2015

Apology as a leadership behavior: a meta-analysis with implications for organizational leaders

Matthew W. Brubaker

Pepperdine University

Graduate School of Education and Psychology

APOLOGY AS A LEADERSHIP BEHAVIOR:

A META-ANALYSIS WITH IMPLICATIONS FOR ORGANIZATIONAL LEADERS

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment

of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Education in Organizational Change

by

Matthew W. Brubaker

June, 2015

Susan Nero, Ph.D. – Chairperson

This dissertation, written by

Matthew W. Brubaker

under the guidance of a Faculty Committee and approved by its members, has been submitted to and accepted by the Graduate Faculty in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

Doctoral Committee:

Susan Nero, Ph.D., Chairperson

Kent Rhodes, Ed.D., Member

Kay Davis, Ed.D., Member and Program Director

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Page

LIST OF TABLES viii

LIST OF FIGURES…………….ix

VITA x

ABSTRACT xi

Chapter 1: Introduction 1

Entering the "Apology Theater" 1
Apology as a Leadership Behavior 4
The Nature of the Problem 5
Apology is Difficult to Define. 5
The Effects of Apology are Difficult to Quantify. 8
Organizational Leaders Serve a Complex Group of Stakeholders. 10
Knowing When, and How to Apologize is Difficult. 12
What is Needed 13
Building a Model for Organizational Leaders 14

Chapter 2: A Review of the Apology Literature 17

Surveying the Terrain 17
The Literature of Philosophy and Theology. 18
The Literature of the Social Sciences. 20
The Literature of Communications and Public Relations. 22
The Literature of the Law. 24
The Literature of Organizational Management 25
Literatures Excluded. 27
Creating the Map 29

Chapter 3: Methodology—A Meta-Analysis of Apology Literature 30

Study Design 30
Elements of Qualitative Content Analysis. 31
Content Analysis Process 32
Building a Framework to Understand the Practice of Apology 33
Definition of Apology 34
Purpose or Function of Apology. 34
Modes of Apology. 35
Process or Steps in Apologizing. 36
Alternatives to Apology. 37
Managing the Data 37
Anticipated Outcomes 42

A Reliable Map. 42
Orienting Questions. 43
Practical Tools. 43
Considerations and Limitations 44
Human Subjects Considerations. 44
Reflexivity of Researcher. 45
Limitations of the Study. 45

Chapter 4: Findings 47

Mapping the Apology Literature 47
The Definition of Apology 48
The Purpose and Function of Apology. 49
Modes of Apology. 51
Process or Steps in Apology. 53
Alternatives to Apology. 61
Leadership and Apology 64
Leadership. 64
Organization. 67

Chapter 5: Apology in Leadership Practice 72

Apology in Organizational Leadership Practice 72
Defining Apology as a Leadership Practice 73
The Purposes and Functions of Apology in Organizational Leadership. 74
Modes of Apology in Leadership Practice 74
The Process of Apologizing in Leadership Practice. 76
Fact-based Acknowledgment of the Offense or Error. 76
Explicit Acceptance of Responsibility for the Offense 76
Genuine Remorse or Regret for the Offender's Actions. 77
Plans for Corrective Action and Restitution. 77
A Credible Promise Not to Repeat the Offense. 77
Alternatives to Apology in Leadership Practice. 78
When and How to Apologize: A Process for Situational Analysis 78
The Organizational Apology Model 80
1. Know Yourself. 81
Personal Values, Biases, etc 81
Understand Personal Culpability. 82
Clarify Role and Responsibilities. 83
2. Get the Facts. 84
Resist the Early Close. 84
Identify the Failure and Causes 85
Identify Actors. 85
Identify Victims and Impacts. 86
3. Map Stakeholder Impacts. 86
Identify Conflicting Interests. 87

Assess REAL Risk. ... 91
4. Identify Range of Responses. ... 93
Do Nothing... 93
Critical Question: Can Disclosure Occur? ... 93
Alternate Responses. ... 94
Defense. ... 94
Counter-attack. ... 95
Corrective Action. ... 96
Ingratiation. ... 96
Empathetic Disclosure. ... 97
Psuedo-Apologies. ... 97
5. Design Apology. ... 98
State the Facts. ... 99
Take Responsibility, Explicitly. ... 99
State Segret, Personally. ... 100
Share Plans for Restitution. ... 101
Promise Not to Repeat. ... 101
6. Deliver Apology. ... 102
Identify Recipients. ... 102
Clarify Mode and Voice. ... 102
Identify Timing. ... 103
Identify Setting(s). ... 104
7. Manage Restitution. ... 105
Manage Accountability. ... 105
Measure Impact. ... 106
Maintain Dialogue. ... 106
Applying the Model: Considerations for Future Work ... 106
Real Time Application. ... 107
Retrospective Inquiry with Co-researcher. ... 108
Publication. ... 108
Conclusion ... 109

REFERENCES ... 111

APPENDIX A: Literature Maps ... 122

APPENDIX B: Non-Human Subjects Determination Notice ... 138

LIST OF TABLES

Page

Table 1. A Draft Framework for Categorizing Data 34

Table 2. Modes of Apology 36

Table 3. Apology: Legal Literature Map, Seminal Thinkers 39

Table 4. Apology: Legal Literature Map 39

Table 5. Steps in the Apology Process 61

LIST OF FIGURES

Page

Figure 1. Approaches to apology. 18

Figure 2. Definitions of apology. 49

Figure 3. Purposes and functions of apology. 50

Figure 4. Modes of apology. 53

Figure 5. Apology process models.. 60

Figure 6. Alternatives to apology.. 62

Figure 7. Organizational stakeholders. 69

Figure 8. The organizational apology model: Overview. 79

Figure 9. The organizational apology model: Observe phase.. 80

Figure 10. The organizational apology model: Interpret phase. 85

Figure 11. Organizational stakeholder map. 88

Figure 12. The organizational apology model: Design phase.. 98

VITA

EMPLOYMENT

FMG Leading, San Diego, CA & Philadelphia, PA
President and COO
2008 - present

Comcast Corporation, Philadelphia, PA
Director of Organization Development
2007 - 2008

Terra Nova Partners, Worcester, MA
Managing Principal
2003 - 2007

Metanoia, East Washington, NH
Director of Reconciliation Ministries
2001 - 2003

Chapel of the Cross, Southborough, MA
Minister
1995 - 2001

EDUCATION

Ed.D. in Organizational Change (2015)
Pepperdine University, Graduate School of Education and Psychology
West Los Angeles, CA

M.A. in Conflict Resolution (2000)
The University of Massachusetts at Boston
Boston, MA

B.A. in Theology and Youth Ministries – Magna Cum Laude (1995)
Eastern University
St. Davids, PA

ABSTRACT

Leaders are frequently called to apologize on behalf of their organizations, in some cases skillfully resolving episodes of failure while meeting the unique, competing needs of diverse stakeholders. However, too often leaders handle apology poorly, exacerbating tense situations and alienating key constituents. This study is an examination of the practice of apology as a leadership behavior in an organizational context. To answer the question, *How might the existing literatures on apology be examined, integrated and refocused to apply specifically to leaders operating within an organizational context*? the study provides a meta-analysis of the diverse literatures that address the practice of apology. Examining literature from theology and philosophy, the social sciences, law, public relations and organizational management, the study builds a framework to understand and evaluate apology and its appropriate application to episodes of organizational failure. The literature integration and analysis demonstrates a diversity of perspectives on the definition of apology, its purpose and goals, the modes through which apology is delivered, the process or steps involved in apology, and the alternatives to apology. Using the adaptive leadership framework and a stakeholder management perspective on organization, the research is organized around the unique and distinct needs of organizational leaders. The Organizational Apology Model, offered in Chapter 5, provides a robust set of tools and examples designed to support organizational leaders considering the practice of apology.

Chapter 1: Introduction

Never ruin an apology with an excuse.

–Benjamin Franklin

A stiff apology is a second insult. The injured party does not want to be compensated because he has been wronged; he wants to be healed because he has been hurt.

–G. K. Chesterton, *On Lying in Bed and Other Essays,* 1896

Entering the "Apology Theater"

Any engagement with contemporary public life exposes the average person to a near constant stream of leaders, public figures and organizations engaged in some form of apology practice. This should not be terribly surprising to us. Leaders and organizations are just as likely to fail as anyone else, and the practice of apology as a means of acknowledging and compensating for failure is an ancient one. And, as the world becomes *smaller* and *flatter*, leadership and organizational mishaps are more difficult to overlook or conceal. Leaders who fail to apologize or deliver insincere self-serving apologies are easily spotted and criticized by their stakeholders and bystanders alike. Public credibility and corporate brand are linked to real economic value, which is often destroyed through inadequately managed or poorly timed apology. For these reasons and others, most leaders are in the apology business, and apologizing in the public sphere is increasingly evident.

As a management consultant with a diverse education and career path, I have been consistently fascinated by the practice of apology and its use by leaders in organizational contexts. I have seen sincere, authentic apology practiced at a variety of levels. Individual relationships have been transformed, inter-group conflict has been reconciled, and shareholder value has been created through the skillful application of this leadership behavior. The converse has also been true. Poorly issued, insincere apologies have led to further alienation, derailed careers, increased perceptions of conflict intractability and significant destruction of economic value. These observations have led to a desire to contribute to the emerging literature, and to create a useful framework for organizational leaders in a variety of contexts.

Dov Seidman (2014), a corporate culture consultant, recently dubbed the phenomenon *apology theater*, suggesting that the proliferation of insincere apologies has rendered the practice nearly meaningless in the public square. The public has developed an attitude of passive cynicism in response to most apologies, distrusting the practice altogether. Andrew Ross Sorkin, a New York Times financial columnist, regularly chronicles public apologies in his columns. Sorkin engages with apologies issued by prominent leaders such as Netflix CEO, Reed Hastings; AOL CEO, Tim Armstrong, and New Jersey Governor Chris Christie; opining on their believability and sincerity (Sorkin, 2014a). His intentionally un-scholarly examination of these apologies is peppered instead with the common-sense language of effective business practices, appealing to the idea that apology is fundamentally a matter of basic human logic and gut feelings (Sorkin, 2014b).

Sorkin's critique and discussion bode well for improving the practice of apology. Public sentiment against its trivialization suggests an enduring human need for legitimate acknowledgement of error, and for a process to restore what has been broken or lost. It also suggests that before the practice of apology can be examined at the organizational level, it must be understood at a more personal one. How is it that certain apologies are *felt* to be true, while others are seen as disingenuous or self-protecting? And why, when offered a simple apology are some victims of major offenses willing to simply drop their claims, forfeiting the opportunity for a large financial settlement? Aaron Lazare (2004), a psychiatrist, has suggested that apology fulfills several critical needs of an individual who has been offended by another party. An authentic apology can restore a victim's sense of self-respect and dignity, and reassure that the offense was not the victim's fault. In some cases, an apology provides an opportunity to have meaningful dialogue with the offender, and is able to assure the victim that both parties indeed have shared values. Apology often provides insight into the level of anguish or suffering experienced by the offender as a result of their misdeed, which can be comforting to a victim as well. Finally, at a tangible level, apology is sometimes accompanied by direct reparations for the harm that has been caused by the offender.

Scholars from a variety of disciplines have recognized this fundamental humanistic dimension to the practice of apology. Each discipline provides some insight, from its own limited perspective, into what the philosopher Tavuchis (1991) calls the "paradoxical and talismanic qualities" (p. 5) of apology. Like the proverbial blind men describing an elephant, however, the majority of these perspectives presume a far greater degree of comprehensiveness than can be accurate given the limitations of any particular discipline. The most comprehensive treatments of the topic are philosophical treatises (see Tavuchis, 1991 and Lazare, 2004), and tend to wander into abstraction, offering limited insight into implications for actual practitioners.

Nevertheless, the study of apology is on the rise. A diverse group of scholars is beginning to contribute to a body of research and insight that can be useful to a contemporary organizational leader. Legitimate scholarship on the subject has emerged from diverse disciplines including communications, linguistics, philosophy, psychiatry, psychology, public relations, sociology, theology and law. Each of these scholars has explored the practice of apology with a particular purpose, and with a set of filters governing their inquiry. Some are far-reaching, while others, such as those offered by the legal profession, are more pragmatic.

In recent years, a small number of scholars have begun the trend of integrating the existing research into comprehensive, coherent frameworks for broad applicability in organizational contexts (Bisel & Messersmith, 2012). This study is offered with that integrative orientation. My goal is ultimately to generate a comprehensive understanding of apology as a leadership practice to be applied by organizational leaders in a modern managerial context.

Apology as a Leadership Behavior

Among the diverse disciplines contributing to the literature on apology, a broad perspective from the field of organizational management has been decidedly absent. The majority of the advice offered to organizational leaders is observational and intuitive, devoid of any significant focus on research. A better-than-average example is provided in a brief 2006 Harvard Business Review article by Barbara Kellerman. Kellerman's (2006) work is general and pragmatic, built on her own experience as a management scholar and her personal observations. These observations contribute to a framework built around categories of situations for which a leader might be called on to apologize. Her analysis is highly practical and outcome-oriented, providing guidance for a leader to discern situations in which apology is likely to lead to favorable or unfavorable outcomes.

Other similar writings are common, especially in the field of healthcare management (Cohen, 2010; Leape, 2012; Roberts, 2007). This literature is certainly useful and should be consulted by those with a genuine interest in more skillful use of the practice of apology. Yet, advice is only the beginning of what is needed by organizational leaders who grapple with mistakes – whether their own or their organization's – and who consider apologizing. Leaders in this position are usually inundated with conflicting advice offered by well-meaning stakeholders with unique interests. In some situations warranting apology the identity of the offending party is difficult to discern. Mistakes and errors can not always be attributed to a particular individual or group of individuals within an organization. Due to a systemic failure or collective oversight, there are many situations where the perpetrator is best understood to be the organization itself. By definition, modern organizations are afforded political, economic and legal status. In some situations requiring apology, the organization itself assumes the role of social actor, and speaks as a participant in the drama (Hearit, 2010).

The Nature of the Problem

Leaders in an organizational context are frequently faced with opportunities to apologize. In some cases, the apology is issued by a leader to acknowledge his or her personal shortcomings or failures. In others, an apology is required on behalf of the organization as a whole. When attempting to discern situations in which apology is warranted, leaders are often confronted with a diverse set of opinions from various counselors and stakeholders. And, once a decision has been made to apologize, there are myriad perspectives on what should be said and omitted, and on what would constitute an appropriate apology. This divergence in opinion is driven by four complicating factors: (a) apology is difficult to define, (b) the effects of` apology are difficult to quantify, (c) organizational leaders must effectively serve a complex group of stakeholders, and (d) knowing when and how to apologize is difficult.

Apology is difficult to define. In a very general sense, apology is seen as “an utterance intended to remedy social disruption” (Scher & Darley, 1997, p. 128) and a speech-act designed to convince an audience that a particular event is not a fair representation of what the actor is like (Schlenker & Darby, 1981). Building on these consensus and common sense assumptions, many fields of study have generated insights into the practice of apology that can be useful to organizational leaders. These insights fall short, however, when attempting to define the act in a comprehensive way. While certain themes emerge from the best of these cross-disciplinary perspectives, they fall short of reaching a consensus or a comprehensive theory of apology (Slocum, Allan, & Allan, 2011).

One of the complicating factors in defining apology is the mode by which it is intended to be delivered. This *mode* is determined by the way the offender and the recipient are defined. Tavuchis (1991) offers the simplest framework to differentiate these modes. In some cases, apology is analyzed as a practice between two individuals, whereas in others, an individual is seen apologizing to a group. In other modes of apology, a group of many people collectively apologize to an individual. And, in still others, a group of many apologize to another group of many. The various scholars lending insight into the practice of apology tend to focus more heavily on one mode versus the others. Many of the more rigorous treatments of the practice come from the fields of psychology, psychiatry and religion. These fields tend to regard apology studies most usually from the perspective of the individual. Other disciplines, like Social Psychology, Sociology and Communications tend to engage with apology at the group and systemic levels.

Confounding the issue, organizational leaders are frequently called upon to understand and practice apology within the constraint of the legal definition of a corporation or other formally structured organizational entity. Apology guidance gleaned from the legal, communications and management literature tends to rely most heavily on this mode. While legally seen as an individual actor, a corporation in practice behaves quite differently than a person, and research suggests that people are generally far less forgiving of a collective/organization than they are when an offense committed is by an individual (Bisel & Messersmith, 2012).

Another of the most critical challenges in defining apology and measuring its effectiveness is linked to the etymology of the word. This involves apology as contrasted with the related concept of *apologia*. Both words derive from the Greek *apo* (away, off, absolve) and *logia* (speech), yet they are fundamentally different in implications, and often confused in practice. An apologia is a defensive act of speech (Tavuchis, 1991), offered to preserve or repair an image, identity or reputation without necessarily admitting fault (Smith, 2008). Hearit (2010) defines apologia as a "response to organizational criticism by offering a vigorous and compelling defense" (p. 4). An apologia proffers a persuasive narrative to a consuming public with the purpose of altering the interpretation of an alleged act. Some forms of apologia include: simple denial ("We didn't do it"), counterattacking by blaming the accuser, passing the blame ("It's not really our fault"), promising never to do it again, and refusing to speak at all ("Talk to our lawyers;" Hearit, 2010, pp. 15-17). By contrast, apology is generally expected to acknowledge the nature of the offense, express genuine remorse for it, and offer some form of reparations for the damages caused (Lazare, 2004).

Much of the dissonance and public outrage around the practice of apology can be connected to the blurring of the lines between these two related but distinct concepts. While the distinction is clear enough at a theoretical level, in practice, organizational leaders are faced with many subtle variations in the core definition of apology. These variations culminate in pseudo-apologetic speech acts that attempt to show concern for the victim but carefully avoid taking responsibility. Smith (2008) describes many varieties, including: statements of regret (*we regret that some of you were impacted*), pleas for amnesty (*forgive us if anything we said or did might have hurt anyone*) and even re-victimizing accusations (essentially, *we are sorry that you were* *thin-skinned enough to be hurt by what we did*). Non-apologies, especially when referred to as an apology, often exacerbate the issues and further entrench opposition.

For these reasons and others, the apology scholars who eschew simple definitions of the practice raise important cautionary points that must be considered thoughtfully (Griswold, 2007; Patel & Reinsch, 2003; Slocum et al., 2011). Nevertheless, certain key elements of the practice have been observed and identified by scholars from many disciplines. Derived from this constellation of insight, the working definition of *apology* for the purpose of this study will be: *a speech act intended to remedy an offense…* (Smith, 2005) *that includes both an acknowledgment of responsibility for an incident of wrongdoing and an expression of remorse* (Buttny, 1993).

The effects of apology are difficult to quantify. Connected to the challenges created by defining apology is the problem of quantifying its effects. Leaders offer apologies for a diverse set of misdeeds, and therefore hold differing expectations for what an effective apology might achieve. The various disciplines providing insight into the practice suggest a very broad range of potential desired effects. In some cases, an effective apology is expected to restore communication and affinity in a broken relationship. In a sense, this expectation is functionally transactional: expecting apology to lead to forgiveness. Existing research suggests that while frequently expected, the outcome of such a transaction is not reliable. Apology is neither a prerequisite for forgiveness to occur, nor is it a guarantee of receiving forgiveness (Slocum et al., 2011). Nevertheless, when offered in an interpersonal context, restoration of relational harmony is a often a defining attribute of effective apology.

In other cases, apology is intended to avoid the penalties or sanctions ensuing from the original infraction, including the avoidance of litigation and regulatory penalties. Within this perspective, an effective apology is offered as form of self-protection. An apology's effectiveness is judged from the perspective of minimized damage to self rather than on the needs or reactions of the offended party. Some organizational leaders, at the advice of counsel offer potentially costly pre-emptive apologies to avoid even more costly litigation (Patel & Reinsch, 2003). Another variation of this hermeneutic encompasses apologies offered as a component of settlement or under compulsion. The impact of these types of apologies are especially complicated to measure. While legal and regulatory concerns may be pre-emptively eliminated, other key stakeholders may become newly disenfranchised by a hollow, mandated pseudo-apology.

Some apologies are offered for the purpose of restoring trust, reputation and credibility of the offending party. In this regard, an effective apology has convinced the receiving audience that the event in question is not a fair representation of what the actor is actually like (Schlenker & Darby, 1981). Insights generated from the fields of crisis communications and public relations focus heavily on brand preservation or restoration as the defining attributes of a successful apology. This typically involves convincing both the offended party and other bystanders of the apologizer's sincerity, and re-casting the offense as an anomalous event outside of the apologizer's normal course of behavior (Smith, 2008).

These assumptions about brand preservation as an effect of apology create a strong set of pressures on organizational leaders, especially chief executives. From a shareholder's perspective, a corporate apology will ultimately be deemed effective if it restores the organization's reputation and preserves economic value. In some cases, this is gradually achieved through restoration of public confidence. In contrast, a pseudo-apology often further alienates a skeptical public, leading to the destruction of value. It has been suggested that in these situations of public, corporate apology, the standard for effectiveness is very high. For the public to be willing to receive a corporate apology as genuine, it must be somewhat painful to the organization, be free of excuses, probe the organizational values that permitted the offense, encourage feedback from the offended party, and lead to sustained behavior change (Seidman, 2014).

Organizational leaders serve a complex group of stakeholders. When a leader discerns that an apology is warranted, either within or on behalf of the organization, he or she is committing to action within a complex system comprised of a diverse group of stakeholders. Indeed, the foundation of modern organization is in many ways best understood as a value chain of inter-connected stakeholders (Schneider, 2002). These stakeholder groups frequently hold competing interests which must be delicately considered in order to make an apology effective, and not counter-productive (Hearit, 2010). Within the broad category of *public* stakeholders, organizational leaders must attend to the needs of several sub-groups. Enabling stakeholders, such as governmental agencies provide legal sanction and license to operate. These agencies are not frequently the intended recipient of an apology, but in some cases are one of the most critical stakeholders to consider. The communities in which the organization operates are also stakeholders, representing unique interests and concerns that must be considered by organizational leaders. A particularly complex example of this involves a pollution case in Ecuador by Texaco Corporation, now owned by Chevron. This 20-year overseas legal saga yielded a $19B legal judgment against Chevron. One half of the total value of the judgment was imposed by Ecuadorian courts for Chevron's unwillingness to publicly apologize for the pollution. Enforcement of the judgment on US soil case was recently dismissed in a US Federal Court due to significant evidence of corruption and tampering with the judicial process (Associated Press, 2013; Casselman & Gonzalez, 2009; Puig, 2013; Samson, 2009).

Additionally, public *commentators* such as media and industry analysts play a critical role by adding a layer of meaning to an apology. While generally conveyed with an air of empirical factualism, this added meaning greatly influences the overall reputation and credibility of an organization. These commentators bring unique biases and assumptions as they sit in judgment of organizational behavior. Leaders offering apology on behalf of large organizations must convey their messages with a keen understanding of these nuances, as they expose themselves and their interests to a high degree of vulnerability in this regard.

Another distinct group of stakeholders hold a normative interest in an organization's behavior, such as industry and professional organizations. These organizations maintain the prerogative to define industry standards and hold the ability to sanction or isolate member organizations based on conformity to rules and codes of ethics. Generally, these normative stakeholders are comprised of an organization's competitors. Leaders considering apology on behalf of their organization must assess impacts on their competitive positioning and market share, as well as their good-standing in relation to organizations on which they depend for legitimacy. This is especially true for the practice of apology when practiced in the context of a healthcare organization (Cohen, 2010).

The final broad category of stakeholders are those who perform necessary functions in the organization's value exchange (Hearit, 2010). These stakeholders form a type of *ecosystem* around the organization, and include an its employees, suppliers and consumers. Leaders considering apology must be aware of the potential of their words to motivate and engage their workforce. There is a significant evidence suggesting that a chief-executive's narrative creates the context for organizational performance, or lack thereof (Denning, 2007). At a more practical level, leaders considering apology must consider the direct financial costs associated with apology, and the impact this may have on employees and their families. Suppliers are another stakeholder group with interconnected interests, both in terms of co-mingled reputations and in terms of tangible contractual obligations. Finally, an organization's customer base is a deeply affected stakeholder group to be understood and acknowledged when considering the practice of apology. In commercial organizations, it is common to attempt to shape the language of apology to preserve customer loyalty and spending in the short-term, but leaders must also consider the long term credibility and trustworthiness of their consumer brands when considering apology. The heralded example of James Burke's direct public apology to consumers during the Tylenol tampering crisis in the 1980's illustrates this powerfully. As Kellerman (2006) describes, "Marketing experts had opined that the Tylenol brand would not survive – but they were wrong…If anything, both the company and the brand emerged from the crisis with their reputations enhanced" (p. 77).

Knowing when, and how to apologize is difficult. There are countless examples to suggest that organizational leaders too often choose to stonewall, sidestep and otherwise avoid apologizing in efforts to protect themselves and their constituents. In light of the aforementioned complexity, however, it should be acknowledged that even for the wisest of leaders, knowing when, and how to apologize can be difficult. In her 2006 Harvard Business Review article, Kellerman attempts to address this dilemma by offering a framework for apology. She suggests that leaders offer apologies for one of four possible reasons: (a) a personal mistake or wrongdoing, (b) an institutional failure, where one or more people in a group the leader oversees fails and the leader apologizes to restore credibility or group cohesion), (c) an intergroup failure, where one or more people in a group the leader oversees harms one or more people outside of the organization, and (d) a moral failure, a situation in which a leader experiences remorse over a personal ethical or moral violation, and apologizes because it is the right thing to do. Kellerman goes on to analyze situations in which apology leads to favorable versus unfavorable outcomes. In light of this analysis, she prescribes characteristics of a successful apology to include acknowledgment of the mistake or wrongdoing, acceptance of responsibility by the offender, an expression of regret, and a promise that the offense will never be repeated. Others have attempted to generate similar situational assessment tools, with specific, prescriptive advice to guide leaders (Hargie, Stapleton, & Tourish, 2010; Hearit, 2010; Roberts, 2007).

In their attempts to be useful, however, these tools still fall short. In some cases, this is due to the narrow perspective of the discipline from which they emerge, while in others the limitations arise from a narrow focus on one stakeholder group without acknowledging the interests of others. The best of the practical writing about apology answers relevant questions, such as:

1. What are the alternatives to apology in this instance?
2. What will apologizing accomplish?
3. What are the risks (if any) of apologizing publicly?
4. What are the risks/costs of not apologizing?

Any useful framework or heuristic for organizational leaders must account for these and others.

What is Needed

The complexity of organizational life warrants a unique body of research directed toward the practice of apology as a leadership behavior. The research must equip the organizational leader to understand and speak effectively to the diverse, conflicting needs of the organization’s stakeholders. This research must help the leader clarify his or her own value system and its impact on role. It should enable the leader to develop a long-term, systemic view of any crisis or misstep and the organization's warranted response. Certainly, the research must support organizational leaders in understanding the components of an authentic, effective apology and in discerning the circumstances in which it should be offered. Finally, in the most protracted situations of public conflict and crisis, the research must ultimately enable the organizational leader to de-escalate and reframe the illusion of intractably conflicting interests between its shareholders and its consumers.

Building a Model for Organizational Leaders

It should be stated that I, as researcher, hold several biases worth mentioning. The study that follows is born out of more than 20 years of personal interest in the subject of apology. Beginning my career as a consultant to congregations and member of the clergy, I first contemplated writing on the subject through a practical, pastoral lens. I have seen relationships transformed by genuine, heartfelt apologies. In this way, I am sympathetic to the perspectives that would seek to elevate the practice of apology beyond a mere speech act into a potential tool for human transformation.

