HOW CAN AN ORGANIZATION LESSEN PEOPLE'S ANGER, BLAME, AND NEGATIVE

BEHAVIORS IN A CRISIS? BUILDING THE ANGER MANAGEMENT MODEL BASED

ON ORGANIZATIONAL CRISIS RESPONSE STRATEGIES AND NEWS FRAMES

by

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ABSTRACT

The main purpose of this study is to examine how to reduce people's anger, blame, and negative behavioral intentions in a crisis. By focusing on levels of responsibility and a morality news frame, this study attempted to (1) examine the effects of the two factors on blame and anger, (2) identify the role of anger mediating blame and negative behavioral intentions, and (3) test the anger management model. The total of 230 college students participated in this experiment. The experimental design was a 2 (individual vs. organizational responsibility) x 2 (immorality vs. non-immorality frame) between-subject factorial design. Each of four groups was exposed to different types of news scenarios regarding a laptop battery recall crisis caused by human-error.

The main effects of the two factors on blame and anger indicated that: (1) participants who read a the individual responsibility exhibited higher levels of blame and anger than did participants who read the organizational responsibility, and (2) participants who were exposed to an immorality frame exhibited higher levels of blame and anger than did participants who did not, (3) significant interaction effects between the two on blame were found when participants were exposed to the immorality frame; no matter what a strategy the company uses, participants showed higher levels of blame in both the individual and the organizational responsibility, (4) the more people blamed the company, the angrier people got toward the company, (5) if people were more likely to be mad at the company, they were less likely to purchase the company's products, and (6) more likely to tell other people about the company negatively. Mediation analyses found that anger mediated (7) blame and negative purchase intention, and (8) blame and

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negative word-of-mouth communication intention. (9) The anger management model was revised.

This study gives practitioners practical implications regarding effective crisis response strategies, the importance of media frame, and anger management in a crisis. Despite limitations regarding generalizability, this study contributes knowledge in the field of crisis communication to (1) better understand the people's emotion in a crisis, and (2) develop specific ways of managing their anger.

DEDICATION

For my Lord

and

my family

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This is the best moment of my life. I thank my Lord for all the people whom I am grateful to, and for creating these relationships.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND SYMBOLS

a   Cronbach's index of internal consistency

β   Standarized multiple regression coefficient

SD   Standard deviation

df   Degrees of freedom: number of values free to vary after certain restrictions have been

placed on the data

F   Fisher's *F* ratio: A ration of two variances

M   Mean: the sum of a set of measurements divided by the number of measurements in the set

p   Probability associated with the occurrence under the null hypothesis of a value as extreme

as or more extreme than the observed value

r   Pearson product-moment correlation

t   Computed value of *t* test

<   Less than

=   Equal to

%   Percentage

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

Crisis management covers all types of organizational activities including predicting and preparing for an issue that could become a crisis, and managing the issue during and after the crisis. In particular, in the case of post-crisis management, the most important issue is how to manage the crisis by using organizational crisis response strategy. Crisis managers should use appropriate organizational crisis response strategies toward various types of stakeholders for any given crisis situations.

Crisis response strategy is an effort organizations make to minimize damage to the organization's image as well as to reestablish the organization's legitimacy (Boyd, 2000; Coombs, 2006a; Hearit, 1994). Therefore, effective crisis response strategies should function to restore the tarnished organizational image caused by a crisis, to minimize crisis responsibility, and to lessen negative cognitive and affective responses and behaviors toward the organization. A variety of experimental studies have examined effective crisis response strategies based on people's perceptions of reputation, image, crisis responsibility, blame, emotional responses, and behavioral intentions (e.g., Cho, 2007; Coombs, 1999; Coombs & Holladay, 1996, 2004, 2007, 2008; Lee, 2004).

Among those key variables examined by previous literature, crisis communication scholars have paid little research attention to affective responses. Recently, however, anger was found to be a critical factor in an external public's evaluation of an organizational crisis (Coombs & Holladay, 2007). As a representative negative affect, anger influences negative outcomes that

people have and mediates crisis responsibility and the negative outcomes (Coombs & Holladay, 2007). This indicates that how to manage anger is a key issue that current crisis managers have to think about in handling an organizational crisis. From this perspective, this study raises a question as to how organizations can reduce people's anger during a crisis. In other words, what is the most effective crisis response strategy to mitigate people's anger in order to prevent potential negative behaviors which might be caused by that anger?

Many crisis communication scholars have identified crisis response strategies through various case studies (Allen & Caillouet, 1994; Benoit, 1995). They have focused on rhetorical approaches such as image restoration theory and apologia theory. The elaboration of crisis response strategies has been derived from examining how people attribute a crisis and make a judgment about its cause (Coombs & Holladay, 1996, 2004). Applying attribution theory in the field of psychology to crisis communication, Coombs and Holladay (1996, 2004) developed the Situational Crisis Communication Theory (SCCT) and its linkage system matching crisis types to crisis response strategies. These types of strategies are also based on image restoration strategies.

The previous literature seems to be limited to image building and apologia strategies, and blame/accountability matters. These image-building strategies vary in their amount of accommodation (i.e., how much emphasis is placed on the victim) (Coombs, 1999; Coombs & Holladay, 2007; Marcus & Goodman, 1991). The strategies do not cover another matter: who is accountable for the crisis. In other words, these types of crisis response strategies are sometimes difficult to apply to a certain crisis type. For example, in an internal crisis caused by an employee, a responsible object is an important matter that the organization should consider in handling the crisis. Beyond the limited scope of current strategies, this study proposes a new perspective to cover various types of organizational crises.

A news frame might be a good resource to find new crisis response strategies in the current field of crisis communication. This study focuses on Iyengar's (1991) episodic and thematic news frames, which are the most frequently discussed in the field of news frames. They can be applied to crisis contexts in terms of level of responsibility, particularly, in an internal crisis. In an internal crisis, how people perceive the crisis might vary according to how the organization assigns the cause for the crisis and "to whom" it assigns punishment. In other words, if the crisis was caused by an employee's mistake, people might have different perceptions about who is responsible—the individual employee or the organization itself. Iyengar's news frame can be applied to this internal crisis as an organizational crisis response strategy (i.e., episodic frame and thematic frame could be considered the individual level of responsibility strategy and the organizational level of responsibility, respectively). Thus, the main purpose of this study is to examine effective crisis response strategies to lessen people's anger, which might influence negative behaviors.

This study also aims to look at news media that current crisis communication theories overlook. The SCCT, the most dominantly used crisis communication theory (An & Cheng, in press), does not consider that people's perceptions could be changed according to different news frames. The SCCT assumes that a crisis type functions as a frame that people should interpret. The SCCT does not pay attention to the possibility that the mass media play a primary role in letting people know about the crisis. According to Weiner (1986), people are more likely to seek causal attribution in a negative and uncertain situation and demand crisis-related information from the news media (Augustine, 1995; Darling, 1994; Fearn-Banks, 2007). Therefore, it is important to look at how media frame crisis-related news in describing a crisis event, the cause

of the crisis, and the actor responsible for it. Those frames influence the public's perception, emotion, impressions, and images toward the organization (Coombs, 2006b).

This study intends to examine the morality news frame, which is one of the news frames frequently used in news coverage (Semetko & Valkenburg, 2000). When people face an event, they make a moral judgment about it and evaluate whether an action is right or wrong (Swan, 2005). Previous research (Cho, 2007) identified that moral judgment is a key factor influencing anger, blame, and image. Given that anger is "basically a moral concept" (Averill, 1993, p.190), this study aims at examining how a morality news frame influences people's anger. In other words, does the immorality frame (which emphasizes organizational immorality and unethical behaviors in a crisis) anger people?

Overall, this study is designed to examine how organizational crisis response strategies (levels of crisis responsibility) and news frames (morality frame) can be used to lessen anger and blame, and to reduce the likelihood of negative behavioral intentions (i.e., purchase intention and word-of-mouth communication intention). Emphasizing the relationships between levels of responsibility (individual responsibility vs. organizational responsibility), morality news frame, anger, blame, purchase intention, and word-of-mouth communication intention, this study aims to explore the influence of crisis response strategies and news frames on anger and blame (i.e., perceived crisis responsibility). In particular, if anger results, this study examines the role of anger in blame and behavioral intentions. Ultimately, this study can provide crisis managers with practical applications regarding effective crisis response strategies and the influences of news frames in crisis communication.

CHAPTER 2

Literature Review

Crisis Responsibility

Attribution of Crisis Responsibility

A crisis can generally mean anything that interrupts a normal flow and condition (Ferarn-Banks, 2007) of a person, an organization, a society, and a country. It includes any disaster, emergency, plight, calamity, and catastrophe (Hagan, 2007). In organizational crisis context, a crisis is defined as "a major occurrence with a potentially negative outcome affecting the organization, company, or industry, as well as its publics, products, services, or good name (Fern-Banks, 2007, p. 8). More specifically, a crisis refers to "a specific, unexpected, and non routine event or series of events that create high levels of uncertainty and threaten or perceive to threaten an organization's high-priority goals" (Seeger, Sellnow, & Ulmer, 1998, p. 233). According to attribution theory, when a negative, unexpected, or important event happens in the interpersonal context, people are likely to ask "*why* did this event happen?" and engage in causal attribution processing (Weiner, 1986). Given that fact, a crisis situation can make people engage in attribution processing of organizational responsibility. Thus, crisis can be defined as "an event for which people seek causes and make attributions" (Coombs & Holladay, 2004, p. 97), and it triggers judgment for crisis responsibility. The understanding of attribution of crisis responsibility is important in that crisis responsibility is "the perception that organization is the reason for the crisis, is the linchpin" (Coombs, 2006b, p. 175).

To understand and explain causal attribution processing in a crisis, Coombs and Holladay (1996, 2004) applied attribution theory to organizational crisis contexts. Attribution theory was originally developed in psychology. Heider (1958) stated that the result of action is thought to

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depend on two sets of conditions: (a) factors within the person (internal factors) and (b) factors within the environment (external factors). Rotter (1966) developed the classification of causality, namely, internal-external locus. Locus indicates whether the cause exists within or outside of the individual involved (Ryan & Boscia, 2002). A new dimension of causality, "stability" (stable vs. unstable) was proposed by Weiner et al. (1971). Stability refers to a constant factor as people look for a cause. For example, ability is a constant internal-locus, whereas effort or mood is an unstable internal-locus, although ability, effort, and mood are all regarded as internal locus factors.

In addition, controllability, another factor assuming that an action is subject to volitional control, was considered as a key causal dimension. Controllability refers to how much a behavior or an event is controllable by an actor. Considering controllability, effort can be distinguished from other internal-unstable dimensions such as mood (Weiner, 1979). In general, the majority of previous studies recognized these causal dimensions that people use when they make attributions (McAuley, Duncan, & Russell, 1992; Weiner, 1985).

Like with the interpersonal situation, causal attribution processing has been applied to the organizational situation. Moussavi and Evans (1993) applied Kelly's (1967, 1973) well-accepted interpersonal attribution schema to the organizational context, calling it an organizational attribution schema. They proposed that both individual and organizational attribution schema are similar in that the object of attribution is a behavior and attributing is an individual function. On the other hand, there is a distinct difference between the two in that individual attribution schema is used when asking "*why* the individual does the behavior?" whereas organizational attribution schema is used when asking "*who* behaves it?" (Moussavi & Evans, 1993, p. 83).

This application of causal attribution to the organizational context has been conducted in crisis-related context. Coombs (1995) applied key causal dimensions to crisis situations: locus of control (internal factor vs. external factor), stability (stable vs. unstable), and controllability (controllable vs. uncontrollable). Coombs (1995) explained that attributions of internal control indicate that the crisis was under the control of the organization; thus, the crisis should be attributed to the organization or someone internal (i.e., employee). Meanwhile, attributions of intentionality suggest that the organization could have done something to prevent the crisis. Such attributions entail that the organization could have prevented the crisis and knew that preventative methods could have been taken (Coombs & Holladay, 1996, 2004). Thus, if the cause is internal control (i.e., the crisis was controlled by the organization itself) and strong internal locus (i.e., intentionality is high), people are more likely to perceive organizational crisis responsibility as the strongest. On the other hand, when the cause for a crisis is strong external control (i.e., the crisis was not controlled by organization itself) and weak internal locus (low intentionality), organizational crisis responsibility should be the weakest.

Based on these causal dimensions, Coombs and Holladay (1996, 2004) suggested a category system of crisis types, linked to crisis response strategies. They assumed that different crisis situations lead to different attributions of crisis responsibility. Similarly, the crisis response strategies imply different degrees of accepting crisis responsibility. In other words, as attributions of crisis responsibility increase, the crisis managers should use crisis response strategies that progressively accept more responsibility for the crisis. Therefore, they argued that accepting crisis responsibility on the part of the organization must be consistent with people's attributions of crisis responsibility generated by the crisis types in SCCT. Coombs (2006a) developed the categorization by classifying various crisis types into three clusters: victim cluster,

accidental cluster, and preventable cluster. For example, the preventable cluster (i.e., human breakdown accidents, human breakdown recalls, organizational misdeed with no injuries, organizational misdeed management, organizational misdeed with injuries) requires the organization to use a strategy accepting all responsibilities.

In spite of its usefulness, SCCT assumed that a particular crisis type (e.g., human error recall crisis) yielded only one level of responsibility based on its causality. It overlooks the possible differences of attribution of responsibility that may occur within a particular crisis according to different crisis response strategies about responsibility. For instance, if human error recall is caused by one employee's mistake inside an organization, people are supposed to attribute high responsibility to the organization according to SCCT, because people are more likely to attribute crisis responsibility to the organization, in particular in an internal-locus crisis situation (Coombs & Holladay, 1996, 2004).

However, in reality, some people could perceive the cause of the crisis as the individual employee's fault rather than that of the organization. Thus, they can attribute its responsibility to the individual employee, not the whole organization. Or, other people could perceive the level of crisis as the organizational level of responsibility, and blame the whole organization rather than the individual employee. In other words, if we think about people's perceived crisis responsibility, the issue of crisis responsibility is not a simple matter in reality. It is more complex than what SCCT suggests, in particular in internal-locus crisis. It shows the public could have a different perception that the company should be held accountable for in a particular crisis, which is the most important fact that crisis managers need to know to use appropriate response strategies.

The Level of Responsibility in an Internal Crisis: Episodic vs. Thematic Frames

As discussed regarding an internal-locus crisis, people's perceptions in terms of level of responsibility could vary. Given that, "who caused it?" is the most important matter for causal attribution in the organizational context (Moussavi & Evans, 1993); the perception of "who is responsible?" is a decisive matter in the crisis-related context. Like the earlier internal crisis case caused by one employee inside the organization, whether people assign blame to the individual or the organization could decide the degree of responsibility.

In the field of media framing, for example, previous studies have explored how media frame the level of responsibility about a particular issue or event. Hallahan (1999) identified responsibility framing in public relations, and its linkages to psychological processing that might be applicable to pubic relations practices. In addition, Semetko and Valkenburg (2000) examined the use of attribution of responsibility frame defined as "a way of attributing responsibility for its cause or solution to either the government or to an individual or group" (p. 96) by newspaper and television media. They found that the attribution of responsibility frame was most commonly used in particular in serious newspapers (Semetko & Valkenburg, 2000).

In fact, a responsibility frame was identified by Iyengar (1991). He identified two distinct news frames dealing with issues: the episodic news frame (focusing on certain individuals or specific events) vs. the thematic news frame (placing issues and events in general context like a society or government). An episodic frame describes an event in terms of personal experience, while a thematic frame describes an event in abstract and impersonal terms. For example, by using an episodic frame, news covers serious social issues/problems as individual experience. Thus, the poor woman on welfare is held responsible for her fate, rather than the government or the social welfare system (Iyengar).

Iyengar (1991) also focused on framing effects on public perception by showing that different frames provide the public with different perspectives on the same issue and assign responsibility to different actors. He insisted that a thematic frame made people attribute responsibility to society or government, while an episodic frame made people attribute responsibility to the individual. Therefore, the more people watch an episodic news frame, the less the audience holds public officials accountable. Thus, news media have a critical role in shaping public opinion about who is responsible for causing or solving key social problems (Iyengar & Kinder, 1987).

Attribution of responsibility is presented in two ways in news media: (a) causal responsibility and (b) treatment responsibility. Causal responsibility focuses on the reason for an issue/problem, whereas treatment responsibility focuses on who or what has the power to alleviate the problem (Iyengar, 1991). Individual attribution of causal responsibility for the issue is to assign responsibility to the individual who commits the act. As a casual theme, it focuses on personality traits (such as personality disorders, the need of avoiding work, carelessness, and greed) and the individual's insufficient ability (such as low level of education and employment skill). Societal attribution of causal responsibility for the issue is to assign responsibility to economic conditions, political pressure, gender/racial discrimination, and cultural diversity. Meanwhile, individual attribution of treatment responsibility is to impose severe punishment against the individual who commits the act, such as criminals and terrorists. Societal attribution of treatment responsibility is to improve socioeconomic systems, political order, reduce poverty and inequality, and rehabilitate education systems, as a prescription for the issue.

