The Boeing Crisis:
Stakeholder Perceptions of an Organization in a Twofold Crisis

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Abstract

Though it may seem uncommon, organizations can experience a twofold crisis in which a current crisis they are experiencing is similar to a recent past crisis. In order to mitigate damage from crises and protect reputation, an organization needs to communicate with stakeholders and can use crisis response strategies as a tool. This is especially important for large corporations with a wide sphere of influence. The research focuses on stakeholder perceptions in a case study of Boeing's crisis communication during the 737 MAX crisis which consists of two plane crashes with the same model five months apart from each other. Content analysis is applied to analyze official Boeing statements with the use of Situational Crisis Communication Theory by Coombs, and stakeholder perceptions of the company and its communication are derived from newspaper articles. Findings indicate stakeholders take crisis history into account when evaluating an organization's crisis communication which has a negative effect on the organization's reputation.

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1. Introduction

In a crisis, time is not on your side. A crisis requires swift and adequate communication with the public under time pressure. As the public demands the information void to be filled, the organization's crisis management team needs to collect and disseminate information during a crisis to allow people to understand what is happening and what actions are being taken, as well as to avoid others from taking control and guiding the narrative (Coombs & Holladay 2011). Crises being caused by major organizations occur frequently. A crisis can be described as an unforeseen event with negative implications, which can lead to far reaching material and immaterial consequences to a corporation, organization or person (Stamsnijder, 2002). It is a situation which under conditions of time pressure and very uncertain circumstances, demands critical decision making (Rosenthal et al., 1989 p. 10).

When the precipitating incident has passed, it does not mean the crisis phase has ended. With the rise of modern communication technology and the ever-continuing news stream, media reporting define and make pertinent the conditions of a crisis. More information is being shared and made readily available for publics situated all over the globe. This trend creates certain challenges. Through media, an organization and its stakeholder groups are enabled and empowered to create, find or share information on organizations and their conduct. People can learn from misconduct and faults quicker and communicate on the events more effectively, more visibly, and to a greater extent. Publics have become the judge of correct corporate business conduct and can have a greater influence on the reaction and further development of those organizations. In this globalized, interconnected world it has therefore become increasingly important for corporations and organizations to build, manage and maintain their corporate reputations amongst stakeholders. Because of this, an unprecedented necessity for a level of dialogue between organizations and stakeholders has arisen, with corporate communication no longer being a one-way street but a web of roads fanning out into multiple directions.

This often makes the study of responding to crisis connected to media reporting and stakeholder relations (Coombs & Holladay, 2011, p. 2). Due to media reporting playing a large role in making salient the conditions of a crisis, an essential part of crisis management is responding in the right way to avoid negative media attention and others guiding the narrative (Coombs & Holladay, 2011, p.2). In these situations, crisis communication is an important tool to protect and enhance relationships with stakeholders (Coombs & Holladay, 2011, p. 4) and to minimalize the negative impact of a crisis on reputation (Barton, 2001, p. 2). Benoit

(1995) has claimed that crises become a threat to reputations when an individual or organization is accused of being responsible for the offensive act, which is when crisis response strategies should be used. Although in the beginning of the crisis phase, it is not always clear yet who was responsible for the precipitating event, an organization involved in the crisis needs to communicate on the event in order to provide information and preserve their reputation by strategically selecting a response. According to Coombs' Situational Crisis Communication Theory (SCCT) (2002), in order to adequately protect an organization's reputation, this crisis response must be adjusted to account for possible past crisis about which relevant publics are aware. Though a past crisis - in SCCT defined as *crisis history* - is posited to be a critical factor in the determination of reputational threat, this remains understudied. It seems an important factor as it is presumed to amplify negative reputational fallout for an organization in a current crisis. It might seem uncommon for an organization having to deal with two big crises in a short amount of time. Nevertheless, it is informative to explore such a phenomenon as insights can be instructive for handling a similar crisis the second time in this specific situation. This thesis will aim to explore the role of crisis history in negative reputational fallout of an organization, by analyzing stakeholder perceptions of crisis response strategies.

For this purpose, a case study of the Boeing 737 MAX crisis was selected. This is a recent crisis which fits the description of crisis history. This crisis exemplifies the dynamics of the use of crisis response strategies and its effects on reputation when an organization experiences the same crisis events for a second time in a relatively short amount of time. On 29 October 2018, a Lion Air flight crashed in the Java Sea, costing 189 lives. In this case, stakeholders focused on the responsibility of Lion Air and Indonesian safety authorities first. Multiple investigations had since been started both into the crash itself and the regulatory process to approve the planes (Newburger, 2019, p. 2) when only five months later Ethiopian Airlines flight with a 737 MAX crashed, which increased the amount of casualties to 346 people. With this second crash involving the same plane creating a similar crisis again, the question arises what happens now to people's attributions of responsibility and perceptions of the Boeing company. Since Boeing has been the premier manufacturer of commercial jetliners worldwide for decades and almost half the world fleet that are in service worldwide are Boeing-built commercial jetliners (Newhouse, 2007), the company has an important stake in world affairs and plays a big role in the international field. Not only do they provide products to consumers, they are also in the business of providing safety. A crisis of a company of this nature and proportion therefore affects not only the corporation itself, but many more

stakeholders in the public and private sector, on a national and international level. The Federal Aviation Administration, multiple airlines, relatives of victims, passengers, safety agencies, investigators, aviation experts, as well as different countries as the U.S., China and members of the European Union communicated and acted on the events. This combination of stakeholders in the private and public sector, and in the national as well as international sphere provides for a dynamic communication field as their different expectations or motivations make for various opinions. These stakeholder perceptions of Boeing's crisis responses are important as they have an effect on the organization's reputation.

The Boeing crisis is an ongoing crisis, divided in twofold. The crisis Boeing is in contains two separate crises as two plane crashes with the same model occurred five months apart from the other. In this case, the first crisis event serves as the crisis history of the second crisis event. The case study will be used to explore how stakeholders perceive an organization and its crisis response strategies when the same crisis event happens twice in a short amount of time, and what this means for the organization's reputation. Any organization can experience a similar crisis another time so it is important to be wary of the consequences of using certain strategies after a crisis event, as it might backfire when a similar crisis event occurs a second time. By conducting this research, the goal is to test and extend existing theory as it will aim to illustrate the role of crisis history in stakeholders perceptions of an organization and the consequent effect on its reputation. The insights will serve as an addition to existing theory on crisis response strategies. Furthermore, as organizations benefit from protecting their reputation in the aftermath of a crisis, the results can serve as insights into how it can best communicate in order to mitigate damage, maintain credibility and preserve reputation.

The question that is used to guide the research is: *How do stakeholders perceive crisis response strategies of an organization that experiences a similar crisis twice in a short amount of time, based on Boeing's crisis communication after the first 737 MAX crash compared to after the second 737 MAX crash?*
In order to answer this, sub-questions that will be addressed throughout the study are:

- How was responsibility attributed in the Boeing 737 MAX crashes and how did this evolve in the four weeks after the crashes?
- What and how did Boeing communicate during the four weeks after the crashes?
- How did involved stakeholders respond to and perceive Boeing's communication?

- What were the differences and similarities between stakeholders' reactions and did they have an influence on each other?
- What was the role of crisis history in stakeholders' evaluations of Boeing's crisis communication and to what extent were references made by stakeholders to the previous crash?
- Were the crisis response strategies that Boeing used found credible or effective by stakeholders?

Before answering these (sub)questions, the second chapter provides the theoretical framework, which includes conceptualization of important concepts such as corporate identity, image and reputation, framing and sensemaking, as well as an indication of the relations between them. In addition, it addresses dominant crisis communication theory by focusing on Situational Crisis Communication Theory and Image Repair Theory. The third chapter describes the research design and method. Content analysis was used by creating a codebook based on SCCT. Official press release statements by Boeing were coded into crisis response strategies, and stakeholder perceptions were derived from reactions in New York Times articles about the crisis. The results are systematically reflected in a table and findings are elaborated on in the consecutive section. Finally, by having assessed stakeholders' evaluations of Boeing's crisis response strategies, the role of crisis history and the effects on Boeing's reputation will be concluded.

2. Theoretical Framework

The following chapter provides an overview of fundamental concepts and theory within the field of (corporate) crisis communication. For the thesis, this overview is necessary as the theoretical framework introduced will be used later to analyze Boeing's and stakeholders' communication strategy during the Boeing 737 MAX crisis. An understanding of crises and communicating in a complex and at times uncertain situation is essential for communication officers of corporations as the likelihood "to be confronted with one major crisis or another has never been as great as it is today" (Anthonissen, 2008, p. 9).

After the chapter defines a crisis and lists some general characteristics, the concept of an organizational crisis is introduced. The next paragraph distinguishes between identity, image and reputation. Thereafter, the chapter touches on pre-crisis reputation and the way crisis communication can be used as a tool. Coombs' (2007) Situational Crisis Communication Theory and Benoit's (1995) Image Restoration Theory are being outlined as the main theoretical framework and dominant approaches to crisis response strategies are described. Furthermore, in order to understand the main theoretical ideas, concepts of framing and sensemaking, as well as responsibility and accountability, need to be explained. Then, the influence of media and the changing role of stakeholders in crisis situations are addressed. Finally, the dominant view in current literature is challenged and a research gap is identified in SCCT. Crisis history is stated to be of influence on stakeholder's attribution of responsibility and the organization's reputation, but this has not been demonstrated. This thesis will therefore explore how crisis history plays a role in the formation of an organization's reputation by analyzing the way stakeholders perceive a current crisis in combination with the crisis response strategies as developed by Coombs (2007).

2.1 Crises

Crises are "low probability/high consequence events" that threaten an organization and its goals (Weick, 1998, p. 305). Barton (1993) defines a crisis as "a major unpredictable event that has potentially negative results" (p.2). A general comprehensive definition of a crisis is one by Rosenthal et. al (1989): "a serious threat to the basic structures or the fundamental values and norms of a social system, which—under time pressure and highly uncertain circumstances—necessitates making critical decisions." (p. 10) They can have international, domestic, local, or organizational dimensions, or they can involve a mixture. Moreover, they can involve danger to the physical integrity and wellbeing of citizens, inflicting damage accidentally or purposefully (Rosenthal & Kouzmin, 1997, p. 280). These aspects however,

are applicable to a crisis in the public domain in which public leaders are leading. An example of a crisis in this sense is a natural disaster such as Hurricane Katrina, which not only inflicted great damage on the city of New Orleans and caused the loss of 1,200 lives, the crisis and its inadequate management also disrupted society and caused social chaos (Boin, Brown & Richardson, 2019). Furthermore, a crisis suggests "an unusual event of overwhelmingly negative significance that carries a high level of risk, harm and opportunity for further loss" (Seeger, Sellnow & Ulmer, 2003, p. 4). In another way, Coombs (2007) defines a crisis as "a sudden event that threatens to disrupt an organization's operations and poses both a financial and a reputational threat" (p. 164). In addition, he argues although crisis events are unpredictable, they are not unexpected (p. 164). More specifically, for corporations or organizations "crisis often conveys a fundamental threat to system stability, a questioning of core assumptions and beliefs, and threats to high-priority goals" (Coombs, 1999, p. 4) such as reputation, credibility, profitability and ultimately survival.

The concept of a crisis thus includes various definitions. This thesis will follow the definition of a crisis by Coombs (1999) since this is the leading definition when it comes to crisis communication literature with a focus on (corporate) organizations.

2.2 Corporate identity, image, and reputation

Following Coombs' (2007) definition of crisis, an important element of crisis is the threat of reputational damage. Two concepts that relate to the concept of reputation, are corporate identity and image. They are often used interchangeably, although they differ in the way of including and excluding internal stakeholders (Walker, 2010). Corporate identity takes an internal focus and describes how employees or members see the organization. Contrary to this, corporate image takes into account how external stakeholders regard the organization. In both identity and image, a distinction can be made between the desired and actual. Reputation, however, is the sum of actual perceptions of all stakeholders. A distinction that can be made between these concepts is that images change frequently and may result in quickly attained perceptions of a corporation, but building a reputation takes time (Walker, 2010, p. 367).

In other words, reputation can be described as "an aggregate evaluation stakeholders make about how well an organization is meeting stakeholder expectations based on its past behaviors" (Wartick, 1992, p. 40). These stakeholder evaluations can be favorable or unfavorable. Reputations are widely acknowledged as an intangible and valuable asset. Reputational assets can "attract customers, generate investment interest, improve financial performance, attract top-employee talent, increase the return on assets, create a competitive

advantage and garner positive comments from financial analysts (Coombs, 2007b, p. 164). A reputation is formed through the information stakeholders receive about the organization (Fombrun and van Riel, 2004) Consequently, when the information that stakeholders receive changes, their perception of the organization can alter, which means eventually reputations are also able to change over time. As reputations are constantly being renegotiated in society and keep changing, they need to be managed continuously (Van Riel & Fombrun, 2007, ch. 2). In an interview, van Riel refers to a reputation being a puzzle, composed of small parts that together form the total image that people have of an organization (Expertisecentrum Risico- en Crisiscommunicatie, 2005, p. 63). The problem with that is that people individually only perceive one piece of the puzzle, which is dependent on the context through which they look at the puzzle. Everyone has a different view of the organization and evaluates the organization on different aspects (p. 63): one stakeholder group might be more concerned with how products are formed, while another stakeholder group might be more concerned with how the organization deals with people. Stakeholders receive information through interactions with an organization, advertising and news media reports about an organization, and second-hand information from others such as word of mouth or social media messages (Coombs, 2007, p. 164). Media coverage is an important aspect of reputation management, as most of the information that is collected by stakeholders about organizations emanates from news media (p. 164). Not only news media, but also social media content on the internet can be critical in providing information that forms a reputation. As reputations in this sense are an evaluation that stakeholders make, in order to determine whether or not an organization meets their expectations for how an organization should behave, stakeholders compare what they know about an organization to some standard (p. 164). This is because reputations are evaluative and stakeholders require some point of comparison. A problem for organizations would arise when they have failed to meet stakeholder's expectations, as reputations are largely based on "how stakeholders evaluate an organization's ability to meet their expectations for treating stakeholders" (p. 164). Stakeholders can change how they interact with an organization if a reputation shifts from favorable to unfavorable (p. 164) which can damage the organization. An example of a crisis that damaged the organization's reputation and stakeholder relations is the crisis Oxfam Novib experienced in 2018. A leaked document showed employees of the organization were involved in a sexual exploitation scandal in Haiti while working there after the 2010 earthquake (Gayle, 2018). The highly respected international aid organization was facing various allegations of sexual misconduct over many years which included hiring sex workers for staff orgies. The crisis that ensued escalated

quickly, also due to the NGO's inadequate crisis communication. As this crisis created an unfavorable view of Oxfam, the relationship with stakeholders such as donors was greatly harmed as the crisis caused the organization to lose support and donations from them.

2.3 Pre-crisis Reputation

As an unfavorable view of the organization can inflict reputational damage, one way to protect an organization against a negative crisis outcome is to build and maintain a positive reputation prior to a crisis occurring. This means to improve business and to appease stakeholders, maintaining a positive reputation is helpful. Contrarily, when an organization already has a negative reputation, this will (generally) negatively affect business and cause stakeholders to abandon relations and/or choose another organization when possible (Coombs, 2007). A positive prior reputation can thus help aid a company in minimizing negative reputational consequences following a crisis. A favorable pre-crisis reputation then acts as a buffer of 'reputational capital' during crises and allows the organization to suffer less damage and rebound quicker (Coombs, 2007) (Fombrun & van Riel, 2004). When companies have a high or positive prior reputation, they will also have a higher post-crisis reputation compared to companies with a lower prior reputation (Decker, 2012) (Fombrun & Foss, 2004). Similarly, research by Claeys and Cauberghe (2015) and Coombs and Holladay (2011) confirms this as findings indicate that organizations with a better pre-crisis reputation will have a more favorable post-crisis reputation. It is argued an explanation for this could be that stakeholders are reluctant to change their pre-existing view of an organization, attributing less responsibility and even going as far as that by having a positive prior reputation, the organization can be protected from negative publicity and external allegations in a crisis (Claeys & Cauberghe, 2015).

