93, SD = .86$ ), Asian ( $M =$



5.39,  $SD = 1.25$ ), African-American ( $M = 5.33$ ,  $SD = 1.04$ ), and Native American ( $M = 6.00$ ,  $SD = 0$ ) participants. Ethnicity was also found to have a significant effect for behavioral intentions,  $F(5, 266) = 2.79$ ,  $p = < .05$ . Non-Hispanic White ( $M = 5.51$ ,  $SD = .88$ ) reported significantly higher levels of behavioral intentions than did Native American ( $M = 5.43$ ,  $SD = 0$ ), Hispanic-White ( $M = 5.21$ ,  $SD = .83$ ), African-American ( $M = 5.02$ ,  $SD = .84$ ), and Asian ( $M = 4.94$ ,  $SD = 1.07$ ) participants. However, sex and ethnicity differences were not the focus of this study.

### **Discussion**

This study analyzed the relationship between attack medium, response medium, and the outcome variables outlined in SCCT. The study was grounded in the richness literature and proposed that a lean attack medium (i.e. print source) followed by a rich response medium (i.e. video source) would elicit the most favorable outcomes, while a rich attack medium (video) followed by a lean response medium (print) would produce the least favorable outcomes. Statistical analyses showed that all media conditions produced insignificant results on all of the dependent variables. This section provides possible explanation for the nature of these insignificant findings, discusses a few limitations of the study, and offers a few recommendations for future research

It is possible that the results of this study are best understood from the uses and gratifications perspective rather than the richness perspective. As previously discussed, two general beliefs about media stem from the U&G approach – that media either compete with one another (Dimmick et al., 2000; Dimmick & Rothenbuhler, 1984) or they complement each other (Dutta-Bergman, 2004a; 2004b). Given the findings that media form didn't affect any of the outcome variables, it may be that organizations utilize many sources to broadcast a response message rather than sticking solely to one source, which would suggest that people are affected

by response sources similarly, regardless of richness. This would align with Dutta-Bergman's (2004a) findings where participants who sought information about a specific topic on the Internet were also likely to seek out more information on the same topic via traditional media sources (newspapers/radio). This would explain why the manipulated media condition did not have a significant impact.

Another possible explanation for the findings is that media choice may simply not be an important factor in the crisis communication process. This is in line with past research as well, as Coombs and Holladay (2009) ultimately found no meaningful differences between the use of a print response and a video response. Combined with this study, these findings may imply a possible trend such that the medium employed in a response is irrelevant. Such an implication would suggest that it is important to consider other factors in the response process rather than media choice. For example, Claeys and Cauberghe (2012) explored timing of response and found that organizations who broke the story about the crisis before a news station did had more freedom when choosing a response strategy than organizations who did not self-disclose the crisis. This idea of 'stealing thunder' is certainly intriguing, but warrants further exploration before causal claims can be justified. At the same time, there is of course a danger of over-interpreting nonsignificant results. There may certainly be instances where one media form is necessary over the other. An active shooter scenario might be one such setting where a text message should take priority over other media forms, as it is likely that several students would be in class, thus limiting their access to other sources (i.e. televised warnings).

Although media condition did not produce any significant results, there was a significant relationship between participant's self-reported web usage and the assessed positive emotion outcome. Participants that reported using the web at higher rates were found to have less

positive emotion towards the crisis-experiencing organization (i.e. TCU). This may be the case due to the vast amount of negative information that users stumble upon while online. The growth of social media in particular may be one way in which users come across negative information causing them to be in a poor emotional state. Studies have found that increased social media and Internet use has led to depression, poor social competence, decreased relational satisfaction, loneliness, and other negative social behaviors (Caplan, 2005; Kraut et al., 1998; Kross et al., 2013). However, given that the amount of variance explained in the web use–positive emotion relationship was very minimal, these ideas are simply speculations at this point. Future research is needed to determine if a relationship does in fact exist.

Additionally, significant relationships were found for both sex and ethnicity on the reputation and behavioral intentions variables. Females reported higher reputation and behavioral intention levels than males did. Similarly, white participants reported the highest reputation and behavioral intention levels than all other ethnicities tested. While this may seem interesting, these results may be just due to the fact that the majority of participants were females (61%) and white (61%) – statistics that are representative of the university as a whole.

Although this study helped broaden the applicability of SCCT, it was not without limitations. First, the sample used in this study was one of convenience and its findings therefore are limited in terms of its generalizability. While this is a limitation, it also may serve as an additional reason for why significant findings did not manifest. This sample consisted entirely of students who attended the university that was used as the organization experiencing the crisis. Considering variables like economic investment and school pride, it is quite likely that these students would rate their institution favorably regardless of the situation, thus skewing the

results. Future research should control for these variables by using an organization that participants are not as highly invested in.