My career has evolved considerably since then. My professional pursuits now focus primarily on corporate organizational life. And, as a consumer of management literature, my dissatisfaction with its mercilessly pragmatic approaches to apology must also be acknowledged. Each time I have seen a new treatment or exploration of the topic released, I have consumed it voraciously, and left it at least mildly dissatisfied. At various points I have been both the leader called upon to apologize, and a member of most of the stakeholder groups described previously. None of these situations have left me convinced that simple, linear, multi-step models are sufficient to equip executives to employ apology in their practice of organizational leadership.

At this point in my professional and academic career, my appreciation of the powerful nature of a well-executed apology is combined with a dissatisfaction at the lack of comprehensiveness of its treatment in management literature. This is not to suggest that the practice has not been examined thoughtfully, merely that it has not been explored in a broad enough manner to be of service to the field of organizational management. This study, now also informed by many years of organizational consulting in a corporate context, recognizes and embraces the complexity of the act of apology, and the impact this practice can have on a wide array of stakeholders.

The practice of apology has indeed been explored by scholars in many academic disciplines. Each of these paths of inquiry is illuminating yet incomplete; constrained by the assumptions and/or values of the discipline itself. A wise outdoorsman once taught me to consult several maps of any large tract of wilderness I planned to traverse. He encouraged me to note the subtle differences in each, belying the mapmaker's assumptions and point of view. Indeed, some maps focus on the contours of the land, others focus on man-made structures and roadways, while others exaggerate the significance of footpaths and trails. When several maps are considered together, the hiker is most effectively prepared to interpret their surroundings in actual practice. With that metaphor in mind, this study is intentionally integrative. It is a broad inquiry into the diverse literatures with insight into the practice of apology, and will answer the question, *How might the existing literatures on apology be examined, integrated and refocused to apply specifically to leaders operating within an organizational context*?

The work then, of this study, is to glean meaningful insights and array them within a framework that will be both additive to the field of organizational management and practically useful to leaders. Chapter 2 of the study surveys the bodies of literature to be considered as primary sources of data. Chapter 3 provides an overview of the research methods that will be employed and the conceptual framework that will be used to categorize and interpret the literatures. Chapter 4 presents an analysis of the literature and findings, and Chapter 5 will integrate these findings into a model designed to support organizational leaders facing opportunity to apologize.

There are several key terms used throughout this study, in addition to apology, that require definition. For the purposes of this study, the words *literatures* and *approaches* are used interchangeably to refer to the discreet groups of written material being analyzed. *Data* represents both the sources of literature as well as the key themes and ideas gleaned from the research. And finally, *map* is used metaphorically to describe an integrative framework for categorizing and analyzing the data for the purposes of this study.

Chapter 2: A Review of the Apology Literature

Surveying the Terrain

To effectively answer the question, *How might the existing literatures on apology be examined, integrated and refocused to apply specifically to leaders operating within an organizational context?* the literature must be surveyed and organized. The integrative nature of this particular study requires a broad examination of several available bodies of literature relating to the subject of apology. In many ways, the review of this literature is the heart of the study. This synthesis of the literature into actionable knowledge requires a disciplined approach. A detailed description of the research methods and framework used to accomplish this is provided in Chapter 3.

To be consistent with the goals of this study, the *terrain* of the apology literature must be surveyed thoughtfully. To make the initial review manageable, the literature must be organized in some way. It is tempting to use academic disciplines as the primary organizing structures, and yet, cleanly articulating the boundaries of academic disciplines is a complex endeavor (Biglan, 1973; W. Jones, 2011). To account for critical differentiation in this study, the literature has been organized into *approaches*, each of which is loosely bounded by a set of common assumptions and perspectives.

In some cases, these approaches parallel academic disciplines, whereas in others academic distinctions have been merged or pared to serve the unique purpose of the study. The categorization of a particular study to one of these groupings is achieved through the use of one of several criteria: (a) the nature and audience of the publication, (b) the author's affiliation, and (c) the author's ultimate academic credential, in that order.

Due to the distinctness of each of these approaches, a variety of different forms of literature has been consulted. When possible, the greatest weight has been given to empirical research and meta-analyses of empirical studies. This is more feasible with certain approaches than it is in others. Meaningful insights are also drawn from news sources documenting events that have transpired within the public sphere, and primarily when coupled with academic commentary on these events. Public statutes and case law also contribute to the array of writings on the subject of apology, especially in situations where legal exposure is being considered in risk mitigation. Finally, due to the deeply personal and humanistic nature of the topic, it is important to consider some of the far-reaching philosophical treatises that have been offered on the subject. As in any study, there are also literatures that have been excluded because they are beyond the scope, tangential to the stated purpose of the study, or are pseudo-academic in nature.

Using the distinctions previously mentioned, the literature examined in this study is sorted into five approaches to allow for analysis. Those approaches are: *philosophy and theology*, *the social sciences*, *communications and public relations*, *law*, and *organization management* (see Figure 1).

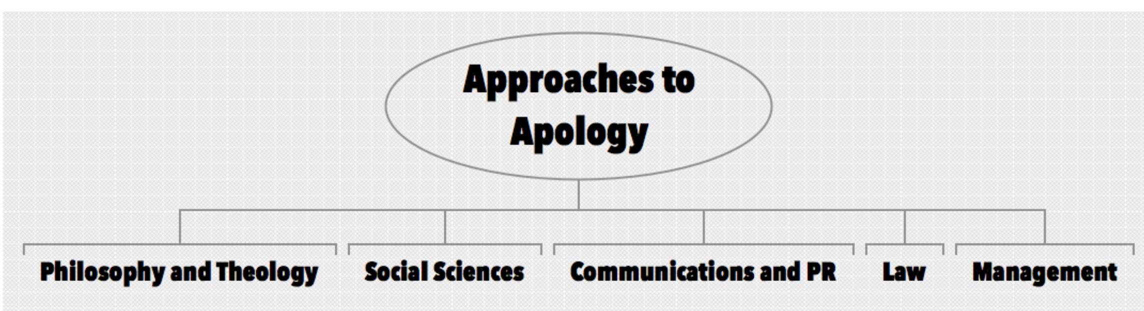

Figure 1. Approaches to apology.

The literature of philosophy and theology. Each of the disciplines examined in this study brings a unique perspective to a peculiar and remarkable human practice. Yet, surprisingly, philosophical inquiries are ultimately at the core of much of the research examining the practice of apology (Griswold, 2007; Lazare, 2004; Taft, 2000, 2005). Indeed, the sum of all writers and researchers who have explored the practice of apology have much in common with each other at this level. This commonality is generally exposed in the philosophical questions and musings giving rise to the research in the first place. And, for the purposes of this study, the philosophical questions raised by theologians are considered alongside other non-theological philosophical approaches.

The philosophical literature on the subject of apology is broad, exploring the evolution of the practice throughout much of recorded human history (Hauerwas, 1985; L. Jones, 1995). Philosophers and theologians are likely to describe the purpose of apology in moralistic terms, such as making moral amends (Golding, 1984) and validating the moral status of the victim (Govier, 2002). The philosophical and theological literature examined in this study asks questions like: Why do people apologize? What is the history and meaning of this practice (Smith, 2005, 2008)? What moral imperatives and principles relate to the practice of apology (Griswold, 2007; Hauerwas, 2001; L. Jones, 1995)? And, are proxy apologies for historical deeds viable and plausible, in a morally accountable manner (Levy, 2002)?

Of particular interest to philosophers is the etymology of the word itself. As previously mentioned, the word is derived from the Greek *apologia*, which originally conveyed a robust, justificatory defense of one's actions through vigorous argumentation. This rigorous defense is notably conveyed into Western Civilization through Plato's *Apology of Socrates,* his literary rendering of Socrates' speech in 399 B.C. in defense against charges of corrupting the youth of Athens (Goldman, 2009). The concept of apologetics – a pronounced defense of religious doctrine – is related to this meaning of the word (Lewis, 1952). The practice of apology is distinctly different. In current use, *apologia* can practically be understood as a near opposite to *apology* (Smith, 2008). Much of the literature conveys this philosophical and practical distinction by defining a genuine apology in contrast to a non-apology. The majority of non-apology speech act categorizations identify with the defensive practice of apologia, regardless of the discipline from which they emerge (Hodgins, 2003; Kampf, 2009; Taft, 2000, 2005).

Christian theology has had a unique influence on the practice of apology in Western culture, and accounts for at least some of the evolution away from a posture of defense of actions toward one of restoration of relationship (L. Jones, 1995). Within Christian teaching, the concept of apology is embedded in the larger construct of reconciliation. Reconciliation is seen as a mandate for life within the Christian community, and is characterized by the moral imperative to proactively correct wrongdoings and restore peaceful relations (Hauerwas, 2001). Certain theological sources will be considered to fully apprehend the moral dimensions of this peacemaking ethic within communal relationships, and its impact on the practice of apology.

The literature of the social sciences. Apology is a phenomenon to be primarily understood within the context of human interaction and relationships. In academic disciplines, the behavioral sciences, such as psychology and social psychology, explore the relationships within and between actors in a human system. The classic social sciences, such as anthropology, sociology, economics and the like, lead inquiries into the nature of the system itself. If one were to embrace to the purest definitions of social and behavioral sciences, virtually all of the literature considered within this study would be claimed by these broad disciplines. To support the study's goal of organizing and synthesizing information, however, it is necessary to operate with a finer degree of focus.

First, the social and behavioral sciences will be aggregated and referred to collectively as social science. Additionally, a few key disciplines within the social sciences are considered separately. These are communications, law, and organizational management. Other traditional social science disciplines, as will be explained, have been excluded. With these clarifications, this study has focused especially on treatments of apology from the fields of psychology, social psychology, sociology and psychiatry, and regards them collectively as *social science*.

The social science literature examined in this study examines apology as a social tool, through the lens of human needs and human social systemic impacts (Scher & Darley, 1997; Schlenker & Darby, 1981). As in other disciplines, there is not a consistently accepted comprehensive theory of apology (Slocum et al., 2011). Most operating definitions, however, contain common elements. Early social science work on apology is influenced by Goffman's idea of a *bad-self* and a *good-self* differentiated for the purpose of convincing the audience that the event is not a fair representation of the individual's true nature (Goffman, 1971; Schlenker & Darby, 1981).

These scholars often probe deeper than the pragmatic dimensions of apology, examining the practice as connected to fundamental human needs. As the psychiatrist Aaron Lazare (2004) observes, "apologies have the power to heal humiliations and grudges, remove the desire for vengeance, and generate forgiveness…and relive the guilt and shame that can grip the mind with a persistence and tenacity that are hard to ignore" (p. 1). Similarly, Nicholas Tavuchis (1991), the sociologist, describes this relatively simple human behavior as having "paradoxical and talismanic qualities" (p. 5) for human relationships.

Social scientists grapple with the question of the function of apology in a social system. The offender-oriented goal of obtaining forgiveness or release from guilt is seen as a primary purpose for the practice (Eaton, Struthers, & Santelli, 2006; Exline, Deshea, & Holeman, 2007; Slocum et al., 2011; Struthers, Eaton, Santelli, Uchiyama, & Shirvani, 2008). This focus has been expanded to include the reduction of anger, diminished desire for retaliation, and reduced aggression on the part of the victim (Baumeister, Stillwell, & Wotman, 1990; Ohbuchi, Kameda, & Agarie, 1989; Zechmeister, Garcia, Romero, & Vas, 2004). Other definitions broaden to include meeting the psychological needs of the offended party (Lazare, 2004), although studies have recently demonstrated that victims tend to overestimate the positive impact of receiving an apology (De Cremer, Pillutla, & Folmer, 2011).

Empirical studies in the social sciences are particularly focused on variables like voluntariness vs. coercion in apology effectiveness (Jehle, Miller, Kemmelmeier, & Maskaly, 2012; Risen & Gilovich, 2007), whether or not the offense was intentional (Struthers et al., 2008), timing of the apology (Frantz & Bennigson, 2005), and post-apology behavioral consistency (Hui, Lau, Tsang, & Pak, 2011).

The literature of communications and public relations. The field of communications and public relations offers one of the most robust sources of literature engaging with the practice of apology. Emerging from academic roots within the social sciences, this approach regards modern organization as a social actor, and evaluates the practice of apology within this frame (Bisel & Messersmith, 2012; Edwards, 2008; Hearit, 2010). In contrast to philosophy and the social sciences, this literature is quite pragmatic in nature. This approach is focused on understanding the interaction between the organization and the larger social system in which it operates (Coombs, 2007; Lee, 2012).

The goal of apology is largely seen as a means of restoring the organization's legitimacy by acknowledging behaviors that are understood to be incongruent with the values of the system, through maximizing reputational protection (Coombs & Holladay, 2008). These scholars focus research energy on questions, such as: When is an apology warranted, and when should one be avoided (Hearit, 1994, 1997)? What impact will an apology have on an entity's perceived credibility (Goei, 2007; Hearit, 2010)? What outcomes are hoped to be achieved through the practice of apology (Coombs, 2007; Goei, 2007; Hearit, 2010)?

Seeing reputational protection as the primary goal of apology, most scholars within this approach regard the practice as but one option in a larger array of image repair strategies (Benoit, 1997; Benoit & Drew, 1997; Blaney, Benoit, & Brazeal, 2002) Apology is generally seen as the strategy exposing the organization to the highest degree of reputational risk, through admission of wrongdoing (Hearit, 2010). To this end, the apology literature within the field of communications explores viable alternatives to apology that might achieve the same goals. These alternatives range on a spectrum from vigorously defensive, denial oriented speech acts to conciliatory, empathetic statements designed to approach but fall just short of apologizing (Benoit & Drew, 1997; Coombs & Holladay, 2008; Hearit, 2010).

This literature provides a foundation for empirical studies seeking to understand the effect of a particular combination of words and sentiments on an particular intended audience (Bisel & Messersmith, 2012; Lee, 2012). There are many variables that can be adjusted to measure the effect of this formulaic idea of apology, but the primary questions for exploration often involve (a) degree of acknowledgement of wrongdoing, (b) degree of accountability assumed, (c) the perceived sincerity and authenticity of the speaker as an agent of the organization, and (d) the degree to which the organization is willing to make reparations for the wrongdoing.

Within the literature on communications and public relations, a significant amount of attention is paid to apology by scholars within the field of crisis communication management (Coombs, 2007; Hearit, 1994, 1996, 1997; Hearit & Brown, 2004) It should not be surprising to find such a robust, pragmatic treatment of the subject in a field where the central question is whether, and how, an organization should publicly apologize. The frameworks offered within this literature differentiate elements of organizational brand, nature of crisis, multiple stakeholder reactions and consequences of silence. The goal of this body of literature is to enable organization leaders to develop a strategy that either includes or excludes apology (Coombs, 2007). While the crisis communication literature is in many ways the least academically rigorous sub-discipline to be considered within this study, it is frequently consulted by organizational leaders when contemplating apology, and for that reason, must be fully understood.

The literature of the law. This study examines literature surrounding the practice of apology produced from within the legal field. While the legal literature brings a unique and distinct perspective to apology, many of the questions raised from the legal approaches share the humanistic perspectives with those previously mentioned. Indeed, some of the most respected legal scholars on the subject of apology default to philosophical language when describing it (Petrucci, 2002; Taft, 2000).

The legal research on the practice of apology is generally focused on the self-perpetuating system of norms, rules and mandates designed to sanction appropriate behavior within a larger social system (Patel & Reinsch, 2003; Taft, 2005). Like the communications and public relations literature, legal writings are focused on organizational risk and exposure. While the public relations discipline considers reputational risk, however, legal scholars directly engage with apology through the specific lenses of legal and financial risk (Ho & Liu, 2011).

One of the pivotal issues within this topic revolves around the legal admissibility of apology as incriminating evidence against the apologizer (Patel & Reinsch, 2003; Van Dusen, 2008). Whereas apologies become more effective with a higher degree of specificity and personal accountability, these very elements have the potential to create legal, even criminal, challenges for the apologizer (Taft, 2000). The legal literature raises the important question of how the practice of apology be protected from legal sanction to ensure benefit to society. To this end, many states have created provisions within their legal codes to encourage the practice of apology in certain circumstances, and to protect it from admissibility (California, 2001; Massachusetts, 2001).

The legal field also raises a unique set of questions about the practice of apology in relation to criminal justice proceedings (Petrucci, 2002). While these questions are only peripherally related to the practice of apology within the organizational context, they illuminate some important issues. The field of restorative justice explores apology from the vantage point of the benefit that both victims and offenders gain from the practice (Daly & Immarigeon, 1998), encouraging apology as part of legal settlements. The related field of therapeutic jurisprudence introduces the psychological well-being of both the victims and the offenders of criminal acts as variables to be evaluated when considering apology (Wexler, 1993, 1998a, 1998b). Considering these two unique dimensions of criminal justice raises the idea that effective apology has the ability to influence both the material and the symbolic dimensions of restoration (Scheff, 1998). When construed in this way, the practice of apology often induces a productive, restorative dimension of shame as the offender re-engages in society (Makkai & Braithwaite, 1994).

The literature of organizational management. The field of organizational management has also produced a body of literature related to the practice of apology. Nested within the social sciences, management literature views the organization as a theoretical social actor within a larger system, and generates management insights related to the practice of apology (Hargie et al., 2010). As stated earlier, this study is offered to be both additive to, and critical of this literature. The work is less cohesive than that produced by other approaches, and is markedly more pragmatic. These insights are typically intended to offer guidance to those responsible for leading and managing organizations, with a view toward overall effectiveness and productivity. Much of the management literature relating to apology is offered in terms of *How-to's* and *Do's and Don'ts* (Blanchard, 2003; Kiger, 2004; Weeks, 2003).

The best of the management literature raises important practical questions, such as: When is an organization itself responsible for the wrongdoing of one of its actors? Who are an organization's stakeholders, and how will they be affected by an apology? What impact will apology, or failure to apologize, have on public perception of an organization's credibility? In cases of wrongdoing, who should apologize on behalf of an organization (Kampf, 2009; Leape, 2012; Roberts, 2007)? How is an effective apology measured in terms of organizational performance? And, why are some leaders better at apologizing than others (Tucker, Turner, Barling, Reid, & Elving, 2006)?

One area of management literature more well-developed than any other relates to the practice of apology in a healthcare context. Healthcare management scholars have been wrestling with the practice of apology for decades. The literature has a unique dual focus. On the one hand, this literature is acutely focused on the legal issues of risk, exposure and liability for healthcare professionals and institutions (Cohen, 2010; Leape, 2012; Roberts, 2007). At the same time, the healthcare management literature on apology also acknowledges the emotional and psychological dimensions of healing as connected to responsible organizational behavior (Lazare, 2004; Taft, 2005).

Leadership studies, as a sub-set of the management literature, has adopted a unique focus on the practice of apology in an organizational context. This is related to the prevailing assumption that in cases of organizational wrongdoing, it is the responsibility of the Chief Executive to apologize on its behalf (Leape, 2012). This has been especially true in situations where organizational failures have had wide-reaching impact on the larger system in which they operate, such as the global financial crisis from 2009-2012 (Hargie et al., 2010). While this belief is not universally held (Roberts, 2007), it has advanced an inquiry into the habits, practices and traits of leaders who are most effective when apologizing on behalf of their organizations. Transformational leadership scholars, in particular, have identified apology as a practice correlated to effective organizational leadership (Tucker et al., 2006).

Literatures excluded. As in any study, certain data must be excluded due to practical constraints of scope and scale, and relevance to the primary research questions. In this study, several distinct related bodies of literature have been excluded in spite of their interesting contributions to the overall dialogue on the nature of the practice of apology. Cross-cultural studies and anthropology bring fascinating insights to a discussion of apology, but broaden the scope significantly beyond the organizational context at the heart of this study. A particularly fine example of this work explores the nature of apology in national reconciliation, relative to crimes against aboriginal peoples in Australia (Murphy, 2011). Other compelling explorations of the role of apology in national reconciliation are drawn from the Truth and Reconciliation Commissions in South Africa (Allan & Allan, 2000; Chapman, 2007) and Rwanda (RimÈ, Kanyangara, Yzerbyt, & Paez, 2011). Notwithstanding this exception, many of the sources considered in this study draw from this cross-cultural work, and therefore less direct evidence still remains (Eaton et al., 2006; Edwards, 2008). As many modern organizations take on a more distinctly global character, future treatments of this research may benefit from directly and specifically examining the practice of apology through this cross-cultural lens.

Literature from the practice areas of mediation and alternative dispute resolution has also been generally excluded, for two reasons. This literature, while occasionally addressing the topic of apology, typically considers it within the context of a quasi-legal process with a specific, pre-determined purpose or goal in mind, namely the avoidance of litigation (Allred, 2000). Additionally, when this literature does consider apology from a broader perspective, it tends to rely on the bodies of knowledge that have been already included in this study, especially the restorative justice material cited among the legal literature (Daly & Immarigeon, 1998; Petrucci, 2002).

Another distinct body of literature excluded is generated by the study of political science and foreign policy. While the similarities to the questions posed by this research are meaningful (Cunningham, 1999), expanding the exploration to the level of nation-state adds a degree of complexity that ultimately obscures the central focus of this study on organizations (Chang, 2009; Pecastaing, 2013).

Additionally, the many popular press self-help and *how-to* writings on the practice of apology are being excluded. Due to the paucity of rigorous management research on the practice of apology, many organizational leaders may see this self-help literature as one of their few resources. In some cases, this material is rich and deeply thought-out (Engel, 2002), while in others it is reasonably shallow and ungrounded (Blanchard, 2003). While meaningful insights could be gained from a separate critique of this literature as a whole, it is beyond the scope of this study.

Finally, the related but distinct idea of forgiveness is excluded from this study as an independent phenomenon. Forgiveness is closely related to almost all inquiries into the practice of apology, especially philosophy and theology (Bauman, 2008; L. Jones, 1995). The forgiveness literature is referenced as appropriate when evaluating the purpose and goals of the practice. Unique research into the concept of forgiveness is plentiful (Fleischacker & Feigelson, 2007; Griswold, 2007; Levy, 2002), but adds a dimension of complexity beyond the scope of this research. As many have noted, it is far easier to describe what forgiveness is not, than what forgiveness is (Griswold, 2007).

Creating the Map

Each of these five bodies of literature offers unique perspectives and insights into the nature of the practice of apology. As with any complex phenomenon, categorizing, grouping and generalizing these insights requires a clear process and a degree of rigor. To that end, Chapter 3 will discuss a research design and methodology to organize the insights from literatures into a useful, actionable framework for leaders within a modern, organizational context.

Chapter 3: Methodology—A Meta-Analysis of Apology Literature

Study Design

As described in Chapters 1 and 2, the data analyzed within this study are bodies of literature found in unique schools of thought and perspectives on the topic. The purpose of this study is to organize the findings from these approaches into a meta-analysis that can support a reliable, actionable framework which can be applied to the practice of apology. Each body of literature is formed around discreet assumptions and core values, and therefore offers unique insight to address the research question; *How might the existing literatures on apology be examined, integrated and refocused to apply specifically to leaders operating within an organizational context?*

These diverse literatures on the subject of apology provide multi-faceted portrayals of a unique human practice. A rich array of qualitative data of this nature provides an opportunity to generate new frameworks, derive patterns and explanations, and explore deeper meaning (Miles & Huberman, 1994). There are several accepted methods employed to analyze qualitative data of this nature. Each method follows a similar pattern to derive and categorize new insights. In general, qualitative research begins with an idea, or paradigm, to be explored or examined a starting point for the process of research (Guba, 1990). Then, a research process is designed, providing a means for organizing and preparing data, and scanning it to list general ideas for framing the study. This process is supported by philosophical and theoretical frameworks congruent with the perspective of the researcher and the nature of the question being explored (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). In the methodological dimensions of qualitative research, a detailed coding process is used to identify themes for analysis. Researchers ultimately map the ways that these themes will be presented in narrative form, and finally interpretation is offered to ascribe meaning to the data (Creswell, 2003).

Given the nature of this study, the interpretive lens of both the researcher and the individual represent will be a critical element in both categorizing the data and constructing a narrative presentation of the findings (Creswell, 2013). For this reason a *qualitative content analysis* design has been selected. This type of study is especially effective for searching out underlying themes in the materials being analyzed. Methodologically speaking, the process through which the themes are extracted is less rigid and left implicit to some degree, based on the research question and the orientation of the researcher (Bryman & Bell, 2003).

Elements of qualitative content analysis. While flexible enough to be useful in a study of this nature, content analysis has developed over several decades as a systematic and objective means for understanding and describing phenomena (Krippendorff, 1980). It allows the researcher to test theoretical questions and apply rigor to the distillation of diverse data sources into manageable categories (Cavanagh, 1997). Content analysis designs allow an empirical, methodological and controlled approach to the analysis of texts within and in light of their original context of communication. Using established analytical rules and models, it allows meaning to emerge from the research process without the type of pre-emptive quantification that might obscure new insights (Mayring, 2000). Ultimately, these designs are of highest value to a researcher in need of a methodology that is systematic, but not rigid (Altheide, 1987).

Content analysis methods have been differentiated into deductive and inductive approaches, based on the nature of the research question. Deductive content analysis approaches are most useful when the researcher intends to test an existing theory. Whereas, inductive approaches are most valuable in cases where there are no previous studies, or when a comprehensive treatment of the phenomenon is lacking altogether (Elo & Kyngäs, 2008). While these two approaches to categorization are important to understand, in practice they tend to serve more as a spectrum, with few examples of either extreme in actual use (Kuckartz, 2014). Nevertheless, the primarily inductive approaches allow for an evolving definition of categories as one of the outputs of the research process. Tentative categories for meaning-making emerge as the literature is reviewed, and those categories are revised through a continual feedback loop throughout the study. Ultimately, the categories are reduced and validated to frame a narrative portrayal of the data (Mayring, 2000). This generally inductive, qualitative approach to research is both reflexive and recursive, allowing for a process of constant discovery and comparison (Altheide, 1987; Altheide & Schneider, 2013).

Kuckartz (2014) further differentiates qualitative content analysis into three methods, based on the way categorization of the information is achieved. These three approaches should not be understood as hierarchical in terms of complexity or rigor, but rather matched to the specific nature of the research question. Thematic textual analysis is most useful when intending to describe the object of analysis in comprehensive detail. In contrast, evaluative textual analysis is useful when testing an existing theory or construct. Type-building approaches to textual analysis are focused on organizing the data by revealing multi-dimensional patterns and typologies to illuminate a complex subject or field. Type-building usually builds on existing studies of a thematic or evaluative nature (Kuckartz, 2014). Due to the comprehensiveness of the literature being reviewed for this study, a slightly modified thematic approach to content analysis has been chosen as most appropriate.

Content analysis process. The thematic qualitative content analysis approach employed in this study follows a standard, three-phase process of preparation, organizing and reporting

(Elo & Kyngäs, 2008). The preparation phase, outlined subsequently, begins with the identification of various bodies of literature as primary units of analysis. The organizing phase, described subsequently and summarized in Chapter 4, applies an emerging framework to the data being analyzed. This organizing involved a continuous cycle of coding, grouping, categorizing findings and elevating them to a level of abstraction. Chapter 5 builds a coherent model of apology that is relevant to organizational management literature and can be implemented within the practice of organizational management.

Building a Framework to Understand the Practice of Apology

Successful completion of a study of this scope and breadth requires grounding in a methodology flexible enough to allow for the ongoing evolution of a conceptual framework. As previously described, an inductive approach to qualitative content analysis provides both the grounding and the flexibility. Indeed, within qualitative approaches, the conceptual framework is of unique and special interest to the nature of the research itself. To that end, a draft framework must be proposed, following the preparation phase, as a starting point for inquiry. Kuckartz (2014) describes this type of framework as a *profile matrix.* This tool allows the researcher to select, separate and abstract the data without losing sight of the context (Kuckartz, 2014). After completing the analysis, this same framework must be re-evaluated for reliability and comprehensiveness prior to the conclusion of the study (Mayring, 2000). The framework to be used in analysis was derived from a preliminary scan of the literature, and will be presented briefly here in Table 1. This framework has been populated and expanded as insights were assembled into a viable model, which is presented in Chapter 4.