The disconfirmation model of Edwards and Smith (1996) could be one of the explanations for the effect of initial reputation. The model holds that people have certain expectations or beliefs in a certain situation and they are not open to new information. When someone receives information that deviates from the existing expectation or belief, this information will be weakened to meet the existing attitude related to a situation (Edwards & Smith, 1996). This could translate to a corporation or organization. When someone has a positive expectation of an organization, deviating information that a crisis brings can be weakened to meet the existing, positive perception of the organization (Claeys & Cauberghe, 2015). Another explanation for positive prior reputation is the *halo effect*, which in essence holds that based on the quality of one product, people presume a product also contains other qualities (Klein &

Dawar, 2004). Applied to corporations or organizations, the *halo effect* holds that when an organization has built such a positive reputation and high trust level (it has become saint-like), it can act as either benefit of the doubt, or as a sort of shield in reflecting negative fallout and the attribution of responsibility for a crisis (Coombs & Holladay, 2006). The halo as benefit of the doubt means that if stakeholders hold a favorable view of the organization, this positive prior reputation has an influence on the attribution of crisis responsibility. Organizations can be given the benefit of the doubt and are not assigned as much crisis responsibility as would be assigned to an organization with an unknown or unfavorable reputation (Coombs & Holladay, 2006, p. 125). The halo as shield means that stakeholders may be inclined to discount or ignore negative information created by the crisis for organizations with favorable reputations (p. 125). In this case, positive aspects of the organization are focused on and recent negative information created by the crisis might be ignored. As stakeholders are biased when processing this new information to support their previous beliefs, this positive prior reputation functions as a shield that deflects reputational harm. This is not to say that positive prior reputation can completely eliminate negative effects from a crisis. The 2015 Volkswagen emissions crisis in which the company had been cheating emission tests by making its cars far less polluting than they are, serves as an example. This scandal initially did not faze stakeholders much and Volkswagen's reputation was not damaged greatly (Reputation Institute, 2016). Though at a later point, due to improper management and response, a loss of trust and willingness to purchase Volkswagen's products was reported. Positive reputations that have been built up over a long time might therefore protect an organization during the initial crisis phase, but reputational damage can still ensue from mismanagement at a later level.

2.4 Crisis communication

Communication is a crucial tool to use in managing a crisis. Broadly, crisis communication is the collection and dissemination of information by the crisis management team (Hiebert, 2005, p. 221). Crisis communication can be used in two ways: (1) crisis communication as information and (2) crisis communication as strategy. The first refers to collecting and disseminating information during a crisis to fill the information gap and to allow the crisis management team to understand what is happening and what actions need to be taken (p. 221). The second way crisis communication can be used is as strategy, which refers to the use of messages to maintain or repair relationships with stakeholders, as well as reputation (p. 221). Coombs (2006) states crisis communication is a factor throughout four

stages of a crisis: prevention, preparation, response, and learning. This thesis focuses on crisis communication as strategy in the response phase.

2.5 Framing and sensemaking

When an organization involved in a crisis collects and disseminates information, they send out a message that is 'packaged' or framed in a certain way. A frame has been defined by Gamson and Modigliani (1994) as "a central organizing idea or story line that provides meaning to an unfolding strip of events. The frame suggests what the controversy is about, the essence of the issue" (p.143). In framing the issue in a certain way, the communicator tries to steer the receiver of the message in a certain direction. The framing and presentation of situations and events can thus systematically affect how recipients of the message perceive and interpret these events (Scheufele, 1999, p. 107). How recipients come to understand the events relates to the process of sensemaking. Sensemaking has been defined as "the attribution of meaning to a target (experiences, events, or other stimuli) via the placement of this target into a mental model or framework, otherwise known as a frame" (Pratt, 2000). The role of frames within sensemaking is characterized by imparting organizing structure. As Cornelissen et al. (2014, p. 700) describe, the frames individuals use as part of their sensemaking define situations and the structure of experiences associated with them. Furthermore, frames help to render events meaningful and thereby function to organize experience and guide action (Benford and Snow, 2000, p. 614). The use of framing creates expectations about important aspects of the circumstance by directing individuals to interpret the events in a manner suggested by the frame. For an organization, it is important it takes the lead in framing events when they communicate in a crisis, to maintain control over the situation and to prevent others from guiding the narrative. The crisis management team of an organization can try to give the public an understanding of what is going on and how the crisis will be handled, in order to contribute to the process of meaning making. More so, Boin, 't Hart and Sundelius (2016) have stated that politicians and other crisis leaders employ "deliberate and concerted moves to influence public perceptions and emotions" (p. 82). This means organizations can use prepared and strategic messages in order to guide public perceptions.

Framing theory plays a part in crisis situations as crises usually generate negative press coverage which can form a threat to the reputation of an organization. It poses a danger as "publicity is generally acknowledged to be more credible and more influential than company-controlled communications" (Dean, 2004, p. 193). Therefore, frames used by the

media may form an obstacle in managing and overcoming a crisis and maintaining or rebuilding stakeholder relationships. The importance of regularly monitoring news and crisis media coverage and how media frame a situation has been indicated in a study by An, Gower and Cho (2011). Not only having a good and reliable relationship with the media is essential in order to provide a favourable frame and getting own messages through to the audience, providing information from an own platform is also crucial. Companies should use their media relations to frame a crisis in their interest, establish their position in the crisis, and include them in their crisis response strategies. Failing or refusing to provide facts, withholding or covering up information and not providing an own explanation and position is negligent (Coombs, 2014, ch. 8). Finally, an organization should focus on providing messages and decreasing media attention to prevent journalists from 'digging deeper' and finding other sources of information to lead a narrative that is unfavourable for the organization (Coombs, 2014, ch. 8).

2.6 Situational Crisis Communication Theory

Within crisis communication, one of the most prominent theories is Situational Crisis Communication Theory (SCCT) by Coombs (2007), in which crisis responsibility lies at its core. The theory holds that communication affects people's perception in a crisis. People's perception of an organization and/or crisis can be affected by the words used and the actions taken by management. In turn, those perceptions shape evaluations of the organizational reputation as well as stakeholders' emotional response toward and future interactions with the organization (Coombs, 2007b, p. 171). SCCT reasons from this power in communication, together with Image Restoration Theory by Benoit (1995). As a crisis can cause stakeholders to physically, financially and/or emotionally come into contact with a company in a negative way causing a negative image of a company (Coombs, 2007), communication as a means to protect the reputation of a company or organization, is at the centre of SCCT. Moreover, the model is a basis for companies to understand crises (Coombs, 2007). The model has two functions: mapping out crisis responsibility for the reputation of a company, and adjusting crisis response strategies to crisis responsibility. In the initial step, SCCT distinguishes three crisis types: victim (low crisis responsibility/threat), accidental (minimal crisis responsibility/threat), and preventable (strong crisis responsibility/threat) (Coombs & Holladay, 2011, p. 39). This will be elaborated on later. In the second step, Coombs mentions two factors that intensify reputational threat from the crisis and alter attributions of crisis responsibility: *crisis history* and *prior reputation*. Crisis history is whether or not an

organization has had a similar crisis before. When an organization has had a similar crisis in the past and has established a pattern of negative behavior, this increases the threat and stakeholders will attribute greater responsibility to the organization (p. 39). Prior reputation of an organization is the general state of its relationship with stakeholders. Likewise, greater crisis responsibility is attributed to an organization with negative prior reputation (p. 39). Crisis history and prior relational reputation both directly and indirectly affect the reputational threat (Coombs, 2007b, p. 165). Moreover, the two factors have a direct effect on the reputational threat besides the effect on crisis responsibility (Coombs, 2004).

Crisis history and unfavorable prior reputation intensify attributions of crisis responsibility and have a direct effect on reputation (Coombs, 2004). Coombs and Holladay (2002) elaborate on the circumstances under which responsibility is attributed. They state the extent of 'blame' (assigned responsibility) is dependent on the type of crisis. The crisis type is how the crisis is being framed. Frames operate on two levels: in communication and in thought. Frames in communication entail how information is presented in a message (either with words, phrases or images) and how certain aspects of a problem or situation in a story are highlighted and others neglected. Frames in thought entail the cognitive structures people use when they interpret information, such as scripts or schema (Druckman, 2001). As mentioned, the way a message is framed "shapes how people define problems, causes of problems, attributions of responsibility and solutions to problems (Cooper, 2002). In their work on SCCT, Coombs and Holladay (2002) defined 13 types of crises and explain how crisis types affect the selection of crisis response strategies. By identifying the crisis type, an initial assessment can be made of the amount of crisis responsibility that others will assign to a crisis (Coombs, 2007, p. 169). In this assessment, two factors need to be considered: severity and performance history. Severity is the amount of damage that is produced by a crisis, and performance history refers to the behavior and past actions of an organization including its crisis history and prior relational reputation. Perceptions of crisis responsibility for some crisis types have been proven to be adjusted because of severity and performance history (Coombs & Holladay 2002). Greater crisis responsibility will be attributed to an organization as severity increases or performance history worsens (Coombs, 2007, p. 169). SCCT therefore suggests that "initial assessments of crisis responsibility based on crisis type should be adjusted upward or downward depending on severity and/or performance history" (p. 169).

Coombs and Holladay (2002) reduced the 13 types they defined into three clusters: the *victim cluster*, the *accidental cluster*, and the *preventable cluster* (Coombs & Holladay, 2006, p. 179). First, there are crises in which the organization is a victim of the crisis. These can be a natural disaster, workplace violence and product tampering (p. 179) in which the organization is not seen as the cause. Furthermore, there are crises that fall under the accidental cluster in which the organizations are held accountable but did not intend to create the crisis (p. 179), which can include technical breakdowns and accidents. Blame is attributed based on the extent to which the organization could have prevented the crisis. The third, preventable cluster, involves crises that could have been prevented because the organization knowingly took inappropriate actions, purposefully placed stakeholders at risk or created human error that could have been avoided (p. 179). In these situations, greater blame is attributed to the organization and these crises types are stated to have a strong crisis responsibility (p. 179).

However, Coombs seems to presume that involved parties after a crisis are either responsible or not. Assuming single responsibility, SCCT does not take into account the idea that responsibility can be shared between organizations and multiple stakeholders could have played a crucial role in creating a crisis. Yet, Conrad, Baker, Cudahy and Willyard (2010) seem to pay more attention to the interaction between involved organizations as they illustrate the complications of crisis management and crisis responses in connected organizations. In two case studies, they show how an organization's stance and rhetoric (crisis response) has changed because of that of another involved organization. They thereby illustrate how reactions of one stakeholder influence another stakeholder. In the view of Conrad et al. (2010), selecting the best crisis response strategy is not only dependent on the extent to which an organization is held accountable for a crisis. According to these scholars, therefore the credibility of a response strategy is partly determined by the strategies that other involved parties have used.

In addition to crisis type, another factor that affects attribution of responsibility is the public's reaction to an event because of how it has been framed in news coverage. The public does not perceive the objective facts of a crisis event, but they perceive it the way the media has constructed the story (Cho & Gower, 2006, p. 420). Cho and Gower (2006) argue that both crisis type and public emotional response abetted or exaggerated by news coverage significantly impact the public's evaluation of blame or responsibility. In their study, they found that emotional response is not a factor in attributing responsibility or blaming a company when a crisis type is an accident, but when people are exposed to a company's act

that was intentional or preventable, "the level of emotional response to the victims does contribute to assigning blame and responsibility to the company" (p. 420) Furthermore, Rickard (2014) adds that attribution of responsibility of a given event is based on "two factors: its *controllability*: the extent to which the cause is perceived to be under personal or situational control, and its *stability*: the extent to which the cause is perceived to vary over time" (Rickard, 2014, p. 514). In his study (2014) he finds that variations in attribution by risk perception, respondent attribute and experience-related variables are "instructive from a practical perspective in that they reinforce the idea that communication to publics should not be envisioned as 'one-size-fits-all' (p. 514).

The level of threat presented by the crisis informs the selection of crisis response strategies. Taking into account the role of victims in the crisis and the extent to which an organization takes responsibility for the crisis, Coombs divided and grouped crisis response strategies in SCCT into three primary strategies: *deny*, *diminish*, and *rebuild*, and one supplemental: *reinforce*. As the threat of a crisis increases, progressively more accommodative strategies should be utilized (Coombs & Holladay, 2011, p. 40). *Deny strategies* "attempt to prove the organization had no responsibility for the crisis" and tries to show that someone else was responsible for the event or it did not even happen (p. 40). *Diminish strategies* seek to reduce the perceived seriousness of the crisis or to minimize the organization's crisis responsibility (p. 40). *Rebuild* or *Deal strategies* are an acceptation frame in which the organization chooses to accept their role and responsibility in the crisis and will take to caring for victims (p. 40).

Furthermore, Coombs (2007) proposes ethical responsibilities that should be adhered to in a crisis response. If these responsibilities are taking into account, this contributes to protecting reputation as well. The first priority in a crisis should be to protect stakeholders from harm (Coombs, 2007, p. 165). First, stakeholders should be instructed with information on what to do to protect themselves from the physical threat of a crisis. This could be warning customers not to eat contaminated food, or to tell people to seek shelter when a toxic chemical has been released in an area. Information also needs to be adapted, which means keeping the public informed on what is happening. Moreover, stakeholders want to know what corrective actions are being taken: what is being done to protect them from similar crisis in the future (p. 165). Finally, stakeholders expect an expression of concern and it is recommended organizations express this towards victims, keeping in mind it is not the same as an admission of guilt (p. 165).

What is more, it has been argued that inadequate crisis communication can actually cause a double crisis (Johansen & Frandsen, 2016). A double crisis is 'a crisis where a communication crisis overlaps the original crisis in so far as the organization is not able to manage the communication processes that should contribute to the handling of the original crisis' (p. 38). When a crisis is handled wrong, any crisis has the possibility to turn into a double crisis. In this event, an organization has to deal with two crises at once, although attention usually shifts more to the second crisis than the original one (Fransen & Johansen, 2016, p. 39). The second crisis can do additional damage to an organization as it is often a communication crisis caused by "poorly executed communication, a lack of communication, or even wrongful communication (such as lying)" (p. 39). This stresses the need for adequate crisis communication even more, as wrongful handling of the original crisis can create a second crisis and cause more damage to an organization.

