



# Organizational communication during crisis situations

An experimental study into the effects of  
crisis responses and interactivity efforts on  
organizational transparency, organizational trustworthiness  
and company-directed emotions

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## **Abstract**

A crisis situation that is attributed to an organization can result in a decline of organizational trust. Rebuilding trust after such a crisis situation is crucial for improving the organizational reputation.

A previous study found that engagement in transparent communication is important to rebuild trust after a crisis situation and to maintain a healthy relationship with the stakeholders. However, organizational transparency during crisis situations is still understudied. Therefore, this study contributed to existing literature by focusing on organizational transparency and its relation to organizational trustworthiness and company-directed emotions during crisis situations.

This experimental study examined the influence of crisis responses and interactivity efforts on the dependent measures; perceived organizational transparency, perceived organizational trustworthiness, and company-directed emotions. The study employed a 2 (crisis response: denial vs. admission) x 2 (interactivity effort: opportunity for interaction vs. no opportunity for interaction) experimental design. In total 165 respondents participated in the study via an online survey.

The results indicated that the crisis response matters more than the interactivity effort. For all three dependent measures main effects of crisis response occurred. The results presented that an organization should admit a crisis situation rather than deny it due to the fact that admission creates a higher level of perceived organizational transparency and perceived organizational trustworthiness. Furthermore, negative emotions will reduce when an organization admits a crisis situation. The opportunity to interact with the organization versus no opportunity to interact had no significant main effect on the dependent measures. A reason could be that it were hypothetical situations and the respondents experienced the crisis situation not for real. This could result in a lack of involvement and therefore the difference between the opportunity to interact with the organization and no opportunity to interact, by presenting a website or phone number in the crisis message or not, was not obvious enough to create a main effect on the dependent measures.

Furthermore, this study investigated that perceived organizational transparency is crucial for the perceived trustworthiness of a company as well as for the emotions toward that company. This means that the higher the level of perceived organizational transparency, the higher the level of perceived organizational trustworthiness and the less negative emotions such as anger will be generated by stakeholders. In short, organizational transparency about a crisis situation is important for rebuilding the overall company evaluation after a crisis situation.

Additional analysis found significant evidence that the level of involvement is a predictor for stakeholders' negative emotions as well as for the need for organizational transparency about the crisis situation. Thus, the higher the level of crisis involvement, the more negative emotions stakeholders will present and the higher the need for organizational transparency will be.

## **Keywords**

Crisis communication, organizational transparency, crisis responses, interactivity effort, organizational trustworthiness, emotions

## **Acknowledgement**

The completion of my thesis is the final step to my master degree in Corporate Communication.

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## **1. Introduction**

### **1.1. Purpose of the research**

In recent years the concept of organizational transparency has become more important due to the exposure of scandals that took place behind closed doors (Rawlins, 2009). These scandals have caused a decline in public trust in organizations.

A decline in organization's trustworthiness will harm an organizational reputation (Coombs & Holladay, 2002). An example of a situation that can result in a decline of organizational trust, is a crisis situation that is believed to have been caused by organizational inaction, negligence, or malicious deed.

A way to rebuild trust and maintain a healthy relationship with the stakeholders is via transparent communication about the crisis situation (Jahansoozi, 2006). However, many companies are not always transparent. Most of the time, organizations are framing messages about crisis situations by emphasizing certain cues (Coombs, 2007). If that is the case, stakeholders could believe the organization is hiding things instead of being completely open about the situation. This could lead to a decline in organizational trustworthiness and it can harm the organizational reputation.

Sometimes, organizations state that they are transparent about a crisis situation and that they are not hiding things. However, it is not the organization that evaluates the organizational transparency, rather the stakeholders are the ones who evaluate if an organization is transparent or not (Klaidman & Beauchamp, 1987). For that reason, the organization should investigate how stakeholders evaluate organizational transparency. If organizations obtain such information, it can adapt to it.

There are already a number of existing studies on crisis communication. For example, many research about crisis response strategies is done. The type of crisis response strategy used influences the stakeholders' emotions towards the crisis situation (Coombs, 2007). However, these studies did not consider organizational transparency as a specific element of a crisis response strategy.

Rawlins (2009) did a study about organizational transparency, including the importance of participation of stakeholders in the process of transparency. However, this was a study among employees of a healthcare organization and it was about the organizational transparency over a longer period instead of organizational transparency in a specific crisis situation. Therefore, this study focuses on the importance of stakeholders' participation during a crisis situation to test the relevance of participation in the process of organizational transparency during a crisis situation.

Furthermore, there are already some studies about the importance of transparency after crisis situations. It is for example investigated that transparency can rebuild trust after a crisis situation (Jahansoozi, 2006). However, the need for transparency during crisis situations and the effects of organizational transparency on for example emotions is still understudied. To fill this gap, this study examines the stakeholders' need for transparency during a crisis situation, the effect of crisis response strategies and interactivity effort on the perceived transparency, on company-directed emotions, and on the trustworthiness of an organization.

## **1.2. Literature review and hypotheses**

According to Coombs (2007), “a crisis is a sudden and unexpected event that threatens to disrupt an organization’s operations and poses both a financial and reputational threat”(p. 164). Such a serious incident can harm stakeholders physically, emotionally, and/or financially (Coombs, 2007). When a crisis situation happens, it creates negative emotions and it gives people reason to think negatively about the organization. Furthermore, it can affect how stakeholders interact with the organization (Dowling, 2002). For that reason, an organization needs crisis management to effectively manage the crisis that occurs and to prevent reputational harm (Pearson & Clair, 1998).

Coombs (2007) developed the Situational Crisis Communication Theory (SCCT) to test the effects of crisis communication on the organization. The theory can be used to predict the reputational threat and with that prediction, the selection of an appropriate crisis response strategy can be determined to diminish the reputational threat (Coombs, 2007).

Crisis response strategies are the organization’s answer to a crisis situation. It is what the management say and does after the crisis (Coombs, 2007). The way how an organization reacts to a crisis situation is related to the level of responsibility that is taken by the organization (Coombs, 2007). Primary SCCT crisis response strategies can be categorized into three groups based on perceptions of accepting responsibility of a crisis: denial, diminish, and rebuild (Coombs, 2006). The actions taken by the management during a crisis situation and the way the organization communicates with its stakeholders affect people’s perceptions during a crisis. An example is that a manager emphasizes certain cues to influence perceptions of stakeholders, which is called framing (Coombs, 2007). These perceptions influence for example the emotions of the stakeholders toward the organization (Coombs, 2007). Framing the message is an important element in crisis communication management. A crisis event is framed by the organization as being a specific crisis type and the management uses crisis response strategies to establish a frame or to reinforce the frame. With framing the crisis situation and its related messages, perceptions of the stakeholders can be influenced in a way that it would be less harmful for the organization (Coombs, 2007). However, when stakeholders will find out that the organization is not completely open about the crisis situation that is attributed to the organization, stakeholders become angry due to the fact that they have the right to true information in matters which affect them (Sullivan, 1965). In turn, this will lead to a decline in organizational trustworthiness (Rawlins, 2009). Therefore, it can be stated that the use of transparent communication during crisis situations is better than framing the crisis message with the risk that stakeholders will perceive the organization as not trustworthy.

The level of organizational transparency is part of the crisis response strategy that is used by the organization. For example, if an organization denies the crisis situation, it is assumable that the organization will be evaluated as not transparent. Due to the fact that if an organization denies a crisis situation stakeholders could think the organization is trying to hide something, which is the opposite of transparency (Florini, 1998; Rawlins, 2009).