Table 1

A Draft Framework for Categorizing Data

	Philosophy & Theology	Social Sciences	Communications & Public Relations	Law	Organizational Management
Definition of Apology					
Purpose or Function					
Modes of Apology					
Process or Steps					
Alternatives to Apology					

Definition of apology. A preliminary scan of the bodies of literature to be consulted within this study paid careful attention to the definition of apology. The stated definition of apology within any of these unique disciplines proved critical, and worthy of thoughtful examination. The nuances considered in creating this definition vary based on the assumptions, interests and values of the particular discipline in question. In some cases, the definition of apology is even more thoughtfully described through comparison to other speech acts deemed to be *non-apologies*. These non-apology characterizations also received careful consideration.

Purpose or function of apology. The intended purpose or function of apology is integrally related to the way the practice is defined within any given discipline. In some disciplines, apology is intended to be humanistic and to heal, restore or repair relationships. In others, apology is intended to minimize risk and exposure. In still others, the practice of apology is seen as a tactic to be considered in a larger engagement with a complex group of stakeholders. Without understanding this range of differing purposes, the value of each unique discipline cannot be fully appreciated. This functional lens on the practice ultimately establishes the foundation for any subsequent evaluation of the effectiveness of an apology. In addition, this purpose and function of a line of inquiry informed the researcher's decision making process in choosing whether or not to pursue it in the first place.

Modes of apology. The way an apology is delivered is a defining characteristic of the practice. Unique insights into mode of apology are provided by each of the bodies of literature being examined. These insights on modality encompass two dimensions of insight. First, while apology can be simply understood throughout human history to be an interaction between an *offender* and the *offended*, the actual and conceptual status of these parties can become quite complex. The nature and degree of this complexity is rooted in the unique perspectives, values and assumptions of each discipline being considered. The simplest taxonomy starts with the possibility of single and plural actors. This allows for an interpersonal apology from one person to another individual, as well as an apology from one person to a collective. Similarly, a collective may apologize to an individual or to another collective (Tavuchis, 1991). For the purposes of this study, this simple taxonomy has been expanded by the author to incorporate an *abstract-collective* category to discreetly examine the role of organization as a social actor (see Table 2). This re-framing allowed the category *many* to be reserved for situations where a specific, identifiable group of individuals constitute the actor.

A secondary consideration related to the mode of apology is the mechanism through which the apology is delivered. Apologies can be delivered through synchronous methods (face to face and in person, through telephone calls and broadcasts) and asynchronous methods (through written or recorded means). Each of the disciplines considered renders a degree of judgment as to the validity and efficacy of an apology by evaluating the appropriateness of the mechanism. These judgments of appropriateness are grounded in the unique values, assumptions and interests represented by the discipline itself.

Table 2

Modes of Apology

	One	Many	Abstract Collective
One	One to one	One to many	One to abstract collective
Many	Many to one	Many to many	Many to abstract collective
Abstract Collective	Abstract collective to one	Abstract collective to many	Abstract collective to abstract collective

Note. Author’s own work, expanded from the taxonomy proposed in *Mea Culpa: A Sociology of Apology and Reconciliation* (p. 48), by N. Tavuchis, 1991, Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press. Copyright 1991 by the author.

Process or steps in apologizing. Each of the disciplines examined explores apology as a process with certain elemental, dependent, steps required to fully accomplish the act of apology. The particular process components or steps vary based on the way apology is defined, and the grounding assumptions of the discipline. The underlying questions posed by each discipline contribute to the definition of these steps. The questions include: What is the nature of the offense that has been committed? Has culpability been established? Who is responsible? Who is the victim/offended party? What moral principle, legal precept or shared value has been violated? How should the apology be delivered? Who, in addition to the offended party, will be affected by the performance of the apology? And, what reparations must be achieved for the apology to be considered sincere? The way these questions are answered generally determines the minimum critical threshold for a speech act to be considered an apology. The omission of one or more of these considerations generally constitutes a *non-apology* event, which most disciplines describe as either a failed apology, or a legitimate alternative to an apology.

Alternatives to apology. Each body of literature examined for the purpose of this study identifies alternatives to the practice of apology. In some cases, these alternatives are defined only in a pejorative sense. These inferior non-apologies are described as a category of speech act that attempt to relieve guilt, restore relationship or repair damage, but fail to do so. This failure is usually connected to the omission of one or more process steps or definitional attributes as defined previously.

In other cases, alternatives to the practice of apology are offered as viable strategic alternatives to be evaluated prior to choosing apology. The process of weighing alternatives takes at least a partially utilitarian approach to the practice of apology, as they are intended for evaluation in light of the specific goals of the offending party. In addition to outcome goals, there are other factors offered for consideration when weighing alternatives. These include whether or not the offending party is willing to acknowledge wrongdoing, and the perceived financial costs of silence. The simplest of these alternatives of course, is to say nothing at all. Other alternatives include forms of public denial and counterattacking, designed to avoid responsibility and invalidate the claims of the accuser. In other cases, alternatives to apology include justifications and defensive strategies, commonly regarded as apologia (Smith, 2008). A final, and more commonly employed category of apology alternatives can be regarded as conciliatory statements. These statements are designed to convey empathy, remorse and even genuine sorrow that a particular event has occurred, but fall short of apologizing by carefully omitting acknowledgement of wrongdoing or culpability (Hearit, 1994).

Managing the Data

There are various methods and tools available to simplify and standardize the research process while employing qualitative content analysis. Included among these are various software tools for coding and archiving large quantities of data (Creswell, 2013; Kuckartz, 2014). These tools have been demonstrated to be most useful when analyzing data at the level of *keywords* and phrases, rather than at the level of complete documents and bodies of research.

With this in mind, a combination of tools were used to categorize and actively sort the data. First, all data sources were catalogued within the *Endnote* software platform for sorting and easy citation within the text of the study. Second, the relevant passages from each document considered were captured on index cards. Each card contained four pieces of information: (a) the author's name and publication year, (b) the approach from Chapter 2 to which the document has been assigned, (c) the comment, idea or quotation to be archived, and (d) the relevant category assigned from the conceptual framework (described in the following section). Finally, the comments, ideas and quotations were aggregated into a *literature map* for each of the five approaches being examined, an example of which is provided subsequently in Tables 3 and 4, *Apology: Legal Literature Map* (the literature maps for the remaining four approaches are included in Appendix A.) To complete the analysis of data in Chapter 4, a mind-mapping software tool was be used to integrate the approaches, and a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet, was used create a harmony of the 11 apology process models.

Table 3

Apology: Legal Literature Map, Seminal Thinkers

Year	Name
1991+	Wexler, D.B. (On role of apology in Therapeutic Jurisprudence)
2002	Petrucci, *Apology in the criminal justice setting*
2000 2005	Taft: *Apology Subverted: The Commodification of Apology* and *Apology and Medical Mistake: Opportunity or Foil?*
2003	Patel & Reinsch, *Companies can Apologize*

Table 4

Apology: Legal Literature Map

Area of Study	Idea	Source(s)
Key Themes	Apology does not necessarily constitute legal liability	Hearit (2006)
	Apology Safe Harbor: "Statements, writings or benevolent gestures expressing sympathy or a general sense of benevolence relating to the pain, suffering, or death of a person involved in an accident and made to such person or to the family of such person shall be inadmissible…"	Mass Annotated Laws Ch. 233, Sec 23D, (2001)
	Apology Safe Harbor: "The portion of statements, writings, or benevolent gestures expressing sympathy or a general sense of benevolence relating to the pain, suffering or death of a person involved in an accident and made to that person or to the family of that person shall be inadmissible as evidence of an admission of liability in a civil action. A statement of fault, however, which is part of, or in addition to, any of the above shall not be inadmissible pursuant to this section"	California Evidence Code Section 1160 (2001)
	Safe Harbor: states vary on provisions regarding legal liability and admissibility of apology	Van Dusen (2006)
	Legal liability: folklore about legal consequences of apology is oversimplified. Most evidence suggests that apology has equal or greater ability to strengthen the apologist's legal strategy.	Patel & Reinsch (2003)

(continued)

Area of Study	Idea	Source(s)
	Liability (confounded by conflicting goals of legal system): a) court wants to provide both parties with a fair trial (therefore, admit all relevant evidence) b) court is meant to be a last resort, not default option (jammed dockets, costly nature of litigation); must support ADR.	Patel & Reinsch (2003)
	Successful apology: 1) communicates emotion 2) face to face interaction 3) manages timing (neither waiting too long, nor preemptively apologizing too soon)	Petrucci (2002)
	Corporate apology (legal factors to consider): • Timing (proximity to event) • Medium (written v. spoken, lawyer v. officer of org) • Elements (remorse, facts, damage, contrition, etc.)	Patel & Reinsch (2003)
	Criminal Justice Offenders want to apologize and victims want apology. Accommodations must be made to protect this	Petrucci (2002)
	Restorative Justice: Parallels apology in that it is focused on conflict resolution in relationships, and inclusion of both victims and offenders in the criminal justice process	Daly (1998)
	Restorative Justice: While affirming RJ, apology is nuanced in relation to domestic abuse and should be carefully considered to protect victim's interests and safety	Stubbs (2007)
	Therapeutic jurisprudence: Examines the laws impact on emotional life and psychological well-being. Values defendants psych process in terms of processing case and in rehabilitation	Wexler (1991, 1998)
	Restorative Justice + Therapeutic Jurisprudence: Two types of restoration: Material AND symbolic	Scheff (1998)
	Acceptance of Responsibility Apology => less anger => less punishment, without diminishing responsibility	Petrucci (2002)
	Apology instrumental to reintegration of offender into society: Re-integrative shaming. Apology plays a role in rehabilitation	Braithwaite (1984, 1989, 1998)

(continued)

Area of Study	Idea	Source(s)
Definition of Apology	"Apology is then the centerpiece in a moral dialectic between sorrow and forgiveness"	Taft (2000)
	An acknowledgment of responsibility for an instance of wrongdoing and (b) expression of remorse.	Buttny (1993)
	What constitutes an apology may vary considerably by situation, and may ultimately be negotiated by the two parties involved.	Patel & Reinsch (2003)
Purpose or Function of Apology	Believability => Acceptance => forgiveness => restoration of relationship	Petrucci (2002)
	Risk reduction, legal exposure minimization (apology reduces avg. payout by $32k – OB cases, anesthesia, and infants)	Ho & Liu (2011)
	Forgiveness: the means of overcoming resentment	Taft (2000)
	Four purposes: 1) Acknowledge a rule violation and express regret 2) Repair one's social identity 3) Accepting responsibility and expression of regret To impel the victim to forgive.	Petrucci (2002)
	Reduce punishment, restore relationships with constituents	Patel & Reinsch (2003)
Modes of Apology	Corporate Apology (org as social actor)	Patel & Reinsch (2003)
	Offender to Victim in Criminal justice cases, face to face. Lessens self-attribution of victim ("this happened to me because")	Petrucci (2002)
Process or Steps	Apology: 1) Acknowledges through speech the legitimacy of the violated rule. 2) Admits fault for its violation 3) Expresses genuine remorse or regret	Van Dusen (2006)
	Steps: 1) Expression of remorse or regret 2) Overt acceptance of responsibility for harmful acts 3) Offer of compensation or restitution 4) Promise to avoid such behavior in the future	Petrucci (2002)

(continued)

Area of Study	Idea	Source(s)
Alternatives to Apology	Empathetic disclosure (mandated by professional association or courts)	Taft (2005)
	Apologia: Strategic communication designed to neutralize potential negative ramifications	Taft (2005)
	"Coerced apology" linked to reduction in penalties and sanctions; "commoditized apology"	Taft (2000)

Anticipated Outcomes

In keeping with the research questions, this synthesis of literature is intended to produce a set of outcomes in support of the practice of apology within the larger context of organizational management. To achieve this, the work must be simultaneously academically grounded and practically useful. This ambitious goal has been set with humility, acknowledging that much of the existing work gravitates toward one of these poles at the exclusion of the other. The purposes of the study will have been achieved if it is able to produce a reliable map of the existing literature, a set of orienting questions to support organizational leaders who are considering apology, and methods that are practical enough to be readily translated and used in an organizational context.

A reliable map. The study has been designed with the intention of generating a reliable map of the existing literature, conveyed with the interests and frameworks of the field of organizational management at the forefront. In keeping with the previous metaphor, this map might best be understood as a step in an evolutionary process. A map will always be a symbol of a larger, multi-dimensional reality. The most precise maps will always take into account the valuable but limited perspectives of other map makers. It is expected that the conceptual framework described earlier in this chapter will be refined subsequently and redacted to serve as a basis for ongoing inquiry into the practice of apology.

Orienting questions. Apology is a complex phenomenon. It would be naïve and arrogant to suggest that this study, or any other, would be able to produce a formula to simplify it. While enticed by such simplicity, organizational leaders should be wary of anything that purports to redact the nuances of such a complex human practice. This is not to say, however, that scholars and leaders should be without means to competently analyze situations and deploy apology skillfully. In place of a simple rubric, this study will aim to produce a set of orienting questions to be considered when contemplating apology. These questions have been formulated to appreciate and account for complexity, rather than minimize it. They are intended to expose the unique variables and nuances to be considered in an apology situation, leaving the actor prepared to fulfill his or her responsibility with confidence.

Practical tools. This study was fundamentally intended to generate practical insights for both scholars and practitioners in the field of organizational management. Given the researcher's orientation, three were several assumptions driving this. The study was designed in the pursuit of insights to illuminate and discern the nature of any wrongdoing, and to clarify both the identity of the offended party and those offended by the act. The study was constructed to equip organizational actors to understand and address the unique needs and interests of a complex group of stakeholders, recognizing that organizational leaders must also be equipped to understand their own unique role in managing an apology process. Thus, the inquiry was broad enough to allow for thoughtful reflection on a leader's own behaviors and values, their commitments to their organization and it's stakeholders, and any constraints placed upon them in light of their responsibilities. And, most practically, the study was designed enable a leader to construct a timely and effective apology, or to choose an alternate strategy if one is relevant, and to manage the implications and aftermath of an apology.

The specific nature of these tools was determined as the research unfolded. The study purpose and design, lent itself to the creation of the following tools:

1. A *process* for analyzing a situation to determine the nature of the offense, the impacted parties, whether an apology is warranted, if so, mapping the various stakeholder groups, and constructing an apology or alternate response.
2. A *graphic model* depicting the multiple variables identified in this study.
3. A *narrative document* summarizing and redacting the findings into practical guidance for leaders, combined with examples from contemporary organizational management cases.

Considerations and Limitations

There are several additional considerations and limitations to this study and its design, namely human subjects concerns, the reflexivity of the researcher, and other general limitations of the study.

Human subjects considerations. This study is comprised entirely of a meta-analysis of existing publicly available literature, with no form of interaction with live human subjects, and is therefore outside of the requirements stipulated by the Code of Federal Regulations for the Protection of Human Subjects (Title 45, Part 46). To this end, the Non-Human Subjects Verification Form and supporting documents were submitted to the Pepperdine University Graduate and Professional Schools Institutional Review Board (GPS IRB). The GPS IRB confirmed that this research does not intervene or interact with living individuals or their identifiable private information in any way and an exemption was granted on January 14, 2015 (Protocol #N0115D01).

Reflexivity of researcher. As described in Chapter 1, this research has been conducted in part as the fulfillment of personal inquiries and strongly held beliefs on the part of the researcher. It should be acknowledged that I hold the practice of apology in high regard, and am biased toward approaches that convey the potential for the practice to contribute to the transformation of human relationships. I believe that the research that follows mitigates that bias because of the intentional focus on multiple literature sources and disciplines, including approaches that are highly prescriptive and pragmatic in nature. Additionally, as a consulting practitioner in the field of organization change and leadership development, I am biased toward academically grounded and practically useful tools in an organizational context. This accounts for the fact that I am a strong critic of most of what has been offered to meet the needs of organizational leaders. This bias also gives rise to my strong desire to see the management literature improved. I believe I have accounted for this bias in the design of this study by considering a broad array of literature, and by describing even the management literature I am critical of with enough contextual support to make its purpose apparent.

Limitations of the study. There are certain limitations to this exploration of the practice of apology that must be acknowledged and understood. In this meta-analysis, the primary limitation is that certain bodies of literature were intentionally excluded from the research process. As discussed in Chapter 2, although these literatures contribute interesting insights, they either broaden or complicate the analysis to a degree that obscures the research question. In addition to the specific literature that was excluded, this study only encompassed documents written in the English language. Secondarily, the premise of this study was intentionally oriented around organizational management in a primarily Western European and North American context. This limitation is important to understand, because the literatures relating to cross-cultural conflict have been excluded from the analysis. Future treatments of the practice of apology in an organizational context would benefit from an exploration of the cross-cultural issues and dynamics at work within global organizational cultures.

Chapter 4: Findings

The meta-analysis of the literature on apology provided important insights into the practice. This literature originates from many different fields of study and frames of reference, and yet shows consistent and universal themes which address the nature of apology. In support of the research question, *How might the existing literatures on apology be examined, integrated and refocused to apply specifically to leaders operating within an organizational context?,* this literature analysis reveals the practice of apology, when designed and delivered thoughtfully, as a significant tool with great potential for transforming difficult circumstances. The findings that follow will first integrate insights from the literature into a single, cross-disciplinary overview of the practice. This overview will describe the definition of apology, the purposes and functions of apology, the modes of apology, the process of apologizing, and alternatives to apology. Subsequently, to provide a foundation for the application of the findings, a framework for understanding the role of leadership and the nature of organization will be presented.

Mapping the Apology Literature

As discussed in Chapter 2, the origins of the literature examined in this study can be traced to a variety of distinct orientations and perspectives. It is appealing to attempt to neatly structure this material using conventional academic disciplines or some similar pre-existing categories. Upon close review, however, the literature did not lend itself so easily to traditional categorization. Although each academic perspective offers occasional unique insights, the apology literature is inherently cross-disciplinary, and not easily contrasted by academic discipline or any other grouping. When applying the framework described in Chapter 3, the insights gleaned from the five original *approaches* proposed for this study overlap significantly with each other.

To continue to pursue the research question in light this finding, it was necessary to re-sort the data to create an alternative framework. The analysis of each element in the framework was integrated and re-considered from a cross-disciplinary perspective. What follows, then, is a cross-disciplinary meta-analysis of (a) the definition of apology, (b) the purpose or function of apology, (c) modes of apology, (d) process or steps in apology, and (e) alternatives to apology.

The definition of apology. In the cross-disciplinary meta-analysis several distinct approaches to the definition of apology emerged, with overlap across the literature sources. One important perspective suggests that due to a lack of consensus in the literature, apology cannot easily be defined. This certainly accounts for the diversity of definitions of apology that have been offered over the years. In some cases, this is attributed to the reality that practically speaking, the definition of an effective apology is subjectively and situationally determined (Slocum et al., 2011). In some cases, this is because the components of a meaningful apology must be determined based on local factors (Griswold, 2007), and in others because the definition must be negotiated by the two parties involved (Patel & Reinsch, 2003).

Some of the simplest approaches define apology as the performance of an action, which can be understood in terms of cause and intended effect. These approaches tend to describe apology as *an excuse or account* for one's actions (Govier, 2002), or *an appeal for forgiveness* (Kellerman, 2006). More complex definitions construe apology as a *process for making moral amends* (Govier, 2002), with a requisite process of discernment and dialogue required for effective implementation. In this process understanding of apology, various critical elements are added to the definition, such as a demonstration of sorrow for an injury, an acknowledgement of responsibility for causing harm, an expression of remorse at the effects of wrongdoing, and some form of compensation or reparations (Buttny, 1993).

The process definitions of apology tend to cluster around two unique perspectives, overlapping in their rigorous, process-oriented approach, but differing in their focal point. One perspective defines and constructs the process of apology from the point of view of the needs and interests of the offended party. These definitions regard apology as *a speech act to remedy an offense* (Lee, 2012; Scher & Darley, 1997; Seidman, 2014; Smith, 2005, 2008), with the focus of definition on the nature of the offense itself and the needs of the offended party to rectify it.

The alternate perspective maintains a comprehensive, process-oriented definition, but as seen primarily through the needs and interests of the offender. These definitions construe apology as a *remedial self-presentation* (Darby & Schlenker, 1989; Goffman, 1971; Hearit, 1994, 1996, 1997, 2010; Schlenker & Darby, 1981), with the focus on repairing reputation and meeting the needs and interests of the offender (see Figure 2).

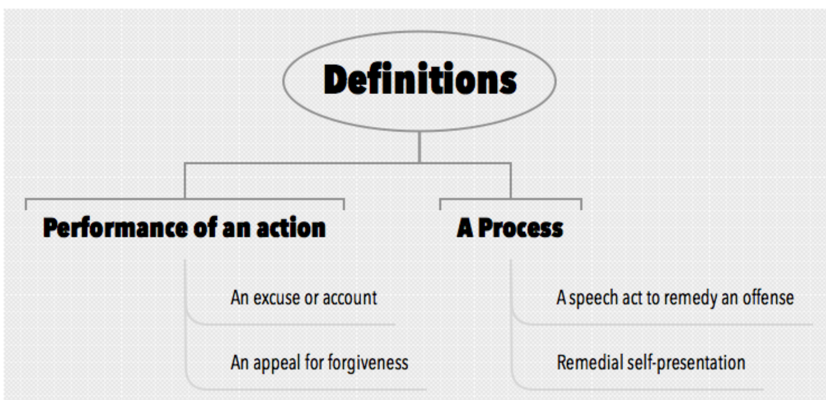

Figure 2. Definitions of apology.

The purpose and function of apology. When reviewed as a whole, the literature contains several distinct purposes and functions for the practice of apology. These purposes range from the highly practical to the moral and philosophical (see Figure 3). One of the most practical purposes described for apology is the reduction of risk facing an individual or an organization due to a failure or an episode of wrongdoing. This risk can be primarily understood as financial exposure connected to legal proceedings (Ho & Liu, 2011). Secondarily, this risk can be understood as the potential severity in potential punishment or sanctions (Darby & Schlenker, 1989; Patel & Reinsch, 2003), or, more generally, as long term risk connected to reputational damage (Coombs, 2007; Coombs & Holladay, 2008).

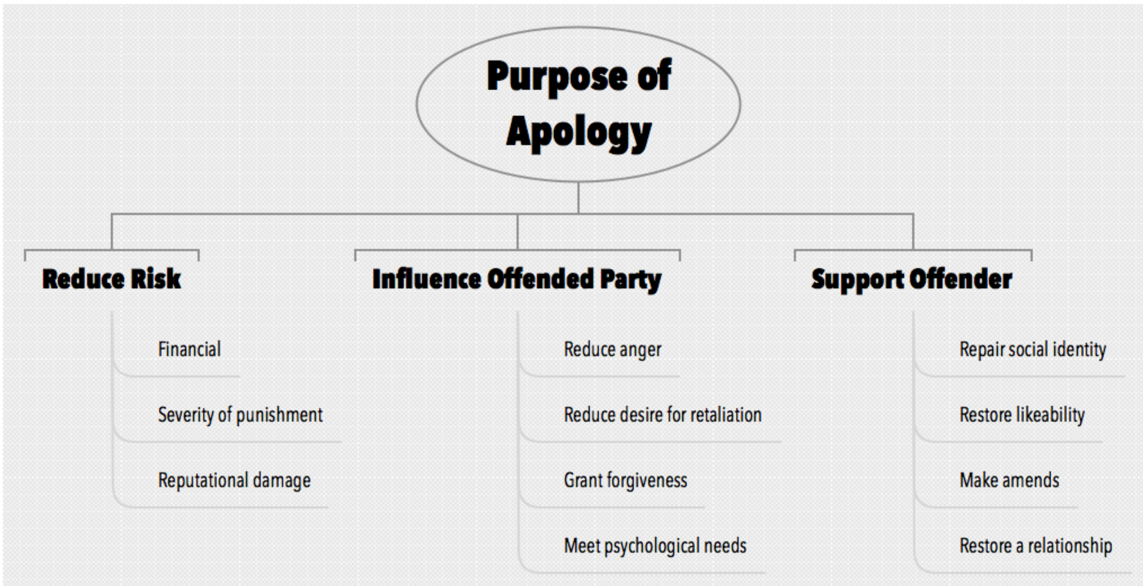

Figure 3. Purposes and functions of apology.

Within the field of crisis communications, which primarily focuses on minimizing reputational risk, apology is seen as one of several potential strategic responses to crisis. Crisis communications sources tend to describe apology as an option within a spectrum of image repair strategies to be applied strategically in the midst of an episode of failure or crisis (Coombs, 2007; Hearit, 1994, 1996, 1997, 2010).

A second set of purposes described for apology is focused on influencing the behaviors of the offended party. In some cases, the purpose of apology is understood to be the reduction of anger (Kellerman, 2006) and aggression (Baumeister et al., 1990; Ohbuchi et al., 1989) from the offended party toward the perpetrator. Similarly, apology can be seen as a strategy to reduce the offended parties' desire for retaliation (Zechmeister et al., 2004). Obtaining forgiveness from an offended party is another frequently invoked purpose (Bisel & Messersmith, 2012; Eaton et al., 2006; Exline et al., 2007; Griswold, 2007; Hui et al., 2011; Kellerman, 2006; Petrucci, 2002; Slocum et al., 2011; Struthers et al., 2008; Taft, 2000, 2005). Most altruistically, meeting the psychological needs of the offended party to achieve reconciliation is also regarded as a purpose of the practice of apology (L. Jones, 1995). These needs include re-affirming dignity, and restoring safety and shared values (Lazare, 2004).

A final distinct set of purposes for apology views the practice through the lens of the needs and concerns of the offender. Apology can serve as a strategy to help the offender repair her or his social identity by acknowledging a rule violation and expressing regret. In this regard, apology allows an offender to stand in agreement with the rest of society that their behavior has been in violation of with a social norm or rule (Petrucci, 2002). Similarly, apology can be understood to restore the social legitimacy of the actor (Hearit, 2010), and restore overall *likeability* (Goei, 2007). Apology is also seen as a mechanism through which an offender can intentionally make moral amends for a wrongdoing (Golding, 1984), and through making amends, can restore a valued relationship (Patel & Reinsch, 2003; Petrucci, 2002).

Modes of apology. The apology literature describes specific modes through which an apology can be delivered. In simplest form, the actors are distinguished between individuals and collectives (Smith, 2008). Using this framing, there is agreement across the literature that apologies are delivered *one to one*, *one to many*, *many to one*, and *many to many* (Tavuchis, 1991).

To address the research question, *How might the existing literatures on apology be examined, integrated and refocused to apply specifically to leaders operating within an organizational context?,* the mode of apology most frequently relevant is a variant of the *one to* *many* mode. In this regard, the organization assumes the role of individual social actor. The organization itself, holding political, economic, and legal status, also assumes discursive status and becomes itself a participant in the drama of apology (Hearit, 1994, 1996, 1997; Patel & Reinsch, 2003). In some of these cases, apologies are issued generally on behalf of the institution as a whole, in a statement or by a spokesperson. Empirical research has shown that recipients are less forgiving in response to these institutional apologies, than they are to an apology for a similar offense committed by an individual (Bisel & Messersmith, 2012). Whereas institutional apologies offered by the CEO, in the first-person, on behalf of the organization are shown to be most effective in achieving forgiveness and assuaging public outrage, yet such apologies are often avoided out of misunderstanding and a desire to maintain a powerful image (Hargie et al., 2010).

There are also several apologetic modes shown by research to be less effective. These include apologies that are mandated as a component of the legal process, such as when an offender apologizes to a victim to reduce severity of sentencing (Petrucci, 2002). Similarly, apologies that are offered retrospectively, such as those delivered by a spokesperson on behalf of collective ancestors to remedy a historical offense, are shown to be less effective in reducing the impacts of an episode of wrongdoing (Levy, 2002; Thompson, 2000). Finally, an apology offered in third-person language serves to distance the deliverer from the offense and obscures personal responsibility (Edwards, 2008). Not surprisingly, these apologies are frequently ineffective in achieving their purposes (see Figure 4).

