

Does it matter how close you are?

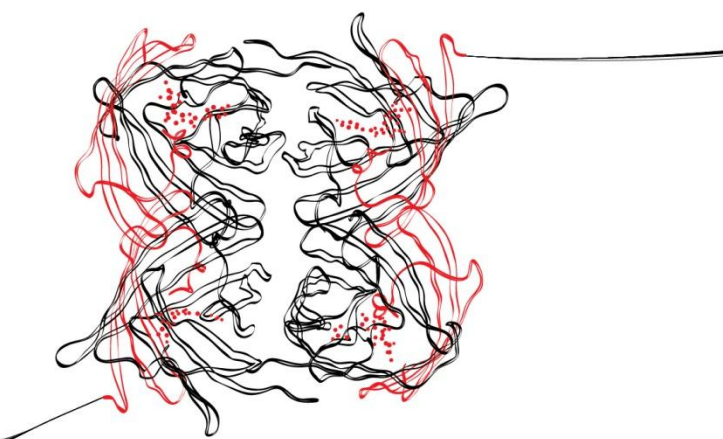
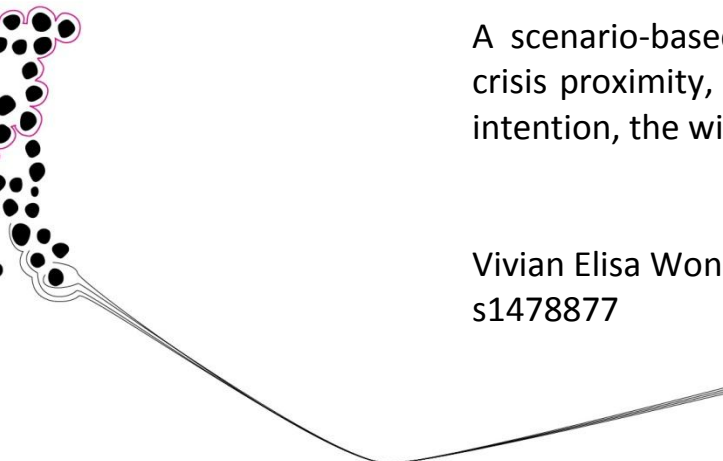
A scenario-based experimental study about the effects of crisis proximity, crisis source and crisis framing on purchase intention, the willingness to forgive, trust and emotion.

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ABSTRACT

AIM. The primary goal of this study was to experimentally investigate to what extent the proximity, framing and source type of a crisis message influence emotions, trust, willingness to forgive and purchase intentions of consumers towards an organization. In addition, it was studied if and to what extent emotions, trust and the willingness to forgive mediate the effects of the manipulations on purchase intention. The proximity consumers have to a crisis is a fixed factor that can't be influenced. Until now it has not been addressed what effects the difference in proximity to a crisis situation has. This study focuses on the importance of taking proximity into account during crisis communication.

METHOD. This study was conducted by using a 2 (CEO as source versus the company as a whole as source) x 2 (emotional crisis framing versus rational crisis framing) x 2 (high versus low crisis proximity) between-respondents, scenario-based experimental design. Results were gathered by presenting participants one out of eight fictional articles and a survey afterwards. In the survey the level of trust, forgiveness and purchase intention of the participants was measured. A total of 288 participants from The Netherlands participated in this research.

RESULTS. The findings of this study show a significant effect of framing (emotional vs. rational) on the amount of sympathy of participants. Additionally, the results revealed anger among the participants, which could not be reduced by certain strategies used in crisis communication. The source type of the message and proximity to the crisis showed no significant effects on the dependent variables measured in this study.

CONCLUSION. The emotionally framed crisis response message resulted in more sympathy towards the organization among participants than the rationally framed message. Furthermore it was found that difference in proximity to the crisis and source type did not influence trust in the organization, the emotions that were felt and the purchase intentions participants have in this study.

Key words: Crisis communication, proximity, source type, framing, experimental study.

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1. INTRODUCTION

In 2016 two large supermarkets, located throughout The Netherlands had possibly infected ham in their shelves. The contagion was very severe as it could cause deadly infections¹. The cause of the contagion was not clear, but might possibly have been a result of too little precautions from the butcher's company. A crisis like this can cause panic among people and raise questions for consumers. The way the organizations, in this case both the supermarkets and the butcher's company, react and handles the crisis can be crucial for their organizational reputations.

Organizations are experiencing crises more frequently now than ever before, caused by the increasing complexity with which goods and services are brought to market and the increasing reliance on technology (Massey, 2001). Modern communication and information technologies have created a challenging environment for organizations because it causes people to be increasingly aware of issues and risks associated with organizations and their industries (Cornelissen, 2014).

Geographical proximity to the crisis event seems to be an important predictor of distress in the population (Thoresen, Aakvaag, Wentzel-Larsen, Dyb & Hjemdal, 2012). Closer geographical proximity to a crisis can cause more worrying about one's own safety and the safety of family and friends. People with high proximity to a crisis might have relationships with the victims, survivors or their relatives. This would all presumably increase a feeling of personal threat (Thoresen et al., 2012). However, the effects of crisis proximity in crisis communication are still unclear and not thoroughly explored in the literature. Therefore, the first manipulation in this study is the consumers' crisis proximity. Proximity to a crisis might influence how involved people feel within a crisis and therefore also change the way people perceive an organization after a crisis has occurred (Arpan & Roskos-Ewoldsen, 2005; Choi & Lin, 2009; Coombs & Holladay, 2005).

The second manipulation is type of crisis source. Whether the crisis response of the organization is delivered by the CEO or the organization as a whole might affect the way consumers perceive the organization. In a previous study it was found that stakeholders react more positively to organizations with a visible CEO during crisis (Turk, Jin, Stewart, Kim & Hipple, 2012). Not much is known about the differences in effects between a human spokesperson (CEO) and an unknown spokesperson (organization as a whole), in crisis communication. Therefore, it is interesting to incorporate these two types of sources within this research.

The third manipulation is crisis framing. The message can be framed in several ways to influence the way people perceive the crisis and the organization confronted with the crisis. Here, there will be a distinction between an emotionally framed message and a rationally framed message. Read (2007) argues that the proper use of emotional appeals can help enhance organizational reputations and reduce criticism against the organization.

The aim of this study is to experimentally investigate to what extent the impact of crisis proximity (low or high), crisis source (CEO or the company as a whole) and framing of the crisis message (emotional or rational), influence emotions, trust, willingness to forgive and purchase intentions of consumers towards an organization. Responding during crisis situations is also called "crisis communication". Scholars refer to crisis communication as "*the collection, processing, and dissemination of information required to address a crisis situation*" (Coombs, 2010, p. 20). Crises are of course preferably prevented, but sometimes they occur anyway and organizations need to manage them correctly. As organizations in crisis face severe reputational damage (Coombs, 2007), it is very relevant to research different ways of responding during crisis, and find out which way would be best in a certain situation. This to make sure the reputational damage is kept as minimal as possible and to restore their organizational reputation (Coombs, 2004).

The three manipulations, crisis proximity, crisis source and crisis framing might also interact. It might for example matter which source is used in crisis communication whether it is better to use emotional framing or rational framing, because a certain type of framing "fits" with the used source.

¹ <http://nos.nl/artikel/2143591-mogelijk-besmette-beenham-teruggeroepen-uit-supermarkten.html>

Also, when the crisis took place nearby, people might rather hear directly from the CEO, whereas in a situation where a crisis took place far away, the way people feel might be less dependent on who delivers the message. Furthermore, an emotionally framed message may be more appropriate when a crisis affects people personally because the crisis took place nearby, whereas a rational framed message could be more fitting when a crisis took place far away and people solely want to be informed. These are all possible interaction effects, on which almost no information is yet available in the literature. This leads to the first research question of this study, which is:

RQ1: To what extent do crisis proximity (high or low), crisis source type (CEO or the company as a whole) together with crisis framing (emotional or rational) influence customers' emotions, trust, willingness to forgive and purchase intentions?

In addition, this study will also give insights about to what extent the effects of the manipulations on purchase intention is mediated by emotions, trust and the willingness to forgive. In previous research it was found that emotions influence trust in different ways (e.g. Dunn & Schweitzer, 2005). During a crisis, negative emotions among consumers are expected (Tiedens, Ellworth & Mesquita, 2000). People might have the feeling that the organization has not lived up to their expectation or did not react appropriately, which can cause a negative emotional state. Certain differences in the crisis communication like who delivers the message, where the crisis took place and how it is written, might affect the extent to which these negative emotions are felt. To measure emotion, this study will explore the levels of two prime emotions: anger and sympathy. This study will strengthen the theoretical basis for other researchers who will conduct research on crisis responding in the future. In summary, the second research question formulated for the research is as follows:

RQ2: To what extent are the effects of crisis proximity (high or low), crisis source type (CEO or the company as a whole) and crisis framing (emotional or rational) on purchase intention mediated by emotions, trust and the willingness to forgive?

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK & HYPOTHESES

2.1 ORGANIZATIONAL CRISIS

Organizational crisis is defined diversely in the literature. However, Pearson and Clair (1998, p.60) provide a very general definition: *‘An organizational crisis is a low-probability, high-impact event that threatens the viability of the organization and is characterized by ambiguity of cause, effect, and means of resolution, as well as by a belief that decisions must be made swiftly.’* A crisis is always unplanned and has the potential to negatively influence the entire structure of an organization (King, 2002). Although a crisis threatens the survival of an organization, it can lead to both positive or negative organizational outcomes (Marcus & Goodman, 1991). However it depends on the specific behaviors of an organization during crisis whether the results will be positive or negative. (Mishra, 1996).

2.1.1 CONSEQUENCES OF A CRISIS

A crisis is a critical situation that, if handled inadequately, can cause serious damage to the organization. In general, there are three potential threats for an organization and its stakeholders when a crisis occurs, namely public safety, financial loss and reputation damage (Coombs, 2015). In this study the effects of a crisis on emotions, trust, the willingness to forgive and purchase intentions of consumers towards an organization are central. The reason why these concepts are interesting to be studied will now be clarified.

Emotions of individuals, especially negative emotions (e.g. disappointment, frustration and anger) play an important role in crisis communication (Coombs & Holladay, 2005, 2007; Jin, Pang & Cameron, 2007). Attributions stakeholders make about a crisis, do not only influence an organization’s reputation but also generate certain emotion about the organization (Coombs, 2007). Increased acknowledgment of crisis responsibility causes negative feelings such as anger (Coombs, 2004). Anger motivates people to do something about the situation because they believe that they have influence in the situation (Lerner & Tiedens, 2006). According to Coombs (2007), individuals who attribute responsibility to an event will experience an emotional reaction that influences their behavior. In the context of purchase behavior, anger has been found to predict negative intentions and negative word-of-mouth (Wetzer, Zeelenberg & Pieters, 2007).

To understand the consequences a crisis can have on the trustworthiness of an organization, the concept ‘trust’ must be clarified. Trust can be defined as: *“A psychological state comprising the intention to accept vulnerability based upon positive expectations of the intentions or behaviour or another”* (Rousseau, Sitkin, Burt & Camerer, 1998, p. 395).Thus, the public believes that the source can be trusted to provide objective and honest information (Martin-Santana, Reinares-Lara & Muela-Molina, 2015). Trust is a fundamental element of corporate success in companies, because it builds and supports long-term relationships between an organization and its stakeholder groups. Trust generates supportive behavior while preventing unsupportive behavior (Huang, 2001; Ki & Hon, 2007). It is therefore crucial for organizations to be seen as trustworthy by consumers to minimize negative effects, especially during hard times like a crisis. Utz, Schultz and Glocka (2012, p.41) state that *“The foremost goal of crisis communication is to restore the reputation of the organization and the trust of consumers or other stakeholders”*, which emphasizes how a crisis can damage people’s trust in an organization embroiled in a specific crisis. Mayer, Davis and Schoorman (1995) propose a model of organizational trust. They suggest that the attributes associated with the trustee include ability, benevolence and integrity. The research presented here uses these attributes to measure consumers’ trust in the organization.