2.7 Image Repair Theory

An important framework that laid the groundwork for SCCT and in which reputational threat is a cornerstone, is Image Restoration Theory (IRT) by Benoit (1997). In this discourse, image repair messages focus on repairing reputation of an individual or organization. Because face, image or reputation are important to organizations, they are motivated to take action to protect this when it is being threatened, and this can be done through multiple strategies. In IRT, Benoit states it is not about the question of an organization's responsibility, but rather if the external world attributes responsibility to the organization. It is therefore more about the 'perception of responsibility' (Benoit, 1997). It can be assumed that the damage to the organization's reputation is greater when the offense was more serious, the action more vile, the effects more negative and widespread, and the amount of people harmed by it higher (Benoit, 2015, p. 22). Moreover, the accused must be held responsible for the offensive act by the relevant public (p. 21). Again, perception is a crucial element here: it is not about whether the accused *in fact* caused the damage, but rather whether the relevant public believes (perceives) the accused is to blame for the reprehensible act (p. 21). For image repair to appear necessary, it is necessary that the organization perceives the audience to blame them for the action. Additionally, the organization's perceptions of the audience's thoughts about blame also influence the development of the image repair message (p. 21). In turn, the audience's perceptions of blame influences reception or effectiveness of the image repair effort (p. 21). Publics tend to hold the organization more accountable for the effects they intended and less responsible for effects that were unintended or unexpected (p. 22). It can

therefore be assumed that the organization's reputation will suffer "in proportion to the extent to which they are individually held responsible for the undesirable action (including the extent to which they are believed to have intended the action and its consequences)" (p. 22). Hence, the offensive act becomes a threat when the organization is being accused to be responsible for the events. Benoit claims there is no reputational threat "if there is no offensive act or no accusations of responsibility for the offensive act" (Coombs & Holladay, 2011, p. 31). IRT consists of five groups of strategies to respond to accusations, which are similar to SCCT's strategies. The strategies described in IRT are: denial, evading responsibility, reducing offensiveness (justifying the events), corrective actions (taking compensating measures to relieve suffering), and mortification (admitting mistakes and apologizing) (Benoit, 1997, p. 178). Altogether, the 14 IRT crisis response strategies are as follows:

Denial
• Simple Denial: did not do it
• Shift the Blame: blame some one or thing other than the organization

Evading responsibility
• Provocation: response to some one else's actions
• Defeasibility: lack of information about or control over the situation
• Accidental: did not mean for it to happen
• Good intentions: actor meant well

Reducing offensiveness
• Bolstering: remind of the actor's positive qualities
• Minimize offensiveness of the act: claim little damage from the crisis
• Differentiation: compare act to similar ones
• Transcendence: place act in a different context
• Attack Accuser: challenge those who say there is a crisis
• Compensation: offer money or goods

Corrective Action
• restore situation to pre-act status and/or promise change and prevent
a repeat of the act

Mortification
• ask for forgiveness; admit guilt and express regret

(Benoit, 1997, p. 179).

Although IRT is an effective framework for selecting response strategies aimed at protecting reputation, this thesis will continue with SCCT using it as a basis for the process of data coding. This is because in IRT, the accused must be held responsible for the offensive act by the public, which was not yet the case in the first crash. In addition, SCCT was chosen since this approach is more audience-oriented. Still, IRT is a valuable theory to take into account as the line of reasoning can be useful to keep in mind when answering the research question. Overall, the important argument from IRT that pressure on an organization seems to increase when it is seen as offender instead of victim, will be taken into account throughout the analysis. Furthermore, IRT contains some aspects that are not included in SCCT. Even though crisis response strategies in SCCT and IRT are fairly similar, an aspect that is included in IRT but lacks in SCCT is the strategy of taking *corrective action*. In SCCT this is included as adjusting information, not as a strategy to improve image. However, this appears to be a strategy that is often used by organization as measures to relieve suffering of stakeholders and to improve perceptions about the organization itself, and therefore will be taken with as a tool for analysis in the research.

2.8 Conclusions

Taking into account the existing literature, it has become clear that an organization's reputation is a valued resource that can be threatened by crisis. The amount of damage that will be inflicted upon the organization as a consequence of the crisis seems to be dependent on pre-crisis reputation. Edwards and Smith (1996) have come up with the disconfirmation model which could be one of the explanations for the effect of initial reputation, which holds that when someone receives information that deviates from the existing expectation or belief, this information will be weakened to meet the existing attitude related to a situation. Otherwise, Klein and Dawar (2004) suggest the *halo effect* can act as a sort of shield in reflecting negative fallout and the attribution of responsibility for a crisis as an organization's prior reputation was so positive it can diminish future damage.

The dominant crisis communication theory to address and mitigate reputational damage, holds that communication affects people's perception in a crisis (Coombs, 2002). The SCCT model was created as a theory-based system for matching crisis response strategies to the crisis situation in order to best preserve the organizational reputation. SCCT maps out two factors that intensify reputational threat from the crisis and alter attributions of crisis responsibility: *crisis history* and *prior reputation*. Furthermore, crisis type informs the selection of crisis response strategy and in this assessment, severity and performance history

are two factors that play a role. Crisis type and crisis history are mentioned to be an important factor that has an effect on an organization's reputation. However a gap is identified here, as in what way crisis history influences an organization's reputation remains underexplored.

Though the SCCT model suggests organizations can anticipate crises by means of crisis communication plans and mitigate the negative fallout of a crisis, it has its shortcomings as it does not elaborate on the role of crisis history. The framework does not take into account the possibility of an organization experiencing the same crisis twice in a short amount of time. However, more attention is being paid to the aspect of time in more recent literature. Klein and Eckhaus (2017) have examined sensemaking in organizations and argue that we should focus on how crisis management groups engage in sensemaking when trying to clarify the reality of a developing or ongoing crisis. Organizations might need to way weigh short-term benefits versus long-term gains in the timing of their response (Claeys & Coombs, 2019) when it comes to reputational damage, though they may be tempted to respond immediately to allegations of crisis responsibility. This seems especially important for an organization who finds itself in the same crisis for a second time in a short amount of time. Whatever they have communicated in the first crisis, might backfire when it appears to be untrue or inapplicable in the second crisis because of new information having become available.

Based on this, the question arises if the SCCT model is sufficient for a situation where an organization ends up in the same crisis twice. An unexplored area remains how crisis history has an effect on the credibility of crisis response strategies when an organization is in a current crisis because of the same events as a past crisis. Jong (2019) has also stated how Coombs assumes that "the cards have already been dealt" (p. 120) and the responsibility for crisis events is clear, even though in the investigation phase responsibility is still an uncertain factor. This applies to the chosen case study of the Boeing crisis in this research, as causes and responsibility for the first plane crash had not yet been established, when the second plane crash happened and the investigations were still ongoing. Jong (2019) argues that the possible reassignment of responsibility for a crisis "complicates the suitable choice of an appropriate crisis response strategy that is ultimately intended to optimize reputational protection" (p. 1). A suggestion is made to use the option of 'acknowledge and await' as a response strategy that can be used when organizations are in a situation where the outcomes of an investigation are unknown, in which organizations respond with care and refrain from jumping to conclusions before outcomes of an investigation are known. This can be taken into account in the assessment of Boeing's use of crisis response strategies, to see if initial strategies used in the

first case have backfired when more information became available and the situation had changed.

The literature review on crisis communication in this section confirms that more research is needed on the topic of crisis history and how that affects an organization's reputation. Regarding the reviewed literature and the gap that is identified within this body, the Boeing crisis can be used to fill in this gap as it is a corporate crisis and comparative case study on the impact on the reputation of a company after it was faced with two crises in a relatively short period of time. The first plane crash will serve as the crisis history of the second plane crash that occurred only five months later, while the investigation from the first crisis was still ongoing. By looking at differences between stakeholder perceptions of Boeing's used crisis response strategies in the first case and the second case, the role of crisis history in the impact on a company's reputation can be explored, therefore adding to the body of literature in this field. SCCT will be taken as a basis in creating a framework of analysis in the form of a codebook, and the applicability of the 'acknowledge and await' option will be addressed in this specific situation.

3. Research Design and Methodology

3.1 Case Study Design

The Situational Crisis Communication Theory provides a set of factors to explain the use of certain crisis response strategies. However, there is no one way how crisis communication works but it is rather context specific. SCCT presents the conditions that are relevant to the process and how they are expected to interact with each other, but it is unknown how they act in a context where an organization experiences the same crisis twice in a short amount of time. There is only a theoretical body of knowledge that presents a set of conditions that are expected to be of influence on each other and will generate a certain outcome. To test what the role of crisis history is when stakeholders perceive crisis communication of an organization in the same crisis for a second time, a specific situation needs to be looked at in depth. A case study is therefore a valid design as a case study is an "empirical examination of real-world phenomenon within its naturally occurring context, without directly manipulating either the phenomenon or the context" (Kaarbo & Beasley, 1999, p. 372). In order to understand complex social phenomena, this method allows for a deep and narrow investigation of one particular instance. By using a case or multiple cases, investigators "retain the holistic and meaningful characteristics of real-life events" (Yin, 2002, p. 2), which in this case are the two plane crashes from the same model by the Boeing company, and the way in which their crisis communication was perceived. Furthermore, it focuses on "real events in their real life context", combines "multiple sources of information and multiple viewpoints", is "detailed and descriptive" and offers a "holistic view, exploring relationships and connections" (Daymon and Hollaway, 2002, p. 106-107). The Boeing crisis as case study focuses on these recent crisis events that affected multiple countries, organizations, and groups of people, thereby also exploring relationships and connections. Multiple viewpoints are provided as various stakeholders and their different perceptions are analyzed. The essence of a case study is "the central tendency among all types of case study, in that it tries to illuminate a decision or set of decisions: why they were taken, how they were implemented, and with what result" (Schramm, 1971). In the 737 MAX crisis, Boeing's use of crisis response strategies will be showed as well as with what result, by looking at stakeholder perceptions.

3.2 Content Analysis

In qualitative research, content analysis is a widely used technique. Content analysis "classifies textual material, reducing it to more relevant, manageable bits of data" (Weber, 1990, p. 5). As the technique has been defined as a systematic and replicable way to compress many words of text into fewer content categories based on explicit rules of coding, the technique is indispensable for making sense of for example official publications, diplomatic messages, political speeches and newspaper articles. Content analysis is a research method "that uses a set of procedures to make valid inferences from text" (Weber, 1990, p. 9). These inferences are about the message itself, the sender of the message, or the audience of the message. In this case, statements by Boeing in official press releases on their website will be used and inferences will be made about the message itself. Furthermore, stakeholder reactions will be derived from newspaper articles and inferences will again be made about the message itself. The goal of content analysis is to systematically examine communicative material (originally from the mass media in particular) (Flick, von Kardoff, Steinke, 2004, p. 266). The many words of the text that is being analyzed, will be classified or coded into fewer content categories, which consist of one, several or many words (Weber, 1990, p. 12). As there is no simple or right way to do content analysis, the code book is created to fit the research problem and question.

According to Krippendorff (2018), every content analysis must address the following six questions, which will be defined in the paragraph on data collection.

1) Which data are analyzed?

2) How are they defined?

3) What is the population from which they are drawn?

4) What is the context relative to which the data are analyzed?

5) What are the boundaries of the analysis?

6) What is the target of the inferences?

These elements will therefore be addressed in the subchapter Data collection. In order to allow for replication, the technique can only be applied to data that are durable in nature (Stemler, 2014, p. 1). For that reason, the analysis consists of data derived from the New York Times archive, and from the Boeing 'media newsroom' on their website as these data are durable and available to anyone.

3.3 Case selection

The two Boeing 737 MAX airplane crashes were selected as comparative cases because they serve as an example for an organization that experiences the same crisis events twice in a short amount of time. This allows the researcher to investigate, while all other variables are the same in both cases, how the way stakeholders perceive crisis response strategies of an organization affect its reputation, when the crisis history has changed. Furthermore, these crises were chosen for the comparative case study because of the actuality, the element of physical and emotional damage as well as to the organization's production, profit and image. It received widespread media attention on a national and international level, and included various involved actors who communicated on the situation, which makes for a richness in data. Many stakeholders are involved in responding on this crisis as they all have their own roles, expectations and interests in this field of influence. The communication field is played out at the intersection of commercial and political sectors. This allows for a dynamic and complex situation and therefore a rich collection of data to analyze how those and the elements mentioned in Coombs's SCCT model are of influence on each other in this situation.

3.4 Case description

On 29 October 2018, Lion Air flight 610 took off from Jakarta. It never reached its destination Pangkal Pinang, situated on the Indonesian island north of Jakarta. Twelve minutes after takeoff, the plane crashed into the Java Sea, killing all passengers and crew. Only five months later, on 10 March 2019 Ethiopian Airlines flight 302 took off from Addis Ababa, on its way to Nairobi. This aircraft crashed six minutes after takeoff near the town of Bishoftu, again costing the lives of all passengers. The airplanes were Boeing's 737 MAX model which is a variant of the best-selling aircraft in history (Zhang, 2019). This version of Boeing's 737 MAX fleet was rushed out after its competitor Airbus announced to make a new fuel-efficient and cost-effective airplane. For decades, the Boeing company has been the premier manufacturer of commercial jetliners and today, it manufactures the 737, 747, 767, 777 and 787 families of airplanes and the Boeing Business Jet range (Newburger, 2019). New product development efforts include the Boeing 737 MAX, which was launched August 30, 2011 (Siegel, 2019). The first flight of a 737 MAX was on January 29 in 2016. In May that year, Boeing promised to accelerate delivery of the first 737 MAX by several months, moving it to the first half of 2017 (Siegel, 2019). Airbus had delivered the first of its bestselling new airplane model three months earlier. On March 9, 2017, Boeing announced that the FAA had certified the aircraft. About two months later, the first 737 MAX was delivered to Malindo

Air, a subsidiary of Lion Air (Siegel, 2019). After 6 months of the 737 MAX being in service, the first flight with this airplane model crashed.

Both crashes are currently still under investigation, but preliminary findings showed that the same errors were occurring to the pilots in the cockpits. They both experienced the nose of the plane going down and struggling to regain control of the aircraft. Boeing used a flight security system centered around one sensor with a history of failures. This automated system, known as the MCAS (Maneuvering Characteristics Augmentation System), reports when an airplane is stalling as the sensors read how much the plane's nose is pointing up or down relative to oncoming airflow (Newburger, 2019). Consequently, if it reads the airplane is stalling it reacts by pointing the aircraft's nose down so that it can gain enough speed to fly safely. However, in both crashes, it was falsely reported that the airplanes were stalling and the consecutive action of pointing the aircraft's nose down actually led them to crash. Preliminary findings from investigations by Lion Air and Ethiopian Airlines suspect that scenario started a chain of events that led to the crashes.

In the first case, focus is more on the Indonesian aviation sector which has a negative prior reputation as it carries a troubling safety record. In the course of time, questions arise whether the responsibility lies with the pilots for not following the right procedures, if it lies with Boeing for installing a faulty flight security system, or with the FAA as regulators for approving the system. Literature leads us to believe that crisis history will amplify negative reputational fallout. This will be tested by comparing stakeholder reactions after the first crash – which serves a crisis history of the second crash – to stakeholder perceptions after the second crash, to find out how credible and effective Boeing's communication strategies were found and what this means for their reputation.

3.4.1. Active stakeholders in the cases

The Boeing crisis included many stakeholders who were in some way involved in the crisis, be it more on the 'affected' side or more on the 'responsible' side of the spectrum. As these stakeholders have their own roles and expectations, they all communicated in their own way during this crisis based on what their perceptions and opinions were. To decide on which stakeholders to include in the analysis, what has been looked at is which stakeholder groups communicated in the first crash *as well* as in the second crash, and which stakeholders were new in communicating after the second crash. This means the dominant stakeholder groups that were selected to analyze communication from after the first crash are the same in both

cases, but the amount of stakeholder groups who communicated increased after the second crash.

This leaves the following stakeholders after the first crash:

1) Boeing

2) Pilots

3) relatives of victims of Lion Air

4) Federal Aviation Administration (FAA)

5) Investigators

These include investigators from the Indonesian safety committee and American investigators whose tasks were to find out the cause of the crash.

6) Aviation experts

These include (former) engineers, analysts at renowned companies or institutes and professors at respected universities who were external to the investigations but possess either experience or expertise on the topic.

7) Airlines that fly the 737 MAX

In the first case this only includes communication from Lion Air as an airline that flies the model.

Sakeholders for analysis of communication after the second crash are:

1) Boeing

2) Pilots

3) relatives of victims of Ethiopian Airlines

4) relatives of victims of Lion Air

5) Investigators

These include investigators from the Indonesian investigation committee, Ethiopian investigation committee as well as American investigators. These investigated the cause of the crash and in the second case, the certification process of the plane as well.