Iyengar (1991) identified how these different frames influence the public's attribution of responsibility for the creation of problems or situations (causal responsibility) and for the

resolution of these problems (treatment responsibility). Iyengar's work provides a better understanding of how people perceive attribution of responsibility according to different news frames. Beyond the simple understanding, if we explore useful implications for organizational crises, his framing work also provides a theoretical framework about how the organization should react to the responsibility for cause and treatment. This is the main point of this study.

Applying Iyengar's (1991) frameworks to an organizational crisis context, causal responsibility may be related to how the organization should respond to the cause for crisis in the internal crisis. In this case, the organization may say the crisis is just one individual's fault (individual-causal responsibility), or the organization may admit the cause of crisis is in the organizational systems or environment factors (organizational-causal responsibility). Likewise, the organization may punish the individual employee (individual-treatment responsibility), or the organization may improve the organizational system without individual punishment (organizational-treatment responsibility).

A previous experiment (An, Park, Cho, & Berger, 2008) tested effective crisis response strategies in terms of level of crisis responsibility in an internal-locus crisis. The results showed that people were angry and had a negative impression of the organization after they were exposed to the crisis response strategy taking an individual level of responsibility (i.e., the organization blamed the individual and punished him). On the other hand, people had a positive response when they were exposed to the crisis response strategy taking an organizational level of responsibility (i.e., organization admitted the individual's fault as their error and taking all responsibilities). The significant difference between the two types of level of responsibility (individual vs. organizational) showed that people's perceived responsibility and negative emotions may vary according to different crisis response strategies.

To examine the differences of people's blame representing crisis responsibility, and negative emotion by the different crisis response strategies in terms of level of responsibility, this study proposes one research question and a hypothesis based on empirical generalization from results of An et al. (2008).

RQ1. How do participants vary by different levels of responsibility (individual vs. organizational) in terms of (a) blame and (b) anger?

H1. Participants who read a crisis scenario with an individual level of responsibility will exhibit more (a) blame and (b) anger than will participants who read a crisis scenario with an organizational level of responsibility.

Crisis in News Media

Perceived Crisis by News Frames

People's perceptions of and inferences about events are dependent on what information or feature is salient in the environment (Heider, 1958). Saliency is determined in part by what and how the media cover events, according to agenda-setting theory. Framing theory suggests the mass media do even more than create saliency. By selecting what to include and what to exclude from a story, the news media frame a story (Iyengar & Kinder, 1987; Pan & Kosicki, 1993); that is, the media limit or define the story's meaning and thereby shape people's interpretation of that story (Hallahan, 1999).

In particular, in a crisis situation, the mass media have a primary role in letting people know about the crisis. According to Weiner (1986), people are more likely to seek causal attribution in a negative and uncertain situation and demand crisis-related information from the news media (Augustine, 1995; Darling, 1994; Fearn-Banks, 2007). The media may frame a crisis news story by describing the crisis cause and any resulting victims, economic loss, and/or

damages. The coverage frame could play a role in shaping people's perceptions of the crisis, given that generally, the public's information about a crisis comes through the media.

An understanding of how the news media frame crisis stories is important to crisis managers and public relations practitioners in determining the appropriate crisis response strategies and messages. Regardless of how and why the crisis occurred, if the news media selectively frame the story by emphasizing organizational responsibility or by suggesting that the organization was morally irresponsible, for example, the organizational response must address and take into consideration that frame. Therefore, news framing studies should be considered by crisis managers as well as researchers in the field of crisis communication.

Despite the importance of the news media in a crisis, current crisis communication scholars have not paid attention to the effects of news frames on people's perception in a crisis. One of the criticisms about SCCT is that SCCT overlooks the public's attribution by assuming that people's perception is decided by one certain type of crisis; this could be influenced by how news media frame the crisis. Considering the impact of news media on people's perception, it is necessary to examine how news media frame the crisis, and how people are influenced by the frame.

Although a large body of literature has contributed to our understanding of frames and framing effects, a shortage of research attention exists about crisis news framing and framing effects based on crisis news coverage. Overall, the majority of previous studies in the field of crisis communication have focused on an analysis of news coverage during a crisis. They have limited their analyses to one particular crisis case such as the 9/11 terrorist attacks (e.g., Domke, Graham, Coe, Lockett, & Coopman, 2006), the SARS health risk (e.g., Lee, 2005; Wilkins, 2005), foreign policy issues (e.g., Livingston, & Eachus, 1995; Zaller & Chiu, 1996), the Gulf

War (e.g., Iyengar & Simon, 1993), the TWA flight hostage crisis (e.g., Atwater, 1987), and political issues (e.g., Neiger & Zandberg, 2004). Thus, to examine the influence of news frames on people's blame and anger in a crisis situation, this study uses the morality frame.

Moral Issue in a Crisis: Morality Frames

Frames are powerful mechanisms that can help define and solve problems and shape public opinion (Knight, 1999). Much of the research on framing has focused on media frames in relation to public policy issues, although framing research is also potentially useful for identifying the strategic messages created by public relations practitioners (Hallahan, 1999). Hallahan (1999) suggested seven models of framing applicable to public relations. Semetko and Valkenburg (2000) identified five news frames (i.e., attribution of responsibility frame, human interest frame, conflict frame, economic consequence frame, and morality frame) in political news, and An and Gower (in press) analyzed them in crisis news coverage. Among them, this study focused on a morality frame as an organizational crisis response strategy.

A morality frame puts the event, problem, or issue in the context of morals, social prescriptions, and religious tenets. Neuman, Just, and Crigler (1992) found that the morality frame was commonly used by journalists indirectly through quotations or inference, rather than directly because of the journalistic norm of objectivity. Morality and social prescriptions imply that a judgment is being made about the individual or the event. Journalists are not supposed to allow their personal judgments to color their writing.

In a crisis context, some types of crises are directly related to morality issues such as a human-breakdown accident and organizational misdeed/management misconduct. In these crises, the organization knowingly places some people at risk, takes inappropriate actions, or violates a law or regulations (Coombs, 2006a). Thus, the organization's controllability of the cause of the

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crisis and its responsibility for the crisis may be dealt with as a morality issue by the news media. That is, news media focus on whether an organization or individual is immoral in causing, handling, and responding to a crisis.

The reason to focus on morality in this study is that previous research (Cho, 2007) demonstrated that people's negative emotions were influenced by their moral judgment. Cho (2007) supported this argument by applying disposition theory to crisis contexts (Zillmann, 1985, 1994, 2000; Zillmann & Bryant, 1975; Zillmann & Cantor, 1976, 1977). Disposition theory describes how viewers perceive and morally judge actors' actions in drama. Disapprobation of an action judged through a character's behavior is considered to produce a negative affect, whereas approbation is considered to generate a positive affect (Zillmann, 1991). This argument can be applied to a crisis. That is, people perceive causal components about a crisis or event and judge it morally, and then they respond to it affectively. In other words, if people think the organization is immoral in a crisis situation, they tend to become angrier. Averill (1982) contended that moral judgment is associated with emotions, and perceiving an incident as voluntary and unjustified elicits more anger than perceiving it as an unavoidable accident. Given a number of framing-effect studies, it is assumed that the morality news frame may influence people's perception regarding moral judgment. People may blame an organization more and be upset after they are exposed to the news story reporting that the organization was immoral in the crisis. To examine its influence on people's blame and anger, this study posed the second research question and hypothesis.

RQ2. How do participants vary by different morality frames (use of immorality frame vs. no use of immorality frame) in terms of (a) blame and (b) anger?

H2. Participants who read a crisis scenario with an immorality frame will exhibit more

(a) blame and (b) anger than participants who did not.

In addition, given H1 and H2, people may show higher levels of blame and anger after they read the news story reporting the individual level of responsibility and the immorality frame. Therefore, H3 was established.

H3. Participants who read a crisis scenario with an individual level of responsibility and

an immorality frame will exhibit more (a) blame and (b) anger than participants

who read a crisis scenario with an organizational level of responsibility and who did

not read the immorality frame.

<div align="center">Negative Emotions in a Crisis</div>

Emotion in a Crisis

In general, emotions are seen as mental states representing evaluative reactions to events, agents, or objects (Nabi, 1999; Ortony, Clore, & Collins, 1988). According to previous emotion literature, there are two distinct perspectives (Dillard & Meijnders, 2002). One perspective is the uni-dimensional model, which depicts emotion as ranging from extremely positive to extremely negative effect. The other perspective is that emotions have two dimensions in which positive and negative emotions are distinct. This perspective, discrete emotion, refers to diverse emotional states and has relatively specific functions (Hullett, Louden, & Mitra, 2003; Lazarus, 1991; Weiner, 1986). In accordance with this functional perspective, several emotions are commonly agreed to be discrete such as anger, disgust, sadness, and guilt (Nabi, 2002). That is, they have unique adaptive functions, appraisal patterns, facial expressions, motivations, action tendencies, and behavioral associations (e.g., Arnold, 1960; Ekman, 1984; Frijda, 1986; Izard,

1977; Lazarus, 1991; Nabi, 2002; Plutchik, 1980; Roseman, 1984; Scherer, 1984; Tomkins, 1963).

Most components representing affective responses in attribution theory are discrete emotions: anger, annoyance, pity, sorrow, happiness, unease, discomfort, or fear. Attributions generate a different set of emotions (Weiner, 1985). For instance, if the cause of an event is perceived as a controllable and internal-locus cause, then a dominant affective reaction is anger, but if the cause is perceived as an uncontrollable and external-locus cause, then a dominant affective response is sympathy (Weiner, 1980).

This discrete emotion perspective could be applied to organizational crises. If an organizational crisis is perceived as a controllable and internal-locus crisis, people's dominant affective response will be negative emotions such as anger, whereas an organizational crisis caused by an uncontrollable and external-locus event might elicit sympathy for the victims. In addition, because crisis causes a negative outcome (Fearn-Banks, 2007), an affective response toward an organization generally relates more with negative emotion than with positive emotion. Although prior crisis communication studies have overlooked affective responses in a public's evaluation of an organizational crisis, anger has been discussed as an important emotion. Among various types of discrete emotions that might be caused by a crisis, this study focuses on negative emotions. In particular, this study tends to emphasize only anger, the most common negative emotion that people might feel in a crisis situation.

Anger and Blame in a Crisis

In psychology, emotion literature has largely discussed the concept of anger as a representative negative emotion. Consensus suggests that anger is generally elicited by situations in which either obstacles are perceived to interfere with goal-oriented behavior, or demeaning

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offenses against oneself or one's loved ones are perceived to have occurred (Averill, 1982; Hampton, 1978; Izard, 1977; Lazarus, 1991; Nabi, 1999; Plutchik, 1980). Averill (1982) defined anger in various perspectives: "Anger may be defined as a conflictive emotion that is related to aggressive systems on the biological level, and even more important, to the capacities for cooperative social living, symbolization, and reflective self-awareness; that, on the psychological level, is aimed at the correction of some appraised wrong; and that, on the sociocultural level, functions to uphold accepted standards of conduct." (Averill, 1982, p. 317)

Anger functions to mobilize and sustains high levels of energy for the purpose of defending oneself or correcting some appraised wrong (Averill, 1982; Izard, 1977, 1993; Nabi, 1999). When a person is experiencing anger, his or her attention is focused, and there is a motivation to attack, or get back at the source of the anger or that which is blamed for goal obstacles (Arnold, 1960; Averill, 1982; Frijda, 1986; Izard, 1977; Lazarus, 1991; Nabi, 1999). Therefore, a key subordinate component of anger is considered to be blame (Nabi, 1999).

Averill (1993) introduced some data about at whom/what people typically become angry and blame someone for what reasons. Most people easily get angry at acts that they considered unjustified events as well as at potentially avoidable accidents or events (Averill, 1993). He also mentioned that targets who denied any wrongdoing (e.g., by claiming that the instigation was either justified or an unavoidable accident) also made reference to the imputation of blame inherent in the other person's anger.

This argument can be explained in the attribution literature. Weiner (1980) suggested that the perception of controllability (control cause vs. uncontrollable cause) is linked to affective reactions such as anger, annoyance, and pity in an educational context. Weiner (1980) found that the participants felt anger toward a person who is in a controllable situation, whereas the

participants felt pity toward a person who is in an uncontrollable situation. In addition, feeling anger was linked to avoiding helping, and feeling pity was linked to helping. Weiner and Handel (1985) found that controllability and locus (internal vs. external) as perceived causes in a broken social contract were associated with anger. In other words, the more controllable and internal the reason for a broken social engagement, the more anger participants revealed.

This explanation can also be applied to crisis contexts. In a crisis, anger is one of the most frequently experienced emotions and is the affective response most commonly associated with the crisis (McDonald & Hartel, 2000). People may be angrier, if they consider a crisis a preventable/avoidable event caused by the organization. Because most preventable crises are caused by internal causes, people may be upset in an internal crisis. By focusing on internal crisis, this study tends to examine the influence of morality frame on anger. In addition, when they think that the organization denies the event itself or its responsibility, this organization's response may aggravate people's negative emotion in a preventable crisis. Therefore, this study assumes that crisis response using an individual level of responsibility may cause people's anger by denying organizational crisis responsibility in an internal crisis.

Anger is a critical component that is assumed to be the attribution of blame (Averill, 1982). In addition, it is an affective response to holding someone responsible for blameworthy behavior (Bright & Goodman-Delahunty, 2006). Negative emotions derived from a perceived cause affect the level of blame. Studies in attribution theory have found that anger was positively related to social judgments such as blame (Weiner, 1980; Weiner, Perry, & Magnusson, 1988). Alicke's (2002) culpable theory suggests that emotional reactions to an event activate the desire to blame the person who evokes the negative emotion. Averill (1993) also addressed that anger is related to social judgment, that is, blame.

Previous crisis communication research has considered people's perceived crisis responsibility as blame. Therefore, perceptions of the organization's crisis responsibility (i.e., how much stakeholders believe the organization is responsible and blamable for the crisis) influence people's negative emotions. As the perceived crisis responsibility intensifies, reports of felt anger also increase (Coombs & Holladay, 2005; Jorgensen, 1996). Based on these discussions, this study proposes another hypothesis:

H4. More intense blame from a crisis will be associated with higher levels of anger.

Anger as a Moral Concept

Anger is "basically a moral concept" (Averill, 1993, p. 190). From a constructivist point of view, anger can be defined as "a socially constituted syndrome, or transitory social role" (Averill, 1982, p. 34). Therefore, anger is related to a sense of fairness and justice (Averill, 1982), and social rules carrying sanctions—they are the "shoulds" and "should nots" of behavior (Averill, 1993).

On a theoretical level, therefore, anger should not be divorced from its moral underpinnings and social order (Averill, 1993). Some of the rules of anger are constitutive and some are regulative (Averill, 1982). In addition, Izard (1991) discussed moral indignation as one of various causes of anger including restraint, the blocking or interrupting of goal-directed activity, aversive stimulation, and being misled or unjustly hurt. Given that anger is associated with moral issue, people's level of anger may depend on how people make a moral judgment in a crisis.

In sum, a crisis can be seen as a form of inappropriate behavior that can lead to anger (Coombs & Holladay, 2005, 2007; Hartel, McColl-Kennedy, & McDonald, 1998; Hearit, 2006). Previous discussions indicate that anger is a common concept resulting from avoidable events

such as internal-locus crises (controllable and preventable events) and immoral acts. These discussions will provide a theoretical background explaining the relations between anger and crisis response strategies regarding denying crisis responsibility, and between anger and the morality frame of this study.

To look at how the two factors influence anger at the same time, this study asks a research question regarding an interaction effect of the two factors (i.e., level of responsibility and morality news frame) on anger. If the interaction is significant, it may be possible that people get angry at the individual level of responsibility condition more than at the organizational level of responsibility, when they are not exposed to an immorality frame. However, it is possible that when people are exposed to an immorality frame (i.e., if news media emphasize organizational immorality), they could hold a similar level of anger (but stronger than that of no immorality frame) in both the individual level and the organizational level of responsibility. To examine the possible interaction effect between the two, this study asks:

RQ3. Is there an interaction effect between levels of responsibility and a morality frame

on participants' (a) blame and (b) anger?

Negative Behaviors in a Crisis

Negative Purchase Intention

In psychology, negative emotion is a critical element to understanding negative behaviors because of its potential to motivate subsequent behaviors (Coombs & Holladay, 2007). The outcomes of anger are largely negative (Averill, 1982). Anger is often used to explain or legitimize a wide variety of aggressive acts (Averill, 1993).

