

# 위기대응 전략으로서 정체성 프레이밍 효과

## The Effect of Identification Framing as Crisis Response Strategy

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### 요약

본 연구의 목적은 기존에 위기커뮤니케이션 주로 다뤄진 규범적 이론을 넘어서 상이한 위기유형에 대응할 수 있는 프레이밍 전략으로 정체성 프레이밍을 소개하고 이에 효과를 밝히는데 있다. 정체성 프레이밍은 포괄적이며 조직정체성을 위한 전략적 메시지이며 이것은 사회적 정체성과 유사하다. 본 연구는 정체성 프레이밍의 효과를 검증하기 위해서 실험연구를 실시하였으며, 실험디자인을 통해 위기유형, 위기대응, 프레이밍 효과를 조작화 하였다. 위기유형은 내부적인 요인에 발생한 위기와 외부적 요인에 의해 발생한 요인으로 조작화 하였고, 위기대응은 사과와 부정으로, 마지막으로 정체성프레이밍 유무를 통해 2x2x2 요인설계 되었다. 총 242명의 대학생이 이 실험에 참여했으며, 주요한 연구결과는 정체성 프레이밍 위기 유형과 위기대응 전략에 상관없이 유의한 효과가 있는 것으로 나타났다.

■ 중심어 : | 정체성 프레이밍 | 위기커뮤니케이션 | 위기대응전략 | 위기유형 |

### Abstract

The current study challenges to suggest an umbrella strategy applied to different type of crisis, which is different from normative principle in crisis communication. The umbrella or comprehensive strategy in this study is identification framing. Identification framing is strategic message for organizational identification, which is close to social identification. The current study employed experimental design manipulating crisis types, crisis response types, and identification framing. The crisis types were internal versus external crisis, crisis responses were denial versus apology, and using identification framing 2x2x2 factorial design were used. Two hundreds forty students participated in the experiment. The result showed the significant effectiveness of identification framing in different crisis types and crisis responses.

■ keyword : | Identification Framing | Crisis Communication | Crisis Response Strategy | Crisis Type |

## 1. Introduction

Numerous studies in crisis communication literature have explored effective crisis response strategies according to crisis types and patterns of public

response to those crisis types. Scholars have argued that a situational crisis response strategy is necessary for successfully dealing with different types of crises. A crisis type could be classified with various factors such as controllability, locus, responsibility, severity,

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and so on. Recently Coombs (2015) gave an overview on a crisis situation: no crisis responsibility, minimal crisis responsibility, strong crisis responsibility, integrity-based crisis, competence-based crisis, long-term threat, and timing[1]. Based on each situation, a crisis manager should plan a different crisis response strategy for effective effort. For example, denial is a response to no crisis responsibility, instructing adjusting information is a response to minimal crisis responsibility, apology or compensation is for responding to integrity-based crisis, and instructing and adjusting information apology is for responding to long-term threat. On the other hand, crisis communication scholars have suggested normative principles regardless type of crisis. Disclosing information about the crisis to stakeholder[2-4], to be honest during a crisis[5-7], and responsible communication are general principles. These general principles should be preserved in any crisis type and they are not strategy. The current study, however, challenges to suggest an umbrella strategy applied to different type of crisis, which is different from normative principle in crisis communication. The umbrella or comprehensive strategy in this study is identification framing. Identification framing is strategical message for organizational identification, which is close to social identification. The current study examines effectiveness of identification framing in different crisis types.

## II. Literature Review

### 1. Framing in Crisis Communication

Framing theories have been numerously used in many different disciplines including journalism, advertising, communication, public relations and so

on. For public relations, Hallahan (1999) provided a fundamental framework how public relations scholars and practitioners strategically apply it into public relations field[8]. He identified seven distinct types of framing applicable to public relations. First, situation framing providing a structure for examining communication used in discourse analysis, negotiation, and other interaction, is relevant to public relations in which situation framing has been investigated involve organizational behavior and negotiation[9-12]. Secondly, attribution framing indicates that characteristics of objects and people are accentuated, whereas other are neglected, thus biasing processing of information in terms of focal attributes[13-15]. Attribution framing have received increased attention many area including media studies, marketing and communication, economic behavior, advertising, and consumer behavior. Crisis communication in public relations has used the framing in explaining how crisis types attribute a responsibility of an organization in evaluation of publics. Coombs' situational crisis communication theory-SCCT (2007) is informed by attribution theory[16][17]. Attribution theory posits that people search for the causes of events especially those that are negative and unexpected. In a crisis, attributes are crisis types and SCCT identifies three crisis clusters including the victim cluster, the intentional cluster, and the intentional cluster. Based on type of crisis cluster, an organization should prepare a reasonable response. A third important framing for public relations is framing of risky choice, wherein individuals must not merely evaluate attributes but must make a choice between two independent options when some level of uncertainty or risk is occurred. The fourth framing is issue framing. Issue framing has been employed as a tool for analyzing public debates on issues[18][19]. The fifth is framing of