Furthermore, if an organization admits a crisis situation and the organization rebuilds the situation it is plausible that the level of organizational transparency will be higher than when the organization denies the crisis situation. For example, when an organization admits a crisis situation the

organization presents that it is accountable for its actions and decisions, which is an important condition of organizational transparency (Cotterrel, 2000; Rawlins, 2009).

Additionally, Arpan and Pompper (2003) emphasize that organizations should use a highly proactive approach to crisis communication which is called 'stealing thunder strategy'. In crisis communication, stealing thunder is an admission of for example a failure before that failure is announced by an external party, such as the media. Thus, to steal thunder in a crisis situation, an organization must break the news instead of deny the crisis situation and wait to respond on messages from other parties (Arpen & Pompper, 2003). Hence, it can be assumed that when an organization admits the crisis situation before the crisis situation is announced by an external party, it will be perceived as more transparent than when the organization denies the crisis situation and only respond on messages from other parties. To test the effect of organizational crisis responses on perceived organizational transparency, the following hypothesis is formulated:

**Hypothesis 1a:** When an organization denies a crisis situation for which it is responsible, the organization will be perceived as less transparent than when the organization admits the crisis situation for which it is responsible.

Responsibility requires accountability and the organization must answer for its actions (Weiner, 2006). Thus, if an organization is responsible for a crisis situation stakeholders expect that the organization takes responsibility and that it is open about the crisis situation toward stakeholders. Openness is an important dimension of trust (Mishra, 1996). It could be stated that when an organization denies a crisis situation for which it is responsible stakeholders will perceive the organization as not being open about that crisis situation. Consequently, this could lead to a decline in organizational trust. Furthermore, concern is an important dimension of trust as well (Mishra, 1996). Thus, when an organization admits the crisis situation and is concerned about the victims of that crisis situation it can be stated that the trustworthiness of the organization will be higher than when the organization denies the crisis situation and does not pay attention to victims. To test the effect of organizational crisis responses on perceived organizational trustworthiness, the following hypothesis is formulated:

**Hypothesis 1b:** When an organization denies a crisis situation for which it is responsible, the perceived organizational trustworthiness will be less than when the organization admits the crisis situation for which it is responsible.

According to Attribution Theory, people are searching for causes of events, especially when these events are negative and unexpected situations, such as crisis situations (Weiner, 1985). A person attributes organizational responsibility for a crisis situation and will experience anger or sympathy toward that situation. If the cause of the crisis was controllable by the organization, the stakeholders will attribute a large amount of crisis responsibility to the organization. Additionally, the more the organization is deemed responsible for the crisis situation, the more stakeholders become angry and the higher the reputational threat (Coombs, 2007). However, the way an organization responds to a crisis situation influences the stakeholder's emotions (Coombs, 2007; Coombs & Holladay, 2005).

For example, if an organization apologizes for the situation and expresses concern for the victims, negative emotions will reduce (Coombs & Holladay, 2005). Therefore, it could be stated that stakeholders' negative emotions, such as anger will be higher when an organization denies the crisis situation for which it is responsible than when an organization admits the crisis situation. The following hypothesis is formulated to test the effect of crisis responses on company-directed emotions:

**Hypothesis 1c:** When an organization denies a crisis situation for which it is responsible, the stakeholders' negative emotions, such as anger, toward the organization will be higher than when the organization admits the crisis situation for which it is responsible.

In general it can be stated that transparency is the opposite of secrecy (Florini, 1998; Rawlins, 2009). Florini (1998) claims that "secrecy means deliberately hiding your actions and transparency means deliberately revealing them" (p.50). More explicitly, transparency can be seen as providing information, whether positive or negative, in an accurate, balanced, and unequivocal way that is understandable by stakeholders interested in that information (Heise, 1985; Rawlins, 2009). Additionally, transparency can only build trust when it enhances understanding, not when it just increases the flow of information (Gower, 2006; Strathern, 2000; Wall, 1996).

Rawlins (2009) defined transparency as having three important elements: "information that is truthful, substantial, and useful; participation of stakeholders in identifying the information they need; and objective, balanced reporting of an organization's activities and policies that holds the organization accountable" (p. 74). Organizations that engage in transparent communication need all these three important elements to build and restore trust with stakeholders (Balkin, 1999).

In the article of Rawlins (2009), a measurement of organizational transparency from the stakeholders' perspective is developed. According to that instrument, "transparent organizations should be seen as having integrity, respecting their stakeholders, and being open with their communication. An organization with its efforts to be more transparent with stakeholders should strive to score high on the participation, high on substantial information, and accountability dimensions, and low on the secretive dimension" (Rawlins, 2009, p. 96).

Rawlins' (2009) definition of transparency is supported by Klaidman and Beauchamp (1987). They state that substantial completeness is an important element of transparency. The goal of transparency is to truthfully communicate the reality of a particular situation (Martinson, 1996) and substantial completeness is a standard to measure truthful information (Klaidman & Beauchamp, 1987). Substantial completeness is the level at which the person's requirements for information are satisfied and thus the key to substantial completeness is knowing the information needs of external stakeholders (Klaidman & Beauchamp, 1987). In short, substantial completeness is concerned with the needs of the receiver, rather than the sender. This means that organizational transparency is evaluated by the stakeholder, rather than the organization. Thus, it can be stated that a self-assessment of organizational transparency has very little value. Therefore, it is important to investigate what the stakeholders want and need to know and then transparency can meet the needs of the stakeholders. Thus, it is about the stakeholders' perceived transparency rather than a self-assessment of organizational transparency.



For that reason, stakeholders need to be actively involved in the process of transparency through active participation in acquiring, distributing and creating knowledge rather than just the availability of information (Cotterrell, 2000). It can be concluded that participation of stakeholders is crucial in the process of transparency (Rawlins, 2009).

Rawlins (2009) did his research among employees of a large regional healthcare organization. Furthermore, it was about the overall organizational transparency over a longer period and not in a specific crisis situation. This study focuses on participation of stakeholders at a specific moment, namely a crisis situation. Despite these differences it is assumed that participation of stakeholders during a crisis situation will be crucial in the process of transparency as well. Participation of stakeholders in the process of transparency in this research is operationalized as interaction with stakeholders, which is similar to the definition of participation stated by Rawlins (2009). To test the effect of interaction with stakeholders on the perceived organizational transparency the following hypotheses is formulated:

**Hypothesis 2a:** When a crisis message provides stakeholders the opportunity to interact with the organization about the crisis situation, the organization will be perceived as more transparent than when the crisis message provides stakeholders no opportunity to interact with the organization about the crisis situation.

If an organization provides stakeholders the opportunity to interact with the organization about the crisis situation, it can be assumed that the organization is perceived as having the willingness to be open about what happened during that crisis situation. As mentioned before, openness is an important dimension of organizational trust (Mischra, 1996). Therefore, it could be stated that when an organization gives stakeholders the opportunity to interact with the organization it would be perceived as more trustworthy than when there is no opportunity to interact. To test this effect, the following hypothesis is formulated:

**Hypothesis 2b:** When a crisis message provides stakeholders the opportunity to interact with the organization about the crisis situation, the organization will be perceived as more trustworthy than when the crisis message provides stakeholders no opportunity to interact with the organization about the crisis situation.

Furthermore, Coombs and Holladay (2005) state that negative emotions will reduce when an organization expresses concern for the victims of the crisis situation. It is assumed that when there is an opportunity for interaction with the organization, the organization shows that it wants to talk with the stakeholders about the crisis situation. In turn, the organization could be perceived as it wants to show concern for the stakeholders involved in the crisis situation. To test this assumption the following hypothesis is formulated:

**Hypothesis 2c:** When a crisis message provides stakeholders the opportunity to interact with the organization about the crisis situation, stakeholders' negative emotions such as anger will be less than when the crisis message provides stakeholders no opportunity to interact with the organization about the crisis situation.

