

Abstract

Purpose – There are only a few if any studies that examine how Hofstede's cultural dimensions interact with the image repair strategies and how this influences organizational reputation and word-of-mouth intentions. However, no existing studies have investigated it in an experimental setting including all these variables. Therefore, the study aims to fill this gap, with an additional examination of emotions' and crisis responsibility's mediating power. The dimensions that are used in the study are uncertainty avoidance and power distance index because these dimensions might explain the public's reaction to crises. The two national cultures that the study focuses on are Russia and The Netherlands.

Design/Methodology/Approach – The research method is an experiment with a 2 (culture: high uncertainty avoidance and large power distance index versus low uncertainty avoidance and small power distance index) X 2 (Image repair strategy: denial versus mortification) factorial design with emotions and crisis responsibility as mediators.

Findings – The study found that in Russia, a mortification response strategy has a more positive effect than a denial on organizational reputation. Moreover, in The Netherlands denial response strategy is more efficient to repair the organization's reputation than in Russia. Similarly, it was found that when organizational reputation is judged unfavourably, the negative WOM intentions become more prominent and the other way around. The impact of both emotions on organizational reputation is salient, suggesting that while anger contradicts the effects of response strategies, sympathy bolsters them in terms of organizational reputation.

Conclusions/Implications — This research has contributed to the field of international crisis communication by providing valuable insights on how national cultures interact with crisis response strategies and influences organizational reputation. The study extended the Image repair theory by identifying the important role of national cultures and the effects they have during a crisis. Consequently, the research stresses the potential value of Hofstede's two dimensions of culture as valuable assets that help to analyse cross-cultural differences that might occur during a crisis. Cultural understanding may help organizations better predict how different public will react to organizational responses. Practitioners should be cautious of stakeholder's behavioural intentions, such as negative WOM because it is highly correlated with the organization's reputation. Lastly, organizations and experts should focus on the affective levels of their stakeholders.

Key words – Crisis, Reputation, Image Repair Theory, Uncertainty Avoidance, Power Distance Index, Emotions, Crisis Responsibility, Word-of-mouth

Table of contents

1.		Intr	roduction	4
2.	,	The	eoretical framework	6
	2.1	1.	Crisis communication and culture	6
		2.1.	1. The characteristics of crises and crisis communication	6
		2.1.2	2. The outcome variable of reputation	7
		2.1	3. The relation between reputation and negative word-of-mouth intentions	7
		2.1.4	4. The effects of culture on crisis research	8
		2.1.:	5. Cultural values and norms in crisis communication	9
	2.2	2.	Cultural dimensions	9
		2.2.	1. Uncertainty Avoidance	10
		2.2.2	2. Power distance index	11
		2.2	3. The combination of uncertainty avoidance and power distance index	11
	2.3	3.	Image repair theory	12
		2.3.	1. Image repair strategies and the cultural dimensions	14
	2.4	4.	Crisis responsibility	16
	2.5	5.	Emotions	18
3.		Met	thod	20
	3.1	1.	Research design	
	3.2	2.	Participants	
	3.3	3.	Procedure	21
	3.4	4.	Stimulus material	
	3.5		Measures	
	3.6		Manipulation checks	
			sults	
	4.1		Correlation between the two dependent variables	
	4.2		The main effect of national cultures on organizational reputation	
	4.3		Interaction effects of national cultures and response strategies on organizational reputat	
	4.4		The mediating power of crisis responsibility on organizational reputation	
	4.5		The level of crisis responsibility in national cultures	
	4.6		The mediating role of emotions	
	4.7	. •	The level of felt emotions in national cultures	
			cussion	
	5.1		Theoretical implications	
	5.2		Practical implications	
	5.3		Limitations	
	5.4		Future research directions	
6.			nclusion	
			NY A. Crisis situation	
			DIX A– Crisis situationDIX B – Final questionnaire	
Al	- 1	DINE.	21A D = Filiai uuesuoiliaile	

1. <u>Introduction</u>

Reputation is a representation of a company's past actions and future expected behaviour that describes the firm's overall attractiveness to its stakeholders when compared to the competitors (Pruzan, 2001). As crises can harm organizational reputation, there may be negative effects of an unfavourable reputation, for example on word-of-mouth (WOM) intentions (Coombs, 2007a, 2007b; Ma & Zhan, 2016). Word-of-mouth (WOM) is considered as an informal and interpersonal communication form about a product with personal recommendations based on previous experiences (Balaji et al., 2016; Walsh et al., 2009). Therefore, negative WOM might play an important role after a crisis because stakeholders can share information with others about that negative event (Cheung & Lee, 2012; Hennig-Thurau et al., 2004; Utz et al., 2013).

Coombs' (2007a) explanation of a crisis is "a sudden and unexpected event that threatens to disrupt an organization's operations and poses both a financial and a reputational threat" (p. 164). Crisis communication is an important part of crisis management, which refers to communication with various stakeholder groups (Coombs, 2007a). When dealing with crises, organizations can employ strategies to reduce the damage, to repair their reputation, and to prevent stakeholders to engage in negative WOM intentions. One theory that can help crisis managers to choose the most suitable strategies of what an organization can say during a crisis is Benoit's (1997) Image repair theory.

The theory of image repair provides guidance for repairing the image or reputation of the organization (Benoit, 1997). Although the Image repair theory is an acknowledged and well-cited paradigm for investigating corporate communication during crises, it does not pay enough attention to the effects that cultural differences have on organizational reputation when an organization uses specific crisis response strategies. Despite that the theory states that a particular message effective with one group might be irrelevant for others, it lacks the specific explanation of cultural differences and the important effects they have on organizational reputation (Benoit, 1997, 2013). Scholars (Frandsen & Johansen, 2010; de Fatima Oliveira, 2013) argue that the stakeholders' interpretation of the events can be more important than the actual events themselves. These interpretations are strongly influenced by cultural factors such as Hofstede's cultural dimensions, which can vary in each country (Hofstede, 1983, 2003). Therefore, without considering cultural differences, an appropriate crisis communication strategy cannot be applied. When an organization does not understand the cultural norms of the host nation and cannot

effectively adapt to them, it might cause severe consequences for the organization and the relationship between them. This happened for instance, in the European scare of Coca-Cola in 1999 or McDonald's chicken debacle in Japan, in 2014 (Lehmberg & Hicks, 2018; Taylor, 2000). Coca-Cola did not pay attention to the level of cultural dimensions when communicated to the public. While the company's response strategy worked for countries with a low level of uncertainty avoidance and power distance index, the same strategy caused one of the biggest failures in the history of the company in those countries which have a high level of uncertainty avoidance and power distance index. On the other hand, McDonald's forgot about the differences in function and meaning of apology in Japan and the West causing enormous reputational and financial loss to the organization. Although these works offer initial findings, they are based on case studies, yet no existing research has investigated the interaction of cultural dimensions with the image repair strategies in an experimental setting. Therefore, to fill the gap in the literature to see how Hofstede's cultural dimensions interact with the image repair strategies and how this influences organizational reputation and WOM intentions, the study examines Hofstede's two cultural dimensions and Benoit's (1997, 2013) image repair strategies as independent variables.

Besides cultural values and orientations, emotions can help stakeholders how to interpret the events (Pang et al., 2013). The primary emotions that are felt during a crisis can influence the public's decision-making process, such as the judgement of organizational crisis response strategies (Jin, 2009). Primary emotional reactions can be divided into negative (e.g., anger) (Jin, 2010; Utz et al., 2013) and positive ones (e.g., sympathy) (Choi & Lin, 2009; Jin, 2013). Due to the emotional state of stakeholders, crisis response strategies might be evaluated differently and consequently have different effects on organizational reputation.

During a crisis, stakeholders also want to find out whether the events are caused by situational or other factors. Attributed crisis responsibility indicates stakeholders' beliefs about the organization's responsibility for the crisis (Coombs, 2007a; McDonald et al., 2010). In other words, how much responsibility stakeholders associate with the organization during a crisis. Coombs (2007a) emphasizes that when the public attributes more responsibility to an organization during a crisis, the threat to organizational reputation increases. Therefore, from a crisis communication perspective, examining emotions and crisis responsibility can provide interesting insights into how they might mediate stakeholders' perceptions of organizational crisis response strategies and how this influences organizational reputation and WOM intentions.

Following this line of reasoning, this study aims to investigate the following research questions:

- RQ1: How are the image repair strategies being affected by cultural factors and how does this affect the organizational reputation and negative WOM intentions?
- RQ2: To what extent do emotions and crisis responsibility mediate the effects of organizational crisis response strategies?

2. Theoretical framework

2.1. Crisis communication and culture

2.1.1. The characteristics of crises and crisis communication

A traditional view of crisis assumes that it is a very uncommon situation that may endanger an organization's reputation and image or harm its public. Crises create uncertainty, pose threat to the affected individuals, and might have features of surprise (Ha & Boynton, 2013; Juliane Wardoyo & Augustine, 2017). During a crisis, the organization itself is under pressure and threatened by internal and/ or external factors. Organizational crises are researched and studied in various disciplines, such as business management, political science, psychology, and sociology. However, from a communicative perspective, crises can be viewed as social constructs (Falkheimer & Heide, 2006). They arise during social discussions where stakeholders can determine whether a certain event is seen as a crisis (de Fatima Oliveira, 2013; Lee, 2004). These stakeholder decisions are based on societal values, beliefs, and norms, which are believed to be the most important elements of culture (Schwartz, 1997). Thus, the cultural context where the crisis takes place must be considered and crisis communication must be adjusted accordingly (Falkheimer, 2013).

Within the field of organizational crisis studies, crisis communication focuses on the prediction of potential crises, the assessment of the situation, and the creation of response messages to reduce the possible damage and create a more favourable standpoint for the organization (Falkheimer & Heide, 2009; Frandsen & Johansen, 2010; Ha & Boynton, 2013). The goal of crisis communication is to provide information to the affected stakeholders to make sense of the situation.

2.1.2. The outcome variable of reputation

To understand the effects of crisis communication, one should recognize the importance of outcome variables, as well. Outcome variables symbolize the different factors that crisis communication can influence (Coombs, 2015). For this study, the most important outcome variable is reputation. Organizational reputation is commonly used as a dependent variable in crisis communication research (Benoit, 2013; Coombs, 2015; Haruta & Hallahan, 2003). A good reputation attracts customers and investors, increases financial efficiency, and creates an advantage against competitors (Benoit, 1997, 2000). Furthermore, reputation plays a role in consumer decisions between products and services (Pruzan, 2001; van der Meer & Verhoeven, 2014). As reputation is considered an intangible asset, organizations should do their utmost to avoid damage to it.

2.1.3. The relation between reputation and negative word-of-mouth intentions

Word-of-mouth (WOM) is considered as an informal and interpersonal communication form about a product with personal recommendations based on previous experiences (Balaji et al., 2016; Walsh et al., 2009). The communicator is independent or at least expected to be, and the information seems more reliable coming from a trustworthy source (Lau & Ng, 2009). WOM is a unique, non-marketing exchange of information, in which the information is tailored to the customers, hence more relevant and credible (Lau & Ng, 2009; Walsh et al., 2009).

The impact of WOM can either be positive or negative. According to Buttle (1998) "positive WOM is associated with performance above that which was predicted and negative WOM with performance below that which was wanted" (p. 247). Research (Buttle, 1998; Lau & Ng, 2009; Williams & Buttle, 2014) link positive WOM with customer satisfaction, while negative WOM with customer dissatisfaction. This study's primary concern is negative WOM since stakeholders are keener to negative than positive messages, and during crises, the magnitude of negative information is greater than of positive ones (Chang et al., 2015). Furthermore, negative WOM is more frequently associated with a crisis. Negative WOM can be defined as a negatively shared opinion or information by customers based on a negative experience with an organization or a product (Balaji et al., 2016). Negative WOM is usually exercised by dissatisfied customers who want to share this dissatisfaction with others (Chang et al., 2015; Lau & Ng, 2009; Wetzer et al., 2007). Research (McDonald et al., 2010; Utz et al., 2013; Wetzer et al., 2007) investigating

the effects of WOM found that negative information causes greater attention, will be shared by more people and may travel faster than positive ones.

In their study, Walsh et al. (2009) demonstrated that organizational reputation can influence behaviour-related variables, such as word-of-mouth. If an organization has a good reputation, it signals the quality of the products towards customers, and this quality-enhancing effect of organizational reputation can cause positive behavioural intentions among customers. On the other hand, a negatively evaluated reputation is considered to generate negative WOM intentions (Chang et al., 2015; Walsh et al., 2009). Hence, it could be assumed that there is a negative relation between reputation and negative WOM intentions (Walsh et al., 2009). Furthermore, Coombs (2007b) emphasizes that when organizational reputation is judged more unfavourably, the valence of WOM intentions becomes more negative. When stakeholders do not accept the organization's responses to crises, consequently they may judge the reputation more unfavourably. Thus, they could be expected to engage in negative WOM about the company's product or services because of this dissatisfaction. Concluding this argument, the hypothesis is:

H1: Organizational reputation is negatively related to negative WOM intentions.

2.1.4. The effects of culture on crisis research

As most of the theories and case studies in the field of crisis communication examined American organizations with an American public, critiques have been argued that crisis communication is ethnocentric (Claeys & Schwarz, 2016; García, 2011; Haruta & Hallahan, 2003). Ethnocentrism means that one approach to a problem in one country would be suitable to all situations and cultures (Haruta & Hallahan, 2003). To fill this gap, research has started to investigate how stakeholders respond to crises in non-American contexts (Jakubanecs, 2017; Lim, 2020; Utz et al., 2013; Wang & Laufer, 2020; Wang & Wanjek, 2018; Zhu et al., 2017). Consequently, other studies have applied Western theories to non-Western environments to explore whether practices used in the Western world would be suitable in other cultures, as well (An et al., 2010; Barkley, 2020; Choi, 2017; Low et al., 2011; Maddux et al., 2011; Maiorescu, 2016).

Due to their transnational operations, many organizations have become more interdependent and interconnected (Jakubanecs et al., 2017; Valentini, 2007). Therefore, crisis research among different cultures is getting more and more relevant. For crisis communication research, it means that a crisis emerging in one country can easily have global

consequences (Sellnow & Veil, 2016). Due to globalization, organizations must pay careful attention to how they communicate with various stakeholder groups because the whole world might be listening to the strategies they use when facing a crisis (de Fatima Oliveira, 2013). Thus, in the globalized world, a corporation needs to be aware of crises, have crisis response strategies at hand, and adapt to the varying expectations of culturally different audiences (Claeys & Schwarz, 2016; Lindholm & Olsson, 2010; Lim, 2020; Valentini, 2007).

2.1.5. Cultural values and norms in crisis communication

One usual problem of crisis communication is suiting the communication to the needs of the diverse international stakeholders. Multinational organizations that operate globally often tend to have a lack of understanding of slight differences that play a role in other cultures' values and norms (Lim, 2020). This failure can easily cause and/ or escalate crises if crisis managers do not give enough importance to the issue (Choi, 2017).