6) Aviation experts

These include (former) engineers, analysts at renowned companies or institutes and professors at respected universities who were external to the investigations but possess either experience or expertise on the topic. The experts who communicated varied in both crashes, and some communicated multiple times.

7) Airlines that fly the 737 MAX

In the second case this stakeholder group has grown, as now not only the airlines of the crashed flights communicated, but also other international as well as American airlines.

8) Federal Aviation Administration (FAA)

9) the United States

10) European Union

11) China

12) Passengers

13) Shareholders

The perceptions of these stakeholders will be categorized into being negative, neutral or positive towards Boeing. The reaction per stakeholder will then be interpreted in the last column, explaining why the reaction was found negative, neutral or positive. Finally, in the discussion, it will be discussed what these results mean and what the motivations behind the perceptions could be.

3.5 Data Collection and Data Analysis

Within the two case studies, the method of content analysis is applied. In order to categorize Boeing's crisis communication into crisis response strategies, official statements were derived as primary text from the Boeing 'newsroom' on their official website. To analyze stakeholder reactions and opinions, newspaper articles from the New York Times were retrieved from the New York Times archive. The New York Times was chosen as a medium because it reports on many worldwide issues and reading these articles involves no translating. The process of translation would have been needed if articles were selected from the national newspaper of different stakeholders. When reading a text in a different language, the content first has to be changed into a language that the researcher is fluent in and the risk of this is that some meaning will be 'lost in translation' and will be interpreted in some way that generates bias and a different outcome.

        In the selection, articles which included content on stakeholder reactions in the 737 MAX crisis were searched by filling in the words "Boeing 737 MAX", "Lion Air", "Ethiopian Airlines", "FAA Boeing", "United States", "European Union", and "China". For case I, a timeframe was chosen between 29 October 2018 and 29 November 2018. For case II, a timeframe was chosen between 10 March 2019 and 10 April 2019. As such, only crisis responses during four consecutive weeks after each airplane crash were included. This timeframe includes the breaking of the accidents, communication of involved stakeholders and the question of their responsibility in the media, as well as the reactions of relatives of

victims during the time the crisis unfolded. Using these search terms and demarcations, 294 articles in total were collected. Of those, 48 articles involved stakeholder reactions which could be used for analysis. In addition, 13 of Boeing's official press releases were used, which were all statements made in the chosen timeframe.

Boeing's crisis communication is processed and analyzed using a codebook which includes response strategies (derived from SCCT). Stakeholders opinions or perceptions towards Boeing that were reported on in these NYT articles were also categorized into being 'negative', 'neutral' or 'positive'. The results and interpretations were systematically reflected in a table. To assess the role of crisis history in stakeholder perceptions of Boeing's crisis response strategies, the reactions of stakeholders are coded and categorized and will serve to indicate if there were differences between the opinions and perceptions of those stakeholders who were active in both cases. After stating the results, these will be discussed to reflect on the opinions and perceptions of stakeholders towards Boeing, what differences were found within perceptions in the two cases of crashed airplanes and how crisis history has played a role in this. This is necessary to assess the impact on Boeing's reputation.

Expectations based on the theoretical framework are formed in the following hypotheses:

H1: If crisis history plays a role in stakeholders' perception of crisis response strategies, then the same group of stakeholders will respond differently from case I in case II.

H2: If crisis history plays a role in stakeholders' perception of crisis response strategies, the amount of stakeholders communicating will increase in case II.

H3: If crisis history plays a role in stakeholders' perception of crisis response strategies, then Boeing will be perceived more negatively in case II.

3.6 Operationalization (codebook)

Adhering to literature in the theoretical framework, a codebook was created in order to analyze crisis response messages. The categories used to classify messages are derived from the Situational Crisis Communication Theory (SCCT) by Coombs (2007). These crisis response strategies include: *deny*, *diminish*, *rebuild*, and *reinforce*. *Deny* strategies attempt to deny there is a problem or to state the organization had no responsibility for the crisis. *Diminish* strategies seek to reduce the offensiveness of the act or to minimize the organization's crisis responsibility. *Rebuild* strategies are accommodative and tend to be reconciling or harmonizing to improve the public's perception of the organization. *Reinforce* strategies are supplementary and aimed at adding positive information about the organization.

This codebook categorizes the four crisis response strategy groups by coupling them with indicators to be able to identify which strategy is used in the content that was analyzed.

Code	Strategy	Definition	Indicators
1	Deny	The organization *denies* there is a problem, or denies its own responsibility and *shifts the blame* by pointing to the role of another actor in being responsible for the offensive act.	• Signals where the organization denies the occurrence of the offensive act • Statements in which the organization tries to shift responsibility by commenting on the role of another organization
2	Diminish	The organization tries to *minimize their crisis responsibility* or *reduce offensiveness* of the act	• Statements in which the act is placed in a broader context to provide a less offensive frame of reference • Statements in which the organization tries to reduce their own role in the crisis by pointing to a factor beyond their control that caused the offensive act • Statements in which the organization tries to diminish the impact of the act for all of the involved
3	Rebuild	The organization tries to *improve the public's perception* of them	• Statements in which the organization shows concern, or compassion for the affected • Statements in which the organization apologizes for the act • Statements in which the organization offers compensation for victims • Statements in which the organization takes action to correct the problem and/or make changes to prevent the offensive act from reoccurring
4	Reinforce	The organization adds *positive information about themselves*	• Statements in which the organization praises others (ingratiation) • Statements in which the organization reminds the audience of positive traits and actions performed by the organization (bolstering) • Statements in which the organization refers to the expertise of their professionals in order to strengthen and justify credibility of the steps being taken

First, some key moments in which Boeing used crisis responses will be coded and classified into a crisis response strategy. Then, on the basis of news reporting on stakeholders' reactions, stakeholders' opinions and perceptions will be coded by identifying the organization, reflecting their reaction in a condensed meaning unit, and lastly classifying their opinion or perception in a negative, balanced or positive way. In the first part, this is done in a cable containing responses chronologically after Boeing's statements on crash I, and in the second part the same is done for responses after crash II. The codebook for this will look like the following, using an example.

Stakeholder	Reaction	Negative/Neutral/Positive	Interpretation of reaction
Pilots	"Boeing inadequately informed us on MCAS"	Negative	…

The part to be analyzed is the whole document, in this case Boeing press releases and newspaper articles. The unit of analysis is sentences, which is an appropriate choice to systematically go through all the relevant statements in order to examine the underlying strategy used or the underlying opinion or perception reflected (Krippendorf, 2018). The selected documents for Boeing's crisis communication are relatively short in length and include no natural units that can be derived from the documents such as sub-sections. Therefore, it was decided a smaller unit of analysis will be used and sentences are analyzed. In addition, from the newspaper articles only the sentences that include stakeholders reactions are analyzed. After interpreting the data with the codebook, the results section will present the findings and elaborate on the differences between perceptions and responses in crash I and crash II and which conclusions can be derived from these observations.

4. Results and Analysis

The following chapter is divided into two parts which contain the analyses of crisis communication and stakeholder perceptions after the plane crashes. The tables contain official Boeing statements coded into crisis response strategies, and stakeholder reactions on the crisis events coded into being negative, neutral, or positive towards Boeing. Interpretations are provided in the last column in each table, and findings will be discussed in the following section 'Discussion'.

4.1 CRASH I: Lion Air Flight 610

29/10/2018: Boeing Statement Issued October 29, 2018

Organization	Statement in condensed unit	Code	Interpretation of strategy
Boeing	"the Boeing company is deeply saddened by the loss of Lion Air Flight JT 610"	3	*Rebuild*: showing they are moved by the accidents
	"We extend our heartfelt sympathies"	3	*Rebuild*: showing concern for relatives
	"Boeing is providing technical assistance at the request and under the direction of government authorities investigating the accident"	4	*Reinforce*: pointing towards their positive action of providing technical assistance and cooperating with the investigation

Stakeholder	Reaction in condensed unit	Negative/neutral/positive	Interpretation of reaction
Lion Air (Edward Sirait, Lion Air's president director)	"The plane that crashed on Monday had experienced an unspecified technical problem during a flight the day before from the Indonesian resort island of Bali to Jakarta. He said the issue had been resolved "according to procedure". (Suhartono & Beech, 2018)	Neutral	The fact that there was a technical problem is mentioned but no responsibility is attributed, as the issue at that moment had been resolved.
Lion Air (Danang Mandala Prihantoro, a Lion Air official)	"The Boeing aircraft had been in service only since August. Lion Air is very concerned about this incident and will collaborate with relevant agencies and all parties". (Suhartono & Beech, 2018)	Neutral	The fact that the aircraft had only been in service for a short amount of time is stated, but no blame or critique is expressed.
Relative of victim Lion Air (Mr. Najib Fuquoni)	[at a news conference where relatives addressed questions to Indonesian officials] "We are the victims here. Imagine if you were in our position" (Suhartono & Beech, 2018)	Neutral	The relatives are angry towards the Indonesian officials because the narrative at that time was that Lion Air technicians had been negligent.
Relative of victim Lion Air (Mr. Muhammad Bambang Sukandar)	"Lion Air technicians need to take full responsibility if it is proved they did not properly attend to technical issues following the jet's previous flight from Bali to Jakarta." (Suhartono & Beech, 2018)	Neutral	The focus is still on Lion Air in this phase of the crisis as not much was known yet on causes of the crash.
Investigator (Mr. Haryo Satmiko, deputy chief of Indonesia's National Transportation Safety Committee)	"The possibility that inaccurate readings fed into the MAX 8´s computerized system could make the plane enter a sudden, automatic descent, is something Boeing should reflect upon." (Beech & Bradsher, 2018)	Neutral	The possibility of Boeing's role being more prominent in this crisis than was thought the days before, is now being introduced which shifts away attention from the negative prior reputation of Indonesian airlines.

07/11/2018: Boeing Statement on Operations Manual Bulletin

Organization	Statement in condensed unit	Code	Interpretation of Strategy
Boeing	**"**Boeing is providing support and technical assistance to the Indonesian National Transportation Safety Committee and other government authorities responsible for the investigation into Lion Air flight 610" […] "The investigation into Lion Air flight 610 is ongoing and Boeing continues to cooperate fully and provide technical assistance at the request and under the direction of government authorities investigating the accident"	4	*Reinforce*: emphasizing positive actions as they are showing the public they are assisting authorities and cooperating with other parties
	"Whenever appropriate, Boeing, as part of its usual processes, issues bulletins or makes recommendations regarding the operation of its aircraft"	2	*Diminish:* diminishing their role in the problem as they state the company already had a bulletin with instructions on how to handle the aircraft as it is a standard procedure for the company, therewith implying that even though an error occurs in the system, pilots had information available on how to handle or correct it.
	"Boeing issued an Operations Manual Bulletin (OMB) directing operators to existing flight crew procedures to address circumstances where there is erroneous input from an AOA sensor"	3	*Rebuild:* taking action to remind operators of procedures to follow if a similar situation occurs

Stakeholder	Reaction in condensed unit	Negative/neutral/positive	Interpretation of reaction
FAA	"The Federal Aviation Administration of the United States reinforced the Boeing bulletin on Wednesday by issuing an "Emergency Airworthiness Directive" addressing the possibility of erroneous data from instruments on the plane that could cause it to pitch downward, "making the aircraft difficult to control." (Specia, 2018)	Positive	The FAA shows it is on the same line as Boeing in supporting them by reinforcing their bulletin.
Investigator (Soerjanto Tjahjono, head of Indonesian National Transportation Safety Committee)	"It is not fair to fault Boeing for a possible systemic problem with the Max 8" (Specia, 2018)	Positive	Focus is being put on the fact that a design flaw in the plane has not yet been established, as there is a possibility that the plane developed a problem after technicians on Bali changed something before the flight.
Indonesian aviation expert (Gerry Soejatman, frequently consulted and cited as a source, about the trend of industry, aviation, safety, and the plane crash, by a variety of local and international media)	"It's really hard to find some faults in testing, so it has happened that problems are only discovered after the plane is put into service. Sometimes weird things happen, and you just can't anticipate it." (Specia, 2018)	Neutral	A frame of the incident being "bad luck" is assumed, as it is stated some technical difficulties can be an unpredictable or unforeseeable.
Aviation expert (John Gadzinski, president of Four Winds Aerospace Safety Corporation)	"There's a one-in-a-million chance that an unknown failure mode that they absolutely couldn't imagine has reared its ugly head and is doing something unexpected. So that's a question that the active investigators and	Negative	He does not directly jump to conclusions, but points to the known potential for error when a new airplane with automated systems is introduced. Therefore the notion that "it is unfair to blame Boeing"

	Boeing should be asking now." (Specia, 2018)		is weakened, as he implies that Boeing could have been aware of the potential of an error.
FAA	"There were not enough differences between the 737 MAX and the prior iteration to require pilots to go through simulator training." (Specia, 2018)	Positive	The FAA sides with Boeing as this statement is in line with the statement Boeing has made which reduces offensiveness for Boeing.
Pilot (from Allied Pilots Association)	"The emergency system in question had not been included by Boeing in the standard operating manual. In addition, the flight checklist — which contains information for manually overriding the emergency system — was incorrect." (Beech et al., 2018)	Negative	Some blame is attributed to Boeing as the company has been inadequate in providing safety beforehand. They are responsible for including the emergency system in the manual and providing a flight checklist and failed to do so.
Pilot (from Allied Pilots Association)	"There's an enormous part of your brain that wants to trust what the airplane is telling you and to all of a sudden to be told, 'Wow, in this case, the airplane – which is the most advanced version of the most trusted airplane in the world – can't be trusted,' that's kind of a big deal. That's a huge deal." (Beech et al., 2018)	Negative	This pilot at American Airlines, refers to pilots being told "over the weekend" that the MCAS was added, to "enhance pitch characteristics during steep turns with elevated load factors and during flaps up flight at airspeeds approaching stall." Pilots therefore express their opinions that Boeing had not adequately informed airlines about the changes to the emergency system.
Investigator (Haryo Satmiko, deputy head of National Transportation Safety Committee)	"Boeing's manual was "incomplete" when it came to advising pilots on how to handle a situation in which false data is fed into the automatic anti-stall system." (Beech et al., 2018)	Negative	Boeing wrote in its advisory that pilots should follow their manual when confronted with an anomalous situation like this. Satmiko points to the fact that pilots could not have done that as Boeing did not adhere to their responsibility to provide them with that information.

Investigator (Soerjanto Tjahjono, head of Indonesia's National Transportation Safety Committee)	"Boeing's manual did not adequately describe how this automatic anti-stall system worked and what to do if it was set off incorrectly. The manual includes how to handle issues but not that specific combination. I don't know why it was not in the manual. Maybe Boeing never thought that this kind of problem would occur." (Beech et al., 2018)	Neutral	This reaction is mostly in line with what his deputy has said which is largely negative as they describe how Boeing's manual is incomplete and inadequate, however he applies some balance by suggesting Boeing just had not thought of the possibility of the problem occurring.
Pilot (Jon Weaks, president of Southwest Airlines Pilots Association)	"Any time a new system is introduced into an airplane, we are the people responsible for that airplane. We felt and we feel that we needed to know about [the addition of M.C.A.S.] and there's just no other way to say it." (Beech et al., 2018)	Negative	Boeing is held accountable for not informing the pilots adequately on the addition, which makes the pilots unable to fully manage the plane and passengers safely.

Organization	Statement in condensed unit	Code	Interpretation of Strategy
Boeing	"We are confident in the safety of the Boeing 737 MAX" (Glanz et al., 2018 November 16)	1	*Deny*: denial of the aircraft being unsafe because of a design flaw and error that causes the nose of the plane to point downwards in high speed
	"While we can't discuss specifics of an ongoing investigation, we have provided two updates to operators that re-emphasize existing operating procedures – the series of steps required – for these situations" (Glanz et al., 2018 November 16)	3	*Rebuild*: taking actions that should prevent a similar situation from happening again by providing new updates for operators in how to manage these situations.