Second, the experimental design was restricted in terms of length, where participants were shown the attack message and immediately shown the response message afterward. Although this is possible, it is unlikely that people experience this same sequence in real-life settings. Future research should consider longitudinal designs in order to broaden the scope of this study.

Third, this study did not include a manipulation check to determine if the video media were in fact perceived to be richer than the print media. For example, there is the possibility that participants viewed the video response as being less rich than the print response due to the speaker reading from a manuscript in the same vocal tone. Future research should utilize a manipulation check to assess whether these manipulations were indeed accurate.

### **Conclusion**

The purpose of this study was to broaden the utility of SCCT by determining if a relationship existed between attack medium, response medium, and the outcome variables outlined in the theory. Although the main findings were insignificant, these results still possess both theoretical and practical value. Instead of spending time researching media effects, scholars should focus their attention on other situational factors, such as timing of response. Doing so will help improve the theory, protect organizational reputation, elicit positive stakeholder emotions, and produce favorable behavioral intentions – the ultimate goal of crisis researchers and practitioners alike.

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## Appendix A

## Attack Condition (Video Source)

**Transcription**

REPORTER: “One by one the TCU students arrested in the drug round up are bonding out of jail after spending the day behind bars. That’s now former TCU football linebacker Tanner Brock, a stand out many believe had a future in the NFL.”

REPORTER [background]: “Tanner anything you want to say at all?”

MAN [yelling]: “Excuse us, excuse us! No thank you sir.”

REPORTER: “He held his shirt over his head as he hustled into a waiting pickup and drove off. An NBC 5 camera was there as dozens of police officers descended on TCU’s campus in an early morning sweep, rounding up students all on charges of dealing drugs – marijuana, LSD, Xanax, cocaine, and ecstasy. Officers also recovered at least one gun.”

TCU CHIEF OF POLICE (Steve McGee): “This investigation began six months ago after receiving complaints from students, staff, parents, and the Fort Worth community.”

REPORTER: “From November to February, police say an undercover officer made dozens of buys on campus and near campus, including this Kroger’s parking lot. That’s where police say defensive tackle David Yendrey sold marijuana several times. Police say one student was a member of a fraternity, but administrators say there’s no reason to believe other fraternity members knew what was going on.”

FORT WORTH POLICE CAPTAIN (Ken Dean): “These are hand to hand transactions. They happened on and off campus. They may have been in the rooms themselves or they may have been somewhere close to the campus, but these were actual hand to hand transactions.”

**URL link:** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Nm8CjoAzmN0>

## Appendix B

Attack Condition (Print Source)

# 18 Arrested in TCU Drug Bust



*February 15<sup>th</sup>, 2012*

One by one, the TCU students arrested in the drug round up are bonding out of jail after spending the day behind bars. Former TCU football linebacker Tanner Brock – a stand out who many believe had a future in the NFL – was questioned after leaving Tarrant County Jail, but declined to comment. He held his shirt over his head as he hustled into a waiting pickup and drove off.



Former TCU linebacker  
Tanner Brock

An NBC 5 camera was there as dozens of police officers descended on TCU's campus in an early morning sweep, rounding up students all on charges of dealing drugs – marijuana, LSD,



Mug shots of the TCU students arrested for several drug-related charges

Xanax, cocaine, and ecstasy. Officers also recovered at least one gun. TCU Chief of Police Steve McGee stated, “this investigation began six months ago after receiving complaints from students, staff, parents, and the Fort Worth community.” From November to February, police say an undercover officer made dozens of buys on campus and near campus, including the

Kroger parking lot located on University Dr. That's where police say defensive tackle David Yendrey sold marijuana several times.

Police say one student was a member of a fraternity, but administrators say there's no reason to believe other fraternity members knew what was going on. Fort Worth Police Captain Ken Dean said, "these were hand to hand transactions. They happened on and off campus. They may have been in the rooms themselves or they may have been somewhere close to the campus, but these were actual hand to hand transactions."