Schwartz (1997) emphasizes that cultural values form and legitimize individual and group beliefs and actions. These factors influence how a multinational organization should communicate with the public in the host nation. Hence an organization must have cultural sensitivity when developing effective corporate messages. Although many crises are global, several organizations still try to handle them in a local context, while they need to be managed in different culture-specific forms suited to the culture of the country where the crisis takes place (An et al., 2010; Frandsen & Johansen, 2010). This is essential, because each involved individual has a different interpretation of the same event, as these cognitive and affective reactions are strongly influenced by the cultural communities they belong to (de Fatima Oliveira, 2013; Frandsen & Johansen, 2010). Therefore, how organizations plan and practice crisis communication and how stakeholders interpret it is influenced by the cultural context and values. Apart from understanding the publics' perceptions across different cultures, crisis managers should apply culturally suitable strategies based on those perceptions (An et al., 2010; Claeys & Schwarz, 2016; Maddux et al., 2011).

2.2. Cultural dimensions

Hofstede's original country dimension scores were produced in the 1970s. In the next few decades, many scholars replicated the study, using different samples to prove whether Hofstede's findings are still valid (Burns & Bruner, 2000; Kirkman et al., 2006; Minkov & Hofstede, 2011).

The model of Hofstede consists of five big dimensions that explain national cultures. Uncertainty avoidance (UAI) expresses the degree to which a society feels uncomfortable due to an unknown future. Power distance (PDI) relates to how inequalities are accepted in society. The next dimension is individualism versus collectivism (IDV), which describes an individual's integration into primary groups. Masculinity versus femininity (MAS) relates to the emotional roles between women and men. Lastly, long-term versus short-term orientation (LTO) explains people's focus orientation regarding the present, past, and future (Hofstede, 1984, 2003).

Although all dimensions can offer interesting insights into a society's culture, this study examines UAI and PDI from Hofstede's cultural dimensions, as these two might help researchers to understand how a culture adapts to crises and help to choose the most appropriate image repair strategies (Low et al., 2011; Taylor, 2000). For instance, Low et al. (2011) emphasize that to be culturally sensitive an organization should recognize UAI and PDI of Hofstede's cultural dimensions because these variables offer the most applicable results when examining how a culture responds to risks and crises (Low et al., 2011). Furthermore, Taylor (2000) investigates the differences in how PDI and UAI affect public response to a product harm crisis. Despite both studies have found interesting results, they are built upon case studies and did not investigate the effects of cultural dimensions in an experimental setting.

2.2.1. Uncertainty Avoidance

Although Hofstede's (1984, 2003) work has been cited many times and one of the most influential studies in the international and intercultural setting, many controversies have emerged during the years, which aimed at both the methodology, operationalization, and reliability of the study (McSweeney, 2002; Minkov, 2018; Kirkman et al., 2006). A common critique of Hofstede's cultural dimensions is that although they are useful in distinguishing cultural characteristics of a specific country, they may overgeneralize the results (McSweeney, 2002; Minkov, 2018; Juliane Wardoyo & Augustine, 2017). The fact, that a nation lives within the borders of a country, does not necessarily mean that those people constitute a homogeneous society with the same culture (Hofstede, 1983). Therefore, this study employs the concept of national culture, which refers to the dominant culture within the boundaries of a country. Thus, the unit of analysis in this current research takes a narrow view of the country level.

UAI describes how humans cope with ambiguity (Hofstede, 1984, 2003; Taylor, 2000). It explains the extent to which individuals in a national culture become concerned due to situations

that are unpredictable, vague, or insecure (Hofstede, 1983, 2011; Hofstede et al., 2010). UAI further explains whether people in a culture can tolerate structured over unstructured situations. In structured situations the rules are clear, and there is a pattern of how to behave (Hofstede & Soeters, 2002). National cultures that have a higher UAI tend to have more written rules, intricate legal systems, and being different is considered dangerous (Hofstede & Soeters, 2002; Taylor, 2000). In crises, the public in these national cultures requires immediate communication from an organization. People will be more anxious during crises and rely on written rules while they try to create security and avoid the possible risk of the crisis (Hofstede, 1984, 2011; Hofstede & Soeters, 2002). On the other hand, lower UAI national cultures feel rather secure in those situations. In national cultures with lower UAI, individuals tend to accept other's opinions and disagreements, and the willingness of taking risks is higher (Hofstede, 1983, 2003, 2011). During a crisis, these national cultures are less dependent on rules and show fewer emotions than those, where UAI is higher (Hofstede, 1984, 2011; Hofstede et al., 2010).

2.2.2. Power distance index

Power distance describes how individuals in a national culture deal with inequality (Taylor, 2000). Hofstede (1983) emphasizes that "people are unequal in physical and intellectual capacities" (p. 81). In national cultures where the PDI is larger, this dependence is accepted by the less powerful public. People respect those in powerful positions and do not challenge them (Kirkman et al., 2006; Wertz & Kim, 2010). At the same time, they are not easily forgiving for the wrongdoings of the powerful (Zhou, & Shin, 2017). During a crisis, the leader of the organization must show efforts to solve the crisis, and the public needs explicit and direct instructions from the organization. (Low et al., 2011; Taylor, 2000). Other societies, where PDI is smaller, try to debunk this inequality and minimize it as much as possible (Hofstede, 1983, 2003). They believe that everyone is equal and questioning orders from higher places is more accepted (Haruta & Hallahan, 2003). These national cultures do not expect to manage the crisis from the highest levels but want to participate in the decision-making procedure (Low et al., 2011).

2.2.3. The interaction of uncertainty avoidance and power distance index

These cultural dimensions have indications for certain types of communication and crisis (Taylor, 2000). However, to understand the various aspects of national culture, one single dimension might be not enough (Hofstede, 1983, 2011; Hofstede et al., 2010). As Hofstede (1983) highlights, combinations of certain dimensions can explain and complete each other. There is a

positive correlation between the two dimensions. For instance, PDI with UAI can be used to examine national cultures more extensively. Although these are two different dimensions, this study aims to investigate their interaction. More specifically, this paper focuses on the two extremes, when lower UAI meets with smaller PDI and when higher UAI interacts with larger PDI.

When lower UAI meets with smaller PDI in a national culture, people may be more tolerant and patient of mistakes (Taylor, 2000). However, higher tolerance for uncertainty does not mean that the public in that national culture would not want to find out the truth and a solution for the crisis. Instead, they are able, to tolerate uncertain situations until they would find out the truth (Haruta & Hallahan, 2003). On the other hand, in higher UAI national cultures with larger PDI, groups with power are under strict rules of behaviour (Taylor, 2000). When this group breaks the socially set norms the powerless public will not forgive and will seek punishment, thus they might see this group as less trustworthy (Low et al., 2011). This is the case during crises when an organization experiences higher levels of threats due to the public's higher scores on cultural dimensions. During crises the written rules are less visible, feelings of security disappear, and due to higher levels of risk the behaviour and attitude of the public might become more negative. Moreover, people in a national culture with higher UAI tend to avoid ambiguity, and since crises create uncertainty, the study assumes that they would react more unfavourably to crises, than people from smaller UAI national cultures. Thus, the hypothesis regarding the combination of the two dimensions is the following:

H2: During a crisis, a national culture with higher UAI and a larger PDI has a more negative effect on organizations' reputation than a national culture that scores low on both dimensions.

2.3. Image repair theory

The theory of image repair provides guidance for repairing the image or reputation of the organization (Burns & Bruner, 2000; Ulmer & Pyle, 2016). One of the key assumptions of Benoit's image repair theory (1997, 2000, 2013) is that the main goal of communication is maintaining a positive reputation. Reputation is built up over a long time and organizations are motivated to maintain a positive reputation in the minds of their stakeholders. When the reputation is either threatened or damaged, an organization wants to defend or restore it (Walsh & McAllister-

Spooner, 2011). Another important tenet in the theory is whether the key stakeholders find the organization responsible for the offensive act regardless of its actual responsibility (Benoit, 1997, 2013). Crisis response strategies influence what people think about the organization's level of responsibility for the crisis (An et al., 2010). This is another reason why an organization needs to understand their publics and the way they perceive the responses and react to them.

The theory consists of five main strategies. The first image repair strategy is denial, which occurs when a firm denies that the act itself happened, that the act was performed by the firm, or that the act had harmful effects on anyone (Benoit, 1997). The other type of denial is shifting the blame that describes when an organization claims that another person or firm is responsible for the offensive act (Benoit, 1997; Burns & Bruner, 2000). The next general strategy is the evasion of responsibility. Minimization, bolstering, differentiation, or transcendence can be used to reduce offensiveness which is the third main strategy. Fourth is corrective action, when the firm tries to restore its previous position and promises to behave correctly in the future (Benoit, 1997, 2013; Benoit & Drew, 1997). Lastly, mortification is to confess the offensive act and beg for forgiveness. The theory is flexible, and many combinations of the strategies can be applied in practice (Burns & Bruner, 2000). However, this study only focuses on denial and mortification response strategies.

There are several reasons why the current study examines only these two strategies. Based on previous literature (Benoit & Drew, 1997; Coombs & Holladay, 2008; Sellnow et al., 1998), denial and mortification strategies seem the most opposing ones, both at the end of the "continuum", as an organization that uses denial does not take liability for the crisis, while with mortification, a company bears responsibility for its wrongdoings. Using a denial strategy might be useful in crises when the company is not proven guilty (Benoit, 1997). On the other hand, mortification is regarded to be more persuasive than the other strategies when the organization has committed the offensive act as stakeholders may evaluate the organization more positively when it apologises for the wrongdoing (Benoit, 1997; Benoit & Drew, 1997). However, Coombs and Holladay (2008) found that apology is the most expensive strategy because it creates chances for lawsuits and financial loss. When an organization apologizes, stakeholders might attribute heavy responsibility to the organization for the crisis (Lee, 2004; van der Meer & Verhoeven, 2014). From a legal point of view, it is believed that an organization should not accept liability until it is not clear what has caused the crisis (Wertz & Kim, 2010). In this case, denial

might work better to reduce perceptions of responsibility among the stakeholders. Nevertheless, it is important to note that sometimes choosing the strategy is not a choice of the organization. For example, when there is video footage of the wrongdoing the firm cannot deny its responsibility. However, given certain crisis circumstances, the organization is in the position to choose from the various crisis responses at hand. For instance, during a product-harm crisis when the causes are vague and the responsibility for the act is less explicitly visible to the stakeholders, the organization can choose between mortification and denial.

Besides, many aspects can influence the efficacy of these repair strategies. For example, cultures' consequences might differently impact the effectiveness of denial and mortification on organizational reputation. Stakeholders' national cultural values might affect the interpretation of these strategies, which in turn may change their perceptions of organizational reputation. Lastly, examining two instead of five strategies creates a chance for the researcher to conclude a more indepth analysis of these particular response strategies.

Although the image repair theory is considered as a dominant paradigm for investigating corporate communication during crises, it does not pay enough attention either to cultures' effects on organizations' image repair strategies or to the effects of these on reputation.

2.3.1. Image repair strategies and the cultural dimensions

Although there are many crisis communication theories that have examined and evaluated crisis events (e.g., Benoit, 1997, 2013; Coombs, 2007), the literature about intercultural crisis communication has only started expanding recently (e.g., Barkley, 2020; Choi, 2017; Maiorescu, 2016; Schwarz et al., 2016). There is a trend in intercultural crisis communication research that most articles have investigated case studies on image repair strategies in a specific cultural environment (e.g., García, 2011; Huang & Bedford, 2009; Lindholm & Olsson, 2010; Taylor, 2000). Taking the different cultural factors into consideration, certain image repair strategies might have different effects on reputation in various national cultural contexts. While one image repair strategy has a positive effect on reputation in a specific situation, the same strategy could cause negative consequences in a different national cultural setting (Frandsen & Johansen, 2010). For example, while apologizing and asking for forgiveness in Japan after a failure is a crucial and required part of image repair, in the United States the same strategy would be considered as a confession of incompetence and guilt (Frandsen & Johansen, 2010; Maddux et al., 2011).

Therefore, for an effective strategy, it needs to be tailored and suited for the characteristic of the host nation.

As has been mentioned previously in the paper, in higher UAI and larger PDI national cultures, people tend to react unfavourably to uncertain and unclear situations (Hofstede, 1983; 2011). When these two dimensions are high in national culture, people will require a clear, honest, and immediate explanation of the crisis and they may not be forgiving. Furthermore, people in stronger UAI national cultures do not accept when an organization does not have clear answers of what has happened (Haruta & Hallahan, 2003). According to Zhou and Shin (2017), in larger PDI national cultures, if the organization uses mortification and emphasizes that it has regretted the wrongdoing, it could repair stakeholders' trust, because with this victim-oriented strategy an organization can demonstrate that it has learnt its lesson. Mortification might also work better to repair the organization's reputation in national cultures where UAI is high because it seeks to fulfil stakeholders' expectations to reduce ambiguity, as it provides clear and honest information about the crisis (Maiorescu, 2016). For individuals from these national cultures, reducing uncertainty, addressing apologies, and asking for forgiveness seem the most suitable image repair strategies because they have a lower tolerance for a crisis. As a result of the aforementioned characteristics of the cultural dimensions, it can be inferred that in these national cultures mortification could be the more suitable image repair strategy. Thus, hypotheses 3a and 3b are the following:

- H3a: In a national culture that scores higher on UAI and PDI, mortification has a more positive effect on reputation than denial from Benoit's image repair theory.
- H3b: In a national culture that scores higher on UAI and PDI, mortification has a more positive effect on reputation than in a national culture that scores lower on both dimensions.

On the contrary, in national cultures that are lower on UAI and PDI is smaller, people do not get anxious if they do not receive clarification of the situation immediately (Taylor, 2000). In these national cultures, providing accurate and immediate information about the crisis is not essential because people can tolerate uncertain situations. In national cultures where the tolerance for ambiguity is higher, an organization could avoid the acceptance of responsibility easier, than in cultures where people do not tolerate uncertainty (Haruta & Hallahan, 2003). Moreover, organizations do not have to make any statements about their accountability during a crisis. Similarly, if the ambiguous situation leads to the solution of the crisis, a public apology is not

necessary (Haruta & Hallahan, 2003). In national cultures, where UAI and PDI are lower, the organization's effort to shift the blame or deny the existence of the crisis might result in more positive perceptions of reputation, as these dimensions assume that people in these cultures can tolerate the ambiguous situation when the organization does not provide clear information of the causes of the crisis. Consequently, denying the accusation or shifting the blame can be more effective in cultures where these two dimensions meet. The study, therefore, makes the following predictions:

H4a: In a national culture that scores lower on UAI and PDI, denial has a more positive effect on reputation than mortification from Benoit's image repair theory.