Stakeholder	Reaction in condensed unit	Negative/neutral/positive	Interpretation of reaction
Lion Air (Former employees)	"Lion Air became adept at passing malfunctioning equipment from plane to plane	Neutral	Lion Air is under the loop here for having a role in the cause of the crash, as the

	rather than fixing problems" (Beech & Suhartono, 2018)		airline has a history of passing malfunctioning equipment
Lion Air (Edward Sirait, Lion Air Group's president director)	"The company does not cut corners or dissemble in logbooks. The company has twin priorities: growth and safety" (Beech & Suhartono, 2018)	Neutral	Lion Air reacts defensive on accusations of responsibility for causing the crash

Organization	Statement in condensed unit	Code	Interpretation of Strategy
Boeing	The proper steps for pulling out of an incorrect activation of the system were already in flight manuals, so there was no need to detail this specific system in the new 737 jet. (Glanz et al., 2018 November 27)	1	*Deny*: Boeing attempts to prove they had no responsibility in causing the crisis as they deny the fact that new and more elaborate information was needed on the new system.
Boeing	"The appropriate flight crew response to uncommanded trim, regardless of cause, is contained in existing procedures" (Glanz et al., 2018 November 27)	2	*Diminish*: the own role in the incident is diminished as they point to the flight crew being able to respond adequately to such a situation

Stakeholder	Reaction in condensed unit	Negative/neutral/positive	Interpretation of reaction
Investigator (Soerjanto Tjahjono, Indonesia's National Transportation Safety Committee)	"The replacement part was not new but was "serviceable" and it had a certification from the FAA of the United States". (Glanz et al., 2018 November 27)	Negative	Pointing to Boeing and FAA for expressing it was serviceable and certified and puts responsibility on them because the airline trusted Boeing's product to be safe for use.

4.2 CRASH II: Ethiopian Airlines Flight 302

10/03/2019: Boeing Statement on Ethiopian Airlines Flight 302

Organization	Statement in condensed unit	Code	Interpretation of Strategy
Boeing	"Boeing is deeply saddened to learn of the passing of the passengers and crew on Ethiopian Airlines Flight 302, a 737 MAX airplane."	3	*Rebuild:* Boeing shows regret for what has happened.
	"We extend our heartfelt sympathies to the families and loved ones of the passengers and crew onboard"	3	*Rebuild*: Boeing shows compassion towards relatives of victims
	"A Boeing technical team will be traveling to the crash site to provide technical assistance"	4	*Reinforce:* Boeing is reminding the public it is cooperating with the authorities and assisting in the investigation

Stakeholder	Reaction in condensed unit	Negative/neutral/positive	Interpretation of reaction
Aviation expert (Robert Stengel, professor of engineering and applied science at Princeton University)	"If you're simply looking at circumstantial evidence, that gives you a pause, doesn't it? That's not a deep technical observation – that's just human nature". (Ahmed et al., 2019)	Neutral	Although Boeing is not directly accused, the obvious similarities between the two crashes are addressed as well as how this is causing the public to connect the dots and to start distrusting Boeing.

Stakeholder	Reaction in condensed unit	Negative/neutral/positive	Interpretation of reaction
China	Order to national airlines to ground all of the Boeing 737 MAX aircrafts that they operate. (Bradsher, 2019)	Negative	This message gives off the signal that the aircrafts are rendered unsafe and is negative for Boeing as China is one of the biggest users of the Boeing jets.
Indonesia	Order to national airlines to ground Boeing 737 MAX (Bradsher, 2019)	Negative	Even though the investigation by Indonesian safety agencies is ongoing, the country has also decided to ground the aircraft which shows distrust in Boeing's model.
FAA	[In a "continued airworthiness notification"]: "The investigation has just begun and it does not have information to draw any conclusions or take any action from." (Ayene, 2019)	Positive	This message came after more than twelve countries already grounded the plane or closed their airspace to it. The FAA shows that up until now, unless proven otherwise, they consider the Max 8 safe to fly and they do not stand by the decision to ground the plane.
Ethiopian Airlines	"We have grounded all Boeing 737 MAX 8 which the airline was operating, as a precaution safety measure." (Reuters, 2019)	Neutral	The airline followed others in grounding the airplane as unrest is starting to unravel about the safety of the plane. The president of the airline however does bring the message with caution by mentioning it is a precautionary measure, since the cause of the crash has not yet been identified.
Passenger (Anna Winnett)	"I just cannot sit on a Boeing 737 MAX 8 with confidence" (Sims, 2019)	Negative	Distrust is growing among consumers.

Passenger (Anna Winnett)	"How could they say that a Boeing 737 MAX 8 has a great safety record when two brand-new planes have tragically crashes within five months of each other in a seemingly similar manner?" (Sims, 2019)	Negative	Boeing's messaging seems contradicting to the public and causes confusion and disbelief.
FAA	"If we identify an issue that affects safety, the FAA will take immediate and appropriate action" (Sims, 2019)	Positive	The FAA is cautious with the position it assumes about the plane because taking immediate action now would reflect badly on them as it would imply they had been passive in the first crash.
FAA	"External reports are drawing similarities between this accident and the Lion Air flight 610 accident. However, this investigation has just begun and to date we have not been provided data to draw any conclusions or take any actions." (Lu et al., 2019)	Positive	The FAA is siding with Boeing and diminishing their role in the accidents.They are being cautious not to make assumptions at this point.
Pilots (Sara Nelson)	"The entire world is looking at two catastrophic incidents that happened on the same aircraft type within five months of each other. Our system is so safe that these things don't happen today. That is why people are questioning what is going on here." (Lu et al., 2019)	Negative	With this message, the growing concern and doubt about the Boeing model is being expressed on behalf of "the people". By using words such as "the entire world" and "catastrophic incidents on the same aircraft type" the perceived gravity and negativity is emphasized.
Pilots (Rory Kay, also head of air safety at the Air Line Pilots Association)	"We're very concerned about why two brand-new aircraft suddenly pitched over and nosed into the ground. This is not the dawn of aviation. We've evolved, planes have evolved" (Lu et al., 2019)	Negative	Pilots are expressing their distrust in the Boeing model as they feel planes in the present should not contain such errors of such proportion

Pilots (Dennis Tajer, also spokesman for the Allied Pilots Association)	"The Lion Air crash hurt the reputation of the 737 MAX in the eyes of some of my members and the Ethiopian accidents has prompted new questions for us. I think there needs to be further review into the certification process. Everybody should be looking into this" (Lu et al., 2019)	Negative	This statement reflects pilots' perception of how the aircraft has already suffered from reputational damage for them and how this new incident is adding to it. He is also exerting pressure towards Boeing and FAA to review the certification process to give more clarity.

11/03/2019: Boeing Statement on 737 MAX Software Enhancement

Organization	Statement in condensed unit	Code	Interpretation of Strategy
Boeing	"The Boeing company is deeply saddened by the loss of Lion Air Flight 610, which has weighed heavily on the entire Boeing team, and we extend our heartfelt condolences and sympathies to the families and loved ones of those onboard"	3	*Rebuild*: Boeing shows emotion and concern for relatives of victims
	"safety is a core value" "the safety of our airplanes, our customers' passengers and their crews is always our top priority"	4	*Reinforce:* Boeing tries to remind the audience of their positive traits by stressing how important safety is to the company.
	"The 737 MAX is a safe airplane"	1	*Deny:* they deny unsafety of the airplane, even though investigation so far has indicated their system containing a dangerous error
	"designed, built and supported by our skilled employees who approach their work with the utmost integrity"	4	*Reinforce:* Boeing refers to the expertise of their professionals in order to strengthen their position
	"Boeing has been developing a flight control software enhancement for the 737 MAX, designed to make an already safe aircraft even safer"	3	*Rebuild*: Boeing takes action to correct and enhance the software to prevent the possibility from it being a factor in an

			incident again and showing the public they are working on it.
	"Boeing's 737 MAX Flight Crew Operations Manual (FCOM) already outlines an existing procedure to safely handle the unlikely event of erroneous data coming from an angle of attack (AOA) sensor"	2	*Diminish*: Boeing keeps up the notion that there was already an existing safety procedure that pilots could have followed, thereby diminishing their own responsibility. Furthermore, using the choice of words of 'the unlikely event' they diminish the idea of the accident being preventable
	"The pilot will always be able to override the flight control law using electric trim or manual trim".	2	*Diminish*: Boeing diminishes their own role by pointing towards the role of the pilots.
	"we would like to express our deepest condolences to those who lost loved ones on Ethiopian Airlines Flight 302"	3	*Rebuild*: Boeing shows emotion and concern for relatives of victims

Stakeholder	Reaction in condensed unit	Negative/neutral/positive	Interpretation of reaction
European Union	Suspension of all flight operations of the Boeing 737 MAX model, performed by third-country operators into, within or out of the E.U. (The New York Times, 2019 March 12)	Negative	This decision not only disrupts travel through the whole of Europe and beyond, but may also cause more unrest or distrust towards Boeing. The swift actions by authorities around the world were driven in part by concerns about a connection to a similar disaster involving a Max 8 in Indonesia last October.

FAA (Daniel K. Elwell, acting administrator)	"The plane is considered safe and there is no basis to order grounding the aircraft. Nor have other civil aviation authorities provided data to us that would warrant action." (The New York Times, 2019 March 12)	Positive	FAA remains of the opinion the plane is safe and disagrees with decisions of grounding the aircraft.
Southwest Airlines	"We don't have any changes planned" (The New York Times, 2019 March 12)	Positive	Together with American airlines, these are the only airlines in the U.S. that fly the Boeing 737 MAX 8 so they stand behind a brand of their own country which is important to the national economy. They are most likely also influenced by the FAA's position who reiterates the plane is safe and there is no basis to ground the plane.
American Airlines	"We have full confidence in the aircraft" (The New York Times, 2019 March 12)	Positive	Together with Southwest airlines, these are the only airlines in the U.S. that fly the Boeing 737 MAX 8 so they stand behind a brand of their own country which is important to the national economy. They are most likely also influenced by the FAA's position who reiterates the plane is safe and there is no basis to ground the plane.
President Trump	[after telephone conversation with chief executive of Boeing, who stresses to him that the plane is safe] made a case that the 737 MAX 8 should not be grounded in the U.S. (The New York Times, 2019 March 12)	Positive	The president still wants to keep the plane in use, which seems to be because Boeing officials have lobbying power in the US government.

Three Senators (Elizabeth Warren, Mitt Romney, Ted Cruz)	Called on the FAA to ground the aircraft while the cause of the Ethiopian crash is still being investigated. (The New York Times, 2019 March 12)	Negative	Other political figures want to ground the aircraft out of safety and call on FAA as the agency or Boeing have not made that decision themselves.

12/03/2019: Boeing Statement on 737 MAX Operation

Organization	Statement in condensed unit	Code	Interpretation of Strategy
Boeing	"We have full confidence in the safety of the 737 MAX"	1	*Deny*: this statement denies the aircraft is unsafe or there is a design flaw that was a cause in the incident
Boeing	"We understand that regulatory agencies and customers have made decisions that they believe are most appropriate for their home markets"	4	*Reinforce*: ingratiation is expressed towards stakeholders in order to construct a positive perception of the company, however the way the sentence is structured by choosing the words "they believe are most appropriate for their markets", ignores the idea that these decisions are based on safety of human lives, and reflects how Boeing has more eye for the economic aspect.

Stakeholder	Reaction in condensed unit	Negative/neutral/positive	Interpretation of reaction
European Union	Suspension of all flight operations of the Boeing 737 MAX model, performed by third-country operators into, within or out of the E.U. (Countess, 2019)	Negative	This decision not only disrupts travel through the whole of Europe and beyond, but may also cause more unrest or distrust towards Boeing. The swift actions by authorities around the world were driven in part by concerns about a connection to a similar disaster involving a Max 8 in Indonesia last October.
President Trump	"We are going to be issuing an emergency prohibition to ground all Boeing 737 MAX planes. Upon landing, all of these planes will be grounded. Pilots and airlines have been notified. The safety of American people and all people is our paramount concern." (Countess, 2019)	Negative	Although formulated neutrally, the decision to ground the plane is negative towards Boeing as it reflects the notion that the plane is unsafe, and it shows others are taking control.
President Trump	"Boeing is an incredible company, they are working very hard right now and hopefully they will very quickly come up with the answer, but until they do, the planes are grounded." (Countess, 2019)	Positive	This section of the statement shows praise towards Boeing for the hard work they do.
FAA	"The decision to temporarily ground the planes is based on new evidence collected at the site and analyzed today. This evidence, together with newly refined satellite data available to FAA this morning, led to this decision." (Countess, 2019)	Neutral	The FAA previously said there was no reason to ground the plane, however now they were pressured to take this decision because of findings from preliminary research.

Pilots	"I think it is unconscionable that a manufacturer, the F.A.A., and the airlines would have pilots flying an airplane without adequately training, or even providing available resources and sufficient documentation to understand the highly complex systems that differentiate this aircraft from prior models." (Countess, 2019)	Negative	The word "unconscionable" makes the perception negative, as well as the contrast between "or even providing *available resources* and *sufficient documentation*" and "to understand the *highly complex systems*". The pilots hold Boeing and the other parties responsible for the incidents as they are unable to handle such situations because of Boeing's inadequate actions.
Pilots	"I am left to wonder: what else don't I know? The Flight Manual is inadequate and almost criminally insufficient." (Countess, 2019)	Negative	Shows a loss of trust in Boeing, as the pilot starts to think there are more important matters he is not being informed of by Boeing. He also seems to find Boeing is to blame for the incidents and errors as he calls them "criminal".

13/03/2019: In Consultation with the FAA, NTSB and its Customers, Boeing Supports Action to Temporarily Ground 737 MAX Operations

Organization	Statement in condensed unit	Code	Interpretation of Strategy
Boeing	"Boeing continues to have full confidence in the safety of the 737 MAX"	1	*Deny*: denial of the aircraft being unsafe because of a design flaw and error that causes the nose of the plane to point downwards in high speed
	"However, […] Boeing has determined - out of an abundance of caution and in order to reassure the flying public of the aircraft's safety - to recommend to the FAA the temporary suspension of operations of the entire global fleet"	3	*Rebuild:* Boeing takes corrective action. However, as this decision comes after the decision of various countries over the world, and the motivation is phrased as "out of an abundance of caution" and

			"to reassure the flying public of the aircraft's safety", the company does not agree to something already being unsafe in their model, or agree to crisis responsibility. Furthermore, they make it seem like it is their decision here, whereas they did not actually have a choice anymore since many other countries and airlines had grounded the plane.
	"We are supporting this proactive step out of an abundance of caution"	2	*Diminish*: they again emphasize this step being taken out of an abundance of caution, not because they think it is unsafe.
	"We extend our deepest sympathies to the families and loved ones of those who have lost their lives in these two tragic accidents"	3	*Rebuild*: concern is expressed towards relatives of victims
	"Safety is a core value at Boeing for as long as we have been building airplanes; and it always will be. There is no greater priority for our company and our industry. We are doing everything we can to understand the cause of the accidents in partnership with the investigators, deploy safety enhancements and help ensure this does not happen again."	4	*Reinforce*: Boeing reminds the public of positive traits such as their values and priorities and of the actions being taken to ensure similar situations from occurring in the future.