**TCU Police Chief Steve McGee and Fort Worth Police Capt. Ken Dean talk before meeting with news reporters**



## Appendix C

## Response Condition (Video Source)

**Transcription**

CHANCELLOR BOSCHINI: “We have clear expectations for our students, we’ve made these clear to our students – one, that they behave in an ethical manner; two, that they abide by our student code of conduct; and three of course, that they follow all state and federal laws. The students’ behavior this morning, these students who were arrested, is incompatible with our norms at Texas Christian University. What they did, to be honest, is simply unacceptable. This behavior, when reported, is never tolerated at our university. Our Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs, Dr. Cavins-Tull, will examine the situation. She’ll determine if we need any new programs or if anything different needs to be implemented. She’ll also determine what is going to happen to those students following this. We have separated all of them from campus and then she’ll do the follow-up. Today’s events have changed the life of everybody at TCU, and we hope that everyone on campus can look at this not as a defining moment, but as an important step in the safety and health of our campus. We’re a community of dedicated faculty, students, and staff, and I feel that the people in our community, they’ll work together to make sure that this doesn’t define us, that this just makes us even stronger.”

**URL link**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cjYpUru0qaw>

## Appendix D

## Response Condition (Print Source)



*February 15<sup>th</sup>, 2012*

We have clear expectations for our students, we've made these clear to our students – one, that they behave in an ethical manner; two, that they abide by our student code of conduct; and three of course, that they follow all state and federal laws. The students' behavior this morning, these students who were arrested, is incompatible with our norms at Texas Christian University. What they did, to be honest, is simply unacceptable. This behavior, when reported, is never tolerated at our university. Our Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs, Dr. Cavins-Tull, will examine the situation. She'll determine if we need any new programs or if anything different needs to be implemented. She'll also determine what is going to happen to those students following this. We have separated all of them from campus and then she'll do the follow-up. Today's events have changed the life of everybody at TCU, and we hope that everyone on campus can look at this not as a defining moment, but as an important step in the safety and health of our campus. We're a community of dedicated faculty, students, and staff, and I feel that the people in our community, they'll work together to make sure that this doesn't define us, that this just makes us even stronger.

*– Chancellor Victor Boschini*

## Appendix E

## Organizational Reputation Scale

**DIRECTIONS:** After viewing the previous crisis and the organization's response, to what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements? Please indicate the answer that accurately reflects your honest opinion.

- 1) TCU is concerned with the well-being of its students, faculty, staff, alumni, and other community members.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neutral	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
←1	-----2	-----3	-----4	-----5	-----6	-----7→

- 2) TCU is basically DISHONEST

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neutral	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
←1	-----2	-----3	-----4	-----5	-----6	-----7→

- 3) I do NOT trust TCU to tell the truth about the incident

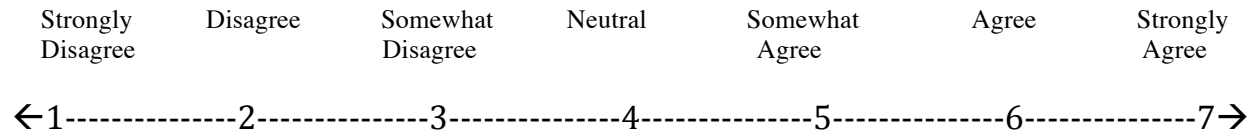
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neutral	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
←1	-----2	-----3	-----4	-----5	-----6	-----7→

- 4) Under most circumstances, I would be likely to believe what TCU says

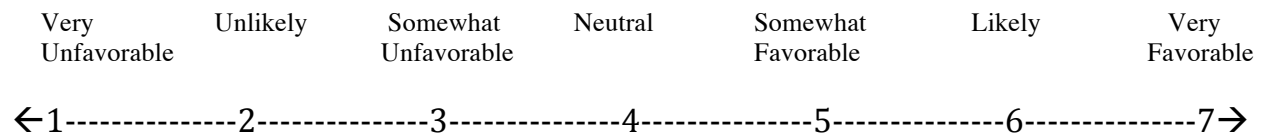
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neutral	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
←1	-----2	-----3	-----4	-----5	-----6	-----7→



5) TCU is NOT concerned with the well-being of its students, faculty, staff, alumni, and other community members



6) Overall, my impression of TCU is ...



Appendix F

Stakeholder Emotions Scale

**DIRECTIONS:** How did the organization's response to the crisis make you feel? Please indicate the answer that accurately reflects your honest opinion.

1)  
not at all \_\_\_\_\_ very  
annoyed \_\_\_\_\_ annoyed

2)  
not at all \_\_\_\_\_ very  
angry \_\_\_\_\_ angry

3)  
not at all \_\_\_\_\_ very  
sorry \_\_\_\_\_ sorry

4)  
not at all \_\_\_\_\_ very  
sympathetic \_\_\_\_\_ sympathetic

Appendix G

Stakeholder Behavioral Intentions Scale

**DIRECTIONS:** After viewing the previous crisis and the organization’s response, how likely are you to engage in the following actions? Please indicate the answer that accurately reflects your honest opinion.