H4b: In a national culture that scores lower on UAI and PDI, denial has a more positive effect on reputation than in a national culture that scores higher on both dimensions.

2.4. Crisis responsibility

Organizational responsibility for a crisis and its relationship with organizational reputation has been investigated in prior research (Coombs & Holladay, 2002; Kim, 2009; Lee, 2004, 2005; Ma & Zhan, 2016). The attribution of organizational responsibility is based on Weiner's (1986) Attribution Theory. The main tenet of Attribution Theory is that people search for causes, especially during surprising and negative events (Weiner, 1986). Stakeholders make attributions about the causes of events to make sense of them and try to create a feeling of control over the circumstances (Dean, 2004; McDonald et al., 2010). Crisis responsibility refers to the extent to which people believe that the organization has caused the crisis (Coombs, 2007a). According to Coombs (2007a), if stakeholders see the organization as the main cause of the crisis, they will more possibly blame the organization, and the reputation would be seriously damaged. Other research in this domain (Coombs, 2007b; Ma & Zhan, 2016) also showed that when attributions of crisis responsibility increase, organizational reputation becomes more unfavourable. For instance, Ma & Zhan (2016) found in their study that attributed responsibility was negatively and strongly related to organizational reputation.

Besides, the public perceptions of organizational crisis responsibility may be influenced by the organization's crisis response strategy. Therefore, organizations must find the most appropriate strategy to alter these judgements of crisis responsibility to protect organizational reputation (Lee, 2004). By doing so, organizations can be successfully managing a crisis. Although, during a crisis, an organization can use several response strategies, in the academic world there is no consistent agreement on the effectiveness of those strategies (e.g., Benoit, 1997; Coombs & Holladay, 2002, 2008; Lee, 2004). For instance, McDonald et al. (2010) contended that an organization's confession was the most effective strategy to alter organizational crisis responsibility. Despite this strategy accepts the most responsibility for a crisis, the researchers found that it had the second-lowest responsibility rating. On the other hand, denial that aims to reduce the level of responsibility was found to have higher attribution of responsibility (McDonald et al., 2010). Similarly, Lee (2004) found that when an organization used a denial response strategy, people attributed more responsibility to the organization for the wrongdoing. Consequently, the hypothesis regarding crisis responsibility is the following:

H5: Crisis responsibility mediates the effects of response strategies on organizational reputation.

Nevertheless, people's evaluations can change according to their cultural differences. Laufer and Coombs (2006) state that one of the important cultural traits that influences perceptions of a product harm crisis is the tolerance for ambiguity. Tolerance for ambiguity is linked to UAI, hence it can explain why stakeholders react in a certain way to a product harm crisis across national cultures (Laufer & Coombs, 2006). Taylor (2000) noted that during Coca-Cola's product harm crisis in Europe, the reaction to the crisis was stronger among countries that have higher UAI scores than those which score lower on this dimension. Therefore, it might be logical to assume that higher UAI leads to stronger attributions of responsibility to the organization during a product harm crisis. Furthermore, Laufer et al. (2005) investigated the potential connection between blame attribution and the level of UAI. In their findings, they found that those who cannot tolerate ambiguous situations evaluated the organization as more responsible for a product harm crisis (Laufer et al., 2005). These findings offer initial exploratory evidence that stakeholders from national cultures that score higher on UAI may not tolerate ambiguous product harm crises, hence attribute higher levels of responsibility to the organization. Following this line of reasoning the hypothesis is:

H6: In a national culture where UAI is higher, people will attribute more responsibility to the organization than in a national culture where UAI is lower.

2.5. Emotions

As has been noted previously in the study, that emotions can have significant mediating effects, too. Moreover, this study seeks to investigate the explanatory power of emotions, the way they can affect the effectiveness of the image repair strategies on organizational reputation and behavioural intentions.

Emotions are naturally complex entities. Emotions can affect how participants interpret the company's responses, drive judgements and decision-making (Choi & Lin, 2009; Jin et al., 2012; Kim & Cameron, 2011). Claeys and Schwarz (2016) emphasize that the public has their coping strategies to handle feelings experienced by crises. Thus, stakeholders are not passive receivers of information, rather they are active users of coping strategies to understand the crisis event (Claeys & Schwarz, 2016). Coping with stressful situations varies across people, such as their expressed emotions differ in each crisis (Jin, 2009; Pang et al., 2013). This is due to their personal interpretation of the crisis. The importance of emotions lies within the assumption that crisis response strategies would be ineffective if they do not apply to the stakeholders' emotions of the crisis (Jin, 2010; Jin et al., 2012). Thus, emotions may bolster or contradict the success of crisis response strategies, and the strategies might be mediated by them (Jin & Pang, 2010; Kim & Cameron, 2011).

The dominant-negative emotions experienced during a crisis are 1) anger, 2) fright, 3) anxiety, and 4) sadness, while the positive ones are 1) sympathy and 2) relief (Jin, 2009; Jin et al., 2012; Zhou & Shin; 2017). However, the two main emotions that this study examines are anger and sympathy. During crises, anger and sympathy are the most usually felt emotions from the negative and positive clusters (Coombs & Holladay, 2005; Grappi & Romani, 2015; Jin & Pang, 2010), hence might have opposing effects on image repair strategies. Anger would arouse when the organization is seen as responsible for the crisis. When stakeholders think that the organization could harm them and has a possible threat to their well-being, they might feel anger towards the organization (Grappi & Romani, 2015; Jin, 2010, 2013). Sympathy evokes when the public feels sorry for the ones who are suffering from the crisis, especially when the suffering is considered undeserved (Grappi & Romani, 2015; Jin, 2013). Thus, protecting the organizational reputation may be easier when the audience experiences sympathy towards the organization, as stakeholders may feel compassion towards the organization and try to help them. If stakeholders feel anger, crisis response strategies might not be efficient to reduce the damage to reputation because

stakeholders may enjoy seeing the organization suffering (Coombs & Holladay, 2005). According to An et al. (2010), a denial response strategy may enhance the audience's feeling of anger as people might be suspicious when an organization tries to minimize its responsibility and they think that the organization wants to evade its responsibility for the wrongdoing. Nonetheless, taking full responsibility for the crisis without considering the actual blame for it could backfire (Coombs & Holladay, 2005; Park & Reber, 2011). Furthermore, other studies (Grappi & Romani, 2015; van der Meer & Verhoeven, 2014) indicate that the mortification response strategy elicits more sympathy than a denial that may even generate negative emotions, such as anger. McDonald et al. (2010) argue that an organization's confession was the most effective strategy to diminish anger while increasing positive emotions at the same time. On the other hand, a denial that aims to reduce the level of responsibility was found to have more negative stakeholder affective reactions (McDonald et al., 2010). These studies indicate that different response strategies lead to different emotions. Therefore, the hypotheses are the following:

H7: Anger mediates the effects of denial crisis response strategies on reputation.

H8: Sympathy mediates the effects of mortification crisis response strategies on reputation.

However, national cultural differences may also play a role here. The literature has not investigated how emotions differ in various national cultural contexts, although people in national cultures with a higher level of UAI and PDI experience stronger emotions during crises (Hofstede, 1984, 2011; Hofstede et al., 2010). Following this line of reasoning, Hypothesis 9 is:

H9: In a national culture where UAI and PDI are higher, felt emotions are stronger than in a national culture with lower level of UAI and PDI.

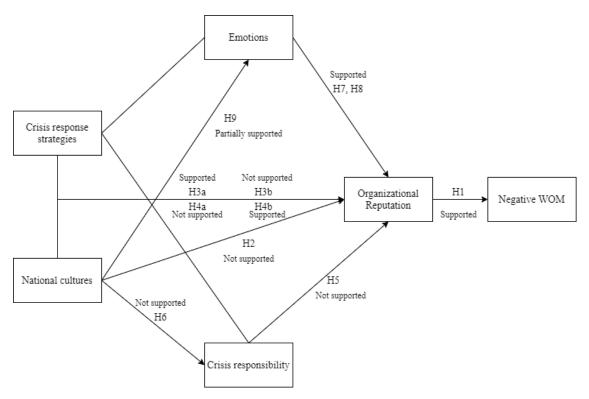


Figure 1: Research model

3. Method

3.1. Research design

An experiment with a 2 (culture: high uncertainty avoidance level and large power distance index versus low uncertainty avoidance and small power distance index) \times 2 (Image repair strategy: denial versus mortification) factorial design was conducted to investigate the effects of crisis response strategies and culture on organizational reputation and negative WOM intentions, and to see whether the effects are being mediated by crisis responsibility and emotions.

3.2. Participants

The participants were selected from Russia and The Netherlands. Russia scores 95 on UAI and 93 on PDI that means this national culture is high on both dimensions, while in The Netherlands these scores are 38 and 53, which supports this national culture's low tendencies on these dimensions. Each of the dimensions has been measured on a scale that ranges from 0 to 100. The data was collected online from April to May 2021 through online survey panels on Qualtrics.

Through the personal network of the researcher and the online survey platforms of SurveySwap.io and SurveyCircle.com, the initial responses were collected in English. Furthermore, the researcher connected to participants on social media, and participants were asked to spread the survey by snowball sampling. The researcher's initial expectation of the sample was of 250 young people, between the age group of 16-26. The reason for this is that due to language barriers the author assumed that among young generations, more people have sufficient knowledge of English. Moreover, the distribution of the survey might have been easier and more far-reaching among this age group.

In order, to collect the data 322 people filled in the survey. However, after cleaning the data, 227 people completed the survey successfully. The main reasons for deletion were either incomplete fillings or wrong national cultures (i.e., participants who did not have Russian or Dutch nationality). The average age of the participants is M = 22.74 (SD = 1.98) with a minimum age of 17 and the maximum age of 26. There were 101 male and 124 female participants in this study. Moreover, regarding national cultures, 107 people from Russia and 120 from The Netherlands filled in the survey (Table 1). Most of the participants have finished their bachelor's degree (63.9 %).

Table 1Condition Frequencies

Condition	Frequency	Percent
Denial	109	48.0
Mortification	118	52.0
Total	227	100.0
Condition	Frequency	Percent
The Netherlands	120	52.9
Russia	107	47.1
Total	227	100.0

3.3. Procedure

First of all, participants were asked some demographic questions regarding age, gender, educational background, birthplace, and place of living. Four scenarios of a fictitious multinational organization's image repair strategies, during the same fictitious crisis situation, were produced

(See Appendix A for full crisis scenarios). Participants from each culture were randomly assigned to one of the two image repair strategies. Then, participants had to indicate which emotions they had felt while reading about the organization's response strategy. After, participants had to indicate their agreement with the items regarding crisis responsibility, negative WOM, and the organization's reputation. Lastly, respondents had been assigned to the manipulation check questions. In the end, they were debriefed and thanked for their participation.

3.4. Stimulus material

The manipulations were included in fictitious news articles from DutchNews.nl (for Dutch participants) and Moscow Times (for Russian participants). The news articles detailed a fictitious product contamination crisis of a fictitious British multinational organization, named Mixvett Soda Company. The reason for the creation of a fictitious company was to control the prior attitudes toward the organization. Crisis response strategies were presented in the form of a news article including the company's spokesperson's reaction to the crisis (See Appendix A and the boxes below for the displayed stimulus material). In all scenarios, the organization used either denial or mortification from Benoit's Image repair theory. While the layout and the length of the article were the same, the crisis responses from the organization were manipulated. The reason for this was to avoid the possibility of biased attribution of crisis responsibility of the organization.

"On March 13, 2021, many of our consumers have reported falling ill after consuming our products. I come before you to apologize to you, especially to the families who have been involved in these terrible accidents. The events of the last week are painful, seeded doubts and led some of our customers to question the safety of our products. These are hard times for all of us, but what I can promise you is that we take these issues very, very seriously. We are extremely sorry for this failure and hope that you can forgive us. In the name of the company, I wish a quick recovery for all of you who have fallen ill."

"On March 13, 2021, many of our consumers have reported falling ill, yet there are no clear explanations of what had caused the symptoms. We were surprised when we first heard about the news, as we found no signs of human or technological error. After a thorough examination, our scientists indicated that there were no harmful substances in the products of our company. Therefore, our company strongly believes that the illness has not been caused by our products. We at Mixvett Soda truly trust that our products are as safe as they have ever been."

Before the survey was finalized and distributed, it was pretested to check whether the manipulation in the crisis scenarios and constructs was correct. 16 respondents participated in the pre-test study and were assigned to one of the four conditions. The main focus of the pre-test was

to test the understandability and transparency of the survey. Moreover, the researcher wanted to test the validity of the manipulation questions. Some of the respondents filled in the survey during an online video call, others sent their feedbacks to the researcher via email. Through participants' evaluation of the questions, the flow of the survey was changed accordingly. Furthermore, some questions were adjusted, and additional changes were made to assist participants in understanding the crisis scenarios easily.

3.5. Measures

All items were rated on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from (1) strongly disagree to (7) strongly agree. The participants were asked to imply the extent to which they agree/ disagree with each of the statements. Organizational reputation was measured with the RepTrak ™ Pulse scale developed by Ponzi et al. (2011) which is a popular and well-cited measurement of corporate reputation. It is a four-item scale that can help to identify a stakeholder's perceptions about the reputation of an organization. The items are the following: 1) "[Company] is a company I have a good feeling about", 2) "[Company] is a company that I trust", 3) "[Company] is a company that I admire and respect", 4) "[Company] has a good overall reputation".

The emotion of anger was measured with a four-item scale developed by Lee (2004); 1) After reading the response of the [Company] I feel anger; 2) "After reading the response of the [Company] I feel repulsion"; and 3) "After reading the response of the [Company] I feel annoyed; 4) "After reading the response of the [Company] I feel outraged".

Using Mc Donald et al.'s (2010) measurement of emotions (sympathy), a four-item scale was used to see how the respondent feel about the response of the organization; 1) "The way the [Company] responded to the crisis makes me feel sympathetic"; 2) "The way the [Company] responded to the crisis makes me feel pitiful"; 3) "The way the [Company] responded to the crisis makes me feel compassionate"; and 4) "The way the [Company] responded to the crisis makes me feel empathetic".

The attribution of crisis responsibility was measured by a three items scale from the study of Griffin et al. (1992). The items were as follows: 1) "Circumstances are responsible for the crisis, not the company of [Company]" (reverse scored), 2) "The blame for the crisis lies with the company of [Company]" and 3) "The blame for the crisis lies with the circumstances, not with the company of [Company]" (reverse scored).

Negative WOM intentions were measured using three items from Coombs and Holladay's (2009) study: 1) "I would encourage friends or relative NOT to buy products from [Company]", 2) "I would say negative things about [Company] and its products to other people" and 3) "I would recommend [Company]'s products to someone who asked my advice" (reverse scored).

All constructs are reliable based on Cronbach's alpha (See Table2). The subscales of the crisis responsibility scale all had high reliability except one for negative WOM intentions. All the reliabilities are displayed in Table2.