responsibility. Most issue and social problems brings about responsibility of an event, wherein individual, group, or organization should be credited or blamed for the event[20][21]. The sixth is framing of action which is closely aligned to prospect theory’s emphasis on the influence of framing gains versus losses. Levin, Schneider, and Gaeth (1998) called it goal framing and Elliott and Hayward (1998) told that framing of action is similar to pure-valence framing as used by economics[22]. The final framing was framing of news referring to how news stories are portrayed or constructed by the media

## 2. Identification Framing

Among the seven framings, crisis communication has mainly used news framing, issue framing, responsibility framing, and attributional framing. Kim and Cameron (2011) investigated how news framing influences emotional response of the public in a crisis[23]. The importance of message framing in crisis communication is related with crisis response strategy, because crisis response strategy in crisis communication represents the words manager employ in dealing with crises[3]. Previous several studies have proved the importance of message framing in the context of public relations. Kim and Cameron (2011) investigated how emotional news framing induced anger or sadness. Identification framing is organization’s framing theoretically originated by social identity. Organizational identification was developed by Tajfel (1981, 1984) and Turner (1982, 1984)[24-27]. In general, individuals can classify the concept of self in to personal identification and social identification. Personal identification indicates psychological characteristics, personal tendency or character, and personal favor. In turn, social identification indicates collective groups who individual belongs to such as social group, social

category, family, and nationality, informal or formal group. Barge argued that organization identification is formed when an individual consciously or unconsciously identifies with a certain of social value, belief, attitude, or idea in a social system. Cheney and Tompkins (1987) defined that organizational identification is the substance of individual organizational relationship and commitment as referring to their form and they found that organizational identification explicate both their interrelations and distinctiveness[28]. This current study attempts to investigate the effect of identification framing on publics’ response to a company who face a crisis. Publics’ response on a crisis is influenced by crisis type and crisis response strategy. Coombs (1998) summarized crisis response strategy based on a crisis types as following[Table 1][29].

Table 1. Crisis communication strategy according to crisis type

Crisis Situation	Definitions	Crisis Response	Definitions
Rumor	False and damaging information about an organization is being circulated	Denial	Crisis manager state that no crisis exists,
Accidental cluster	In these crisis types, the organizational action being leading to the crisis were unintentional	Excuse	Crisis manager tries to minimize the organization’s responsibility for the crisis,
Preventable cluster	Human-error accidents Human-error product harm	Justification	Crisis manager tries to minimize the perceived damage associated with the crisis. This can include stating there was no serious damage or injuries or claiming that the victims deserved what they received
	Organizational misdeed with no injuries Organizational misdeed management misconduct	Agreed and Apology	Crisis manager publicly states that the organization takes full responsibility for the crisis and asks forgiveness for the crisis,

Crisis situation are classified based on the level of externality and internality, and crisis response strategy are categorized according to crisis types. Based on Kenneth Burke's conception of identification, it was hypothesized that messages higher in identification would generate more positive respondent evaluations. It was further hypothesized that the influence of identification in the crisis response messages would be positive regardless of whether the crisis response included an apology or a denial strategy, and whether the crisis was created by internal or external forces or actions. Results showed that messages using high identification elements generated responses that included more favorable assessments of the organization and a greater likelihood to patronize the organization in the future. Messages using low or no identification elements led to lower assessments of the organization and its handling of the crisis, regardless of whether apology or denial strategies were used. Identification was also shown to be more effective public relations practice in crisis communication messages when the crisis was caused by external (uncontrollable) forces, or by internal (potentially controllable) forces. Using type (external vs. internal) and type of crisis response strategy (excuse and apology), this study suggests the following hypothesis and research question.

H1. Participants will show more positive attitude toward a company's response using identification framing even regardless crisis response types.

RQ1. How identification framing is associated with crisis response types?

RQ2. How identification framing is associated with crisis types?

RQ3. How is identification framing associated with a company's impression during a crisis?

### III. Research Methods

#### 1. Experiment Process and Independent Variables

In the current study 240 university students at Department of Business were surveyed using 8 parallel organizational crisis scenarios (30 respondents per scenario) to examine organizational crisis communication responses and the impact of 3 variables: (1) yes and no identification; (2) apology versus denial; and (3) internal versus external responsibility for the crisis. To manipulate each variable, the following stories in [Table 2] were made up.