When a crisis contributed to a decline in trust, it is important to rebuild the trustworthiness of an organization after the crisis situation. Trustworthiness is a primary construct of reputational measures, such as the reputational quotient (RQ) (Coombs & Holladay, 2002) and therefore it is important to rebuild trust with the aim to prevent an organization's reputational harm.

Jahansoozi (2006), claims that transparency becomes a critical relational characteristic when crises or other organizational behaviors have contributed to a decline in trust. In addition to rebuilding trust, she argued that, "transparency can be viewed as a relational condition or variable that promotes accountability, collaboration, cooperation and commitment" (Jahansoozi, 2006, p. 11). Thus, instead of framing the news, transparency is crucial for rebuilding trust after a crisis. This is supported by the Rawlins (2009) who cited transparency as a means to gaining more trust from stakeholders. Furthermore, organizational transparency could be seen as an example of organizational vulnerability due to the fact that when an organization is transparent it is vulnerable as well. Vulnerability is an important aspect of trust and this aspect of trust is especially important in crisis situations (Mischra, 1996). This lead to the following hypothesis:

**Hypothesis 3a:** The higher the level of perceived organizational transparency after a crisis, the higher the level of perceived organizational trustworthiness.

As mentioned before, the way an organization responds to a crisis situation influences stakeholders' emotions (Coombs, 2007; Coombs & Holladay, 2005). When an organization denies the crisis situation and not expresses concern for victims, negative emotions such as anger will be higher than when the organization expresses concern for victims. Furthermore, it is stated before that denial negatively influences the perceived organizational transparency. Therefore, it can be stated that when stakeholders believe the organization is not completely open about the situation and thus the organization is not perceived as being transparent, stakeholders' negative emotions such as anger will be more generated than when an organization is perceived as being transparent. This leads to the following hypothesis:

**Hypothesis 3b:** The lower the level of perceived organizational transparency after a crisis, the higher the level of negative emotions such as anger towards the organization and its actions.

Besides, the following hypothesis is formulated to test the relation between perceived organizational trustworthiness and emotions towards the organization and its actions. It is assumed that if a crisis situation leads to organizational distrust, more negative emotions such as anger will be generated due to the fact that they feel betrayed by the organization (Mischra, 1996).

**Hypothesis 3c:** The lower the level of perceived organizational trustworthiness, the higher the level of negative emotions such as anger towards the organization and its actions.

Crisis involvement is the key to predicting emotions (McDonald & Härtel, 2000). Besides, organizational responsibility for the crisis situation is a predictor for negative emotions towards the organization (Coombs, 2007). For example, when stakeholders are highly involved in a crisis situation that is attributed to the organization, stakeholders react more negatively (McDonald et al., 2010) and

they feel they have the right to know the truth. Furthermore, if an organizational action for example a crisis situation can harm stakeholders, the involvement of those stakeholders is high and it is likely that the need for transparent communication about that crisis situation will be high as well. This lead to the following hypotheses:

**Hypothesis 4a:** The higher the level of stakeholders' involvement in a crisis situation, the more negative company-directed emotions such as anger will be generated.

**Hypothesis 4b:** The more negative company-directed emotions, such as anger, are generated by stakeholders, the higher the need for organizational transparency about the crisis situation.

**Hypothesis 4c:** The higher the level of stakeholders' involvement in a crisis situation, the higher the need for organizational transparency about the crisis situation.

## 2. Methods

### 2.1. Design

The study employed a 2 (crisis response: denial vs. admission) x 2 (interactivity effort: opportunity for interaction vs. no opportunity for interaction) experimental design. A hypothetical situation was described and the respondents were asked to imagine the situation if it was a real occurrence on their work or school. In the crisis scenario described in the hypothetical situation, the organization was responsible for the crisis and could prevent the situation if enhanced control took place earlier. To manipulate the crisis response strategy, the respondents viewed either a crisis message in which the organization denied the situation and act if nothing went wrong or a crisis message in which the organization admitted the situation and apologized for the incident. Thus, in the admission condition the organization used a 'stealing thunder strategy' described by Arpan and Pompper (2003) and in the denial condition the organization did not steal thunder. The interactivity effort was manipulated by the opportunity to interact with the organization or not. In two conditions participants got the opportunity to react on the website or by giving a phone call. In the other two conditions participants got no opportunity to react. According to Rawlins (2009), participation is one of the most important dimensions of organizational transparency. In this study, the opportunity for interaction is used instead of Rawlins' (2009) definition of participation due to the fact that opportunity for interaction could be easily manipulated and is similar to the opportunity for participation.

The texts of the four conditions were:

#### **Denial - Opportunity for interaction:**

*Research has investigated presence of salmonella bacteria in the food of our canteen. Currently, the research is still running and evidence must show in which food the salmonella bacteria is presented. Two people in our organization are in critical illness situation and it seems that the salmonella bacteria is the cause of their situation. Nevertheless, there is no reason to panic because it is not sure that the two people became very ill due to the salmonella bacteria. Therefore, the doors of the canteen are still open and you can still buy your drink and food in our canteen.*

*If you have questions or remarks about our message, you can interact with us via: [www.reageren.nl](http://www.reageren.nl) or give a phone call via: 0002-58 00 27. We will answer your questions.*

#### **Denial – No opportunity for interaction:**

*Research has investigated presence of salmonella bacteria in the food of our canteen. Currently, the research is still running and evidence must show in which food the salmonella bacteria is presented. Two people in our organization are in critical illness situation and it seems that the salmonella bacteria is the cause of their situation. Nevertheless, there is no reason to panic because it is not sure that the two people became very ill due to the salmonella bacteria. Therefore, the doors of the canteen are still open and you can still buy your drink and food in our canteen.*

**Admission – Opportunity for interaction:**

*Research has investigated presence of salmonella bacteria in the food of our canteen. Currently, the research is still running and evidence must show in which food the salmonella bacteria is presented. Two people in our organization are in critical illness situation and it seems that the salmonella bacteria is the cause of their situation. We think it is terrible something like this could happen and we apologize for this situation. During the research, the doors of the canteen will be closed and it is not possible to buy drink and food in our canteen.*

*If you have questions or remarks about our message, you can interact with us via: [www.reageren.nl](http://www.reageren.nl) or give a phone call via: 0002-58 00 27. We will answer your questions.*

**Admission – No opportunity for interaction:**

*Research has investigated presence of salmonella bacteria in the food of our canteen. Currently, the research is still running and evidence must show in which food the salmonella bacteria is presented. Two people in our organization are in critical illness situation and it seems that the salmonella bacteria is the cause of their situation. We think it is terrible something like this could happen and we apologize for this situation. During the research, the doors of the canteen will be closed and it is not possible to buy drink and food in our canteen.*

## 2.2. Procedure

An online survey was created with Survey Monkey, a tool to create and distribute online surveys. The language of the survey was Dutch. Participants who are working or are student were invited via e-mail and Facebook to participate in a short study.

After a short introduction, a screenshot of a hypothetical crisis communication message was shown. Depending on the experimental condition, respondents were presented with one of the two crisis responses in combination with the opportunity to react or with no opportunity to react on the message. Survey Monkey assigned the participants randomly to the conditions and it prohibited respondents from participating twice.

