

Assignment: Comparative Image Repair Analysis

Purpose

This assignment asks you to compare two image repair efforts that share some common features, such as examining two different influencers who both got in trouble for racist comments or analyzing two politicians suspected of extra-marital affairs. Rather than analyzing one case in isolation, you will examine how different speakers or organizations responded to public accusations and why one response may have been more effective, more constrained, more authentic, or more rhetorically nuanced than the other.

Case Selection

- Choose two image repair cases that share at least one major characteristic.
- The two cases may come from the same category, such as sports, politics, corporate crisis, entertainment, or social media, or they may come from different categories if the comparison is clearly justified.
- Each case must include at least one substantial image repair text, such as an apology statement, video, interview, press release, press conference, public testimony, or social media post.
- Choose cases that create a meaningful comparison. For example, the cases might involve similar offenses, different levels of prior goodwill, different audiences, different delivery channels, or different outcomes.

Assignment Requirements

1. Comparative Context

Begin by introducing both cases and explaining the controversies. Readers should understand what happened in each case, why image repair was necessary, and why the two cases are useful to compare. This section should do more than summarize two scandals. It should build an argument for the comparison itself.

- Identify both people or organizations involved.
- Explain each accusation or controversy clearly and accurately.
- Discuss why the two cases make sense as a comparison.
- Use credible outside sources to support the background for both cases.
- Cite all outside sources in APA 7th edition style.

2. Strategy Comparison

Analyze the image repair strategies used in each case. You may organize this section by case or by strategy, but the structure should allow readers to see meaningful similarities and differences. Do not simply list strategies. Define each major strategy, provide evidence from the image repair texts, and explain how the examples fit the strategy.

When comparing strategies, consider whether both speakers used similar approaches or whether they made noticeably different choices. For example, one speaker may have relied heavily on mortification while another relied on denial, bolstering, differentiation, or corrective action.

- Identify the key strategies used in each case.
- Define each major strategy before applying it.
- Provide direct examples from the image repair texts.
- Explain how each example fits the strategy being discussed.
- Compare the rhetorical choices across the two cases rather than treating them as unrelated summaries.

3. Comparative Discussion/Interpretation

In the final major section, interpret what the comparison reveals. You might discuss which image repair effort was more effective, which speaker faced greater constraints, which response seemed more authentic, or which response better addressed the concerns of key audiences.

You should also consider whether the differences between the cases were caused by the strategies themselves or by outside factors such as the severity of the offense, prior reputation, timing, media coverage, audience expectations, organizational power, or later behavior. A strong paper will avoid simple judgments and instead explain why the cases developed differently.

- Interpret the strengths and weaknesses of each image repair effort.
- Discuss whether the cases differed because of rhetorical strategy, context, audience, timing, offense severity, or public goodwill.
- Use external evidence when available to evaluate audience response or aftermath.
- Explain what the comparison teaches about Benoit's Image Repair Theory.
- Consider whether another theory or framework might help explain the comparison more fully.

Evaluation Criteria

- Clarity and accuracy of both case summaries.
- Strength of the justification for comparing the cases.
- Accuracy of image repair strategy identification and definition.

- Quality of textual evidence from both image repair efforts.
- Depth of comparison and interpretation.
- Use of credible outside sources and APA 7th edition style.
- Quality of writing, organization, transitions, and proofreading.