

EXPLORING LINKAGES AMONG PUBLIC RELATIONS, ATTRIBUTE AGENDA-
BUILDING, TRUST, AND CORPORATE REPUTATION MEDIATED BY EMOTION

By

JI YOUNG KIM

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To my father, mother, and sister

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By

Ji Young Kim

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One of the main contributions of this study was to explore the predictors of corporate reputation in a corporate communication context. Grounded in the agenda-building perspective, the current study examined the role of issues in public relations communication strategies. The purpose of the study was, 1) to demonstrate a causal relationship in agenda building, 2) to explore the role of affect in the relationship, and 3) to expand the scope of application of the concept into corporate communication. In particular, a 2 x 2 between-subject factorial experiment was conducted with 225 participants. These participants were recruited from an online panel service and received monetary compensation. Analysis of variance, regression, and a path analysis model were utilized to test the relationships. Some direct and indirect effects were found in the model, supporting the mediating role of emotions in the relationship between the two independent variables (issue ownership and issue tone) and dependent variables (issue salience, trust, and corporate reputation). Theoretical and practical implications are presented in Chapter 5.

CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

Society is a collective entity consisting of multiple publics (stakeholders) who have different interests and needs (Heath, 2006). From an organizational standpoint, publics are a group or individuals who affect and/or are affected by an organization's performance. Scholars have stated that a satisfactory balance of interests among diverse publics is essential for organizations to reach their goals (Harrison & Freeman, 1999). The increase of empowered publics – due to the communication technology development and globalization – has provided opportunities and challenges in the public relations field. For example, the role of publics has been emphasized in several public relations theoretical frameworks, such as relationship management or issue management (Luoma-aho & Vos, 2010). Focusing on long-term relationship building, organizations, including corporations, have been involved in diverse social issues in their community and have been engaged in that public debate. Scholars have used the terms “issue arenas,” referring to the place where diverse social factors interact with each other about community issues (Luoma-aho & Vos, 2010).

The reactions of organizations towards the issues affect how these organizations are perceived by various publics (Luoma-aho & Vos, 2010). Miller (2010) found that issue advocacy practices affect the changes in approval ratings toward an industry. Meijer and Kleinnijenhuis (2006) also stated that organizations' competency in dealing with social issues affects the overall evaluations of various organizations by the public. In particular, scholars have explored the effects of issues on organizational reputation as one of the important outcomes of good relationships. The effect of issues has been widely explored in political communication. Scholars have pointed out that when issues

are primed, parties who owned the issue would receive more attention and electoral gains (e.g., Kleinnijenhuis, Maurer, Kepplinger, & Oegema, 2001; Petrocik, 1996; Petrocik, Benoit, & Hansen, 2003; Sheafer & Weimann, 2005; Zaller, 1992).

The impact of the media has focused greatly on the issue management perspective of public relations. In particular, scholars have explored the effects based on the theories of priming, framing, agenda setting, or agenda building (e.g., Kleinnijenhuis et al., 2001; Petrocik, 1996; Sheafer & Weimann, 2005). Petrocik (1996) stated that framing helps publics recognize certain aspects of social problems while ignoring others, and framing affects subsequent public judgment and behavior. Sheafer and Weimann (2005) explored the role of media in Israeli election results grounded in the agenda-setting and agenda-building processes. Their findings indicate associations among the media, public opinion, and associations between the media and voting behaviors. Priming effects were supported showing that the media helped voters to set their evaluation criteria for the politicians (Sheafer & Weimann, 2005).

To examine the role of issues in public relations, this study focused on the “issue ownership” concept. Exploring the priming efforts of political campaigns, Petrocik et al. (2003) stated that some political issues can easily be attributed to certain parties. Publics used to believe that Democrats dealt well with such issues as social welfare while Republicans dealt well with such issues as taxes or size of government (Petrocik et al., 2003). The concept’s assumption was that political parties’ competence in dealing with certain issues affects voters’ supportive behaviors toward the political parties when the issue is significant among voters (e.g., Belanger & Meguid, 2008; Cha, Song, & Kim, 2010; Elmelund-Praestekaer, 2011; Green & Hobolt, 2008). On the other hand, little

empirical research has been conducted on the effects of issue ownership in corporate communication. Cha, Song, and Kim (2010) defined “issue ownership” as the level of capability that a corporation has shown us all certain social issues. Meijer and Kleinnijenhuis (2006) indicated that issues in business news transferred into the mindset of the publics’ criteria which was then used to evaluate the corporation involved in those issues.