McCullough, Worthington, Maxey and Rachal (1997, p.321-322) define forgiveness as ‘A set of motivational changes whereby one becomes decreasingly motivated to retaliate against an offending relationship partner, decreasingly motivated to maintain estrangement from the offender, and increasingly motivate by conciliation and goodwill for the offender’. Forgiveness from consumers after a crisis has occurred can be difficult to obtain. According to Coombs (2007), a crisis can evoke sympathy for the organization, as long as the message describes the organization as the victim, which causes people to believe the organization deserves sympathy. Forgiving an organization will be more likely when the company has apologized for the situation, and the organization has as less responsibility for the crisis as possible (Coombs, 2007).

Different types of associations with a company, have diverse influences on people’s product or service evaluation (Berens, Van Riel & Van Bruggen 2005; Sen & Bhattacharya, 2001). A crisis can evoke negative thoughts about the organization which influences the behavioral intentions of consumers. According to Lin, Chen, Chiu and Lee (2011) purchase intention cannot be randomly fostered by an immediate announcement of marketing, but rather it can be boosted after managers plan their firm’s actions from two customer perspectives simultaneously (e.g., quality service to buyers and repayment to society). Different kinds of crisis response can thus have different effects on purchase intentions. In summary, a crisis has several negative consequences on an organization, which causes a great need for organizations to engage in crisis communication.

2.1.2 CRISIS COMMUNICATION

Crises are a threat to the organizational reputation. A crisis damages the reputation of organizations, and this can affect how stakeholders interact with the organization (Barton, 2001; Dowling, 2002). Post-crisis communication can be used to repair this reputational damage, and restore a good reputation for organizations (Coombs & Holladay, 2005). Crisis responsibility is related inversely to organizational reputation. To clarify, the higher the level of crisis responsibility held by the organization, the more severe the potential impact to its reputation (Jamal & Bakar, 2015).

2.2 CRISIS PROXIMITY

Within a crisis, people often react very differently. According to a study by Huang, Starbird, Orand, Stanek and Pedersen (2015), both physical and emotional proximity to a crisis influence consumers behavior towards information seeking and sharing. Choi and Lin (2009) describe that proximity or closeness to a crisis can influence the amount of involvement people have in a crisis. In general, involvement is considered a personal connection or bridging experience for an individual. Consumers with high crisis involvement process a message in greater detail and pay more attention to the message compared to low involved consumers (Choi & Lin, 2009).

Involvement is often conceptualized as personal relevance (Grau & Folse, 2007). Personal relevance can be defined as the level of perceived personal importance and/or interest evoked by a stimulus within a specific situation (Antil, 1984). Close geographic proximity makes a crisis endogenous, whereas for others the crisis is more exogenous. This difference in closeness can affect the way people react to the crisis (Nohrstedt & Weible, 2010), as it also affects the personal relevance of people to the crisis and thus the extent to which they feel involved. Recent examples, such as the global financial recession and the spread of the swine-flu affected all people worldwide which makes proximity to the crisis not relevant. However, when a crisis occurs only in a certain area (e.g. Hurricane Katrina in Louisiana), differences in proximity affect people’s behaviors (Nohrstedt & Weible, 2010).

When there is high proximity to a crisis, people believe that certain issue affects them personally, whereas for low proximity subjects the issue has no personal impact (Petty, Cacioppo & Schumann, 1983). When the personal relevance in a crisis is low, people are less involved in a crisis which makes them process the crisis messages less actively than people with high personal relevance and therefore higher involvement (Choi & Lin, 2009; Engel & Blackwel, 1982; Krugman 1965).

2.2.1 CRISIS PROXIMITY AND PURCHASE INTENTIONS

There is little to no information about the effect of geographical proximity to a crisis on post-crisis purchase intentions. However, it seems very logical that consumers will have lower purchase intentions for products of an organization that has faced a crisis in their own country, than when the crisis happened far away. This assumption can be complemented by a study of Prendergast, Tsang and Chan (2010) in which is concluded that the impact of the country of origin of a brand on purchase intention is mediated by the level of personal involvement. It is stated that when a consumer is personally involved with the country of origin of a brand, the impact of favorable or unfavorable perceptions of that country is higher. In other words, this might indicate that the purchase intentions of people with high proximity to the crisis will lower after a crisis has occurred than the purchase intentions of people with low proximity to the crisis.

In addition, high involvement messages have greater personal relevance and consequences or elicit more personal connections than low involvement messages (Engel & Blackwell, 1982; Krugman, 1965; Petty & Cacioppo, 1979; Sherif & Hovland, 1961). This might indicate that high proximity would also cause more personal consequences which might lower the purchase intentions. Altogether, this leads to the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 1a: When participants have low proximity to a crisis, they will have more purchase intentions after a crisis has occurred compared to when participants have high proximity to a crisis.

2.2.2 CRISIS PROXIMITY AND THE WILLINGNESS TO FORGIVE

The extent to which people forgive an organization after a crisis, might be dependent on the level of proximity they have to the crisis. Forgiveness expresses the desire to protect the relationship with the organization responsible for the offence. Therefore, the higher the level of closeness and commitment marking the relationship between a customer and the organization, the more likely it is that forgiveness will be granted (Nelson, 1993; Rackley, 1993). This indicates that consumers with high proximity to a crisis will be more likely to forgive the organization. This leads to the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 1b: When participants have high proximity to a crisis, they will be more willing to forgive the organization after a crisis has occurred compared to when participants have low proximity to a crisis.

2.2.3 CRISIS PROXIMITY AND TRUST

Little is known about the effects crisis proximity might have on the trustworthiness of an organization. In a study of Heath, Seshadri and Lee (1998) it was found that proximity significantly affected uncertainty, support and dread. But proximity did not significantly affect trust, involvement, openness and knowledge. However, Nathan, Heath and Douglas (1992) have shown that proximity did not increase risk tolerance, and perceived risk is accompanied by low levels of trust (Heath,

Seshandri & Lee, 1998). Thus, high proximity might decrease levels of trust in risky situations. This leads to the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 1c: When participants have low proximity to a crisis, they will feel more trust towards the organization after a crisis has occurred compared to when participants have high proximity to a crisis.

2.2.4 CRISIS PROXIMITY AND EMOTIONS

To what extent people feel certain emotions during a crisis might be dependent on their proximity to the crisis. High geographical proximity to a crisis might be an important predictor of feeling distressed and increase feeling of personal threat (Thoresen et al., 2012). According to the research of Thoresen et al. (2012) people with high proximity felt higher levels of fear compared to people with low proximity to the crisis. However, their research focused on the terrorist attacks in Oslo specifically, and a different crisis with lower severity might trigger different emotional states of people. Other research has also found that geographical proximity is an important predictor of emotional reactions in the public after terrorist attacks (Hoven et al., 2005; Miguel-Tobal et al., 2006; Neria, DiGrande & Adams, 2011; Schlenger et al., 2002).

Previous studies have found that more physically distant objects are generally construed as being more psychologically distant (Fujita, Henderson, Trope & Liberman, 2006; Henderson, Fujita, Trope & Liberman, 2006). This could indicate that a physically distant crisis is also generally perceived as being more psychologically distant. According to Hart, Stedman and McComas (2015), individuals may rely less on affect when making decisions about the object as it becomes more physically and psychologically distant. Strong emotional feelings may thus be less present in the low proximity condition compared to the high proximity condition. This indicates that high proximity will result in both more sympathy as more anger. Together, this leads to the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 1d: When participants have low proximity to a crisis, they will feel (a) more sympathy and (b) less anger towards the organization compared to when participants have high proximity to a crisis.

2.3 CRISIS SOURCE

In April 2012 the telecom company Vodafone struggled with a big disorder when a fire occurred in one of their network locations. Their customers could not call with their phones for several days. The cause of the fire has never been found out, but it was most likely a result of too little precautions from the company. Vodafone replied clear and simple: they released videos on YouTube in which the CEO explains the problem, giving a behind-the-scenes look and showing the damage and how they are trying to fix everything. During this crisis the CEO constantly communicated honestly and transparently with Vodafone's customers, which resulted in a lot of understanding amongst the public. This is thus an example of successful crisis communication, by using the CEO as source.

Crisis response messages from spokespersons who are seen as credible and trustworthy can positively influence post-crisis communication (Yang, Kang & Johnson, 2010). The difference in source of the message might thus affect the trustworthiness of the organization. Organizations can communicate a crisis in various ways. The source that gives information can differ. In crisis responding, the credibility of the source of communicated information plays a critical role in information diffusion (Zhang, Veijalainen & Kotkov, 2016). Heath and Palenchar (2008, p.297) state: *"A company suffering a crisis must be able to tell a credible story, one that has factual fidelity that can withstand the scrutiny of reporters, governmental investigators, and concerned citizens"*. Having

a CEO who takes clear and public command might be crucial for successfully ending a corporate crisis (Murray & Shohen, 1992).

Previous studies on the effect of crisis source are limited. This study explores the impact of using the CEO as source compared to the company as a whole as source. Trust in the CEO and the company are important for decision-making processes of consumers (Möllering & Sydow, 2005). Using a CEO as source does not directly mean the message is perceived more positively by consumers (Reidenbach & Pitts, 1986). Communicators that are perceived more credible by an audience are more likely to persuade that audience to accept or believe their message (Eagly, Wood & Chaiken, 1978; Hovland, Janis, & Kelley, 1953; Wilson & Sherell, 1993). It is therefore important that the source possesses the right characteristics in order to be credible (e.g. trustworthiness, expertise and likability) (Reidenbach & Pitts, 1986).

2.3.1 CRISIS SOURCE AND PURCHASE INTENTIONS

When the CEO is visible during a crisis situation, he or she takes an active role in dealing with the crisis, rather than letting the media take control. This has a positive influence on the purchase intentions of consumers (Turk, Jin, Stewart, Kim & Hipple, 2012). Corporate credibility directly influences the consumers' purchase intentions (Lafferty & Goldsmith, 1999), and Turk et al. (2012) state that having a CEO present in crisis communication improves the credibility of an organization. This might all indicate that using a CEO as spokesperson will result in a perception of corporate credibility which in turn will enhance more purchase intentions among consumers.

Furthermore, Straughan, Bleske and Zhao (1996) found that source effects (CEO versus nonprofit organization spokesperson) indirectly impacted consumers' attitudes and intentions. According to their study, a CEO appears more persuasive than an outside authority because the CEO generates more interest among consumers. This might indicate that a CEO will also be more persuasive than the company as a whole. While persuasion can lead to behavioral changes, a CEO might be a more effective source to enhance purchase intentions than an unidentified spokesperson. Therefore the following hypothesis states:

Hypothesis 2a: When the CEO of the organization is used as source for the crisis response message, participants will have more purchase intention after a crisis has occurred compared to when the organization as a whole is used as a source for the crisis response message.

2.3.2 CRISIS SOURCE AND THE WILLINGNESS TO FORGIVE

After a crisis, consumers must be willing to forgive an organization in order to prevent reputational damage for the organization. This 'willingness to forgive' might be dependent on who brings the crisis response message. There is not much information about the effect of crisis source on the willingness to forgive in the literature. But, in a study of Verhoeven, Van Hoof, Ter Keurs and Van Vuuren (2012), it was found that in a crisis situation, even one in which the CEO was personally responsible for the crisis, participants blamed the organization as a whole more than they blamed the CEO in person. This may indicate that consumers are also more likely to be willing to forgive a CEO rather than the organization as a whole. Also, Coombs and Holladay (2012) state that organizational leaders are ideal sources of apologies and that it is possible that apologies are more effective when communicated by top managers. This leads to the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 2b: When the CEO of the organization is used as source for the crisis response message, participants will be more willing to forgive the organization after a crisis has occurred compared to when the organization as a whole is used as a source for the crisis response message.