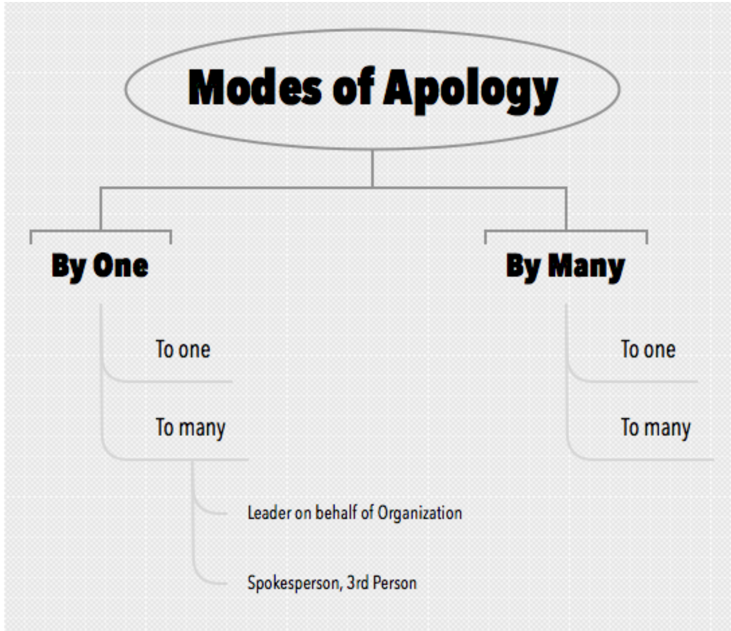

Figure 4. Modes of apology.

Process or steps in apology. The literature reviewed in this study examined 11 models for the process of apology, each outlining a prescribed set of steps to complete the act of apologizing and achieve the stated purpose. These models originate from differing disciplinary perspectives, and as a result carry imprints of the authors' philosophical and practical orientations. The broadest approaches to describing a process of apology are offered by a philosopher (Smith, 2005), a psychiatrist (Lazare, 2004), and a group of Australian behavioral science researchers (Slocum et al., 2011). These three models attempt to unify multi-disciplinary perspectives into comprehensive, unified models.

Smith's (2005, 2008) approach, the *categorical apology,* is an intentionally broad and multi-disciplinary approach to understanding the practice at its essential level. Offered to clarify the nature of true apologies, and discern these false or partial apologies, the categorical apology approach aspires to a high degree of rigor, comprehensiveness and intensity. Smith draws broadly in assembling examples from literature, religion, contemporary public life and interpersonal relationships. The model calls for a comprehensive corroboration of the facts surrounding an episode, and an unequivocal acceptance of blame. This distinguishes apology from other statements that attempt to avoid taking responsibility, such as statements of regret, expressions of sympathy, and denials of intent. The categorical apology specifically identifies each harm, the moral principles that have been violated by each harm, and conveys the offender's endorsement of the legitimacy of these moral principles. By performing a categorical apology, the offender engages the victim as a partner in a moral inquiry, transforming the nature of their interaction. Like other models, the categorical approach highlights the importance of reparations and redress of grievances to demonstrate legitimacy of the apologizer's intentions.

The framework offered by the psychiatrist Lazare (2004) portrays apology as *healing process* for healing wounded relationships, accomplished through dialogue. This approach sees apology as a joint process moving the two parties from a state of alienation to a restored relationship. This dialogue begins with the offender to demonstrating to the victim that he or she knows the nature of the offense, and validating that the offense indeed occurred. In response the victim is moved by the offender's willingness to listen to their concern. Through dialogue, the shame around the offense, for both victim and offender, is overshadowed by the pride of survival. This approach allows for catharsis of the victim's pain, as she or he grieves what his been lost. This dialogue can also serve as a form of retributive justice, as the victim sees the offender wrestle with discomfort. Through the apology discourse, the victim may also be able to feel some sense of empathy and sorrow for the offender.

A similarly comprehensive model focuses on the progression from *self to other-orientation* in the process of achieving effective apologies. This model is offered by the authors as a the foundation for a comprehensive theory of apology, and is grounded in a study of 23 individuals who had been wronged by an intimate partner. The study found that the effectiveness of apology increased as the apologizer's focus moved from self to both self and other. The study identified three components of apology: (a) affirmation, (b) affect, and (c) action. Each component transforms as the focus of apology expands beyond the offender's needs to include a simultaneous focus on the needs of the recipient. Admission, a simple acknowledgment of responsibility moves into an acknowledgment of the consequences of those facts and the impact on the victim. Regret, offender-focused distress at wrongful behavior, is transformed into remorse, allowing the offender to verbalize and demonstrate sorrow over the suffering that the recipient has experienced. And, restitution focused on reversing the most tangible consequences of a failure transforms into active reparation, focused on the intangible needs of victims, as well (Slocum et al., 2011).

Four apology process models with direct relevance to the practice of leadership in an organizational context were also considered. These models included one focused on organizational crisis management (Hearit, 2010), one exploring the effectiveness of management apology training (Bisel & Messersmith, 2012), another specifically examining the practice of leadership apology (Kellerman, 2006), and finally, a model examining the phenomenon of CEO apology (Hargie et al., 2010).

Hearit's (1994, 2010) model examines apology as a strategic option available to organizational leaders in the midst of navigating a crisis. In this regard, the work surrounding the model is as focused on understanding the situations in which apology is most effective in resolving a crisis as it is on appropriate design and execution. The model challenges the traditional notion of apologia, or defensive public discourses, as mainly ineffective in relieving public anger in the midst of a failure. Instead, this approach describes the option of effectively designed and delivered corporate apologies. The model, which Hearit terms *ethical apologia*, results in a carefully worded and choreographed public statement in the ontological vein of a defensive apologia, but with a genuinely apologetic posture. As these apologies are matters of public record, the apologies must disclose information related to the failure and provide a plausible explanation that meets the legitimate concerns of affected stakeholders. The approach encourages organizational leaders to explicitly acknowledge wrongdoing, accept responsibility and express regret. These apologies identify with the injury committed against stakeholders, asking for their forgiveness and stating intention and desire to be reconciled with injured stakeholders. Finally, the ethical apologia offers appropriate reparations, compensation or other corrective action.

The OOPS model of apology emerges from a study exploring the efficacy of management training as a means of increasing the effectiveness of apology with stakeholders. The study raises two notable findings: (a) that offenses committed by an organization are indeed perceived to be more egregious than those committed by a friend or a supervisor, and that (b) subjects who were trained in a specific apology methodology were able to deliver more effective apologies. This apology model is rather simple in comparison to many of the more complex approaches, and yet demonstrates meaningful impact through training. The OOPS model trains prospective apologizers to *explain your error*, *say you're sorry*, *promise forbearance*, and *offer to restore* (Bisel & Messersmith, 2012).

Kellerman (2006) offers a practical model designed to support leaders in understanding the nature of apology, what the practice can and cannot be expected to achieve in an organizational context, and how to deliver apology effectively. This model is tactical, focused on enabling leaders to discern situations where a public apology is appropriate, and to avoid the pitfall of avoiding apology when one is warranted. The model is organized around critical questions facing leaders, such as: Who would benefit from an apology? Why would apology matter strategically and morally? What are the likely consequences and impacts of a public apology? And, what are the consequences of not apologizing? Citing examples from recent business context, the model proposes that a well-executed corporate apology clearly acknowledges the mistake and accepts responsibility. The effective leadership apology expresses regret that the wrongdoing has occurred, provides assurance that it will not be repeated, and is delivered with appropriate timing in proximity to the event (Kellerman, 2006).

A model exploring the particular phenomenon of CEO apology was constructed in the aftermath of the 2008/2009 economic downturn. This study analyzed the public statements of several European CEO's attempting to restore faith and repair relationships with affected stakeholders. The study concluded that CEO discourse around adverse events is frequently characterized by general statements of regret, attempts to show alignment with others who have been affected by a crisis, and general unwillingness to directly and publicly accept responsibility. In this way, the authors characterize the majority of CEO communication in the wake of an organizational crisis to be *apology avoidance*, rather then genuine apology. Proposing a remedy, the model the authors propose requires that effective CEO apologies include an explanation of the events that occurred, a statement of complete responsibility and a direct request for pardon. Additionally, CEO apologies might also provide a denial of intentionality, a form of self-rebuke at the error, and some description of personal remorse at having been responsible for damage. Finally, this model suggests that effective CEO apologies must be able to speak directly to an offer of reparations and assurances that the failure will not happen again (Hargie et al., 2010).

In addition, two models from the medical field were considered, including an approach focused on acknowledging medical mistakes (Roberts, 2007) and apologies offered in response to mistakes by pharmacists (Van Dusen, 2008). Roberts offers practical advice to physicians considering the practice of apology in response to a medical mistake, suggesting that apology is appropriate in situations where both an error has been committed and an adverse event has occurred. In this model, an error is understood as the failure to complete an action as prescribed or intended, and an adverse event is an injury that would not have occurred if not for the error. With both conditions fulfilled, an apology is warranted. The model suggests that for physicians to appropriately design and deliver a medical apology, they must: get the facts, get the right people to attend, find the right time and place, ask what the others understand, describe what happened, show empathy, apologize, and be willing to make things right (Roberts, 2007).

In providing counsel to pharmacists considering apology, Van Dusen also explores situations where apology might be warranted, citing several benefits of the practice in addition to providing condolences and respect. Apologies offered in response to pharmacist errors have been shown to impact a potential litigant's willingness to settle a claim out of court, and, in many cases patients and family members are less likely to file suit in the first place if an apology is offered. The prescribed approach is quite simple, suggesting that a pharmacist acknowledge the violated rule, admit fault, and express genuine remorse (Van Dusen, 2008).

Both Roberts and Van Dusen explore the risk of legal exposure as it relates to the practice of apology, advising health care professionals to seek counsel and adhere carefully to their organization's standards and guidelines. It is noted in both cases, however, that many states have enacted legislation for the explicit purpose of preventing the admission of apology as evidence in legal proceedings. This is indicative of a trend recognizing that apology, when offered pre-emptively, has the ability to assuage the concerns of affected stakeholders and greatly reduce the overall costs of expensive healthcare litigation borne by society (Roberts, 2007; Van Dusen, 2008).

Other models reviewed in the meta-analysis include an approach from criminal justice (Petrucci, 2002), and an approach primarily focused on retrospective apology (Sugimoto, 1999). Petrucci examines the practice of apology as nested within the larger contexts of restorative justice and therapeutic jurisprudence. This approach to defining the process of apology is focused on understanding the practice in the reparation of harms perpetrated against victims of crimes and the rehabilitation of criminal offenders. While Petrucci's model is less central to the research question of this study, it is important to note that many of the same previously acknowledged themes are repeated in the criminal justice context. Moreover, in a criminal context, the impacts of failures are frequently more acute and personal. The practice of apology, when appropriately deployed in these contexts is similarly powerful in restoring relationships, reducing severity of impacts and facilitating the rehabilitation of offenders. Petrucci's model suggests that an effective apology expresses remorse or regret, accepts responsibility for the impact, offers restitution, and conveys a credible promise not to repeat the offense in the future (Petrucci, 2002).

Finally, Sugimoto's model of apology is somewhat marginal to this study, as it explores the cross-cultural dimensions of the practice of apology. Yet, this work is highly regarded and frequently referenced in the other literatures. For this reason, it is worth briefly considering. Sugimoto's research integrates insights from social psychology, conversation analysis and rhetoric, offering insights beyond the cross-cultural dimension. Sugimoto's work is primarily an exploration of the similarities and differences in thinking about apology between Japanese and

U.S. cultures, and explores the practice using a model quite comparable to the aforementioned research (Sugimoto, 1997, 1998). Sugimoto's apology process begins with an account of events, a summary of damages and a statement of the offender's remorse. Acknowledging direct responsibility, the apologizer then requests forgiveness and offers reparations. With self-castigation, the apologizer finally offers a promise not to repeat the offense in the future (Sugimoto, 1999; see Figure 5).

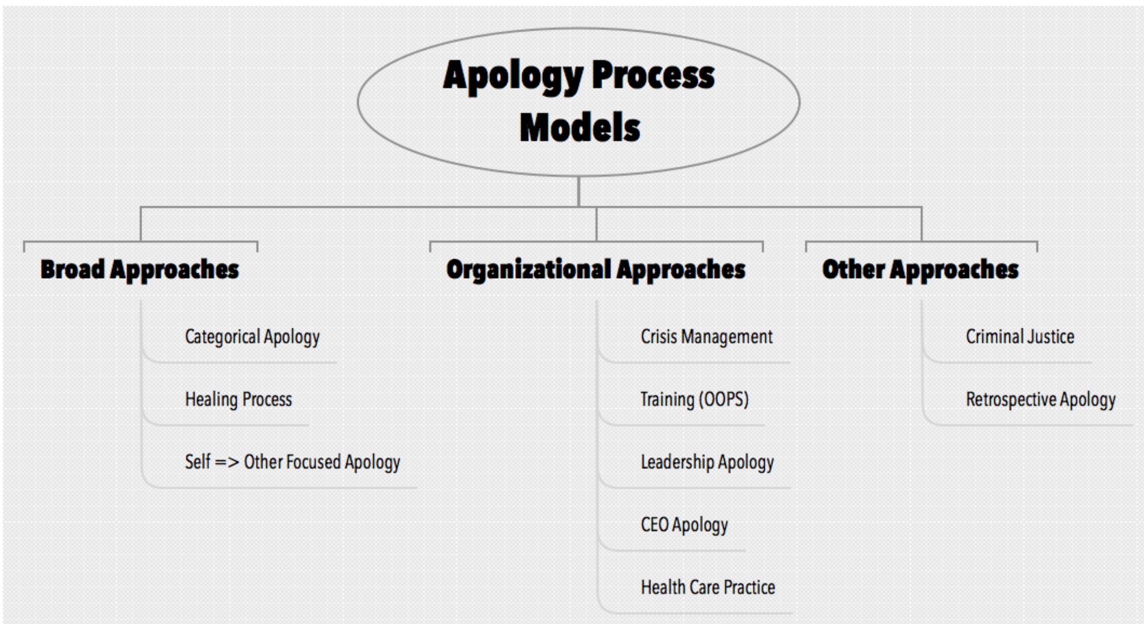

Figure 5. Apology process models.

Across the 11 models, five steps or components were repeatedly identified as critical to the process of delivering a comprehensive, effective apology. First, the apology must include a fact-based acknowledgment of the offense, mistake or error (Bisel & Messersmith, 2012; Hearit, 2010; Kellerman, 2006; Lazare, 2004; Slocum et al., 2011; Smith, 2005; Van Dusen, 2008). Second, the offender explicitly accepts responsibility for the offense (Hargie et al., 2010; Hearit, 2010; Kellerman, 2006; Petrucci, 2002; Smith, 2005; Van Dusen, 2008). Third, the offender expresses genuine remorse or regret for their actions (Hargie et al., 2010; Hearit, 2010;

Kellerman, 2006; Petrucci, 2002; Slocum et al., 2011; Smith, 2008; Van Dusen, 2008). Fourth, the offender describes plans for corrective action and restitution of the wrong (Bisel & Messersmith, 2012; Hargie et al., 2010; Hearit, 2010; Petrucci, 2002; Roberts, 2007; Slocum et al., 2011; Smith, 2008). And, fifth, the offending party offers a credible promise not to repeat the offense (Bisel & Messersmith, 2012; Hargie et al., 2010; Kellerman, 2006; Petrucci, 2002).

These five components of apology, as shown in Table 5, were cited frequently enough to be considered critical and indispensible to the process. For this reason, these steps were regarded as the framework for constructing apology as described in Chapter 5.

Table 5

Steps in the Apology Process

Step	Component
1.	Fact-based acknowledgment of the offense or error.
2.	Explicit acceptance of responsibility for the offense.
3.	Genuine remorse or regret for offender's actions.
4.	Plans for corrective action and restitution.
5.	A credible promise not to repeat the offense.

As demonstrated, the meta-analysis revealed considerable breadth and depth around the understanding of apology's definition, purpose, mode and process. The study also revealed a clear set of alternatives to the practice of apology.

Alternatives to apology. The literature reviewed in this study identified a number of alternatives to apology (see Figure 6). These non-apologies are accounts offered as an attempt to explain away an undesirable event through excuses and justifications (Schlenker & Darby, 1981). In some situations, these alternatives to apology should be considered as legitimate alternative approaches to be employed as part of a crisis management strategy (Coombs, 2007; Coombs & Holladay, 2008; Exline et al., 2007). The most frequently described alternatives to apology are an embodiment of the Platonic idea of *apologia,* or defensive statement. The apologia is designed to neutralize the negative ramifications of a failure (Hearit, 2010; Taft, 2000) and maintain a positive public image (Hodgins, 2003).

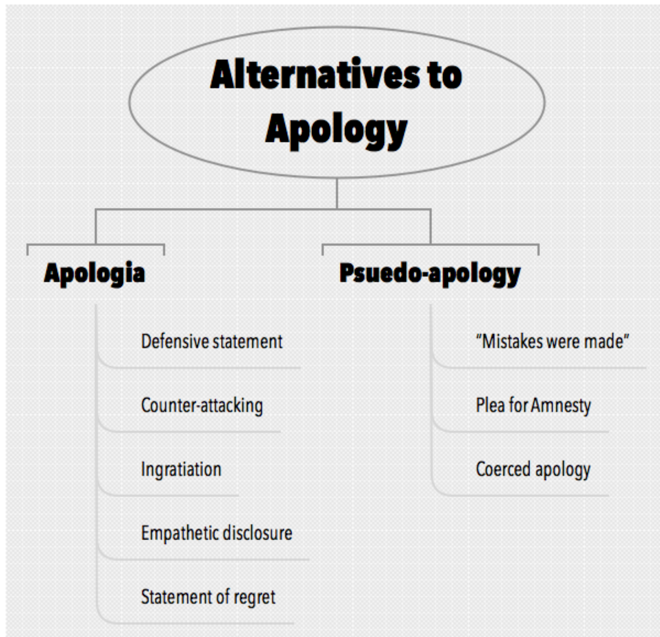

Figure 6. Alternatives to apology.

Defensive statements are generally offered with some form of narrative intended to justify the perceived offender's actions (Coombs, 2007). The statement may be offered with various justifications, including a denial of causation, blaming another factor, party or organization (Benoit, 1997). Alternately, an apologia might claim that the failure in question was purely accidental, or a result of natural causes (Smith, 2005). In some cases, an apologia might claim that the perceived offender was in fact victimized by another party (Coombs, 2007). Finally, an organizational apologia might seek to reduce the offensiveness of the event by placing it in a different context, or comparing it do other more adverse events (Blaney et al., 2002; Taft, 2000).

Other viable alternatives to apology in response to organizational crisis include *counter-attacking* either the accuser or another third party. In these situations, the perceived offender attempts to deflect blame by directly blaming another (Coombs & Holladay, 2008). In some cases, an organization might choose to take *corrective action* to the stated offense without actually acknowledging it, either with public acknowledgment of the remedy, or in private (Benoit, 1997; Benoit & Drew, 1997). Alternately, organizations might choose an *ingratiation* response to alter the victim's perceptions, either through direct compensation, or a reminder of past good deeds (Coombs, 2007). Finally, organizations may choose to offer an *empathetic disclosure* in lieu of an apology. This type of disclosure is designed to convey a statement of regret that the events in question occurred (Exline et al., 2007). The statement might include an expression of sympathy for the plight of the victims (Smith, 2005) but would carefully avoid any acknowledgment or acceptance of responsibility (Taft, 2000). In some situations of empathetic disclosure, a statement may contain a sophisticated *statement of regret* that skillfully avoids taking self-threatening responsibility (Kampf, 2009).

In addition to the aforementioned, legitimately useful alternatives to apology, the literature also describes a variety of largely ineffective alternatives. These types of statements have been characterized as *pseudo-apologies*. Unlike an empathetic disclosure, pseudo-apologies are meant to be perceived as a genuine apology, but intentionally or unintentionally eliminate one or more of the elemental steps in the apology process (Hearit, 2010; Smith, 2008), most commonly the admission of wrongdoing.

In some cases, these pseudo-apologies are exceedingly vague or ambiguous, suggesting a regret that "unfortunate things have happened," or that "mistakes were made" (Smith, 2005, p. 38). In other cases, they are offered as a broad *plea for amnesty*, by suggesting the statement should be applicable to *anyone who may have been harmed at any point*. In other cases, these pseudo-apologies are offered under duress, either through pressure from media commentators or in the shadow of looming litigation. Other pseudo-apologies are obviously coerced or obligatory (Taft, 2000), inviting the impacted audience to strongly question the apologizer's sincerity.

Leadership and Apology

The meta-analysis of the apology literature offers a single, cross-disciplinary summary of the meaningful themes and approaches to characterizing the practice of apology. The literature included brings a depth of understanding, and highlights important nuances and complexities. A particular strength is that the authors speak from a variety of unique perspectives. To support the research question guiding this study, *How might the existing literatures on apology be examined, integrated and refocused to apply specifically to leaders operating within an organizational context?* these perspectives must be organized around the unique needs and contextual challenges facing leaders in organizations. These challenges are amplified by the reality that: (a) apology is difficult to define, (b) the effects of apology are difficult to quantify, (c) organizational leaders must effectively serve a complex group of stakeholders, and (d) knowing when and how to apologize is difficult. In light of this complexity, a framework is needed to support the researcher in describing both the act of leading and the essence of organization. What follows is a description of relevant research from the fields of leadership and organizational studies through which the apology literature can be applied and made useful to organizational leaders.

Leadership. Leadership is one of the most widely studied topics in the field of management and in the organizational literature, and has been examined and defined in many ways. Research in this field has led to an understanding of the leadership process as one far more complex than the *common sense* ideas often conveyed in management books (Northouse, 2004). Many approaches to leadership have focused on the personal attributes and self-mastery of the leader. These have included prescriptive examinations of necessary personality traits for effective leaders (Zaleznik, 1977), methods for diagnosing and developing psychological health and maturity (Torbert, 2004), and a focus on the leader's emotional intelligence, or EQ (Goleman, Boyatzis, & McKee, 2002). Other approaches have focused on the specific, trainable skills a leader must acquire, including agility (Joiner & Josephs, 2007) and narrative storytelling (Denning, 2007), as well as broad, skills-based approaches to leader development (Kouzes & Posner, 1995). The situational approaches to leadership focus attention on techniques and approaches most suited to specific organizational challenges (Blanchard, Zigarmi, & Nelson, 1993), while transformational approaches to leadership focus on a combination of personal attributes and charisma to inspire followers in challenging situations (Bass, 1990; Bass, Avolio, Jung, & Berson, 2003).

To establish some grounding of the complex subject of apology within the context of organizational leadership, the *adaptive leadership* approach is particularly helpful. The core principles of adaptive leadership have been researched and applied in a variety of contexts over the past two decades (Heifetz, Grashow, & Linsky, 2009). Like the trait-theories and transformational leadership work, this leadership theory differentiates the act of providing direction in an organization into two separate and necessary categories. (Quinn, 2005; Zaleznik, 1977). While trait and transformational theories typically distinguish *leading* from *managing*, adaptive leadership theory separates adaptive leadership tasks from technical leadership tasks. Adaptive leadership tasks are focused on understanding and discerning a path in unprecedented circumstances, whereas technical leadership tasks are focused on adhering to previously established norms and policies.

In this framework, technical leadership is portrayed as both a vital component of organizational management, and as an insufficient model for managing in a dynamic and changing environment. Heifetz describes technical leadership as relevant when both the problem and the solution are clear, with the locus of control based on the authority of the leader to implement an intervention. By comparison, adaptive leadership is relevant in situations where both the problem and the solution are unclear, requiring learning before framing an intervention or response. In adaptive leadership, the locus of activity moves away from the leader's authority and outward toward the differing needs of stakeholders. Behaviors demonstrated by leaders in adaptive modes include framing key questions and issues to address, recognizing external threats, disorienting current roles, exposing conflict and challenging norms. In this regard, adaptive leadership models are particularly useful for leaders serving organizations in crisis (Heifetz, 1994).

The adaptive leadership model is particularly helpful for application to the apology literature because the practice of apology, for organizational leaders, almost always emerges from a crisis episode of some kind (Hearit, 2010). The tasks facing a leader considering apology require a robust, rapid-cycle learning process. In this way, the process of evaluating a crisis, discerning impacts, examining culpability, evaluating responses and framing a response is fundamentally an adaptive leading task. Notably, within adaptive leadership studies, there is an emerging field of research focused on discerning the process by which a leader guides an organization through the transition from perceiving a crisis as a threat to seeing the same event as an opportunity to flourish and prosper. As leaders engage in this process, they are able to design interventions that treat causes, not merely symptoms. They seek and apply the views of multiple, diverse stakeholders. These leaders emphasize the short and long terms outcomes of an event simultaneously, and, they establish norms for divergent thinking (Brockner & James, 2008). For many organizational leaders, the choice to employ the practice of apology is located at the threshold of this threat/opportunity distinction.

The essence of adaptive leadership has been broken down into an iterative cycle with three phases: (a) observe events and patterns, (b) interpret what is being observed, and (c) design an intervention (Heifetz et al., 2009). These core tenets of adaptive leadership will serve as the basis for the concept of *leadership* as applied in Chapter 5.

Organization. Similar to leadership, organizational theory contains a complex array of theories, frameworks and philosophies by which the nature of organization can be examined and managed. A casual reference to *the organization* as a fixed entity for analysis is perilous if one is to engage with even a small part of the literature on the subject. Some of the most enduring theories of organization adopt a mechanistic perspective, describing processes for controlling and structuring activity to achieve coordinated outcomes (Morgan, 1997). Others see organizations as cultures to be managed, focusing on the values, norms, beliefs, rituals and symbols that structure organizational life (Schein, 1992). A group of systems theorists adopt the metaphor of a living organism, and examine organizational practice through the lens of its environment, function and various supporting sub-systems (Senge, 1990). Post-modern organizational theories attempt to deconstruct and move beyond the mechanistic, structural approaches, focusing instead on the role of technology, information exchange, communication and social systems (Hatch, 1997).

This study of apology requires a point of view and conceptual basis for the nature of the organization. Because the study is linked to the practice of leading, and applies its findings to the individual with responsibility to lead, organization is first construed as something that can and should be directed. The goal of this study is to make the research on the practice of apology available and relevant to leaders in a modern organizational context. To this end, models and theories that describe an organization as interconnected groups of stakeholders provide the greatest degree of grounding and insight. This literature, collectively referred to as *stakeholder theory*, portray modern organization as a value chain connecting the interests of various groups through shared or compatible goals (Waligo, Clarke, & Hawkins, 2014). Stakeholders can be understood as the various groups within this value chain that contribute to or benefit from the organization's value creation, and those that have the potential to suffer from it. Their inextricability from the value chain affords a degree of power through which stakeholders are able to influence the behavior of the organization and its leadership (Schneider, 2002).

This stakeholder value chain theory of organization lends itself well to an understanding of the implications of apology for leadership behavior, given the diversity of stakeholder groups that an apology can impact. For the purposes of this study, the stakeholder groups described in Chapter 1 will be grouped into the broad categories of (a) normative, (b) public, and (c) direct value-chain (Cohen, 2010; Hearit, 2010; Kellerman, 2006; see Figure 7: Organizational stakeholders).