Table 2

Validity and Reliability of The Constructs

	Descriptive statistics	Item reliability	Scale reliability
	M (SD)		
Crisis responsibility			.95
External circumstances are responsible for the crisis, not the company of Mixvett.	4.34 (1.74)	.89	
The blame for the crisis lies with the company of Mixvett	4.50 (1.78)	.87	
The blame for the crisis lies with the external circumstances, not with the company of Mixvett	4.35 (1.78)	.90	
Emotions- Anger			.93
After reading the response of the organization I feel anger	3.81 (1.53)	.87	
After reading the response of the organization I feel repulsion	3.72 (1.49)	.84	
After reading the response of the organization I feel annoyed	4.10 (1.77)	.82	
After reading the response of the organization I feel outraged	3.32 (1.51)	.82	
Emotions- Sympathy			.93
The way the organization responded to the crisis makes me feel sympathetic	3.58 (1.54)	.87	
The way the organization responded to the crisis makes me feel pitiful.	3.35 (1.40)	.74	
The way the organization responded to the crisis makes me feel compassionate	3.44 (1.49)	.87	
The way the organization responded to the crisis makes me feel empathetic	3.48 (1.55)	.86	

Organizational reputation			.95
Mixvett Soda is a company I have a good feeling about	3.55 (1.58)	.91	
Mixvett Soda is a company I trust	3.25 (1.49)	.88	
Mixvett Soda is a company I admire and respect	3.31 (1.52)	.86	
Mixvett Soda has a good overall reputation	3.49 (1.63)	.88	
Negative WOM			.86
I would encourage friends or relatives NOT to buy the products of Mixvett Soda.	3.98 (1.54)	.81	
I would say negative things about Mixvett Soda and its products to other people	3.72 (1.45)	.76	
I would recommend Mixvett Soda's products to someone who asked my advice	4.76 (1.38)	.65	
Manipulation check- Response strategies			.97
Mixvett apologised for the crisis.	4.15 (2.16)	.92	
Mixvett accepted responsibility for the incident.	3.83 (2.19)	.89	
Mixvett expressed concern for those affected by the crisis.	4.21 (2.06)	.91	
Mixvett asserted that there is a crisis.	4.29 (2.04)	.92	
Mixvett denied the crisis.	4.31 (2.21)	.89	
Manipulation check- PDI			.93
People in higher positions should make most decisions without consulting people in lower positions.	3.44 (1.71)	.81	
People in higher positions should not ask the opinions of people in lower positions too frequently.	3.41 (1.68)	.81	
People in higher positions should avoid social interaction with people in lower positions.	2.95 (1.66)	.80	
People in lower positions should not disagree with decisions by people in higher positions.	3.30 (1.65)	.83	
People in higher positions should not delegate important tasks to people in lower positions.	3.46 (1.60)	.81	
Manipulation check- UAI			.93
It is important to have instructions spelled out in detail so that I always know what I'm expected to do.	4.71 (1.53)	.74	
It is important to closely follow instructions and procedures.	4.98 (1.49)	.80	

Rules and regulations are important because they inform me of what is expected of me.	5.07 (1.54)	.84
Standardized work procedures are helpful.	5.04 (1.31)	.82
Instructions for operations are important.	5.19 (1.43)	.86

Note: Cronbach's alpha is reliable at the level of .70 or above

3.6. Manipulation checks

After exposure to the scenarios, manipulation check questions were presented to the respondents (e.g., whether participants knew that they had been assigned to the denial/mortification condition, and whether they scored differently on cultural dimensions). To measure participants' national cultural dimensions, Yoo et al.'s (2011) CVSCALE was used in this study (See Appendix B). Respondents were asked to rate the statements on a 7-point Likert scale. Besides, independent T-tests were used to confirm the significance of the manipulation questions.

For the manipulation check of response strategies (Table 3), the data was not normally distributed in either of the conditions based on z-score of skewness and kurtosis (z-score skewness for Denial= 3.89, z-score skewness for Mortification = -5.95; z-score kurtosis for Mortification = 4.80), and the produced histograms. Homogeneity of variance was met as Hartley's variance ratio was VR = 1.39. To correct for the assumption of normality, BCa bootstrapping (1000 samples) was implemented for the independent t-test. The implemented independent t-test found that participants who were given a denial response strategy M = 2.39 (SD= 1.15) knew that they had been engaged with a denial response strategy, such as those participants who have been assigned to the mortification condition M = 5.78 (SD = 0.97). This difference between groups means was significant, t(225) = -24.05, p = .001 and represented a large-sized effect of d = 3.19 (Table 3). The interpretation of this finding is that lower scores represented the denial condition, while higher scores related to mortification. Therefore, the manipulation check for response strategies was successful.

An independent t-test was performed to test whether Russian participants score higher on the PDI dimension than Dutch participants (Table 3). The data score was not normally distributed, (z-score skewness for Dutch = 5,00 z-score skewness for Russian = -4.43). Therefore, the p-value may not be reliable, and more weight should be placed on the bootstrapped 95% confidence interval that has been provided. Homogeneity of variance was met as Hartley's variance ratio was VR = 1.16. Participants from Russia scored higher on the PDI dimensions M = 4.33 (SD = 1.15)

than Dutch participants M = 2.40 (SD = 1.07). This difference was significant, t(225) = -13.10, p < .001 and represented a large-sized effect of d = 1.73 (Table 3). Higher scores for the items represent higher scores for the cultural dimensions. Therefore, the manipulation check for national cultures' PDI dimension was successful. To test the manipulation check for UAI, the researcher performed an independent t-test (Table 3). The data was not normally distributed in either of the conditions based on z-score of skewness and kurtosis (z-score skewness for Dutch = -2.32, z-score skewness for Russian= -10.9; z-score kurtosis for Russian= 20.2) and the produced histograms. Homogeneity of variance was met as Hartley's variance ratio was VR = 2.93. To correct for the assumption of normality, BCa bootstrapping (1000 samples) was implemented for the independent t-test. On the dependent variable scale, Russians M = 5.90 (SD = 0.68) scored higher than Dutch participants M = 4.20 (SD = 1.16). This difference was significant t(225) = -13.29, p < .001 (Table 3). The difference represents a large-sized effect d = 1.79. Higher assigned values to the items represent higher scores for the UAI dimension. Hence, the manipulation check for national cultures' UAI index was successful.

Table 3 Independent t-test Manipulation Checks

	Denial	Mortification	t	Sig.
Response strategies	2.39 (1.15)	5.78 (0.97)	-24.05	.001*
	Russia	The Netherlands		
PDI	4.33 (1.15)	2.40 (1.07)	-13.10	<.001*
UAI	5.90 (0.68)	4.20 (1.16)	-13.29	<.001*

Note: * $p \le .001$

4. Results

4.1. Correlation between the two dependent variables

For the correlation of organizational reputation and negative WOM intentions, the data scores were not normally distributed (z-score kurtosis for Organizational Reputation = -3.97, z-score kurtosis for negative WOM = -4.34). Homogeneity of variance was met as Hartley's

variance ratio was VR = 1.34. Organizational reputation was significantly, strongly, and negatively correlated with negative WOM intentions, r(225) = -.75 [-.82, -.66]; R2 = 0.56, p < .001 (Table 4). Thus, H1 is supported meaning that organizational reputation is negatively related to negative WOM intentions.

Table 4		
Correlation Table for H1		
	1.	2.
1. Organizational reputation		75*
2. Negative WOM	75*	

Note: *Correlation is significant at the .01 level (1-tailed)

4.2. The main effect of national cultures on organizational reputation

To test H2 to see whether Russians react to the crisis more negatively in terms of organizational reputation, a one-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was conducted. The one-way ANOVA resulted in F (1, 225) = .44, p = .51. The difference between group means was not significant. Hence, H2 was rejected meaning that people from Russia M= 3.33 (SD= 1.49) do not score significantly differently on reputation than people from The Netherlands M= 3.46 (SD= 1.42).

4.3. Interaction effects of national cultures and response strategies on organizational reputation

The assumption of normality was not met for the variable of national culture in either of the groups since the z-scores kurtosis (Dutch = -2.61, Russian = -2.89). For the variable of response strategies both the z-scores of skewness and kurtosis (skewness of Mortification = 2.05, kurtosis of Mortification = -3.48, kurtosis for Denial = -2.02) fell outside of the -1.96 < z < +1.96 interval. Therefore, normality was not met here either. Homogeneity of variance based on Hartley's variance ratio was met for both independent variables VR = 1.11. To correct the violation of normality and to test the hypothesis, a bootstrapped BCa (1000 samples) independent two-way ANOVA test was run. The Factorial ANOVA is fairly robust against the violations of these assumptions, but the outcomes may not be completely reliable. Since there were two categories in the national cultures and response strategies predictor variables, no contrasts were needed to be specified to obtain their main effects. However, for the interaction effect, a simple effect analysis

was implemented through syntax suggested by Field (2018). After conducting a two-way ANOVA, no main effect was found of national culture on reputation F (1, 223) = 0.80, p = .37 (Table 5). However, there was a main effect of response strategy on reputation F (1, 223) = 15.67, p < .001, ω 2 = 0.25 and an interaction effect of national culture * response strategy F (1, 223) = 6.67, p = .01, ω 2 = 0.14 (Table 6).

Table 5

Main Effects

	M 1	M 2	F	p	ω2
National culture	3.33 (1.49)	3.46 (1.42)	0.80	.37	_
Response	3.74 (1.52)	3.03 (1.28)	15.67	<.001*	0.25
strategy					

Note: $p \le .001$

Table 6Interaction Effect

	F	p	ω2
National culture * Response strategy	6.67	.01*	0.14

Note: $p \le .01$.

To test H3a the simple effect analysis was implemented. In the national culture where UAI and PDI dimensions are higher, participants given a mortification response strategy evaluated the organizational reputation more positively M = 3.90 (SD = 1.56) than those who have been assigned to the denial condition M = 2.69 (SD= 1.12). This difference between groups means F (1, 223) = 20.19, p < .001 was significant and represented a small-sized effect of r = 0.29 (Table 7). Hence, H3a was supported. In order, to test H3b, a simple effect analysis was carried out through syntax following the suggestions of Field (2018). Russian participants did not evaluate the organization's reputation differently M = 3.90 (SD = 1.56) than participants from The Netherlands in the same condition M = 3.59 (SD= 1.50). The simple effect analysis reported that this effect was not significant F (1, 223) = 1.49, p = .22 (Table 7). Therefore, H3b has to be rejected. In other words, in a national culture where UAI and PDI are higher, mortification response strategy does not work better than in a national culture where both dimensions are lower.

Netherlands given denial response strategy did not evaluate the reputation differently M=3.33 (SD= 1.34) than those who have been assigned to the mortification condition M=3.59 (SD = 1.50). The simple effect analysis revealed that this difference was not significant F(1, 223) = 1.01, p=.32 (Table 7). Therefore, H4a was not supported meaning that in a national culture where both dimensions are lower, a denial response strategy does not create a more favourable reputation than a mortification. Furthermore, to test H4b, a new simple effect analysis was coded through syntax (Field, 2018). The analysis revealed that participants from Russia in the denial condition judged the organization's reputation worse M=2.69 (SD = 1.12) than participants from The Netherlands in the same condition M=3.33 (SD = 1.34). The difference between the conditions F(1, 223) = 5.80, p=.02 was significant and represented a small-sized effect of r=0.17 (Table 7). Thus, we can conclude that H4b was supported.

Table 7 Crisis response strategy Condition Descriptive Mortification **Denial Total** Sig. Russia 3.90 (1.56) 2.69 (1.12) 3.33 (1.49) < .001** National N = 57N = 50N = 107**Culture** The Netherlands 3.59 (1.50) 3.33 (1.34) 3.46 (1.42) .32 N = 59N = 120N = 61**Total** 3.74 (1.52) 3.03 (1.28) N = 118N = 109.22 .02* Sig.

Note: *p \leq .05. **p \leq .001

4.4. The mediating power of crisis responsibility on organizational reputation

To investigate H5 to see whether crisis responsibility has a mediating power on organizational reputation, a simple mediation analysis was performed by using PROCESS v3.5. The outcome variable for the analysis was reputation. The predictor variable for the analysis was the crisis response strategies. The mediator was crisis responsibility. After implementing the analysis there was not a significant indirect effect of crisis response strategies, b = 0.18, 95% BCa

CI [-0.11, 0.47]. In other words, H5 was not supported meaning that crisis responsibility does not mediate the effects of crisis response strategies on reputation.

4.5. The level of crisis responsibility in national cultures

To investigate H6 an independent t-test was performed. For crisis responsibility, the data score was not normally distributed (z-score kurtosis for Dutch participants = -2.50; z-score kurtosis for Russian participants = -3.59). Homogeneity of variance was met as Hartley's variance ratio was VR = 1.30. To correct for the assumption of normality, BCa bootstrapping (1000 samples) was implemented for the independent t-test. Russians M = 4.35 (SD = 1.81) did not attribute different crisis responsibility to the organization than Dutch participants did M = 4.44 (SD = 1.56). This difference was not significant t(225) = 0.39, p = .70. Hence, H6 was not supported, meaning that in a national culture where UAI is higher, people did not attribute more responsibility to the organization than in national cultures where UAI is low.

4.6. The mediating role of emotions

To investigate H7, a simple mediation analysis was performed by using PROCESS v3.5. The outcome variable for the analysis was reputation. The predictor variable for the analysis was the denial response strategy, and the mediator was the felt emotion of anger. After conducting the analysis, there was a significant indirect effect of denial response strategy on reputation through anger, b = -0.50, 95% BCa CI [-0.75, -0.26] (Figure 2). In other words, H7 was supported meaning that anger mediates the effects of denial response strategy on reputation.

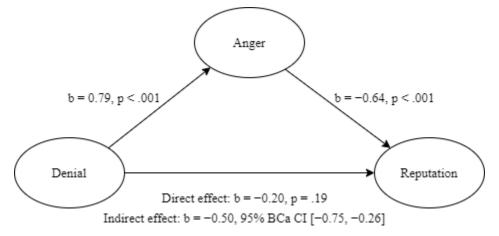


Figure 2: Mediation of anger

To investigate H8, another simple mediation analysis was performed by using PROCESS v3.5. The outcome variable for the analysis was reputation. Mortification response strategy was the predictor, while the mediator variable was the felt emotion of sympathy. After conducting the analysis, there was a significant indirect effect of mortification response strategy on reputation through sympathy, b = 0.77, 95% BCa CI [0.47, 1.06] (Figure 3). In other words, H8 was supported meaning that sympathy mediates the effects of mortification response strategy on reputation.