2.3.3 CRISIS SOURCE AND TRUST

The extent to which consumers perceive an organization as trustworthy might depend on who brings the messages about the crisis. During a crisis, information can be given by the CEO of the organization, but might also be given by an (unidentified) spokesperson. Ingenhoff and Sommer (2010) examined the main influences of trust in companies and in companies' Chief Executive Officers (CEOs), and showed that general trust in the organization as a whole is higher than trust in CEOs. Individuals often have no direct, personal contact with the company except through its products and services. Therefore, information from the media about the organization is the basic source of information for consumers to build trust (Ingenhof & Sommer, 2010).

However, the CEOs represent the company and therefore they have a strong impact on the corporate image (Park & Berger, 2004). Using the CEO as source during crisis communication might be beneficial because findings suggest that a CEO is perceived to be more interesting, informative and persuasive by consumers than nonprofit organization spokespersons, even though CEOs are not perceived as more credible (Straughan, Bleske & Zhao, 1996).

Perceived trust is influenced by trustee attributes such as ability, integrity and benevolence (Butler, 1991; Mayer, Davis & Schoorman, 1995). These attributes are expected to be easier assigned to a human (in this case the CEO of the company) than to the organization as a whole. In summary, the literature provides very different perspectives on whether the CEO of an organization will be perceived as more trustworthy or the company as a whole would be trusted more. This leads to the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 2c: When the CEO of the organization is used as source for the crisis response message, participants will more likely trust the organization after the crisis has occurred compared to when the organization as a whole is used as a source for the crisis response message.

2.3.4 CRISIS SOURCE AND EMOTIONS

The emotions people feel after reading a crisis response may be affected by the source of the message. According to Arpan (2002), the communicator's credibility strongly affects the extent to which consumers accept the message. When the message is accepted, more positive emotions might be felt. This might indicate that the more credible the source is as perceived by consumers, the more positive emotions these consumers feel.

Different crisis situations cause certain attributions of organizational responsibility for a crisis. These attributions can lead people to certain feelings and behaviors (Weiner, Perry & Magnusson, 1988). The stronger people feel the organization is responsible, the more likely it is that negative emotions are felt. Consumers will have more negative images of the situation and the organization and will less likely interact (again) with the company (Coombs, 1995). The amount of responsibility people assign to the organization might be dependent on the source of the crisis response. The source of information has been established as critical for establishing trust and credibility (Avery, 2010; Callison, 2001), which affect message acceptance. The source of information may therefore affect the extent to which the organization is held responsible which might influence the extent to which emotions (positive or negative) are felt by consumers after reading the crisis response message. Altogether, this leads to the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 2d: When the CEO of the organization is used as source for the crisis response message, participants will feel (a) more sympathy and (b) less anger towards the organization compared to when the organization as a whole is used as source for the crisis response message.

2.4 CRISIS FRAMING

When an organization faces a crisis, a quick response is essential. By using framing, the organization chooses to highlight certain factors of the message. Those factors will then get more attention from the receivers (Druckman, 2001). Framing the message in crisis responding can be of impact on consumers as it presents one message differently by framing the same content in two ways (Mayer & Tormala, 2010). Framing provides a context for information and creates frames of reference that people use when interpreting and evaluating information (Hallahan, 1999).

The message is being framed in two ways in this study, namely emotionally and rationally. According to Yoo and MacInnis (2005), emotional framing of a message might appeal to the customers' own emotions and therefore enhance their perception, because it causes the organization to show humane characteristics with which people can better relate to. Moon and Rhee (2012) claim that a message in an emotional frame *"focuses more on expressing the organization's sincere sorrow, regret, and concern for those affected by a crisis in describing how the organization is managing the crisis situation"* (p. 681).

On the contrary, rational messages present merely objective and simple information which stimulate consumers to assess the trustworthiness of the messages instead of triggering primarily emotions (Yoo & MacInnis, 2005). Claeys, Cauberghe and Leysen (2013) describe the rational frame as direct, straightforward and objective without referring to emotion or displaying the crisis in a vivid manner. In contrast, emotional framing is trying to evoke positive feelings such as sympathy by using apologies regarding the crisis (Schultz, Utz & Göritz, 2011). According to Flora and Maibach (1990) emotional appeals are more likely to be remembered than rational appeals. Also, emotional framing is more effective in terms of attitude changes (Rosselli, Skelly & Mackie, 1995). This might indicate that emotional framed messages are more persuasive than rational framed messages.

2.4.1 CRISIS FRAMING AND PURCHASE INTENTIONS

An emotionally framed crisis response message might trigger emotions of consumers. Research shows that negative emotions (e.g. regret, anger, disappointment) will lower purchase intention while for positive emotions (e.g. sympathy) it is expected to increase future purchase intention (Coombs & Holladay, 2007). In a study by Cooper (2002) it was concluded that the way a message is framed shapes how people define a crisis and its attributions of responsibility. When the organization is perceived not to be responsible, and sympathy is evoked, behavioral responses of consumers are positive (Weiner, 2006). In addition, Kim and Cameron (2011) proved in their study that emotionally framed messages lead to positive public responses. Also, by communicating emotion, the organization appears to be more human which may decrease feelings of anger towards the organization (Van der Meer & Verhoeven (2014). This all suggests that an emotionally framed message will more positively influence consumers' purchase intentions compared to a rationally framed message. This leads to the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 3a: When emotional framing is used in the crisis response message, participants will have more purchase intentions after a crisis has occurred compared to when rational framing is used in the crisis response message.

2.4.2 CRISIS FRAMING AND THE WILLINGNESS TO FORGIVE

Whether or not consumers forgive an organization after a crisis might depend on the crisis communication used by the company. According to Cho and Gower (2006), framing a message is of great importance because it influences the public's evaluation of the organizational responsibility for the crisis to occur. Combinations of a cognitive and affective approach have already shown efficacy in obtaining forgiveness (Schmitt, Gollwizer, Förster & Montada, 2004). This study will compare a rational and an emotional framed message and the extent to which they provide willingness to forgive from consumers. In a study of Cleays, Cauberghe and Leysen (2013) it was found that when organizations express emotions during a crisis, they are more likely to be forgiven by the public. Altogether, this leads to the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 3b: When emotional framing is used in the crisis response message, participants will be more willing to forgive the organization after a crisis has occurred compared to when rational framing is used in the crisis response message.

2.4.3 CRISIS FRAMING AND TRUST

Framing the crisis message either emotionally or rationally might affect the extent to which consumers trust the organization. According to Dunn and Schweitzer (2005), showing emotions can have an influence on perceived trust. This might indicate that during crisis communication it has also a positive effect on trust when emotions are showed. Negative emotions delay trust building, or even terminate relationships (Andersen & Kumar, 2006). However, positive emotions seem necessary in trust building because it allows consumers to take 'a leap of faith' in the trust building process. When the message evokes positive emotions by consumers, their trust in the organization becomes higher (Dunn & Schweitzer, 2005). This is also confirmed by Weiss and Cropanzano (1996) who state that emotionally framed messages can increase consumers' trust in the organization during a crisis. This leads to the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 3c: When emotional framing is used in the crisis response message, participants will have higher trust towards the organization after a crisis has occurred compared to when rational framing is used in the crisis response message.

2.4.4 CRISIS FRAMING AND EMOTIONS

The two different framing strategies used in this study (emotional framing vs. rational framing) might trigger different emotional states of consumers. When using an emotional appeal, the organization is perceived more human, which in turn decreases feelings of anger towards the organization (Van der Meer & Verhoeven, 2014). In a study by Kaufmann, Drevland, Wessel, Overskeid and Magnussen (2003) it was found that a message was perceived more credible when emotions were displayed but the credibility was not influenced by the content of the story. Although their research was not conducted with crisis response messages, their results might indicate that also in crisis communication, emotionally framed messages will be perceived as more credible than rational messages. More credibility might enhance more sympathy towards the organization. This might in turn decrease anger towards the organization. This leads to the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 3d: When emotional framing is used in the crisis response message, participants will feel (a) more sympathy and (b) less anger towards the organization compared to when rational framing is used in the crisis response message.

2.5 INTERACTION BETWEEN SOURCE, FRAMING & PROXIMITY

2.5.1 SOURCE AND PROXIMITY

The success of using a certain type of source might be dependent on the level of proximity people have to a crisis. However, there is not much knowledge in the literature about the interaction between these two manipulations. In a study of Frewer, Howard, Hedderley and Shepherd (1999) was found that low perceived personal relevance was more likely to lead to elaborative processing than high personal relevance, contrary to their predictions. When consumers have high proximity to a crisis, they will most likely also feel more personal relevance compared to consumers with low proximity to the crisis.

Also, perceptions of source characteristics play an important part in determining whether central or peripheral processing occurs (Liska, 1978). In the research of Frewer et al. (1999), under conditions of high personal relevance, information from a source which was low in persuasiveness was more trusted. High trust and high credibility are likely to produce attitude change in the direction of the information content if motivation to process is low (Frewer et al., 1999).

In summary, a source that is trusted more and perceived more credible, is likely to produce change in behavior when the motivation to process is low. High proximity to a crisis will likely cause less elaborative processing compared to low proximity. Which results in the expectation that a combination of a CEO with a low proximity will enhance most trust and willingness to forgive. This leads to the following two hypotheses:

Hypothesis 4a: The combination of a CEO as source type with low proximity will enhance more trust and willingness to forgive the organization than the combination of the company as a whole as source type with low proximity to the crisis.

Hypothesis 4b: The combination of a CEO as source type with low proximity will enhance more trust and willingness to forgive the organization than the combination of CEO as source type with high proximity to the crisis.

2.5.2 FRAMING AND PROXIMITY

As described previously in this thesis, people with high geographical proximity to a crisis might feel more personally involved. When there is high involvement, message content determines persuasion (Petty & Cacioppo, 1981) and therefore the messages with rational framing persuade more, as they focus on the content (Stafford & Day, 1995; Yoo & MacInnis, 2005). When crisis involvement is low, consumers base their attitudes on simple inferences (Maheswaran & Meyers-Levy, 1990), and they tend to focus on the emotional framing of a message (Petty, Cacioppo & Schumann, 1983; Yoo & MacInnis, 2005). Controversially, for individuals with high involvement, the message with rational framing will be more persuasive, and they focus on the content itself (Stafford & Day, 1995; Yoo & MacInnis, 2005). This might indicate that high proximity in combination with rational framing will enhance more positive emotions than high proximity in combination with emotional framing. This leads to the following two hypotheses:

Hypothesis 5a: The source that will enhance most sympathy, is perceived as more trustworthy in combination with a rational frame, than the other source in combination with a rational frame.

Hypothesis 5b: The combination of the CEO as source with emotional framing will enhance more positive emotions than the combination of the CEO as source with rational framing.

2.5.3 SOURCE AND FRAMING

Choi and Lin (2007) conducted a study in which they found that framing of a message has an effect on how consumers interpret the message. By using an emotional frame, an organization might be perceived as more human, which enables people to feel more sympathy towards this organization (Van der Meer & Verhoeven, 2014). It can be expected that a CEO is also perceived more human than the organization as a whole. Therefore it is expected that the combination of an emotional frame with the CEO as source will enhance more positive emotions than an emotional frame with the organization as a whole as source of the message.