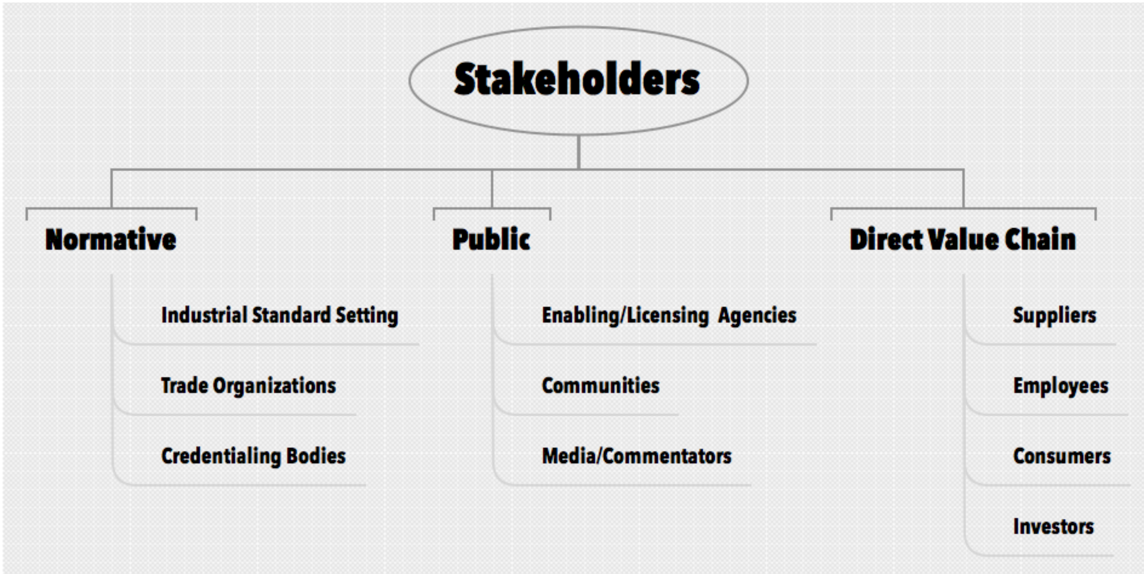

Figure 7. Organizational stakeholders.

Normative stakeholders are those non-governmental groups or bodies that possess the authority and influence to set standards of conduct and performance for organizational behavior. These non-governmental normative stakeholders can, in some cases, grant or withhold certification and licensing that legitimizes an organization. These groups include industrial standard setting organizations, trade federations and credentialing bodies. The organizational constituents of these groups hold a vested interest in mutual compliance to standards. On occasion, these normative stakeholder groups are informal, reflecting a mutual participation in the same industry or pursuit without an official organization binding them. This is demonstrated by the partial collapse of smaller non-pasteurized juice producers in the wake of an Odwalla E. Coli contamination in 1996. In this case, smaller producers were highly critical of Odwalla's willingness to publicly discuss the science behind its safety processes because of the exposure it created for them as producers in the same industry (Thomsen & Rawson, 1998).

Public stakeholders include federal, state and local licensing bodies that confer legal rights to operate, or can withhold such rights from an organization. These agencies represent public interests, and hold the ability to impose sanctions for behavior that is out of line. The physical communities in which an organization operates are also frequently regarded as an organizational stakeholder, particularly from the perspective of environmental natural resources and economic impacts. Finally, members of the media function as representatives of the public and require unique attention during situations from which an apology might arise.

Direct value-chain stakeholders, for the purposes of this study, will be understood as those groups with first-hand economic interests in the operating activities of an organization. These include the suppliers and vendors who provide products and services to the organization, the employees and contractors supplying labor to the organization, and the end users and consumers of the organization's goods.

Notably, the investor community is infrequently mentioned within the existing academic literature addressing the practice of apology in an organizational context. Yet, the effectiveness of an apology is frequently judged by industry analysts in their recommendations to invest or withhold investment. Corporate leaders facing apology spend significant time and resources considering the needs of their investor communities in the midst of crisis, and in response to it (Liker, 2011; Stewart, 2013; Thomsen & Rawson, 1998). It is this author's perspective that investors must be considered as a discreet stakeholder group, and, that they must be considered directly as part of the value chain.

The meta-analysis of literature described in this chapter explores the practice of apology from a variety of different approaches, disciplines and points of view. Insights from philosophy and theology, the legal field, the social sciences, communications and public relations and organizational management have been integrated into a single framework. This framework portrays the depth of meaning associated with the definition and the purpose of apology.

Similarly, the framework explores the modes by which apology can be delivered and the various steps and components that have been identified as meaningful in the process of apologizing. And, alternatives to the practice of apology have been organized into this framework. Finally, a compatible framework for understanding the practice of leadership and the nature of organization has been offered in support of the research question: *How might the existing literatures on apology be examined, integrated and refocused to apply specifically to leaders operating within an organizational context?* Chapter 5 will now build on this framework by engaging with the practice of apology as a leadership behavior. It will present a model for use by organizational leaders considering apology in response to an episode of organizational failure or crisis.

Chapter 5: Apology in Leadership Practice

The meta-analysis of the apology literature described in Chapter 4 yields a rich array of insight and guidance with relevance to leaders in an organizational context. Using the adaptive leadership framework and a stakeholder management theory of organization, Chapter 5 translates this insight into practical and useful tools to support leaders facing opportunities to apologize on behalf of an organization. The first section of the chapter integrates the themes of the meta-analysis into the practice of leadership in organizations. The definition, the purpose and function, the mode, and the process of apology will be considered as leadership practices in an organizational context. The second section of the chapter presents the Organizational Apology Model. This model is a comprehensive situational assessment process, grounded in adaptive leadership theory, and designed to support organizational leaders in the midst of an episode of crisis or failure.

Apology in Organizational Leadership Practice

An integrated, cross-disciplinary summary of the apology literature allows the possibility of engaging with the central question of this study. Namely, *How might the existing literatures on apology be examined, integrated and refocused to apply specifically to leaders operating within an organizational context*? The practice of apology intersects with organizational leadership in a complex system requiring an *adaptive* response to a crisis that considers various and often competing *stakeholder* needs. This will require leaders to carefully and thoughtfully observe the events surrounding an episode of wrongdoing, interpret these events through a valid and useful framework, and design an appropriate organizational response.

Leaders facing an opportunity to apologize for or on behalf of their organizations must understand the five dimensions of apology as demonstrated by the meta-analysis of the literature.

Specifically, leaders must be supported in: (a) defining apology as a leadership practice, (b) understanding the purposes and functions of apology in organizational leadership, (c) discerning relevant modes of apology in organizational leadership, (d) the process of creating and delivering an impactful apology, and (e) considering other viable alternatives to apology that might be considered.

Defining apology as a leadership practice. Apology is defined in this study as *a speech act intended to remedy an offense, that includes both an acknowledgment of responsibility for an incident of wrongdoing and an expression of remorse*. Organizational leaders considering apology must fully appreciate that within the context of their roles, apology is dually focused on the needs of extra-organizational normative and public stakeholders, and well as stakeholders within the direct value chain. During times of crisis, these complex stakeholder maps are often artificially compressed into a binary, oppositional relationship between an organization's shareholders and its consumers (Hearit, 1994). More broadly, this narrowing can be understood as conflict between those who own or benefit from the organization and those who have been harmed by it.

In this regard, the practice must be understood simultaneously as both (a) a speech act intended to remedy an offense by acknowledging responsibility, to address the needs of consumers, and also (b) a persuasive image repair strategy, to protect the long term interests of shareholders. It is critically important that leaders navigate these conflicting interests, and design a response that engages both sets with equal rigor. Failure to acknowledge either dimension of this definition has the potential to expose the organization to unnecessary risk, alienate critical stakeholders, or worse, exacerbate an already tenuous situation. Even the most effective leaders struggle to successfully address both sides of this definition, as it is not a simple technical task.

The purposes and functions of apology in organizational leadership. Similarly, leaders must recognize that apology offered in the context of an organization will likely fulfill more than one purpose. As described in the literature, these purposes will generally align around the same two distinct sets of needs and considerations. On the one hand, an organizational leader facing apology must be aware of, and represent the needs of the organization. And, to apologize effectively, a leader must also be aware of the needs of the offended parties or victims of the wrongdoing.

The foremost purpose of apology, from the point of view of an offending organization, is to intervene skillfully in a situation of crisis, minimizing risk and exposure while considering the needs of various competing stakeholder groups. From this point of view, apology also serves to repair the organization's brand or identity within the various normative and public stakeholder groups. Finally, from the organization's perspective, an apology serves to restore value-creating relationships with parties impacted by the offense.

From the point of view of a victim of organizational wrongdoing, the purpose of an apology is primarily about making amends. As has been shown in the literature, this amending must consider any moral dimensions of the wrongdoing, as well as the psychological and material needs of the offended party. An apologetic response to crisis that fails to acknowledge this dualism of purpose will again leave the organization exposed to risk, and has the potential to escalate a situation of crisis.

Modes of apology in leadership practice. The mode of apology is a topic of particular interest to organizational leaders who are considering the practice. When choosing to apologize, careful attention to mode is a critical factor in determining successful resolution of crisis. The literature most frequently refers to organizational apology in light of the *one to many* mode. This perspective, regards the organization as an individual social actor, and is a helpful starting point for leaders. In many cases, the episode of crisis is indeed the result of the failure of an institutional system or process, rather than the fault of any single person in the organization. In this way, speaking on behalf of the organization is entirely appropriate. When constructing apologies from this frame of reference, however, leaders must be cognizant of their limited effectiveness in reducing anger and meeting the needs of offended parties. These apologies, when issued unskillfully and apart from meaningful reparations, are easily interpreted as an avoidance of responsibility.

The research has also shown that first-person accountability, particularly on the part of the chief executive, is far more effective than third-person generalities (Hargie et al., 2010). By speaking on behalf of the organization, a leader has the ability to say, *I am ultimately accountable for this organization, and thus for its failure in this regard*. The empirical research on the subject demonstrates this apologetic mode to be more effective than others (Bisel & Messersmith, 2012). Conversely, third person language and vague statements are generally ineffective and can contribute to the escalation of crisis (Edwards, 2008).

There are also situations in which the victim of wrongdoing is a single individual or very small group. In these cases a variant of the *one to one* apology mode is effectively used. These apologies are almost exclusively made in private settings as opposed to in public, and to be effective must be delivered by an accountable party. Research in the field of medical mistakes has demonstrated that with appropriate protections in place, doctors who are personally responsible for errors can achieve effective resolution to crisis through personal, face to face apology (Roberts, 2007). This may serve as a valuable precedent for leaders in other contexts.

The process of apologizing in leadership practice. Organizational leaders framing an apology in response to an episode of failure hold a unique responsibility as architects. These leaders are responsible for an interpretive process designed to restore public faith in an organization, and by so doing meet the needs of many impacted stakeholder groups. With many detailed, prescriptive models, the literature has shown that this process should be comprised of certain minimum critical components in order to function effectively.

Fact-based acknowledgment of the offense or error. Leaders offering apology on behalf of an organization must clearly understand and acknowledge the facts surrounding the episode, and identify the failure(s) specifically. When a leader apologizes, impacted stakeholders are listening carefully, at both a practical and a psychological level, to determine if the leader and/or organization is operating with a shared set of values, morals and ethics. This generally requires a thoughtful inquiry and investigation into the events themselves, and the perceptions of those events held by various impacted stakeholder groups. In light of this, hastily constructed apologies frequently backfire when additional facts or impacts come to light. Leaders who apologize are well served to investigate thoroughly and acknowledge facts explicitly.

Explicit acceptance of responsibility for the offense. In cases of organizational failure and misdeeds, there are often multiple underlying causes and contributors. Leaders considering apology should carefully understand these factors, but must construct apologies without attempting to shift the blame or obfuscate responsibility. Understanding these nuances will again require thoughtful examination of facts, and simultaneous engagement with organizational needs, and the perspectives of affected stakeholders. When leaders choose to apologize, their acceptance of responsibility for the failure must be unequivocal, and should reflect a comprehensive understanding of how the failure occurred.

Genuine remorse or regret for the offender's actions. Leaders offering apologies on behalf of organizations must both *state* and *embody* this regret. Recognizing the real temptation to de-personalize, obfuscate or shift responsibility, leaders must specifically acknowledge regret for the organization's failure in order to achieve an effective apology. In addition, the most effective apologies convey genuine remorse for the impacts of the failure on affected victims and other stakeholders. As the public face of an organization, the most effective leaders are able to move beyond mere recitation of facts and display genuine, personal remorse as well. While many aspects of this transaction are personality based, the literature demonstrates a high correlation between perceptions of authenticity in the apologizer and effectiveness of an apology (Tucker et al., 2006).

Plans for corrective action and restitution. Even the most seasoned leaders facing crisis are tempted to intervene quickly in order to minimize damage and restore credibility. Notwithstanding this bias for action, organizational leaders crafting apologies must be prepared to describe plans for corrective action and restitution. In decisive moments of crisis, leaders may be tempted to state emphatically, and with much emotion, *We'll do whatever is needed to make this right.* The genuineness of this promise is solidified by articulating plans, actions and commitments with enough transparency and specificity that the organization can be easily held accountable for follow-through.

A credible promise not to repeat the offense. Effective apologies offered in this context conclude with credible commitments not to re-offend. The credibility of these promises, when offered, is generally interpreted in light of the effectiveness of the four preceding steps. When facing a complex array of disenfranchised stakeholders, leaders must be able to tell a persuasive story about the organization's commitment to avoid future offenses.

Alternatives to apology in leadership practice. The literature describes an array of alternative approaches with varying degrees of usefulness to organizational leaders who are confronted with their organization's misdeeds. Some of these alternatives are designed exclusively to protect the organization, while others are designed to meet at least some of the offended party's needs without fully acknowledging the offense. Leaders considering an apology will likely be challenged by various internal and external stakeholders to consider one of these alternatives, and they should be weighed carefully against short and long term goals. Organizational leaders must carefully examine the situation, interpret meaning and impact, and design an intervention that meets the various needs of affected stakeholders. An array of these alternatives will be described in detail in the Organizational Apology Model in the next section of this chapter.

When and How to Apologize: A Process for Situational Analysis

Organizational leaders are often called on to provide clear, decisive direction in the midst of crisis. In some of these situations, leaders are required to diagnose and explain an episode of organizational failure or oversight to affected stakeholders. And, in many of these cases, an organizational apology is both warranted and strategically appropriate. As has been noted, existing management literature provides little in terms of meaningful guidance to leaders facing these situations. Recognizing the volume of broader literature on the topic, the purpose of this study is to integrate knowledge and generate practical insights and tools for organizational leaders considering the practice of apology. It is guided by the question, *How might the existing* *literatures on apology be examined, integrated and refocused to apply specifically to leaders operating within an organizational context?*

The model that follows integrates existing research and insight on the practice of apology into an actionable process. This process is designed to support leaders in understanding their own role in managing an apology process, their unique commitments to both the organization and its stakeholders, and enable them to construct a timely and effective apology in situations where one is warranted (see Figure 8).

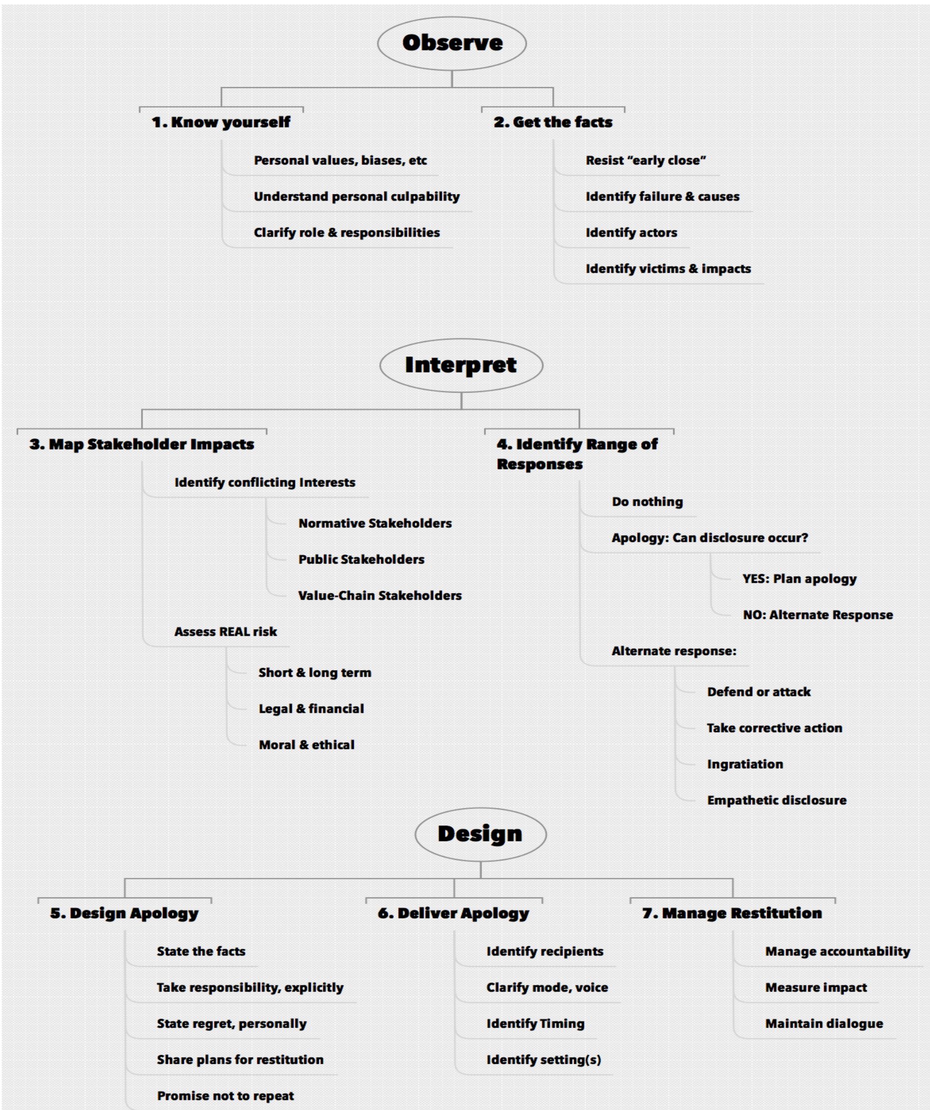

Figure 8. The organizational apology model: Overview.

The Organizational Apology Model

The Organizational Apology Model is grounded in the *adaptive leadership* framework described in Chapter 4. Facing episodes of crisis for which apology might be determined an appropriate intervention, leaders must thoughtfully *observe* events and underlying patterns, *interpret* them in light of various stakeholder needs and interests, and *design* an intervention that supports both the short and long-term viability of the organization. The Organizational Apology Model describes each of these three dimensions of the adaptive leadership approach as a distinct phase in considering and preparing an apology. In the *Observe Phase*, leaders must effectively consider the complex factors surrounding a situation of organizational crisis. This requires that a leader demonstrate a high degree of self knowledge, and pursue deep understanding of the facts (see Figure 9). In the *Interpret Phase* leaders must identify the interests of key stakeholder groups, assess any real risk facing the organization, and discern the full range of appropriate responses, including the possibility of an apology (see Figures 10 and 11). Finally, in the *Design Phase,* if an apology is warranted, the leader must design it thoughtfully, deliver it skillfully and manage the aftermath proactively (see Figure 12).

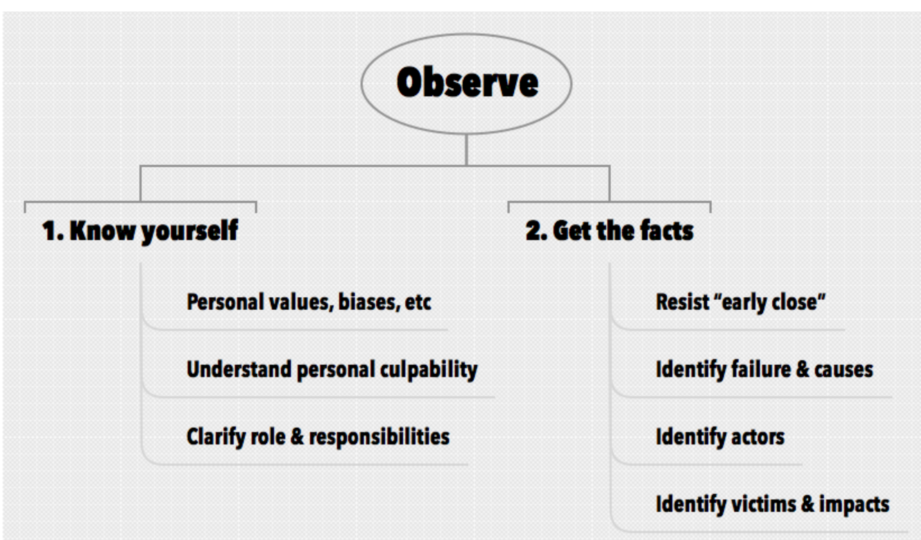

Figure 9. The organizational apology model: Observe phase.

1. Know yourself. The act of apologizing on behalf of an organization is incredibly challenging to even the most seasoned leaders, especially in light of highly visible public failures. These situations are volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous. Leaders contemplating apology are inundated with advice, counsel, warnings and even threats from a variety of potentially affected stakeholder groups. In the most protracted situations, it is nearly impossible for a leader to act decisively without choosing to ignore at least some of this input. In these situations, there are no risk-free solutions. Leaders are called upon to weigh inputs, discern patterns, and choose a course of action that has the potential to alienate one or more critical stakeholder groups in attempt to appease another.

For this reason, it is vitally important that a leader develop the discipline of self-knowledge. In the midst of a crisis calling for swift and immediate action, leaders must first be willing to spend time reflecting on several critical dimensions of their own leadership (Quinn, 2000).

Personal values, biases, etc. Leaders facing situations of crisis must thoughtfully reflect on their own beliefs and values system. Leaders contemplating a public apology should be aware of their own communication strengths and weaknesses, and demonstrate understanding of their defensive patterns in the face of public criticism. What assumptions, if any, does the leader hold about the practice of apology? How does the leader prefer to deal with conflict, and, does this create any potential blind spots? Does the leader, like many others, subtly embrace the idea that public admission of failure is a sign of personal weakness (Tucker et al., 2006)? Even more subtly, does the leader hold a viewpoint suggesting that acknowledgment of error might in some way harm their organization by detracting from their symbolic power (Kampf, 2009)? Is the leader tempted to honor the wishes of one stakeholder group to avoid personal pain in the short-term, while exposing the organization to greater risk in the long term? And, does the leader hold a belief about the nature of the crisis or its resolution that transcends the strategic and touches upon moral and ethical concerns? These questions and others like them are best considered in dialogue, early in a crisis, with a trusted advisor, executive coach or other non-stakeholder colleague.

In a particularly interesting demonstration of this, Facebook Chief Operating Officer Sheryl Sandberg issued a pseudo-apology on behalf of the organization in July 2014. The statement was offered in response to experiments conducted by the organization, designed to discern if Facebook members' behavior could be manipulated by the nature of posts they were exposed to. When results of the study were publicized, Facebook was roundly criticized for these actions. In response to the criticisms, Sandberg issued a brief public statement suggesting that the experiment was "Poorly communicated…we never meant to hurt you" (Sullivan, 2014, para. 2). The statement was widely dismissed as a non-apology, for failing to acknowledge the actual offense, and for seeming to make communication, rather than manipulation, the issue (Sullivan, 2014). Of particular interest to some commentators is a public speech Sandberg gave in Cannes, at approximately the same time, wherein she criticized women in general for apologizing too frequently for meaningless things. Having identified publicly with a posture resisting female leadership and apology, Sandberg left herself and her organization exposed to heightened criticism (Kellaway, 2014). This rare public view into a leader's belief system offers a poignant reminder that personal bias can cloud an executive's ability to effectively apologize on behalf of an organization.

Understand personal culpability. In many cases requiring organizational apology, the leader delivering the message speaks as spokesperson or representative, rather than as the personified offender. In situations like this, it is often tempting for a leader to default to distancing language to identify the offenders as outsiders, or to search for a scapegoat onto whom the blame can be placed. An episode of failure may ultimately be determined to be the result of the negligence of a rogue actor. But, in these situations, it first is critical that a leader thoughtfully examine the extent of personal culpability. While he or she may not have committed the acts that led to the failure, the response that the leader endorses will shape public beliefs about the organization. In episodes of organizational failure, it is important for CEO's and other senior executives to be willing to recognize that, as leaders, they are ultimately, albeit indirectly, responsible for the behavior of the organization they purport to lead. If a crisis response attempts to side-step this, especially in formal statements, public stakeholders can be quite unforgiving (Seidman, 2014).

Lloyd Blankfein, Chairman and CEO of Goldman Sachs Group, faced significant public criticism for the role that Goldman and other large banks played in the financial crisis of 2009. After receiving federal bailout funds in 2008, Goldman was on target to disburse more than $16B in bonus compensation less than nine months later. In the response to public criticism, Blankfein apologized using very general language, "We participated in things that were clearly wrong and have reason to regret" (Harper & Townsend, 2009, para. 2). Failing to recognize the importance of acknowledging personal culpability, Blankfein's apologies continually used the first person plural *we*, rather than taking personal responsibility for his leadership of the firm during these crucial months.

Clarify role and responsibilities. Leaders facing organizational crisis must also become comfortable continually clarifying and restating their ultimate role and responsibility. While many affected internal and external stakeholders will have clear, prescriptive advice on how the situation should be handled, executives must remain grounded in the fulfillment of their accountability to the organization's long-term sustainability and perseverance. Other stated goals, like: *make this crisis go away quickly* or *repair our image* may certainly be important, but cannot supplant long-term sustainability as the critical focus. Grounded senior leaders understand this, and will often have to make difficult decisions to ensure all the responsibilities of their role are fulfilled.

2. Get the facts. In some cases of organizational failure or crisis, the facts are simple to discern and are publicly available. More often, however, there exists a depth of contextual information, causal linkages and precipitating circumstances. Executives and other leaders, compelled to act decisively to resolve crises, must be certain to thoroughly understand the full context of an episode before designing an intervention. Hastily prepared responses, only to be followed by additional layers of damaging revelations, typically exacerbate crises instead of resolving them. As the adage suggests, *The truth will eventually come out*. A leader should determine how and when.

Resist the early close. In attempts to derive an explanation for organizational failure, leaders can be led astray by a simple, black and white explanation that seems plausible. These early hypotheses may ultimately prove to be the most truthful and compelling explanations for the crisis. Executives must, however, exercise discipline to maintain a thoughtful inquiry into root causes and underlying system dynamics for two reasons. First, overly simplistic explanations when proven to be untrue reflect poorly on the organization and the leader's own judgment. Second, hastily delivered explanations are generally regarded with suspicion by many public stakeholder groups. While these *early closes* may alleviate short-term scrutiny, they can contribute to long-term reputational damage, resulting in the destruction of shareholder value.