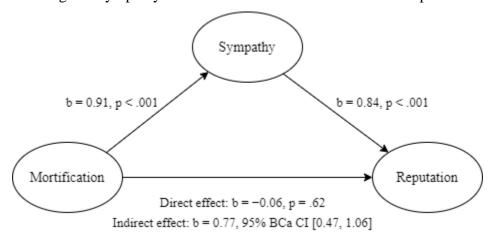


Figure 3: Mediation of sympathy

4.7. The level of felt emotions in national cultures

To test the H9 to see whether the felt emotion of anger was stronger in national cultures where UAI and PDI are higher than in national cultures where both cultural dimensions are lower, an independent t-test was performed. For the emotion of anger, the data score was not normally distributed (z-score kurtosis for Dutch = -2.57, z-score kurtosis for Russian = -3.02). Homogeneity of variance was met as Hartley's variance ratio was VR = 1.24. To correct for the assumption of normality, BCa bootstrapping (1000 samples) was implemented for the independent t-test. Russian participants M = 3.94 (SD = 1.50) felt stronger emotions of anger than Dutch participants did M = 3.56 (SD = 1.35). This difference, t(225) = -2.04, p = .04 was significant (Table 8). The difference represents a small effect size of d = 0.27. Therefore, H9 was supported for the felt emotion of anger meaning that respondents from national cultures where UAI and PDI are higher felt more anger than respondents from national cultures where UAI and PDI are lower.

To test the H9 to see whether the felt emotion of sympathy was stronger among participants from national cultures where UAI and PDI are higher than in national cultures where the dimensions are lower, another independent t-test was performed. For the emotion of sympathy, the

data score was not normally distributed (z-score skewness for Russian = 2.65). Therefore, the p-value may not be reliable, and more weight should be placed on the bootstrapped 95% confidence interval that has been provided. Hartley's variance ratio was VR = 1.20, hence homogeneity of variance was acceptable. On the dependent variable scale of sympathy, Russians M = 3.18 (SD = 1.40) scored lower than Dutch participants M = 3.71 (SD = 1.28). This difference was significant, t(225) = 2.98, p = .003 (Table 8). The difference represents a moderate effect size of d = 0.40. Therefore, H9 was not supported for the felt emotion of sympathy meaning that the felt emotion of sympathy was not stronger among respondents from national cultures where UAI and PDI are higher. To conclude, H9 was partially supported.

Table 8Independent t-test for H9

	Russia	Netherlands	t	Sig.	
Anger	3.94 (1.50)	3.56 (1.35)	-2.04	.04*	
Sympathy	3.18 (1.40)	3.71 (1.28)	2.98	.003**	

Note: * $p \le .05$. ** $p \le .01$

Table 9Summary and Results of The Hypotheses

Summary and Results of The Hypotheses			
H1 . Organizational reputation is negatively related to negative WOM intentions.	Supported		
H2 . During a crisis, a national culture with higher UAI and a larger PDI has a more negative effect on organizations' reputation than a national culture that scores low on both dimensions.	Not supported		
H3a . In a national culture that scores higher on UAI and PDI, mortification has a more positive effect on reputation than in a national culture that scores lower on both dimensions.	Supported		
H3b . In a national culture that scores higher on UAI and PDI, mortification has a more positive effect on reputation than in a national culture that scores lower on both dimensions.	Not supported		
H4a . In a national culture that scores lower on UAI and PDI, denial has a more positive effect on reputation than mortification from Benoit's image repair theory.	Not supported		

H4b . In a national culture that scores lower on UAI and PDI, denial has a more positive effect on reputation than in a national culture that scores higher on both dimensions.	Supported
H5 . Crisis responsibility mediates the effects of response strategies on organizational reputation.	Not supported
H6 . In a national culture where UAI is higher, people will attribute more responsibility to the organization than in a national culture where UAI is low.	Not supported
H7 . Anger mediates the effects of denial crisis response strategies on reputation.	Supported
H8. Sympathy mediates the effects of mortification crisis response strategies	Supported

H8. Sympathy mediates the effects of mortification crisis response strategies on reputation.

H9. In a national culture where UAI and PDI are higher, felt emotions are stronger than in a national culture with a lower level of UAI and PDI.

Partially supported

5. <u>Discussion</u>

5.1. Theoretical implications

In the following section, first, the most important findings of the study will be discussed, while the implications of the non-findings will be elaborated on in the later section of the discussion.

An important finding of the current research is that in a national culture with high UAI and PDI, a mortification response strategy works better than denial to create a more favourable reputation. This finding is in line with previous studies (Maiorescu, 2016; Taylor, 2000; Zhou & Shin, 2017) that highlight the efficiency of mortification to repair the organization's reputation in national cultures where UAI is higher because it seeks to fulfil stakeholders' expectations to reduce ambiguity, as it provides clear and honest information about the crisis. Another explanation of this finding is argued in the study of Zhou and Shin (2017), namely that in Russia if the organization employs mortification and emphasize that it has regretted the wrongdoing, it could repair stakeholders' trust because with this victim-oriented strategy an organization can demonstrate that it has learnt its lesson.

Moreover, following previous research (Taylor, 2000) the current study found that in a national culture where UAI and PDI are lower, denial response strategy is more efficient to repair the organization's reputation than in a national culture that scores higher on both dimensions. As

Low et al. (2011) emphasize in national cultures with higher UAI and larger PDI, when the organization breaks the socially constructed norms, the public will not be forgiving and will seek punishment. Hence, the organization might experience reputational damage. When people from national cultures with high UAI and large PDI faces a denial response strategy, the level of uncertainty and the ambiguous situation leads to a more negative evaluation of the organizational reputation (Low et al., 2011; Taylor, 2000). They do not accept when an organization does not have clear answers to what has happened. Therefore, these findings imply that in Russia the damage to organizational reputation becomes more considerable than in The Netherlands.

The study's findings regarding the relationship between organizational reputation and negative WOM intentions are in line with Coombs' (2007b) and Chang et al.'s (2015) work. More precisely, by comparing the observed means, it was found that when organizational reputation is judged negatively, the negative WOM intentions become more prominent and the other way around. Similarly, the current study supports the assertion of Walsh et al. (2009) who argue that organizational reputation can influence behaviour-related variables, such as word-of-mouth intentions. When stakeholders' perceptions of the organizational reputation are unfavourable, they will assign it to bad service quality and consequently, they want to take action when engaging in negative WOM intentions (Chang et al., 2015). Furthermore, stakeholders of a crisis have a desire to help others saving them from negative future experiences.

In addition, the study found that anger mediates the effects of denial crisis response strategies on organizational reputation. This result is in line with the research of Claeys and Schwarz (2016) who accentuate that the public has their coping strategies to handle feelings experienced by crises. Thus, stakeholders in both national cultures are not passive receivers of information, but active users of coping strategies to understand the crisis event. Furthermore, the results concur with previous findings (An et al., 2010; Grappi & Romani, 2015; Jin, 2010), namely that anger would arouse when the organization uses a denial response strategy. Similarly, the results show that sympathy mediates the effects of mortification response strategies on organizational reputation, as well. Thus, the results are in line with van der Meer and Verhoeven's (2014) work who concluded similar results. The impact of both emotions on organizational reputation is salient, suggesting that while anger contradicts the effects of response strategies, sympathy bolsters them in terms of organizational reputation.

The current study provides other theoretical implications for the field of international crisis communication. Previous literature has not investigated the level of felt emotions in various national cultural contexts. To the best of the researcher's knowledge, no empirical studies have examined this difference between two national cultures that differ significantly on both dimensions. From the examined two emotions, only anger was stronger among participants from a national culture with higher UAI and PDI whereas people from a national culture with lower levels of the dimensions experienced a stronger feeling of sympathy after receiving the response strategies from the organization. This result partially contradicts Hofstede's (1984, 2003) assumption. Since people cannot tolerate ambiguous situations in national cultures such as Russia, they might experience a stronger feeling of negative emotions due to unexpected events. However, this may differ for positive emotions. Due to the country dimension of UAI, in Russia what is different and new is being considered dangerous (Hofstede, 1984, 2003). Furthermore, consumers often judge foreign products more negatively versus their domestic pairs due to their level of UAI (Verlegh, 2007). Therefore, it is plausible that due to the higher level of UAI, Russians would express positive emotions to a lesser extent, than their Dutch counterparts. Moreover, we can assume that other latent variables may have contributed to this result that is out of the scope of this study.

Nevertheless, many conclusions can be drawn from the research that contradicts prior literature in this field. For instance, the conducted analysis showed that there were no main differences in how people reacted to the same crisis in the two national cultures. This means that regardless of the used response strategy, a product-harm crisis has the same effects in both Russia and The Netherlands. This finding is controversial to the findings of Low et. al. (2011) and Taylor (2000) who emphasize that national cultures that have a different level of cultural dimensions react to crises differently. Moreover, the results contradict Hofstede's (1983, 2011) assumptions that people in national cultures react more unfavourable to uncertain and unclear situations than people from national cultures where both UAI and PDI are lower. An explanation for the finding may be the time frame of the crisis. Since the current study focused only on the immediate effects of response strategies and culture on reputation, different outcomes could be acquired if the focus of the analysis was on the long-term effects because participants who have higher UAI might evaluate the organizational reputation more negatively given a longer period.

When the effects of mortification strategy on reputation were examined in the two national cultures, the results show no significant differences. This means that in Russia when the organization uses a mortification strategy to lessen the consequences of the crises, it does not create a better reputation than the same strategy in The Netherlands. This finding raises several further implications for international crisis communication research. A possible explanation for this is the time aspect of a crisis. It is plausible that time might be functioning as a crucial variable in this context. Since stakeholders from The Netherlands do not require an immediate solution, a mortification strategy might be working better for them in the short term. Therefore, participants from The Netherlands might be more tolerant of mistakes during the immediate aftermath of a crisis, however, if the organization cannot find a solution in a tolerable time frame their evaluation might change. This might be the reason why mortification was not more efficient in Russia than in The Netherlands.

Another contradictory finding is that the study expected that in The Netherlands, a denial response strategy might work better to create a favourable organizational reputation than a mortification strategy. Strikingly, the results show that people from The Netherlands do not evaluate the organization better after receiving a denial response strategy. As has been mentioned previously in the paper, the reason for this result might be contrary to what Haruta and Hallahan (2003) proposed in their study. Since the denial response strategy in this specific context does not lead to the solution of the crisis but leaves the public in obscurity, the denial strategy does not function better to protect the organizational reputation. Furthermore, the answer for this phenomenon might lay in Hofstede's (2003) principal work of cultural dimensions. Although Russian and Dutch participants significantly differ on the UAI scale, people from The Netherlands were expected to score lower on this dimension. Due to the not tested effects and circumstances, it is plausible that with the higher scores on UAI, Dutch people react differently to crises than the theory has anticipated beforehand.

Moreover, the current study's finding contradicts the findings of Coombs and Holladay (2002) and Coombs (2007a) who concluded that crisis responsibility is a key index to determine the potential reputational damage a crisis might possess. No mediating power of crisis responsibility was found in the present research. Further explanation of this finding can be explained by a different cultural dimension of Hofstede's (2003) principal work that has not been investigated in this study. Since not only the two analysed national cultural dimensions can

influence the public's perceptions and behaviour, the individualist-collectivist categorization might offer clarification. As Hofstede (2003) argues, in individualistic national cultures such as The Netherlands, people tend to attribute responsibility for the event to the individual. This is what Maddux et al. (2011) call, the "fundamental attribution error". In other words, the tendency in highly individualistic cultures to overestimate individual, while underestimating situational factors (Maddux et al., 2011). This can be the reason why crisis responsibility did not have a mediating effect because the level of the individualistic cultural dimension in The Netherlands might have biased the outcomes. Moreover, prior research (Coombs & Holladay, 2005; Choi & Lin, 2009; Jin, 2013) argues that crisis responsibility can have more prominent effects on the publics' affective responses which relation has not been investigated by the current study.

Lastly, the study found that Russian participants did not attribute more responsibility to the organization than Dutch participants. This finding differs from what Laufer and Coombs (2006) reported in their study. To the researcher's best knowledge there is no clear explanation why people who cannot tolerate ambiguous situations did not assign more responsibility to the organization. A plausible cause of this effect can be the individual, micro-cultural characteristics that have influenced the research results. For instance, Schwartz (1997) emphasizes that within national cultures, individuals can differ and may have unexpected reactions, especially under situational pressure.

To sum up, the current study has extended previous literature about the effects of culture and response strategies on organizational reputation. Indeed, a denial strategy has a more positive effect on reputation in a national culture where UAI and PDI are higher, such as Russia, while a denial strategy works better in a national culture where both dimensions are lower, like The Netherlands. Thus, this study affirms previous findings in that different crisis response strategies can have different effects on reputation in various national cultures. Furthermore, the significant role of anger and sympathy during a crisis has been confirmed which emphasizes the importance of emotions even in an intercultural setting. Similarly, the relationship between organizational reputation and negative WOM intentions has been supported which offers additional evidence that besides reputation, other variables should be considered by organizations during a crisis. Lastly, the current research has indicated that many latent variables, such as time frame, micro-cultural characteristics, or other cultural dimensions might play an important role during a crisis.

5.2. Practical implications

The outcomes of this research have implications for organizations as well as for practitioners in the field of crisis communication. What can international organizations learn from this study? First, cultural understanding may help organizations better predict how different publics will react to organizational responses. Organizations that operate globally should learn about the cultural factors that drive the behaviour and influence the perception of the local public. This is especially true when an organization operates in a national culture where UAI and PDI dimensions are higher, such as Russia. During a product harm crisis when the causes are vague, an organization should consider using a mortification strategy if it wants to protect its organizational reputation. However, if the organization wants to deny its responsibility for the wrongdoing, it seems a wiser strategy to do in a national culture where the dimensions are lower, such as The Netherlands.

Secondly, practitioners should be cautious of stakeholder's behavioural intentions, such as negative WOM because it is highly correlated with the organization's reputation. Customers use negative WOM to inform others about their disappointment and to try to save others from these negative encounters (Chang et al., 2015). Crisis communication experts should be aware that the negative consequences a crisis can possess are not only reputational threats. In their study, Utz et al. (2013) and Wetzer et al. (2007) concluded that that negative information causes greater attention, will be shared by more people and may travel faster than positive ones. This is another reason why maintaining a good reputation in the minds of the stakeholders is a crucial goal of organizations in times of crisis.

Lastly, organizations and experts should focus on the affective levels of their stakeholders. Since emotions can either bolster or contradict the success of crisis response strategies, successful protection of organizational reputation may depend on stakeholders' felt emotions (Jin, 2010; Jin et al., 2012). Crisis communication experts should find the most suitable strategies because if the response strategy elicits more anger than sympathy, then organizational reputation will suffer. If the organization decides to use a denial response strategy, it should be conscious that anger might contradict the effects of this strategy. On the contrary, using mortification, experts should acknowledge that sympathy can bolster the effects of the response in terms of organizational reputation.