Issue ownership effects depend greatly on the role of the media and public relations efforts. Prior scholarship has emphasized the role of media, indicating that the mass media can force public attention to certain issues while ignoring others (e.g., Entman, 1993; Lang & Lang, 1966; Sheafer & Weimann, 2005). In particular, the agenda-setting hypothesis states that “elements prominent in the mass media’s picture of the world influence the prominence of those elements in the audience’s picture” (McCombs, Lopez-Escobar, & Llamas, 2000, p. 77). McCombs and Shaw (1972) found that the public would consider certain issues more prominently when those issues are portrayed by the media. For instance, Iyengar and Simon (1993) ascertained that the portrayal of the Gulf War crisis on TV news influenced the public in deciding what were the most important issues in the United States.

Expanding on agenda setting, scholars have also suggested an agenda-building theory focusing on the role of information subsidies in building the media agenda and the public agenda (e.g., Kiousis, Mitrook, Wu, & Seltzer, 2006; Kiousis & Wu, 2008). Ohl, Pincus, Rimmer, and Harrison (1995) examined the relationship between information sources and media gatekeepers, and Turk (1986) found links between the agendas of state governments’ news releases and news media coverage. Providing information to

the media and the public is one of the most important jobs for public relations professionals. This is accomplished through news releases, advertisements, campaigns, or speeches. Moreover, scholars have explored the linkages among policy agendas, media, and the public to define the role of public relations and to discuss public relations strategies (i.e., McKinnon, Tedesco, & Lauder, 2001; Kiousis & Strömbäck, 2010).

The main idea of agenda building is the transfer of salience (in the form of objects or attributes) from one to the other. Scholars have distinguished the two levels of salience transfer: the salience of object (first-level) and the salience of attributes (second-level) (e.g., Kiousis, 2005; Lee, 2010). Attributes are defined as certain aspects of an object (Ghanem, 1997). When a political candidate is an object, his/her personality or position on the issues can be their attributes. Researchers have shown evidence of the transfer of attribute salience (e.g., Golan & Wanta, 2001; Lee, 2010; McCombs & Shaw, 1972). The first level (object level) has been studied with regard to the strength of opinion, and the second level (attribute level) has been studied with regard to the direction of opinion (McCombs, 2004). Furthermore, scholars have indicated that the two levels can also be linked. Kiousis (2005) suggested there are “compelling-arguments hypothesis explaining the linkages between attribute level of salience and object level of salience” (Figure 1-1). For example, evaluations by the public of political candidates differ between what the media portrays as the family history of a political candidate and what the media portrays as the candidate’s policy issues.

The compelling-arguments hypothesis leads this study’s attention to priming effects and other consequences of the agenda-building process. Priming effects are measured by the importance of the issue and the perception of the organization’s

influence (Iyengar & Kinder, 1987). Grounded in agenda-building theory, this study measures the priming effects on corporate reputation and trust. For example, reputation management becomes the central framework in corporate public relations (Hutton, Goodman, Alexander, & Genest, 2001). However, how and when reputation can be managed still has not been fully explored. "Reputation" is defined as "a perceptual representation of a company's past actions and future prospects that describes the firm's overall appeal to all of its key constituents when compared with other leading rivals" (Fombrun, 1996, p. 72). Wartick (1992) also defined "reputation" as "the aggregation of a single stakeholder's perceptions of how well organizational responses are meeting the demands and expectations of many organizational stakeholders" (p. 34).

At first, the role of public opinion was emphasized in the political communication arena; however, corporations have also become a social entities influencing and influenced by public opinion. The need for communication management by corporations has increased the understanding of public opinion and the improvement of the quality of corporate-stakeholder relationships. Clark (2000) stated that "communication managers and business managers recognize the need to analyze multiple stakeholders (sometimes referred to as publics) to develop a sense of the needs and wants of those who are either critical to the corporation's existence or capable of expressing significant concern (primary and secondary stakeholders)" (p. 374). J. Grunig, L. Grunig, and Ehling (1992) also emphasized the significance of organization-public relations, stating that the quality of the relationship might prevent negative public opinion about corporations. J. Grunig (1979) stated that corporations would receive public attention by dealing with social issues since publics believe that corporations should be involved in

responsible social actions. Findings of this current study would contribute to the following communication areas: public relations strategies for business/organizations, corporate reputation and trust, and agenda-building and agenda-setting theories.