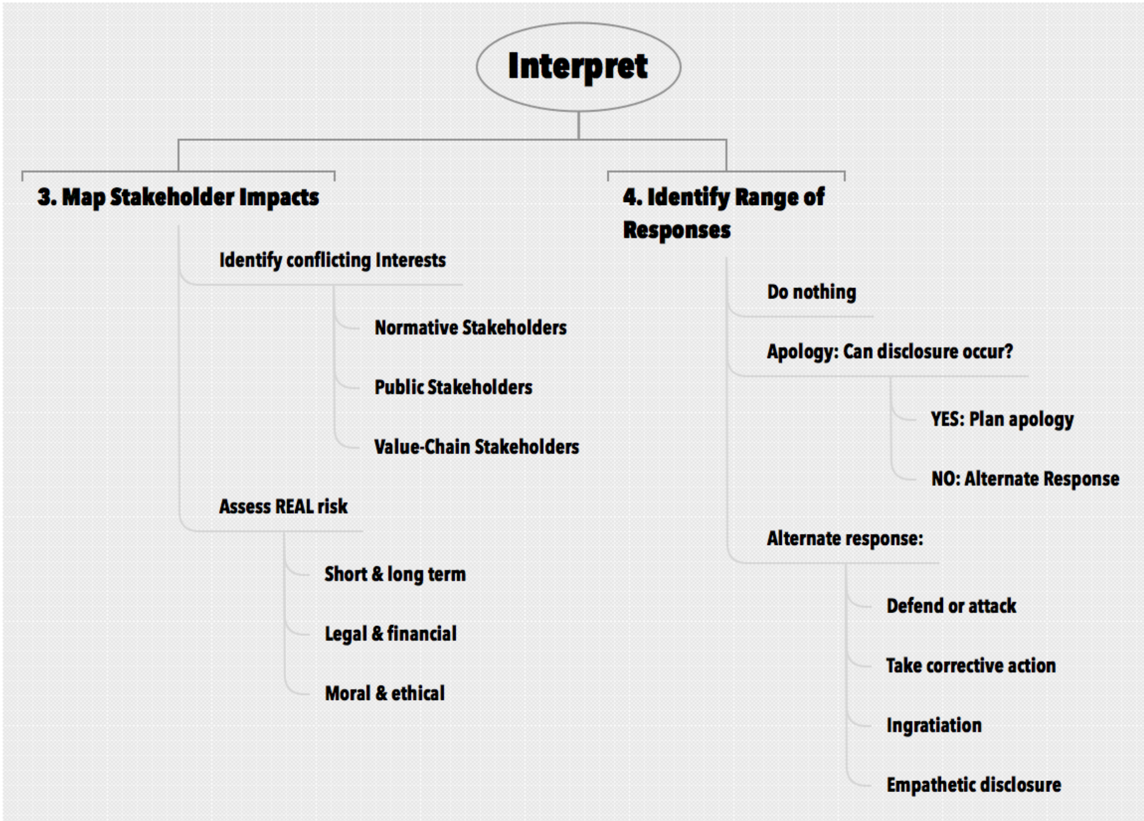

Figure 10. The organizational apology model: Interpret phase.

Identify the failure and causes. It is important for a leader to have a clear understanding of the true nature of the failure and its causes before designing an appropriate intervention. This will likely involve a significant allocation of resources, and may not necessarily be completed prior to the issuance of a public apology or other image-repair strategy. Demonstrating a willingness to inquire, however, is in many cases critical to the reparations expected by affected stakeholders. Whether or not all of the facts surrounding the episode are ultimately disclosed, it is critical to understand them before framing a meaningful response.

Identify actors. As organizational leaders prepare to respond to crisis, it is critical to identify the actors involved in creating the initial crisis, its victims, and their relationship to the organization and its stakeholders. While tempting to identify a person on whom the blame can be offloaded to preserve the organization's image, leaders must thoughtfully inquire into the context in which the actors performed. Was the episode simply an accident? Was it intentional? Were the actors identified as responsible acting under direction from executives who are attempting to obscure their role? Was the failure a result of competing, incompatible expectations placed on an employee who might be portrayed sympathetically as a victim, if they were to be scapegoated? Prior to framing a response to crisis, executives must have working knowledge of all of the actors involved, both primary and secondary ones.

Identify victims and impacts. While gathering information to understand the nature and extent of an organizational failure, leaders must begin to develop a working understanding of current and potential victims and the impacts that they are likely to experience. This list may not be complete or comprehensive at the onset of a crisis, but it should nevertheless be assembled with as much diligence as possible. Hastily constructed responses delivered to *anyone who may have been harmed* sound like a plea for amnesty, not a genuine apology, and often diminish the organization's reputation rather than preserving it.

3. Map stakeholder impacts. Managing the competing needs of multiple stakeholders is one of the most complex, and yet critical aspects of any executive's role. When responding to organizational failure, it is critical that a leader understand these interests. An apology or other image repair strategy must be designed with an understanding of both immediate, and secondary impact to a broad group of affected parties. Generally, this will be a comprehensive undertaking, and executives are well advised to resist the temptation to act so quickly as to overlook critical stakeholder groups in the early days of a media flap.

Consider one of the most widely criticized public apologies in 2013. The statement was issued by Lululemon founder Chip Wilson in response to comments he made in a Bloomberg interview. In the interview, Wilson responded to concerns about the near-transparency of the fabric used to make a popular line of yoga pants, by suggesting the problem was women's bodies, rather than his firm's materials, stating "Some women's bodies don't work for the pants, it's about the rubbing through the thighs" (O'Connor, 2013, para. 4). Wilson's comments created a significant public relations crisis for the company. Wilson released a video apology within several days, attempting to resolve the crisis. In the apology, Wilson speaks only of his remorse for letting down to the employees of his company, and speaks only of his regret for the repercussions of his actions, not the actions themselves. This was Wilson's only public statement on the subject. Wilson completely overlooked his consumers, the primary victims in the original scandal, and the female population in general, whom he offended with his interview comments. The loss began to spiral out of control. Over the next year, Lululemon lost a third of its market capitalization, and Wilson lost nearly half of his own net worth (Wallace, 2015).

Identify conflicting interests. Clearly, leaders in the process of considering apology quickly become aware that there will be no perfect solution from which complete satisfaction for all affected stakeholders can be achieved. And yet, thoughtful planning is required. In episodes of organizational failure, the needs of some stakeholder groups are placed at odds with each other, and an intervention designed to repair a relationship with one group heightens the risk of upsetting another, as the Chip Wilson apology demonstrates. In the most acute crises, the complex network of interconnected stakeholders surrounding any organization is frequently artificially collapsed into a binary tension between the interests of shareholder against those of consumers (Hearit, 1994). In many cases, these two stakeholder groups indeed have the most easily identifiable needs and concerns, and the most vocal complaints.

It is a mistake, however, to relegate the remaining stakeholders to the role of audience or commentator. An effective organizational apology must be crafted with a keen awareness of the interests of a much more complex system of stakeholders. The broader network of organizational stakeholders, shown in Figure 11, will likely hold important and unique concerns that must be addressed to skillfully resolve an episode of crisis. Leaders are well advised to thoughtfully consider both the short and long term implications as they discern which stakeholder needs are most critical to address at the outset of a crisis.

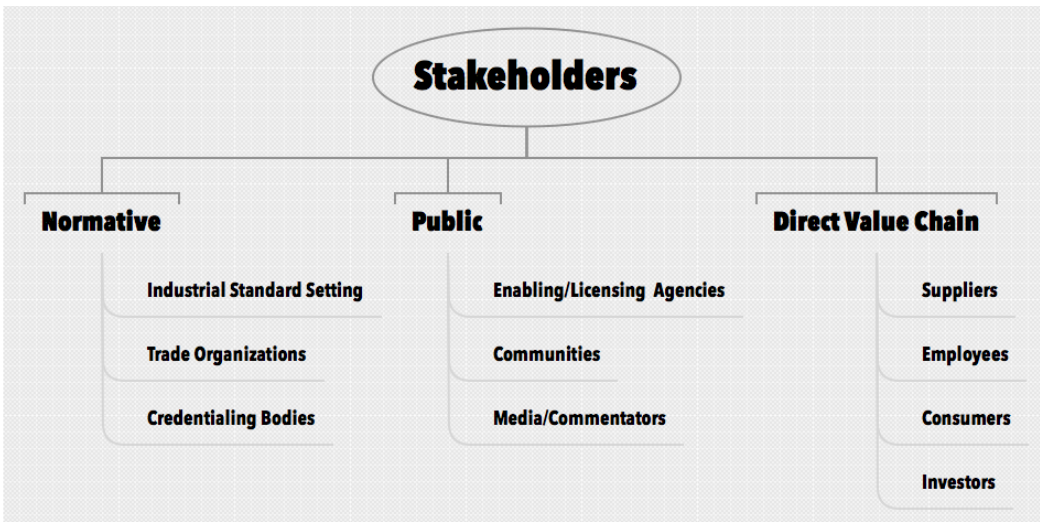

Figure 11. Organizational stakeholder map.

Leaders considering apology must be aware of the short and longer term interests of the *normative* stakeholders with whom they are affiliated. These non-governmental, voluntary groups hold the authority and influence to set benchmarked standards of conduct and performance. These groups include industrial standard-setting bodies, voluntary trade organizations, and other credentialing bodies. Normative stakeholder groups have the authority to sanction or certify a member organization as compliant with accepted standards, and therefore have the potential to be impacted by a failure on behalf of a member. In some cases, these groups convey a certification that is vital to the organization's brand or presence in the marketplace.

For example, these normative groups have become an important stakeholder in the evolution of organic food production. While in the United Sates, the US Department of Agriculture (USDA) maintains and conveys an organic standard, various other normative groups, such as ECO-CERT, maintain parallel or higher standards which can then be marketed to consumers. These normative groups are important stakeholders to organic food production organizations looking to distinguish themselves by exceeding the standards set by the public licensing body (Strom, 2012).

Leaders planning a response to an organizational failure must also be keenly aware of the interests of the affected *public* stakeholder groups. These stakeholders include federal or state licensing agencies established to uphold the public good. These groups provide licensure for operations, and hold the power to impose sanctions in instances of failure or neglect. In some cases, sanctions can be crippling, as in recent Federal Trade Commission (FTC) probes in the aftermath of financial crisis (Eavis & Corkery, 2014). In other cases, the mere suggestion of an intervention by a regulatory body creates secondary risks associated with public stakeholders.

Leaders must also be aware of the needs and interests of the communities in which the organization operates. In some cases, communities might be part of the victim group in an episode of failure, while in others the community might be secondarily affected by a crisis. The needs and interests of affected communities have the potential to manifest many years in the aftermath of a crisis, and an organizational response must consider these in advance.

Finally, organizational leaders preparing to apologize must consider the potential for conflicts within the groups of stakeholders in their direct value-chain. In most cases, these groups have obvious first hand economic interests in the operating activities of an organization and include suppliers, employees, consumers and shareholders. These stakeholder groups tend to manifest immediate, near-term concerns that must be acknowledged in order to effectively resolve an episode of crisis.

In crisis situations, executives and other organizational leaders are fundamentally responsible for guiding a response in accordance with organizational values and commitments, including and perhaps especially those values that have been communicated as components of the public image or brand. In considering an appropriate response to an organizational failure, leaders must thoughtfully identify the most critical potential stakeholder conflicts to be resolved with the understanding that there is rarely a *silver bullet* type response at their disposal. Leaders must engage in a highly subjective, interpretive exercise with broad potential implications. In the absence of a linear set of guidelines to implement, leaders are responsible to both restore stability in the short term and provide for organizational sustainability in the long term.

When discerning an appropriate response to stakeholder conflicts one variable leaders frequently attempt to manage is disclosure of the facts surrounding the episode. In particular, leaders must frequently consider the degree of transparency any response will contain, recognizing that the disclosure of certain facts might provoke a negative response from stakeholders with conflicting interests or positions. When attempting to navigate these choices, leaders must consider the question: *Will the truth eventually come out anyway?* Assuming it will, leadership in the midst of crisis frequently involves a voluntary, measured, and appropriately contextualized disclosure of damaging facts. In cases where damaging facts are initially concealed, subsequently to be leaked, the leader and organization lose the ability to proactively establish context, and have often cause greater harm in the long term (Robertson, 2012).

This was well understood by David Morton, CEO of Alcan Aluminum in the aftermath of the explosion of a ship carrying by-products of aluminum smelting, off the coast of La Baie, Quebec in 1990. Within minutes of the explosion, news media began speculating wildly on the possibility of deaths and other adverse impacts, undermining public confidence nearly instantaneously. Recognizing the real potential for significant environmental concerns, impacts to the local economy, and a major lapse in public confidence, the organization undertook a nearly unprecedented campaign to keep the public informed, beginning minutes after the explosion. Company leadership chose to proactively inform the public about continuing risk in the coming days and weeks, in spite of the fact that a safety perimeter had been established and the incident was well under control (Bouchard, 1992). This incident has been subsequently studied and upheld as a model for proactive dissemination of facts in the crisis communications literature (Borda & Mackey-Kallis, 2004).

Assess REAL risk. While discerning appropriate responses to crisis, organizational leaders are keenly aware of the risks facing themselves personally, as well as their organizations. Short-term losses in revenue, longer-term losses related to a tarnished brand, and the possibility sanctions from licensing agencies must be considered and skillfully navigated by executives in these circumstances. In addition, executives must also be mindful of the real likelihood of a costly litigation process, and the possibility of a punitive adverse judgment. Against this backdrop of looming risk, executives often overestimate the costs of a proactive apology, and underestimate the benefits (Kellerman, 2006), especially in situations where the organization's guilt can be proven regardless of whether the apology occurs.

This *mythology* about apology must be first navigated to begin to understand the real risks associated with a proactive apology. Currently, nearly thirty states have established some form of legal protection around the practice by disallowing the admissibility of apology as evidence against the apologizing party (Cohen, 2010). Overburdened court systems benefit from out of court settlements. Believing that apologies frequently facilitate settlement, they have begun establishing legal precedent to encourage it (Patel & Reinsch, 2003). Choosing to proactively frame a thoughtful, articulate apology may be both strategically, morally, and legally the most advantageous approach.

Nevertheless, there are real risks around any response to an organizational crisis, and executives must thoughtfully consider them while designing a response. In many cases the legal and financial risks are most prominent, and therefore easiest to contemplate. It is important however, to recognize that moral and ethical concerns also carry legal and financial implications in the long-term. Moreover, an expedient solution to a short-term financial risk, may lead to a much larger, longer-term financial consequence.

The now famous case surrounding Johnson & Johnson's handling of Tylenol product tampering in 1982 demonstrates that an aggressive and costly short-term strategy built around apology and accountability can lead to long-term financial recovery. Under the leadership of Jim Burke, Johnson and Johnson proactively spent more than $100 million to recall an entire product, which had never been done before. While the company's share price suffered immediately following the recall, it recovered within two months. Indeed, if one were to have invested $1000 in Johnson & Johnson the day before the Tylenol crisis broke, it would have been worth more than $22,000 20 years later, after four stock splits (Rehak, 2002). Burke is an example of how executives facing crisis must be able to simultaneously balance short and long-term perspectives, to meet the needs of internal and external stakeholders if they are to achieve meaningful resolution.

4. Identify range of responses. The literature describes a broad array of speech acts with varying degrees of usefulness to organizational leaders responding to crisis or failure. Executives must thoughtfully consider this range of options in light of the unique facts of the case, the relevant stakeholder interest conflicts, and any potential legal implications they may be facing. While the summary presented subsequently is not exhaustive, it is designed to help leaders choose apology from a range of options, as well as to become clear about situations in which apology would be unwise or inadvisable.

Do nothing. In certain circumstances, the most appropriate response to a minor failure or media flap is to simply do nothing. While most executives considering apology will have moved past this option, it is important to recognize it as a legitimate alternative in certain circumstances. This approach is particularly relevant in situations where the failure was verifiably accidental, there is no human victim of the accident, and the organization has established enough public good will to be granted the *benefit of the doubt*.

Critical question: Can disclosure occur? When it becomes clear that a situation of crisis requires a response, organizational leaders must begin to explore an array of options. The question of disclosure is at the center of this exploration. Namely, is it appropriate for the organization to materially disclose the facts surrounding this episode, as we understand them, to the general public? While there must certainly be a thoughtful inquiry into which facts should be revealed, and to what depth, the answer to this question will determine the range of potential responses available to an executive.

Crisis management scholars and practitioners have explored the question of disclosure at great length, and suggest there are certain situations where full disclosure of facts is both warranted and advisable. Leaders should consider disclosure when: (a) the corporation is itself a victim, (b) when it is critical to avoid alienating certain key stakeholders, (c) when the facts are likely to come out anyway, (d) to minimize damage to public brand or image, (e) to maintain a relationship with the victims, either for the purpose of pursuing a private settlement or to discourage them from pursuing litigation, and (f) to pre-emptively avoid punitive damages in legal proceedings. Alternately, full disclosure of the facts surrounding a crisis is not advisable when: (a) apology can legally be used as an admission of guilt, (b) when the CEO's time could be preoccupied by managing the aftermath, (c) when doing so would invite regulatory intervention, or (d) it would significantly expose organizational shareholders (Hearit, 2010).

In situations where disclosure is advisable, organizational leaders should thoughtfully consider a well executed apology as principal among their strategic responses. In situations where disclosure cannot occur, however, leaders should not consider apology as an option. The research shows that attempts to apologize that obscure or fail to acknowledge the facts amount to ineffective pseudo-apologies.

Alternate responses. In situations where apology is not advisable or cannot be effective, there are several viable alternative responses available to organizational leaders. Choosing an alternate response, like apologizing, is an adaptive leadership task. Each of these alternatives can be applied skillfully, meeting stakeholder needs and resolving a crisis effectively. Similarly, each of these alternatives can also be applied unskillfully, exacerbating a crisis and further alienating critical stakeholders.

Defense. In some circumstances, leaders must consider vigorously defending the organization, particularly when facing fabricated or unjust allegations. When the alleged wrongdoing is the result of an accident, or of the organization itself being victimized by another party, a defensive strategy may be more effective than an weak apology. Leaders must be cautious, however, about overtones of excuse-making, which frequently backfire in achieving public sympathy. These defensive statements are most effective when the evidence supporting victimization is strong, or when it is clear for other reasons that the prevailing interpretation is flawed in suggesting the organization's culpability.

In a recent 2014 crisis involving a cyber-attack on Sony Studios, the company and its CEO, Michael Lynton, were widely criticized for their decision to cancel the theatrical release of a motion picture. The film, called *The Interview*, was identified as offensive by a group of apparent-terrorists, and threats were made against the company's security if it was to be released. Lynton and his team took numerous precautions and a series of actions deemed to be cryptic by the public, and faced constant criticism for several weeks. The decision to remove the movie was characterized as capitulation to terrorism, and was even criticized publicly by President Obama. Finally, near the end of December 2014, Lynton began engaging in a vigorous public defense of his actions, including a reference to several calls to President Obama's advisors assisting counsel. To date, Lynton has not apologized for this action, in spite of widespread criticism, choosing instead to remain defensive of the studio's response to the crisis (Cieply & Barnes, 2014).

Counter-attack. Similarly, in a limited array of situations, organizational leaders may choose to attack, or counter-attack in lieu of apologizing to one or more stakeholder groups. This strategy is most often deployed in situations where an organization is faced with an ethical charge, questioning not only its behavior, but also its guiding principles and moral compass. Thus, crisis communications scholars suggest, these strategies are best employed with clear evidence of victimization and strong grounds for public sympathy (Hearit, 2010). With a strong factual case and a moral basis, an attacking response can provide the platform for the public to become sympathetic with the organization. A frequently cited example involves Harry Pearce, General Counsel for General Motors Corporation (GMC) counterattacking NBC Dateline for irresponsible conduct around its reporting on the safety of certain GMC vehicles, resulting in reputational damage to GMC. When it came to light that Dateline had in fact used incendiary devices to cause a GMC vehicle to explode on air, Pearce vigorously defended the organization and attacked NBC. NBC offered an official apology for its actions within a week (Parrish & Nauss, 1993).

Corrective action. Facing a crisis, organizational leaders can also choose to take immediate corrective action without issuing a statement. When choosing this strategy, organizational leaders must understand the needs of the various impacted stakeholder groups and discern that reparation is ultimately more important than empathy and acknowledgment of wrongdoing. This response is most effective when the offense is clearly accidental, and there is little human or financial damage as a result.

Ingratiation. Leaders might also choose an ingratiating response, deploying a carefully constructed image repair strategy designed to portray the organization in a positive light. In these cases, the organization attempts to remind the victims and offended stakeholders of shared values, past good deeds and common moral commitments, judging these to be more important than an explicit acknowledgment of wrongdoing. An ingratiating response may even include a reference to the idea of apology, either by stating willingness to apologize at some future point, or by referencing past apologies (Hargie et al., 2010)

Ingratiating responses detract attention from the crisis by placing it in a larger context, extolling the organization's good citizenship and other benefits to its stakeholders. Leaders might ingratiate by referencing the act of apology, citing the organization's willingness to do so in the past, and promising to do so again in the future if necessary. In 2010, Toyota Motor Corporation was excoriated in the press, following a series of safety concerns related to accelerator pedals. Toyota willingly complied with all appropriate inquiries, and invoked its own legendary systematic approach to problem solving. Building on decades of positive public regard, Toyota slowly began to draw attention to this legacy in ads in early 2011. These ingratiating responses to the crisis, in addition to appropriate recalls, ultimately helped it to maintain market position and portray many of its media detractors as sensationalists (Liker, 2011).

Empathetic disclosure. Finally, in situations where disclosure of facts surrounding the episode is inadvisable, organizational leaders might choose to make an empathetic disclosure in lieu of a comprehensive apology. This type of statement is a carefully worded response to the crisis, conveying the organization's regret that the events in question have occurred. Empathetic disclosures designed to invoke sympathy for the organization, and may also offer sympathy for the victims and other affected stakeholders. In an empathetic disclosure, an organization might even choose to align and identify itself along with other victims affected by the crisis. These statements are often favored by legal departments in the face of risk and exposure that may be connected to an explicit admission of wrongdoing. While stating an organization's regret that an event has occurred, an empathetic disclosure falls short of an apology by failing to acknowledge wrongdoing or offering to remedy it in a meaningful way. These statements can be effective when the organization itself is also a victim, when the offense was clearly unintentional, and when the offense was preventable but unknowingly committed by the organization (Coombs, 2007).

Psuedo-apologies. Organizational leaders can, and frequently do choose an alternative or pseudo-apology in response to wrongdoing. These responses are generally problematic in that they are offered with the intention of achieving the purpose and function of apology, while avoiding one or more critical steps. Psuedo-apologies are typically vague, avoid taking responsibility, and offer no meaningful reparations. Statements of this nature may be perceived by stakeholders as simply *wishing* the instance had not occurred. Not surprisingly, these strategies infrequently bring meaningful resolution to a crisis. Organizational leaders would generally be well advised to avoid them.

For example, British Petroleum (BP) has been sharply criticized for its response to several industrial disasters, causing multiple forms of costly damage, and impacting a very wide range of stakeholders. While BP officials issued several empathically worded statements of regret when interviewed in the aftermath of these crises, its official position has repeatedly been to attempt to reframe the failures as crises with *multiple causes, involving multiple parties*. These pseudo-apologies continue to contribute to the erosion of public confidence in BP as a corporate citizen in affected communities (Whitford & Elkind, 2012).

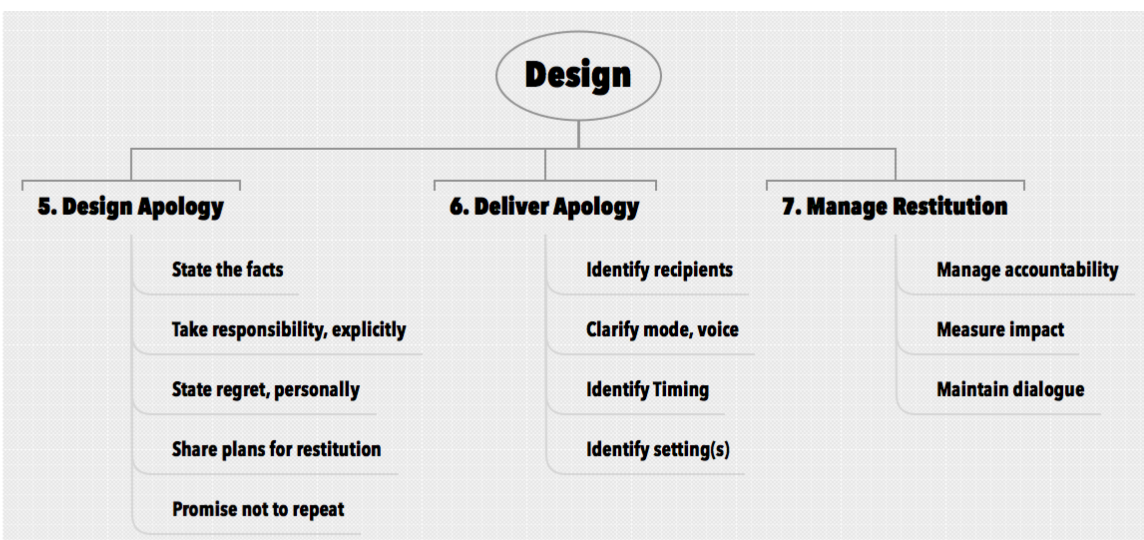

Figure 12. The organizational apology model: Design phase.

5. Design apology. When a leader has determined that an organizational apology is warranted as a response to crisis, the leaders should pay careful attention to the design of the message. A thoughtfully constructed apology can be a powerful tool in restoring public confidence, acknowledging victims' concerns, and refocusing an organization. Similarly, a poorly constructed apology has the potential to exacerbate delicate situations and further alienate the organization from its stakeholders.

State the facts. The decision to issue a public apology must correlate to an organization's willingness to disclose the basic facts surrounding a case. In many situations, this provides an opportunity for the organization to release additional, previously undisclosed facts that might portray it in a more sympathetic light. In other cases, the organization may use an apology to adjust or to re-frame the public understanding of these facts. While these can be appropriate in the context of an effective apology, affected stakeholders must also hear a concise acknowledgment of events that resonates with their own understanding. Stakeholders anticipating an apology are looking to hear the organization state simply, and clearly, that the failure in question did in fact occur. Obfuscation of the facts, especially at the outset of an apology, has the potential to disenfranchise supporters and further alienate victims. Similarly, holding back damaging facts that are likely to be leaked or revealed in the future will erode the organization's credibility at a time when it most needs to be restored.

Take responsibility, explicitly. A second element to consider in the design of an apology is a clear statement of responsibility. For an apology to be effective, a clear statement of organizational responsibility must be directly connected to the critical facts of the event. Even in situations where the damages have been significant, or the organization has clearly failed, a willingness to actively take responsibility frequently relieves public anger, and restores the confidence of key stakeholders (Lee, 2012). Active responsibility cannot amount to, *We are sorry that this happened*. For stakeholders to accept the genuineness of an apology, the statement must be specific and explicit, as in the 1996 case of E. Coli poisoning from Odwalla unpasteurized apple juice, during which a 2-year old girl died in Colorado. The organization's CEO, Greg Steltenpohl, immediately implemented a complete recall of all potentially affected products, and made several heart-felt, public statements acknowledging the organization's role in the crisis. This is particularly meaningful as Steltenpohl was encouraged, and may have been well-advised, to divert attention to his local fruit suppliers, rather than to the organization's sanitation and processing practices (Thomsen & Rawson, 1998). Notably, Odwalla recovered completely from this crisis, culminating in a sale for $181 million to Coca Cola 5 years later (McClam, 2001).

State regret, personally. A third element to consider when designing an organizational apology is the communication of regret. Effective apologies explicitly recognize not only the facts and the responsibility behind the failure, but also acknowledge the organization's regret that it happened. This is a critical step in restoring public confidence in the aftermath of crisis, as it restores public faith in a shared value system between the organization and affected stakeholders. This remedial self-presentation is a form of agreement with critics, *You think this is wrong, we do too. And we're sorry it happened* (Schlenker & Darby, 1981).

Regret is conveyed far more powerfully in cases where a leader speaks on behalf of the organization, rather than in situations where a spokesperson speaks generally in third person language. This type of regret was put into incredibly strong terms by David Neeleman (2007), CEO of JetBlue Airways, in the aftermath of a week-long operational crisis in 2007. While the crisis was initially caused by a late winter snow-storm that created unpredicted icy conditions, operational failures and miscues left passengers stranded in aircraft on runways for 5 or more hours. Neeleman's public testimony explicitly acknowledged all of the facts surrounding this embarrassing episode, and the impact it had on JetBlue stakeholders. He stated,

> Against this background, when JetBlue realized what it put its loyal customers through, we truly feared that our airline might lose all of the good will we had engendered over seven years and perhaps see our customers go elsewhere…Many of our customers understandably reached their breaking point. (p. 3)

Share plans for restitution. A fourth element to consider when designing an organizational apology is restitution. An effective apology does not stop at acknowledging the facts surrounding the episode and expressing remorse. Organizations planning to apologize in light of a failure or crisis must also come prepared to describe their plans for remedying the offense. These plans should be specific and measurable to the degree that the organization can be held accountable for their implementation. While broad statements like *We'll do whatever is necessary* may have modest emotional appeal, a truly effective apology identifies the offense and a specific remedy to meet the needs of impacted stakeholders. In cases of product malfunction, recalls are frequently implemented to provide a no-charge repair or replacement of the effective part. In cases involving more complex harms or broader classes of victims, organizations often agree to implement a series of actions designed to meet the needs of different stakeholder groups.