A study by Yan, Ogle and Hyllegard (2010) provides evidence to suggest that both message appeal and message source may impact consumers' attitudes and purchase intentions. The credibility of the message is related to the perceived persuasiveness of the source. Rational frames trigger consumers to evaluate the credibility of a message more than emotional frames, as rational frames appeal to the individual's cognitions (MacInnis, Rao & Weiss, 2002; McKay-Nesbitt et al., 2011; Yoo & MacInnis, 2005). This might indicate that the combination of the most credible source with rational framing will be more persuasive than the combination of this source with emotional framing. A more persuasive message will likely result in more positive emotions. This leads to the following two hypotheses:

Hypothesis 6a: When there is high proximity to the crisis, this will enhance more trust and willingness to forgive when a rational frame is used compared to when an emotional frame is used in combination with high proximity.

Hypothesis 6b: When there is low proximity to the crisis, this will enhance more trust and willingness to forgive when an emotional frame is used compared to when a rational frame is used.

2.6 THE MEDIATING ROLE OF EMOTIONS

According to Dunn and Schweitzer (2005), emotions with positive valence (e.g. happiness and gratitude) increase trust, and emotions with negative valence (e.g. anger) decreases trust. Thus, it is expected that the more positive emotions a participant feels after reading the crisis response message, the more trust this person has in the organization afterwards. Also, emotions influence attitudes and behavioral intentions towards the organization (Kim & Cameron, 2011). According to Kotler and Armstrong (1994) both negative and positive emotions motivate the purchase intentions of consumers. This leads to the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 7: The more sympathy and anger participants feel after reading the crisis response message, the higher their purchase intentions will be afterwards.

When consumers develop feelings of empathy for the organization, this plays a vital role in beginning the forgiveness process (Worthington, 1998). When participants feel empathy after reading the crisis response message, the humanity of the organization is considered rather than defining the company solely in terms of the offence (Enright & Coyle, 1998). In the study of Enright and Coyle (1998) participants felt significantly more negative, aroused, angry, sad and less in control when they were unforgiving than when they were forgiving. This might indicate that the more positive emotions, and the less negative emotions a participant feels after reading the crisis response message, the more this person is willing to forgive the organization afterwards. Altogether, this leads to the following two hypotheses:

Hypothesis 8: The more sympathy and the less anger participants feel after reading the crisis response message, the more trust they will have in the organization.

Hypothesis 9: The more sympathy and the less anger participants feel after reading the crisis response message, the more they will be willing to forgive the organization.

2.7 THE MEDIATING ROLE OF TRUST

Several studies have similarly concluded that higher trust results in a higher degree of consumers' purchase intentions (e.g. Gefen & Straub, 2004; McCole & Palmer, 2001). This is caused by the fact that the presence of trust increases consumers' beliefs that the trustee will not engage in opportunistic behavior (Gefen, 2000). This leads to the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 10: The more trust participants have towards the organization after reading the crisis response message, the higher their purchase intentions will be afterwards.

2.8 THE MEDIATING ROLE OF WILLINGNESS TO FORGIVE

Apologies are also associated with increased purchasing behavior (Liao, 2007). When people are more willing to forgive, their purchase intentions and positive word-of-mouth intentions will likely increase (Lyon & Cameron, 2004). This leads to the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 11: The more participants are willing to forgive the organization after reading the crisis response message, the higher their purchase intentions will be afterwards.

2.9 RESEARCH FRAMEWORK

The research framework of this study with all variables and hypotheses visualized can be seen in Figure 1.

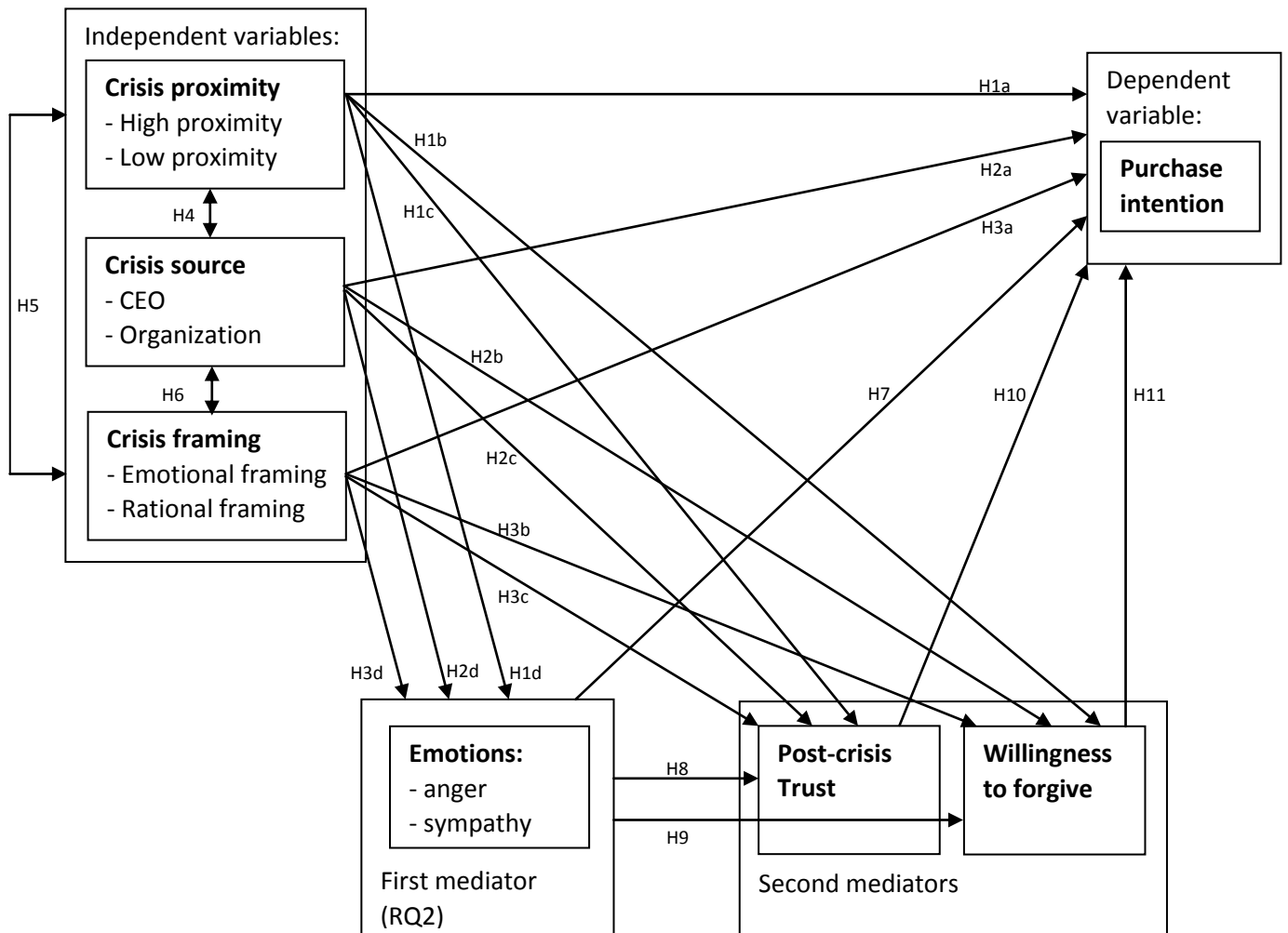


Figure 1:
Research framework

3. METHOD

The method used for this 2 (CEO as source versus the company as a whole as source) x 2 (emotional crisis framing versus rational crisis framing) x 2 (high versus low crisis proximity) between-respondents experimental study, is a scenario-based experiment. A scenario-based experiment is well suited for research seeking to understand how and why people form their judgments and preferences or make their decisions, especially when dealing with complex issues (Rungtusanatham, Wallin & Eckerd, 2011). Before the research started two pre-tests were conducted. The first pre-test was about finding out whether the news website that would publish the crisis in the experiment was valued trustworthy. The second pre-test was conducted to check the manipulations.

3.1 RESEARCH DESIGN

This study consists of eight different scenarios based on the three moderators. A visualization of the research design can be seen in Figure 2.

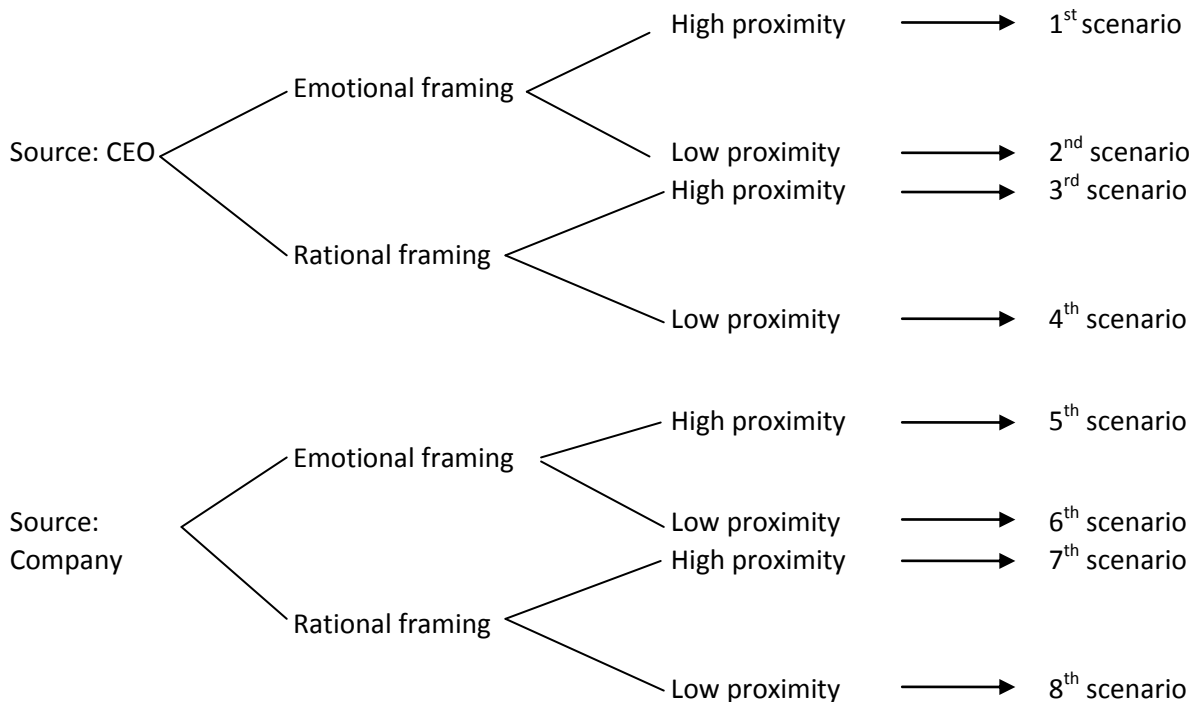


Figure 2:
Research design

3.2 PROCEDURE

The survey is distributed via snowball sampling. Participants were approached via social media, face-to-face contact, and e-mail. First, the respondents were informed about the purpose and the structure of this study. Also respondents had to give their consent for participation in the study. The study consisted of three parts. In the first part the respondents were asked four demographic questions (age, gender, education and residence). Then, in the second part, participants got one of eight scenario's which had to be read carefully and afterwards questions about their emotions, trust in the organization, willingness to forgive the organization and their purchase intention towards the organization were asked. The answers of the participants were assessed by using a 5-point Likert scale (from 1 'strongly disagree' to 5 'strongly agree'). In the last part of the survey, the three manipulations were checked by seven questions.

3.3 PRE-TEST

To prevent respondents from perceiving a message untrustworthy caused by a certain news website that provides the information, participants were asked to rank 20 different news websites from most trustworthy to most untrustworthy. A total amount of N=20 respondents participated in this pre-test. 9 of the participants were female, and 11 were male. Participant age ranged from 20 to 53 with a mean age of 26. It was found that these participants were quite unanimous about which news website could be trusted and which not. The most trusted news website in The Netherlands according to this pre-test, NOS, was chosen for this study. All results from this pre-test can be found in Appendix 3.