Table 2. Stories for Crisis Types and Crisis Response Strategies

Stimulus	Story
Internal Crisis	Yesterday, D Airlines flight 323 departing from Incheon to GTR caught fire while landing. Investigation into the fire indicated that it was caused by frayed wires in the electrical system, FAA recommendations indicated that those wires should have been replaced 2 years ago on all Boeing 727s. Two crew members and 5 passengers were treated for injuries from smoke inhalation at a local hospital. One firefighter received serious burns fighting the blaze.
External Crisis	Yesterday, D Airlines flight 323 departing from Incheon to GTR caught fire while landing. Investigation into the fire indicated that it was caused when lightning struck the aircraft in flight, causing an electrical fire. Two crew members and 5 passengers were treated for injuries from smoke inhalation at a local hospital. One firefighter received serious burns fighting the blaze.
Denial with non-identification frame	J.A. Kim, CEO of D Airlines, has denied responsibility for the fire. He said, "Of course we wish that this would have never happened. We believe that the problem is with the Boeing 727, not with us and our maintenance practices."
Denial with identification frame	J.A. Kim, CEO of D Airlines, has denied responsibility for the fire. He said, "The D Airline family is shocked and saddened by the injuries to our courageous crew, Sgt. William Yost of the GTR fire squad, and 5 of our passengers. We are pleased that all of those injured are expected to make full recoveries. Our hearts go out to those injured and to those in the larger D Airline family in this difficult circumstance. Kim also said, "Of course we wish that this would have never happened. We believe that the problem is with the Boeing 727, not with us and our maintenance practices."

Apology with non-identification	J.A. Kim, CEO of D Airlines, has apologized for the fire. He said, "We are sorry for the fire and we are sorry for those who were injured. We are pleased that all of those injured are expected to make full recoveries. We deeply regret that this fire occurred and we accept responsibility for the accident."
Apology with identification framing	J.A. Kim, CEO of D Airlines, has apologized for the fire. He said, "The D's family is shocked and saddened by the injuries to our courageous crew, Sgt. William Yost of the GTR fire squad, and 5 of our passengers. We are pleased that all of those injured are expected to make full recoveries. Our hearts go out to those injured and to those in the larger D airline family in this difficult circumstance. We are sorry for the fire and we are sorry for those who were injured. We deeply regret that this fire occurred and we accept responsibility for the accident."

2. Dependent Measure

*Public's Acceptance of Organization's Crisis Response.* To measure the extent at which how acceptable each of the action taken by D Airline could be, this study used Coombs & Holladay's (2005) 7 point Likert-type scale where "1= Not Acceptable at all and 7= Totally Acceptable"[30].

*A Corporate's Image.* The four items were used for measure D Airline's Image such as "My overall attitude toward D Airline is positive," "D Airline has a clean reputation in general," "D Airline's overall image is favorable," and "Many people are impressed by D Airline," "Overall, D Airline is evaluated positively in the eye of the general public" using 7-point Likert scale "1=Strongly Disagree and 7=Strongly Agree." Impression scales adopted by Benoit(1997) showed high reliability, Cronbach  $\alpha = .93$ , and I summed the scales' values and used the mean value for analyzing further statistic calculation[2].

IV. Findings

H1. As we hypothesized, identification framing affected significantly people's acceptance level to a

crisis response of a company. Regardless types of crisis responses, people more accepted the company using identification framing. Moreover, people who were exposed to identification framing message significantly much perceived that the company properly responded the crisis ( $M=1.57, t=-2.93, p < .041$ ).

Table 3. The effect of Identification Framing on Publics' Perception on Crisis Response Strategy driven by a Company.

Dependent Variables	Identification Framing	N	MEAN	SD	t	p
How acceptable was the response to the crisis taken by D Airline	No	89	3.62	2.06	-2.73	.012
	Yes	82	4.40	1.63		

RQ 1. How identification framing is associated with crisis response types (Denial & Apology)?

To see the interaction affect between crisis response type and identification framing, I conducted two-way ANOVA. I found that the identification effect was significantly present in Denial, but in apology strategy there were almost same in difference No-identification and Yes-identification. The following figure showed the results. The crisis response type had the signification main effect of acceptance.