In a crisis, these aggressive acts include negative behaviors such as negative purchase and negative word-of-mouth communication. When people have stronger feelings of anger from a

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crisis, they are more likely to avoid purchasing the organization's products and to say something bad about the organization to their friends, families, or even strangers online. Moving beyond reputation/image in the current crisis communication research, this study examines the effects of anger on stakeholders' negative behaviors in a crisis. This study posits that anger stimulates people to engage in negative behaviors including negative purchase intention and negative word-of-mouth communication following a crisis. The anger generated by a crisis can be every bit as important as the impact a crisis has on reputation. Stakeholders' effect can have important behavioral ramifications for crisis communication. Coombs and Holladay (2007) call the relationship between anger and negative word-of-mouth communication the negative communication dynamic. The negative communication dynamic posits that anger leads to an increased proclivity towards negative word-of-mouth communication as well as reduced purchase intention.

McDonald and Hartel (2000) applied affective events theory (Weiss & Cropanzano, 1996) to further our understanding of the anger generated by crises. Anger affective events theory illuminates how events trigger emotions and influence our behaviors. According to the theory, the higher the felt involvement, the more attention the stakeholder will give to the crisis and the crisis response. And the greater the felt involvement, the stronger the impact of the crisis on anger and purchase intention (Hartel et al., 1998; McDonald & Hartel, 2000).

Previous experimental studies examined that anger has been found to be an emotion influencing purchase intention (Folkes, Koletsky, & Graham, 1987; Jorgensen, 1996). Thus, anger can have important behavioral ramifications for an organization in a crisis. Coombs and Holladay (2007) argued that the connection between purchase intention and anger from a crisis may have little effect on the organization. If anger sinks before a purchase is made, the crisis

conceivably could have little to no impact on purchasing (Coombs & Holladay, 2007). As time

goes by, in most crises, the anger will disappear as stakeholders forget about the crisis. As anger

sinks, purchase intention should return to its pre-crisis level (Coombs & Holladay, 2007).

Negative Word-of-mouth Communication Intention

Negative word-of-mouth communication may be more critical than positive word-of-

mouth communication, because it can disappear quickly after a crisis as anger dissipates.

Generally, negative word-of-mouth communication refers to "interpersonal communication

among consumers concerning a marketing organization or product which denigrates the object of

the communication" (Richins, 1984, p. 697). It is a powerful force in shaping consumers'

attitudes (Brown & Reingen, 1987; Herr, Kardes, & Kim, 1991). In particular, negative word-of-

mouth communication demonstrates a stronger effect on customers' evaluations than positive

word-of-mouth communication (Laczniak, DeCarlo, & Ramaswami, 2001; Mizerski, 1982).

Dissatisfied customers are much more likely to tell friends and family about a product or service

than happy customers (Baker Retail, 2006). Given that negative word-of-mouth communication

is a predictor of purchase intention (Jorgensen, 1996), negative word-of-mouth communication

could be a threat to an organization in a crisis.

Negative word-of-mouth communication has been considered to have stronger effects

than negative purchase intention in terms of the scope of information spread and the duration

time of effects. People angered by a crisis may share their displeasure and bad experiences

through negative word-of-mouth communication. After negative word-of-mouth communication

spreads, as a result, the potential damage is not limited to the stakeholders experiencing the crisis.

Like viral marketing, negative word-of-mouth communication can spread unfavorable

information from person to person. The result is that the crisis has a potential effect on behaviors

well beyond those who experienced the crisis or learned about the crisis through the news media. Moreover, if we consider the power of new technologies like the internet, the potential effect of the crisis on people is more significant during the crisis. The increased use of the internet makes negative word-of-mouth communication easier to be created and to be disseminated rapidly (Schlosser, 2005).

In terms of the duration time of effects, the negative word-of-mouth communication has a longer effect than purchase intention. People may read negative messages on other people's blogs, discussion group postings and consumer-evaluation websites, or they may get an e-mail from others long after the crisis. Consumer-generated media or social media is an electronic form of word-of-mouth communication (Blackshaw & Nazzaro, 2004). The person who originally posts the message may no more be angry, but his or her angry words could still influence the purchase intentions of others. Therefore, online negative word-of-mouth communication can hurt organizational reputations and their bottom lines (Boyd, 2000; Market Sentinel, 2005; Tucker & Melewar, 2005).

Overall, both online and offline negative word-of-mouth communication has a greater reach and potentially longer shelf life than purchase intention. This study posits that anger stimulates people to engage in negative behaviors including negative purchase intention and negative word-of-mouth communication following a crisis. Based on this, this study established the following research hypotheses.

H5. More intense anger from a crisis will be associated with higher levels of negative purchase intention.

H6. More intense anger from a crisis will be associated with higher levels of negative word-of-mouth communication intention.

H7. Higher levels of negative purchase intention will be associated with higher levels of

negative word-of-mouth communication intention.

Coombs and Holladay (2007) stated that anger plays a mediator role between crisis responsibility (blame) and behavioral intentions. It is assumed that blame affects anger, which also affects negative purchase intention. Not all people's purchase intentions may be affected by people's blame. However, as a mediator, anger may increase the likelihood that a crisis will lead to decreased purchase intention. Therefore, this study asks the following research question.

RQ4. How does anger mediate blame and purchase intention?

In addition, this study examines a mediation role of anger between blame and negative word-of-mouth communication. It is assumed that blame influence anger, which can influence negative word-of-mouth communication. People can perceive an organization as responsible for a crisis but not engage in negative word-of-mouth communication. Anger serves to energize people into negative word-of-mouth communication with others. Therefore, this study asks the following research question.

RQ5. How does anger mediate blame and word-of-mouth communication intention?

Figure 1 shows the overall relationships hypothesized among the variables in this study. In an attempt not only to test the direct and indirect relationships among variables, but also to test whether the current data support relationships in the proposed model as theorized, this study sought to test an integrated path model, which is called the anger management model. Therefore, the following research question was established:

RQ6. Do the current data fit the proposed model?

Figure 1. Anger Management Model
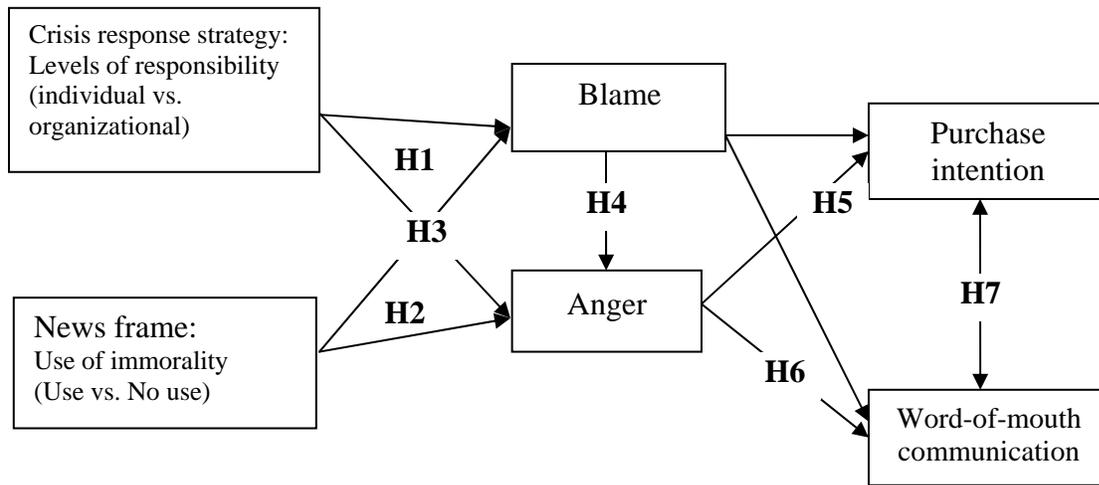
CHAPTER 3

Method

Participants

The participants in this study were 230 students enrolled in communication courses at a large Southeastern university. They participated in exchange for extra credit or to fulfill course research requirements. Although students are not the typical target for crisis communication, it has been assumed in previous research (Coombs, 1999) that there is no response-difference between a student population and a non-student population. Of the 230 participants, 34.8 % were male (n=80) and 65.2% female (n=150). The age of the participants ranged from 18 to 34 years ($M = 21.34$, $SD = 2.6$).

Experimental Design

The experimental design was a 2 (level of responsibility: individual responsibility vs. organizational responsibility) x 2 (news frame of morality: immorality frame vs. non-immorality frame) between-subject factorial design. Participants were randomly assigned to four experimental conditions. Table 1 shows the experimental design and the number of participants per condition.

Table 1.

The Experimental Design and Number of Participants Per Cell

		Level of responsibility		N
		Individual	Organizational	
Morality news frame	Immorality	News scenario A Group A (n = 64, 27.8%)	News scenario B Group B (n = 55, 23.9%)	119
	Non-immorality	News scenario C Group C (n = 56, 24.3%)	News scenario D Group D (n = 55, 23.9%)	111
Total		120	110	230

Stimulus Material

Four news scenarios would be created with different combinations of crisis response strategies and news frames. For each scenario, a case of recall of a laptop battery caused by human-error was chosen. The main reasons for choosing this crisis are (a) a laptop battery is a product that participants (i.e., college students) would be interested in, (b) the recall of a laptop battery is a crisis case with which participants would be familiar because of several similar cases (e.g., Dell, Sony, etc), (c) participants would be expected to be involved in a human-error recall crisis they perceived as relatively serious, given Coombs's categorization (2006a), and (d) high involvement is likely to trigger an attribution evaluation process. The news story indicates that the recall was caused by the mistake of the director of safety testing, who oversaw the test of the recalled battery. The recall resulted in large economic losses and a negative image of the company, which was created by the researchers hypothetically, to reduce any bias participants might have toward any currently existing company.

News scenario A was designed in such a way that the organization says the cause for the crisis is solely due to the safety director's mistake, and the organization has punished him (individual level of responsibility). At the end of the paragraph, it is reported that his behavior should be culpable as immoral behavior (immorality frame). News scenario B was designed in such a way that the organization admits the cause for the crisis was in the organization, and is rehabilitating its systems (organizational level of responsibility). At the end of the paragraph, it is reported that this organizational behavior should be blamable as immoral (immorality frame). News scenario C was designed in the same way as the first scenario (individual level of responsibility), but there is no mention of immoral behavior in the news scenario (non-immorality frame). News scenario D was designed in the same way as the second scenario (organizational level of responsibility), but there is no mention of immoral behavior (non-immorality frame). Table 2 shows the manipulations for each condition.

Table 2

Manipulation for Each Condition

Condition groups		Manipulation
Condition A	Individual-level of responsibility	After the CPCS's report Thursday, ACE Inc. later released a statement that "the cause of the battery problem was due to our employee's error and that the director of quality control was solely responsible for this accident." ACE Inc. spokesman James Ward said Friday, "we decided to fire the director of quality control over the economic loss and damage to the company's image." Ward said, "our final decision will help prevent similar mistakes in the future."
	Immorality news frame	A representative of CPSC, Carol Leonnig said, "ACE Inc. may be in trouble for a while due to this recall. ACE Inc. could be open to a great deal of public criticism. As one of the largest companies, it should have been more careful about consumers' safety. A young woman was hurt after all. It's a moral issue."
Condition B	Organizational-level of responsibility	After the CPCS's report Thursday, ACE Inc. later released a statement that "the cause of the battery problem was not solely due to the employee's error, but the cause for the recall and the responsibility were the entire company's." ACE Inc. spokesman James Ward said Friday, that "we agreed that simply firing the director would not be the best solution. We will not only admonish our employee, but also work to strengthen our company's overall systems of quality control testing processes at every level of the company." Ward said, "our final decision will help prevent similar mistakes in the future."
	Immorality news frame	A representative of CPSC, Carol Leonnig said, "ACE Inc. may be in trouble for a while due to this recall. ACE Inc. could be open to a great deal of public criticism. As one of the largest companies, it should have been more careful about consumers' safety. A young woman was hurt after all. It's a moral issue."
Condition C	Individual-level of responsibility	After the CPCS's report Thursday, ACE Inc. later released a statement that "the cause of the battery problem was due to our employee's error and that the director of quality control was solely responsible for this accident."ACE Inc. spokesman James Ward said Friday, "we decided to fire the director of quality control over the economic loss and damage to the company's image." Ward said, "our final decision will help prevent similar mistakes in the future."
	Non-immorality	None
Condition D	Organizational-level of responsibility	After the CPCS's report Thursday, ACE Inc. later released a statement that "the cause of the battery problem was not solely due to the employee's error, but the cause for the recall and the responsibility were the entire company's." ACE Inc. spokesman James Ward said Friday, that "we agreed that simply firing the director would not be the best solution. We will not only admonish our employee, but also work to strengthen our company's overall systems of quality control testing processes at every level of the company." Ward said, "our final decision will help prevent similar mistakes in the future."
	Non-immorality	None

Procedures

Each participant was given a randomly assigned packet containing a cover page with directions, one page of news scenarios, and four pages of questions to evaluate their perceptions. They were told that they would be reading a news story describing a recall crisis and its organizational response. After reading the news story, participants then were asked to complete a set of questions regarding their perceptions and emotions. The procedure took 15 to 20 minutes.

Measurement Scales

Anger

As affective responses, anger is a conflictive emotion. It was measured by responding to the eight items used in Cho (2007) and Coombs and Holladay (2007) on 7-point Likert scales (1 = Strongly disagree, 7 = Strongly agree): (a) "I feel annoyed toward the company for what happened, " (b) "I feel like reprimanding the company," (c) "I am disgusted by the company," (d) "I feel anger toward the company," (e) "I feel displeasure toward the company," (f) "I hate the company," (g) "I resent the company," and (h) "I rage at the company." The eight items were summed and averaged to compute the mean value of anger. The higher the mean score the more anger is reported by subjects toward the company ($M = 3.55$, $SD = 1.67$). For the scale reliability, *Cronbach's α* value was .97.

Blame

Blame is considered as a perceived crisis responsibility. It was measured in Griffin, Babin, and Attaway (1991). The three items used in this study are as follows: (a) "However much do you blame the company for the recall?" with a 7-point Likert scale (1 = None, 7 = Totally), (b) "Circumstances, not the company, are responsible for the crisis (reverse coded)," with a 7-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly disagree, 7 = Strongly agree), and (c) "The blame for

the crisis lies with the company," with a 7-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly disagree, 7 = Strongly agree). The three items were summed and averaged to compute the mean value of blame (M = 5.82, SD = 1.29). The *Cronbach's α* value was .92.

Purchase Intention

Participants' intention to purchase the organization's product was obtained from Lee (2004). The following questions were measured on a 7-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree): (a) "I will still consider the company when I plan to buy a laptop battery," and (b) "I will hesitate in choosing the company to buy a laptop battery (reverse coded)." Item c was measured by a 7-point bipolar scale ranging from 1 (absolutely improbable) to 7 (absolutely probable): (c) "how likely is it you will use the company's laptop battery?" The three items were summed and averaged to compute the mean value of purchase intention (M = 2.69, SD = 1.58). The scale reliability yielded a *Cronbach's α* value of .90.

Word-of-mouth Communication Intention.

Word-of-mouth communication intention was assessed as the degree that participants reported the likelihood that they would speak favorably about the organization offline as well as online. Participants indicated their level of agreement on a 7-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly disagree, 7 = Strongly agree). Two items were added to Coombs and Holladay's study (2007) for online negative word-of-mouth communication intention. The four items included (a) "I would encourage friends or relatives NOT to buy products from the organization (reverse coded)," (b) "I would recommend the organization's products to someone who asked my advice," (c) "I would send/forward emails about it to friends who wanted to buy a laptop NOT to buy this product (reverse coded)," and (d) "I would post this information on my personal webpage, blog, or consumer-evaluation website for someone NOT to buy it (reverse coded)." The four items

were summed and averaged to compute the mean value of word-of-mouth communication

intention ($M = 3.49$, $SD = 1.73$). For the scale reliability, *Cronbach's α* value was .89.

Manipulation Check

A manipulation check was performed to ensure the effectiveness of the intended

manipulations. To assess the effectiveness of manipulation of level of responsibility, participants

were asked the following question on a 7-point, Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (not at all

responsible for the crisis) to 7 (absolutely responsible for the crisis): "To what degree did you

think that the safety director is responsible for the crisis?" An independent T-test was conducted

to compare the two scores between individual level and organizational level, with a higher score

reflecting a greater degree of perceived individual responsibility, and a lower score reflecting a

greater degree of perceived organizational responsibility.

The result showed that the mean for the manipulation check item in the condition of

individual responsibility (i.e., Group A and C) ($M = 6.48$, $SD = .94$) was greater than in condition

of organizational responsibility (i.e., Group B and D) ($M = 2.53$, $SD = 1.39$), and the difference

between the two means was statistically significant, $t(190) = 25.08$, $p < .001$ (two-tailed).