Trust was measured as one of the relationship indicators. As suggested by Hon and J. Grunig (1999), trust has been considered one of the important public relations outcomes, measured by such multidimensional items as integrity, dependability, or competence. In a business environment, corporate reputation is crucial when issues in business news become salient in the public mind, and these issues may act as a yardstick for evaluating those firms.

For example, if a news story appears about an issue which the public perceives the organization to be handling successfully, that is, an owned issue, then the reputation of the organization will improve. If a news story emerges about an issue which the public perceives the organization as being incapable of handling, that is, a poorly owned issue, then the reputation of the organization will worsen (Meijer & Kleinnijenhuis, 2006). This study explored how reputation and trust are affected by communication strategies in public relations focusing on the publics' perception of issue ownership and affective attributes of the messages.

This study also examined the role of emotions in the agenda-building process and effects. The study has two dimensions of attributes: substantive and affective dimensions (e.g., Golan & Wanta, 2001; McCombs & Shaw, 1972). Substantive attributes refer to the cognitive aspect of attributes, while affective attributes refer to the emotional (affective) aspect of attributes (e.g., Golan & Wanta, 2001). Frames are an example of the cognitive aspect of agenda building (agenda setting), and the tone

(valence) has been used as an example of the affective aspect of agenda building (agenda setting) (e.g., Golan & Wanta, 2001; McCombs & Shaw, 1972).

Previously, scholars have stated that affective attributes would lead to emotional responses to a message and shape the overall composition of the object in the message (Schoenbach & Semetko, 1992; Sheafer, 2007). Coleman and Wu (2010) showed that the audience's emotions strongly affected the overall evaluation of a political candidate by increasing the need for in-depth cognitive thinking about the candidate. Sheafer (2007) also found that the evaluative tone of news media coverage affects voters' political judgments.

However, the role of the affective dimension of attributes and emotions was less developed than the cognitive dimension in agenda-building studies. In addition to the valence (tone) of the message, this was widely used as the affective attribute, this study also aimed to see how emotions mediate the agenda-building effects. Emotional arousal measures how much an individual feels or is stimulated (or not stimulated). Hence, by linking issue ownership to the agenda-building theory, the purpose of this dissertation was, 1) to explore how the public relations practices of corporations are related to priming effect, trust, and corporate reputation, and 2) to explore the role of emotion in the process and effect. In particular, using an experimental design, the current research manipulated issue ownership and affective attributes of issues and explored the linkages with the corporation's agenda-building outcome mediated by emotions.

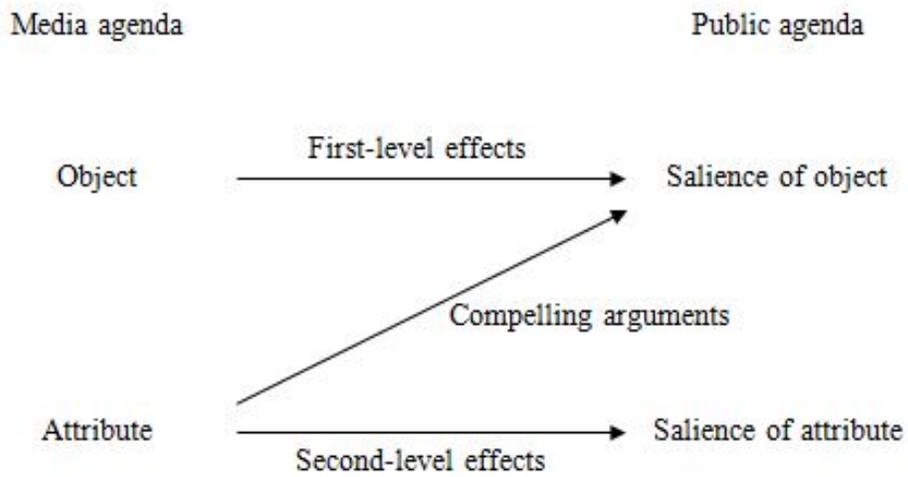


Figure 1-1. Compelling arguments: Attribute effects on object salience (Reprinted by permission from McCombs, Maxwell. 2004. *Setting the agenda: The mass media and public opinion* (Page 92, Box 6-1). Malden, MA: Polity)