Stakeholder	Reaction in condensed unit	Negative/neutral/positive	Interpretation of reaction
Aviation expert (Richard Aboulafia, Vice President of Analysis at Teal Group who edits their World Military and Civil Aircraft Briefing, a forecasting tool. A prominent aircraft industry analyst who regularly appears on American media outlets.)	"The narrative that's out there right now is that Boeing might have gotten favorable treatment from the FAA. That's not good." (Kitroeff, 2019)	Negative	When an agency of oversight becomes to close with the organization they are supposed to check or control, this gives the impression that organization has power or influence over the agency that could render a more favorable position for them and the actions they want to carry out. This reaction therefore reflects how the public is starting to distrust Boeing because it might have more power over the FAA and was therefore able to bring the aircraft to the market more quickly without the right certification procedure.
Shareholder (in an email to the New York Times)	"I am dismayed that Boeing has tarnished its reputation for excellence and safety in the name of corporate greed. […] Instead of being forthcoming and transparent, Boeing had to be dragged into doing something to fix the problem. When passengers' lives are at stake, that isn't good enough. Shame on Boeing." (The New York Times, 2019 March 14)	Negative	Boeing was late to take action itself and pressure by stakeholders had to be built up high before they actually started working on fixing the problem and this showed how they prioritized profit over human lives and safety.
Pilot (Michael Michaelis, top safety official at the American Airlines pilots union and a Boeing 737 captain)	"Boeing was going to have a software fix in the next five to six weeks. We told them 'Yeah, it can't drag out.' And well, here we are." (Kitroeff et al., 2019 March 14)	Negative	This statement has a sarcastic tone and reflects loss of trust in Boeing as it shows how the company does not follow up on what they promise.

Pilot (Michael Michaelis, top safety official at the American Airlines pilots union and a Boeing 737 captain)	"Such a single point of failure on a modern jet is rare and far riskier than having backup systems. A single point of failure on a significant system that points my nose towards the ground? Now that to me seems just a little bit over the line." (Nicas et al., 2019)	Negative	The pilot expresses the opinion that it was disproportionate and dangerous of Boeing to have the single point of failure on the system that could bring a plane towards the ground.
Pilots (at American Airlines and Southwest Airlines)	Have said they still generally felt comfortable flying the 737 MAX jets, in part because they are now aware of the automated system [which was only disclosed to pilots until after the Lion Air crash] (Nicas et al., 2019)	Positive	The only two American carriers that fly Boeing jets have uttered positive reactions, which can be economically motivated as them also deeming the aircraft unsafe might lead to a decrease in profit which would have more negative effects for the national economy.
Pilot (Tajer, American pilot union spokesman)	"The first thing we talked about was the break of trust. We called it disrespectful." (Kitroeff et al., 2019 March 16)	Negative	The pilots were not being fully informed about the new software, which made them lose their trust in the company.
Relative of victim (Mr. Seyoum, frequent flier on Ethiopian Airlines)	"I imagine this could have happened with any type of plane. It could have happened to any airline. I will continue to use the airline" (Gebrekidan, 2019 March 17)	Neutral	This relative shows understanding and assumes a balanced view that it could have happened with another aircraft type, not specifically Boeing's.
Relative of victim (Mr. Menkir Kassa, lawyer)	"Boeing has departed from its ethos of safety when it resisted global calls to ground the Max 8 planes immediately after the Ethiopian crash. Boeing should have admitted its fault and sided with passengers. Instead, it chose to be stubborn." (Gebrekidan, 2019 March 17)	Negative	This person views Boeing in a negative way as he finds Boeing was to blame for the incident and the company also did not take the right actions afterwards.

17/10/2019: Boeing CEO Muilenburg Issues Statement on Ethiopian Airlines Flight 302 Accident Investigation

Organization	Statement in condensed unit	Code	Interpretation of Strategy
Boeing	"our deepest sympathies are with the families and loved ones of those onboard Ethiopian Airlines flight 302`	3	*Rebuild*: Boeing shows concern for relatives of victims
	"Boeing continues to support the investigation, and is working with the authorities to evaluate new information as it becomes available."	3	*Rebuild:* Boeing shows a positive trait to the public in that the company is being cooperative.
	"As part of our standard practice following any accident, we examine our aircraft design and operation, and when appropriate, institute product updates to further improve safety" "Boeing is finalizing its development of a previously- announced software update and pilot training revision that will address the MCAS flight control law's behavior in response to erroneous sensor inputs"	3	*Rebuild*: The company states it will take action to make sure similar situations will not happen again, however it is phrased in such a way they do so because it is "part of standard practice", and not because they feel they did something wrong that needs to be corrected.

18/03/2019: Letter from Boeing CEO Dennis Muilenburg to Airlines, Passengers and the Aviation Community

Organization	Statement in condensed unit	Code	Interpretation of Strategy
Boeing	"We know lives depend on the work we do, and our teams embrace that responsibility with a deep sense of commitment every day. Our purpose at Boeing is to bring family, friends and loved ones together with our commercial airplanes—safely"	3	*Rebuild*: reminding the public of positive traits, values and goals.
	"The tragic losses of Ethiopian Airlines Flight 302 and Lion Air Flight 610 affect us all, uniting people and nations in shared grief for all those in mourning. Our hearts are heavy, and we continue to extend our deepest sympathies to the loved ones of the passengers and crew on board."	3	*Rebuild*: showing compassion for bereaved, by for the first time drawing on unitedness between all groups of people as a cause of the incidents

	"This overarching focus on safety spans and binds together our entire global aerospace industry and communities. We're united with our airline customers, international regulators and government authorities in our efforts to support the most recent investigation, understand the facts of what happened and help prevent future tragedies"	3	*Rebuild*: Boeing to improve the public's perception by showing their commitment and involvement as well as cooperation with other parties, again drawing upon 'unitedness'.
	"Based on facts from the Lion Air Flight 610 accident and emerging data as it becomes available from the Ethiopian Airlines Flight 302 accident, we're taking actions to fully ensure the safety of the 737 MAX"	3	*Rebuild*: taking corrective action based on findings
	"Boeing has been in the business of aviation safety for more than 100 years, and we'll continue providing the best products, training and support to our global airline customers and pilots"	4	*Reinforce*: reminding the public of their prominence in the industry and the quality of their products and services
	"We've been working in full cooperation with the U.S. Federal Aviation Administration, the Department of Transportation and the National Transportation Safety Board on all issues relating to both the Lion Air and the Ethiopian Airlines accidents since the Lion Air accident occurred in October last year."	3	*Rebuild*: trying to improve the public's perception by showing their continuing willingness to cooperate with authorities and other parties
	"Our entire team is devoted to the quality and safety of the aircraft we design, produce and support. I've dedicated my entire career to Boeing, working shoulder to shoulder with our amazing people and customers for more than three decades, and I personally share their deep sense of commitment. Recently, I spent time with our team members at our 737 production facility in Renton, Wash., and once again saw firsthand the pride our people feel in their work and the pain we're all experiencing in light of these tragedies."	4	*Reinforce*: Boeing refers to the expertise, commitment and hard work of their professionals in order to strengthen and justify credibility as well as to remind the public of positive traits by drawing on the 'human aspect' of the company.
	"Our mission is to connect people and nations, protect freedom, explore our world and the vastness of space and inspire the next generation of aerospace dreamers and doers—and we'll fulfill that mission only by upholding and living our values. That's what safety means to us"	3	*Rebuild*: trying to improve the public's perception by mentioning positive traits such as their mission and values. This time they do so by again drawing on the unitedness and connection between

			groups of people and nations. They are also trying to appeal more to other groups in society besides bereaved, by talking about "inspiring the next generation of aerospace dreamers".

Stakeholder	Reaction in condensed unit	Negative/neutral/positive	Interpretation of reaction
Ethiopian pilot (Yonathan Menkir Kassa, also aviation writer)	"Ethiopians think of Boeing when they think of planes, the way people call all toothpaste Colgate" (Gebrekidan, 2019 March 19)	Positive	Boeing has built up a very positive reputation over the years, as their brand name in Ethiopia is associated with a product in general.
Relative of victim	"But many Ethiopians believe Boeing is to blame for the crash of Ethiopian Flight 302. And some have started to mistrust the manufacturer." (Gebrekidan, 2019 March 19)	Negative	This is a negative perception of Boeing as blame is being attributed to the company and mistrust expressed.
Relative of victim (Aby Yilma)	Believes a design flaw was responsible for the Boeing's nose-dive. But he suspects relatives of the victims will not be inclined to go after the manufacturer. "What can we possibly do? We have to accept our fate" (Gebrekidan, 2019 March 19)	Negative	Blame is attributed to Boeing, and the last sentence shows there is no trust in the company being willing or able to do anything to make up for the mistakes and loss that have taken place.
US government (Senate subcommittee on aviation and space)	"In light of the recent tragedy in Ethiopia and the subsequent grounding of the Boeing 737 Max aircraft, a hearing will be organized to examine challenges to the state of commercial aviation safety, including any specific concerns highlighted by recent accidents," (Gebrekidan, 2019 March 20)	Neutral	No accusations or notes on causes are being made in this statement, but concerns that have come forward because of the accidents, will be addressed in the hearing. Also, the fact that a hearing is being organized reflects the impact the

			ongoing crisis has on multiple levels – in this case on the governmental level.
Aviation expert (Bjorn Fehrm, analyst at consultancy Leeham)	"The angle of attack indicators are critical, and cost almost nothing for the airlines to install. Boeing charges for them because it can. But they're vital for safety." (Tabuchi & Gelles, 2019)	Negative	This is a negative view as it shows how even though it is almost uncostly, Boeing does not include the AOA indicators in the standard design because the company wants to make more money on it, which shows their focus on profit instead of safety.
Relatives of victims Lion Air (family of Harvino, the co-pilot of Lion Air flight)	Filed a lawsuit, claiming that "The plane was defective and in a condition that rendered it unreasonably dangerous for its intended use." (Beech & Suhartono, 2019)	Negative	These relatives hold Boeing accountable for the accident as the plane was defective and too dangerous to use.
Relatives of victims Lion Air	More than 20 relatives of those who died on Flight 610 have sued Boeing in the U.S. (Beech & Suhartono, 2019)	Negative	Filing a lawsuit reflects a very negative view as they hold Boeing accountable and want compensation or justice through this way.

Garuda Indonesia (national airline)	"Our passengers have lost confidence in the Boeing 737 MAX 9 model after the crashes" It sought to cancel its order of 49 more planes; it had ordered 50, just one of which has been delivered. "Continuing the Max order does not benefit Garuda. Our passengers, psychologically, they don't trust flying with Max anymore. They often asked during booking what type of aircraft they would be flying on." (Suhartono & Tsang, 2019)	Negative	This reflects the impact the accident has had on the Indonesian nation as many people have lost trust and are afraid to fly with the model.
Pilot (Dennis Tajer, spokesman for American Airlines pilots union)	"They completely discounted the human factor component, the startle effect, the tsunami of alerts in a system that we had no knowledge of that was powerful, relentless and terrifying in the end," (Gelles, 2019)	Negative	The pilot blames Boeing for the accidents as they pilots had no knowledge on how to correct the system's faulty readings.
Aviation expert (Senior engineer at Boeing)	"To keep costs down, the company rejected a safety system that could have reduced the risks that contributed to the two deadly crashes" (Gelles, 2019)	Negative	This again reflects the view that Boeing puts profit and economic efficiency above safety of people.
Shareholder (at Boeing's first annual meeting after the crashes)	"We don't have to have 300+ people die every time to find out that something is unreliable." (Gelles, 2019)	Negative	This person implies the accidents should not have happened, and Boeing's models were not to be used when unreliable at all.

Aviation expert (Engineer Rick Ludtke, helped design the 737 MAX cockpit and spent 19 years at Boeing)	"The company set a ground rule for engineers: limit changes to hopefully avert a requirement that pilots spend time training in a flight simulator before flying the Max." […] "This program was a much more intense pressure cooker than I've ever been in. The company was trying to avoid costs and trying to contain the level of change. They wanted the minimum change to simplify the training differences, minimum change to reduce costs, and to get it done quickly." (Gelles et al., 2019)	Negative	This again supports the view how Boeing puts economic profit before safety people.
FAA (Daniel K. Elwell, FAA's acting administrator)	"The system of delegating authority outside of the agency is critical to the success and effectiveness of the certification process." "This is not self-certification; the FAA retains strict oversight authority." (Kaplan, 2019)	Positive	With this statement, the fact that Boeing carries a part of the FAA's work is phrased in a positive way as it adds to the effectiveness of the process while the FAA simultaneously retains authority and oversight.

26/03/2019: Boeing Response to Ethiopian Airlines Group CEO Ato Tewolde GebreMariam and the aviation industry

Organization	Statement in condensed unit	Code	Interpretation of Strategy
Boeing	"As the lead engineer on a project earlier in my career, I watched my pilot friend climb into the cockpit of a prototype aircraft and fly it for the first time. He landed safely, and I exhaled with admiration and relief—a vivid memory I carry with me every day. Knowing someone's life depends on your work is an unforgettable feeling, and it's one shared among all of us at Boeing. We hold ourselves to the highest standards of safety, excellence and integrity in our work because the stakes could not be higher."	4	*Reinforce*: adding positive information about themselves by referring to the expertise of their professionals in order to strengthen and justify credibility and providing a 'human' frame.

	"Since the moment we learned of the recent 737 MAX accidents, we've thought about the lives lost and the impact it has on people around the globe and throughout the aerospace community. All those involved have had to deal with unimaginable pain. We're humbled by their resilience and inspired by their courage."	3	*Rebuild:* showing compassion for the affected
	"Ethiopian Airlines has a proud history that stretches more than seven decades. In that time, Ethiopian has been a pioneer and a leader in our industry, launching Africa into the jet age, connecting the continent with all corners of the globe with its extensive network, and earning a reputation for service and safety. More than just an airline, Ethiopian represents the pride and progress of a great people and a symbol of The New Spirit of Africa."	4	*Reinforce:* Boeing praises Ethiopian Airlines
	"With a shared value of safety, be assured that we are bringing all of the resources of The Boeing Company to bear, working together tirelessly to understand what happened and do everything possible to ensure it doesn't happen again."	3	*Rebuild:* Boeing states it will do everything possible to ensure the same situation occurring in the future and will therefore take corrective action
	"Boeing stands together with all our customers and partners to earn and strengthen the flying public's trust and confidence in us every day."	3	*Rebuild:* Boeing tries to improve the public's perception by assuming a position of 'unitedness' and the will to improve in every way.

Stakeholder	Reaction in condensed unit	Negative/neutral/positive	Interpretation of reaction
Aviation expert (Engineer Bjorn Fehrm, former fighter pilot for Swedish Air force)	"That's not a good engineering system. That's where they screwed up royally." (Glanz et al., 2019)	Negative	This engineer is of the opinion Boeing made a big mistake by implementing a system with this single point of failure

FAA	"The FAA expects to receive Boeing's final package of its software enhancement over the coming weeks for FAA approval. Time is needed for additional work by Boeing as the result of an ongoing review of the 737 MAX Flight Control System to ensure that Boeing has identified and appropriately addressed all pertinent issues." "The FAA will not approve the software for installation, until the agency is satisfied with the submission." (Gelles, 2019 April 1)	Neutral	The FAA provides an update to the public to inform Boeing's software enhancement is coming out later than expected, but reassures the public of the quality and emphasizes their own authority as it will only be approved when the agency is satisfied.
Indonesia's top aviation regulatory official	"Both Boeing and the FAA were slow in responding to requests for help in determining the safety of other Max planes flown by Indonesian carriers." (Beech & Suhartono, 2019 April 2)	Negative	This is a negative perception as it shows Boeing did not take action quickly which gives the impression they do not take it seriously enough.
Relatives of Lion Air victims (Charles Herrman, lawyer)	"Lifesaving lessons are only lifesaving if we learn from them. It's absolutely inexcusable that it takes another crash for people to kick this investigation and improvements into high gear." (Beech & Suhartono, 2019 April 2)	Negative	The perception of relatives of the previous crash have worsened or amplified by the second crash – it is no more 'bad luck', but incomprehension and astonishment that it has happened again and it seems only now are people working on it.
Investigator (Nurcahyo Utomo, head of Safety group's air-accident subcommittee)	"I first learned of the term MCAS from news reports." (Beech & Suhartono, 2019 April 2)	Negative	This accentuates the shared perception that Boeing did not accurately inform involved actors of the system and its workings.