A second pre-test was conducted to check the complete questionnaire to make sure the propositions were clear and the manipulations were measured correctly. After this second pre-test some questions were formulated a little clearer, spelling mistakes were corrected and the explanation of the research was made more comprehensible. The three manipulations (crisis source, crisis framing and crisis proximity) were also checked in the second pre-test.

3.4 STIMULUS MATERIALS

The eight different scenarios that were used as stimulus materials can be found in Appendix 1. The news articles are written after studying real news articles that are comparable^{2,3}. Figure 3 shows an example of how one scenario looked like. The scenarios describe a fictitious organization, 'Broodkapje', in order to prevent any confusing effects of a pre-crisis reputation (Laufer & Jung, 2010). To make sure as many biases as possible are prevented, a product with low involvement and utilitarian motives has been chosen. The product bread is chosen based on the Foot, Cone & Belding advertising (FCB) involvement grid. According to the FCB involvement grid, products can be classified by whether their involvement is high or low and whether the motive is utilitarian or emotional (Ratchford, 1987). People generally choose to buy bread without emotional motives (Laurent & Kapferer, 1985). Bread is a product eaten by (almost) everyone in The Netherlands on a daily basis, and because it is consumed, the effects of an infection can be devastating for people.

The crisis source was manipulated by mentioning several times who responded on behalf of the company (CEO versus the company as a whole). On the example shown in Figure 3, a CEO condition is shown. The manipulation is here marked in yellow. In the conditions with the company

² <http://nos.nl/artikel/2148388-zeker-vier-aardappelbedrijven-besmet-met-bruinrot.html>

³ <http://nos.nl/artikel/2143591-mogelijk-besmette-beenham-teruggeroepen-uit-supermarkten.html>

as a whole as source type, there is no name of a person mentioned. Crisis framing was manipulated by writing the response of the source emotionally versus rationally. In the example shown in Figure 3, a emotionally framed condition can be seen, and the manipulation is here marked in blue. In the emotionally framed scenario's words like "sad", "apologies", "horrible" and "shocked" were used, while in the rationally framed scenario's only facts and information about the crisis were presented without showing emotions. The third manipulation, proximity, was manipulated by changing the location of the crisis. In the high proximity scenario's the crisis took place in Overijssel, a province in The Netherlands and in the low proximity groups the crisis took place in Suriname. In the example shown in Figure 3, a low proximity condition can be seen. The manipulation is here marked in green.



Figure 3:
Example of a scenario

3.5 MANIPULATION CHECK

Before checking the manipulations a factor analysis was conducted to see if the manipulations loaded correctly. The results of this analysis can be found in Table 1 and show a correct loading for all the manipulations. Only one item for the framing manipulation had to be removed because of the wrong loading.

A total of six questions were asked to check the manipulations. The manipulations were measured on a 5-point Likert scale with on each side an opposing option. The source manipulation (CEO vs. the company as a whole) was checked by asking: "In the news article the information about the crisis was given by:", with the opposing options 1= The CEO of Broodkapje, 5= The company Broodkapje, and in the second question 1= a person, 5= an organization. The framing manipulation

(emotional vs. rational) was checked with the following two questions: “I think the reaction of Broodkapje was:”, with the opposing options 1= emotional, 5= not emotional, and 1= personal, 5= not personal. The last two questions, to check the proximity manipulation (high vs. low), were as follows: “The crisis was for me:” 1= nearby, 5= far away, and: “I feel towards the crisis:” 1= personally involved, 5= not personally involved. The manipulations were checked by conducting an independent sample T-test. The results of this test are shown in Table 2. All manipulations worked.

Table 1:
Factor analysis for the manipulation check variables

Item	Rotated factor loading		
	1	2	3
Source 1	0.90		
Source 2	0.90		
Framing 1		0.90	
Framing 2*			
Framing 3		0.88	
Proximity 1			0.86
Proximity 2			0.87

* condition was removed from data

Table 2:
Independent sample T-test

Manipulation	M	SD	Sig. (2-tailed)	t
Source			0.00	-16.82
CEO	2.04	1.02		
Company as a whole	4.02	0.98		
Framing			0.00	-7.33
Emotional	2.71	1.08		
Rational	3.58	0.94		
Proximity			0.00	-6.37
High	3.24	1.20		
Low	4.04	0.93		

3.6 PARTICIPANTS

A total amount of 291 respondents participated in this research. All participants were Dutch. Several participants were excluded from the data because they finished the survey either too fast or too slow for the results to be trustworthy. Also, participants who answered the control question (“Do you know the company Broodkapje?”) with “yes” were excluded. In total the results of 288 respondents were used. Of those, 185 were female, and 103 were male. Participant age ranged from 18 to 70 with a mean age of 26.5 (SD= 10.095). The most represented province of residence was Overijssel (41%). In general, participants were highly educated. The complete overview of the demographic information can be found in Table 3.

The study was conducted online which made sure participants could finish the questionnaire in their own environment rather than setting up an experimental research environment. The participants were roughly evenly divided into eight different scenarios, with at least 33 participants in each condition as shown in Table 4.

Table 3:
Demographic information of respondents.

Demographics	N	%	M	SD
Age	288		26.45	10.10
Gender				
Female	185	64.2		
Male	103	35.8		
Province				
Noord-Holland	40	13.9		
Zuid-Holland	27	9.4		
Utrecht	21	7.3		
Noord-Brabant	15	5.2		
Zeeland	1	0.3		
Groningen	17	5.9		
Friesland	2	0.7		
Flevoland	2	0.7		
Overijssel	117	40.9		
Gelderland	38	13.2		
Drenthe	1	0.3		
I currently do not live in The Netherlands	7	2.4		
Educational level				
Primary education	2	0.7		
VMBO	2	0.7		
HAVO	4	1.4		
VWO	7	2.4		
MBO	14	4.9		
HBO	61	21.2		
WO bachelor	94	32.6		
WO pre-master	1	0.3		
WO master	100	34.7		
PHD	3	1.0		

Table 4:

Division into scenarios

Scenario	Gender	Age (M)	Education	N	%
1	11 male	25.18	23 high	33	11.5
	22 female	24.36	6 middle		
			5 low		
2	15 male	29.07	22 high	35	12.2
	20 female	25.40	10 middle		
			3 low		
3	12 male	31.17	25 high	33	11.2
	21 female	24.43	7 middle		
			1 low		
4	11 male	27.18	26 high	41	14.3
	30 female	26.17	15 middle		
			0 low		
5	12 male	23.50	27 high	39	13.6
	27 female	26.37	11 middle		
			1 low		
6	18 male	31.50	30 high	41	14.3
	23 female	24.61	10 middle		
			1 low		
7	13 male	26.08	24 high	33	11.5
	20 female	28.30	7 middle		
			2 low		
8	11 male	24.64	21 high	33	11.2
	22 female	26.64	9 middle		
			3 low		

3.7 VALIDITY

Before conducting any other analyses, a factor analysis was done to check if the items from the dependent variables loaded on different factors. All purchase intention items loaded on the same factor. The ability-based trust items loaded also on the same factor. The items used to measure willingness to forgive loaded on the same factor as ability-based trust. Because the items for willingness to forgive loaded less strong, these items had to be removed. This means that hypotheses 1b, 2b, 3b, 9 and 11 could not be tested.

Furthermore, all (except one) of the benevolence and integrity items loaded on the same factor. This caused a reformulation of the post-crisis trust variable into two different components. These are competence-based trust (ability), and character-based trust (benevolence and integrity). This is based on a study by Gabarro (1987), according to which character-based trust studies qualitative characteristics of behavior inherent in partners' strategic philosophies and cultures. Whereas competence-based trust examines specific operating behaviors and day-to-day performance. In comparison with the trust characteristics stated by Mayer and Davis (1999), ability involves competence-based trust, whereas integrity and benevolence involve character-based trust. The one item to measure integrity that loaded on another factor had to be removed.

The items to measure emotions, divided in sympathy and anger, both loaded correctly on two factor, except for one item to measure sympathy which had to be removed. All results from the factor analysis of the dependent variables can be found in Table 6. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy was 0.921, which is good.

Table 6:
Factor analysis of the dependent variables

Item	Rotated factor loading					
	1	2	3	4	5	6
Purchase intention 1		.77				
Purchase intention 2		.80				
Purchase intention 3		.80				
Purchase intention 4		.88				
Purchase intention 5		.85				
Purchase intention 6		.86				
Ability 1			.72			
Ability 2			.66			
Ability 3			.71			
Ability 4			.70			
Ability 5			.76			
Benevolence 1	.68					
Benevolence 2	.66					
Benevolence 3	.65					
Benevolence 4	.83					
Benevolence 5	.80					
Integrity 1	.72					
Integrity 2	.62					
Integrity 3	.66					
Integrity 4	.57					
Integrity 5						.87*
Willingness to forgive 1			.39*			
Willingness to forgive 2			.43*			
Willingness to forgive 3			.49*			
Willingness to forgive 4			.40*			
Anger 1				.80		
Anger 2				.78		
Anger 3				.81		
Anger 4				.73		
Sympathy 1					.74	
Sympathy 2				-.71*		
Sympathy 3					.80	
Sympathy 4					.81	

* Condition was removed from data

3.8 MEASURES

The participants in this study were asked to fill in a questionnaire to measure the variables of emotions, trust, willingness to forgive, and purchase intention. With a 5-point Likert scale participants were required to indicate to what extent they (dis)agreed with statements. The items ranged from 'strongly disagree' to 'strongly agree'. The complete list of statements that were used can be found in the questionnaire in Appendix 2. Because the variables have been measured in previous studies on crisis communication, the items used to measure each construct were based on existing scales.

The questions that were used to measure trust were based on a study of Mayer and Davis (1999). Trust was divided into ability, benevolence and integrity. An example of a statement that was used to measure trust is: "I trust the competence of Broodkapje". To measure the willingness to forgive, items were based on research from Xie and Peng (2009). An example of a statement used to measure the willingness to forgive of participants is: "I think positively of Broodkapje". The questions to measure purchase intention were based on the research of Lin (2006). An example of a statement used to measure the purchase intention of participants is: "I want to buy a product of Broodkapje in the future". The items to measure 'anger' and 'sympathy' were based on a study by McDonald, Glendon, and Sparks (2011). Examples of these statements are: "I am angry" or "I feel empathetic". The original scales measured emotions on a 7-point Likert scale, but these are adjusted to a 5-point Likert scale for the consistency of the research instrument.

To check the validity of the dependent variables that loaded correctly, Cronbach's alpha was measured. An overview of this is shown in Table 5. Because all alpha's were above 0.7 the dependent variables are all valid. Furthermore, removing one or more items would not increase alpha so no items were removed.

Table 5:

Cronbach's alpha of the dependent variables

Dependent variable	Cronbach's alpha
Purchase intention	.933
Competence-based trust	.875
Character-based trust	.906
Sympathy	.778
Anger	.873

4. RESULTS

4.1 MAIN RESULTS

Before specific results were checked, a correlation analysis was conducted to see how strong the relation between variables is. Almost all correlations were significant, thus, there is a confident relationship between the dependent variables. However, there seems to be no significant relationship between purchase intention and sympathy. An overview of these results can be found in Table 7.

The strong relationship between trust and purchase intention might indicate that there possibly exists a mediation of trust on the relation between the independent variables and purchase intention. Anger could also be a possible mediator because the relation between anger and purchase intention is very significant.

Table 7:
Pearson's Correlation between variables

	Purchase intention	Character-trust	Competence-trust	Anger	Sympathy
Purchase intention	1				
Character-trust	.35**	1			
Competence-trust	.53**	.61**	1		
Anger	.38**	.43**	.48**	1	
Sympathy	.10	.45**	.29**	.13*	1

**Significant effect $p < 0.01$

* Significant effect $p < 0.05$

4.2 CRISIS SOURCE

Overall, no significant effects were found on the dependent variables for the use of a different type of source $V = 0.08$, $F(5, 282) = 0.46$, $p = .80$). An overview of these results are shown in Table 8 and Table 9. Based on these results, hypotheses 1a, 1c and 1d are not supported.

