

Assignment: Image Repair Analysis Paper

Purpose

This assignment asks you to analyze a recent (last five years) image repair effort using the framework developed by William Benoit. Your goal is to explain the controversy, identify the most important image repair strategies used by the person or organization, and interpret how effectively those strategies responded to the situation. The paper should be written in narrative form and should use outside sources to support the justification/contextualization section and internal textual evidence for the analysis and discussion/conclusion sections.

Case Selection

- Choose an image repair case from the last five years.
- Select a case involving a public person, organization, institution, team, company, public official, celebrity, or influencer.
- Make sure the case includes at least one substantial image repair text, such as an apology statement, social media post, press conference, interview, video statement, open letter, press release, or public testimony. The more they said in their defense, the easier for you to find strategies.
- Choose a case with enough public information or news coverage to explain the case and justify its importance.

Paper Sections

1. Justification/Contextualization

Begin the paper by explaining the controversy or scandal for readers who may not already know the case. This section should provide the necessary background to understand what happened, who was accused, what audiences were affected, and why the image repair effort mattered.

This section should also justify why the case is uniquely interesting or important compared to other image repair cases. You might consider the type of offense, the rhetorical constraints on the speaker, the location or setting of the offense, the history of the behavior, the amount of goodwill the public had toward the person or organization before the offense, the channel used to deliver the image repair, the timing of the response, or the intensity of public reaction.

- Clearly identify the person or organization involved in the image repair case.
- Explain the accusation, controversy, or scandal in enough detail for an unfamiliar reader.
- Discuss why the case is rhetorically interesting, unusual, difficult, or important.
- Use credible outside sources to support the background and significance of the case.

- Cite all outside sources in APA 7th edition style.

2. Analysis

The analysis section should identify and explain the key image repair strategies used in the case. Students are not expected to find all of Benoit's image repair strategies in a single case. Instead, select the strategies that seem most important to understanding how the person or organization attempted to repair the damage.

Begin this section with a brief preview of the key strategies you will analyze. Then discuss each strategy one at a time. Each strategy subsection should define the strategy, provide one or more examples from the image repair text, and explain how those examples illustrate the strategy.

For example, a student analyzing shifting blame might write: "The strategy of shifting blame involves deflecting responsibility for the act onto someone else. One example of the speaker's use of shifting blame occurred when he said, '...' This example fits the strategy because..."

- Preview the major image repair strategies used in the selected case.
- Define each strategy before applying it.
- Use direct examples from the image repair text, such as quotes from statements, interviews, press conferences, social media posts, or press releases.
- Explain in your own words how each example fits the strategy being illustrated.
- Use enough examples to support your claims without letting quotation replace your own analysis.
- Focus on the most important strategies rather than trying to force every strategy into the case.

3. Discussion/Interpretation

After identifying and illustrating the strategies, move beyond description and interpret the image repair effort. This section should explain what the strategies reveal about the speaker's rhetorical choices, the difficulty of the situation, and the likely response of different audiences.

You might discuss whether individual strategies were effective or ineffective, whether the combination of strategies worked well together, whether any strategies weakened the perceived authenticity of the apology, or whether different audiences were likely to respond differently. You may also consider external evidence of effectiveness, such as opinion polling, news commentary, audience reaction, institutional consequences, continued criticism, or later professional recovery.

This section should also reflect on the usefulness of Benoit's Image Repair Theory. Did the theory help explain the case clearly? Were there features of the case that Benoit's theory did not fully capture? Would another theory or framework have helped explain the image repair more completely?

- Interpret the effectiveness of the major image repair strategies.
- Discuss whether the strategies worked together coherently or conflicted with one another.
- Consider different audiences and how they may have responded to the image repair effort.

- Use external evidence when available to assess public, media, organizational, or professional response.
- Evaluate how useful Benoit's Image Repair Theory was for understanding the case.

Evaluation Criteria

- Depth and accuracy of case contextualization.
- Quality of justification for why the case matters.
- Accuracy of image repair strategy identification and definition.
- Strength of textual evidence used to illustrate strategies.
- Depth of discussion and interpretation beyond simple description.
- Quality of writing, organization, transitions, and proofreading.
- Accuracy and consistency of APA 7th edition style.