Promise not to repeat. The fifth, and final element to consider when designing an apology, is forbearance. An effective organizational apology culminates with promise not to repeat the same wrongdoing again in the future. To meet the needs of affected stakeholders and restore public confidence in a transgressing organization, offers of forbearance must be credible and grounded in realistic plans. In many cases, these promises are accompanied by descriptions of comprehensive reforms to be implemented. In the aftermath of the 2007 JetBlue crisis, the airline issuing a detailed and comprehensive JetBlue Customer Bill of Rights, making explicit promises of services and restitution like notification, accommodations and compensation to ensure that such a crisis would never occur again (Neeleman, 2007). Genuine, repeated apologies with these types of guarantees eventually restored public faith in JetBlue, and unsettled the entire industry by in some cases exceeding what competitor airlines offer (McGregor, 2007).

After the necessary components of an apology have been identified, and a statement has been composed, the conditions in which the delivery occurs must also be considered and thoughtfully managed to ensure the apology effectively addresses the needs of various organizational stakeholders.

6. Deliver apology. The delivery context of an apology is an important contributor to overall effectiveness, and should be designed with the same degree of thoughtfulness.

Identify recipients. The first element in deciding how an apology should be delivered is to decide upon the targeted recipients. In some cases, the recipients of an apology will be individuals, while in others whole classes or groups of stakeholders. In more complex situations, leaders might recognize that multiple distinct apologies are warranted due to the unique needs of various stakeholder groups. When preparing an apology, the explicit identification of intended audience is an important consideration. Bland apologies offered to *anyone we might have offended* ring hollow and leave the legitimate concerns of organizational stakeholders unaddressed. For example, while there were indeed many stakeholder audiences interested in the aforementioned JetBlue apology, the recipients of apology were clearly identified as (a) JetBlue's affected customers, and (b) the airline's employees.

Clarify mode and voice. A second consideration in delivering an apology is the mode and voice to be used in the language. Recognizing the proliferation of third-person apologies issued by an organization as a whole, leaders preparing apologies must carefully consider the mode and voice of the statement. Both must be aligned with the needs of the intended audience of stakeholders to the highest degree possible. Executives must consider questions like, Who, specifically, has been offended or victimized?; What is the most respectful way to address this group?; and Who, on behalf of our organization, can deliver the most compelling summary of our position? In general, a first-person delivery by an actual organizational leader is preferred to all other modes, although in some cases a spokesperson, such as an attorney, is effectively used (Patel & Reinsch, 2003).

Chief Executive Officers frequently apologize on behalf of their organizations. In many cases, this is a best practice to adopt, especially when the offense is very serious, and the causes are broad and systemic within the organization (Kellerman, 2006). If the CEO chooses to deliver the apology on behalf of the organization, the statement must reflect a combination of both personal, and organizational accountability.

One notable exception to this practice emerges from the field of medical malpractice, where mistakes are most commonly committed by one doctor, and the victim is most frequently identified as an individual or surviving family. While some practitioners suggest that hospital CEO's are in the best position to effectively apologize (Leape, 2012), others suggest that the physician responsible for the error deliver the message personally and directly (Roberts, 2007).

Identify timing. A third important consideration in delivering an apology is the timing. As stated earlier, in some cases, motivated by a desire to protect its reputation, an organization can be tempted to issue an apology too soon, before a complete and thoughtful investigation of the failure has been completed. These apologies can weaken confidence in an organization, and even diminish credibility, by appearing self-serving (Frantz & Bennigson, 2005; Petrucci, 2002).

Similarly, maintaining silence until stakeholders begin to demand an apology will significantly impact the perceived sincerity of any ensuing message. Ultimately the timing of an effective organizational apology is determined through appropriate proximity to the event itself. From the timing, stakeholders must be able believe that the organization fully appreciates the nature of the failure, and is willing to take responsibility for it proactively (Patel & Reinsch, 2003).

Identify setting(s). A fourth and final consideration in the delivery of an organizational apology is the setting. The actual venue in which an apology is delivered is an important variable to consider, especially in circumstances where multiple groups of stakeholders are affected. Many potential venues can be appropriate, depending on the nature of the crisis, the size of the affected group of victims, and any geographical considerations. Generally speaking, the forum must be accessible to all impacted stakeholders (Hearit, 2010). In this way, effective apologies have been delivered in televised interviews, press conferences, written statements and even in op-ed articles in news media. In general, organizational leaders must discern the most personal and direct way to reach the stakeholders most impacted, in a first-person context. And, in some cases, the apology is offered more than once.

Netflix encountered a significant strategic crisis in 2012, when the organization determined that its legacy business of mailing DVD discs to customers was becoming unprofitable. To remain competitive and prepare for the future, it was clear to Netflix that a transition to an online, streaming video platform would be necessary for future competitiveness. The company abruptly renamed the legacy business *Qwickster* and began to charge an additional monthly fee to users who wanted to continue receiving DVD shipments. The company redeployed the Netflix brand to a streaming only platform. This decision created an immediate and enormous backlash among loyal Netflix subscribers, threatening the survival of the business.

The company quickly recognized the error in this decision and acted quickly to reverse it, although not before sustaining significant reputational damage. In his efforts to restore public confidence during the crisis, Reed Hastings, Netflix CEO, sent personal letters to each Netflix subscriber, released a video apology delivered in the first person, and continued to maintain an apologetic posture in subsequent media appearances for several months following the event. Hastings recognized that both Netflix customers and investors had lost faith in the company, and that his apology would need to be an extended process, delivered across multiple venues (Stewart, 2013).

7. Manage restitution. Even after the apology is delivered, the work of an effective apology is not complete for many stakeholders until the organization has made good on its promises to restore damages and implement other forms of restitution. A well designed and delivered apology statement can certainly have immediate impact in the midst of crisis, preventing worsening of brand and public perceptions, but organizations usually remain in a very fragile place. Temporarily placated stakeholders may remain wary and suspicious, waiting to be convinced of the organization's sincerity. Organizational leaders in the midst of apology must be willing to actively manage this process of restitution.

Manage accountability. Many well-designed apologies contain specific promises and remedies designed to meet stakeholder needs and repair damage. Organizational leaders managing this type of crisis often become aware of systemic causes contributing to the failure. When implementing restitution, these same systems may not be trustworthy or reliable enough to carry out reparations. In light of this, organizations are well advised to create a clear accountability structure for restitution, with direct lines to the organization's senior leadership. This accountability must be managed directly, as part of the apology process.

Measure impact. Organizational leaders must also be willing to measure the effectiveness of their attempts at restitution, and speak to them publicly, when necessary as part of the aftermath of apology. This further affirms the organization's sincerity in issuing the apology, and continues to reassure other peripherally affected stakeholders as well. When it becomes clear that the original commitments to restitution have not been effective, leaders are then accountable to acknowledge this and devise other methods. In the previously mentioned Netflix example, CEO Hastings offered several remedies to attempt to restore the confidence of consumers and analysts, including minor incentives, until he finally chose to undo the changes to the Netflix consumer experience that caused the crisis in the first place. Without this ongoing focus on their attempts at restitution, Netflix would likely not have survived the crisis (Stewart, 2013).

Maintain dialogue. Finally, organizational leaders committed to achieving long-term, sustainable resolution of crisis and failure must be willing to establish ongoing dialogue with affected stakeholders. In some cases this dialogue will involve formal methods and structured forums. In others, it will be reflected in a posture of openness maintained by the organization stating it's recognition of the ongoing priority of re-establishing trust with stakeholders affected by episodes of crisis.

Applying the Model: Considerations for Future Work

The Organizational Apology Model was designed as the product of a comprehensive meta-analysis of the existing literature on the practice of apology. This study was designed to support the research question, *How might the existing literatures on apology be examined, integrated and refocused to apply specifically to leaders operating within an organizational* *context?* The model is comprehensive and robust, with careful attention paid to the unique needs of leaders and the unique demands of complex organizations.

There are several possible next steps implied by this work, both to hone the model and to make its insights available to a broader group of potential users in an organizational context. It is the author's perspective that this work should be further developed in three ways: (a) the application of the model during real-time crisis as a partnership between an organizational executive and a coach, board member or consultant, (b) a retrospective inquiry into a recent episode of organizational crisis with an executive from the subject organization as co-researcher, and (c) a business book on the practice of apology, robust with case studies, examples and stakeholder management tools designed to support organizational leaders.

Real time application. The meta-analysis and the model described in this study have been designed for the purpose of application to real world leadership challenges. In spite of the rigor applied to the evaluation of the available literature, the conclusions drawn herein must be tested, affirmed and honed in an organizational context. While rooted in numerous examples and case studies, as well as many years of professional practice, the model is as of yet untested in management practice. Ideally this limitation will be addressed in subsequent work by other researchers.

It is available in this context with the offer and the desire that other practitioners would experiment with it as a coaching and communications planning tool. The material is written from the perspective of a seasoned executive coach. To that end, other coaches might find the material relevant to their role in supporting organizational leaders. Additionally, internal human resources and communications leaders would find value in using the tool to coach the businesses they support. Finally, board members are frequently engaged in episodes of conflict and crisis management, this research would add value to leaders operating from that perspective, as well.

Retrospective inquiry with co-researcher. The research and model contained in this study would benefit from additional academic scrutiny, through application to real episodes of corporate failure and apology. This research might be conducted retrospectively by organizational scientists as case study inquiries into significant episodes of corporate apology. In any given year, a handful of meaningful and interesting apologies are offered that would benefit from this level of analysis. While a purely academic study of the model would be of great interest, even greater value could be achieved by engaging a co-researcher from inside a subject organization to conduct the inquiry. This would allow access to certain documentation and perspectives that are otherwise unavailable through public means.

Publication. One of the primary justifications for the relevance of this research was the notable absence of comprehensive resources on the subject of apology in the field of organizational management. With one notable exception, based on a *1-minute* model (Blanchard, 2003), there very few significant published resources available to corporate leaders written within the genre of business writing. The literature review for this study did, however, survey four significant monographs on the subject of apology, each written with a unique perspective in mind. Aaron Lazare (2004), a psychiatrist and medical school chancellor, wrote *On Apology*, exploring the practice from the perspective of healing. Nick Smith (2008), a philosopher, has contributed *I Was Wrong* as a philosophical treatise on the subject. Nicholas Tavuchis (1991) wrote *Mea Culpa: A Sociology of Apology and Reconciliation,* creating a sociological framework for the practice of apology. And finally, Michael Hearit (2010), a well regarded crisis management strategist, has *offered Crisis Management by Apology*.

Each of these authors has offered a comprehensive treatment of the subject, and yet all require translation and re-alignment to speak directly to the needs of my intended audience. Further development of the ideas and models in this research would lend itself well to a fifth comprehensive book on the subject. A published version of this material would benefit from expanded resources for stakeholder needs assessment and impact planning, as well as other more tactical tools and workbook type resources to support the unique needs of leaders facing organizational apology.

Conclusion

Organizational leadership is difficult work. I have conducted this study with a strong and genuine desire to provide support, wisdom and insight to leaders in the midst of some of the most challenging circumstances of their careers. During my years as a coach, consultant and guide in many types of organizations I have seen leaders struggle to balance competing demands, conflicting advice and personal uncertainty. Many of these leaders have been able to powerfully transform difficult circumstances with thoughtful, contrite acknowledgments of failure and an effective apology. Far too often, however, I have seen earnest leaders, deceived by the belief that apology must be avoided at all costs, lead their organizations deeper into costly public relations crises. Tragically, some leaders and organizations choose to hold blindly to the belief that they must not publicly admit to being wrong, in spite of ample public evidence of their failures.

At a time when corporate entities are among the most powerful institutions on earth, the stakes are incredibly high. Billions of dollars of value are either created or lost through the navigation of episodes of crisis and failure. This study, and the Organizational Apology Model, are offered to organizational leaders as an invitation to consider the practice of apology as a viable strategic option. When thoughtfully constructed and delivered, organizational apologies have great potential to restore public confidence and re-engage stakeholders who have been impacted or alienated.

Leaders facing competing demands and conflicting advice are encouraged to thoughtfully test their own beliefs about the practice of apology, and consider the interests of all affected stakeholders. Apologizing, even when connected to painful and embarrassing admissions, can be a powerfully transforming response to crisis situations. And, when apology is not advisable, leaders are encouraged to avoid pseudo-apologies, pleas for amnesty and other statements intended to reap the benefits of apology without the truthful genuineness required. There are many other appropriate responses that can also be considered.

REFERENCES

Allan, A., & Allan, M. M. (2000). The South African truth and reconciliation commission as a therapeutic tool. *Behavioral Sciences & the Law, 18*(4), 459-477. doi:10.1002/1099-0798(2000)18:4<459::AID-BSL366>3.0.CO;2-T

Allred, K. G. (2000). Anger and retaliation in conflict: The role of attribution. In M. Deutsch & P. T. Coleman (Eds.), *The handbook of conflict resolution: Theory and practice*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Altheide, D. L. (1987). Ethnographic content analysis. *Qualitative Sociology, 10*(1), 65-77. doi:10.1007/BF00988269

Altheide, D. L., & Schneider, C. J. (2013). *Qualitative media analysis*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Associated Press. (2013, February 4). Ecuador: Chevron will not apologize for pollution, even to save $8.5 billion. *The New York Times,* p. 7.

Bass, B. M. (1990). From transactional to transformational leadership: Learning to share the vision. *Organizational Dynamics, 18*, 19-31. doi:10.1016/0090-2616(90)90061-S

Bass, B. M., Avolio, B. J., Jung, D. I., & Berson, Y. (2003). Predicting unit performance by assessing transformational and transactional leadership. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 88*(2), 207-218. doi: doi:10.1037/0021-9010.88.2.207

Bauman, J. (2008). The role of forgiveness in rehabilitation. *Journal of Health Care Chaplaincy, 14*(2), 75-82. doi:10.1080/08854720802129018

Baumeister, R. F., Stillwell, A., & Wotman, S. R. (1990). Victim and perpetrator accounts of interpersonal conflict: Autobiographical narratives about anger. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 59*(5), 994-1005. doi:10.1037/0022-3514.59.5.994

Benoit, W. L. (1997). Image repair discourse and crisis communication. *Public Relations Review, 23*(2), 177-186. doi:10.1016/S0363-8111(97)90023-0

Benoit, W. L., & Drew, S. (1997). Appropriateness and effectiveness of image repair strategies. *Communication Reports, 10*(2), 153-163. doi:10.1080/08934219709367671

Biglan, A. (1973). The characteristics of subject matter in different academic areas. *Journal of Applied Psychology Journal of Applied Psychology, 57*(3), 195-203. doi:10.1037 /h0034701

Bisel, R. S., & Messersmith, A. S. (2012). Organizational and supervisory apology effectiveness: Apology giving in work settings. *Business Communication Quarterly, 75*(4), 425-448. doi:10.1177/1080569912461171

Blanchard, K. (2003). *The one minute apology: A powerful way to make things better*. New York, NY: William Morrow.

Blanchard, K., Zigarmi, D., & Nelson, R. (1993). Situational leadership after 25 years: A retrospective. *Journal of Leadership Studies, 1*(1), 22-36. doi:10.1177/107179199300100104

Blaney, J. R., Benoit, W. L., & Brazeal, L. M. (2002). Blowout!: Firestone's image restoration campaign. *Public Relations Review, 28*(4), 379-392. doi:10.1016/S0363-8111(02)00163-7

Borda, J. L., & Mackey-Kallis, S. (2004). A model for crisis management. In D. P. Millar & R. L. Heath (Eds.), *Responding to crisis: A rhetorical approach to crisis communication* (pp. 117-137). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Bouchard, A. (1992). Freak explosion jolts Baie Des Ha! Ha! *Public Relations Journal, 48*(10). Retrieved from https://www.questia.com/library/journal/1G1-13528008/freak-explosion-jolts-baie-des-ha-ha

Brockner, J., & James, E. (2008). Toward an understanding of when executives see crisis as opportunity. *The Journal of Applied Behavioral Science, 44*(1), 94-115. doi:10.1177/0021886307313824

Bryman, A., & Bell, E. (2003). *Business research methods*. London, UK: Oxford University Press.

Buttny, R. (1993). *Social accountability in communication*. London, UK: Sage.

Casselman, B., & Gonzalez, A. (2009). Chevron files suit against Ecuador. *Wall Street, 254*(72). Retrieved from http://www.wsj.com/articles/SB125373995288335273

Cavanagh, S. (1997). Content analysis: Concepts, methods and applications. *Nurse Researcher, 4*, 5-16. doi:10.7748/nr1997.04.4.3.5.c5869

Chang, M. (2009). The politics of an apology. *Harvard International Review, 31*(3), 34. Retrieved from http://hir.harvard.edu

Chapman, A. R. (2007). Truth commissions and intergroup forgiveness: The case of the South African truth and reconciliation commission. *Peace and Conflict: Journal of Peace Psychology, 13*(1), 51-69. doi:10.1037/h0094024

Cieply, M., & Barnes, B. (2014, December 30). Sony cyberattack, first a nuisance, swiftly grew into a firestorm. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com

Cohen, M. L. (2010). The power of apology. *Family Practice Management, 17*(1-2), 1-2. Retrieved from http://www.aafp.org/journals/fpm.html

Coombs, W. T. (2007). Protecting organization reputations during a crisis: The development and application of situational crisis communication theory. *Corporate Reputation Review, 10*(3), 163-176. doi:10.1057/palgrave.crr.1550049

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. doi:10.1016/j.pubrev.2008.04.001

Creswell, J. W. (2003). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Creswell, J. W. (2013). *Qualitative inquiry & research design: Choosing among five approaches*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Cunningham, M. (1999). Saying sorry: The politics of apology. *Political Quarterly, 70*(3), 285-293. doi:10.1111/1467-923X.00231

Daly, K., & Immarigeon, R. (1998). The past, present, and future of restorative justice: Some critical reflections. *Contemporary Justice Review, 1*, 25-45.

Darby, B. W., & Schlenker, B. R. (1989). Children's reactions to transgressions: Effects of the actor's apology, reputation and remorse. *British Journal of Social Psychology*, *28*(4), 353-364. doi:10.1111/j.2044-8309.1989.tb00879.x

De Cremer, D., Pillutla, M. R., & Folmer, C. (2011). How important is an apology to you? Forecasting errors in evaluating the value of apologies. *Psychological Science, 22*(1), 45-48. doi:10.1177/0956797610391101

Denning, S. (2007). *The secret language of leadership*. San Francisco, CA: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

Denzin, N. K., & Lincoln, Y. S. (2005). *The Sage handbook of qualitative research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Eaton, J., Struthers, C. W., & Santelli, A. G. (2006). The mediating role of perceptual validation in the repentance-forgiveness process. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin, 32*, 1389-1401. doi:10.1177/0146167206291005

Eavis, P., & Corkery, M. (2014, August 21). Bank of America's $16 billion mortgage settlement less painful than it looks. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com

Edwards, J. A. (2008). The mission of healing: Kofi Annan's failed apology. *Atlantic Journal of Communications, 16*, 88-104. doi:10.1080/15456870701840012

Elo, S., & Kyngäs, H. (2008). The qualitative content analysis process. *Journal of Advanced Nursing, 62*(1), 107-115. doi:10.1111/j.1365-2648.2007.04569.x

Engel, B. (2002). *The power of apology: Healing steps to transform all your relationships*. Hoboken, NJ: Wiley.

Exline, J. J., Deshea, L., & Holeman, V. T. (2007). Is apology worth the risk? Predictors, outcomes, and ways to avoid regret. *Journal of Social & Clinical Psychology, 26*(4), 479-504. doi:10.1521/jscp.2007.26.4.479

Fleischacker, S., & Feigelson, J. (2007). Vladimir Jankelevitch, Forgiveness [Book review]. *Ethics, 118*(1), 160-164. doi:10.1086/521284

Frantz, C. M., & Bennigson, C. (2005). Better late than early: The influence of timing on apology effectiveness. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology, 41*(2), 201-207. doi:10.1016/j.jesp.2004.07.007

Goei, R. R., Anthony; Meyer, Gary; Carlyle, Kellie. (2007). The effects of favor and apology on compliance. *Communication Research, 34*(6), 575-595. doi:10.1177/0093650207307896

Goffman, E. (1971). *Relations in public*. New York, NY: Basic Books.

Golding, M. (1984). Forgiveness and regret. *Philosophical Forum, 16*(1984-1985), 121-137.

Goldman, H. (2009). Traditional forms of wisdom and politics in Plato's Apology. *The Classical Quarterly, 59*(2), 444-467. doi:10.1017/S0009838809990103

Goleman, D., Boyatzis, R., & McKee, A. (2002). *Primal leadership: Learning to lead with emotional intelligence*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard Business School Press.

Govier, T. V. W. (2002). The promise and pitfalls of apology. *Journal of Social Philosophy, 33*, 67-82. doi:10.1111/1467-9833.00124

Griswold, C. L. (2007). *Forgiveness: A philosophical exploration*. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.

Guba, E. G. (1990). The alternative paradigm dialog. In E. G. Guba (Ed.), *The paradigm dialog* (pp. 17-30). Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

Hargie, O., Stapleton, K., & Tourish, D. (2010). Interpretations of CEO public apologies for the banking crisis: Attributions of blame and avoidance of responsibility. *Organization, 17*(6), 721-742. doi:10.1177/1350508410367840

Harper, C., & Townsend, M. (2009, November 17). Blankfein apologizes for Goldman Sachs' role in crisis. *Bloomberg Businessweek*. Retrieved from http://www.bloomberg.com/apps/news?pid=newsarchive&sid=aeV9jwqKKrEw

Hatch, M. J. (1997). *Organization theory: Modern, symbolic, and postmodern perspectives*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Hauerwas, S. (1985). Peacemaking: The virtue of the church. *The Furrow, 36*, 605-615.

Hauerwas, S. (2001). *The Hauerwas reader* (J. Berkman & M. Cartwright Eds.). Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

Hearit, K. M. (1994). Apologies and public relations crises at Chrysler, Toshiba and Volvo. *Public Relations Review, 20*, 113-125. doi:10.1016/0363-8111(94)90053-1

Hearit, K. M. (1996). The use of counter-attack in apologetic public relations crises: The case of General Motors vs. Dateline NBC. *Public Relations Review, 22*(3), 233-248. doi:10.1016/S0363-8111(96)90047-8

Hearit, K. M. (1997). On the use of transcendence as an apologia strategy: The case of Johnson controls and its fetal protection policy. *Public Relations Review, 23*(3), 217-231. doi:10.1016/S0363-8111(97)90033-3

Hearit, K. M. (2010). *Crisis management by apology: Corporate response to allegations of wrongdoing*. New York, NY: Routledge.

Hearit, K. M., & Brown, J. (2004). Merrill Lynch: Corporate apologia and business fraud. *Public Relations Review, 30*(4), 459-466. doi:10.1016/j.pubrev.2004.08.008

Heifetz, R. (1994). *Leadership without easy answers*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Heifetz, R., Grashow, A., & Linsky, M. (2009). *The practice of adaptive leadership: Tools and tactics for changing your organization and the world*. Boston, MA: Harvard Business Press.

Ho, B., & Liu, E. (2011). What's an apology worth? Decomposing the effect of apologies on medical malpractice payments using state apology laws. *Journal of Empirical Legal Studies, 8*, 179-199. doi:10.1111/j.1740-1461.2011.01226.x

Hodgins, H. S. L. E. (2003). Apology versus defense: Antecedents and consequences. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology, 39*(4), 297-316. doi:10.1016/S0022-1031(03)00024-6

Hui, C. H., Lau, F. L. Y., Tsang, K. L. C., & Pak, S. T. (2011). The impact of post-apology behavioral consistency on victim's forgiveness intention: A study of trust violation among coworkers. *Journal of Applied Social Psychology, 41*(5), 1214-1236. doi:10.1111/j.1559-1816.2011.00754.x

Jehle, A., Miller, M. K., Kemmelmeier, M., & Maskaly, J. (2012). How voluntariness of apologies affects actual and hypothetical victims' perceptions of the offender. *Journal of Social Psychology, 152*(6), 727-745. doi:10.1080/00224545.2012.697079

Joiner, B., & Josephs, S. (2007). *Leadership agility: Five levels of mastery for anticipating and initiating change*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Jones, L. G. (1995). *Embodying forgiveness*. Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans.

Jones, W. A. (2011). Variation among academic disciplines: An update on analytical frameworks and research. *The Journal of the Professoriate, 6*(1), 9-27.

Kampf, Z. (2009). Public (non-) apologies: The discourse of minimizing responsibility. *Journal of Pragmatics, 41*(11), 2257-2270. doi:10.1016/j.pragma.2008.11.007

Kellaway, L. (2014, July 6). Sheryl Sandberg adds to the glut of non-apologies. *The Financial Times*.

Kellerman, B. (2006). When should a leader apologize and when not? *Harvard Business Review, 84*(4), 72-81.

Kiger, P. J. (2004). The art of the apology. *Workforce Management, 83*(10), 57-62. Retrieved from http://www.workforce.com/publications/1

Kouzes, J. M., & Posner, B. Z. (1995). *The leadership challenge*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Krippendorff, K. (1980). *Content analysis: An introduction to its methodology*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Kuckartz, U. (2014). *Qualitative text analysis*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Lazare, A. (2004). *On apology*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Leape, L. L. (2012). Apology for errors: Whose responsibility? *Frontiers of Health Services Management, 28*(3), 3-12.

Lee, S. C. S. (2012). Corporate apology and crisis communication: The effect of responsibility admittance and sympathetic expression on public's anger relief. *Public Relations Review, 38*(5), 932-934. doi:10.1016/j.pubrev.2012.08.006

Levy, N. (2002). The apology paradox and the non-identity problem. *The Philosophical Quarterly, 52*(208), 358-368. doi:10.1111/1467-9213.00273

Lewis, C. S. (1952). *Mere Christianity*. New York, NY: Macmillan.

Liker, J. (2011, February 11). Toyota's recall crisis: What have we learned? *Harvard Business Review.* Retrieved from https://hbr.org/2011/02/toyotas-recall-crisis-full-of

Makkai, T., & Braithwaite, J. (1994). Reintegrative shaming and compliance with regulatory standards. *Criminology, 32*(3), 361-385. doi:10.1111/j.1745-9125.1994.tb01158.x

Massachusetts Annotated Laws. (2001). A*dmissibility of benevolent statements, writings or gestures relating to accident victims, Chapter 233: Witnesses and Evidence* C.F.R. § 23D.

Mayring, P. (2000). Qualitative content analysis. *Forum: Qualitative Social Research, 1*(2). Retrieved from http://www.qualitative-research.net/index.php/fqs/article/view/1089/2385

McClam, E. (2001, October 31). Coke confirms Odwalla buy. *The Los Angeles Times*.

McGregor, J. (2007, March 4). An extraordinary stumble at JetBlue. *Bloomberg Businessweek*.

Miles, M. B., & Huberman, A. M. (1994). *Qualitative data analysis: An expanded sourcebook*. San Francisco, CA: Sage.