To assess the effectiveness of manipulation of the morality news frame, participants were

asked the following question on a 7-point, Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (not at all immoral)

to 7 (absolutely immoral): "To what degree did you think the organization is immoral?" An

independent T-test was conducted to compare the two scores between morality frame and non-

morality frame, with a higher score reflecting a greater degree of negative moral judgment, and a

lower score reflecting a lower degree of moral judgment.

The analysis showed that the mean for the manipulation check item in the condition of

immorality frame (i.e., Group A and B) ($M = 5.65$, $SD = 1.38$) was greater than in condition of

non-immorality frame (i.e., Group C and D) ($M = 1.84$, $SD = 1.10$), and the difference between the two means was statistically significant, $t\,(223) = 23.27$, $p < .001$ (two-tailed). These results indicated that the manipulation for level of responsibility and immorality news frame were all successful.

CHAPTER 4

Results

Before conducting the main statistical analyses, a correlation analysis was conducted to examine whether there were any significant relationships between demographic variables (i.e., gender, age, and school year) and main variables used in research questions or hypotheses (i.e., anger, blame, purchase intention, and word-of-mouth communication intention). If there are any significant relationships which may influence relationships between independent variables and dependent variables for the research questions or hypotheses, those variables should be controlled while main analyses are being conducted. Pearson correlation analyses revealed that anger, blame, purchase intention, and word-of-mouth communication intention were not significantly associated with age and school year. Spearman correlation analyses indicated that there were no statistically significant relationships between gender and the other variables. Additional independent T-tests found no significant differences in means of blame, anger, purchase intention, and word-of-mouth communication intention between male and female participants. Therefore, main statistical analyses were conducted without controlling for demographic variables.

In addition, normal distributions of main variables were checked. On a 7-point scale, ranging from 1 to 7, anger ($M = 3.55$, $SD = 1.67$, Skewness = .32, Kurtosis = -.55), blame ($M = 5.82$, $SD = 1.29$, Skewness = -1.44, Kurtosis = 2.35), purchase intention ($M = 2.69$, $SD = 1.58$, Skewness = 1.07, Kurtosis = .68), and word-of-mouth communication intention ($M = 3.49$, $SD = 1.73$, Skewness = .34, Kurtosis = -.93) were distributed in this sample. This index indicates that

anger, purchase intention, and word-of-mouth communication intention assumed their normal distributions, whereas blame was slightly skewed toward high scores, given its high mean value. Assuming normal distributions of main variables, a series of independent T-tests, one-way analysis of variance, factorial analysis of variance, simple linear regression analysis, correlation analysis, and hierarchical multiple regression were used to test research hypotheses, and AMOS program was used to test the proposed model.

Hypotheses Testing

RQ1 and H1: Group Differences of Blame and Anger by Level of Responsibility.

Regarding levels of responsibility, the individual level of responsibility (Group A and C) was coded as 1, and the organizational level of responsibility (Group B and D) was coded as 2. Since blame and anger were measured via 7-point Likert scales and each of the scores was summed and averaged to calculate each mean value, they were considered continuous variables. Therefore, one-way ANOVA tests were conducted to look at differences in means of (a) blame and (b) anger between two groups (individual level vs. organizational level), respectively. The analysis regarding blame showed that participants who read a crisis scenario with an individual level of responsibility ($M = 6.16$, $SD = .96$) exhibited higher mean value of blame than did participants who read a crisis scenario with an organizational level of responsibility ($M = 5.45$, $SD = 1.47$), $F (1, 228) = 19.18$, $p < .001$. The explained difference of variability for blame was calculated by dividing the sum of squares by the total (29.394/349.391=.0841). Therefore, the explained variance of blame due to levels of responsibility is 8.41%, which indicates that its practical implication and significance is limited.

In addition, participants who read a crisis scenario with an individual level of responsibility ($M = 4.51$, $SD = 1.45$) showed a higher mean value of anger than did participants

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who read a crisis scenario with an organizational level of responsibility ($M = 2.49$, $SD = 1.18$), F (1, 228) = 133.41, $p < .001$. The explained difference of variability for anger was calculated (235.249/402.049=.5851). Therefore, the explained variance of anger due to levels of responsibility is 58.51%, which indicates that its practical implication is considerable and significant. The difference is depicted graphically in Figure 2. Therefore, H1 was supported.

Figure 2. Differences in Means of Blame and Anger between Individual Level and Organizational Level of Responsibility
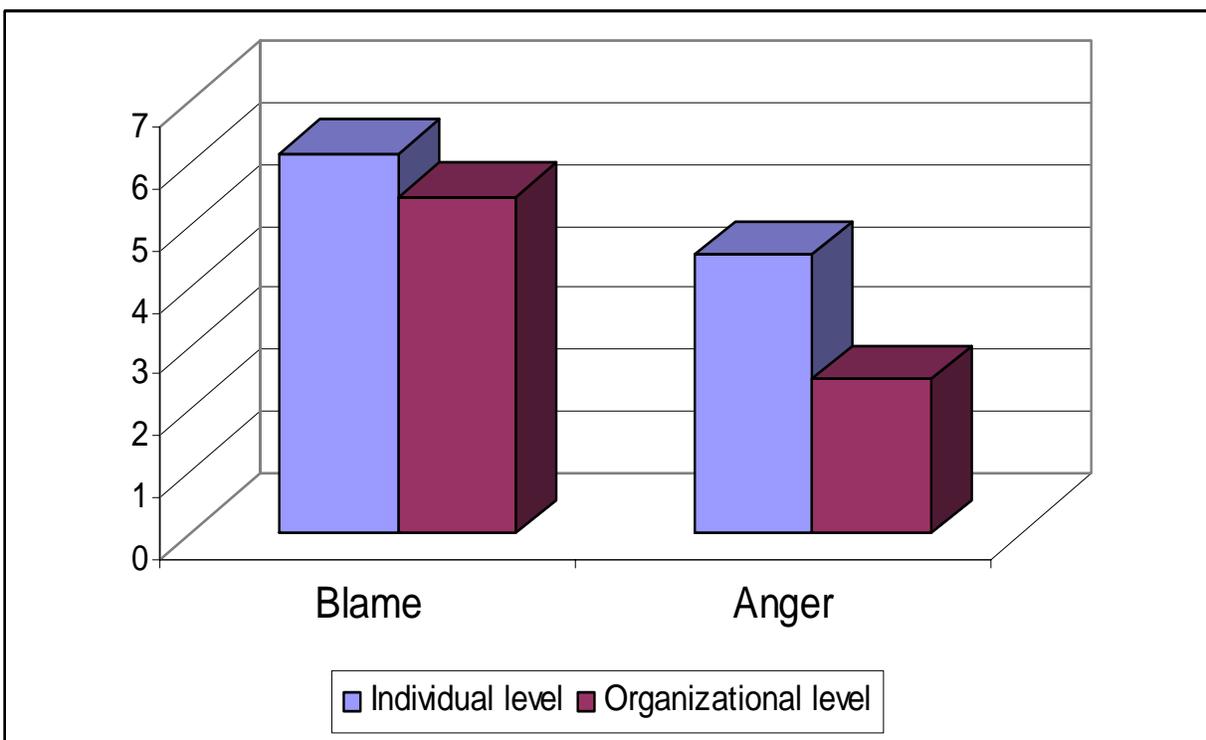
RQ2 and H2: Group Differences of Blame and Anger by Immorality News Frame.

Groups A and B who were exposed to the immorality news frame were coded as 1, and Groups C and D who were not exposed to the immorality frame were coded as 2. Two independent T-tests were conducted to look at differences in means of (a) blame and (b) anger between two groups (immorality frame vs. non-immorality frame). The analysis regarding blame showed that participants who read a crisis scenario with an immorality frame ($M = 6.29$, SD

= .82) exhibited higher mean values of blame than did participants who did not ($M = 5.31$, $SD =$ 1.49), $F (1, 228) = 38.77$, $p < .001$. The explained difference of variability for blame was calculated by dividing the sum of squares by the total (55.044/323.741=.17). Therefore, the explained variance of blame due to the immorality frame is 17%, which indicates that its practical implication is not quite significant in reality.

In addition, participants who read a crisis scenario with an immorality frame ($M = 3.96$, $SD = 1.67$) exhibited higher mean values of anger than did participants who did not ($M = 3.10$, $SD = 1.55$), $F (1, 228) = 16.53$, $p < .001$. The explained difference of variability for anger was calculated (43.079/594.219=.0725). Therefore, the explained variance of anger due to the immorality frame is 7.25%, which indicates that its practical implication and significance is limited. Overall, H2 was supported. The difference is depicted graphically in Figure 3.

Figure 3. Differences in Means of Blame and Anger between Immorality Frame and Non-immorality Frame
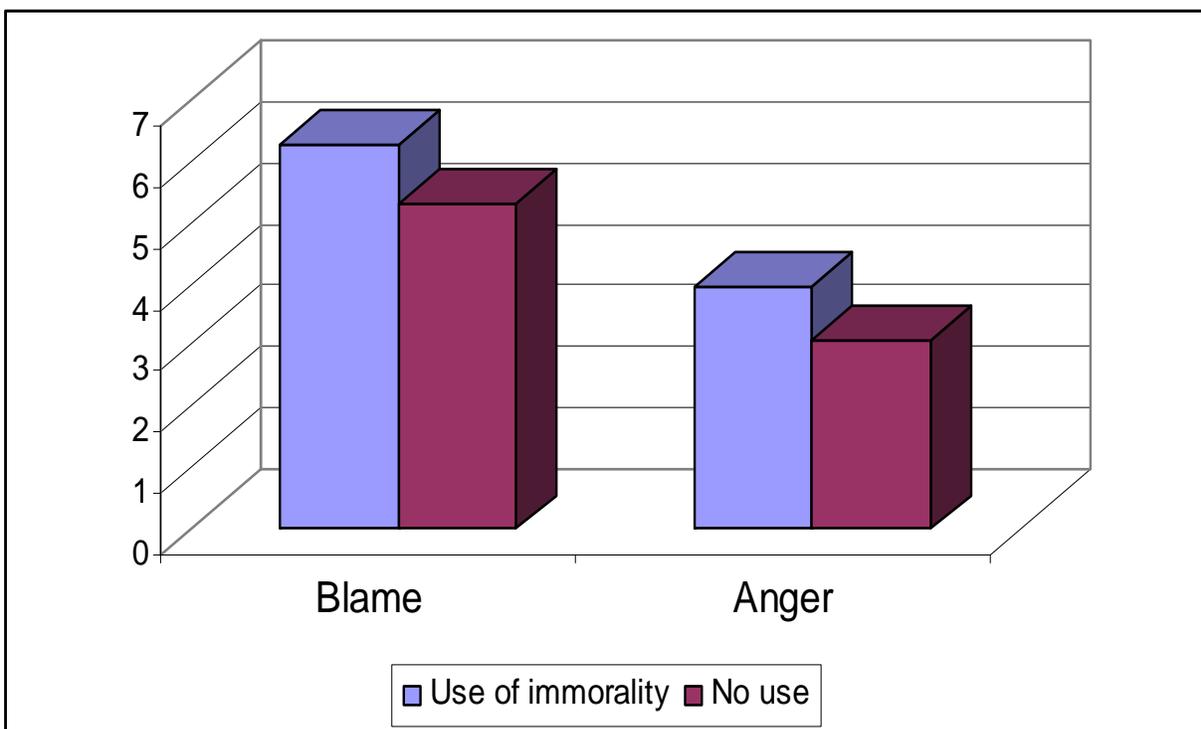
H3: Group Differences of Blame and Anger by Level of Responsibility and Immorality Frame.

Hypothesis 3 predicted that participants who read a crisis scenario with an individual level of responsibility and the immorality frame would exhibit more (a) blame and (b) anger than participants who read a crisis scenario with an organizational level of responsibility and non-immorality frame. A one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted to look at differences in means of (a) blame and (b) anger among four groups. Each group showed its own mean of blame: Individual level/immorality frame ($M = 6.41$, $SD = .70$), organizational level/immorality frame ($M = 6.15$, $SD = .93$), individual level/non-immorality ($M = 5.88$, $SD = 1.14$), and organizational level/non-immorality ($M = 4.74$, $SD = 1.59$). One-way ANOVA analysis showed that there were statistically significant differences in means of blame among the four groups, $F (3,226) = 24.454$, $p < .001$.

In addition, post hoc analysis with the Bonferroni test revealed that the individual level/immorality (Group A) yielded a higher level of blame than did the organizational level/non-immorality (Group D) ($p < .05$) (See Table 3). Therefore, H3 was supported for blame. Besides that, there were also statistically significant differences in means of blame between organizational level/immorality (Group B) and organizational level/non-immorality (Group D) ($p < .05$), and between individual level/non-immorality (Group C) and organizational level/non-immorality (Group D) ($p < .05$). These findings are graphically depicted in Figure 4. As seen in Figure 4, participants' mean of blame is the highest in the condition of individual level/immorality (Group A), followed by organizational level/immorality (Group B), individual level/non-immorality (Group C), and organizational level/non-immorality (Group D).

Table 3

Post Hoc Test for Blame Among Four Groups

	Individual level		Organizational level	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Immorality frame	6.41[a]	.70	6.15[a]	.93
Non-immorality frame	5.88[a]	1.14	4.74[b]	1.59

Note. Values are the means of reported scores on a 7-point scale (1 = *not at all blame*, 7 = *strongly blame*).
Means having different superscripts in common statistically differ at $p < .05$ by Bonferroni test.
Means having the same superscripts in common do not statistically differ at $p < .05$ by Bonferroni test.

Figure 4. Four Groups' Means of Blame
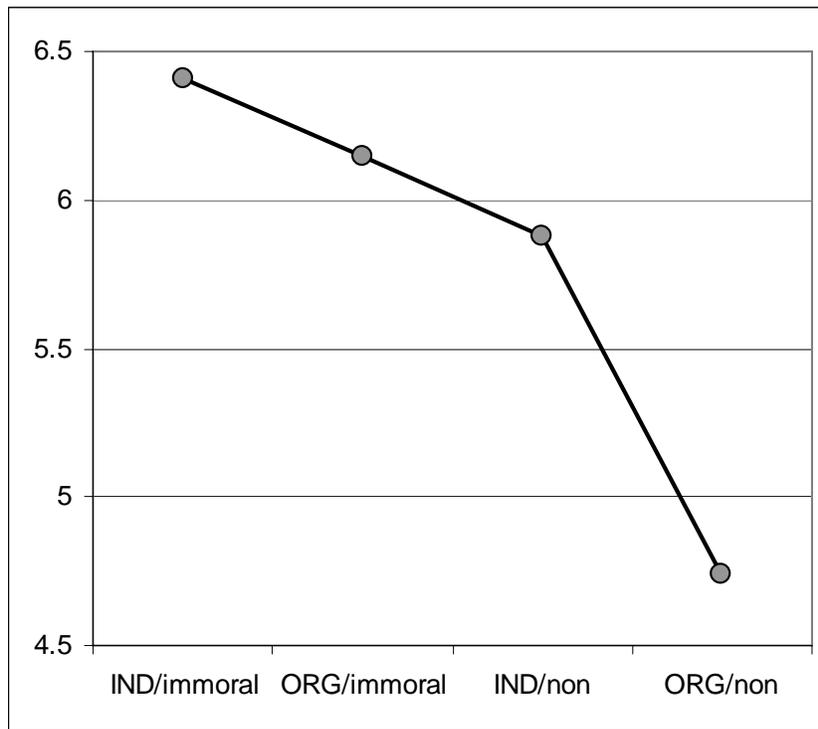
Note. IND/immoral (Individual level and immorality frame), ORG/immoral (organizational level and immorality frame), IND/non (individual level and non-immorality frame), and ORG/non (organizational level and non-immorality frame)

Regarding anger, each group yielded the following mean values: Individual level/immorality ($M = 4.87$, $SD = 1.48$), organizational level/immorality ($M = 2.91$, $SD = 1.22$), individual level/non-immorality ($M = 4.11$, $SD = 1.32$), and organizational level/non-immorality ($M = 2.07$, $SD = .99$). To examine the significant difference of anger among four groups, one-way ANOVA was performed. There were statistically significant differences in means of anger among four groups, $F (3,226) = 56.097$, $p < .001$. In addition, post hoc analysis test revealed that the individual level/immorality (Group A) showed a higher level of anger than organizational level/non-immorality (Group D) ($p < .001$) (See Table 4). Therefore, H3 was also supported for anger. In addition, there were also statistically significant differences in means of anger (1) between individual level/immorality (Group A) and organizational level/immorality (Group B) ($p < .001$), (2) between individual level/immorality (Group A) and individual level/non-immorality (Group C) ($p < .01$), (3) between individual level/immorality (Group A) and organizational level/non-immorality (Group D) ($p < .001$), (4) between organizational level/immorality (Group B) and individual level/non-immorality (Group C) ($p < .001$), (5) between organizational level/immorality (Group B) and organizational level/non-immorality (Group D) ($p < .01$), and (6) between individual level/non-immorality (Group C) and organizational level/non-immorality (Group D) ($p < .001$).