Table 4. TWO -WAY ANOVA for Interaction between Identification Framing and Crisis Response Types

Sources	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Crisis Response Type	1	91.28	31.8	.000	.160
Identification Framing	1	18.85	6.57	.011	.038
Crisis Response X Identification Framing	1	19.66	6.86	.010	.039
Error	167	2.866			
Total	171				
Corrected Total	170				

*Dependent Variable: How acceptable was the response to the crisis taken by D Airlines?*

An analysis of variance with level of public acceptance to the response taken by the organization as the dependent variable and crisis response type (excuse vs. apology) and identification framing (Yes vs. No), and their interaction as independent variables yielded the predicted effect. There was a significant ordinal interaction between crisis response type and identification framing ( $F(1, 170) = 6.86, p < .01$ ), showing that using identification framing was more efficiently worked with excuse response message than apology response message(see [Figure 1]). The main effect of response type was significant ( $p < .001$ ), indicating that using apology strategy rather than denial influenced participants' evaluation on an organization more positive way. The main effect for identification framing was also significantly effective ( $p < .01$ ) on participants acceptance on D Airline's crisis.

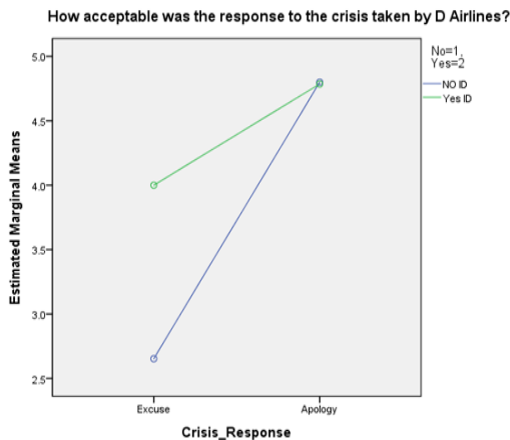


Figure 1. Interaction Effect between Identification Framing and Crisis Response Type

RQ2. How identification framing effect is associated with crisis types (internal vs. external)?

This study conducted two-way ANOVA analysis and found that the significant interaction between

identification and Crisis Type was shown. identification framing effect was much stronger in internal crisis than in external crisis situation

Table 5. Two-Way ANOVA Interaction Effect between Crisis Type and Identification

Source	MS	F	p	Eta
Crisis Type	21,6	6,35	,013	,037
Identification Framing	23,8	7,00	,009	,040
Crisis Type X Identification Framing	1,09	,320	,572	,002
Error	3,41			

Dependent Variable: How acceptable was the response to the crisis taken by D Airlines?

The main effect for crisis type on people's acceptance to the crisis taken by D Airline was statistically significant ( $p < .05$ ), which means that the external crisis was more acceptable to participants. And identification framing was also statistically significant ( $p < .01$ ), presenting that identification framing contributed people perception on a crisis in positive way. The interaction effect between crisis type and identification framing, however, was not significant.

RQ3. The study analyzed T-test to answer how identification framing affected overall impression toward a company after crisis. Through the t-test, I found that using identification framing as a crisis management significantly helped restore impression of the company aftermath.

Table 6. The Difference in Overall Impression on a Company

Dependent Variable	Identification Frame	N	M	SD	t	p
Overall Impression toward a company after a crisis	No	89	3,82	1,20	2,98	,003
	Yes	82	3,25	1,26		

Base on the data, there was statistically significant

difference in overall expression toward the D Airline between identification framing and Non-identification framing groups,  $t(171) = 2.98$ ,  $p = .003$ , which reflects that identification framing helped recovering image of an organization aftermath.

## V. Conclusion

This study challenged to suggest identification framing as comprehensive strategy for crisis communication. To testify the effect of identification framing on publics' evaluation on a crisis, this study designed experimental process and found meaningful implications. In summarizing the findings, identification framing was significant on public's evaluation on crisis response done by a company. Analyzing interaction effect between crisis response type and identification framing showed that identification framing worked at denial crisis response much effectively. There might be a possible reason for explaining the finding. Denial looks irresponsible crisis response for a company, but apology seems responsible crisis response to public's regardless type of crisis. Identification framing might act as responsible message, and it was more effective at denial situation than apology. However, the interaction between identification framing and crisis type was not significant. In terms of overall impression, identification framing was significant and it was meaningful strategy for restoring image tarnished during a crisis. Nevertheless, this study has some limitations. First, this study created hypothetical stories employing an airplane crisis, which is a likely one but the external validity of the experiment design is still an issue. Secondly, identification framing manipulated was significant variable in this study, but the influence would be diluted in some other situation.

For example, a company's prior negative reputation brings about suspicion of identification framing done by the company. Nevertheless, identification framing in this study was discovered as an effective crisis response strategy for appeasing negative evaluation from publics and for provoking acceptance of a company's response to a crisis, and the future research will test the effect of identification framing in other crisis situations and types.

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