After viewing the screenshot, first control questions and manipulation check were assessed. Furthermore, to make sure that no respondent have experienced the hypothetical situation before in its own daily life, a specific control question was formulated. On the other pages respondents answered questions on perceived transparency, involvement in the situation, the need for transparency, company-directed emotions, and trustworthiness of the organization. Finally, two multiple choice questions and one open question were formulated for providing information regarding three demographic background variables: 'What is your gender?'; 'What is your age (in years)?'; 'What is your highest accomplished study?'.

On the last page, participants were thanked for participating in the study. Because participating in the study took approximately 10 minutes, no incentives were provided. The questionnaire used in this study is presented in appendix A.

### 2.3. Participants

The online survey was implemented through e-mail and Facebook of family and friends. Most of them are living in the northern regions of The Netherlands, Friesland and Groningen. To assure a high rate of respondents, people were requested to share the link of the online survey with others. The downside of this method is that the overall response rate could not be determined. Only respondents who are working or who are a student, were asked to participate in the study.

Overall, 211 respondents started to participate and 165 completed the experiment (response rate: 78,2%). 58 Men (35,2%) and 107 women (64,8%) participated and the mean age of 165 respondents was  $M=31.65$  years. 70 Respondents accomplished HBO (42,4%), 36 respondents accomplished WO (21,8%), 33 respondents finished MBO (20%) and the other 26 respondents (15.8%) accomplished another education. The four conditions were compared to see whether the distribution of the respondents according to demographic characteristics was successfully randomized. A Fisher's exact test for cross tables was used to investigate if differences in demographic characteristics between the four conditions could be found. The Fisher's exact test presented no significant differences, so the randomization was successful.

### 2.4. Dependent measures

Three dependent variables were measured, perceived transparency, perceived organizational trustworthiness, and company-directed emotions. Statements were formulated to measure the dependent variables and for each of the statements participants had to indicate on a seven-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree) the extent to which they (dis)agree with each of them.

*Perceived transparency* was measured by six items from Rawlins (2009). Participants indicated their agreement on the following items: 'I think the given information is reliable'; 'In my opinion the organization is not honest about the situation' (reverse); 'I think the organization is completely open about the situation'; 'In my opinion the message about the situation shows that the organization is ethical'; 'It seems that the organization is not sincere about the situation' (reverse); 'The organization is willing to listen'. In this study  $\alpha = .81$ , which means that the scale used for perceived transparency was very reliable.

To measure the level of the *perceived organization's trustworthiness*, the following items were used: 'I trust the organization'; 'I am not sure if the information is reliable' (reverse); 'I trust the organization that they operate in a way that it is not negative for me'; 'I am not sure if I can trust the organization' (reverse); 'I think the organization is trustworthy'; 'The organization is truthful in its dealings with me'. In this study  $\alpha = .88$ , which means that the scale used for perceived organizational trustworthiness was very reliable.

*Company-directed emotions* were measured by four items mentioned in the article of McDonald et al. (2010): anger, satisfaction, surprise, and sympathy. The following statements were presented: 'I am angry towards the organization and the way the organization deals with the situation' (reverse);

'I am positive about how the organization deals with the situation'; 'I am satisfied about how the organization deals with the situation'; 'Due to this situation, I am very negative about the organization' (reverse); 'I have no feelings about the organization and the situation'. In this study  $\alpha = .85$ , which means that the scale used for company-directed emotions was very reliable.

## 2.5. Additional variables

Some additional variables were measured for additional analysis, such as involvement in the situation, and the need for transparency. For each variable several statements were formulated. Participants had to indicate on a seven-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree) the extent to which they (dis)agree with each of the statements.

*Involvement in the situation* was measured by the following four items from (McQuarrie & Munson, 1992): 'The information about the situation is very important for me'; 'I am not interested in the given information'(reverse); 'The message about the situation does not matter to me'(reverse); 'I think it is interesting information'. In this study  $\alpha = .80$ , which means that the scale used for involvement in the situation is very reliable.

To measure the *need for transparency*, participants indicated their agreement on the following newly formulated items: 'I think it is important that the organization have send the message to me'; 'I see no reason why the organization shared this information with me' (reverse); 'In my opinion it is important that the organization send complete information about the situation'; 'I think the organization should always share this kind of information with me'. In this study  $\alpha = .61$ , which is an acceptable reliability.

## 2.6. Control variables and manipulation check

Two control questions (multiple choice) were formulated to test if the crisis scenarios were read well: 'Which bacteria is discovered in the food of the canteen?'; 'In which food is the bacteria discovered?'.

Three items checked the manipulation of the crisis response. Respondents indicated their agreement with the following statements on a seven-point scale: 'The organization denies the crisis situation'; 'The organization admits the crisis situation and apologize'; 'The organization acts like nothing went wrong'. In this study  $\alpha = .84$ , which means that the scale used for the manipulation check of crisis responses was very reliable. Six items from (Rawlins, 2009) checked the manipulation of the interactivity effort: 'I think the message from the organization gives me enough opportunity to react'; 'The organization shows that they want to involve me in the situation'; 'I think there is not enough opportunity to provide feedback to the organization' (reverse); 'I think the message shows concern about my opinion'; 'In my opinion the organization gives me the opportunity to talk about the situation'; 'I think the organization does not give the impression that they are willing to understand me'(reverse). In this study  $\alpha = .83$ , which means that the scale used for the manipulation check of interactivity effort was very reliable.

### 3. Results

#### 3.1. Manipulation checks

Participants who read the hypothetical situation in which the organization denied the crisis situation ( $M=4.64$ ,  $SD=1.695$ ) scored significantly higher on the item 'the organization denies the crisis situation' than participants who read the situation in which the organization admitted the crisis situation ( $M=2.36$ ,  $SD=1.34$ ),  $t(141.55)=9.51$ ,  $p<.001$ . Participants in the denial condition ( $M=2.45$ ,  $SD=1.29$ ) scored significantly lower on the item 'the organization admits the crisis situation and apologize' than participants in the admission condition ( $M=5.26$ ,  $SD=1.63$ ),  $t(163)=-12.147$ ,  $p<.001$ . Furthermore, participants in the denial condition ( $M=4.29$ ,  $SD=1.80$ ) scored significantly higher on the item 'the organization acts like nothing went wrong' than participants in the admission condition ( $M=1.98$ ,  $SD=1.03$ ),  $t(115.27)=9.88$ ,  $p<.001$ . Thus, the manipulation of the crisis response was successful.

Participants who read the hypothetical situation in which there was an opportunity to interact with the organization ( $M=4.48$ ,  $SD=1.08$ ) scored significantly higher on the perceived possibility for interaction than participants who read the hypothetical situation in which there was no opportunity to interact ( $M=3.39$ ,  $SD=1.08$ ),  $t(163)=6.49$ ,  $p<.001$ . Thus, the manipulation of the interactivity effort was also successful.

#### 3.2. Control questions

Almost all respondents (98.8%) answered 'salmonella' on the question 'which bacteria is discovered in the food of the canteen?'. This is the correct answer. 1.2% answered 'E.coli-bacteria' and no participant answered 'Listeria bacteria'. Thus, this control variable was successful. Furthermore, 94% answered 'that is still unknown' on the question 'in which is the bacteria discovered?'. This is the correct answer. 3% of the respondents gave the answer 'in filet american' and also 3% answered 'in the eggs'. Thus, this control question was also successful.

Furthermore, 7 respondents (4.2%) answered 'yes' on the question 'have you ever been sick before due to the bacteria that is mentioned in the text?'. For these respondents, it was not really a hypothetical situation due to the fact that they have experienced for real to be sick due to the salmonella bacteria. It is assumable that this real experience could influence the answers given on the questions about the hypothetical situation presented in this research. To be sure that there will be no differences in results between the respondents who have experienced the situation in its own daily life and the respondents who did not have experienced it for real, the 7 respondents are deleted in the analyses that will be presented hereafter.