The means of each group's anger were graphically depicted in Figure 5. As seen in Figure 5, participants' anger is the highest in the condition of individual level/immorality (Group A) followed by individual level/non-immorality (Group C), organizational level/immorality (Group B), and organizational level/non-immorality (Group D).

Table 4

Post Hoc Test for Anger Among Four Groups

	Individual level		Organizational level	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Immorality frame	4.87[a]	1.48	2.91[b]	1.22
Non-immorality frame	4.11[c]	1.32	2.07[d]	.99

Note. Values are the means of reported scores on a 7-point scale (1 = *not at all angry*, 7 = *strongly angry*).
Means having different superscripts in common statistically differ at $p < .05$ by Bonferroni test.
Means having the same superscripts in common do not statistically differ at $p < .05$ by Bonferroni test.

Figure 5. Mean of Anger among Groups of Level of Responsibility and Immorality Frame
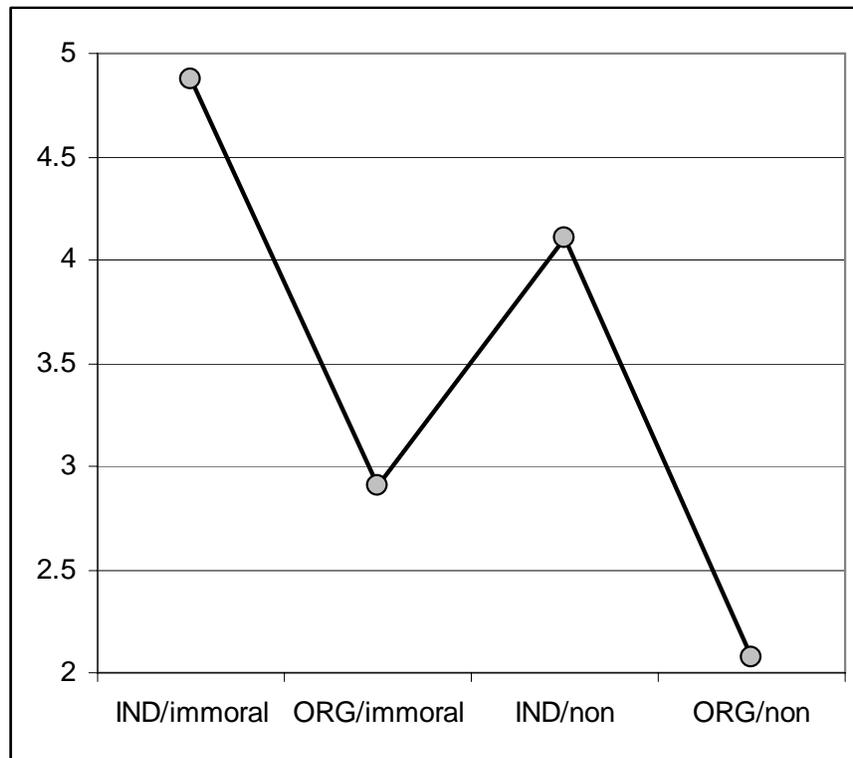
Note. IND/immoral (Individual level and immorality frame), ORG/immoral (organizational level and immorality frame), IND/non (individual level and non-immorality frame), and ORG/non (organizational level and non-immorality frame)

H4: Relationship between Blame and Anger

Since blame and anger were considered as continuous variables, Pearson correlation analysis was conducted to look at the significant relationship between the two. The analysis result showed that there was a statistically significant correlation between blame and anger (Pearson, r (230) = .48, $p < .001$), and the relationship was positive. This indicates that more intense blame is associated with higher levels of anger. Therefore, H4 was supported. In addition to the correlation coefficient, a linear regression analysis was also performed on the data. The analysis revealed that blame significantly predicted anger (β = .48, $p < .001$, Adjusted R^2 = .23). That is, participants' blame toward the organization positively affected their anger against the organization.

RQ3: Interaction Effects between Level of Responsibility and Immorality Frames

A factorial analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted to look at interaction effects between levels of responsibility and the morality frame for blame and anger, respectively. Each of two factors has each of two levels, respectively, and outcome variables (i.e., blame and anger) were considered as continuous variables.

At first, a factorial ANOVA result for blame yielded statistically significant main effects for both factors: levels of responsibility, F (1, 226) = 22.04, $p < .001$, and the immorality frame, F (1, 226) = 42.96, $p < .001$. Most importantly, there is a statistically significant interaction effect between levels of responsibility and the immorality frame, F (1, 226) = 8.68, $p < .01$. The model explained 24% of blame, adjusted R^2 = .24. The interaction effect indicates that one's level of responsibility, or use of immorality frame, is significantly effective in some conditions, whereas in other conditions, it is not statistically significant. In order to make sure from which condition the significant difference came, Bonferroni comparison tests were calculated. With the

four conditional comparisons for two levels of responsibility and immorality/non-immorality frame, Bonferroni values were calculated by using 226 of degree of freedom, .05 of alpha level, and 4 combinations, 1.265 of *MSE*, and each number of each condition (N):

$$B = t_{df, \frac{a}{2C}} \sqrt{MSE} \sqrt{\frac{1}{Ni} + \frac{1}{Nj}} = t_{226, \frac{0.05}{2*4}} \sqrt{1.265} \sqrt{\frac{1}{Ni} + \frac{1}{Nj}} = 2.51 \times 1.1247 \times \sqrt{\frac{1}{Ni} + \frac{1}{Nj}}$$

$$= 2.02055 \times \sqrt{\frac{1}{Ni} + \frac{1}{Nj}} \ .$$

Beferroni comparison analyses showed that there were three statistically significant differences among four conditions. At first, Table 5 indicates the statistically significant differences in means of blame between the immorality and non-immorality frame in both conditions of individual level and organizational level of responsibility. That is, when participants read a news scenario with the individual level of responsibility, participants who were exposed to immorality frame (Group A) exhibited a higher means of blame than did participants who were not (Group C) (6.41 vs. 5.88, $p < .05$). In addition, when participants who read a news scenario with the organizational level of responsibility, participants who were exposed to the immorality frame (Group B) exhibited a higher mean of blame than did participants who did not (Group D) (6.15 vs. 4.74, $p < .05$).

Figure 6 shows the difference in means between immorality and non-immorality in both conditions of levels of responsibility. Even though the gap between immorality and non-immorality at the individual level (6.41 vs. 5.88) seems to be less than the gap at the organizational level (6.15 vs. 4.74), both gaps indicated statistically significant differences between the two at the alpha level of .05.

Table 5

Bonferroni Comparison Analysis for Differences in Means of Blame Between Immorality and non-Immorality

Level of responsibility	Ni	Nj	Bonferroni value	Differences in means of blame between immorality and non-immorality
Individual level	64	56	0.52	0.54*
Organizational level	55	55	0.54	1.41*

*Note. * indicates the value of differences in means of blame, which is larger than its Bonferroni value. It indicates a statistically significant difference between two conditions.*

Figure 6. Differences in Means of Blame between Immorality and Non-immorality in Both Individual and Organizational Level
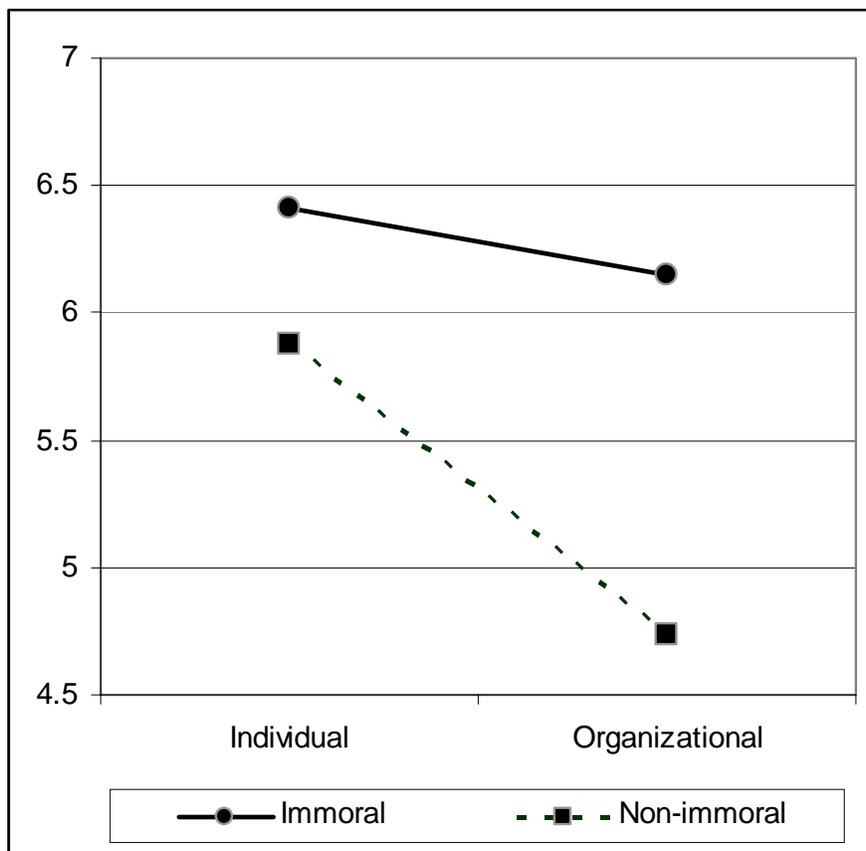
Table 6 shows the significant difference in means of blame between individual and organizational level in both conditions of immorality and non-immorality. There was one statistically significant difference between the individual and the organizational level only in the condition in which participants were not exposed to the immorality frame. That is, only in the case of those participants who were not exposed to the immorality frame, participants who read the news scenario with an individual level of responsibility (Group C) exhibited a higher level of blame than did participants who read the news scenario with an organizational level of responsibility (Group D) (5.88 vs. 4.74, $p < .05$). On the other hand, no significant difference between the individual and organizational level of responsibility was found in the condition of the immorality frame. That is, the two means of blame were similar in both the individual level (Group A) and the organizational level (Group B) (6.41 vs. 6.15, n.s.). Both means of blame were higher than those of non-immorality frame conditions (Group C and Group D).

Figure 7 showed the differences in means of blame between the individual and organizational level in both conditions of immorality and non-immorality. It shows that the gap between the individual and the organizational level at the immorality frame (6.41 vs. 6.15) is significantly smaller than the gap at the non-immorality frame (5.88 vs. 4.74).

Table 6

Bonferroni Comparison Analyses for Differences in Mean Between Individual and organizational Level

Use of immorality frame	Ni	Nj	Bonferroni value	Difference in means of blame between the individual and the organizational level
Immorality	64	55	0.52	.26
Non-immorality	56	55	0.54	1.14*

*Note. * indicates the value of differences in means of blame, which is larger than its Bonferroni value. It indicates a statistically significant difference between two conditions*

Figure 7. Differences in Mean of Blame between Individual and Organizational Level by Use of Immorality
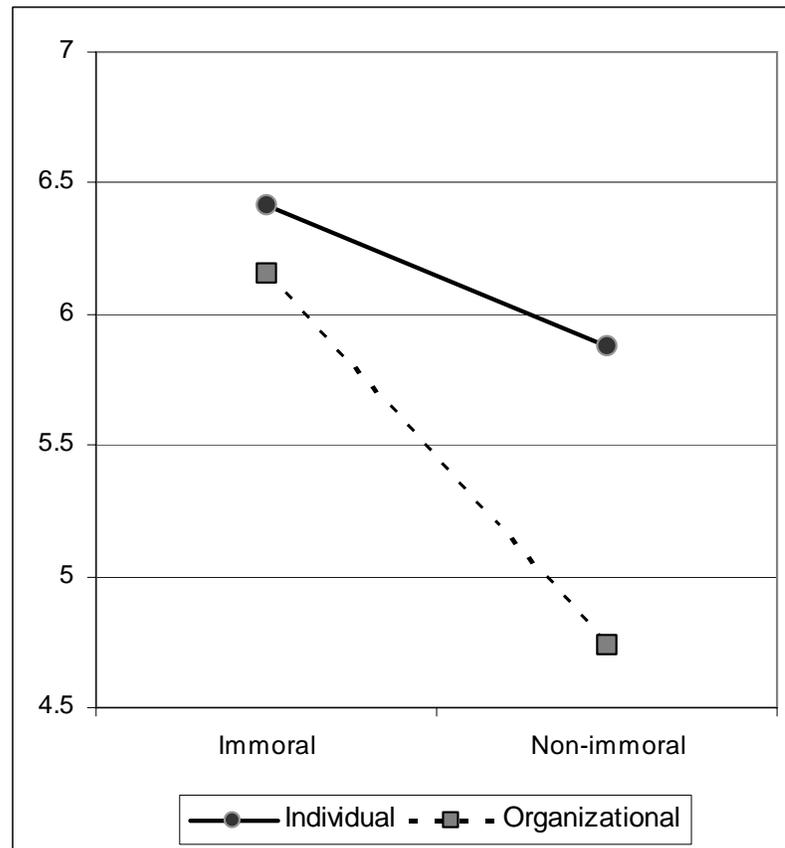
Overall, this interaction effect showed that people blame organizations more intensively when they read a news story with the individual level of responsibility than when they read a news story with the organizational level of responsibility, if they are not exposed to a news story with the immorality news frame. However, if people are exposed to a news story with the immorality news frame, people blame the organization more intensively, no matter whether the news story features the individual level or organizational level of responsibility (See Table 7).

Table 7

Interaction Effects of Two Factors on Blame

	Individual level		Organizational level	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Immorality frame	6.41[a]	.70	6.15[a]	.93
Non-immorality frame	5.88[b]	1.14	4.74[c]	1.59

Note. Values are the mean of reported scores on a 7-point scale (1 = *not at all blame*, 7 = *strongly blame*).
Means having different superscripts in common statistically differ at $p < .05$ by Bonferroni test. Means having the same superscripts in common do not statistically differ at $p < .05$ by Bonferroni test.

In addition, a factorial ANOVA was performed for anger. The analysis yielded statistically significant main effects for both factors: level of responsibility, $F(1, 226) = 141.62$, $p < .001$, and immorality frame, $F(1, 226) = 22.74$, $p < .001$. No interaction effect was found between the level of responsibility and the immorality frame, $F(1, 226) = .6$, $p = .82$. The model explained 24% of anger, adjusted $R^2 = .24$.