Table 8:
Means & standard deviations - Source

Dependent measure	CEO			Company		
	N	M	SD	N	M	SD
Purchase intention	142	2.15	0.74	146	2.20	0.79
Competence-trust	142	2.80	0.74	146	2.81	0.74
Character-trust	142	3.01	0.66	146	2.98	0.70
Sympathy	142	3.07	0.87	146	3.05	0.80
Anger	142	3.48	0.90	146	3.38	0.88

Table 9:
MANOVA effects - Source

Dependent measure	Sum of sq.	df	Mean sq.	F	Sig.
Purchase intention	0.19	1	0.19	0.33	0.57
Competence-trust	0.02	1	0.02	0.03	0.86
Character-trust	0.07	1	0.07	0.15	0.70
Sympathy	0.01	1	0.01	0.02	0.89
Anger	0.78	1	0.78	0.98	0.32

*Significant effect: $p < 0.05$

4.3 CRISIS FRAMING

Only one significant effect was found for the use of a different type of framing, which was on the dependent variable sympathy $V = 0.03$, $F(5, 282) = 1.45$, $p = .21$. The individual results show that there was no significant effect on purchase intention, competence-based, character-based trust and anger.

Framing has a significant effect on sympathy. The results show that participants in the emotional framed condition scored significantly higher on sympathy ($M = 3.18$, $SD = 0.85$) than participants in the rational framed condition ($M = 2.93$, $SD = 0.79$), $F(1, 286) = 6.59$, $p = .01$. An overview of these results are shown in Table 10 and Table 11. Based on these results, hypothesis 2d can partly be confirmed and must partly be rejected, and hypothesis 2a and 2c are not supported.

Table 10:
Means & standard deviations - Framing

Dependent measure	Emotional			Rational		
	N	M	SD	N	M	SD
Purchase intention	148	2.19	0.77	140	2.17	0.76
Competence-trust	148	2.85	0.74	140	2.76	0.74
Character-trust	148	3.03	0.65	140	2.97	0.71
Sympathy	148	3.18	0.85	140	2.93	0.79
Anger	148	3.44	0.91	140	3.42	0.87

Table 11:
MANOVA effects – Framing

Dependent measure	Sum of sq.	df	Mean sq.	F	Sig.
Purchase intention	0.05	1	0.05	0.08	0.77
Competence-trust	0.62	1	0.62	1.14	0.29
Character-trust	0.26	1	0.26	0.57	0.45
Sympathy	4.46	1	4.46	6.59	0.01*
Anger	0.05	1	0.05	0.06	0.80

*Significant effect: $p < 0.05$

4.4 CRISIS PROXIMITY

No significant effects were found on the dependent variables for the use of a different type of proximity $V = 0.004$, $F(5, 281) = 0.23$, $p = .94$. An overview of these results are shown in Table 12 and Table 13. Based on these results, hypotheses 3a, 3c and 3d are not supported.

Table 12:

Means and standard deviations - Proximity

Dependent measure	N	High		N	Low	
		M	SD		M	SD
Purchase intention	138	2.20	0.76	149	2.16	0.63
Competence-trust	138	2.85	0.72	149	2.77	0.62
Character-trust	138	3.04	0.67	149	2.96	0.56
Sympathy	138	3.10	0.82	149	3.03	0.69
Anger	138	3.47	0.90	149	3.41	0.74

Table 13:

MANOVA effects – Proximity

Dependent measure	Sum of sq.	df	Mean sq.	F	Sig.
Purchase intention	0.10	1	0.10	0.17	0.68
Competence-trust	0.43	1	0.43	0.78	0.38
Character-trust	0.48	1	0.48	1.04	0.31
Sympathy	0.38	1	0.38	0.54	0.46
Anger	0.16	1	0.16	0.20	0.66

*Significant effect: $p < 0.05$

4.5 INTERACTION EFFECTS

No significant main effect was found between the type of source and type of framing of the message, $V = 0.02$, $F(5, 275) = 0.83$, $p = .53$. An overview of these results can be found in Table 14 and Table 15. Based on these results, hypotheses 4a and 4b are not supported.

Table 14:

Source x framing

Dependent measure		N	CEO		N	Company	
			M	SD		M	SD
Purchase intention	Emotional	68	2.20	0.80	80	2.18	0.75
	Rational	74	2.11	0.68	66	2.23	0.83
Competence-trust	Emotional	68	2.89	0.70	80	2.83	0.78
	Rational	74	2.72	0.70	66	2.80	0.70
Character-trust	Emotional	68	3.04	0.59	80	3.01	0.71
	Rational	74	2.98	0.73	66	2.94	0.69
Sympathy	Emotional	68	3.27	0.89	80	3.11	0.82
	Rational	74	2.88	0.80	66	2.99	0.77
Anger	Emotional	68	3.50	0.89	80	3.39	0.93
	Rational	74	3.47	0.92	66	3.36	0.83

Table 15:

Manova – Source x framing

Dependent measure	Sum of sq.	df	Mean sq.	F	Sig.
Purchase intention	0.41	1	0.41	0.69	0.41
Competence-trust	0.30	1	0.30	0.54	0.46
Character-trust	0.00	1	0.00	0.01	0.94
Sympathy	1.40	1	1.40	2.06	0.15
Anger	0.00	1	0.00	0.00	0.96

No significant main effect was found between the type of source and type of proximity to the crisis, $V=0.10$, $F(5, 275)= 0.56$, $p=.73$. An overview of these results can be found in Table 16 and Table 17. Based on these results, hypothesis 5a and 5b are not supported.

Table 16:

Source x proximity

Dependent measure		CEO			Company		
		N	M	SD	N	M	SD
Purchase intention	High	66	2.15	0.74	72	2.24	0.79
	Low	76	2.15	0.75	73	2.18	0.80
Competence-trust	High	66	2.80	0.74	72	2.89	0.71
	Low	76	2.79	0.74	73	2.74	0.78
Character-trust	High	66	3.08	0.68	72	3.00	0.69
	Low	76	2.95	0.65	73	2.96	0.71
Sympathy	High	66	3.14	0.80	72	3.06	0.84
	Low	76	3.00	0.92	73	3.05	0.76
Anger	High	66	3.48	0.94	72	3.43	0.87
	Low	76	3.48	0.91	73	3.33	0.91

Table 17:

MANOVA – source x proximity

Dependent measure	Sum of sq.	df	Mean sq.	F	Sig.
Purchase intention	0.06	1	0.06	0.10	0.75
Competence-trust	0.29	1	0.29	0.52	0.47
Character-trust	0.20	1	0.20	0.42	0.52
Sympathy	0.33	1	0.33	0.49	0.49
Anger	0.21	1	0.21	0.26	0.61

No significant main effect was found between the proximity and type of framing of the message, $V=0.01$, $F(5, 275)= 0.70$, $p=.63$. An overview of these results can be found in Table 18 and Table 19. Based on these results, hypotheses 6a and 6b are not supported.

Table 18:

Proximity x framing

Dependent measure		High			Low		
		N	M	SD	N	M	SD
Purchase intention	Emotional	72	2.22	0.78	76	2.17	0.77
	Rational	66	2.18	0.74	73	2.17	0.78
Competence-trust	Emotional	72	2.93	0.70	76	2.77	0.78
	Rational	66	2.75	0.74	73	2.77	0.74
Character-trust	Emotional	72	3.10	0.63	76	2.96	0.67
	Rational	66	2.97	0.74	73	2.96	0.69
Sympathy	Emotional	72	3.27	0.83	76	3.07	0.87
	Rational	66	2.89	0.76	73	2.98	0.82
Anger	Emotional	72	3.47	0.94	76	3.41	0.88
	Rational	66	3.44	0.86	73	3.40	0.90

Table 19:

MANOVA – proximity x framing

Dependent measure	Sum of sq.	df	Mean sq.	F	Sig.
Purchase intention	0.01	1	0.01	0.01	0.91
Competence-trust	0.52	1	0.52	0.95	0.33
Character-trust	0.28	1	0.28	0.59	0.44
Sympathy	1.95	1	1.95	2.87	0.09
Anger	0.00	1	0.00	0.00	0.96

In the three way interaction, also no significant effects were found, $V=0.02$, $F(5, 275)= 0.92$, $p=.47$. An overview of these results can be found in Table 20.

Table 20:

MANOVA - 3-way interaction

Dependent measure	Sum of sq.	df	Mean sq.	F	Sig.
Purchase intention	0.96	1	0.96	1.63	0.20
Competence-trust	1.23	1	1.23	2.23	0.14
Character-trust	0.12	1	0.12	0.25	0.62
Sympathy	1.18	1	1.18	0.26	0.61
Anger	0.12	1	0.12	0.15	0.70

** Significant effect $p<0.01$

4.6 MEDIATION ANALYSIS

The conditions for mediation analysis to be conducted were not met. According to Baron and Kenny (1986), the starting point of the mediation analysis is to establish first if there is a significant zero-order effect of the independent variable (in this study the manipulation) on the dependent variable. This is called the “effect to be mediated” (Collins, Graham & Flaherty, 1998; Kenny, 2003; Preacher & Hayes, 2004). Without an effect to be mediated, there is no point in further investigating whether the effect of an independent variable on a dependent variable is mediated by anything. Because in this study no direct effect on purchase intention, trust or emotions was found, no further analyses can be done. This causes the second research question to stay unanswered. Also, hypotheses 7, 8 and 10 cannot be tested.

5. DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to experimentally investigate to what extent the impact of crisis proximity (low or high), the source (CEO or the company as a whole) and framing of the crisis message (emotional or rational), influence emotions, trust, willingness to forgive and purchase intentions of consumers towards an organization. In addition, if and to what extent emotions, trust and the willingness to forgive mediate the effects of the manipulations on purchase intention was studied.

5.1 CRISIS PROXIMITY

This study did not find any significant effects between proximity and emotions, trust or purchase intention. This might be caused by the severity of the crisis. Participants might have perceived the crisis as not risky for them personally, even when in the high proximity condition. Previous studies stated that high proximity decreases levels of trust in risky situations, but perhaps because in the scenarios used in this study the crisis was in control, the crisis was not seen as risky enough for trust levels to decrease more in the high proximity condition compared to the low proximity condition.

Earlier studies reveal that geographical proximity to a crisis influence consumers behavior. Consumers with high crisis involvement process a message in greater detail and pay more attention to the message compared to low involved consumers. Differences in closeness affect the way people react to the crisis and the extent to which they feel involved. When there is high proximity to a crisis, consumers have the feeling that the crisis affects them personally, whereas for low proximity consumers, the issue has no personal impact.

Also, participants did not have stronger emotional feelings (positive or negative) in the high proximity condition compared to the low proximity condition. Earlier studies found that high geographical proximity to a crisis is an important predictor of feeling distressed and increase fear. When a crisis is more physically distant, is also becomes psychologically distant and this causes people to rely less on affect. Although the manipulation of proximity did work and participants knew if the crisis happened nearby or far away, the perceived risk might not have differed. This may have caused people to not feel fear of getting personally hit by the crisis, even when the crisis happened in their own country.

The purchase intention of consumers also did not differ in the two conditions. Previous studies suggested that purchase intentions would decrease more when personal relevance to the crisis would increase. However, as described above, the extent to which people felt personally affected might not have changed by the difference in proximity to the crisis.

5.2 CRISIS SOURCE

This study shows no significant effect when a different type of spokesperson is used. This might be caused by the way the spokesperson is presented in the scenarios used in this study. Several earlier studies stated that for a source to be successful it needs to be credible. Reidenbach and Pitts (1986) stated that using a CEO as source does not directly mean the message is perceived more positively by consumers, and that in order to be credible a source needs the right characteristics. Although there was a difference in source type in this study (a CEO versus the organization as a whole), there might not have been a difference in the amount of credibility of the source, which resulted in no significant effects.