Indonesian aviation expert (Gerry Soejatman)	"People immediately assumed this was a Lion Air problem, an issue with a terrible Indonesian airline. But when a brand-new plane crashes, you have to look at all the factors, including the possibility of a manufacturer problem or defect. And you have to look really carefully when that manufacturer isn't providing all the answers." (Beech & Suhartono, 2019 April 2)	Negative	Though it was first a more natural reaction for people to look at the airline which had a bad prior reputation, after the second crash it has become more evident for people to look at the company who provided the aircraft and look at what flaws they have left and mistakes they have made.
Indonesian civil aviation authority (Polana Promesti, head)	[days after Flight 610 crashed] "I waited for visiting Boeing and FAA officials to talk to me. [As head of Indonesia's version of the FAA] I wanted advice on whether to ground Max 8 jets in Indonesia. But the Americans, who did spent time with transportation safety committee officials, never came to me." (Beech & Suhartono, 2019 April 2)	Negative	This person shows the negligence of Boeing and FAA in communicating with Indonesian authorities, which gives the impression they do not find it important enough.
Indonesian civil aviation authority (Avirianto, in charge of airworthiness and aircraft operation)	"We were never given a clear explanation of how MCAS worked or whether it was safe. They kept saying they were still analyzing, evaluating. We never received any guidance because there were never any clear answers for us." (Beech & Suhartono, 2019 April 2)	Negative	The Indonesian version of the FAA points to their inability to fulfill their role adequately because they were not informed and guided by Boeing to be able to do this.
Investigators (Mr. Nurcahyo, KNKT head of air accident investigations)	"They all say: 'My product is good'. That's what Boeing does." (Beech & Suhartono, 2019 April 2)	Negative	Boeing is perceived to only emphasize the quality of the product, thereby seemingly ignoring what is going on.

Indonesian aviation expert (Gerry Soejatman)	"Airplanes are very complex machines. If you don't have all the information that should be out there, how are you supposed to know how to fix them?" (Beech & Suhartono, 2019 April 2)	Negative	This reflects the opinion again that Boeing should have informed all involved parties on the new system and its workings.
Ethiopian investigators	[In an initial report] Pilots initially followed safety procedures recommended by Boeing, performing actions on the emergency checklist, including cutting off electricity to an automatic system that was pushing the nose down. But they were still unable to prevent the jet from crashing. ((Kitroeff et al., 2019 April 4)	Negative	Boeing had consistently diminished their crisis responsibility by insisting pilots were able to deal with any problems with the system by merely following an existing manual of procedures, which has now turned out to be insufficient.
Pilot (Dennis Tajer, also spokesman for the American Airlines pilot union)	"The MCAS was too aggressive. Boeing left the pilot with no ability to gain control of the aircraft if it went to the full limit." (Kitroeff et al., 2019 April 4)	Negative	Not only the inadequately provided information, but the system itself is being criticized here and crisis responsibility is put with Boeing as the pilots were unable to correct the system's mistake.
Aviation expert (Chesley B. Sullenberger III, also retired pilot)	"Boeing has made good aircraft over the years, but this is a radical departure from that. This never should have happened." (Kitroeff et al., 2019 April 4)	Negative	Boeing's performance and reputation has rapidly declined because of the two crashes in a short amount of time.

| FAA | "We continue to work toward a full understanding of all aspects of this accident. As we learn more about the accident and findings become available, we will take appropriate action."
(Kitroeff et al., 2019 April 4) | Neutral | FAA indicates they also have some blanks left to fill in as they have to research their information on the certification process which they had partly delegated towards Boeing employees. Until then, they cannot take fitting action. |

04/04/2019: Boeing Statement On Ethiopian Airlines Flight 302 Investigation Preliminary Report

Organization	Statement in condensed unit	Code	Interpretation of Strategy
Boeing	"I'd like to reiterate our deepest sympathies are with the families and loved ones of those who lost their lives in the accident,"	3	*Rebuild:* showing compassion towards relatives of victims
	"We will carefully review the AIB's preliminary report, and will take any and all additional steps necessary to enhance the safety of our aircraft."	3	*Rebuild*: taking action to prevent a similar situation from happening again
	"Safety is a core value for everyone at Boeing and the safety of our airplanes, our customers' passengers and crews is always our top priority"	3	*Rebuild*: reminding the public of positive traits and values
	"Boeing's technical experts continue to assist in this investigation and company-wide teams are working to address lessons from the Lion Air Flight 610 accident in October. […] To ensure unintended MCAS activation will not occur again, Boeing has developed and is planning to release a software update to MCAS and an associated comprehensive pilot training and supplementary education	3	*Rebuild*: again, it is announced actions are being taken to improve the system. However this time it is phrased "to ensure unintended MCAS activation will not occur again" instead of stating all necessary steps were already there. Furthermore, they are taking corrective action regarding pilot

	program for the 737 MAX. […] on the development and certification of the software update and training program"		training and supplementary education on the system which was not available before.
	"As previously announced, the update adds additional layers of protection and will prevent erroneous data from causing MCAS activation. Flight crews will always have the ability to override MCAS and manually control the airplane."	2	*Diminish*: Boeing diminishes their own role by pointing at the responsibility and role pilots will always have if a similar situation occurs
	"Boeing also is continuing to work closely with the U.S. National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) as technical advisors in support of the AIB investigation."	3	*Rebuild*: trying to improve the public's perception of them by reminding them they are assisting others and cooperating in the ongoing investigation.

04/04/2019: Boeing CEO Dennis Muilenburg Addresses the Ethiopian Airlines Flight 302 Preliminary Report

Organization	Statement in condensed unit	Code	Interpretation of Strategy
Boeing	"We at Boeing are sorry for the lives lost in the recent 737 MAX accidents."	3	*Rebuild*: CEO Muilenberg extends condolences to the relatives of victims
	"These tragedies continue to weigh heavily on our hearts and minds, and we extend our sympathies to the loved ones of the passengers and crew on board Lion Air Flight 610 and Ethiopian Airlines Flight 302. All of us feel the immense gravity of these events across our company and recognize the devastation of the families and friends of the loved ones who perished."	3	*Rebuild*: Boeing now draws more on the connectedness and shared grief of various groups in society, instead of just showing concern for relatives of victims. They include the company itself in the emotional response as well.

	"The history of our industry shows most accidents are caused by a chain of events. This again is the case here, and we know we can break one of those chain links in these two accidents. As pilots have told us, erroneous activation of the MCAS function can add to what is already a high workload environment. It's our responsibility to eliminate this risk. We own it and we know how to do it."	3	*Rebuild*: Boeing recognizes the fact that an error in their system design that was identified as a cause for the plane crashes, and ensures the public they know they need to eliminate this risk and will take action to do this.
	"From the days immediately following the Lion Air accident, we've had teams of our top engineers and technical experts working tirelessly in collaboration with the Federal Aviation Administration and our customers to finalize and implement a software update that will ensure accidents like that of Lion Air Flight 610 and Ethiopian Airlines Flight 302 never happen again."	4	*Reinforce*: referring to the expertise of their professionals in order to strengthen and justify credibility of the steps being taken
	"We're taking a comprehensive, disciplined approach, and taking the time, to get the software update right. We're nearing completion and anticipate its certification and implementation on the 737 MAX fleet worldwide in the weeks ahead."	3	*Rebuild*: phrasing the information on delay of the corrective action they are taking in a way of "a comprehensive, disciplined approach that takes time" in order to generate a more positive perception
	"We regret the impact the grounding has had on our airline customers and their passengers."	3	*Rebuild*: the Boeing company tries to show compassion to passengers by taking into account their issues. However they implicate they are only sorry for the inconvenience of the plane's grounding, not for the accidents.
	We at Boeing take the responsibility to build and deliver airplanes to our airline customers and to the flying public that are safe to fly, and can be safely flown by every single one of the professional and dedicated pilots all around the world. This is what we do at Boeing. […] "We've always been relentlessly focused on safety and always will be. It's at the very core of who we are at Boeing. And we know we can always be	3	*Rebuild*: reminding the public of the positive traits, values, missions and actions performed by the company.

	better. Our team is determined to keep improving on safety in partnership with the global aerospace industry and broader community."		
	"We remain confident in the fundamental safety of the 737 MAX. All who fly on it—the passengers, flight attendants and pilots, including our own families and friends—deserve our best. When the MAX returns to the skies with the software changes to the MCAS function, it will be among the safest airplanes ever to fly."	2	*Diminish*: even though they have just recognized an error that caused a dangerous plunge of the aircraft to the ground, they express they remain confidence in the safety of the aircraft, which then reduces offensiveness of the act.
	"It's this shared sense of responsibility for the safety of flight that spans and binds us all together."	3	*Rebuild*: drawing on connectedness of all involved and affected groups in order to receive a positive view
	"I cannot remember a more heart-wrenching time in my career with this great company. When I started at Boeing more than three decades ago, our amazing people inspired me. I see how they dedicate their lives and extraordinary talents to connect, protect, explore and inspire the world — safely. And that purpose and mission has only grown stronger over the years."	4	*Reinforce*: referring to the expertise of their professionals in order to strengthen and justify credibility, as well as drawing upon sympathy by providing this 'human' frame.
	"Again, we're deeply saddened by and are sorry for the pain these accidents have caused worldwide. Everyone affected has our deepest sympathies."	3	*Rebuild*: showing compassion for affected and recognizing some responsibility for the accidents

05/04/2019: Statement from Boeing CEO Dennis Muilenburg: We Own Safety - 737 MAX Software, Production and Process Update

Organization	Statement in condensed unit	Code	Interpretation of Strategy
Boeing	"As we work closely with customers and global regulators to return the 737 MAX to service, we continue to be driven by our enduring values, with a focus on safety, integrity and quality in all we do."	4	*Reinforce*: emphasizing their continuing work on improvement and mentioning their positive traits
	"We have the responsibility to eliminate this risk, and we know how to do it. As part of this effort, we're making progress on the 737 MAX software update that will prevent accidents like these from ever happening again." […] "We're also finalizing new pilot training courses and supplementary educational material for our global MAX customers."	3	*Rebuild*: Boeing informs the public on the steps that are being taken to prevent the offensive act from occurring again.
	"Teams are working tirelessly, advancing and testing the software, conducting non-advocate reviews, and engaging regulators and customers worldwide as we proceed to final certification" […] "This progress is the result of our comprehensive, disciplined approach and taking the time necessary to get it right."	4	*Reinforce*: showing the good and hard work Boeing's employees are doing and justifying the delay by emphasizing their precision and attention to get it right
	"In light of our commitment to continuous improvement and our determination to always make a safe industry even safer, I've asked the Boeing Board of Directors to establish a committee to review our company-wide policies and processes for the design and development of the airplanes we build." […] The committee members will be Adm. Edmund P. Giambastiani, Jr., (Ret.), former vice chairman, U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, who will serve as the committee's chair; Robert A. Bradway, chairman and CEO of Amgen, Inc.; Lynn J. Good, chairman, president and CEO of the Duke Energy Corporation; and Edward M. Liddy, former chairman and CEO of the Allstate Corporation, all members of the company's board. These individuals have been selected to serve on this committee because of their collective and	4	*Reinforce*: referring to the expertise of their professionals in order to strengthen and justify credibility of the steps being taken

	extensive experiences that include leadership roles in corporate, regulated industries and government entities where safety and the safety of lives is paramount."		
	"Safety is our responsibility, and we own it. When the MAX returns to the skies, we've promised our airline customers and their passengers and crews that it will be as safe as any airplane ever to fly."	3	*Rebuild:* focusing on positive traits and values of the company in order for the public to perceive them positively
	"Our continued disciplined approach is the right decision for our employees, customers, supplier partners and other stakeholders as we work with global regulators and customers to return the 737 MAX fleet to service and deliver on our commitments to all of our stakeholders."	4	*Reinforce:* reminding the audience of positive actions performed as they continue to cooperate and take into account employees, customers, supplier partners and other involved parties as well as the promise to deliver on commitments to all stakeholders.

Stakeholder	Reaction in condensed unit	Negative/neutral/positive	Interpretation of reaction
Ethiopian Airlines (Tewolde GebreMariam, chief executive)	[on reconsidering its order for 25 additional Max planes] "We may reach the decision: Look, we just had a very tragic accident a few weeks ago, and customers still have the accident in their mind. So it will be a hard sell for us to convince our customers." (Gelles, 2019 April 5)	Negative	Another airline that is debating whether to cancel an order of the Max planes because passengers have become unwilling to travel on this airplane type will put more pressure on Boeing and its reputation.
U.S. Transportation Secretary (Elaine L. Chao)	"The United States will not clear Boeing 737 MAX jets for flight again until federal officials are satisfied that Boeing has fixed its flawed flight control system" (Thrush, 2019)	Negative	This is a stern governmental reaction addressing the company has made a mistake that needs to be fixed and their business will not continue in the U.S. before it is fixed.

FAA	"The FAA will not approve Boeing's proposed changes until the FAA is satisfied it is safe." (Thrush, 2019)	Negative	This indicates a change in FAA's position towards Boeing as they will be more strict and authoritive now as opposed to before when they were lenient and in some way negligent in the certification process.

4.3 Discussion

From analyzing reactions in both cases it has become clear that stakeholder perceptions have changed from the first crash compared to the second crash. In light of SCCT, whereas the view in the first case fit more in the *accidental* cluster as the general perception became that it was merely a technical error, the view in the second crash has shifted towards 'this should not have happened'. Since the second accident included the same aircraft type and caused a similar crisis, from then on the first crash served as *crisis history* of the second crash. Stakeholders then perceived the second crash as a cause of human error for not having handled the problem that previously already occurred. The crisis therefore then fit into the cluster of a *preventable* crisis and caused stakeholders to attribute more crisis responsibility to Boeing. With retroactive effect, the first crisis was put in the *preventable* cluster as well.

Not only did stakeholder reactions and perceptions change from the first case compared to the second case, reactions amongst stakeholders also differed from each other. As van Riel mentioned when describing reputation as a puzzle, people individually only perceive one piece of the puzzle, which is dependent on the context through which they look at the situation (Expertisecentrum Risico- en Crisiscommunicatie, 2005, p. 63). Everyone has a different view of the organization and evaluates the organization on different aspects (p. 63). As in the Boeing case stakeholders had different positions, motivations and frames in thought which influence how they communicated on the events, it has become clear that the stakeholders vary on what they focus on and are concerned with. Stakeholder groups such as the FAA, investigators, passengers and the countries or governments who communicated were more concerned with the product and how it was formed and certified, whereas stakeholder groups such as relatives of victims and aviation experts were more concerned with the way the company interacted with its publics and what it communicated. Pilots were concerned with both, as they voiced their concerns and critique about manuals and training on the plane's system being inadequate, as well as their disagreement with Boeing's statements towards the public.

Stakeholders communicating in the second crash took into account Boeing's crisis history as they often referred to the crash that occurred a few months prior. From the results it is evident the first crash negatively affected peoples' perception of Boeing in the second crash. The way in which Boeing responded to and handled the first crisis was kept in mind by stakeholders as in the second crash they referred back to statements that were made by Boeing in the first crisis. In light of the second crash, some information turned out to be untrue or

inapplicable which caused stakeholders to find Boeing´s response less credible. Furthermore, Boeing was overall held more accountable for the accidents because in the second crash, when they now had the crisis history and knowledge from just a few months before, the perception was "how could this have happened again?".