5.3. Limitations

As there are only a few if any studies that examine how Hofstede's (2003) cultural dimensions affect the image repair strategies and how this influences organizational reputation and word-of-mouth intentions, the current study has its limitations. First of all, the study included only a relatively small number of crisis scenarios. The inclusion of more crisis scenarios could improve the generalizability of the results. Secondly, the examined participants form a considerably homogenous layer concerning their age and educational background. Therefore, future studies should be cautious when applying the current findings to other groups.

For accurate manipulations and measures, instead of treating the crisis as a dynamic process, the researcher analysed it as a single event. In real life, crises operate as ongoing processes (An et al., 2010). Hence, the study used a simplistic view of the crisis, that could have altered the results. Furthermore, the type of crisis, the product, the origin country of the organization, the national cultures, and all the variables investigated here can limit the applicability of these results. Changing any of the variables and measurements could have derived different findings.

Regarding the translation of each scale, the researcher did not follow the suggestions of Coombs (2016) who argues that first a scale should be translated from language A to language B. Then a different translator should translate the scale from language B to A. In the absence of language knowledge, the researcher used English for both national cultures. However, it might be possible that language barriers have emerged for participants that biased the results.

An additional limitation of the study is that both the organization and the crisis scenarios were fictitious to control previous attitudes toward the organization. Because participants had no personal experience with this specific product, this may have produced more biased results than if they had an ongoing direct relationship with the organization.

5.4. Future research directions

Despite its limitations, this study provides meaningful insights into the applicability of Image repair theory across different national cultures. In this current research, a product-harm crisis was examined with the organization's mortification and denial response strategies. Future cross-culture research could investigate other types of crises, from other crisis clusters, for example where the responsibility for the wrongdoing is more explicitly visible. Moreover, in a similar cultural setting, different crisis response strategies could be examined from the Image repair

theory, such as evasion of responsibility or corrective action. This could further extend our understanding of culture's importance in terms of the effects on different response strategies and organizational reputation.

As this research was focusing on two specific national cultures, namely Russia and The Netherlands, the applicability of the findings to other cultures is relatively limited. Future research can investigate new national cultures with similar dimensional scores because using the current study's findings based on the premise that other national cultures think, and act similarly due to the same dimensional scores is highly doubtful and dangerous. There are many latent variables that the current research has not investigated, such as the level of trust, the role of the communicator, or the different media cultures and structures, all of which future research can put more emphasis on.

Lastly, different experiment stimuli (e.g., real crisis) can also be examined in future research to replicate the current study and to validate the viability of the findings. Similarly, larger random samples with carefully designed questions would provide more generalizable results.

6. Conclusion

This research has contributed to the field of international crisis communication by providing valuable insights on how national cultures affect crisis response strategies and organizational reputation. The study extended the Image repair theory by applying two of the response strategies to different national cultural settings. By identifying the important role of national cultures and the effects they have during a crisis this study extend the knowledge of prior literature in this field. Furthermore, the current study provided interesting results about the role that emotions and crisis responsibility play during a crisis.

This study stresses the potential value of Hofstede's two dimensions of culture as valuable assets that help to analyse cross-cultural differences that might occur during a crisis. Power distance and uncertainty avoidance are useful dimensions that have indicative power on the effectiveness of response strategies in terms of organizational reputation. Although the same product harm crisis can negatively affect organizational reputation regardless of where the crisis takes place, organizations need to avoid being ethnocentric when dealing with a crisis in different countries. Due to the ever-increasing globalization, multinational organizations must pay attention

to culture when developing their crisis response messages. While one image repair strategy can be efficient in a culture, the same strategy could be disregarded in a different national cultural setting.

The current study further emphasizes the importance of emotions when it comes to the success of crisis response strategies. Both anger and sympathy have important mediating power which organizations should take into consideration when dealing with a crisis. Moreover, behavioural intentions, such as negative WOM are important factors during a crisis, as well. The study shows the close connection between organizational reputation and negative WOM intention that can determine the future of the organization.

To fully understand culture's role in crisis communication and the important implications it possesses this study must be extended in the future. Crisis communication in international contexts becomes more relevant, and the need to understand the cultural values and beliefs of the public requires future research to investigate the various factors that might play an important role in an organization's failure/ success in times of crisis.

References:

- An, S.-K., Park, D.-J., Cho, S., & Berger, B. (2010). A Cross-Cultural Study of Effective Organizational Crisis Response Strategy in the United States and South Korea. International *Journal of Strategic Communication*, 4(4), 225–243. https://doi.org/10.1080/1553118x.2010.515543
- Balaji, M., Khong, K. W., & Chong, A. Y. L. (2016). Determinants of negative word-of-mouth communication using social networking sites. *Information & Management*, *53*(4), 528–540. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.im.2015.12.002
- Barkley, K. (2020). Does one size fit all? The applicability of situational crisis communication theory in the Japanese context. *Public Relations Review*, 46(3), 101911. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pubrev.2020.101911
- Benoit, W. L. (1997). Image repair discourse and crisis communication. *Public Relations Review*, 23(2), 177–186. https://doi.org/10.1016/s0363-8111(97)90023-0
- Benoit, W. L. (2000). Another visit to the theory of image restoration strategies, *Communication Quarterly*, 48:1, 40-43. DOI: 10.1080/01463370009385578
- Benoit, W. L. (2013). Image Repair Theory and Corporate Reputation. *The Handbook of Communication and Corporate Reputation*, 213–221. https://doi.org/10.1002/9781118335529.ch19
- Benoit, W., & Drew, S. (1997). Appropriateness and effectiveness of image repair strategies. *Communication Reports*, 10, 153-163. DOI:10.1080/08934219709367671
- Burns, J., & Bruner, M.S. (2000). Revisiting the theory of image restoration strategies. *Communication Quarterly*, 48, 27 39. DOI:10.1080/01463370009385577
- Buttle, F. A. (1998). Word of mouth: understanding and managing referral marketing. *Journal of Strategic Marketing*, 6(3), 241–254. https://doi.org/10.1080/096525498346658
- Chang, H. H., Tsai, Y. C., Wong, K. H., Wang, J. W., & Cho, F. J. (2015). The effects of response strategies and severity of failure on consumer attribution with regard to negative word-of-mouth. *Decision Support Systems*, 71, 48–61. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.dss.2015.01.007

- Cheung, C. M., & Lee, M. K. (2012). What drives consumers to spread electronic word of mouth in online consumer-opinion platforms. *Decision Support Systems*, *53*(1), 218–225. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.dss.2012.01.015
- Choi, Y. (2017). Putting Cultural Context into SCCT When Crisis Responsibility Does Not Tell It All. *Journal of Public Relations*, 21(1), 97–116. https://doi.org/10.15814/jpr.2017.21.1.97
- Choi, Y., & Lin, Y.-H. (2009). Consumer Responses to Mattel Product Recalls Posted on Online Bulletin Boards: Exploring Two Types of Emotion. *Journal of Public Relations Research*, 21(2), 198–207. https://doi.org/10.1080/10627260802557506
- Claeys, A.-S., & Schwarz, A. (2016). Domestic and International Audiences of Organizational Crisis Communication: State of the Art and Implications for Cross-Cultural Crisis Communication. *The Handbook of International Crisis Communication Research*, 224–235. https://doi.org/10.1002/9781118516812.ch21
- Coombs, W. T. (2007a). Attribution Theory as a guide for post-crisis communication research. *Public Relations Review*, *33*(2), 135–139. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pubrev.2006.11.016
- Coombs, W. T. (2007b). Protecting Organization Reputations During a Crisis: The Development and Application of Situational Crisis Communication Theory. *Corporate Reputation Review*, *10*(3),163-177.https://doi-org.ezproxy2.utwente.nl/10.1057/palgrave.crr.1550049
- Coombs, W. T. (2015). The value of communication during a crisis: Insights from strategic communication research. *Business Horizons*, 58(2), 141–148. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.bushor.2014.10.003
- Coombs, W. T. (2016). Methodological Challenges of International Crisis Communication Research. *The Handbook of International Crisis Communication Research*, 456–464. https://doi.org/10.1002/9781118516812.ch41
- Coombs, W. T., & Holladay, S. J. (2002). Helping Crisis Managers Protect Reputational Assets. *Management Communication Quarterly*, 16(2), 165–186. https://doi.org/10.1177/089331802237233
- Coombs, W. T., & Holladay, S. J. (2005). An Exploratory Study of Stakeholder Emotions: Affect and Crises. *Research on Emotion in Organizations*, 263–280. https://doi.org/10.1016/s1746-9791(05)01111-9

- Coombs, W. T., & Holladay, S. J. (2008). Comparing apology to equivalent crisis response strategies: Clarifying apology's role and value in crisis communication. *Public Relations Review*, *34*(3), 252–257. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pubrev.2008.04.001
- Coombs, W. T., & Holladay, S. J. (2009). Further explorations of post-crisis communication: Effects of media and response strategies on perceptions and intentions. *Public Relations Review*, *35*(1), 1–6. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pubrev.2008.09.011
- Coombs, W. T., & Laufer, D. (2018). Global Crisis Management Current Research and Future Directions. *Journal of International Management*, 24(3), 199–203. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.intman.2017.12.003
- de Fatima Oliveira, M. (2013). Multicultural environments and their challenges to crisis communication. *Journal of Business Communication*, 50(3), 253–277. doi:10.1177/0021943613487070
- Dean, D. H. (2004). Consumer Reaction to Negative Publicity: Effects of Corporate Reputation, Response, and Responsibility for a Crisis Event. *Journal of Business Communication*, 41(2), 192–211. https://doi.org/10.1177/0021943603261748
- Falkheimer J. (2013). Transboundary and Cultural Crisis Communication. In: Thießen A. (eds) Handbuch Krisenmanagement. Springer VS, Wiesbaden. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-531-19367-0 12
- Falkheimer, J. & Heide, M. (2009). Crisis communication in a new world: Reaching multicultural publics through old and new media. *Nordicom Review*, *30* (1), 55-65. Retrieved from: http://www.nordicom.gu.se/common/publ pdf/279 falkheimer heide.pdf
- Field, A. P. (2018). Discovering statistics using IBM SPSS statistics. SAGE Publications
- Frandsen, F., & Johansen, W. (2010). Corporate Crisis Communication Across Cultures. In A. Trosborg (Ed.). *Pragmatics across Languages and Cultures* (pp. 543-569). Mouton de Gruyter. Handbooks of Pragmatics, 7. DOI: 10.1515/9783110214444.4.543
- García, C. (2011). Sex scandals: A cross-cultural analysis of image repair strategies in the cases of Bill Clinton and Silvio Berlusconi. *Public Relations Review*, *37*(3), 292–296. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pubrev.2011.03.008

- Grappi, S. & Romani, S. (2015). Company Post-Crisis Communication Strategies and the Psychological Mechanism Underlying Consumer Reactions. *Journal of Public Relations Research*, 27(1), 22-45. DOI: 10.1080/1062726X.2014.924839
- Griffin, M., Babin, B. J., Darden, W. R. (1992). Consumer Assessments of Responsibility for Product-Related Injuries: The Impact of Regulations, Warnings, and Promotional Policies. Advances in Consumer Research, 19, 870-878. Retrieved from: https://aquila.usm.edu/fac_pubs/6812/
- Ha, J. H., & Boynton, L. (2013). Has Crisis Communication Been Studied Using an Interdisciplinary Approach? A 20-Year Content Analysis of Communication Journals. *International Journal of Strategic Communication*, 8(1), 29–44. https://doi.org/10.1080/1553118x.2013.850694
- Haruta, A., & Hallahan, K. (2003). Cultural issues in airline crisis communications: A Japan-US comparative study. *Asian Journal of Communication*. *13*, 122-150. DOI:10.1080/01292980309364841
- Hennig-Thurau, T., Gwinner, K. P., Walsh, G., & Gremler, D. D. (2004). Electronic word-of-mouth via consumer-opinion platforms: What motivates consumers to articulate themselves on the Internet? *Journal of Interactive Marketing*, *18*(1), 38–52. https://doi.org/10.1002/dir.10073
- Hofstede, G. (1983). The Cultural Relativity of Organizational Practices and Theories. *Journal of International Business Studies*, 4(2),75-89. Retrieved from: http://www.jstor.org/stable/222593
- Hofstede, G. (1984). Cultural dimensions in management and planning. *Asia Pacific Journal of Management*, 1(2), 81–99. doi:10.1007/bf01733682
- Hofstede, G. (2003). *Culture's Consequences: Comparing Values, Behaviors, Institutions and Organizations Across Nations* (2nd ed.). SAGE Publications, Inc.
- Hofstede, G. (2011). Dimensionalizing Cultures: The Hofstede Model in Context. *Online Readings in Psychology and Culture*, 2(1). https://doi.org/10.9707/2307-0919.1014
- Hofstede, G., & Soeters, J. (2002). Consensus Societies with Their Own Character: National Cultures in Japan and the Netherlands. *Comparative Sociology*, 1(1), 1–16. doi:10.1163/156913202317346728

- Hofstede, G., Hofstede, G. J., & Minkov, M. (2010). Cultures and organizations: software of the mind: intercultural cooperation and its importance for survival. (3rd ed.) McGraw-Hill. Retrieved from: https://eedu.nbu.bg/pluginfile.php/900222/mod_resource/content/1/G.Hofstede_G.J.Hofstede_M.M inkov%20%20Cultures%20and%20Organizations%20%20Software%20of%20the%20Mind%203r d edition%202010.pdf
- Huang, Y.-H., & Bedford, O. (2009). The Role of Cross-Cultural Factors in Integrative Conflict Resolution and Crisis Communication: The Hainan Incident. *American Behavioral Scientist*, *53*(4), 565–578. https://doi.org/10.1177/0002764209347631
- Jakubanecs, A., Supphellen, M., & Helgeson, J. G. (2017). Crisis Management Across Borders: Effects of a Crisis Event on Consumer Responses and Communication Strategies in Norway and Russia. *Journal of East-West Business*, 24(1), 1–23. https://doi.org/10.1080/10669868.2017.1381214
- Jin, Y. (2009). The effects of public's cognitive appraisal of emotions in crises on crisis coping and strategy assessment. *Public Relations Review*, *35*(3), 310–313. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pubrev.2009.02.003
- Jin, Y. (2010). Making Sense Sensibly in Crisis Communication: How Publics' Crisis Appraisals Influence Their Negative Emotions, Coping Strategy Preferences, and Crisis Response Acceptance. CommunicationResearch, 37(4), 522–552. https://doi.org/10.1177/0093650210368256
- Jin, Y. (2013). Examining Publics' Crisis Responses According to Different Shades of Anger and Sympathy. *Journal of Public Relations Research*, 26(1), 79–101. https://doi.org/10.1080/1062726x.2013.848143
- Jin, Y., & Pang, A. (2010). Future Directions of Crisis Communication Research: Emotions in Crisis - The Next Frontier. In S. J. Holladay & T. W. Coombs (Eds.), *The Handbook of Crisis Communication* (1st ed.) (pp. 677–682). Wiley-Blackwell. https://doiorg.ezproxy2.utwente.nl/10.1002/9781444314885.ch33
- Jin, Y., Pang, A., & Cameron, G. T. (2012). Toward a Publics-Driven, Emotion-Based Conceptualization in Crisis Communication: Unearthing Dominant Emotions in Multi-Staged Testing of the Integrated Crisis Mapping (ICM) Model. *Journal of Public Relations* Research, 24(3), 266–298. https://doi.org/10.1080/1062726x.2012.676747

