

How different crisis responses can mitigate discrete negative moral emotions

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Abstract

Past research on communications and recovery after organizational crises has almost exclusively focused on anger. Building on insights from constructivist and social-functionalist theories of emotions, this article develops an account of how anger, disgust and contempt influence evaluators' responses to crises and conceptualizes the responses that mitigate each of these emotions. By matching the response strategy's attention focus (on the transgression *versus* the transgressor) and interpretation focus (on harm *versus* moral character *versus* competence) with the evaluators' emotions, organizations can attempt to mitigate combinations of anger, disgust and contempt. The paper extends the notion of *matching* as a key mechanism to mitigate evaluators' negative emotions and examines organizational responses to the specific threat posed by distinct negative emotions.

Keywords: crisis response, crisis communications, moral emotions

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