CHAPTER 2 LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter reviews previous literature related to the agenda-building theory, corporate communication and issues in business, mediating factors in agenda building, and the consequences of the agenda-building process. In particular, the consequences of agenda building have been explored in terms of the trust as a relationship quality outcome for corporate reputation. The linkages between these theoretical frameworks and each concept used in the current research are explored. Figure 2-1 presents the theoretical framework of this study among public relations, emotional mediators, agenda salience, and public opinion.

Agenda-Building Theory

This section provides a theoretical overview of agenda building and agenda setting and presents the first- and second-level of the processes. In terms of the second-level of agenda building and agenda setting, this section discusses both substantive and affective attributes, and the linkages between the two levels, the so-called “compelling arguments” hypothesis. In addition, the priming effects of agenda building are also examined.

Agenda-Setting Theory

Since McCombs and Shaw’s (1972) proposal, the agenda-setting hypothesis has been widely investigated in various communication settings (e.g., Iyengar & Kinder, 1987; Kioussis & McDevitt, 2008; Kioussis et al., 2006; McCombs, 2004; McCombs & Reynolds, 2002). Conducting content analysis and surveys, McCombs and Shaw (1972) found a correlation on issue agendas between the media and the public. Certain issues prominently presented in media coverage were also considered important issues by

undecided voters (McCombs & Shaw, 1972). The main idea of the hypothesis is that “elements prominent in the mass media’s picture of the world influence the prominence of those elements in the audience’s picture” (McCombs et al., 2000, p. 77). Numerous previous studies have provided robust evidences supporting this hypothesis (e.g., Kiouisis & McDevitt, 2008; Kiouisis et al., 2006; McCombs, 2004; McCombs & Reynolds, 2002). Dearing and Rogers (1996) noted that approximately 60% of the studies supported the agenda-setting hypothesis; they reviewed 112 empirical studies about the salience transfer between the media and the public agenda.

The agenda-setting hypothesis is grounded in a tradition of the significant media effects perspective. The media choose and display certain news stories while ignoring others, and the news media influences what people know about the world (McCombs & Shaw, 1972). Lang and Lang (1966) emphasized the function of the media reporting that “the mass media force attention to certain issues. They build up public images of political figures. They are constantly presenting objects suggesting what individuals in the mass should think about, know about, have feelings about” (p. 468). Cohen (1963) also stated that the press “may not be successful much of the time in telling people what to think, but it is stunningly successful in telling its readers what to think about” (p. 13).

In political communication settings, scholars hypothesized the influence of the mass media on public opinion and attitudes toward certain political issues and candidates. Iyengar and Simon (1993) found evidence that the increase in television news coverage of the conflict in the Persian Gulf, between 1990 and 1991, influenced the political concerns of Americans about the Persian Gulf crisis such that it became the nation's most important problem. Sheafer (2007) also supported the agenda-setting

linkage to media coverage, and public opinion showed that the media's attention to the economy affects survey respondents' awareness of the issue.

The agenda-setting function of the media is also emphasized in international events. Wanta, Golan, and Lee (2004) stated that the need for international news has increased due to globalization following the end of the Cold War in 1991 and the rise of terrorism. The American public's concern for international events is higher than ever. "Few individuals have direct experience with news event in foreign countries. For many, the sole source of information about world events is the press. Media coverage of international news then should play an important agenda-setting function" (Wanta et al., 2004, p. 367). Yang, Shin, Lee, and Wrigley (2008) also emphasized the effects of mass media on a country's reputation, along with the individuals' first-hand experiences and interpersonal communication.

