

정치적 위기에 대한 정당들의 위기대응 메시지와 뉴스보도와와의 차이

The Difference between News Coverage and News Release of Political Parties During A Political Crisis

조승호

승실대학교 글로벌통상학과

SeungHo Cho(sc616@ssu.ac.kr)

요약

본 연구의 목적은 정치적 위기 상황에서 위기대응에 대한 언론보도와 정당의 차이를 조사하는 것이다. 과거 정치적 사례를 통해 정치적 상황, 정치적 집단의 위기대응, 언론보도를 살펴보았다. 본 연구가 살펴본 사례는 16대 대통령 선거운동에서 불법 선거자금 모금과 관련해서 두 정당(새천년민주당 vs. 한나라당)의 대응이다. 두 정당은 그들의 이미지 회복을 위한 위기대응 전략을 활용하였다. 본 연구는 위기대응메시지와 언론보도 메시지의 차이를 내용분석을 통해서 살펴보았다. 그 결과 특정 정당의 위기대응 메시지와 뉴스미디어는 차이를 보이지 않았으나, 다른 정당의 경우는 차이가 나타났다. 이러한 뉴스보도와 정당의 메시지 일치 여부는 공중의 위기평가에 중요한 영향을 미친다. 본 연구는 위키커뮤니케이션에서 조직의 위기대응 메시지와 뉴스미디어의 보도 차이의 중요성을 다뤘다는 점에서 의의를 갖는다.

■ 중심어 : | 정치적 위기 | 위기대응 | 언론 | 위키커뮤니케이션 |

Abstract

The purpose of this study is to explore a difference in crisis between media and parties. This research examined political crisis situation, crisis response, and media coverage using a case. Two main political parties in Korean faced the illegal fund raising case during the 16th presidential election. They used types of crisis response strategies for restoring or maintaining their reputation. This study found that a party's crisis response was consistent with news media, but another party's message was significantly different from news media. Such match or mismatch between a party and news media will influence on public evaluation toward a crisis response. This study has meaningful contribution in that the difference between an organizational crisis response message and news media coverage is significant.

■ keyword : | Political Crisis | Crisis Response | News Media | Crisis Communication |

I. Introduction

In a crisis, it is critical to select the correct

communication strategy[1]. A political crisis requires politicians to salvage their reputations and the image of their party. When facing a crisis, some politicians and

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교신저자 : 조승호, e-mail : sc616@ssu.ac.kr

political parties make an effort to minimize or deny the crisis. Such efforts, however, can get nothing or worse when news media selectively covered their crisis responses. Initially, public exposures to a crisis and crisis responses of an actor through news media, then they evaluate who's responsible for the crisis and deserve to be blamed.

Accordingly, news coverage for crisis responses from an actor in a crisis is a critical factor for public to make a decision on a crisis. Scholars of media have long argued, however, that the media are never objective and neutral channels or recorders of events [2][3]. Voluminous case studies of news coverage of particular political issue have witnessed that news coverage can implicitly or directly support one side in a conflict[4]. There are several reasons that each news channel has different audience, are different in political ideology such as conservative or progressive, or have their own news valued rooted in an organization. These factors induce selection bias in news coverage.

The selective news coverage can be appeared in coverage for crisis response to a political crisis. However, the issue of selective news coverage has not much been dealt in previous crisis communication studies. This study attempts to analyze the incident, *Illegal fund raising case during the 16th presidential election in Korea 2002*. There were four reasons to investigate the case, even if the case was happened in several years ago. First, the incident was the first illegal fund raising case apparently covered in news media. Such illegal election campaigns were occurred earlier than that, but most of them were not covered in newspaper including online news. Secondly, the case has meaningful implication for recent political corruption (etc. Lee, Myung-bak's and Park Geun-hye's scandals). In 2002, several conglomerate companies offered bribe to several politicians including Hanara and Uri parties. Third, this case is the political crisis and it is significant in crisis communication

perspective in regard that how political parties responded to the crisis. Many news media revealed the issue and covered crisis response messages appealed by Hannara Party and Uri Party. Finally the case showed selection bias in news coverage from news media. Analyzing the case imply using crisis communication frame might contribute to both political communication and crisis management.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Crisis Communication Strategy