Confirming expectations, the amount of stakeholders communicating in the second crash has increased since the first crash. In the second crash, also new stakeholders had emerged in the communication field as different aviation experts, other airlines, other countries, and also passengers and shareholders started communicating. Some stakeholders, such as Indonesian safety authorities, who already communicated in the first crash, also communicated in the second crash more intensively. Along the general line of thought in IRT that threat for an organization increases when they are being held responsible for an offensive act, pressure on Boeing increased as an the amount of stakeholders and the frequency in which they communicated accumulated. As pilots became more vocal on their issues with inadequate training and aviation experts expressed their skepticism of Boeing and its production of the plane, passengers and relatives became more distrusting and confused with Boeing as these narratives contradicted Boeing's statements. This might be because pilots are generally perceived as being intelligent and passengers or newspaper readers find them credible and easily believe what they say as they would have no motive to be dishonest.

In agreement with Conrad et. al (2010) who state that an organization's stance and rhetoric can be affected by that of another involved organization, stakeholders in this study have also had an influence on each other in their responses. Although China's decision to ground the plane was most likely economically motivated as the country has been making an effort to build a commercial aviation competitor to Boeing and Airbus, the announcement triggered other countries and airlines to do the same. On the same day, Indonesia and Ethiopian Airlines also issued the decision to ground the airplanes. In the following days, many more countries and airlines grounded the plane and the EU even closed its airspace to the 737 MAX model. In another way, American Airlines and Southwest Airlines who both possess a large fleet of Boeing 737's, also appeared to build upon what the FAA had communicated. Though many other airlines had already taken the decision to ground the airplanes, these two stood their ground in considering the plane safe to fly, since their national oversight authority had stated there were no indications causing them to believe the plane should be grounded.

Although SCCT does not take into account the idea that responsibility can be shared between organizations, findings in this case within the framework of four weeks after the

crashes, indicated multiple stakeholders played a role in creating this specific crisis. Not all crisis responsibility lies with Boeing, some can also be put with the FAA as there was a disconnect between them and the Boeing company for not maintaining transparent cooperation, full oversight and awareness of Boeing's technical adjustment in the new aircraft. This caused the plane to be certified with a new system against their knowledge, and the FAA's proactive reaction to be late as they also needed time to find out what was going on.

Boeing's favorable pre-crisis reputation that was built up over decades might have acted as a buffer of 'reputational capital' during the first crisis (Coombs, 2007) (Fombrun & van Riel, 2004) as no one suspected Boeing to be responsible at first but rather the Indonesian airline and technicians were under the loop. However, damage increased as the level of information about the cause of the crash increased and as the same crisis event occurred again. Not only did the publics make a more negative evaluation of Boeing because of the information on their role in the crisis becoming more well known, results support the idea of Johansen & Fransen (2016) that an organization can create a *double crisis* due to improper communication and management. As the crisis ensued, stakeholders became more dissatisfied with the way Boeing handled the situation. Moreover, crisis communication was found inadequate, as it was initially too defensive, slow and passive, suggesting a lack of openness and accountability. The following paragraphs will elaborate and support this by summarizing the general findings from stakeholder reactions.

Throughout the first case, The FAA continuously adopted a similar position to Boeing. However, The FAA's position in the second case has changed. First they supported almost all statements made and actions taken by Boeing. When the FAA also faced scrutiny over how this plane could have been approved and certified, they changed to a more authoritive stance towards Boeing. It appears the FAA noticed further onwards in the investigation that they should have been more proactive in the first case. At the beginning when the FAA still controlled oversight over the system, it was designed to correct minor movements but when this task was delegated to Boeing, the company adjusted and changed the MCAS system so much that it became dangerous. Because the FAA was unaware that Boeing had further adjusted the system and approved it themselves, FAA could not say with certainty that the plane was unsafe until evidence proved otherwise.

Investigators from authorities such as the Indonesian National Transportation Safety Committee and Indonesian Safety Agency were initially cautious as their reactions were

balanced in terms of accusations, but did state negative facts of technical error and inadequate information in the manual. In the second case, when more results from the investigations came to the fore, dissatisfaction with the way Boeing communicated to Indonesian safety agencies had grown and their reactions became more negative too.

Pilots were predominant in expressing negative opinions of Boeing as the company had shifted responsibility towards pilots by stating they should have been able to correct the system manually and the required information was in the manual. This strategy was not received well by pilots, and it backfired when information from the investigation of Ethiopian Airlines crash indicates that pilots did follow the manual, and the plane still shot down in high speed. This shows caution should therefore be used in making these statements because there is no coming back from them once said, and it is not perceived credible if something entirely opposite is being said later on in the process.

While relatives of Lion Air victims in the first crash were mostly holding the airline and safety authorities accountable, in the second crash this has shifted towards Boeing as they express their negative opinions and they have grown more dissatisfied with how they have been treated by Boeing. Boeing's statements were first more 'mechanic' and focused on their business and providing information on the work they were doing. Only later on did the company seem to express more understanding, emotion and compassion. However, this should have been done earlier on in the process to come across as genuine. Relatives of victims felt neglected as Boeing did not really take any action to show that their care and concern, which aggravated their negative perception of Boeing. It even came down to many lawsuits of families demanding compensation, so it would have been better if the company had addressed, acknowledged and involved them more and offered some compensation before.

Regarding relatives of victims of the Ethiopian crash, expectations were that they would communicate frequently and negatively in the second case, taking into account the crisis history of another plane crashing down under the same circumstances just a few months prior. However, relatives of the Ethiopian victims were initially quiet after the second crash. Also Ethiopian Airlines had barely communicated about the investigation a week after the crash and the media were being left out of briefings by the Ministry of Transport. This initial muted public reaction in Ethiopia could be motivated by a cultural factor as mentioned by Lee (2004), since Ethiopia has had a long history of repression. When they did communicate,

a few stayed neutral or positive, whereas expectations were relatives would be most intensive in communicating negatively as they had suffered emotional loss. However, this can be explained because of the history Ethiopia has with using Boeing aircraft, as the decade-long partnership with the airline is a source of pride and welfare for the country. The disconfirmation model by Edwards and Smith (1996) may elucidate this as this positive experience with the company weakens the deviating information that a crisis brings to meet the positive perception of the company. Nevertheless, like most stakeholders, the majority of victims found in the data was upset with Boeing and held the company accountable for causing the accident.

Moving on to more general principles, Boeing could have communicated with the public more, instead of issuing formal statements. Concern, sympathy, and empathy is best shown through live messages in which emotion can be shown, and compassion could have been shown through providing compensation and having more contact with relatives of victims. It seemed Boeing was not able to adequately show the public that they actually cared. It was a respective attempt for Boeing to express transparency by showing they are cooperating with the investigation, trying to get to the bottom of the problem, and are busy improving their product. However, this needs to be accompanied by showing they are not only in the business of selling products, but also in the business of selling safety for humans. Boeing's strategies have given people the impression that economic profit is more important to them than human lives, as they rejected a safety system that could have reduced the risks that contributed to the two crashes and they approached president Trump to convince him to let the airplanes fly instead of immediately grounding the 737 MAX jets and therewith addressing and validating fearful customers.

Moreover, crisis communication by Boeing at times was perceived as mechanic. Findings of Boeing's official statements indicate a trend in use of strategies. In the analysis, messages were often built up by the usage of code $3 - 3 - 4$ (*rebuild*, *rebuild*, *reinforce*). This is in line with the argument of Boin, 't Hart and Sundelius (2016) which entails how crisis leaders employ "deliberate and concerted moves to influence public perceptions and emotions" (p. 82). The trend in using this combination of codes consistently, indicates Boeing used prepared and strategic messages in order to guide public perceptions. However, in the eyes of the public these messages missed emotion or genuineness and it did not create the desired effect.

Furthermore, from the first crash onwards, Boeing has reiterated their confidence in the safety of the model, using a *deny* strategy by implying there is no problem on their part. Yet, when findings indicate a design flaw and error in the system, this confuses people. Passages in the same statement by Boeing were often contrary to each other as they would apologize for the crashes in the same message as defending the airplane's safety. Moreover, they were admitting responsibility while also suggesting something beyond their control caused the offensive act. These ambiguous messages caused people to feel anxious and skeptical. Efforts of saying all the right things by showing concern, expressing condolences and showing commitment to 'getting it right', are undermined when the safety of the plane is being stressed while it is also voiced the company is working on a software update (which suggests there is currently something wrong with it). In addition, the continuing repetition of phrases such as "safety is a core value" in every statement, causes it to become a platitude.

Although the strategy of apology is effective as Boeing showed the public they know, are on it, apologize, take it seriously, and are on the scene – it came delayed and could have been used sooner. Boeing issued the transcript version of this message (which was coded in the results) while simultaneously posting a video statement with this message. This is a step in the right direction, however still shows some of their distance. This response could have been improved if the CEO of the company was able to connect to the public more, by for example having an audience in front of which this speech could have been held, so that people would have the ability to ask questions.

What is more, Boeing repeated that the planes were safe for two days even after various countries grounded the aircraft. Even when the FAA eventually also grounded the planes on 13 March, Boeing again reiterated the planes were safe. Other than that, leadership by Boeing was mostly silent. This shows passiveness and suggests that an organization is not in control or not trying to take control of a situation. In general, Boeing started to actively communicate too late. Only after a lot of pressure was built up, did their responses become more frequent and more elaborate. A fundamental rule in crisis communication is for an organization to take control and guide the narrative before others guide it for you (Coombs & Holladay 2011.). Yet, because Boeing kept themselves on the background and at times stayed quiet for weeks, they have let others tell the story. Responses by Boeing could have been perceived more positively if there was no room for confusion and they used framing to describe the nature of the problem that the organization is facing. As frames shape the way people think about problems, they indicate the category of problem that needs to be dealt with. When a type of

problem is identified in a frame, this contains the seeds of the organization's action and response – which could have brought stakeholders more clarity and in the end a more favorable view of the company.

Despite the fact that Boeing's stance and selected strategies improved over the course of the timeframe of the second case, reputational damage had already increased as most of those responses should have been utilized much sooner to have met stakeholders expectations. The suggested approach of 'acknowledge and await' (Jong, 2019) could therefore be useful in such a situation as well. The company can choose to respond with care and refrain from jumping to conclusions before outcomes of an investigation are known. Boeing acknowledged the situation, but could have addressed the complexity and gravity of the situation more in-depth by increasing focus on relatives of victims and concerned passengers. The company could have awaited findings before explicitly stating their products are safe, and stating all the information needed for pilots to handle the new software system was already there. These statements have backfired because they were made too quick in a time of uncertainty, and were not found credible by stakeholders. In order to have preserved reputation, they could have been more cautious, considering and inclusive in selecting their response.

4.3.1 Limitations (assessment of reliability and validity)

Due to time restrictions, the time span over which data was collected is limited. Since the Boeing crisis is an ongoing crisis, stakeholders are still communicating and new information, events and decisions are still adding to the body of data on this crisis. However, demarcations in this thesis provided for data collection in a frame of four weeks after the crashes and left out information outside of this time frame. Furthermore, the stakeholders that were selected for analysis were not all stakeholders who were involved in the crisis or who were communicating in the crisis. Nevertheless, again due to time constraints and the scope of this Master Thesis, some of those stakeholders which were less prominent in the communication field or which were not addressed in the New York Times articles, were left out.

Research is reliable if it can be repeated by other researches and when it produces consistent results (Hammersley, 1992). Other researches must be enabled to conduct similar procedures and to arrive at the same findings, by being provided access to similar research methods. Yin (2003) has stated how making a study replicable by make as many steps as operational as possible is a general way of approaching the reliability problem. To achieve this, the procedures being followed in collecting data and coding them have been logically provided in the third chapter so that another researcher could implement them along the same

lines in a similar study. Reliability in this case may be undermined by the problem of a bias to a certain extent, when analyzing or interpreting newspaper articles. However, as content is categorized and coded into 'negative' 'neutral' and 'balanced' and it is expected researchers would have the same framework of reference to guide their way of categorizing information into those, the possibility another researcher deviates from this categorization, is minimal.

External validity is the problem of knowing whether a study's findings are generalizable beyond the immediate case study (Yin, 2003, p. 37). A common concern about case studies is that they provide little basis for generalization. This research has used a case study of one specific phenomenon or situation, which means that the findings cannot be generalized towards all organizations who experience a second similar crisis in a short amount of time. Crisis history of an organization is specific to its context and it can turn out differently in another case study. However, case studies are generalizable to theoretical propositions "and not to populations or universes" (Yin, 3004, p. 37). In this sense, the case study does not represent a "sample " and in doing a case study, the goal is to expand and generalize theories (analytic generalization) (p. 37). As no research had been conducted into the role of crisis history and its effect on reputation in this specific context, this research adds to the existing body of theory and provides new insights on this topic in crisis communication.

5. Conclusion

This thesis was aimed at assessing how stakeholders perceive crisis response strategies of an organization that experiences a similar crisis twice in a relatively short amount of time, based on Boeing's crisis communication after the first 737 MAX crash compared to after the second 737 MAX crash. This was done to in light of the unexplored role of crisis history and its effect on an organization's reputation. Comparing stakeholder reactions on Boeing after the first crash to stakeholder reactions on Boeing after the second crash shed light on the impact of past crisis on a similar current crisis.

With the second crisis ensuing, pressure on the company increased as the amount of stakeholders communicating grew from the first crash to the second crash, as well as the frequency of their reactions. Most stakeholders were balanced and neutral in their opinions of Boeing after the first crash as it was seen as an accidental crisis and not much was known yet on the cause and crisis responsibility of the plane crash. However, with this first crash having become crisis history of the second crash that followed, stakeholder perceptions predominantly became more negative as the situation was then seen as a preventable crisis.

The way in which stakeholder perceptions evolved and increased from the first crash to the second crash have illustrated how crisis history of an organization plays a role in stakeholders evaluation of an organization. The company was held more accountable for the incidents as well as for what they had communicated. Results also showed stakeholders have an influence on each other's reaction, as for example China's decision to ground the airplane created a domino effect to other countries and airlines, generating more negative implications for Boeing. Moreover, Boeing has created a double (communication) crisis as stakeholders found the company's crisis response improper or inadequate. The company had seemed slow and passive in a response, their strategy was largely defensive, and lacked openness and accountability. Contradicting statements and reiterations of confidence in the safety of the aircraft were not deemed credible when evidence from investigations in the second case suggested otherwise.

From these findings it can be concluded that Boeing's crisis history in the 737 MAX crisis has amplified stakeholders negative evaluations of the company, creating a more negative reputation. This illustrates the importance for an organization to be wary when selecting and creating a crisis response, as previous statements can backfire when new information comes to light and similar events occur again.

On the one hand, this study adds to existing theory as it has explored the workings of SCCT and namely elaborated on the factor of crisis history that has been posited to be of influence on reputation in Coombs´ theory. Its applicability has been studied in the situation of an organization whose current crisis is similar to a crisis in their recent past and results confirm the assumption that in this situation, crisis history does have a negative influence on an organization's reputation. This can serve as an elaboration of SCCT and addition to IRT, which does not take into account the role of crisis history.

On the other hand, the findings of this study provide new lessons for this specific situation and can serve as guidance for an organization like this as it shows the effects of crisis response strategies and what factors they should take into account when using crisis communication as a tool in this specific situation. Crisis communication advisors can take the insights into account when choosing the right response in order for the organization maintain stakeholder relations and to preserve a positive reputation.

Finally, it would be informative to replicate this study with an organization of different cultural origin. Crisis communication theory and suggestions are largely focused on Western organizations and assumptions that fit Western culture. Therefore further research could focus on crisis response strategies by an organization originating and situated in a different part of the world. This study can then contain a broader variety in cultural backgrounds of stakeholders, in order to gain insights into the workings of SCCT and stakeholder perceptions when it is applied to different cultures and different dynamics.

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