Correlations have been found between foreign news coverage and public opinion supporting the agenda-setting effects of international news coverage (e.g., Salwen & Matera, 1989; Semetko, Brzinski, Weaver, & Willnat, 1992; Wanta et al., 2004; Wanta & Hu, 1993). Conducting both content analysis and surveys, Salwen and Matera (1989) suggested that the amount of media coverage about other nations can influence changes in what the public thinks about other nations over time. Semetko et al. (1992) also stated that a relationship exists between other nations' visibility on TV news in the United States and U.S. public opinion about other nations. Scholars have stated that the public's perception of other nations is affected by how those nations are portrayed in international news through diverse frames (Semetko et al., 1992). Moreover, Wanta and Hu (1993) indicated that certain issue categories have stronger agenda-setting effects

than other categories. The four categories demonstrating strong agenda-setting effects were international conflict (involving the United States), terrorism (involving the United States), crime/drugs, and military/nuclear arms (Wanta & Hu, 1993).

Agenda-Building Theory and Public Relations

Expanding from the agenda-setting theory, communication scholars have also explored the antecedent factors of agenda-setting effects, and they have focused on how the media agenda can be set in the first place (e.g., Kiousis et al., 2006; Kiousis & Wu, 2008). Gandy (1982) addressed the need for broad conceptual understanding of agenda setting, suggesting that “we go beyond agenda-setting to determine who sets the media agenda, how and for what purpose it is set, and with what impact on the distribution of power and values in society” (p. 7). From a public relations perspective, the influence of external sources on the media and the public agenda is called “agenda building,” referring to “sources’ interactions with gatekeepers, a give-and-take process in which sources seek to get their information published and the press seeks to get that information from independent sources” (Ohl et al., 1995, p. 91).

Several external information sources affect media coverage and public opinion, directly or indirectly, including information subsidies, such as press conferences, news releases, or interviews. Miller (2010) explained that public relations professionals provide information subsidies to journalists to sway media attention, reducing journalists’ cost and efforts to gather information. In a congressional election setting in Michigan, Kaid (1976) noted that journalists often use campaign announcements or candidate information provided by public relations professionals on their news stories. Turk (1986) also found evidence of the subsequent use of state governments’ news

releases on media coverage. Gans (2003) stated that “journalists respect their official sources, reporting what these sources tell them” (p. 46).

Similar to agenda-setting studies, the agenda-building effects were also investigated widely in political campaign communications (e.g., Kaid, 1976; Kiousis et al., 2006; Kiousis & Wu, 2008), but the agenda-setting and agenda-building concepts have also been applied to other communication settings in business or international events (e.g., Carroll & McCombs, 2003; Ohl et al., 1995). For example, Ohl et al. (1995) focused on the effectiveness of a company’s press releases in a hostile corporate takeover context and found agenda-building effects from news releases on media coverage. Carroll and McCombs (2003) stated that the news media portrayals of corporations can influence how the public perceives the corporations.

Agenda-building theory has many meaningful implications in public relations. Lang and Lang (1981) declared that agenda building is useful to conceptualize the salience relationships among policymakers, the media and the public, and McKinnon et al. (2001) pointed out that agenda building emphasizes the role of public relations professionals in successful political candidacies. Kiousis and Strömbäck (2010) also supported agenda-building effects on public opinion by studying the relationship between presidential public relations messages and job approval ratings. Comparing general or issue-specific job approval ratings, Kiousis and Strömbäck (2010) showed different agenda-building effects across topics between two types of public relations messages. Kiousis et al. (2006) also explained the theoretical implications of agenda building in public relations:

This works to further our knowledge of the role of news releases and other public relations information subsidies to journalists in helping to shape both the media and public agendas. This knowledge is also useful in furthering our understanding of other public relations theory areas as well. (Kiousis et al., 2006, p. 279)

According to the scholars, an agenda-building perspective is valuable to other public relations theories, such as the contingency theory, relationship theory, and issue management theory (Kiousis et al., 2006). For example, public relations professionals affect the public's recognition of certain issues as problems or their awareness of certain organizations through salience formation. Consequently, these communication efforts can be utilized to affect the relationship between an organization and its public, and to get the public more active in certain social issues (e.g., Hallahan, 2001; Ledingham, 2001; Reber & Cameron, 2003):

Level one of agenda setting examined how individuals learn about the major issues of the day through media coverage – an important process in political communication. This level emphasized the news media's role in generating awareness of issues that should concern the public. (Golan & Wanta, 2001, p. 258)