1) Say nice things about TCU to other people

Very Unlikely	Unlikely	Somewhat Unlikely	Neutral	Somewhat Likely	Likely	Very Likely
←1	-----2	-----3	-----4	-----5	-----6	-----7→

2) Sign a petition in support of some action that TCU is trying to take

Very Unlikely	Unlikely	Somewhat Unlikely	Neutral	Somewhat Likely	Likely	Very Likely
←1	-----2	-----3	-----4	-----5	-----6	-----7→

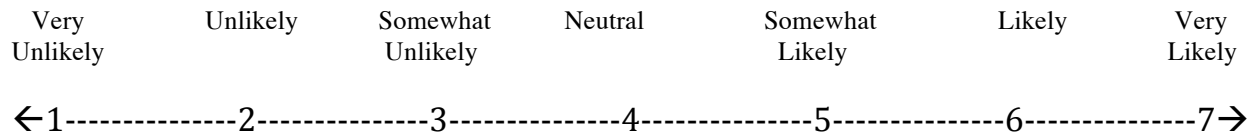
3) Call or e-mail a government official in support of some action that TCU is trying to take

Very Unlikely	Unlikely	Somewhat Unlikely	Neutral	Somewhat Likely	Likely	Very Likely
←1	-----2	-----3	-----4	-----5	-----6	-----7→

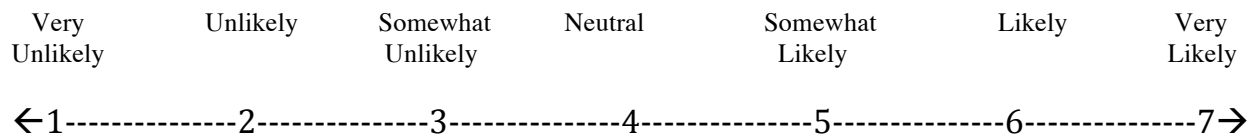
4) Attend a rally that TCU was putting on in support of some action they are advocating

Very Unlikely	Unlikely	Somewhat Unlikely	Neutral	Somewhat Likely	Likely	Very Likely
←1	-----2	-----3	-----4	-----5	-----6	-----7→

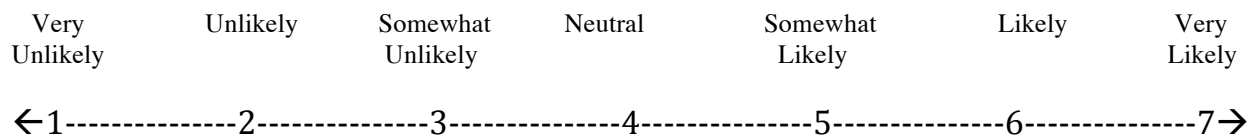
5) I would encourage friends or relatives NOT to attend TCU



6) I would say negative things about TCU and its administration to other people



7) I would recommend TCU to someone asking my advice about which college to attend



Appendix H

Demographic Questions

**DIRECTIONS:** Please answer the following questions.

- 1) What is your sex?
  - a. Male
  - b. Female
  - c. N/A
  
- 2) What is your age? \_\_\_\_\_
  
- 3) What is your ethnicity?
  - a. White (non-Hispanic)
  - b. White (Hispanic)
  - c. African American
  - d. Asian or Asian American
  - e. Native American
  - f. Hawaiian or Pacific Islander
  - g. Other
  
- 4) What is your current level of education?
  - a. Freshman
  - b. Sophomore
  - c. Junior
  - d. Senior

## Appendix I

## Media Preference &amp; Usage Scale

**DIRECTIONS:** Please honestly answer the following questions to the best of your knowledge.

- 1) Please rank which of the following media is your most preferred way for getting information (rank in terms of your preference for usage; 1 = most preferred way, 6 = least preferred way).
  - a. Television
  - b. Radio
  - c. Social Media
  - d. Newspapers
  - e. Websites (not accessed via social media)
  - f. Word-of-Mouth
  
- 2) How much time per week do you spend engaging with the following forms of media?
  - a. Watching television = \_\_\_\_\_ minutes
  - b. Listening to the radio = \_\_\_\_\_ minutes
  - c. Using social media = \_\_\_\_\_ minutes
  - d. Reading newspapers = \_\_\_\_\_ minutes
  - e. On websites (not accessed via social media) = \_\_\_\_\_ minutes
  - f. In social conversations with other people = \_\_\_\_\_ minutes