Morgan, G. (1997). *Images of organization* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Murphy, M. (2011). Apology, recognition, and reconciliation. *Human Rights Review, 12*(1), 47-69. doi:10.1007/s12142-010-0166-7

Neeleman, D. (2007). *Statement of David Neeleman, Chief Executive Officer, JetBlue Airways Corporation, before the committee on transportation and infrastructure subcommittee on aviation*. Retrieved from http://www.jetblue.com/p/about/ourcompany/flightlog /042007_jetbluetestimony_billofrights.pdf

Northouse, P. G. (2004). *Leadership theory and practice*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

O’Connor, C. (2013, November 11). Do you accept Lululemon billionaire Chip Wilson’s teary apology? *Forbes*. Retrieved from http://www.forbes.com/sites/clareoconnor/2013/11/11 /do-you-accept-lululemon-billionaire-chip-wilsons-teary-apology-over-his-body-shaming-comments/

Ohbuchi, K., Kameda, M., & Agarie, N. (1989). Apology as aggression control: Its role in mediating appraisal of and response to harm. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 56*(2), 219-227. doi:10.1037/0022-3514.56.2.219

Parrish, M., & Nauss, D. W. (1993, February 10). NBC admits it rigged crash, settles GM suit. *Los Angeles Times*.

Patel, A., & Reinsch, L. (2003). Companies can apologize: Corporate apologies and legal liability. *Business Communication Quarterly, 66*(1), 9-25. doi:10.1177 /108056990306600103

Pecastaing, C. (2013). The politics of apology. *World Affairs, 175*(6), 51. Retrieved from http://connection.ebscohost.com/c/articles/85738086/politics-apology

Petrucci, C. J. (2002). Apology in the criminal justice setting: evidence for including apology as an additional component in the legal system. *BSL Behavioral Sciences & the Law, 20*(4), 337-362. doi:10.1002/bsl.495

Puig, J. F. (2013, October 12). Ecuador versus Chevron [Letter to the editor]. *The Economist, 409*(8853). Retrieved from http://www.economist.com/news/letters/21587764-armenia-ecuador-e-cigarettes-azerbaijan-3d-printing-germany-machiavelli-bon-jovi

Quinn, R. E. (2000). *Change the world*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Quinn, R. E. (2005). Moments of greatness. *Harvard Business Review, 83*(7/8), 74-83.

Rehak, J. (2002, March 23). Tylenol made a hero of Johnson & Johnson: The recall that started them all. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com

RimÈ, B., Kanyangara, P., Yzerbyt, V., & Paez, D. (2011). The impact of Gacaca tribunals in Rwanda: Psychosocial effects of participation in a truth and reconciliation process after a genocide. *European Journal of Social Psychology, 41*(6), 695-706. doi:10.1002/ejsp.822

Risen, J. L., & Gilovich, T. (2007). Target and observer differences in the acceptance of questionable apologies. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 92*(3), 418-433. doi:10.1037/0022-3514.92.3.418

Roberts, R. G. (2007). The art of apology: When and how to seek forgiveness. *Family Practice Management, 14*(7), 45-49. Retrieved from http://www.aafp.org/fpm/2007/0700/p44.html

Robertson, J. (2012). Tell it all?: Challenging crisis communications' rules. *Public Relations Journal, 6*(1). Retrieved from http://www.prsa.org/intelligence/prjournal/documents /2012robertson.pdf

Samson, D. (2009). Chevron in Ecuador. *The Economist, 392*(8638). Retrieved from http://www.economist.com/node/13815107

Scheff, T. J. (1998). *Emotions, the social bond, and human reality: Part/whole analysis*. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.

Schein, E. (1992). *Organizational culture and leadership* (2nd ed.). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Scher, S. J., & Darley, J. M. (1997). How effective are the things people say to apologize? Effects of the realization of the Apology Speech Act. *Journal of Psycholinguistic Research, 26*(1), 127-140. doi:10.2307/3033840

Schlenker, B. R., & Darby, B. W. (1981). The use of apologies in social predicaments. *Social Psychology Quarterly, 44*(3), 271-278. doi:10.2307/3033840

Schneider, M. (2002). A stakeholder model of organizational leadership. *Organization Science, 13*(2), 209-222. doi:10.1287/orsc.13.2.209.531

Seidman, D. (2014, February 3). Calling for an apology cease-fire. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from http://dealbook.nytimes.com/2014/02/03/calling-for-an-apology-cease-fire/

Senge, P. (1990). *The fifth discipline: The art and practice of the learning organization*. New York, NY: Doubleday.

Slocum, D., Allan, A., & Allan, M. M. (2011). An emerging theory of apology. *Australian Journal of Psychology, 63*(2), 83-92. doi:10.1111/j.1742-9536.2011.00013.x

Smith, N. (2005). The categorical apology. *Journal of Social Philosophy, 36*(4), 473-496. doi:10.1111/j.1467-9833.2005.00289.x

Smith, N. (2008). *I was wrong: The meanings of apologies*. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.

Sorkin, A. R. (2014a, February 10). AOL chief's words leads to a study in 'I'm sorry'. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com

Sorkin, A. R. (2014b, February 3). Too many sorry excuses for apology. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com

Stewart, J. B. (2013, April 26). Netflix looks back on its near-death spiral. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com

Strom, S. (2012, July 7). Has 'organic' been oversized? *The New York Times*. Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com

Struthers, C. W., Eaton, J., Santelli, A. G., Uchiyama, M., & Shirvani, N. (2008). The effects of attributions of intent and apology on forgiveness: When saying sorry may not help the story. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology, 44*(4), 983-992. doi:10.1016 /j.jesp.2008.02.006

Sugimoto, N. (1997). A Japan-U.S. comparison of apology styles. *Communication Research, 24*(4), 349-369. doi:10.1177/009365097024004002

Sugimoto, N. (1998). Norms of apology depicted in U.S. American and Japanese literature on manners and etiquette. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations, 22*(3), 251-276. doi:10.1016/S0147-1767(98)00007-8

Sugimoto, N. (1999). *Japanese apology across disciplines*. Hauppauge, NY: Nova Science Publishers.

Sullivan, G. (2014, July 3). Sheryl Sandberg not sorry for Facebook mood manipulation study. *The Washington Post*. Retrieved from http://www.washingtonpost.com/news/morning-mix/wp/2014/07/03/sheryl-sandberg-not-sorry-for-facebook-mood-manipulation-study/

Taft, L. (2000). Apology subverted: The commodification of apology. *Yale Law Journal, 109*, 1135-1160. doi:10.2307/797485

Taft, L. (2005). Apology and medical mistake: Opportunity or foil? *The Annals of Health Law, 14*(55), 55-94. Retrieved from http://www.luc.edu/law/centers/healthlaw/annals/index.html

Tavuchis, N. (1991). *Mea culpa: A sociology of apology and reconciliation*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

Thompson, J. (2000). The apology paradox. *Philosophical Quarterly, 50*(201), 470-475. doi:10.1111/1467-9213.00200

Thomsen, S. R., & Rawson, B. (1998). Purifying a tainted corporate image: Odwalla's response to an e. coli poisoning. *Public Relations Quarterly, 43*(3), 35-46. Retrieved from http://connection.ebscohost.com/c/articles/1317834/purifying-tainted-corporate-image-odwallas-response-e-coli-poisoning

Torbert, B. (2004). *Action inquiry: The secret of timely and transforming leadership*. San Francisco, CA: Berrett-Koehler.

Tucker, S., Turner, N., Barling, J., Reid, E. M., & Elving, C. (2006). Apologies and transformational leadership. *Journal of Business Ethics, 63*, 195-207. doi:10.1007/s10551-005-3571-0

Van Dusen, V. (2008). Legal and practical aspects of the professional's apology. *Pharmacy Times, 74*(2), 82-89. Retrieved from http://www.pharmacytimes.com

Waligo, V. M., Clarke, J., & Hawkins, R. (2014). The "leadership-stakeholder involvement capacity" nexus in stakeholder management. *Journal of Business Research, 67*(7), 1342-1352. doi:10.1016/j.jbusres.2013.08.019

Wallace, A. (2015, February 2). Chip Wilson, Lululemon guru, is moving on. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com

Weeks, H. (2003). The art of the apology. *Harvard Management Update, 8*, 10-11. Retrieved from https://hbr.org/product/harvard-management-update-april-2003-volume-8-number-4/U03040-PDF-ENG

Wexler, D. B. (1993). Therapeutic jurisprudence and the criminal courts. *William and Mary Law Review, 35*, 279-299. Retrieved from http://wmlawreview.org

Wexler, D. B. (1998a). Relapse prevention planning principles for criminal law practice. *Psychology, Public Policy & Law, 5*, 1028-1033. doi:10.1037/1076-8971.5.4.1028

Wexler, D. B. (1998b). Therapeutic jurisprudence forum: Practicing therapeutic jurisprudence. *Revista Juridica Universidad de Puerto Rico, 67*, 317-242. Retrieved from http://www.revistajuridicaupr.org

Whitford, D., & Elkind, P. (2012, November). Will this be BP's last apology? *Fortune*. Retrieved from http://fortune.com/2012/11/19/will-this-be-bps-last-apology/

Zaleznik, A. (1977). Managers and leaders: Are they different? *Harvard Business Review, 55*, 67-78. Retrieved from https://hbr.org/2004/01/managers-and-leaders-are-they-different

Zechmeister, J. S., Garcia, S., Romero, C., & Vas, S. N. (2004). Don't apologize unless you mean it: A laboratory investigation of forgiveness and retaliation. *Journal of Social and Clinical Psychology, 23*(4), 532-564. doi:10.1521/jscp.23.4.532.40309

APPENDIX A

Literature Maps

Apology: Philosophy and Theology Literature Map

Seminal Thinkers

Year	Name
339BC	Plato, Apology of Socrates
	Jesus
1984	Golding, Martin, *Forgiveness and Regret*
1985	Hauerwas, *Peacemaking*
1995	Jones, Embodying Forgiveness
2007	Griswold, Charles L., Forgiveness: A Philosophical Exploration
2005	Smith, Nick, *The Categorical Apology*
2008	Smith, Nick, I Was Wrong: The Meanings of Apologies

Key Themes

Idea	Source(s)
Apologia (as opposed to *apology*)	Plato,
Forgiveness (apology as precursor to)	Griswold (2007)
Reconciliation (apology as component of, along with related ideas of confession and forgiveness) Repentance = Apology + Moral acknowlegement	Jesus, Hauerwas
Moral amends	Golding (1984)
Justified resentment (on behalf of victim)	Golding (1984)
“go and show him his fault…just between the two of you, if he listens”	Jesus, Matthew 18:15
“if you remember that your brother has something against you…first go and be reconciled”	Jesus, Matthew 5:23-24
Apology can accomplish purpose in the public sphere even when the offense is un-forgiven; unforgivable	Griswold (2007)

Definition of Apology

Idea	Source(s)
Three levels of definition: a) A defense,	Govier & Vervwoerd (2002)

b) An excuse or account c) A moral apology ("profoundly sorry I inured you")	
What makes apology effective varies based on local factors	Griswold (2007)
Speech act to remedy an offense	Smith (2008)
a) must be painful (vulnerability) b) must be authentic (not an excuse) c) must probe personal and organizational values that permitted the offense d) Must encourage feedback from offended e) Must lead to behavior change	Seidman (2014)

Purpose or Function of Apology

Idea	Source(s)
Response to public apology not forgiveness, but acceptance (goal)	Griswold (2007)
Making moral amends, by negating justified resentment	Golding (1984)
Acknowledgement:1) of wrongdoing by self or institution, 2) of the moral status of the victim, 3) of the legitimacy of anger, resentment	Govier & Verwoerd (2002)
Getting offended party to recognize the apologizer's sincerity	Smith (2005)

Modes of Apology

Idea	Source(s)
Individual & Collective (Individual to individual, individual to collective, collective to individual, collective to collective)	Smith (2008)
Individual vs. institutional	Govier & Verword (2002)
Retrospective "many to many" (leader on behalf of collective descendants, to the collective descendants of a victim group). Ie – slavery, discrimination, etc. Philosophical inconsistencies, and disingenuousness	Thompson (2000)
"Temporal indexing" required to issue retrospective, revisionist "agency" apologies	Levy (2002)

Process or Steps

Idea	Source(s)
Categorical Apology: a) Corroborated factual record b) Acceptance of blame c) Identification of each harm d) Endorsing moral principles underlying each harm e) Recognition of victim as moral interlocutor f) Categorical regret g) Performance of the apology h) Reform and redress i) Intentions for apologizing j) Emotions	Smith (2005, 2008)
Description of Apology: a) Statement of remorse b) Account/description of events c) Description of damage d) Offer of reparation Less frequently includes: e) Explicit statement of responsibility f) Request for forgiveness g) Self-castigation h) Promise not to repeat	Sugimoto (1999)

Alternatives to Apology

Idea	Source(s)
Apologia (robust justificatory defense)	Plato, many others.
Expression of sympathy Denial of causation or moral responsibility Claiming accident, denial of intent	Smith (2008)

Apology: Communications and Public Relations Literature Map

Seminal Thinkers

Year	Name
2006	Hearit
2007, 2008	Coombs
1997	Benoit, W.L. (prolific on Image Repair strategies)

Key Themes

Idea	Source(s)
Crisis Communication. Three types of crisis: 1) Victim cluster (where org is also a victim) 2) Accidental cluster (unintentional) 3) Preventable (org unknowingly commits)	Coombs (2007)
Active responsibility (vs. passive) correlates to relief of public anger	Lee & Chung (2012)
Crisis communication: Post crisis, apology, compensation and sympathy led to favorable reputation with non-victim stakeholders	Coombs & Holladay (2008)
"Full disclosure" (recommended when): • when corporation is a victim • to avoid alienating key stakeholders • when the facts will come out anyway • minimize damage to image • preserve relationships with victims • restore relationship to set the groundwork for pursuing a private settlement • to discourage victims from pursuing a legal remedy • to pre-emptively minimize punitive damages if litigation is pursued	Hearit (2006)
"Full disclosure (discouraged when): • Apology can be used as evidence of guilt • CEO's time will be drained/preoccupied • Actual cost of legal fees could be severe • If it invites regulatory intervention • If it presents an invitation to expand discovery • If it conveys legal responsibility to organization's	Hearit (2006)

shareholders.	
When should organizations apologize/when not: Should, when: • The event amounts to a media flap, and there is no victim with bodily harm. • Damage calculation is relatively straightforward • In cases of defamation (speech crimes befit apology) • As part of a larger settlement • When guilt can be proven regardless of apology (nothing to lose) Should not, when: • Compensation is difficult/complex to determine • When there is a potentially large victim class.	Hearit (2006)
Conflict tension for leaders: (Hobson's Choice) Do the right thing or protect the organization's survival	Hearit (2006)
Organizational Stakeholders: • Self • Employees • Board/shareholders • Public • Regulatory/enabling agencies • Ecosystem (suppliers, vendors, b2b, consumers)	Hearit (2006)
Stakeholders as competing constituencies: During crisis, the above mentioned stakeholders are reduced to "consumer vs. stockholder"	Hearit (2006)

Definition of Apology

Idea	Source(s)
Components: • Acceptance of responsibility • Expression of remorse/sympathy • Compensation • Assurance	Lee & Chung (2012)
Ethical, effective apology: • truthful • sincere • timely • voluntary • addresses all stakeholders	Hearit (2006)

• performed in appropriate context	
Use of a persuasive narrative to alter the interpretation of the alleged act	Hearit (2006)

Purpose or Function of Apology

Idea	Source(s)
Increased Likeability: apology leads to greater "liking" even when no actual transgression has occurred (apologizing for not providing a favor)	Goei et al. (2007)
Crisis intervention Variables include: crisis types, crisis history, prior relationships	Coombs (2007)
Maximize reputational protection	Coombs (2007)
Restore legitimacy of actor, in regard to behaviors which are seen as incongruent with the social system in which they operate	Hearit (2006)
Speech act intended to generate feelings of forgiveness toward (the) organization	Bisel & Messersmith (2012)

Modes of Apology

Idea	Source(s)
3rd Person: Obscuring personal responsibility A leader with a personal role in offense, but speaking generally, about Org as social actor (Kofi Annan to Rwandan parliament)	Edwards (2008)
Apologies from "Collective" (org as social actor): Adults less forgiving of an organization than an offense committed by an individual	Bisel & Messersmith (2012)
Attributes of organization as social actor • Political and economic status • Legal status • Discursive status (speaking as) • Participants in the drama	Hearit (2006)

Process or Steps

Idea	Source(s)

OOPS Model: 1) Explain your error 2) Say you're sorry 3) Promise of forbearance 4) Offer to restore	Bisel & Messersmith (2012)
Trained participants crafted more effective apologies (meaning feelings of forgiveness were extended toward the organization) than non-trained	Bisel & Messersmith (2012)
Steps: 1) Explicitly acknowledges wrongdoing 2) Fully accepts responsibility 3) Expresses regret 4) Identifies with injured stakeholders 5) Asks for forgiveness 6) Seeks reconciliation with injured stakeholders 7) Fully disclosed information related to the offense 8) Provides explanation that addresses the legitimate expectations of the stakeholders 9) Offers to perform appropriate corrective action 10) Offers appropriate compensation	Hearit (2006)

Alternatives to Apology

Idea	Source(s)
Apologia: respond to organizational criticism by offering a vigorous and compelling defense	Hearit (2006)
"statement of regret" well crafted, showing concern for victim but carefully avoiding responsibility	Hearit (1994)
Non-categorical apologies: • Ambiguous apologies • Expressions of sympathy • Value declaring apologies • Conciliatory apologies • Compensatory apologies • Purely instrumental apologies • Coerced apologies • Proxy apologies	Smith (2008)
Alternatives: • Attack accuser • Denial	Coombs (2007)

• Scapegoat • Excuse making • Justification • Compensation (in lieu of apology) • Reminder of past good works • Ingratiation • Victimization claims	
Benoit's Typology of Image Repair Strategies • Denial (shift blame, simple denial) • Evade responsibility (provocation, defeasibility, accident, good intentions) • Reduce offensiveness of event (bolstering, minimization, differentiation, transcendence, attack accuser, compensation) • Corrective action • Mortification (apology)	Benoit (1997)

Apology: Social Sciences Literature Map

Seminal Thinkers

Year	Name
1971	Goffman, Relations in Public
1981	Schlenker & Darby, *The Use of Apologies in Social Predicaments*
1991	Tavuchis, Mea culpa: A sociology of apology and reconciliation
2004	Lazare, On Apology
2007	Exline et al., *Is apology worth the risk? Predictors, outcomes and ways to avoid regret*

Key Themes

Idea	Source(s)
Situational: When apology is likely to occur - a) With greater severity of the offense b) With greater remorse on part of offender c) With greater sense of offended as innocent party. d) With constructive (vs. destructive) behaviors demonstrated by offended party e) With higher likelihood of offender being confronted by offended party. f) With less intentional, less justified offenses. g) With a mutual offense, and repentant behaviors	Exline et al. (2007)
Intention: Forgiveness not easily granted, even after apology, when victim believes the offenses is intentional	Struthers et al. (2008)
Voluntariness: Coerced apology. Seen as less genuine/sincere by observers but not necessarily by recipients	Risen & Gilovitch (2007)
Voluntariness: Hypothetical victims do not distinguish between coerced and voluntary apology (such as in criminal sentencing). Whereas, actual victims do.	Jehle et al. (2012)
Voluntariness: Victims adjust perceptions of offender based on degree of voluntariness. More convinced of sincerity with voluntary vs. coerced apology	Jehle et al. (2012)
Impact: Victims overestimate the positive impact of receiving an apology (control: imagined scenarios vs. real ones)	Cremer et al. (2010)

Definition of Apology

Idea	Source(s)
No consensus, comprehensive, accepted theory in Psychology literature	Slocum (2011)
“an utterance intended to remedy social disruption”	Scher & Darley (1997)
Offender “splits self in two” (bad self & good self); “bad self” is the transgressor	Goffman (1971)
“remedial self-presentation… which include admissions of blameworthiness and regret by the actor”	Schlenker & Darby (1981)
“convincing the audience that the event is not a fair representation of what the actor is like”	Schlenker (1980)

Purpose or Function of Apology

Idea	Source(s)
Repair or minimize damage done to identities and attenuate potential punishment from audiences	Schlenker & Darby (1981)
Eliciting forgiveness; reducing un-forgiveness; granted when repentance offered with acknowledgment of wrongdoing.	Eaton et al. (2006)
Three goals of apology: 1) Increase interpersonal forgiveness 2) Self-forgiveness 3) reconciliation	Exline et al. (2007)
Forgiveness: Less likely when offense perceived as intentional	Struthers et al. (2008)
Forgiveness (goal) linked to post apology behavioral consistency	Hui (2011)
Genuine Apology: 1) Acknowledges offense 2) Expresses genuine remorse 3) Offers reparations	Lazare (2004)
Eliciting forgiveness (but not a pre-requisite for, or a guarantee of, forgiveness)	Slocum (2011)
Meeting Psychological needs of the offended party: • Restoring self respect and dignity • Reaffirm that both parties have shared values • Assure offenses were not victim’s fault • Assurance of safety in future relations	Lazare (2004)

• See offender suffer • Reparation for harm caused Having meaningful dialogue with offenders	
Reduce Anger/Aggression:	Baumeister (1990)
Reduce anger/desire for retaliation	Zechmeister (2004)
Reduce anger/increase aggression control - Linked to severity of harm.	Obuchi (1989)

Modes of Apology

Idea	Source(s)
One to One One to many Many to one Many to many	Tavuchis (1991)

Process or Steps

Idea	Source(s)
Three steps in Apology: 1) Affirmation (admission => acknowledgement) 2) Affect (regret => remorse) 3) Action (restitution => reparation) [Where Self orientation => Other orientation]	Slocum et al. (2011)
Timing: Apologies delivered later in a controlled study, more effective than those offered too early (pre-emptively). Victims feeling heard	Frantz & Bennigson (2005)
Dialogue Based Apology: 1) Offender knows the nature of offense 2) Offender validates that the offense happened 3) Victim moved by the offender's willingness to listen. 4) Shame of offense => pride of survival 5) Catharsis (pain put into words) 6) Retributive justice (victim gets to see the offender squirm) 7) Victim grieves what is lost 8) Victim feels sorrow/caring for the offender	Lazare (2004)

Alternatives to Apology

Idea	Source(s)

Regret at harming an innocent person (does not constitute an apology)	Exline et al. (2007)
Defense: Face-saving, image management	Hodgins & Liebeskind (2003)
Apologia (to speak in defense)	Tavuchis (1991)
"Accounts" (attempts to explain away undesirable event through excuses and justifications)	Schlenker & Darby (1981)

Apology: Organization Management Literature Map

Seminal Thinkers

Year	Name
2006	Kellerman (HBR)
2006	Tucker (Transformational leadership)
2010	Horgie et al.

Key Themes

Idea	Source(s)
Management Literature Highly pragmatic: "How to's" "Do's and Don'ts" "One-minute"	Weeks (2003) Blanchard (2001) Kiger (2004)
Transformational Leadership: Leaders who apologize to victims of mistakes are perceived to be more transformational than those who don't	Tucker et al. (2006)
Why Leaders avoid apology: 1) Public sign of weakness. 2) Expose organization to legal risk.	Tucker et al. (2006)
Leaders overestimate the costs of apology and underestimate the benefits	Kellerman (2006)
CEO Apologies: Four Discursive Strategies • Expressions of regret • Alignment with others affected by the crisis • Dissociation from events • Statements of willingness to apologize and/or references to past apologies.	Hargie et al. (2010)
CEO Apology Senior figures in a public forum, apologizing may be perceived as a humiliating act which detracts from the apologizer's symbolic power.	Kampf (2009)
Four reasons for a Leadership Apology: 1) A personal mistake 2) An institutional failure 3) An intergroup failure 4) A moral failure	Kellerman (2006)
When leaders should apologize: • When doing so is likely to serve an important	Kellerman (2006)

purpose • When the offense is of serious consequence • When it's appropriate that the leader assume responsibility for the offense • When no one else can get the job done • When the cost of saying something is likely lower than the cost of staying silent	
Apology in Health Care practice	Cohen (2010) Roberts (2007) Leape (2012)
Apologies in Health Care Best suited to a "preventable, adverse event" Ideal speaker: Patient's personal physician (vs. hospital administration) – ie – the person who made the mistake	Roberts (2007)
Apologies in Health Care Ideal speaker: Patient's personal physician (vs. hospital administration) – ie – the person who made the mistake	Roberts (2007)
Apologies in Health Care CONTRARY: Hospital CEO's responsibility to apologize	Leape (2012)
Legal liability (shared with Law literature) 29 states have apology laws protecting admission of fault for the purpose of apology from admissibility.	Cohen (2010)
Effects of corporate apology: • Shaping corporate reputation • Facilitating forgiveness or private settlement • Evidence for plaintiff (guilt) • Evidence for the accused.	Patel & Reinsch (2003)

Definition of Apology

Idea	Source(s)
A genuine, honest appeal for forgiveness	Kellerman (2006)
Need to repair a damaged image in the eyes of external audience or audiences	Hargie et al., (2010)

Purpose or Function of Apology

Idea	Source(s)
To receive forgiveness	Kellerman (2006)

Defuse the anger of those who were injured or feel wronged	Kellerman (2006)

Modes of Apology

Idea	Source(s)
CEO Apologies: Framework • Apologizer responsible vs. apologizer not directly responsible • Apologizee directly affected vs. apologizee not directly affected.	Hargie et al., (2010)
Corporate Apology (org as social actor)	Patel & Reinsch (2003)
On behalf of an individual vs. on behalf of an institution	Kellerman (2006)
Public apologies vs. private	Kampf (2009)

Process or Steps

Idea	Source(s)
1) IFID (illocutionary force initiating device) 2) Accepting responsibility 3) Denial of intent 4) Request to be pardoned 5) Explanation 6) Self-rebuke 7) Expression of remorse 8) Offer of reparation 9) Promise of future forbearance	Hargie et al. (2010)
How to apologize: 1) Get the facts 2) Get the right people to attend 3) Find the right time & place 4) Ask what they understand 5) Describe what happened 6) Show empathy 7) Offer an apology 8) Make things right	Roberts (2007)
Four parts: 1) Acknowledgment of the mistake or wrongdoing 2) Acceptance of responsibility 3) Expression of regret 4) Promise that the offense will never be repeated.	Kellerman (2006)

Alternatives to Apology

Idea	Source(s)
“appearance of regret” without taking self-threatening responsibility or juridical liability for the offense	Kampf (2009)

APPENDIX B

Non-Human Subjects Determination Notice

PEPPERDINE UNIVERSITY

Graduate & Professional Schools Institutional Review Board

January 14, 2015

Matthew Brubaker

Protocol #: N0115D01
Project Title: Apology as a Leadership Behavior: Implications for Leadership and Organizations

Dear Mr. Brubaker:

Thank you for submitting the Non-Human Subjects Verification Form and supporting documents for your above referenced project. As required by the Code of Federal Regulations for the Protect for Human Subjects (Title 45 Part 46) any activity that is research and involves human subjects requires review by the Graduate and Professional Schools IRB (GPS-IRB).

After review of the Non-Human Subjects Verification Form and supporting documents, GPS IRB has determined that your proposed research[1] activity does not involve human subjects. Human subject is defined as a living individual about whom an investigator (whether professional or student) conducting research obtains (1) data through intervention or interaction with the individual, or (2) identifiable private information. (45 CFR 46102(f))

As you are not obtaining either data through intervention or interaction with living individuals, or identifiable private information, then the research activity does not involve human subjects, therefore GPS IRB review and approval is not required of your above reference research.

We wish you success on your non-human subject research.

Sincerely,

Dr. Thema Bryant-Davis
Chair, Graduate and Professional Schools IRB
Pepperdine University

cc: Dr. Lee Kats, Vice Provost for Research and Strategic Initiatives
Mr. Brett Leech, Compliance Attorney
Dr. Susan Nero, Faculty Advisor

[1] *Research m*eans a systematic investigation, including research development, testing and evaluation, designed to develop or contribute to generalizable knowledge. Activities which meet this definition constitute research for purposes of this policy, whether or not they are conducted or supported un-der a program which is considered research for other purposes. (45 CFR 46.102(d)).