First- and Second-Level of Agenda Building and Agenda Setting

In both the agenda-building and agenda-setting frameworks, scholars have defined two levels of salience transfer: object and attribute salience (e.g., Kiousis, Bantimaroudis, & Ban, 1999; Kiousis et al., 2006; McCombs & Reynolds, 2002; McCombs & Shaw, 1972; Weaver, Graber, McCombs, & Eyal, 1981). Referring to the first-level of agenda building and agenda setting, object salience transfer has been explored with issues or candidates; on the other hand, referring to the second-level of agenda building and agenda setting, attribute salience transfer has been explored with certain aspects of objects (e.g., Kiousis et al., 1999; Lee, 2010; McCombs & Shaw, 1993; Behr & Iyengar, 1985; Iyengar & Kinder, 1987; Iyengar, Peters, & Kinder, 1982).

Ghanem (1997) defined attribute as “the set of perspectives or frames that journalists and the public employ to think about each object” (p. 5), and McCombs, Llamas, Lopez-Escobar, and Rey (1997) referred to the second-level of agenda setting as attributes salience of an object or the actor concerned. McCombs and Estrada (1997) asserted that “these perspectives and frames – called semantic devices – draw attention to certain attributes and away from others” (p. 246). Evidence was found to support the fact that attributes of an issue are transferred from the media to the public and from public relations information sources to the media and the public (e.g., Golan & Wanta, 2001; Kim, Scheufele, & Shanahan, 2002; Kiousis et al., 1999; Shaw & McCombs, 1977).

Describing the emergence of the attribute level of agenda building and the agenda-setting theory, Kiousis (2005) stated that it has “shifted the focus of research away from investigating what topics news media cover to how they cover them” (p. 4). Ghanem (1996) suggested four dimensions of second-level agenda building and agenda setting, subtopics, the framing mechanism, affective elements, and cognitive elements. McCombs and Shaw (1972) also investigated the salience of attributes in addition to the salience of issues in terms of affective and cognitive attributes. “Affect denotes a “pro/con” orientation, a feeling of liking or disliking something. Cognition, by contrast, denotes the individual’s perception of the attitude object, his ‘image’ or organized set of information and beliefs about a political object” (McCombs & Shaw, 1972, p. 186). Previous scholars also defined the two dimensions of attributes as cognitive attributes (substantive attributes) and affective attributes (e.g., Carroll & McCombs, 2003; Kiousis et al., 2006; McCombs & Shaw, 1972). Substantive attributes,

based on reasoning, were commonly explored in terms of frames of objects, and affective attributes were explored in terms of the evaluative tone of objects. Golan and Wanta (2001) explained that both cognitive and affective attributes influence individuals' evaluations of political candidates. Specifically, they stated that the attribute level is essential to learning the characteristics of political candidates. In a business context, Carroll (2004) tested both the first- and second-level of agenda setting, showing that media descriptions of the issues or attributes of the firms were associated with public perceptions about the firm regarding the issues. Carroll and McCombs (2003) also defined two levels of agenda setting:

At the first level, agenda setting effects are on attention. At the second level, agenda setting effects are on comprehension. These attribute agenda-setting effects on public comprehension can be described in terms of two dimensions: substantive and evaluative (or, cognitive and affective, if you will). (Carroll & McCombs, 2003, p. 38)

Substantive attributes

Cognitive or substantive attributes of agenda building and agenda setting deal with the logical aspect of the object, while affective attribute deals with the evaluative tone toward the object (Sheafer, 2007). Scholars have defined "substantive dimension of attribute" as "the characteristics of news that help us cognitively structure news and discern among various topics" (Kiousis et al., 1999, p. 417). Frames have been widely used in terms of the cognitive attribute of an object (McCombs et al., 2000). McCombs et al. (2000) distinguished two definitions of frames:

In the case of the central theme, our concern is with the central focus of the picture. In cases of aspects, the frame distinguishes between what the picture included and what is outside, a use of the term very similar to the idea of framing in photography. (McCombs et al., 2000, p. 79)

Tankard, Hendrickson, Silberman, Bliss, and Ghanem (1991) defined “framing” as “the central organizing idea for news content that supplies a context and suggests what the issue is through the use of selection, emphasis, exclusion and elaboration” (cited in Golan & Wanta, 2001, p. 248). An object has several aspects and one could focus on certain aspects while ignoring others through the framing process; the frame of an object affects people’s learning about social issues (Entman, 1993). Entman (1993) stated that the framing process can explain how people interpret certain social issues and how people perceive the causes of those social issues.