### 3.3. Effects of the manipulation

To measure the effects of the manipulation variables on the dependent variables ANOVA tests were executed.

#### 3.3.1. Main effects of crisis response

The perceived organizational transparency was lower when the organization denied the crisis situation ( $M=3.94$ ,  $SD=.11$ ) than when the organization admitted the crisis situation ( $M=4.72$ ,  $SD=.10$ ),  $F(1,156)=26.74$ ,  $p<.001$ . The results are significant and thus H1a is supported.

The perceived organizational trustworthiness was significantly higher in the admission condition ( $M=4.76$ ,  $SD=.11$ ) than in the denial condition ( $M=3.96$ ,  $SD=.13$ ),  $F(1,156)=22.41$ ,  $p<.001$ . Thus H1b is supported.

Participants had more positive emotions, such as satisfaction and positive feelings, towards the organization when the organization admitted the crisis situation ( $M=4.66$ ,  $SD=.12$ ) than when the organization denied the crisis situation ( $M=3.74$ ,  $SD=.13$ ),  $F(1,156)=28.52$ ,  $p<.001$ . Thus H1c is also supported.

#### 3.3.2. Main effects of interactivity effort

The perceived level of organizational transparency was little higher when there was an opportunity to interact with the organization ( $M=4.39$ ,  $SD=.12$ ) than when there was no opportunity to interact ( $M=4.35$ ,  $SD=.11$ ), however the difference was not significant,  $F(1,156)=.05$ , ns. Thus H2a is not supported.

Participants thought the organization was a little more trustworthy when there was no opportunity to interact ( $M=4.51$ ,  $SD=.13$ ) than when there was an opportunity to interact ( $M=4.27$ ,  $SD=.13$ ), however the difference was not significant,  $F(1,156)=1.69$ , ns. Thus H2b is not supported.

Almost no differences in emotions towards the organization was presented when there was an opportunity to interact ( $M=4.25$ ,  $SD=.13$ ) and when not ( $M=4.23$ ,  $SD=.13$ ). Thus, no main effect of the interactivity effort on company-directed emotions of the participants was found,  $F(1,156)=.01$ , ns. This means that H2c is not supported.

#### 3.3.3. Interaction effects of crisis response and interactivity effort

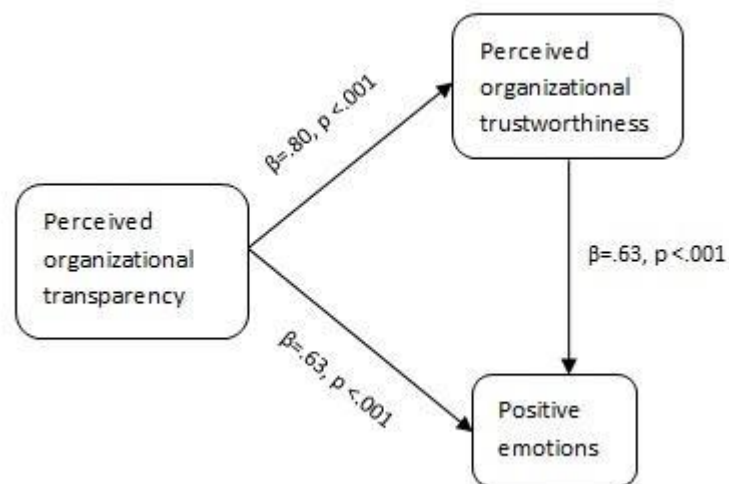
It seems that the perceived organizational transparency is higher in the denial cluster when there is no opportunity for interaction than when there is an opportunity to interact, but that the perceived organizational transparency is higher in the admission cluster when there is an opportunity to interact than when there is no opportunity to interact. However, results present that there is no significant interaction effect of crisis response and interactivity effort on perceived organizational transparency,  $F(1,156)=1.17$ , ns. For company-directed emotions the interaction effect between crisis response and interactivity effort was not significant as well,  $F(1,156)=.42$ , ns.

For perceived organizational trustworthiness no interaction effect has been found.

### 3.4. Regression analysis for dependent measures

A regression analysis was executed to find evidence for correlations between the dependent measures; perceived organizational transparency, perceived organizational trustworthiness, and company-directed emotions. The results are presented in figure 1.

Figure 1: Regression model for dependent measures



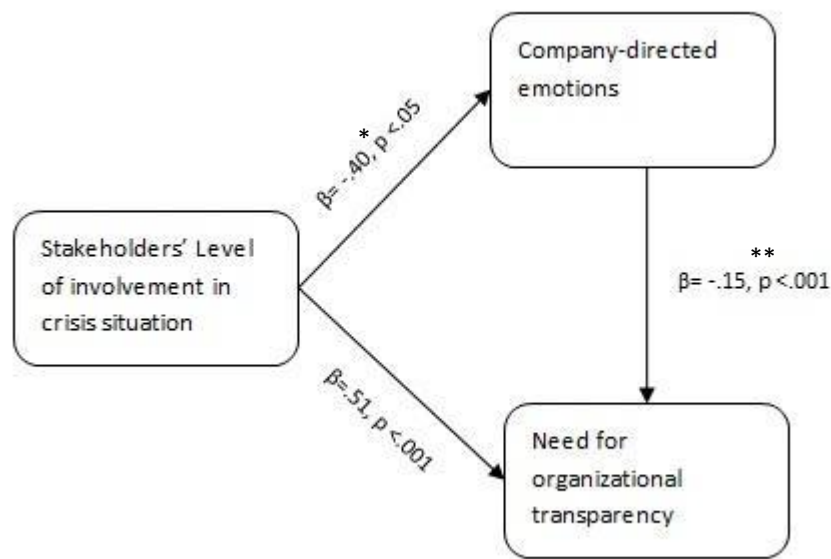
Results show that the higher the level of perceived organizational transparency, the higher the level of perceived organizational trustworthiness,  $\beta=.80, p<.001$ . Which means that perceived organizational transparency can be seen as a predictor of perceived organizational trustworthiness. Thus H3a is supported.

Furthermore, perceived organizational transparency is positively correlated with company-directed emotions. Which means that the higher the level of perceived organizational transparency, the higher the level of positive company-directed emotions,  $\beta=.63, p<.001$ . Thus H3b is supported. Moreover, results show that the higher the level of perceived organizational trustworthiness, the higher the level of positive company-directed emotions,  $\beta=.63, p<.001$ . Thus H3c is also supported.

### 3.5. Regression analysis for additional variables

Another regression analysis was executed for the additional variables; level of involvement in the crisis situation, the need for transparency, and company-directed emotions. Results are presented in figure 2 on the next page.

Figure 2: Regression model for additional variables



\*negative correlation between level of involvement and (positive) company-directed emotions

\*\*negative correlation between (positive) company-directed emotions and need for organizational transparency

Additional results show that there is a relation between the level of involvement in the crisis situation and negative company-directed emotions from the crisis situation. Which means that the higher the level of stakeholders' involvement in the crisis situation, the more negative company-directed emotions will be evoked,  $\beta = -.40, p < .005$ . Thus H4a is supported.

Furthermore, emotions can be seen as a predictor for the need for transparency about the crisis situation. Results present that the higher the level of positive company-directed emotions, the lower the need for organizational transparency,  $\beta = -.15, p < .001$ . Moreover, this means that the more negative company-directed emotions, such as anger, are generated by stakeholders, the higher their need for organizational transparency about the crisis situation will be. Thus H4b is supported.