- Juliane Wardoyo, R., & Augustine, P. (2017). Power Distance, Uncertainty Avoidance, and Rukun: Managing the Transboundary Haze Crisis in Indonesia. *Culture and Crisis Communication*, 136–152. https://doi.org/10.1002/9781119081708.ch8
- Kim, H. J., & Cameron, G. T. (2011). Emotions Matter in Crisis: The Role of Anger and Sadness in the Publics' Response to Crisis News Framing and Corporate Crisis Response. *Communication Research*, 38(6), 826–855. https://doi.org/10.1177/0093650210385813
- Kirkman, B., Lowe, K., & Gibson, C. (2006). A quarter century of Culture's Consequences: a review of empirical research incorporating Hofstede's cultural values framework. *J Int Bus Stud*, *37*, 285–320. https://doi-org.ezproxy2.utwente.nl/10.1057/palgrave.jibs.8400202
- Lau, G. T., & Ng, S. (2009). Individual and Situational Factors Influencing Negative Word-of-Mouth Behaviour. *Canadian Journal of Administrative Sciences / Revue Canadianne Des Sciences de l'Administration*, 18(3), 163–178. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1936-4490.2001.tb00253.x
- Laufer, D., & Coombs, W. T. (2006). How should a company respond to a product harm crisis? The role of corporate reputation and consumer-based cues. *Business Horizons*, 49(5), 379–385. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.bushor.2006.01.002
- Lee, B. K. (2004). Audience-Oriented Approach to Crisis Communication: A Study of Hong Kong Consumers' Evaluation of an Organizational Crisis. *Communication Research*, *31*(5), 600–618. https://doi.org/10.1177/0093650204267936
- Lee, B. K. (2005). Hong Kong consumers' evaluation in an airline crash: A path model analysis. *Journal of Public Relations Research*, 17(4), 363–391. https://doiorg.ezproxy2.utwente.nl/10.1080/1553118X.2010.515543
- Lehmberg, D., & Hicks, J. (2018). A 'glocalization' approach to the internationalizing of crisis communication. *Business Horizons*, 61(3), 357-366. DOI: 10.1016/j.bushor.2018.01.002
- Lim, J. R. (2020). How Organizations in Different Cultures Respond to Crises: Content Analysis of Crisis Responses between the United States and South Korea. *International Journal of Strategic Communication*, 14(4), 294–316. https://doi.org/10.1080/1553118x.2020.1812613
- Lindholm, K., & Olsson, E.-K. (2010). Crisis Communication as a Multilevel Game: The Muhammad Cartoons from a Crisis Diplomacy Perspective. *The International Journal of Press/Politics*, *16*(2), 254–271. https://doi.org/10.1177/1940161210391785

- Low, Y.S., Varughese, J., & Pang, A. (2011). Communicating crisis: How culture influences image repair in Western and Asian Governments. *Corporate Communications: An International Journal*, *16*, 218-242. https://doiorg.ezproxy2.utwente.nl/10.1108/13563281111156880
- Ma, L., & Zhan, M. M. (2016). Effects of attributed responsibility and response strategies on organizational reputation: A meta-analysis of situational crisis communication theory research. *Journal of Public Relations Research*, 28(2), 102–119. https://doi.org/10.1080/1062726x.2016.1166367
- Maddux, W. W., Kim, P. H., Okumura, T., & Brett, J. M. (2011). Cultural Differences in the Function and Meaning of Apologies. *International Negotiation*, 16(3), 405–425. https://doi.org/10.1163/157180611x592932
- Maiorescu, R. D. (2016). Deutsche Telekom's spying scandal: An international application of the image repair discourse. *Public Relations Review*, 42(4), 673–678. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pubrev.2015.10.005
- McDonald, L. M., Sparks, B., & Glendon, A. I. (2010). Stakeholder reactions to company crisis communication and causes. *Public Relations Review*, *36*(3), 263–271. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pubrev.2010.04.004
- McSweeney, B. (2002). Hofstede's Model of National Cultural Differences and their Consequences: A Triumph of Faith a Failure of Analysis. *Human Relations*, 55(1), 89–118. https://doi.org/10.1177/0018726702551004
- Minkov, M. (2018). A revision of Hofstede's model of national culture: old evidence and new data from 56 countries. *Cross Cultural & Strategic Management*, 25(2), 231–256. https://doi.org/10.1108/ccsm-03-2017-0033
- Minkov, M., & Hofstede, G. (2011). The evolution of Hofstede's doctrine. *Cross Cultural Management: An International Journal*, 18(1), 10–20. https://doi.org/10.1108/13527601111104269
- Pang, A., Hyo-Jung, K., & Chaidaroon, S. (2013). Dealing with emotions of stakeholders during crises: why should leaders care? *Handbook of Research on Crisis Leadership in Organizations*, 127–148. https://doi.org/10.4337/9781781006405.00015
- Ponzi, L. J., Fombrun, C. J., & Gardberg, N. A. (2011). RepTrakTM Pulse: Conceptualizing and Validating a Short-Form Measure of Corporate Reputation. *Corporate Reputation Review*, *14*(1), 15–35. https://doi.org/10.1057/crr.2011.5

- Pruzan, P. (2001). Corporate Reputation: Image and Identity. *Corp Reputation Rev*, *4*, 50–64. https://doi-org.ezproxy2.utwente.nl/10.1057/palgrave.crr.1540132
- Schwartz, S. H. (1997). Values and culture. In D. Munro, J. F. Schumaker, & S. C. Carr (Eds.), *Motivation and culture* (pp. 69–84). Routledge. Retrieved from: https://www-researchgate-net.ezproxy2.utwente.nl/publication/313471967
- Schwarz, A., Seeger, M. W., & Auer, C. (2016). Significance and Structure of International Risk and Crisis Communication Research: Toward an Integrative Approach. *The Handbook of International Crisis Communication Research*, 1–10. https://doi.org/10.1002/9781118516812.ch1
- Sellnow, T. L., & Veil, S. R. (2016). Preparing for International and Cross-cultural Crises: The Role of Competing Voices, Inclusivity, and the Interplay of Responsibility in Global Organizations. In A. Schwarz, M. W. Seeger, & C. Auer (Eds.), *The Handbook of International Crisis Communication Research* (pp. 489–498). Wiley. https://doi.org/10.1002/9781118516812.ch44
- Sellnow, T. L., Ulmer, R. R., & Snider, M. (1998). The compatibility of corrective action in organizational crisis communication. *Communication Quarterly*, 46(1), 60–74. https://doi.org/10.1080/01463379809370084
- Taylor, M. (2000). Cultural variance as a challenge to global public relations: A case study of the Coca-Cola scare in Europe. *Public Relations Review*, 26 (3), 277-293. https://doi.org/10.1016/S0363-8111(00)00048-5
- Ulmer, R. R., & Pyle, A. S. (2016). International Organizational Crisis Communication: A Simple Rules Approach to Managing Crisis Complexity. *The Handbook of International Crisis Communication Research*, 108–118. https://doi.org/10.1002/9781118516812.ch11
- Utz, S., Schultz, F., & Glocka, S. (2013). Crisis communication online: How medium, crisis type and emotions affected public reactions in the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear disaster. *Public Relations Review*, 39(1), 40–46. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pubrev.2012.09.010
- Valentini, C. (2007). Global versus cultural approaches in public relationship management. *Journal of Communication Management*, 11(2), 117–133. https://doi.org/10.1108/13632540710747352
- van der Meer, T. G. L. A., & Verhoeven, J. W. M. (2014). Emotional crisis communication. *Public Relations Review*, 40(3), 526–536. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pubrev.2014.03.004

- Verlegh, P.W. (2007). Home country bias in product evaluation: The complementary roles of economic and socio-psychological motives. *Journal of International Business Studies*, *38* (3), 361–373. https://doi-org.ezproxy2.utwente.nl/10.1057/palgrave.jibs.8400269
- Walsh, G., Mitchell, V. W., Jackson, P. R., & Beatty, S. E. (2009). Examining the Antecedents and Consequences of Corporate Reputation: A Customer Perspective. *British Journal of Management*, 20(2), 187–203. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-8551.2007.00557.x
- Walsh, J., & McAllister-Spooner, S. M. (2011): Analysis of the image repair discourse in the Michael Phelps controversy. *Public Relations Review*, *37*(2), 157-162. Retrieved from: https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pubrev.2011.01.001
- Wang, Y., & Laufer, D. (2020). How does crisis management in China differ from the West?: A review of the literature and directions for future research. *Journal of International Management*, 26(1), 100708. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.intman.2019.100708
- Wang, Y., & Wanjek, L. (2018). How to Fix a Lie? The Formation of Volkswagen's Post-crisis Reputation Among the German Public. *Corporate Reputation Review*, 21(2), 84–100. https://doi.org/10.1057/s41299-018-0045-8
- Wertz, E.K., & Kim, S. (2010). Cultural issues in crisis communication: A comparative study of messages chosen by South Korean and US print media. *Journal of Communication Management*, 14 (1), 81-94. https://doi.org/10.1108/13632541011017825
- Wetzer, I. M., Zeelenberg, M., & Pieters, R. (2007). "Never eat in that restaurant, I did!": Exploring why people engage in negative word-of-mouth communication. *Psychology and Marketing*, 24(8), 661–680. https://doi.org/10.1002/mar.20178
- Williams, M., & Buttle, F. (2014). Managing negative word-of-mouth: an exploratory study. *Journal of Marketing Management*, 30(13–14), 1423–1447. https://doi.org/10.1080/0267257x.2014.933864
- Yoo, B., Donthu, N., & Lenartowicz, T. (2011). Measuring Hofstede's Five Dimensions of Cultural Values at the Individual Level: Development and Validation of CVSCALE. *Journal of International Consumer Marketing*, 23(3-4), 193-210. DOI: 10.1080/08961530.2011.578059

Zhou, L., & Shin, J.-H. (2017). Does stealing thunder always work? A content analysis of crisis communication practice under different cultural settings. *Public Relations Review*, *43*(5), 1036–1047. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pubrev.2017.08.004

APPENDIX A– Crisis situation

The background of the organization:



Our story

In 1985, the UK, Norbert Gomori, the CEO of Mixvett Soda Co. recognized the publics' need for a new, refreshing soft-drink that matches perfectly with salty-snacks. His vision led to what quickly became one of the continent's well-known beverage companies: Mixvett Soda Co.

Headquartered in Brighton, the UK, but operating in more than 15 countries such as The Netherlands, France, and Russia, the products of Mixvett Soda are enjoyed by consumers more than 7 million times a day. The company generated more than €5 billion in net revenue in 2020. Mixvett Soda' product portfolio includes a wide range of enjoyable beverages in 12 flavours, such as orange, blue raspberry, cranberry, and lemon lime.

We, as a company are proud of our values and respect others' too.

For more information on the Mixvett Soda Co. beverages portfolio visit: www.MixvettSodaFacts.com

Crisis response strategies:



√> 11.4°

Thursday 18 March 2021

News | Features | Blogs | Jobs | Housing | Best of the Web | Donate | Advertise

f 💌 in 🎯 📤 💌



Home | Election | Corona | Business | Society | Sport | Education | Health | International | Europe

Many have fallen ill after Mixvett's products: Who is responsible?









Health f in March 18, 2021

Mixvett Soda, the producer of Fiji Soda in The Netherlands, appears to be involved in a product contamination scandal. Many accused the British multinational that they were selling expired and tainted products.

On March 13, 2021, several consumers of the company's products reported illness on Facebook and Twitter. Dozens of posts appeared on social media by consumers complaining that the taste of the soft drink was weird and they had become sick because of it. Approximately 250 persons had the same symptoms of fever, nausea, and abdominal cramps after consuming Mixvett Soda products, 25 of whom were hospitalized. By chance, all of the victims were from South Holland which is the epicenter of the outbreak. The accusations inferred that all tainted products were produced in the same factory, based in Leiden.

The Netherlands Food and Consumer Product Safety Authority (NVWA) has asked all consumers who have symptoms to contact a health care provider to report the symptoms and receive treatment. .

Thomas van de Goor, spokesperson for Mixvett Soda Co. made an announcement during an official press conference of the company, in which he responded to the

"On March 13, 2021, many of our consumers have reported falling ill after consuming our products. I come before you to apologize to you, especially to the families who have been involved in these terrible accidents. The events of the last week are painful, seeded doubts and led some of our customers to question the safety of our products. These are hard times for all of us, but what I can promise you is that we take these issues very, very seriously", he said.

"We are extremely sorry for this failure and hope that you can forgive us. In the name of the company, I wish a quick recovery for all of you who have fallen ill", Thomas van de Goor closed his statement.

Among many questions, the most important still remains; What's next for Mixvett Soda Co ?















Features



What do you do when your husband dies and leaves you hundreds of unseen masterpieces?



Learning outdoors is more important than ever, says Amity International School Amsterdam



Balcony beauty: Here's an easy way to enjoy tulips in the city this spring



DutchNews podcast - The Blame My Wife For The Pandemic Edition - Week 11



Election night podcast: The Thank God You're Not Hugo Edition



'I saw an old couple on a bicycle and I thought, 'this is romantic, this is so Dutch'

Daily newsletter

SIGN UP

Search Keywords.

SEARCH

Best Of The Web

- ▶ 'Our biggest challenge? Lack of imagination': the scientists turning the desert green
- ▶ D66 could pull the strings in Rutte's next quartet
- ▶ The Dutch Joe Biden



√> 11.4°

Thursday 18 March 2021

News | Features | Blogs | Jobs | Housing | Best of the Web | Donate | Advertise

f 💌 in 🎯 👛 💌

Home | Election | Corona | Business | Society | Sport | Education | Health | International |

Europe

Many have fallen ill after Mixvett's products: Who is responsible?









Health f y in March 18, 2021

Mixvett Soda, producer of Fiji Soda in The Netherlands appears to be involved in a product contamination scandal. Many accused the British multinational that they were selling expired and tainted products. .

On March 13, 2021, several consumers of the company's products reported illness on Facebook and Twitter. Dozens of posts appeared on social media by consumers complaining that the taste of the soft drink was weird and they had become sick because of it. Approximately 250 persons had the same symptoms of fever, nausea, and abdominal cramps after consuming Mixvett Soda products, 25 of whom were hospitalized. By chance, all of the victims were from South Holland which is the epicenter of the outbreak. The accusations inferred that all tainted products were produced in the same factory, based in Leiden

The Netherlands Food and Consumer Product Safety Authority (NVWA) has asked all consumers who have symptoms to contact a health care provider to report the symptoms and receive treatment.