The main effect of level of responsibility indicates that participants who read a news scenario with the individual level of responsibility get angrier than participants who read a news scenario with the organizational level of responsibility in both conditions of immorality and non-immorality frame. In addition, the main effect of the immorality frame showed that participants who were exposed to the immorality news frame represented higher levels of anger than did participants who did not in both conditions of the individual level and the organizational level of responsibility. (See Figure 8 and 9)

Figure 8. Differences in Means of Anger Between Immorality and Non-immorality by Levels of Responsibility
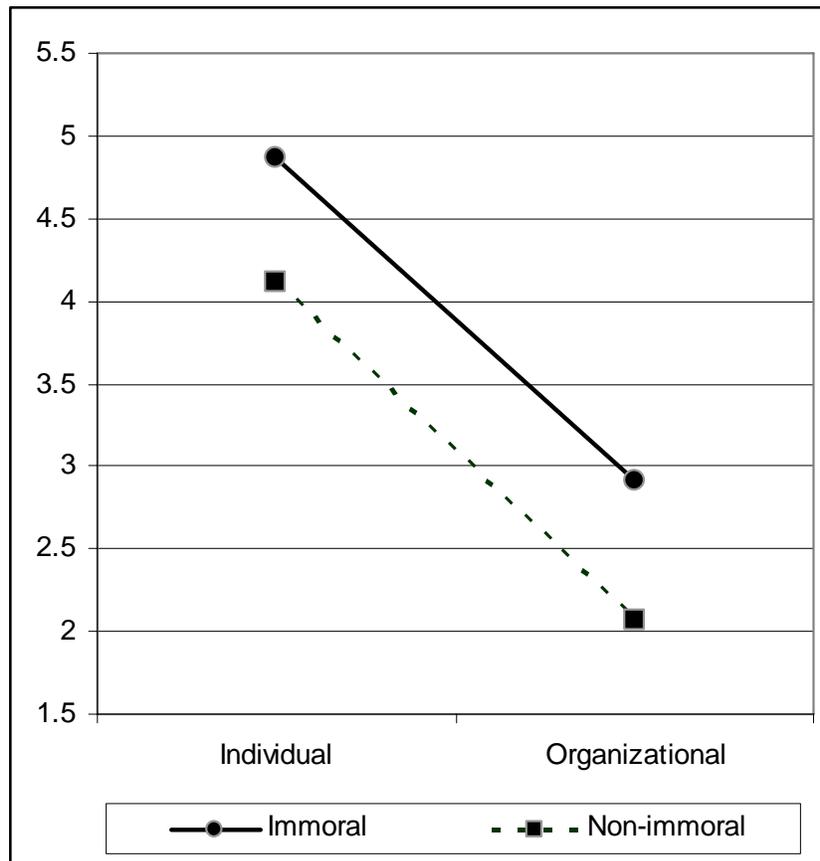
Figure 9. Differences in Means of Anger between the Individual and Organizational Level by Use of Immorality Frame
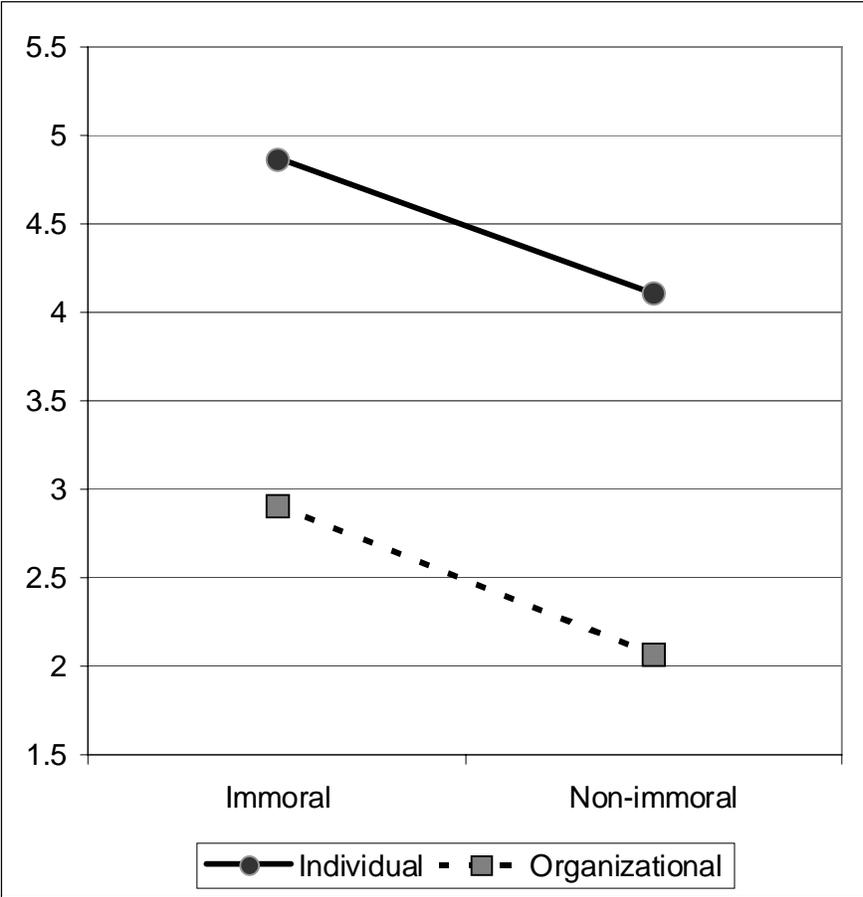
H5: Relationship between Anger and Purchase Intention

Because both anger and purchase intention were measured via 7-point Likert-type scale, and each of the scores was summed and averaged to calculate each mean value, the data are truly interval in nature. Therefore, Pearson's correlation analysis was conducted to look at the significant relationship between anger and purchase intention. There was a statistically significant correlation between the two variables (Pearson, r (230) = -.51, $p < .001$), and the relationship was negative. It indicates that as participants' levels of anger increased, their likelihood of purchase intention decreased. Therefore, H5 was supported. In addition to the correlation coefficient, a simple linear regression analysis was also performed on the data. The analysis revealed that anger significantly predicted purchase intention (β = -.51, $p < .001$, adjusted R^2 =.25). That is, participants' anger against the organization negatively affected their purchase intention toward the organization.

H6: Relationship between Anger and Word-of-mouth Communication Intention

Since word-of-mouth communication intention was measured via 7-point Likert-type scale, and each item was summed and averaged to calculate the mean value of the score, the score was considered as a continuous variable. Therefore, Pearson's correlation analysis was conducted to look at the relationship between anger and word-of-mouth communication intention. The analysis showed that there was a statistically significant correlation between the two variables (Pearson, r (230) = -.69, $p < .001$), and the relationship was negative. As participants' level of anger increased, their intention of word-of-mouth communication score decreased. Therefore, H6 was supported. In addition to the correlation coefficient, a simple linear regression analysis was also performed on the data. The analysis revealed that anger was found to be a significant predictor of word-of-mouth communication intention (β = -.69, $p < .001$, adjusted R^2

= .47). That is, participants' anger against the organization affected their negative word-of-mouth communication toward the organization.

H7: Relationship between Purchase Intention and Word-of-mouth Communication

To examine the significant relationship between purchase intention and word-of-mouth communication intention, which are all considered as continuous data, Pearson's correlation analysis was performed. A statistically significant correlation was found between the two variables (Pearson, r (230) = .54, $p < .001$), and the relationship was positive. It indicates that as participants' score of negative purchase intention increases, their score of negative word-of-mouth communication increases. Therefore, H7 was supported.

RQ4. Mediation Effects of Anger between Blame and Purchase Intention

In order to test the mediation effects of anger on purchase intention (RQ4) and word-of-mouth communication intention (RQ5), respectively, three types of relational analyses should be conducted among variables, according to Baron and Kenny (1986), which demonstrate that the following conditions must be met to establish a mediation:

(1) the independent variable (blame) must affect the mediator (anger);

(2) the independent variable (blame) must affect the dependent variable (purchase intention (RQ4) and word-of-mouth communication intention (RQ5));

(3) the mediator (anger) must affect the dependent variable (purchase intention (RQ4) and word-of-mouth communication intention (RQ5)).

Most importantly, if all these conditions hold in the predicted direction, then the effect of the independent variable on the dependent variable must be less in the third equation than in the second. At first, regarding purchase intention, three types of simple linear regression analyses were conducted (See Table 8): (1) blame as a predictor of anger, (2) blame as a predictor of

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purchase intention, and (3) anger as a predictor of purchase intention. The regression analyses

revealed that (1) blame significantly predicted anger ($\beta = .48$, $p < .001$, adjusted $R^2 = .23$), which

satisfies the first condition, (2) blame was found to be a significant predictor of purchase

intention ($\beta = -.45$, $p < .001$, adjusted $R^2 = .21$), which satisfies the second condition, and (3)

anger significantly predicted purchase intention ($\beta = -.50$, $p < .001$, adjusted $R^2 = .25$), which

satisfies the third condition.

Table 8

Simple Linear Regression Analyses Among Blame, Anger, and Purchase Intention

IV	DV	B	Standardized β	Adjusted R^2
Blame	Anger	.63***	.48***	.23
Blame	Purchase intention	-.55***	-.45***	.21
Anger	Purchase intention	-.48***	-.50***	.25

Note. Blame (higher score = more blame), Anger (higher score = angrier), and Purchase intention (higher score = more likely to purchase)
*** $p < .001$

Next, hierarchical multiple regression analysis was conducted (See Table 9): (1) In the

first model, blame significantly affected negatively purchase intention. ($\beta = -.45$, $p < .001$,

adjusted $R^2 = .20$). (2) In the second model, anger was added to the first model. The results

showed that blame ($\beta = -.27$, $p < .001$) and anger ($\beta = .38$, $p < .001$) significantly and negatively

affected purchase intention (adjusted $R^2 = .31$). Most importantly, when including anger in the

model, the effect of blame on purchase intention ($\beta = -.27$) was less than that when excluding

anger ($\beta = -.45$). Therefore, anger was found to be a mediator between blame and purchase

intention. As the beta weight for blame dropped from -.45 to -.27, yet the statistical significance

at the level of .001 remains, anger is a partial mediator, linking between blame and purchase

intention. In fact, a perfect/complete mediator holds if the independent variable has no effect

when the mediator is controlled (Baron & Kenny, 1986). The relationships among blame, anger, and purchase intention are graphically depicted in Figure 10.

In terms of adjusted R^2, it was shown that the first model considering only blame reported adjusted $R^2 = .20$ ($p < .001$) and the second model that including anger showed adjusted $R^2 = .31$ ($p < .001$). Thus, when including anger, variance in purchase intention increased. That is, R^2 change value for this model would be 0.11, which means that the addition of anger as a predictor explains an additional 11.1% of the variance in purchase intention.

Table 9

Hierarchical Multiple Regression Analysis for Variables Predicting Purchase Intention

Model	Variables in block	Standardized β Step 1	Standardized β Step 2	Adjusted R^2
1	Blame	-.45***		.20
2	Blame		-.27***	.31
	Anger		-.38***	

Note. Blame (higher score = more blame), Anger (higher score = angrier,) and Purchase intention (higher score = more likely to purchase)
*** $p < .001$

Figure 10. The Effect of Anger on the Relation between Blame and Purchase Intention
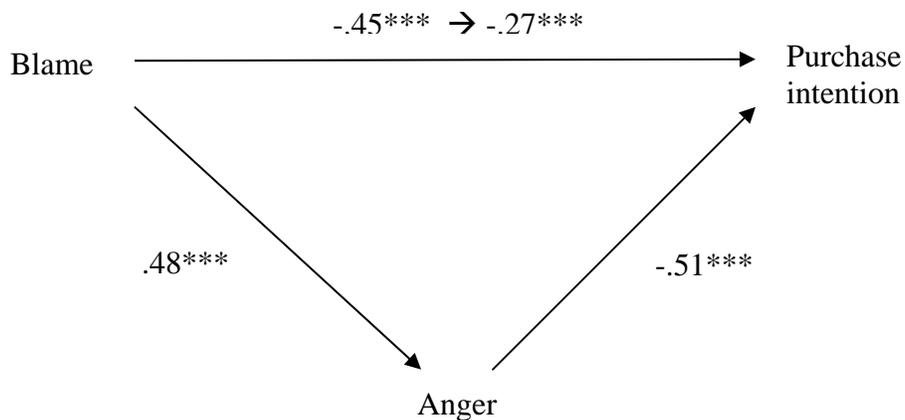
Note. *** $p < .001$

RQ5. Mediation Effect of Anger between Blame and Word-of-mouth Communication.

At first, three types of simple linear regression analyses were conducted (See Table 10):
(1) blame as a predictor of anger, (2) blame as a predictor of word-of-mouth communication
intention, and (3) anger as a predictor of word-of-mouth communication intention. The
regression analyses revealed that (1) blame significantly predicted anger ($\beta = .48$, $p < .001$,
adjusted $R^2 = .23$), which satisfies the first condition, (2) blame was found to be a significant
predictor of word-of-mouth communication intention ($\beta = -.42$, $p < .001$, adjusted $R^2 = .18$),
which satisfies the second condition, (3) anger significantly predicted word-of-mouth
communication intention ($\beta = -.69$, $p < .001$, adjusted $R^2 = .47$), which satisfies the third
condition.

Table 10

*Simple Linear Regression Analyses Among Blame, Anger, and Word-of-Mouth Communication
Intention*

IV	DV	B	Standardized β	Adjusted R^2
Blame	Anger	.63***	.48***	.23
Blame	WOM	-.57***	-.42***	.18
Anger	WOM	-.71***	-.69***	.47

Note. Blame (higher score = more blame), Anger (higher score = angrier,) and WOM: word-of-
mouth communication (higher score = more likely to positive word-of-mouth communication)
*** $p < .001$

Hierarchical multiple regression analysis was conducted (See Table 11): (1) In the first
model, blame significantly and negatively affected word-of-mouth communication intention ($\beta =
-.42$, $p < .001$, adjusted $R^2 = .18$). (2) In the second model, anger was added to the first model.
The results showed that blame ($\beta = -.12$, $p < .05$) and anger ($\beta = -.63$, $p < .001$) significantly
affected word-of-mouth communication intention (adjusted $R^2 = .48$). Most importantly, when

including anger in the model, the effect of blame on word-of-mouth communication intention (β = -.42) was less than when excluding anger (β = -.12). Finally, the anger was found to be a mediator between blame and word-of-mouth communication intention. Even though the beta weight for blame dropped from -.42 to -.12, the statistical significance remains. Therefore, anger is a partial mediator linking blame and word-of-mouth communication. The relations among blame, anger, and word-of-mouth communication are graphically depicted in Figure 11.

Table 11

Hierarchical Multiple Regression Analysis for Variables Predicting Word-of-Mouth Communication Intention

Model	Variables in block	Standardized β Step 1	Standardized β Step 2	adjusted R^2
1	Blame	-.42***		.18
2	Blame		-.12*	.48
	Anger		-.63***	

Note. Blame (higher score = more blame), Anger (higher score = angrier), and WOM (higher score = more likely to positive word-of-mouth communication), * $p < .05$, *** $p < .001$

Figure 11. The Effect of Anger on the Relation between Blame and Word-of-mouth Communication
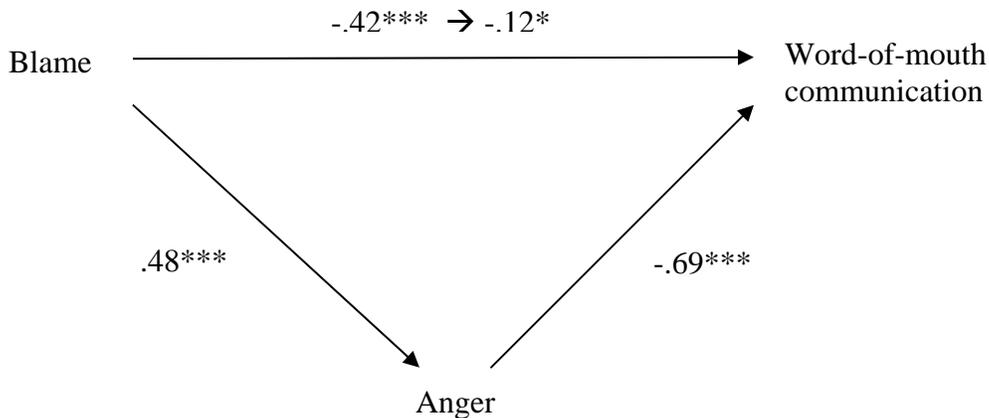
Note. * $p < .05$, *** $p < .001$

In terms of adjusted R^2, it was shown that the first model as considering only blame reported adjusted $R^2 = .18$ ($p < .001$), and the second model that including anger showed adjusted $R^2 = .48$ ($p < .001$). Thus, when including anger, variance in word-of-mouth communication intention increased. That is, the R^2 change value for this model would be .30, which means that the addition of anger as a predictor explains an additional 30.0% of the variance in word-of-mouth communication intention.

Model Testing

RQ6: Anger Management Model Testing

Through testing all hypotheses, this study found that each variable was statistically and significantly associated with all the others. The matrix of Pearson product-moment correlation coefficients shows all relationships among the variables (See Table 12).

Table 12

Pearson Product-Moment Correlations for Variables (N=230)

	Blame	Anger	PI	WOM
Blame	1			
Anger	.48***	1		
PI	-.45***	-.51***	1	
WOM	-.42***	-.69***	.54***	1

Note. a. The two categorical variables such as level of responsibility (individual = 1, organizational = 2) and immorality frame (immorality = 1, non-immorality = 2) were not included in this result of Pearson correlation.
b. Blame (higher score = more blame), Anger (higher score = angrier), PI: Purchase intention (higher score = more likely to purchase), and WOM: word-of-mouth communication (higher score = more likely to do positive word-of-mouth communication)
c. *** $p < .001$

In order to answer the fifth research question, a path analysis was performed to test this proposed model by employing AMOS program using maximum likelihood estimation. This technique not only examines the direct and indirect relationships of the hypotheses, it also purportedly demonstrates whether the current data support relationships in the proposed model as theorized. For model fit indices, this study used CFI (Comparative Fit Index), NFI (Normed Fit Index), and RMSEA (Root Mean Square Error of Approximation). A CFI and NFI over .95 and an RMSEA at or below .05 are considered a "well-fitting" model (Schumacker & Lomax, 2005). Overall, the original path model first proposed was consistent with the data: $\chi^2 = 4.302$, *df* = 3, *p* = .231, *CFI* = .998, *NFI* = .992, *RMSEA* = .000, *90% C.I:* .000 -.127 (See Figure 12). The significant correlation between blame and word-of-mouth communication disappeared (Pearson *r* (230) = -.08, n.s.), unlike the matrix of Pearson correlation coefficients (Pearson, *r* (230) = -.42, *p* < .001), when controlling for anger. This indicates the mediation effect of anger between blame and word-of-mouth communication intention. The correlation between blame and purchase intention remains statistically significant (Pearson, *r* (230) = -.27, *p* < .001), even though anger was found to be a partial mediator linking the two in the findings for research question 4. The proposed model was revised and retested by deleting the non-significant path, which is the relationship between blame and word-of-mouth communication. The revised model also fits the data very well: $\chi^2 = 6.715$, *df* = 4, *p* = .152, *CFI* = .995, *NFI* = .988, *RMSEA* = .05, *90% C.I:* .000 - .124. The significant path coefficients in the final model are shown in Figure 13.