Finally, the higher the level of stakeholders' involvement in the crisis situation, the higher the stakeholders' need for organizational transparency,  $\beta = .51, p < .001$ . Thus H4c is also supported.

## 4. Discussion of results

### 4.1. Conclusion

The experiment examined the effects of organizational crisis responses and interactivity efforts on perceived organizational transparency, perceived organizational trustworthiness, and company-directed emotions. The results indicated that the crisis response matters more than providing stakeholders the opportunity to interact with the organization or not. For all three dependent measures main effects of crisis response occurred, whereas the interactivity effort had no significant main effect on the dependent measures.

First, this study found that organizations should admit a crisis situation instead of deny it to enhance the perceived organizational transparency. When an organization admits a crisis situation, it presents that it is accountable for its actions and decisions and accountability is an important condition of organizational transparency (Cotterrel, 2000; Rawlins, 2009). Thus, the results found in this study support existing literature.

Mishra (1996), states that openness and concern are important dimensions of trust. In the admission condition the organization apologized and showed concern for the stakeholders. Results provided significant evidence that the level of organizational trustworthiness will be higher when the organization admits the crisis situation than when it denies it. It is important to rebuild trust with the aim to prevent organizations' reputational harm (Coombs & Holladay, 2002). It could be stated that an organization should admit a crisis situation instead of deny it to prevent its perceived organizational trustworthiness as well as its organizational reputation.

Finally, this study provided evidence that an organization should admit the crisis situation instead of deny it to reduce negative emotions, such as anger. This is supported by Coombs and Holladay (2005) who state that if an organization apologizes for the situation and expresses concern for the stakeholders, negative emotions of stakeholders will reduce.

It can be concluded that when an organization is responsible for a crisis situation and the organization admits that crisis situation, stakeholders perceive the organization as more transparent, more trustworthy, and are more positive affected towards the organization than when the organization denies the crisis situation and acts like nothing went wrong. Thus, organizations should admit a crisis situation due to the fact that it is less harmful for an organization and its reputation.

This study does not provided evidence that organizations should give stakeholders the opportunity to interact with the organization about a crisis situation. Rawlins (2009), states that participation of stakeholders is one of the most important elements of transparency due to the fact that a self-assessment of organizational transparency without the input of stakeholders has very little value. However, in this research the opportunity for interaction versus no opportunity for interaction created no main effect and thus was equally effective on perceived organizational transparency, perceived organizational trustworthiness, and company-directed emotions. This is contrary to the statement of Rawlins (2009). However, this could be explained by the fact that Rawlins (2009) accomplished his research among employees who were actually working in a specific healthcare organization. Furthermore, the study of Rawlins (2009) focused on the evaluation of overall organizational transparency over a longer period and not in a specific crisis situation at a specific moment. Moreover, Rawlins (2009) states that it is about the process of participation in which

stakeholders need to be actively involved to create organizational transparency. In this experimental study, respondents read a crisis message in which the opportunity to interact was presented or not. Thus, not a whole process of participation was created and tested in this research, there was just the opportunity to interact or not by presenting a website or phone number in the crisis message or not. Therefore, it could be that the respondents did not perceive this as an opportunity to interact with the organization but just the possibility to obtain more information. This could be a reason why in this study no main effects of the interactivity effort on the dependent measures were found.

Results presented that the manipulation of the interactivity effort was successful. Nevertheless, the differences between the opportunity to interact with the organization and no opportunity to interact, by presenting a website or phone number in the crisis message or not, created no main effect on perceived organizational transparency, perceived organizational trustworthiness, and company-directed emotions. A reason could be that it were hypothetical situations and thus the respondents were not really employees of the organization described in the conditions. Furthermore, the respondents experienced the crisis situation not for real. It is arguable that this resulted in lack of involvement in the crisis situation and toward the organization. That could be a reason why the opportunity to interact with the organization or not did not result in significant differences.

Furthermore, the experiment tested the relationship between the three dependent measures. Results indicated that there is a significant correlation between all three dependent measures. For example, the higher the level of perceived organizational transparency, the higher the level of perceived organizational trustworthiness. Thus, it can be stated that perceived organizational transparency is a predictor for perceived organizational trustworthiness. This is supported by Jahansoozi (2006), who states that transparency is crucial for rebuilding trust after a crisis situation. This means that it is crucial for organizations to be transparent about the crisis situation, otherwise the level of trustworthiness will decline and this will be harmful for the organizational reputation (Coombs & Holladay, 2002).

Additionally, perceived organizational transparency is positively correlated with company-directed emotions. Which means that the higher the level of perceived organizational transparency, the less negative emotions will be presented by stakeholders. As mentioned before, this research provided evidence that admission of the crisis situation positively influences the perceived organizational transparency. Furthermore, Coombs (2007) states that when an organization admits a crisis situation for which it is responsible and apologizes for the situation, negative emotions will reduce. Thus, results found in this study support existing literature.

Moreover, the level of perceived organizational trustworthiness predicts the level of company-directed emotions. Thus, the lower the level of perceived organizational trustworthiness the more negative emotions such as anger towards the organization will be presented. This is supported by Mishra (1996), who states that if a crisis situation leads to organizational distrust, it will lead to negative feelings due to the fact that stakeholders feel betrayed.

In short it can be concluded that the perceived level of organizational transparency is crucial for the perceived trustworthiness of a company as well as for the emotions towards that company. And thus it is proved that organizations should engage in transparent communication to rebuild the overall company evaluation after a crisis situation (Coombs, 2007; Jahansoozi, 2006).

Finally, additional research tested the relation between the level of involvement in the crisis situation, the need for transparency about that crisis situation, and company-directed emotions. There is significant evidence that the level of crisis involvement predicts the level of negative emotions such as anger. This means that the higher the level of stakeholder's involvement in the crisis situation, the more negative emotions will be generated by the stakeholder. This is supported by McDonald et al. (2010). Furthermore, it is assumed that this negative reaction will lead to a higher need for transparency, due to the fact that stakeholders feel they have the right to know the truth about the crisis situation. Results supported this assumption. Finally, results indicated that the higher the level of involvement in a crisis situation, the higher the need for transparency. Thus, it can be concluded that the level of involvement is a strong predictor for stakeholders' emotions as well as for the need for transparency. Which means that when stakeholders are highly involved in for example a crisis situation, stakeholders are more negative and their need for transparency is high. Thus, it can be stated that organizations should be transparent in its communication towards the stakeholders involved in the crisis situation.

## **4.2. Practical implications**

The most important practical implication is that an organization should 'steal thunder' and admit the crisis situation instead of deny it. Due to the fact that the perceived organizational transparency and the perceived organizational trustworthiness will be higher if an organization admits the crisis situation and apologizes for the situation. Furthermore, stakeholders are more positive affected towards the organization. All these three dependent variables are important for the overall company evaluation after a crisis situation. Thus, to prevent reputational harm after a crisis situation organizations should admit a crisis situation instead of deny it.

Furthermore, it is investigated that the higher the level of stakeholders' involvement in a crisis situation, the higher the need for transparency and the more negative emotions will be generated. Thus, the stakeholders who are highly involved in the crisis situation, reacts more negative and thus these stakeholders should be seen as the one who are most dangerous for an organizational reputation after a crisis situation. If stakeholders are highly involved in the crisis situation and react negative, their need for transparency is high. Therefore, organizations should be specifically transparent towards stakeholders who are highly involved in the crisis situation. Moreover, results indicated that when an organization engages in transparent communication after a crisis situation, especially towards stakeholders who are highly involved in the situation, it can rebuild its trustworthiness after a crisis situation which is important to diminish the reputational harm after a crisis situation. Thus, it can be concluded that organizational engagement in transparent communication is crucial. However, if an organization wants to be perceived as transparent it should be aware of the fact that a self-assessment of organizational transparency has very little value. Actually, it is about the stakeholders' perception of organizational transparency. Therefore, organizations should involve its stakeholders actively in the process of transparency. Only with the input of its stakeholders an organization knows when it will be perceived as transparent.