Another possible reason for the lack of significance in the results could be the fact that it was not made clear who was responsible for the crisis in the scenarios. According to previous studies, the

more people think the organization is responsible, the more likely it is that they will feel negative emotion (e.g. Coombs, 1995).

Furthermore, no visibility of the source can also have caused the lack of significance. In a study conducted by Turk et al. (2012) a video was used as crisis communication medium. Their study showed that a CEO positively influences emotions and purchase intention. These findings possibly indicate, that when participants were shown more visual cues of the spokesperson, the results would be different.

5.3 CRISIS FRAMING

In this study, a significant difference was found between framing and the amount of sympathy participants felt towards the organization. An emotionally framed message resulted in more sympathy than a rational framed message. This is in line with a study of MacInnis (2005) in which is stated that emotional framing appeals to the customer's own emotions and therefore enhance their perception, because it causes the organization to show humane characteristics with which people can better relate to. Also, Schultz, Utz and Göritz (2011) state that emotional framing evokes sympathy by using apologies regarding the crises. In this study the emotionally framed message did include an apology whereas the rationally framed message did not.

However, not all results regarding framing are in line with previous studies. In this study there was no significant effect found between framing and the feeling of anger. In a study of Van der Meer and Verhoeven (2014) was stated that an emotional appeal is perceived more human and in turn decreases feelings of anger towards the organization. Our results contradicts these findings, while in fact, both the emotionally framed messages and the rationally framed messages caused a lot of anger among participants.

The reason for participants to be very angry, even in the emotional-framing condition, might be caused by having no prior reputation of the organization. A prior reputation determines the level of trust that consumers have in the organization. Also, it determines the credibility the company has with customers (Siomkos & Shrivastava, 1993). A lack of trust and credibility towards the organization might cause anger. In this study a fictional organization was used, which means participants did have no experience with the organization and therefore no prior image or reputation was held. When there was a good prior reputation, the trust in the organization and the credibility of the message could have been higher, which in turn could have reduced feelings of anger among the participants. Also, previous studies on product harm crises identified that the organization's prior reputation is one major factor that has a significant impact on consumers' perceptions and buying behavior. In this study there were no significant effects found between framing and purchase intentions.

Furthermore, previous studies concluded that showing emotions can increase consumers' trust in the organization during crisis. Nevertheless, in this study, no significant effects were found between framing and trust. Earlier studies revealed that negative emotions such as anger, decrease trust. The fact that all participants were very angry after reading the crisis response message may have caused the lack of trust in both the emotional framing condition as the rational framing condition.

5.4 INTERACTION EFFECTS

Although several previous studies concluded that interaction effects between source and framing, source and proximity and framing and proximity occurs in crisis communication, no significant interaction effects were found in this study. Almost no significance was found between the manipulations and the dependent variables individually, which might be the reason that there are also no significant interaction effects.

Previous studies indicate that the credibility of a source is related to the perceived persuasiveness. Also, rational framing triggers consumers to evaluate the credibility of a message more than emotional frames. A more credible source could thus result in more positive emotions when combined with a rational frame. Also, earlier studies underline that by using an emotional frame, an organization might be perceived as more human, which enhances more sympathy towards the organization. A CEO as source might also be perceived as being more human than the company as a whole as source. In this study, however, there were no differences found in the extent to which people felt sympathy and anger between the CEO conditions and the company as a whole conditions. This might indicate that not one of them was perceived more credible or more human which causes the interaction effects to stay away.

According to earlier studies, a source that is trusted more and perceived more credible is likely to produce attitude change when the motivation to process is low. Also, with low proximity the motivation to process would be lower than with high proximity to a crisis. In this study, there were no differences in trust and purchase intention when the source type changed. This means that one certain source type was not trusted more than the other. This might be the cause for the fact that there are no interaction effects between the source type and the proximity to the crisis.

Previous studies also indicate that high proximity in combination with rational framing would enhance more positive emotions than in combination with emotional framing, because high involvement determines more persuasion, and rational framed messages are more persuasive as they focus on the content of the message. However, there were no significant differences in the emotions (positive or negative) people felt between those conditions. The extent to which people felt involved might however not be affected by the proximity to the crisis, because the extent to which participants felt the situation to be risky for them personally might not have changed. This could also be the reason for the interaction effects to not be present.

6. IMPLICATIONS

6.1 THEORETICAL IMPLICATIONS

The aim of this research was to strengthen the theoretical basis that provides insight in how to communicate as organization in times of crises. This study provides a lot of contradictions with previous literature, which emphasizes that differences in how the manipulations are shown and what specific crisis is addressed might change the effects the manipulations have on consumers. The theories provided in previous studies about the effects of proximity, source type and framing cannot be generalized for every organizational crisis.

Also, the results show that a crisis, no matter who delivers the message, how it is framed and how far or near it occurred, causes a lot of anger to consumers. This is something future research has to keep in mind when conducting research about crisis communication. Reducing feelings of anger might be crucial to increase trust and purchase intentions of consumers.

6.2 PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS

A crisis can disrupt organizational operations and threaten to damage the reputation of the organization (Coombs & Holladay, 2002). With this study, it was aimed to find out what can make crisis communication more effective to minimize the damage for the organization. First of all, this study shows that an emotionally framed message results in more sympathy for the organization after a crisis has occurred than when a rationally framed message is used. However, a particular manner of framing could not reduce feelings of anger.

Although this study showed no direct main effects of proximity and source type on the measured dependent variables, it is still important to carefully consider what source is used to deliver the message, and how close the consumers targeted with the message are to the crisis. Previous studies show that both variables can have effects on how the organization is perceived after a crisis has occurred, which means that in a different setting it is possible that the effects would be more vital.

Based on the results of this study, companies should be very careful with formulating their crisis response message. It is important to know as much as possible about the target group and put effort in trying to reduce anger among those affected.

7. LIMITATIONS & SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

There are several limitations of this study, beginning with the generalizability. This study was mainly distributed among HBO and university students in between the ages of 20 and 27. This might cause a selection bias and cause the results to be not generalizable among all age groups and education levels. As educational level gives an indication of cognitive abilities and skills (Wiersema & Bantel, 1992), this might have influenced information processing. Both the educational levels and ages of the participants leads to overrepresentation of certain characteristics within the sample, which makes it difficult to generalize it as a representative sample of the population. A different sample method could thus be useful in future research.

Also, future research could include other types of products or companies, also outside the food industry. As this study focuses on a product harm crisis, results might differ when another type of crisis is used. Also the severity of the crisis might have an influence on the effects on the dependent variables. Especially when looking at the effects of proximity it can be interesting to find out in future research if the effects are bigger when the perceived risk becomes higher. Because this study did not measure perceived risk it is unclear whether this has an influence on the effects of proximity.

Furthermore, in this study a fictional organization was used. Participants might have had difficulties with rating the trustworthiness of the organization, and their purchase intentions after the crisis, because there was no prior experience with the company. To advantage of a fictional organization is that results will not be biased by those previous experiences, and participants thus base their answers purely on the scenarios they have read. However, a disadvantage could be that a fictional organization lacks reality and credibility which can cause a lack of involvement with the organization and the crisis. To enhance realism in this study a real news brand was used, which was perceived as very credible in the pre-test. Nevertheless this could have been not enough for participants to feel as if the crisis was real.

In this study all participants were Dutch. Future research could be conducted among different cultures to see if the effects of proximity, source and framing differ. Of course it should be carefully considered how the high and low proximity conditions would be shaped for the different backgrounds of the participants. Culture plays an important role in choosing the right crisis communication strategy (Ray, 1999). Culture affects responses because of different norms and values of people in specific situations (Stephens, Malone & Bailey, 2005).

In the crisis response message formulated for this study the crisis responsibility was not clearly indicated. Future research is needed to find out if the results differ when one party is clearly responsible during the crisis. According to previous studies this might affect the way consumers perceive the organization after a crisis has occurred. It is therefore interesting to know if the effects of crisis proximity, source and framing would also differ when the amount of responsibility of the organization changes.

8. CONCLUSION

The results of this study support findings in previous studies as it shows the impact that an emotionally framed crisis response message has on the feeling of sympathy towards the organization by consumers after a crisis has occurred. Also, the results illustrate that consumers became very angry after reading the crisis response message, in every condition. This emphasizes the importance for organizations to select their response strategy very carefully.

Although earlier studies have concluded that a different type of source and proximity can have impact on the extent to which the organization is perceived as trustworthy, and the extent to which consumers have purchase intentions, no evidence was found in this study to confirm this. This stresses the way different types of crises can have different impacts on consumers. More research is needed in this field to find out what differences in crises makes the impact of variables as source, framing and proximity bigger or smaller. In this study, a product harm crises of a fictional organization was used and participants were mainly highly educated students aged between 18 and 27, living in The Netherlands. A different crisis with another type of severity and a more generalized group of participants could have resulted in different results.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1:

Stimulus material – scenario 1 (source: CEO, framing: emotional, proximity: high)

NOS

Nieuws

Sport

Uitzendingen

TELETEXT



AEX



23 km



21°



Brood van Broodkapje is besmet

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Vanmorgen maakte de CEO van 'Broodkapje' (Ron Dirksen) tijdens een persconferentie bekend dat één van hun broodsoorten graan bevat dat besmet is met de moederkoornschimmel. Het gaat om de voorverpakte 'Meergranen pistolets'. De schimmel moederkoorn kan leiden tot ernstige, en zelfs dodelijke vergiftiging.

Broodkapje is één van de grootste broodleveranciers van Overijssel en naar schatting gaat het om duizenden besmette broodjes. In de regio Twente zijn er reeds 20 mensen met ernstige klachten in het ziekenhuis opgenomen.

Dirksen verklaarde vanochtend tijdens de persconferentie: "Gisteren is tijdens de dagelijkse controle van ons brood tot mijn spijt de schimmel moederkoorn ontdekt. Het doet mij veel verdriet dat dit is gebeurd. Via deze weg bied ik als CEO mijn welgemeende excuses aan voor alle betrokkenen. Ik vind het vreselijk dat dit heeft kunnen gebeuren en ben erg geschrokken en aangeslagen".

In een reactie geeft de Nederlandse Voedsel- en Warenautoriteit (NVWA) aan dat de eerste symptomen bestaan uit spiertrillingen, verlies van coördinatie, pijnlijke spiersamentrekkingen en hallucinaties. Het NVWA adviseert consumenten om de broodjes niet te eten en terug te brengen naar de winkel. Klanten krijgen hun geld terug.

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NOS

Nieuws

Sport

Uitzendingen

Teletekst

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Brood van Broodkapje is besmet

🕒 VANDAAG, 10:02 🌐 BUITENLAND

Vanmorgen maakte 'Broodkapje' tijdens een persconferentie bekend dat één van hun broodsoorten graan bevat dat besmet is met de moederkoornschimmel. Het gaat om de voorverpakte 'Meergranen pistolets'. De schimmel moederkoorn kan zorgen voor ernstige tot dodelijke vergiftiging.

Broodkapje is één van de grootste broodleveranciers ter wereld en naar schatting gaat het om duizenden besmette broodjes. In Suriname zijn er reeds 20 mensen met ernstige klachten in het ziekenhuis opgenomen.

Broodkapje verklaarde vanochtend tijdens de persconferentie: "Gisteren is tijdens de dagelijkse controle van ons brood de schimmel moederkoorn ontdekt. Er is een onderzoek gestart en het besmette brood is uit de schappen verwijderd. Het was onbekend dat er een kans was dat dit kon gebeuren en wij proberen dit zo snel mogelijk op te lossen".