An unethical behavior or mistake in a political figures or party obliges political crisis managers to offer public response. The purpose of the public response is not only for making public understanding the situation but also for protecting the political figure or organization's image. This perspective bases on the assumption that crisis threatens organizations or political figure's image[5] and crisis response strategies are symbolic resource employing to protect or repair their image[6]. There has been theoretical development in impression management for two decades.

Benoit has summarized the discussion about image restoration, and he claims that image restoration is constructed in 5 broad strategies and 14 specific sub-strategies[7-9]. First, denial is a general refusal to admit misbehavior. With this category, there is a simple denial and a shifting the blame. The simple denial is a strategy when a person who was accused or attacked simply refuses to admit that he or she has done something wrong, or that what was done was harmful. By shifting the blame the accused argues that someone else was actually responsible. Previous studies have discussed communication strategy for image restoration.

Second, an evading of responsibility takes one of

four forms. A provocation is the strategy that its act was merely a reasonable response to an unreasonable act. Another way to evade responsibility is defeasibility. It is a claim that a person alleges a lack of information about or control over important elements of the situation. The accident is the strategy that the offensive action occurred unintentionally. Finally there is a good intentions strategy that a person can suggest that the offensive behavior was performed without the intention to do harm.

Third, reduce offensiveness is used when a person that is accused of wrongful actions can also try to reduce the perceived offensiveness of that act. There are six ways to do this: (1) Bolstering; (2) Minimization; (3) Differentiation; (4) Transcendence; (5) Attacking the accuser; (6) Compensation. The fourth is corrective action strategy in which the person promises to take action to put matters right and to prevent future problems. The fifth is mortification in which someone admits wrongdoing and asks for forgiveness. McLaughlin, Cody, and O'Hair have described the strategy of silence. This is a strategy of avoiding comment, assuming that problems could be more serious if they are discussed[10].

Above all, communication strategies to restore image affect public's perception of crisis. At the same time, public's perception is influenced by news media, the most influential information source. Political crisis managers expect that a crisis response strategy matching with a crisis will effectively minimize damage of reputation in political figure or party. Unfortunately, sometimes the results are against their expectations. There must be several reasons giving rise to unexpected result. When planned crisis response does not reach publics well, when a message does not included content what they intended to, or when media selectively cover the story or distort it, crisis management for restoring image or reputation would be failed. The present study attempts to

investigate media selection bias in covering crisis response to political crisis.

On the other hand, when a message driven by a political party match with news coverage of news media, the effect of the party's crisis communication will be reinforced and much persuasive to the public. In this context, news media is a moderator in an organization's crisis communication process.

2.2 News Media Selection on a Crisis Response

It is known that news media are not neutral and objective in covering events, even though a journalist takes such an effort to be. Past research have identified sets of factors influencing the news coverage of events. Oliver and Myers summarized them as three main factors: news value, news routines, and predispositions[4]. News values refer to journalistic norms and standard for assessing the news values of events. Sallot, Steinfatt, and Salwen suggests eight news values provided by surveying journalists [11]: (1) Factual accurate; (2) Interest to readers; (3) Usefulness to readers; (4) Completeness; (5) Prompt, timely publication; (6) Depicts subject in favorable light; (7) Mechanical/grammatical accuracy; and (8) Fairness to different views. In terms of political events, journalists are likely to cover a political figure's or party's scandals that can attract public's eye bolts such as political figure's personal events, or conflicts among different parties. Second, news routines indicate that news coverage is influenced by constraints that journalist face in everyday, especially in news source.