### **4.3. Implications for future research**

This study presents enough evidence that perceived organizational transparency during crisis situations is crucial to rebuild trust and to prevent the organizational reputation. However, this study does not present enough evidence when and how an organization exactly will be perceived as transparent or not. It is measured that the organizational crisis response, admission versus denial, has influence on the perceived organizational transparency. This means that when an organization admits the crisis situation it will be perceived as more transparent than when the organization denies the crisis situation. However, it is not sure that this is the only criterion which indicates the level of perceived organizational transparency. Furthermore, Rawlins (2009) states that participation is one of the most important transparency efforts. A similar effort 'opportunity for interaction' is used in this study, however results did not present a main effect of this effort on perceived organizational transparency during a crisis situation. Furthermore, it did not create a main effect on perceived organizational trustworthiness and company-directed emotions as well. In the crisis message there was the opportunity to interact or not, by presenting a website or phone number in the bottom line of the crisis message or not. It could be that the respondents did not perceive this as an opportunity to interact with the organization but just the possibility to obtain more information. It can be stated that more research on interactivity efforts is needed. Future research should focus on what stakeholders really perceive as a possibility for interaction. If that is investigated, further research should test again the effect of interaction possibilities during crisis situations on perceived organizational transparency, perceived organizational trustworthiness, and company-directed emotions.

The inter correlation between perceived organizational transparency, perceived organizational trustworthiness, and company-directed emotions is very high. This means that the correlation between perceived organizational transparency and company-directed emotions is exactly the same as the correlation between perceived organizational trustworthiness and company-directed emotions. It is possible that the same constructs were measured instead of three different dependent measures. To be sure that the constructs were not the same, the constructs should be investigated for further elaboration in future research.

This study used an experiment with a hypothetical situation, thus stakeholders experienced the situation not for real. This could have influenced the results. Future research should accomplish a study in which stakeholders experience the crisis situation for real to investigate if results will be the same under other conditions. Besides, for this experiment only one crisis type was used. The organization was responsible for the crisis situation. However, results could be different in another crisis type such as the victim cluster in which the organization is not responsible for the crisis situation. Furthermore, only two crisis responses were used. Results could be different when other crisis responses than denial and admission will be used. In short, more research is needed to test if results are the same under other conditions.

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## Appendix A: Questionnaire

### 1. Welkom

Hartelijk welkom bij deze vragenlijst.

De vragenlijst gaat over communicatie tijdens crisissituaties. Op de eerstvolgende pagina is een situatie omschreven waarbij u zich moet voorstellen dat de situatie zich afspeelt binnen het bedrijf waar u werkzaam bent of op de school waar u studeert. Vervolgens worden hier vragen over gesteld. Bij de vragen worden invulinstructies gegeven.

Deelname aan deze vragenlijst is anoniem en de gegevens worden vertrouwelijk behandeld. Het invullen van de vragenlijst duurt ongeveer 10 minuten. Er zijn geen foute antwoorden mogelijk.

Succes!

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### 2. Situatieschets

Stelt u zich eens voor dat onderstaand bericht vanuit de organisatie komt waar u op dit moment werkzaam bent of waar u op dit moment studeert:

#### Scenario 1:

Onderzoek heeft uitgewezen dat er salmonella in het voedsel van onze kantine bevindt. Op dit moment loopt het onderzoek nog en zal blijken waar de bacterie zich precies in bevindt. Twee van onze medewerkers zijn in de afgelopen periode ernstig ziek geworden en het lijkt er op dat het door de salmonella bacterie komt. Desondanks is er geen reden voor paniek, want het is nog niet zeker dat de medewerkers daadwerkelijk ziek zijn geworden door de salmonella bacterie. De kantine zal daarom gewoon open blijven en je kan jouw lunch in onze kantine blijven nuttigen. Als je vragen of opmerkingen over bovenstaand bericht hebt, reageer dan via de link: [www.reageren.nl](http://www.reageren.nl) of bel naar het telefoonnummer: 0002-58 00 27. Wij zullen je vervolgens te woord staan over de situatie.

#### Scenario 2:

Onderzoek heeft uitgewezen dat er salmonella in het voedsel van onze kantine bevindt. Op dit moment loopt het onderzoek nog en zal blijken waar de bacterie zich precies in bevindt. Twee van onze medewerkers zijn in de afgelopen periode ernstig ziek geworden en het lijkt er op dat het door de salmonella bacterie komt. Desondanks is er geen reden voor paniek, want het is nog niet zeker dat de medewerkers daadwerkelijk ziek zijn geworden door de salmonella bacterie. De kantine zal daarom gewoon open blijven en je kan jouw lunch in onze kantine blijven nuttigen.

#### Scenario 3:

Onderzoek heeft uitgewezen dat er salmonella in het voedsel van onze kantine bevindt. Op dit moment loopt het onderzoek nog en zal blijken waar de bacterie zich precies in bevindt. Twee van onze medewerkers zijn in de afgelopen periode ernstig ziek geworden en het lijkt er op dat het door de salmonella bacterie komt. Wij vinden het verschrikkelijk dat zoiets heeft kunnen gebeuren en

bieden onze oprechte excuses aan voor de situatie. Zolang het onderzoek loopt, zullen de deuren van de kantine sluiten en is er geen mogelijkheid om jouw lunch bij ons te nuttigen.

Als je vragen of opmerkingen over bovenstaand bericht hebt, reageer dan via de link: [www.reageren.nl](http://www.reageren.nl) of bel naar het telefoonnummer: 0002-58 00 27. Wij zullen je vervolgens te woord staan over de situatie.

#### **Scenario 4:**

Onderzoek heeft uitgewezen dat er salmonella in het voedsel van onze kantine bevindt. Op dit moment loopt het onderzoek nog en zal blijken waar de bacterie zich precies in bevindt. Twee van onze medewerkers zijn in de afgelopen periode ernstig ziek geworden en het lijkt er op dat het door de salmonella bacterie komt. Wij vinden het verschrikkelijk dat zoiets heeft kunnen gebeuren en bieden onze oprechte excuses aan voor de situatie. Zolang het onderzoek loopt, zullen de deuren van de kantine sluiten en is er geen mogelijkheid om jouw lunch bij ons te nuttigen.

---

### **5. Vragen**

Geef bij onderstaande stellingen aan in hoeverre u het er mee oneens of mee eens bent:

- De organisatie ontkent dat er een crisis is.

Helemaal oneens – Oneens – Beetje oneens – Neutraal – Beetje eens – Eens – Helemaal eens

- De organisatie geeft toe dat er een crisis is en biedt haar excuses aan.

Helemaal oneens – Oneens – Beetje oneens – Neutraal – Beetje eens – Eens – Helemaal eens

- De organisatie doet alsof er niks aan de hand is.

Helemaal oneens – Oneens – Beetje oneens – Neutraal – Beetje eens – Eens – Helemaal eens

---

### **6. Vragen**

- Welke bacterie bevindt zich in het voedsel?

☐ Listeria

☐ Salmonella

☐ E.coli-bacterie

- In welk voedsel bevindt de bacterie zich?

☐ In de filet americain

☐ In de eieren

☐ Dat is nog onbekend

- Bent u in het verleden zelf wel eens ziek geworden door de bacterie die is genoemd in de tekst?