In een reactie geeft de Nederlandse Voedsel- en Warenautoriteit (NVWA) aan dat de eerste symptomen bestaan uit spiertrillingen, verlies van coördinatie, pijnlijke spiersamentrekkingen en hallucinaties. Het NVWA adviseert consumenten in Suriname om de broodjes niet te eten en terug te brengen naar de winkel. Klanten krijgen hun geld terug. Het brood van Broodkapje dat in Nederland verkocht wordt is voor zover bekend niet besmet.

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Appendix 2:
Stimulus material – Questionnaire

Beste deelnemer,

Allereerst wil ik u bedanken voor het invullen van deze vragenlijst.

In het kader van mijn studie communicatiewetenschap aan de Universiteit Twente, voer ik ter afronding van mijn master een onderzoek uit naar het reageren van organisaties tijdens een crisis.

Het doel van dit onderzoek is om erachter te komen hoe een organisatie het beste kan reageren wanneer zij een crisis ervaart.

Deze enquête zal hooguit 10 minuten van uw tijd in beslag nemen. De aspecten die in de vragenlijst behandeld worden gaan over een nieuwsbericht dat u eerst te lezen zult krijgen. Zorg dus dat u dit bericht aandachtig leest!

De inzameling en verwerking van de resultaten gebeurt op volledig vertrouwelijke wijze. Dit betekent dat de resultaten van dit onderzoek alleen worden gebruikt ten behoeve van dit onderzoek, er niet naar uw naam of contactgegevens wordt gevraagd en dat de onderzoeker uw identiteit nooit zal nagaan.

Het succes van dit onderzoek hangt af van het aantal ingevulde vragenlijsten. Uw deelname wordt dan ook enorm gewaardeerd. Het is van groot belang dat u probeert zo goed mogelijk te antwoorden.

Eventuele vragen kunt u mailen naar: v.e.wonink@student.utwente.nl

Alvast bedankt voor uw deelname en met vriendelijke groet,

Vivian Wonink,
Universiteit Twente.

Ik verklaar op een voor mij duidelijke wijze te zijn ingelicht over de aard, methode, doel en belasting van het onderzoek. Ik weet dat de gegevens en resultaten van het onderzoek alleen anoniem en vertrouwelijk aan derden bekend gemaakt zullen worden. Mijn vragen zijn naar tevredenheid beantwoord.

Ik stem geheel vrijwillig in met deelname aan dit onderzoek. Ik behoud me daarbij het recht voor om op elk moment zonder opgaaft van redenen mijn deelname aan dit onderzoek te beëindigen.

Vul alstublieft de volgende gegevens in:

Leeftijd: _____

Geslacht:

☐ Man

☐ Vrouw

Wat is uw hoogst genoten opleiding?

(Als u op dit moment bezig bent met een opleiding, vul deze dan in).

☐ Basisonderwijs

☐ VMBO

☐ HAVO

☐ VWO

☐ MBO

☐ HBO

☐ WO bachelor

☐ WO master

☐ PHD

☐ Anders, namelijk:

In welke provincie bent u woonachtig?

☐ Noord-Holland

☐ Zuid-Holland

☐ Utrecht

☐ Noord-Brabant

☐ Zeeland

☐ Groningen

☐ Friesland

☐ Flevoland

☐ Overijssel

☐ Gelderland

☐ Drenthe

☐ Limburg

☐ Ik woon op dit moment niet in Nederland

Bent u bekend met het bedrijf 'Broodkapje'?

☐ Ja, ik ken dit bedrijf

☐ Nee, dit bedrijf ken ik niet

U krijgt nu een nieuwsbericht te lezen waar achteraf vragen over zullen worden gesteld. Om de vragen goed te kunnen beantwoorden zult u het nieuwsbericht aandachtig en in zijn geheel moeten lezen. Let op! U kunt bij het antwoorden van de vragen niet weer terugkeren naar het nieuwsbericht.

Vul alstublieft alle vragen in met het nieuwsartikel dat u zojuist hebt gelezen in uw achterhoofd.

De volgende vragen zijn allemaal in de vorm van stellingen. De eerste stellingen gaan over wat u verwacht te doen in de toekomst. Geef alstublieft aan in hoeverre u het met de stellingen eens bent (1= helemaal mee oneens, 5= helemaal mee eens).

	Helemaal mee oneens	Mee oneens	Niet mee oneens/ niet mee eens	Mee eens	Helemaal mee eens
Ik ben van plan in de toekomst een product van Broodkapje te kopen	1	2	3	4	5
Ik wil in de toekomst een product van Broodkapje kopen	1	2	3	4	5
Ik verwacht in de toekomst een product van Broodkapje te kopen	1	2	3	4	5
Ik ben van plan in de toekomst meergranen pistolets van Broodkapje te kopen	1	2	3	4	5
Ik wil in de toekomst meergranen pistolets van Broodkapje kopen	1	2	3	4	5
Ik verwacht in de toekomst meergranen pistolets van Broodkapje te kopen	1	2	3	4	5

De volgende vragen gaan over het bedrijf Broodkapje. Geef alstublieft aan in hoeverre u het met de stellingen eens bent (1= helemaal mee oneens, 5= helemaal mee eens).

	Helemaal mee oneens	Mee oneens	Niet mee oneens/ niet mee eens	Mee eens	Helemaal mee eens
Broodkapje is zeer geschikt in het uitvoeren van hun werk	1	2	3	4	5
Broodkapje staat er om bekend zeer succesvol te zijn in de dingen die zij proberen te doen	1	2	3	4	5
Broodkapje heeft veel kennis over het werk dat zij doen	1	2	3	4	5
Ik vertrouw op de kundigheid van Broodkapje	1	2	3	4	5
Broodkapje heeft specialistische kennis wat ervoor zorgt dat het werk goed wordt uitgevoerd	1	2	3	4	5
Broodkapje maakt zich erg veel zorgen om mijn welzijn	1	2	3	4	5
Mijn behoeften zijn erg belangrijk voor Broodkapje	1	2	3	4	5
Broodkapje doet er alles aan om mij geen schade te berokkenen	1	2	3	4	5
Broodkapje doet er alles aan om mij te helpen	1	2	3	4	5
Broodkapje kijkt echt naar wat voor mij belangrijk is	1	2	3	4	5
Broodkapje heeft een sterk gevoel voor rechtvaardigheid	1	2	3	4	5
Ik kan er zeker van zijn dat Broodkapje zich aan haar woord houdt	1	2	3	4	5
Belangrijke principes lijken Broodkapje te sturen	1	2	3	4	5
Het gedrag en de acties van Broodkapje zijn consistent	1	2	3	4	5
Broodkapje doet niet haar best om anderen eerlijk te behandelen	1	2	3	4	5

De volgende stellingen gaan over wat u vindt van het bedrijf Broodkapje. Geef alstublieft aan in hoeverre u het met de stellingen eens bent (1= helemaal mee oneens, 5= helemaal mee eens).

	Helemaal mee oneens	Mee oneens	Niet mee oneens/ niet mee eens	Mee eens	Helemaal mee eens
Ik denk positief over Broodkapje	1	2	3	4	5
Ik keur Broodkapje af	1	2	3	4	5
Ik ben bereid om Broodkapje te vergeven	1	2	3	4	5
Ik keur Broodkapje niet goed	1	2	3	4	5

De volgende stellingen gaan over hoe u zich voelt na het lezen van het nieuwsbericht. Geef alstublieft aan in hoeverre u het met de stellingen eens bent (1= helemaal mee oneens, 5= helemaal mee eens).

	Helemaal mee oneens	Mee oneens	Niet mee oneens/ niet mee eens	Mee eens	Helemaal mee eens
Ik ben boos	1	2	3	4	5
Ik voel walging	1	2	3	4	5
Ik ben geërgerd	1	2	3	4	5
Ik ben diep verontwaardigd	1	2	3	4	5
Ik voel sympathie	1	2	3	4	5
Ik ben bedroefd	1	2	3	4	5
Ik voel medelijden	1	2	3	4	5
Ik voel empathie	1	2	3	4	5

De volgende stellingen gaan over het nieuwsartikel dat u heeft gelezen.

In het nieuwsartikel stond dat de informatie over de crisis gegeven was door:

1	2	3	4	5
De CEO van Broodkapje				Het bedrijf Broodkapje

1	2	3	4	5
Een specifiek persoon				Een bedrijf

In het artikel stond in de tweede alinea wat de reactie vanuit Broodkapje was tijdens een persconferentie die eerder die dag had plaatsgevonden. De volgende vragen gaan specifiek over deze reactie.

Ik vond de reactie vanuit Broodkapje:

1	2	3	4	5
Emotioneel				Niet emotioneel

1	2	3	4	5
Informeel				Formeel

1	2	3	4	5
Persoonlijk				Onpersoonlijk

De volgende vragen gaan over waar de crisis plaats vond.

De crisis was voor mij:

1	2	3	4	5
Dichtbij				Ver weg

Ik voel mij bij de crisis:

1	2	3	4	5
Persoonlijk betrokken				Niet persoonlijk betrokken

Dit is het einde van de vragenlijst. Heel erg bedankt voor uw medewerking. Voor eventuele vragen kunt u mailen naar: v.e.wonink@student.utwente.nl

Appendix 3:
Pre-test 1 – trusting news websites

News website	R1	R2	R3	R4	R5	R6	R7	R8	R9	R10	R11	R12	R13	R14	R15	R16	R17	R18	R19	R20
De Telegraaf	3	10	19	19	17	18	6	19	19	19	15	18	16	12	16	20	19	20	3	12
De Stentor	19	9	7	14	16	8	4	8	12	12	19	13	15	10	8	9	5	14	13	13
Google	10	6	4	5	18	11	1	5	18	9	14	19	14	18	12	14	18	15	12	19
nieuws																				
De Volkskrant	4	5	10	9	7	12	11	9	4	2	13	8	12	2	6	2	7	7	5	2
Metro	13	11	18	15	19	13	19	18	17	6	10	11	19	19	17	7	4	11	14	6
nieuws																				
NOS	1	1	3	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	2	2	4	1	3	1	1	2	1
Nieuws	16	20	13	12	12	6	18	16	13	13	17	17	9	17	18	15	16	17	19	18
Overijssel																				
Het AD	6	13	6	8	3	7	5	10	7	18	9	4	5	8	9	4	14	9	7	11
Trouw	15	14	5	13	6	16	8	7	11	17	16	9	4	1	10	5	8	6	8	7
FOK nieuws	20	16	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	19	20	19	20	20
Elsevier	8	4	17	7	8	15	14	3	6	15	18	1	1	7	3	12	12	8	4	3
De	17	12	14	16	11	19	16	14	14	10	7	14	10	11	13	13	13	12	17	14
Gelderlander																				
Nieuws.nl	9	17	11	3	15	4	7	13	9	16	8	15	17	16	19	16	17	16	18	17
NRC	7	2	1	6	2	5	3	4	3	4	12	5	3	3	4	1	6	4	9	4
Brabants	18	15	15	11	14	17	15	11	15	11	6	10	11	9	15	17	9	18	16	16
Dagblad																				
Nu.nl	5	3	2	17	9	10	10	12	2	7	3	6	13	13	7	11	2	13	11	10
Teletekst	14	7	12	18	5	9	17	6	5	8	2	16	7	5	2	10	3	2	10	9
NPO nieuws	2	8	8	2	4	2	9	2	8	3	4	3	6	6	11	6	10	3	1	8
Dagblad van het noorden	11	19	16	10	13	14	13	15	16	14	5	7	8	14	14	8	11	10	15	15
RTL nieuws	12	18	9	4	10	3	12	17	10	5	11	12	18	15	5	18	15	5	6	5
Gender	M	M	F	M	F	F	M	M	F	M	M	F	F	M	M	F	F	M	M	F
Age	25	25	27	53	47	25	34	21	22	22	20	21	21	22	24	21	21	22	20	20