Thomas van de Goor, spokesperson for Mixvett Soda Co. made an announcement during an official press conference of the company, in which he responded to the allegations;

"On March 13, many of our consumers reported falling ill, yet there are no clear explanations of what had caused the symptoms. We were surprised when we first heard about the news, as we found no signs of human or technological error. After a thorough examination, our scientists indicated that there were no harmful substances in the products of our company. Therefore, our company strongly believes that the illness has not been caused by our products", he said.

"We, at Mixvett Soda, truly trust that our products are as safe as they have ever been", Thomas van de Goor closed his statement.

Among many questions, the most important still remains; What's next for Mixvett













Features



What do you do when your husband dies and leaves you hundreds of unseen masterpieces?



Learning outdoors is more important than ever, says Amitv International School Amsterdam



Balcony beauty: Here's an easy way to enjoy tulips in the city this



DutchNews podcast - The Blame My Wife For The Pandemic Edition - Week 11



Election night podcast: The Thank God You're Not Hugo Edition



'I saw an old couple on a bicycle and I thought, 'this is romantic, this is so Dutch'

Daily newsletter

SIGN UP

Search Keywords.

SEARCH

Best Of The Web

- ▶ 'Our biggest challenge? Lack of imagination': the scientists turning the desert green
- ▶ D66 could pull the strings in Rutte's next quartet
- ► The Dutch Joe Biden

Support The Moscow Times!

■ NEWS OPINION BUSINESS MEANWHILE ARTS AND LIFE PODCASTS VIDEOS IN-DEPTH

RU Q

Many have fallen ill after Mixvett's products: Who is responsible?

By AFP Updated: March 18, 2021



Mixvett Soda, producer of Fiji Soda in Russia appears to be involved in a product contamination scandal. Many accused the British multinational that they were selling expired and tainted products.

On March 13, 2021, several consumers of the company's products reported illness on Facebook and Twitter. Dozens of posts appeared on social media by consumers complaining that the taste of the soft drink was weird and they had become sick because of it. Approximately 250 persons had the same symptoms of fever, nausea, and abdominal cramps after consuming Mixvett Soda products, 25 of whom were hospitalized. By chance, all of the victims were from Moscow which is the epicenter of the outbreak. The accusations inferred that all tainted products were produced in the same factory, based in Bibirevo District, Moscow.

The Federal Service for Surveillance on Consumer Rights Protection and Human Wellbeing (Rospotrebnadzorha) asked all consumers who have symptoms to contact a health care provider to report the symptoms and receive treatment.

Michail Alekseev, spokesperson for Mixvett Soda Co. made an announcement during an official press conference of the company, in which he responded to the allegations;

"On March 13, 2021, many of our consumers have reported falling ill after consuming our products. I come before you to apologize to you, especially to the families who have been involved in these terrible accidents. The events of the last week are painful and seeded doubts and led some of our customers to question the safety of our products. These are hard times for all of us, but what I can promise you is that we take these issues very, very seriously", he said.

"We are extremely sorry for this failure and hope that you can forgive us. In the name of the company, I wish a quick recovery for all of you who have fallen ill", Michail Alekseev closed his statement.

Among many questions, the most important still remains; What's next for Mixvett Soda Co.?

Read more about: Twitter , Roskomnadzor , Social media



MOST READ **JUST IN**

Coronavirus in Russia: The Latest News |

2 UNWELCOME ALL EGATIONS

Russian Billionaire Abramovich Sues Author Catherine Belton for Defamation

3 RED TAPE REDUCED

Russia to Soften Visa Policy for Tourists, Relatives of Russians

4 SEEKING SUPPLIES

France May Start Sputnik V Vaccinations in June - Official

5 FATAL INCIDENT

3 Russian Soldiers Killed in Supersonic Bomber Accident



Support The Moscow Times!

■ NEWS OPINION BUSINESS MEANWHILE ARTS AND LIFE PODCASTS VIDEOS IN-DEPTH

RU Q

Many have fallen ill after Mixvett's products: Who is responsible?

By AFP Updated: March 18, 2021



Mixvett Soda, producer of Fiji Soda in Russia appears to be involved in a product contamination scandal. Many accused the British multinational that they were selling expired and tainted

On March 13, 2021, several consumers of the company's products reported illness on Facebook and Twitter. Dozens of posts appeared on social media by consumers complaining that the taste of the soft drink was weird and they had become sick because of it. Approximately 250 persons had the same symptoms of fever, nausea, and abdominal cramps after consuming Mixvett Soda products, 25 of whom were hospitalized. By chance, all of the victims were from Moscow which is the epicenter of the outbreak. The accusations inferred that all tainted products were produced in the same factory, based in Bibirevo District, Moscow.

The Federal Service for Surveillance on Consumer Rights Protection and Human Wellbeing (Rospotrebnadzorha) asked all consumers who have symptoms to contact a health care provider to report the symptoms and receive treatment.

Michail Alekseev, spokesperson for Mixvett Soda Co. made an announcement during an official press conference of the company, in which he responded to the allegations;

"On March 13, many of our consumers reported falling ill, yet there are no clear explanations of what had caused the symptoms. We were surprised when we first heard about the news, as we found no signs of human or technological error. After a thorough examination, our scientists indicated that there were no harmful substances in the products of our company. Therefore, our company strongly believes that the illness has not been caused by our products", he said.

"We, at Mixvett Soda, truly trust that our products are as safe as they have ever been", Michail

Among many questions, the most important still remains; What's next for Mixvett Soda Co.?

Read more about: Twitter, Roskomnadzor, Social media



MOST READ JUST IN

Coronavirus in Russia: The Latest News |

2 UNWELCOME ALL EGATIONS

Russian Billionaire Abramovich Sues Author Catherine Belton for Defamation

3 RED TAPE REDUCED

Russia to Soften Visa Policy for Tourists, Relatives of Russians

4 SEEKING SUPPLIES

France May Start Sputnik V Vaccinations in June - Official

5 FATAL INCIDENT

3 Russian Soldiers Killed in Supersonic Bomber Accident

APPENDIX B – Final questionnaire

Q1 You are being invited to participate in a research study about a product harm crisis that has recently happened.

This study is being done by Robert Toth from the Faculty of Behavioural, Management and Social Sciences at the University of Twente.

The survey will take you approximately **7-10 minutes** to complete.

Please indicate below if you consent to take part in this study.

The data will be used for this study only. Your participation in this study is entirely voluntary and you can withdraw at any time.

Your answers in this study will remain confidential. We will minimize any risks by collecting your anonymous responses which can never be traced back to you.

As a thank you note, two Amazon gift cards of 25€ and 25€ will be randomly given to two of the participants who will complete the whole survey and fill in their email addresses at the end of it. Please be reassured that the e-mail addresses will not be stored together with the data list.

Study contact details for further information: Robert Toth, r.l.toth@student.utwente.nl

By clicking the button below, you acknowledge that you have read the previous information and you are at least 16 years old.

O I consent (1)			
End of Block: Default Question Block			

Start of Block: Demographics

Q2	What	gender	do	you	identify	as'	

O Male (1)	
Female (2)	
O Non-binary / third gender ((3)

O Prefer not to say (4)

Q3 What is your age? (In numbers, e.g. 24)										
Q4 What is the highest degree or level of school you have completed? If currently enrolled, highest degree received.										
O High school or equivalent (1)										
Technical or occupational certificate (2)										
O Associate degree (3)										
O Bachelor's degree (4)										
Master's degree (5)										
O Doctorate degree (6)										
Q5 Where are you from?										
O The Netherlands (4)										
Other country (5)										
Q6 In which country do you live?										
O The Netherlands (3)										
Other country (4)										

End of Block: Demographics

Start of Block: Introduction 1

Q7 In the following, you are introduced to the soft-drink producer Mixvett Soda Company. Please read the story carefully.

End of Block: Introduction 1

Start of Block: Our story

End of Block: Our story

Start of Block: Introduction 2

Q9 Now you will read about a recent crisis that Mixvett Soda Co. experienced. Imagine that you are being affected by this crisis.

The news article was published on the site of DutchNews.nl which is a leading online newspaper for Dutch news translated into English.

Please read the article carefully and answer the questions.

End of Block: Introduction 2

Start of Block: Mixvett a response

Q11 Please answer the questions based on the news article you have just read about. It is important to give your honest answers.

Q12 Based on the news article, please indicate whether you agree/ disagree with the following statements.

	Strongly disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Somewhat disagree (3)	Neither agree nor disagree (4)	Somewhat agree (5)	Agree (6)	Strongly agree (7)
External circumstances are responsible for the crisis, not the company of Mixvett. (1)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
The blame for the crisis lies with the company of Mixvett. (2)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
The blame for the crisis lies with the external circumstances, not with the company of Mixvett. (3)	0	0	0	0	0		

Q13 Based on the response you read from the organization, would you please express the degree to which you felt each of the following emotions?

	Strongly disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Somewhat disagree (3)	Neither agree nor disagree (4)	Somewhat agree (5)	Agree (6)	Strongly agree (7)
After reading the response of the organization I feel anger.	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
After reading the response of the organization I feel repulsion. (2)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
After reading the response of the organization I feel annoyed.	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
After reading the response of the organization I feel outraged. (4)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Q14 Please indicate how do you feel towards the response of Mixvett?

	Strongly disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Somewhat disagree (3)	Neither agree nor disagree (4)	Somewhat agree (5)	Agree (6)	Strongly agree (7)
The way the organization responded to the crisis makes me feel sympathetic. (1)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
The way the organization responded to the crisis makes me feel pitiful. (2)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
The way the organization responded to the crisis makes me feel compassionate. (3)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
The way the organization responded to the crisis makes me feel empathetic. (4)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Q15 Based on the news article, please indicate whether you agree/ disagree with the following statements.

	Strongly disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Somewhat disagree (3)	Neither agree nor disagree (4)	Somewhat agree (5)	Agree (6)	Strongly agree (7)	
Mixvett Soda is a company I have a good feeling about. (1)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Mixvett Soda is a company I trust. (2)	0	0	0	0	\circ	\circ	0	
Mixvett Soda is a company I admire and respect. (3)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Mixvett Soda has a good overall reputation. (4)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
End of Block: Mixvett a response Start of Block: Mixvett d response								

-	Q17 Please answer the questions based on the news article you have just read about. It is important to give your honest answers.									
Q18 Based on the news article, please indicate whether you agree/ disagree with the following statements.										
	Strongly disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Somewhat disagree (3)	Neither agree nor disagree (4)	Somewhat agree (5)	Agree (6)	Strongly agree (7)			
External circumstances are responsible for the crisis, not the company of Mixvett. (1)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0			
The blame for the crisis lies with the company of Mixvett. (2)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0			
The blame for the crisis lies with the external circumstances, not with the company of Mixvett. (3)	0		0							

Q19 Based on the response you read from the organization, would you please express the degree to which you felt each of the following emotions?

	Strongly disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Somewhat disagree (3)	Neither agree nor disagree (4)	Somewhat agree (5)	Agree (6)	Strongly agree (7)
After reading the response of the organization I feel anger.	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
After reading the response of the organization I feel repulsion. (2)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
After reading the response of the organization I feel annoyed.	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
After reading the response of the organization I feel outraged. (4)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Q20 Please indicate how do you feel towards the response of Mixvett?

	Strongly disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Somewhat disagree (3)	Neither agree nor disagree (4)	Somewhat agree (5)	Agree (6)	Strongly agree (7)
The way the organization responded to the crisis makes me feel sympathetic. (1)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
The way the organization responded to the crisis makes me feel pitiful. (2)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
The way the organization responded to the crisis makes me feel compassionate. (3)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
The way the organization responded to the crisis makes me feel empathetic. (4)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Q21 Based on the news article, please indicate whether you agree/ disagree with the following statements.

	Strongly disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Somewhat disagree (3)	Neither agree nor disagree (4)	Somewhat agree (5)	Agree (6)	Strongly agree (7)
Mixvett Soda is a company I have a good feeling about. (1)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Mixvett Soda is a company I trust. (2)	0	0	\circ	0	0	0	0
Mixvett Soda is a company I admire and respect. (3)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Mixvett Soda has a good overall reputation. (4)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

End of Block: Mixvett d response

Start of Block: WOM and MAN

Q22 Please note that you can go back to the news article with the "Back button" at the bottom left corner.

Q23 Based on the news article, please indicate whether you agree/ disagree with the following statements.

	Strongly disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Somewhat disagree (3)	Neither agree nor disagree (4)	Somewhat agree (5)	Agree (6)	Strongly agree (7)
I would encourage friends or relatives NOT to buy the products of Mixvett Soda. (1)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
I would say negative things about Mixvett Soda and its products to other people (2)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
I would recommend Mixvett Soda's products to someone who asked my advice (3)	0	0	0	0		0	0

Q24 Based on the response of Mixvett, please indicate whether you agree/ disagree with the following statements.

	Strongly disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Somewhat disagree (3)	Neither agree, nor disagree (4)	Somewhat agree (5)	Agree (6)	Strongly agree (7)
Mixvett apologised for the crisis.	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Mixvett accepted responsibility for the incident. (2)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Mixvett expressed concern for those affected by the crisis. (3)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Mixvett asserted that there is a crisis. (4)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Mixvett denied the crisis. (5)	0	0	0	0	\circ	\circ	0

End of Block: WOM and MAN

Start of Block: Introduction 3

Q25 Don't worry, it's almost over!

In the next section, we'll ask you some questions about your personal preferences regarding your everyday decisions. This part of the survey is not related to the crisis of Mixvett.

End of Block: Introduction 3

Start of Block: Culture dim

Q26 Based on everyday situations, please indicate whether you agree/ disagree with the following statements.

	Strongly disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Somewhat disagree (3)	Neither agree nor disagree (4)	Somewhat agree (5)	Agree (6)	Strongly agree (7)72
People in higher positions should make most decisions without consulting people in lower positions.	0	0		0	0	0	0
People in higher positions should not ask the opinions of people in lower positions too frequently. (2)	0	0		0			0
People in higher positions should avoid social interaction with people in lower positions.	0	0		0			0
People in lower positions should not disagree with decisions by people in higher	0					0	0

positions. (4)							
People in higher positions should not delegate important tasks to people in lower positions. (5)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Q27 Based on everyday situations, please indicate whether you agree/ disagree with the following statements.

	Strongly disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Somewhat disagree (3)	Neither agree nor disagree (4)	Somewhat agree (5)	Agree (6)	Strongly agree (7)
It is important to have instructions spelled out in detail so that I always know what I'm expected to do. (1)	0	0		0	0	0	0
It is important to closely follow instructions and	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

of what is expected of me. (3)							
Standardized work procedures are helpful. (4)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Instructions for operations are important. (5)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
End of Block: Start of Block:		l					