Figure 12. The Original Path Model of Anger Management
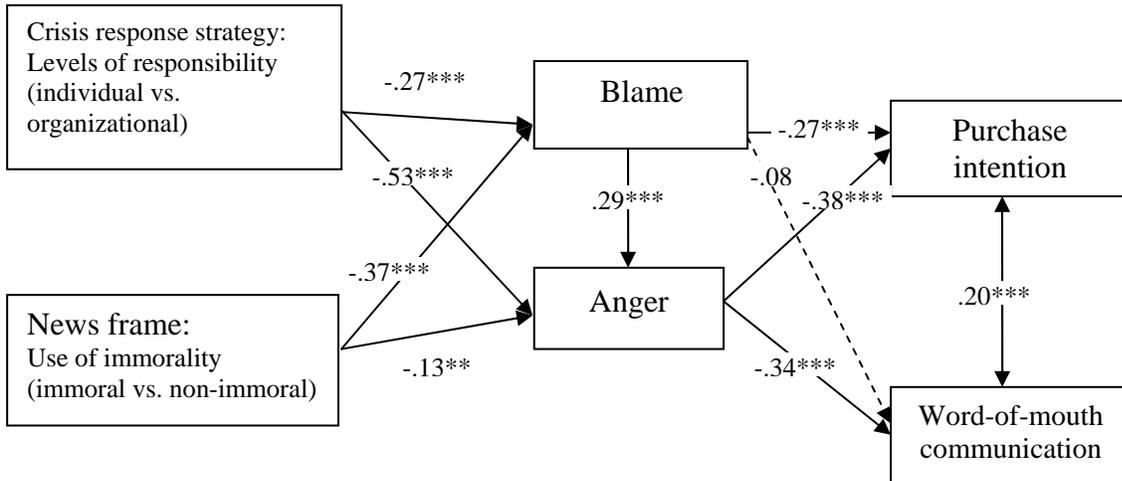
Note. a. Level of responsibility (individual = 1, organizational = 2), Immorality frame (immorality = 1, non-immorality = 2), Blame (higher score = more blame), Anger (higher score = angrier), Purchase intention (higher score = more likely to purchase), Word-of-mouth communication (higher score = more likely to do positive word-of-mouth communication)
b.- - - - - -   indicates a non-significant relationship (but was deleted in the final analysis).
c. χ^2 = 4.362, *df* = 3, *p* = .231, *CFI* = .998, *NFI* = .992, *RMSEA* = .044, *90% C.I:* .000-.127
d. Because the significant correlation coefficients in the result of Pearson Product-Moment Correlations were found, co-variances were considered in the relationships between immorality frame and word-of-mouth communication, and between level of responsibility and word-of-mouth communication.
e. * *p* < .05, ** *p* < .01, *** *p* < .001

Figure 13. The Final Path Model of Anger Management
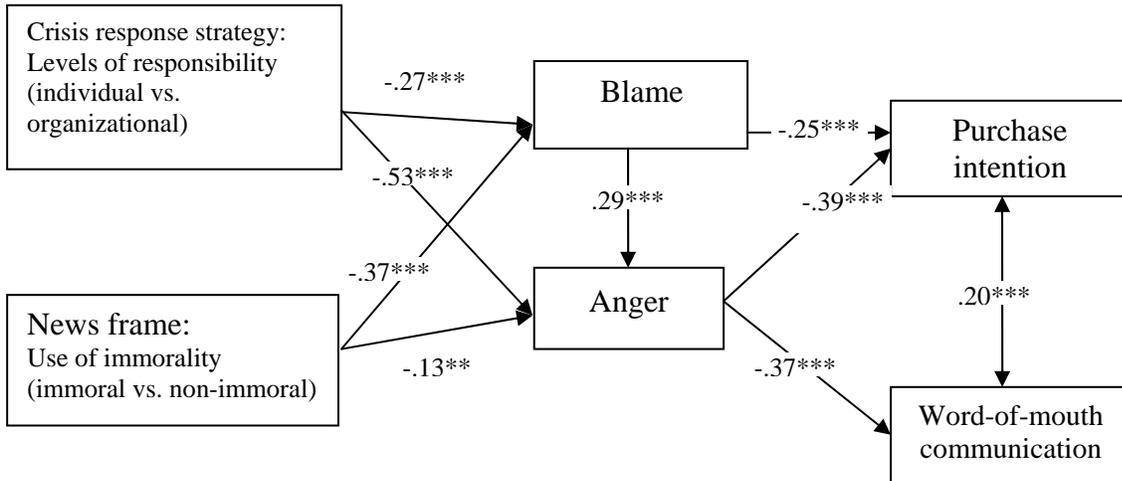
Note. a. Level of responsibility (individual = 1, organizational = 2), Immorality frame (immorality = 1, no-immorality = 2), Blame (higher score = more blame), Anger (higher score = angrier), Purchase intention (higher score = more likely to purchase), Word-of-mouth communication (higher score = more likely to positive word-of-mouth communication)

b. $\chi^2 = 6.715$, $df = 4$, $p = .152$, *CFI* = .995, *NFI* = .988, *RMSEA* = .05, *90% C.I:* .000 - .124

c. Because the significant correlation coefficients in the result of Pearson Product-Moment Correlations were found, co-variances were considered in the relationships between immorality frame and word-of-mouth communication, and between level of responsibility and word-of-mouth communication.

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

CHAPTER 5

Discussion

This study sought to examine how organizational crisis response strategies and news frames can be used to lessen people's anger and blame, and to reduce the likelihood of negative purchase intention and word-of-mouth communication intention. By focusing on levels of responsibility (individual responsibility vs. organizational responsibility) and the morality news frame (use vs. no use), this study attempted to explore how the interaction effects between crisis response strategies and news frames work effectively in people's blame and anger, which can influence negative behavioral intentions. Furthermore, this study examined the role of anger as a mediator linking blame and behavioral intentions, and finally proposed the anger management model. Based on these purposes of this study, key findings are discussed as follows.

Crisis Response Strategies, Blame, and Anger

This study first attempted to answer the question, "What is the most effective crisis response strategy to mitigate people's blame and anger?" As an effective crisis response strategy, this study proposed a new perspective from the news framing studies, beyond the limited scope of current crises response strategy literatures. One of the important contributions that this study makes for crisis communication is to show that Iyengar's (1991) news frame can be used to explain and provide an effective crisis response strategy that public relations practitioners can employ. The finding for the first research question and hypothesis showed that the organizational level of responsibility can minimize participants' anger and blame, whereas the individual level of responsibility can aggravate participants' anger and blame. It indicates that although an

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individual employee caused the crisis, participants prefer that the organization admits its responsibility for the crisis instead of blaming the individual employee who committed the crisis. It also suggests that participants feel more positive if the organization corrects its system rather than punishing the individual employee.

In fact, additional elements of the study clarify this explanation. Participants were asked to report their attitude toward the company's response strategies. There were statistically significant differences between the individual level and the organizational level of responsibility: participants who read the individual level of responsibility exhibited consistently a negative attitude toward the company, whereas participants who read the organizational level of responsibility showed a positive attitude toward the company on the item of (a) "I support what the company says," (b) "I agree with what the company says," and (c) "I'm favorable toward what the company says." This additional analysis indicates that people are more likely to see the organizational responses taking all responsibility for the crisis, even though a crisis was caused by an individual employee's mistake. Given a number of previous studies identifying a strong positive relationship between attitude and behaviors, a company's response strategy using the organizational level of responsibility may influence people's positive attitude, purchase intention, and word-of-mouth communication. Therefore, it is suggested for crisis managers to employ crisis response strategies containing an organizational level of responsibility toward the public in an internal crisis situation.

These findings provide a new perspective to crisis managers and public relations practitioners. According to Iyengar (1991), news media use an episodic frame to minimize the importance and seriousness of social issues/problems at the level of individual characteristics, and to lower their accountability for them. In practice, this phenomenon can be observed. This

framing of news organization could be applied to organizational crisis context and may be considered organizational crisis response strategy. Some organizations utilize a scapegoat approach, such as individual punishment, to hide more fundamental problems and serious causes of the crisis, and thereby attempt to distract the public's attention from the roots of the problem. They might assume that identifying the person's responsibility might decrease the organization's level of responsibility. However, by examining that the individual level of responsibility made people blame the organization more intensively than the organizational level of responsibility, this study suggests otherwise; participants in the study were more likely to see the organization's confessions for the crisis cause and responsible behavior such as rehabilitation. Therefore, this study encourages crisis managers to understand how people perceive the organizational responses, and use favorable strategies (i.e., organizational level of responsibility) for the people's perception.

Regarding the levels of responsibility strategy in an internal crisis, this study suggests various types of future studies. First, people's emotion may depend on who causes a crisis inside an organization. For example, if a leader or CEO who is in the upper rank of a company causes the crisis, people may get much angrier at the company and may differently respond to the company's strategies regarding levels of responsibility than if the crisis is caused by an individual employee who ranks low in the company. Second, people's emotion may vary by types of public (i.e., a certain type of stakeholders). It may be explained as how much they are involved with a crisis or an organization facing the crisis, or legal issues surrounding the crisis. For example, people may have different attitudes and feelings toward organizational responses if they are investors or suppliers or activists or general public. Therefore, further studies can be suggested for examining the effects of levels of responsibility by types of actors causing the

crisis in internal crises and types of publics in various settings related to legal issues and
governmental laws.

Morality Frame, Anger, and Blame

The positive effect of an organizational level of responsibility on people's anger and
blame disappears when an immorality news frame is introduced into a crisis. This is one of the
most critical findings from this study. This study identified not only the influence of news frames
on people's perception, which has been overlooked in previous studies, but also the interaction
between the news frame and the crisis response strategies. Previous crisis communication
research did not pay attention to the influence of news media on people's perception and
negative emotion, and Situational Crisis Communication Theory did not consider the possibility
that people's perceptions could be changed by news media in a crisis, by assuming that people's
attribution is decided by crisis type. Given the limitation of previous studies, this study provides
crisis communication scholars with a critical factor that they must not disregard in considering
people's perceptions and emotions in a crisis.

The finding for the second research question and hypothesis showed that an immorality
news frame made people upset and attribute intense blame to the company. Given that a number
of previous framing effect investigations have examined the influence of news frames on
people's perceptions, it is presumed that the immorality news frames may affect people's
judgment about the immorality of the organization. Several items regarding moral judgment
were added to measure participants' moral judgment toward the company additionally. The
results revealed that there were statistically significant differences in means between the
immorality and non-immorality frame. Participants who were exposed to the immorality frame
evaluated the company immorally or unethically more than participants who were not exposed to

the immorality frame. For example, participants with the immorality frame showed stronger agreements on three questions: (a) "Do you think that the company is immoral?" (b) "Do you think that the company is dishonest?" and (c) "Do you think that the company is unethical?" Given that moral judgment influences anger and blame (Cho, 2007), these additional analyses demonstrated that the immorality frame can affect people's moral judgment, which may influence their anger and blame toward the organization. Overall, this finding can provide organizational crisis managers with an important practice that news media (in particular, immorality news frame in this study) should be considered as one of core variables that crisis managers need to pay attention to handle the crisis. Organizational media relationship and management is a pivotal practice in any given situation.

Besides the main effect of news frame on people's anger and blame, this study identified the interaction effects between crisis response strategies and news frames on people's level of blame. The interaction effects show that the organizational level of responsibility strategies is significantly effective in one condition (i.e., non-immorality frame), whereas it is not significant in the other condition (i.e., immorality frame). If people do not read the immorality news frame in news coverage (i.e., news media do not deal with any immorality matters about the company), people's level of blame may be different by what crisis response strategies the company use. If the company uses the organizational level of responsibility strategy toward people, the company can reduce people's blame, whereas if the company uses the individual level of responsibility strategy, it can even aggravate people's blame. However, if the news organization describes the company as an immoral and unethical organization in news coverage, and people are influenced by the immorality frame, people's level of blame may be very high, no matter what strategies the company use (i.e., there may be no difference in blame between the individual and the

organizational level of responsibility). Namely, even though the company employs the organizational level of responsibility strategy, it could not be used to lessen people's blame, because of the immorality frame of news media.

This finding illustrates that an immorality frame can make people attribute a high level of crisis responsibility to the organization in any situation. In fact, a post hoc test in the results section showed that people's level of blame under the non-immorality frame condition were higher than those under the immorality frame condition. (i.e., each group's levels of blame has appeared in the following order: individual level/immorality, organizational level/immorality, individual level/non-immorality, and organizational level/non-immorality). As a whole, a certain frame of news media seems to be more important than a company's crisis response strategy in terms of reducing levels of blame in a crisis. This is one of the critical practical implications that this study can give to public relations practitioners. It makes the practitioners difficult in managing a crisis, and think more about the matter of media like how to achieve a "fair" frame, how to do right thing with media, and how to practice good media relations. They should not ignore the news frame, and should always check any bias, a certain frame, point of view, and predisposition that the news organization may have.

On the other hand, no interaction effect on anger between crisis response strategies and news frame was found. Instead, the main effects of two factors were significant, respectively. The main effect of levels of responsibility indicates that participants who read a news coverage containing the individual level of responsibility get angrier than participants who read a news coverage containing the organizational level of responsibility, whether an immorality news frame is employed or not. In addition, the main effect of the immorality frame shows that participants

who are exposed to the immorality news frame reasonably get angrier than participants who do not, in both under conditions of individual-level and organizational-level responsibility.

These main effects have a promising meaning for the organization, in that the organizational crisis response strategy could be used to alleviate people's anger. The use of crisis response strategy taking all organizational responsibility can make people less angry, whereas that of strategy showing individual responsibility could make people angrier, regardless of whether the morality news frame was used. It is interesting to observe that participants were much angrier in the individual level condition (even though they were not exposed to the immorality frame) than those in the organizational level condition (i.e., participants' levels of anger shown in the following order: individual level/immorality, individual level/non-immorality, organizational level/immorality, and organizational level/non-immorality). It seems that the company's crisis response strategy could play a decisive role in decreasing people's anger. Once the company uses a crisis response strategy by showing organizational responsibility, it could relieve people's negative emotions, regardless of the influence of a certain news frame. On the other hand, if the company employs strategies focusing on the individual responsibility, it could provoke people's rage and anger. However, that company strategy may be effective if the news media includes that strategy.

Anger, Mediating Blame and Negative Behavioral Intention

By testing hypotheses regarding the relationship among blame, anger, purchase intention, and word-of-mouth communication intention, this study yields results that are consistent with previous studies (Cho, 2007; Coombs, 1999; Coombs & Holladay, 1996, 2004, 2007, 2008; Lee, 2004). If people are more likely to blame the organization, they are more likely to get mad at the

company, less likely to buy the company's products, and more likely to tell other people about the company unfavorably.

Among main variables, one of the main goals of this study was to identify the role of anger as a mediator linking blame and negative behavioral intentions. Consistent with Coombs and Holladay (2007), this study also found that anger plays an important role in mediating (1) blame and purchase intention, and (2) blame and word-of-mouth communication intention. These results explained that if people are mad at and strongly blame the company (i.e. people hold high levels of blame and anger), they may not buy the company's product, and may share negative impressions about the company. However, even though people blame the company more intensively, unless they are angry at the company (i.e., people have a high level of blame, but a low level of anger), their blame may not lead any negative purchase intention and word-of-mouth communication. Accordingly, they may buy the company's product and recommend the company to their friends and family.

The mediation effect of anger on word-of-mouth communication is little stronger, compared to that of anger on purchase intention. Therefore, the matter whether or not people get angry at the organization is more important in predicting how likely they come to tell other people about the company negatively. This mediation effect has more considerable meaning for public relations practitioners in handling a crisis. Given that negative word-of-mouth communication is more dangerous than negative purchase intention, because negative word-of-mouth communication can spread to other people who do not know about the crisis, it has the potential to last longer than purchase intention (Coombs & Holladay, 2007).

The influence of negative word-of-mouth communication is getting more important, when considering that new technologies make people more easily and promptly disseminate their

negative messages and experiences by using email, blogs, web-sites, message boards, and social media. In fact, a closer examination in the current data regarding word-of-mouth communication online identified that anger came to be a perfect mediator between online word-of-mouth communication and blame. Namely, regardless of levels of blame, once people are really angry at a company, they may post negative messages about the company on their web-sites and blogs, or write negative evaluations on various consumer-evaluation web-sites, or email their friends not to buy the company's products. By contrast, if people are not angry, even though they strongly blame the organization, their blame may not initiate their negative online word-of-mouth communication. In other words, not all people's purchase intentions or word-of-mouth communication intention may be affected by a crisis. Consequently, anger serves to energize people to decrease their purchase intention and increase negative online and offline word-of-mouth communication. By the same token, reduced anger should decrease the likelihood of a crisis triggering negative word-of-mouth communication and the inclination not to purchase a product or service. That is, the most important matter in a crisis is anger.