Finally, predisposition means that news organization's political bias or ideology affects news[12][13]. For example, more liberal newspaper tends to cover more protest event than the more conservative newspaper[14]. This political predisposition in a news organization links to a particular party and the organization supports the party who has the same direction in ideology. In practical, an

editorial in newspaper apparently represent the predisposition. This study attempts to find an effect of predisposition on selective news coverage for crisis responses of a political figure or party in a crisis. As earlier discussed, crisis responses to publics are necessary to minimize damage of reputation when political party or figure faces a crisis. If news media cover crisis responses selectively, it would impact on public's evaluation on an organization.

Thus, the current study attempt to compare news coverage of news media with news release of political organization to look at difference of crisis response strategies according to different political parties based on political crisis. To answer the research question, this study investigate illegal funds incident for the 16th presidential election campaign.

Based on this discussion, we suggest the following research questions:

RQ1. How much different between news coverage and news release of the opposition party regarding the illegal funds incident?

RQ2. How much different between news coverage and news release of the government party regarding the illegal funds incident?

3. METHOD

3.1 The Case of analysis

In this study, the event, *the Illegal Funds for the 16th Presidential Election Campaign*, refers to “the event that revealed through the investigation of Central Investigation Division at the Prosecutor-General's Office for 8 months, from October 2003 SK slush fund incident to the next year May 2004, about the Illegal Funds for the 16th Presidential Election Campaign.” Following the revelations, 13 politicians associated with the event were charged and 19 politicians were indicted. 13 business people were convicted.

This case played as a critical crisis for both parties. Especially, for government party, it was one of the reasons that the opposition party introduced a motion of impeachment against the President Roh, Moo-Hyun through his associates' bribery case. With respect to opposition party, it also played a critical role in losing the majority party in the following 17th General Election, by tarnishing previous image and gain negative image as illegal party.

In sum, this event can be referred to the crisis for both parties. According to Coombs (1995), among type of crisis, it is organizational misconduct includes purposeful risks and legal violations, that the organization has the highest internal responsibility and locus of control on crisis.

3.2 Sample

The analysis unit is the remarks of leader of a party and an event-related politician. Two types of message were searched and analyzed. First, for news messages covered by media's gatekeeping were searched on <*Oh my news*> web site, which is the one of the most influential and progressive on-line news media, from October 2003 to May 21, 2004. It includes event-related politician's interview by journalists and speech on news.

For each party's message was selected through each party's homepage (for government party, Cheongwaedae homepage, and the Uri Party (formerly Minjoo party), and for opposition party, Hannara party. It includes each party's public apology and statement by the leader and the spokesperson of each party.

The each remark was regarded as one case that has been stated by politicians in a crisis situation. Each case were analyzed as one major their image restoration strategy. Total 137 remarks were used for the analysis, which 81 (59.1%) came from the opposition party and 56 (40.9%) came from the government party. For opposition party, the number of

news message is 35 (43.2%) and the number of strategy of party is 46 (56.8%). For government party, the number of new message is 39 (69.6%), and the number of strategy of party is 17 (30.4%).

3.3 Categories of Analysis

This study used Benoit’s image restoration strategy, adding “silence” strategy[7]. The 137 cases were analyzed by two-trained graduate school students based on 13 subcategories of analysis. Denial including simple denial and shifting the blame, evading of responsibility including provocation and accident, reducing offensiveness of event including minimization, differentiation, transcendence, attack accuser, compensation, corrective action, mortification, and silence (see [Table 1]).

Table 1. Subcategories for Analysis

Crisis Response Strategies	
Denial	Simple denial
	Shifting the blame
Evading Of Responsibility	Provocation
	Accident
	Good Intentions
Reducing Offensiveness Of Event	Minimization
	Differentiation
	Transcendence
	Attack Accuser
	Compensation
Corrective Action	
Mortification	
Silence	

3.4 Inter-coder Reliability

Two researchers worked together in a training session to examine and code remarks in the sample. In this session they were able to talk through any uncertainties or differences in opinion. After the training, a pretest was conducted to establish inter-coder reliability. For the pretest, the two coders independently examined 20 cases in the sample. The inter-coder reliability for the pretest was 0.87.