☐ Ja

☐ Nee

---

## 7. Vragen

Geef bij onderstaande stellingen aan in hoeverre u het er mee oneens of mee eens bent.

- Ik vind dat de boodschap mij voldoende mogelijkheid biedt om te reageren op de situatie en de organisatie.

Helemaal oneens – Oneens – Beetje oneens – Neutraal – Beetje eens – Eens – Helemaal eens

- De organisatie laat zien dat ze mij willen betrekken in de situatie.

Helemaal oneens – Oneens – Beetje oneens – Neutraal – Beetje eens – Eens – Helemaal eens

- Ik vind dat er onvoldoende mogelijkheid is om feedback aan de organisatie te geven over de situatie.

Helemaal oneens – Oneens – Beetje oneens – Neutraal – Beetje eens – Eens – Helemaal eens

- Ik vind dat de organisatie laat zien dat ze naar mijn mening willen luisteren.

Helemaal oneens – Oneens – Beetje oneens – Neutraal – Beetje eens – Eens – Helemaal eens

- De organisatie geeft mij de mogelijkheid om details over de situatie te bespreken.

Helemaal oneens – Oneens – Beetje oneens – Neutraal – Beetje eens – Eens – Helemaal eens

- Volgens mij staat de organisatie niet open voor mijn mening.

Helemaal oneens – Oneens – Beetje oneens – Neutraal – Beetje eens – Eens – Helemaal eens

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## 8. Vragen

Geef bij onderstaande stellingen aan in hoeverre u het er mee oneens of mee eens bent.

- Ik denk dat de informatie over de situatie betrouwbaar is.

Helemaal oneens – Oneens – Beetje oneens – Neutraal – Beetje eens – Eens – Helemaal eens

- Naar mijn mening is de organisatie niet eerlijk over de situatie.

Helemaal oneens – Oneens – Beetje oneens – Neutraal – Beetje eens – Eens – Helemaal eens

-

- Ik denk dat de organisatie geheel open over de situatie is.

Helemaal oneens – Oneens – Beetje oneens – Neutraal – Beetje eens – Eens – Helemaal eens

- Naar mijn mening laat de boodschap over de situatie zien dat de organisatie integer is.

Helemaal oneens – Oneens – Beetje oneens – Neutraal – Beetje eens – Eens – Helemaal eens

- Volgens mij is de organisatie niet oprecht over de situatie.

Helemaal oneens – Oneens – Beetje oneens – Neutraal – Beetje eens – Eens – Helemaal eens

- De organisatie laat zien dat ze wil luisteren naar anderen.

Helemaal oneens – Oneens – Beetje oneens – Neutraal – Beetje eens – Eens – Helemaal eens

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## 9. Vragen

Geef bij onderstaande stellingen aan in hoeverre u het er mee oneens of mee eens bent.

- Ik vind de informatie over de situatie erg belangrijk.

Helemaal oneens – Oneens – Beetje oneens – Neutraal – Beetje eens – Eens – Helemaal eens

- Ik ben niet geïnteresseerd in de informatie over de situatie.

Helemaal oneens – Oneens – Beetje oneens – Neutraal – Beetje eens – Eens – Helemaal eens

- De boodschap over de situatie vind ik niet belangrijk.

Helemaal oneens – Oneens – Beetje oneens – Neutraal – Beetje eens – Eens – Helemaal eens

- Ik vind het interessante informatie.

Helemaal oneens – Oneens – Beetje oneens – Neutraal – Beetje eens – Eens – Helemaal eens

- De situatie heeft een grote impact op mij.

Helemaal oneens – Oneens – Beetje oneens – Neutraal – Beetje eens – Eens – Helemaal eens

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## 10. Vragen

Geef bij onderstaande stellingen aan in hoeverre u het er mee oneens of mee eens bent.

- Ik vind het belangrijk dat de organisatie deze informatie met mij deelt.

Helemaal oneens – Oneens – Beetje oneens – Neutraal – Beetje eens – Eens – Helemaal eens

- Ik begrijp niet waarom de organisatie deze informatie met mij deelt.

Helemaal oneens – Oneens – Beetje oneens – Neutraal – Beetje eens – Eens – Helemaal eens

- Naar mijn mening is het belangrijk dat de organisatie volledige informatie over de situatie verstrekt.

Helemaal oneens – Oneens – Beetje oneens – Neutraal – Beetje eens – Eens – Helemaal eens

- Ik vind dat de organisatie alle informatie met betrekking tot de organisatie altijd met mij moet delen.

Helemaal oneens – Oneens – Beetje oneens – Neutraal – Beetje eens – Eens – Helemaal eens

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## 11. Vragen

Geef bij onderstaande stellingen aan in hoeverre u het er mee oneens of mee eens bent.

- Ik ben boos op de organisatie en de manier waarop de organisatie met de situatie om gaat.

Helemaal oneens – Oneens – Beetje oneens – Neutraal – Beetje eens – Eens – Helemaal eens

- Ik ben positief over de manier waarop de organisatie met de situatie om gaat.

Helemaal oneens – Oneens – Beetje oneens – Neutraal – Beetje eens – Eens – Helemaal eens

- Ik ben tevreden over de manier waarop de organisatie om gaat met de situatie.

Helemaal oneens – Oneens – Beetje oneens – Neutraal – Beetje eens – Eens – Helemaal eens

- Door deze situatie ben ik erg negatief over de organisatie.

Helemaal oneens – Oneens – Beetje oneens – Neutraal – Beetje eens – Eens – Helemaal eens

- De situatie doet mij niks.

Helemaal oneens – Oneens – Beetje oneens – Neutraal – Beetje eens – Eens – Helemaal eens

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## 12. Vragen

Geef bij onderstaande stellingen aan in hoeverre u het er mee oneens of mee eens bent.

- Ik vertrouw de organisatie in de omschreven situatie.

Helemaal oneens – Oneens – Beetje oneens – Neutraal – Beetje eens – Eens – Helemaal eens

- Ik weet niet zeker of de verstrekte informatie betrouwbaar is.

Helemaal oneens – Oneens – Beetje oneens – Neutraal – Beetje eens – Eens – Helemaal eens

- Ik vertrouw er op dat de organisatie handelt op een manier dat het niet schadelijk is voor mij.

Helemaal oneens – Oneens – Beetje oneens – Neutraal – Beetje eens – Eens – Helemaal eens

- Ik weet niet zeker of ik de organisatie kan vertrouwen.

Helemaal oneens – Oneens – Beetje oneens – Neutraal – Beetje eens – Eens – Helemaal eens

- Ik denk dat de organisatie betrouwbaar is.

Helemaal oneens – Oneens – Beetje oneens – Neutraal – Beetje eens – Eens – Helemaal eens

- De manier waarop de organisatie met de situatie om gaat, laat zien dat ze beloftes nakomen.

Helemaal oneens – Oneens – Beetje oneens – Neutraal – Beetje eens – Eens – Helemaal eens

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## 13. Vragen

- Wat is uw geslacht?

( ) Vrouw

( ) Man

- Wat is uw leeftijd? (In jaren)

.....

- Wat is uw hoogst genoten afgeronde opleiding?
    - ☐ Basisschool
    - ☐ VMBO
    - ☐ HAVO
    - ☐ VWO
    - ☐ MBO
    - ☐ HBO
    - ☐ WO
    - ☐ Anders
    - ☐ Kan/wil ik niet zeggen
- 

#### **14. Einde**

Bedankt!

Dit is het einde van de vragenlijst.

Bedankt voor uw medewerking. Uw bijdrage is zeer belangrijk voor het onderzoek.