Implications for Crisis Management

This study showed the important role of anger in a crisis, therefore, managing anger is a key to managing the crisis. As emphasized in the introduction of this study, crisis management is "anger management." Crisis managers should be aware of and concerned about people's anger, which could fuel potentially damaging negative behaviors. From this perspective, it is time to answer the question as to what is the most effective crisis response strategy to mitigate people in order to prevent potential negative behaviors which might be caused by their anger. This study shows that the organizational level of responsibility strategy of taking care of their employee and

all their responsibility at every level of the organization can reduce people's anger and blame, and furthermore reduce negative behavioral intentions.

Previous discussions dealing with this topic have shown similar suggestions. For example, Coombs and Holladay (2007) provided suggestions as to how the level of anger should affect the crisis response guidelines. For example, when people have a (1) low level of anger (i.e., when a product tampering or natural disaster happens to a company), they suggest the company to use crisis response strategies by containing instructional information and by expressing concern for victims; when people have a (2) moderate level of anger (i.e. when an accident or malfunctioning occurs in a company), they recommend the company to utilize crisis response strategies including instructional information and to express concern for victims, excuse, and justification strategies; and when people hold a (3) strong level of anger (i.e., when human error or mismanagement misdeed crisis happens to a company), they suggest the company to employ strategies by showing the instructional information, concern for victims, compensation, and full apology strategies. Basically, Coombs and Holladay's (2007) guideline indicates that anytime a crisis occurs, showing sympathy and empathy toward the public is the bottom line that the organization should keep for victims. However, one thing that Coombs and Holladay (2007) have overlooked is that people's perceptions could differ and be influenced by various factors such as a certain news frame as this study shows. By simply assuming that people's perceptions are decided by crisis types, they suggested the response strategies guideline according to the crisis types. Simola (2003) emphasized the importance of care. Simolar analyzed McDonald's responses toward the public by focusing on an ethic of care. McDonald's responses were combinations of expression of sympathy and compensation, even though the crisis was not caused directly by their fault. This indicates McDonald's strategy based on the ethic of care is to

show the very least sympathy for victims. Given previous literature regarding effective response strategies, sympathy and highly accommodative crisis response strategies might be the most effective ways to prevent negative responses.

Consistent with the analyses of previous studies, this study also discovered that it is best for the organization to take care of all responsibility and individual employees by showing a confession and sympathy. It can alleviate people's anger and blame. Why did participants evaluate the individual level of responsibility more negatively, whereas perceiving the organization's strategy to accept all responsibilities for the crisis more positively, even when the crisis was caused by the individual employee? At least two explanations are possible. First, individual punishment might be interpreted as a smokescreen to hide something related to the crisis. People might look suspiciously at the organization's behavior to minimize the responsibility and might think about the organization's mistakes in the backstage. In psychology, people may have engaged in backward chaining to trace back to the crisis cause (Quattron, 1982). Results in a previous study also showed that people judged the company to be responsible for the crisis, if the company used the denial response strategy (Lee, 2004). In addition, people may judge the company's strategy per se. In other words, people perceive a denial strategy itself to be blamable.

Social responsibility may be the second clue of the explanation. Social responsibility and ethics are key concepts for understanding the role of public relations and for gaining organizational legitimacy in today's society. Grunig (1993) said, "Public relations is the practice of public responsibility" (p. 147). Public relations practice should be responsible and ethical if the organization is to achieve good relationships with the public and acquire institutional legitimacy. In a crisis, managers make an effort to reestablish legitimacy and to protect the

organizational image (Coombs, 2006a) by showing crisis responses strategies. A crisis response strategy is an effort by the organization to offer appropriate explanations for the causes of and solutions for the crisis, and also to show responsible behaviors. Consistent with this, the public might expect a high degree of organizational social responsibility and contribution to society. In particular, in a crisis situation, people might be more likely to want the organization to demonstrate ethical and responsible behaviors. This may indicate the public's desire for the organization to be accountable by taking all responsibility for an internal crisis. Thus, it is suggested that the crisis response strategy using organizational level of responsibility would be appropriate in showing organizational ethical/responsible behavior.

As the field of crisis communication becomes more diversified, scholars may start to move beyond the current discussion of crisis responses strategies and need to review a broader range of theories for newer insights. To facilitate theoretical developments in this field, insightful conceptualizations may be borrowed from a larger scope of human communication literature (e.g., organizational and interpersonal communication, persuasion), as well as other academic disciplines (e.g., psychology, sociology, behavioral sciences). In fact, SCCT borrowed the reasoning of the attribution theory, which is originated from psychology, and image restoration theory incorporated apology theory, which has its roots in rhetoric. This study contributes to theoretical development by applying Iyengar's frameworks dominantly used in news framing studies to crisis-related context with the special purposes of (a) looking at the public's perception and negative emotions through news frames, which are a common and influential medium for hearing about voices, and (b) offering an effective organizational crisis response strategy that frames different responsible objects to the cause and treatment for crisis based on audience-centered data. In addition, by combining crisis response strategies with a morality news frame,

this study identified (a) the influence of news frame and (b) the interaction effect of the two on people's blame. Finally, this study contributed to theoretical development in the crisis communication literature by providing the reliable anger management model linking anger, blame, and negative behavioral intentions.

Limitations and Suggestions

First, as with any experimental study, this study has weak external validity because of the limited size of the sample, which was obtained from one university. Students were sampled for convenience, although they were randomly assigned. A single experimental study is also not ideal for assessing the public's evaluation of an organizational crisis. Future research should be conducted with multiple audiences and on a nationwide scale.

Second, only one type of internal crisis (i.e., human error recall) was explored. Because human error recall is relatively serious, it might be biased in such a way as to make people blame the company intensively. In particular, people could be more highly involved in the laptop battery recall crisis because they might be exposed to similar recall incidents through news media frequently in everyday life. Future studies could examine other crisis types (e.g., organizational mismanagement, accident, product tempering, etc.) to cover various types of crises response strategies.

Third, this study only focused on an immorality news frame, because morality is associated with anger and blame. Given that various news frames (e.g., attribution of responsibility frame, human-interest frame, economic frame, and conflict frame) have been identified in crisis news coverage, and they have been used more frequently than the immorality frame (An & Gower, in press), it is useful for future researchers to examine the influences of other types of news frames on people's blame and negative emotion. In addition, this study

creates various types of research topics for future studies. Besides types of public and crises, there are numerous variables influencing people's perceptions in a crisis such as types of communication channels, post history of organizations, public's prior experiences and knowledge with organizations, and competing news events and media agenda. These factors would be good topics for the next step to find the effective specific strategies.

Despite these limitations, the study made contributions to (1) better understand the public's attribution, emotion, and behavioral intentions in an internal crisis based on audience-based data, and (2) develop specific ways of managing people's anger through the point of view of public relations practitioners. The power of crisis response strategies to mitigate anger may be beneficial for organizations to protect their tarnished images due to crises. In addition, the influence of a news frame may also be a critical factor for the organization to figure out the motive for people's anger and blame. This study is a stepping stone in furthering our understanding of anger and its role of mediator linking attribution and negative behaviors. Beyond the levels of responsibility strategies and an immorality news frame, the next step is to develop various effective strategies to manage people's negative emotions and identify the impact of other news frames frequently used in crisis news coverage on people's perceptions and emotions with a hope of obtaining insights and directions for future research and practice.

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APPENDIX A

Informed Consent Form

Participant Information Sheet

A Study of Anger in Internal Crisis

INFORMATION
This study will take approximately 15 minutes in total. During that time, at first, you will be given a general questionnaire about your demographic information. This will be used for classification purposes only. After you complete the questionnaire, you will read a news article. After reading, you will be asked several questions based on your perception of a news story you read. If at any time you feel uncomfortable, you many choose to ignore the questions or discontinue your participation.

CONFIDENTIALITY
The personal information you provide in this experiment will be kept completely confidential. Data will be stored securely and will be made available only to persons conducting the study, the UA IRB, and any other person or agency required by law. Your name will not be stored with the data I collect.

RISKS AND BENEFITS
Participation in the study does not present any foreseeable risks to you. If any, you may have a certain image of the company in the news story you will read. As the benefits for you, you may find it useful to see how research in crisis communication is conducted. In addition, for participating you will receive extra credit for your class. If you do not want to participate, your instructor will inform you of the other alternative form to earn extra credit.

PARTICIPATION
Your participation in this study is completely voluntary; you may withdraw from the study at any time without any penalty and without loss of benefits. When you withdraw from the study, you will not have to complete or return the survey to me if you do not want to, and your data will be destroyed. As indicated by your instructor you may receive extra credit for your participation. If you do not want to participate, your instructor will inform you of the other alternative form to earn extra credit.

CONTACT
If you have any questions at any time, please feel free to ask Seonkyoung An, a doctoral Student in the College of Communication and Information Sciences, at (205) 239-8475. You may also contact the advisor of this research project, Dr. Jennings Bryant, at (205) 348-6774, if you have any other questions or concerns. Additionally, you can also contact Ms. Tanta Myles, the University of Alabama Research Compliance Officer, at 205-348-5152, if you have any questions about your rights as a research participant.

APPENDIX B

Crisis News Scenarios

Fire Hazards: ACE Inc. Laptop Batteries Recalled

By Rodney Joyce

MONTGOMERY - Laptop battery maker ACE Inc. Corporation announced Thursday that it is recalling millions of laptop batteries over concerns that they could overheat and explode.

The announcement came just one day after a Montgomery, Ala., female college student was injured when her ACE Inc. laptop battery exploded, causing serious burns to her face. After an investigation by the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, it was identified that the accident was apparently caused by the overheated battery.

Accordingly, ACE Inc. is recalling 4.5 million of the BA 4C model lithium ion batteries found in many of their products. The recall is the largest ever for laptop batteries.

After the investigation, the CPSC said that the company's director of quality control, who oversaw the safety test of the recalled battery, mistakenly reported the wrong amount of chemical retardant needed during his safety test of the battery. "He admitted his mistake," the CPSC reported. Industry analysts have speculated the recall will likely cost ACE Inc. more than $60 million.

ACE Inc. BA 4C model lithium ion Battery

After the CPCS's report Thursday, ACE Inc. later released a statement that "the cause of the battery problem was due to our employee's error and that the director of quality control was solely responsible for this accident."

ACE Inc. spokesman James Ward said Friday, "we decided to fire the director of quality control over the economic loss and damage to the company's image." Ward said, "our final decision will help prevent similar mistakes in the future."

A representative of CPSC, Carol Leonnig said, "ACE Inc. may be in trouble for a while due to this recall. ACE Inc. could be open to a great deal of public criticism. As one of the largest companies, it should have been more careful about consumers' safety. A young woman was hurt after all. It's a moral issue."

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ACE Inc. BA 4C model lithium ion Battery

After the CPCS's report Thursday, ACE Inc. later released a statement that "the cause of the battery problem was not solely due to the employee's error, but the cause for the recall and the responsibility were the entire company's."

ACE Inc. spokesman James Ward said Friday, that "we agreed that simply firing the director would not be the best solution. We will not only admonish our employee, but also work to strengthen our company's overall systems of quality control testing processes at every level of the company." Ward said, "our final decision will help prevent similar mistakes in the future."

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APPENDIX C

Questionnaire

Personal Information

1. What is your gender? ____ (1) Male ____ (2) Female

2. How old are you? ____ years old

3. In what year are you?
____ (1) Freshman ____ (2) Sophomore
____ (3) Junior____ (4) Senior

4. What is your ethnicity?
____ (1) African-American
____ (2) White
____ (3) Others (e.g., Asian, Hispanic, multi-racial, etc)

Perception about the News

*A. What do you think about **this company's response?** Circle the number best indicating your level of agreement for the following statements.*

MC1) To what degree did you think that the safety director is responsible for the crisis?
Not at all responsible   1   2   3   4   5   6   7   Strongly responsible

MC2) To what degree did you think the company is immoral?
Not at all immoral   1   2   3   4   5   6   7   Strongly immoral

*B. Based on **your feeling** after reading the news story, circle the number best indicating your reaction to the following feelings.*

ANGER1. "I feel annoyed toward the company for what happened, "
      Strongly disagree   1   2   3   4   5   6   7   Strongly agree

ANGER2. "I feel like reprimanding the company,"
      Strongly disagree   1   2   3   4   5   6   7   Strongly agree

ANGER3. "I am disgusted by the company,"
      Strongly disagree   1   2   3   4   5   6   7   Strongly agree

ANGER4. "I feel anger toward the company,"
      Strongly disagree   1   2   3   4   5   6   7   Strongly agree

ANGER5. "I feel displeasure toward the company,"
      Strongly disagree   1   2   3   4   5   6   7   Strongly agree

ANGER6. "I hate the company,"
      Strongly disagree   1   2   3   4   5   6   7   Strongly agree

ANGER7. "I resent the company,"
      Strongly disagree   1   2   3   4   5   6   7   Strongly agree

ANGER8. "I rage at the company."
      Strongly disagree   1   2   3   4   5   6   7   Strongly agree

*C. Based on **your thought** after reading the news story, circle the number best indicating your level of agreement for the following questions.*

    BLAME1. To what degree do you think this company should be blamed for the recall?
          Not at all to be blame   1   2   3   4   5   6   7   Absolutely to be blamed

    BLAME2. How much responsibility should this company bear?
          Not at all responsible   1   2   3   4   5   6   7   Totally responsible

    BLAME3. The blame for the recall lies with the company.
          Strongly disagree   1   2   3   4   5   6   7   Strongly agree

*D. Based on **your thought** after reading the news story, circle the number best indicating your level of agreement for the following statements.*

    PI1. "I will still consider this company when I plan to buy a laptop."
          Strongly disagree   1   2   3   4   5   6   7   Strongly agree

    PI2. "I will hesitate in choosing this company to buy a laptop."
          Strongly disagree   1   2   3   4   5   6   7   Strongly agree

    PI3. How likely is it you will use this company's laptop?
          Strongly disagree   1   2   3   4   5   6   7   Strongly agree

*E. Based on **your thought** after reading the news story, circle the number best indicating your level of agreement for the following statements.*

    WOM1. "I would encourage friends or relatives NOT to buy products from the organization"
          Strongly disagree   1   2   3   4   5   6   7   Strongly agree

    WOM2. "I would recommend the organization's products to someone who asked my advice."
          Strongly disagree   1   2   3   4   5   6   7   Strongly agree

    WOM3. "I would send/forward emails about it to friends who wanted to buy laptop NOT to buy this product."
          Strongly disagree   1   2   3   4   5   6   7   Strongly agree

    WOM4. "I would post this information on my personal webpage, blog, or consumer-evaluation website for someone NOT to buy it."
          Strongly disagree   1   2   3   4   5   6   7   Strongly agree

G. Circle the number best indicating your level of agreement for the following statements.

MJ1. "Do you think that the company is immoral?"
　　　Strongly disagree　　1　　2　　3　　4　　5　　6　　7　　Strongly agree

MJ2. "Do you think that the company is dishonest?"
　　　Strongly disagree　　1　　2　　3　　4　　5　　6　　7　　Strongly agree

MJ3. "Do you think that the company is unethical?"
　　　Strongly disagree　　1　　2　　3　　4　　5　　6　　7　　Strongly agree

J. Circle the number best indicating your level of agreement for the following statements.

AT1. "I support what this company says."
　　　Strongly disagree　　1　　2　　3　　4　　5　　6　　7　　Strongly agree

AT2. "I agree with this company's response."
　　　Strongly disagree　　1　　2　　3　　4　　5　　6　　7　　Strongly agree

AT3. "I'm favorable toward what this company says."
　　　Strongly disagree　　1　　2　　3　　4　　5　　6　　7　　Strongly agree

K. Circle the number best indicating your level of agreement for the following statements.

IM1. "My impression of this company is positive."
　　　Strongly disagree　　1　　2　　3　　4　　5　　6　　7　　Strongly agree

IM2. "I don't like this company"
　　　Strongly disagree　　1　　2　　3　　4　　5　　6　　7　　Strongly agree

IM3. "This company's overall image is favorable to me."
　　　Strongly disagree　　1　　2　　3　　4　　5　　6　　7　　Strongly agree

IM4. "I evaluate this company negatively"
　　　Strongly disagree　　1　　2　　3　　4　　5　　6　　7　　Strongly agree

IM5. "I am disappointed with this company"
　　　Strongly disagree　　1　　2　　3　　4　　5　　6　　7　　Strongly agree

IM6. "I have a negative impression of this company"
　　　Strongly disagree　　1　　2　　3　　4　　5　　6　　7　　Strongly agree