4. RESULT

4.1 The Result of Difference between News Messages and Strategy of Opposition Party

[Table 2] below showed news messages and strategy of opposition party as an image restoration strategy. Among total 81 remarks, 35 news messages and 46 strategies were analyzed. To examine difference between new message and strategy of party, chi-squares test conducted. There is a statistically significant difference between media gatekeeping messages and strategy of opposition party ($X^2=35.125$, $df=7$, $p<.01$).

Table 2. The Difference between News Coverage and News Release of the Opposition Party

	Type		Total
	News coverage	Oh my news	
Simple denial	12 (34.3%)*	4 (8.7%)*	16 (19.8%)
Shifting the blame	2 (5.7%)	0 (0.0%)	2 (2.5%)
Provocation	2 (5.7%)	2 (4.3%)	4 (4.9%)
Transcendence	1 (2.9%)	0 (0.0%)	1 (1.2%)
Attack accuser	8 (22.9%)*	32 (69.6%)*	40 (49.4%)
Corrective action	0 (0.0%)	2 (4.3%)	2 (2.5%)
Mortification	1 (2.9%)	6 (13.0%)	7 (8.6%)
Silence	9 (25.7%)*	0 (0.0%)*	9 (11.1%)
Total	35 (100.0%)	46 (100.0%)	81 (100.0%)

In detail, in the case of media gatekeeping messages, “simple denial” for 12 cases (34%) is most frequently reported on news. And then other gatekeeping messages were indicated in the order of the “silence” for 9 cases (25.7%), “attack accuser” for 8 cases (22.9%), “shifting the blame” and “provocation” for 2 cases (5.7%) respectively, “mortification” 1 case (2.9%).

On the other hand, in the case of strategy of opposition party, they used “attack accuser” for 32 cases (69.6%) most frequently. This result shows that

opposition party tended to attack government party in the different ways from news coverage during that time. Also, “mortification” for 6 cases (13.0%), “simple denial” for 4 cases (8.7%), “provocation” 2 cases (4.3%) were used by politicians in opposition party.

4.2 The Difference between News Messages and Strategy of Government Party

[Table 3] showed news messages and strategy of government party as an image restoration strategy. Among total 56 remarks, 39 news messages and 17 strategies were analyzed. To examine difference between new message and strategy of party, chi-squares test conducted. There is no statistically significant difference between media gatekeeping messages and strategy of opposition party ($X^2=11.971$, $df=11$, $p=.366<.01$).

Table 3. The Difference between News Coverage and News Release of the Government Party

	Type		Total
	News coverage	<i>Oh my news</i>	
Simple denial	8 (20.5%)	2 (11.8%)	10 (17.9%)
Shifting the blame	1 (2.6%)	0 (0.0%)	1 (1.8%)
Provocation	1 (2.6%)	0 (0.0%)	1 (1.8%)
Accident	1 (2.6%)	0 (0.0%)	1 (1.8%)
Good intention	2 (5.1%)	0 (0.0%)	2 (2.5%)
Minimization	1 (2.9%)	0 (0.0%)	1 (1.8%)
Differentiation	0 (0.0%)	1 (5.9%)	1 (1.8%)
Transcendence	0 (0.0%)	1 (5.9%)	1 (1.8%)
Attack accuser	6 (15.4%)	3 (17.6%)	9 (16.1%)
Corrective action	1 (2.6%)*	3 (17.6%)*	4 (7.1%)
Mortification	17 (43.6%)	7 (41.2%)	24 (42.9%)
Silence	1 (2.6%)	0 (0.0%)	1 (1.8%)
Total	39 (100.0%)	17 (100.0%)	56 (100.0%)

In the case of reported news coverage about government party, “mortification” for 17 (43.6%) is almost half of them. Compared to the results of opposition party, this shows that the news messages toward government strategy are quite different. And

then, gatekeeping messages were indicated in the order of the “simple denial” for 8 cases (20.5%), “attack accuser” for 6 cases (15.4%), “good intention”, “shifting blame”, “provocation”, “accident”, “corrective action”, “minimization”, “silence”, all for 1 cases (2.6%).

For the strategy of government party, used strategies are similar to news coverage. The politicians in government party used most frequently “mortification” for 7 cases (41.2%), in accordance with news messages. And then they used “attack accuser”, “corrective action” for 3 cases (17.6%), respectively. “simple denial” for 2 cases (11.8%), “differentiation”, “transcendence”, all, for 1 case (5.6%).

This result also shows that government party used more the variety number of strategies (e.g. the number of type is 12) than opposition party (e.g. the number of type is 8). For the aspects of the theory of the image restoration strategy, opposition party behaved irresponsibly by failing to admit or accept responsibility for wrongdoing as seen in news coverage toward opposition party.

5. CONCLUSION

The results of this study are summarized and discussed as follows. The result of [RQ1] shows that for opposition party, news coverage and strategy of party are significantly different each other. In news coverages, “simple denial” “silence” “attack accuser” are most used, while opposition party usually used “attack accuser.” The opposition party’s communication strategy has an inconsistent and a negative pattern, which is unfit to the crisis type. In fact, even if the party used mostly “attack accuser” through its news release, the crisis response was not reported in news coverage as many as in news release. Instead, *Oh my news* mostly covered “simple denial” and “silence.” Consequently, it showed *Oh my news* the selective

coverage toward the opposition party during the crisis. The selective coverage might base on *Oh my news'* political position or news value. That is, *Oh my news* might try to emphasize that the opposition party's main crisis responses were simple denial and silence.

[RQ2] indicates that for government party, news coverage is accorded with strategy of party. Both government party and news coverage toward the party are used "mortification" and "simple denial." There might be that the progressive media, *Oh my news*, tends to support for the special party, or the party's message was more trustful and honest to *Oh my news*. [Table 4] summarized the findings.

Table 4. The Summary for the Findings

	Major Crisis Response Strategies	Significant Difference with <i>Oh my news</i>
Government Party	Simple denial	Yes
	Attack Accusor	Yes
	Silence	Yes
Uri Party	Simple denial	No
	Attack Accusor	No
	Modification	No

Over all, this study shows the Korean politicians' image restoration strategy pattern. By showing that each political party used different image restoration strategies for the same incident, it indicates that each party feels different responsibility and crisis recognition. The Government party used the "mortification" more often. However, an opposition party used mainly "attack accuser" and "simple denial" that is the strategy when people have little responsibility and crisis recognition. Using these strategies weakened the public's trust in political party and exacerbated the crisis.

Furthermore, within the opposition party, the news messages by gatekeepers were different from strategy of party by politicians. It shows that the harmony and cooperation have a decisive influence on crisis

management. Also this study emphasize on the important of image restoration strategy as a crisis management. Especially even if in a serious crisis like illegal fundraising, the mortification and corrective action should be needed, the opposition party does not manage the crisis effectively without responsibility and crisis recognition. As a result, they tarnished their previous image and gained a negative image as illegal party. Similar events currently occur in political environment, and this study would have meaningful implication for political parties facing a political crisis. Nevertheless, this current research has some limitations. This study analyzed one online news media, which limited information to explain a reason why a news media selectively covered. The future research needs to collect more diverse news channel data and compare the differences.

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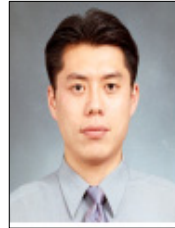
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저 자 소 개

조 승 호(SeungHo Cho)

정회원



- 2007년 7월 : The University of Alabama College of Communication and Information Sciences(박사)

- 2007년 8월 ~ 2011년 2월 : 미시시피 주립대학교 조교수

- 2011년 3월 ~ 현재 : 숭실대학교 국제통상학과 부교수
<관심분야> : CRM (Cause Related Marketing), IMC, Crisis Management, International Marketing