This substantive attribute of agenda-setting influence on the mass media was explored widely concerning public opinion about candidate images, and various candidate characteristics were suggested as the sources that defined the image of political candidates. For example, McCombs et al. (1997) suggested ideology, qualification, and personality attributes to describe the traits of a specific candidate. Kioussis (2005) also defined several dimensions of candidates’ cognitive attributes, including intellectual ability, moral quality, and leadership ability. Both intellectual ability and moral quality are associated with a candidate’s personal traits, and leadership ability is associated with a candidate’s qualification (Kioussis, 2005).

The attribute level of agenda setting and agenda building have also been explored in a business context. Carroll and McCombs (2003) argued that the discussion of the transfer of salience between the media and the public is also well described in a business news context. Adopting traits from previous corporate reputation studies (e.g., Fombrun, 1998; Fombrun, Gardberg & Sever, 2000), Carroll and McCombs (2003)

suggested six substantive attributes of a corporation. The six key attributes identified by Carroll and McCombs (2003) are as follows:

- Familiarity: Knowing the companies or its products well;
- Creating value: Producing high quality products, providing value for the money;
- Operational capability: Being well-run, efficient, and productive;
- Corporate citizenship: Caring about its employees and the community;
- Performance: Proven track record, good use of assets;
- Leadership/management: Having a CEO with vision, communicating values;
- Appeal: Being liked by stakeholders, being a good company to work for;
- Credibility: Being trustworthy, standing behind its practices (Carroll & McCombs, 2003, p. 40, adapted from Fombrun et al., 2000)

Affective attributes

In addition to the substantive (cognitive) dimension of attributes, the salience of the evaluative (affective) aspect of attributes has also been considered an essential feature of the second level of agenda building and agenda setting (e.g., McCombs & Shaw, 1972; Shrauger, 1967). Affective attributes are defined as the emotional responses of the public (Kiousis et al., 1999). Deephouse (2000) defined the “affective dimension of attribute” as “the overall evaluation of a firm presented in the media resulting from the stream of media stories about the firm” (p. 1097) emphasizing the influence of the media in affecting corporate reputational evaluations.

Sheafer (2007) explained that the evaluative tone of news media coverage affects voters’ political judgment. In particular, Sheafer (2007) highlighted the significant role of negative affective attribute in influencing public perception about issue importance:

Information about negative developments captures our attention far more than information about positive developments. . . . A negative object attribute is, therefore, expected to increase object importance and accessibility on the public agenda. A positive tone, on the other hand, is not expected to have such an effect. (Sheafer, 2007, p. 23)

Moreover, Schoenbach and Semetko (1992) found that a positive a tone in media coverage decreases public perception of issue importance since negative news catches the public's attention more naturally than either positive or neutral news.

Explaining the significant effect of negative information, Sheafer (2007) also mentioned that the negative valence is associated with the operational definition of the public agenda. To measure the importance of the public agenda, researchers have asked the nature of the most important problems now facing the nation. Several researchers found significant linkages between an affective tone of news coverage and public opinion on candidate images, issue frames, or national image (e.g., Kepplinger, Donsbach, Brosius, & Staab, 1989; Kim & McCombs, 2007; Sheafer, 2007; Wanta & Mikusova, 2010).

In a longitudinal media content and public opinion analysis, Kepplinger et al. (1989) found that the media's evaluative assessments of a politician shifted public opinion about the politician. Kim and McCombs (2007) also explored the effects of affective attributes in gubernatorial and senatorial elections. Candidates' positive or negative portrayals of the media coverage were related to public opinion about each candidate (Kim & McCombs, 2007). In an international news context, Wanta and Mikusova (2010) also supported the attribute level of agenda-setting effects. The findings showed that the tone of the news coverage affects whether the news readers assess the nation positively or negatively.

As a critical element of persuasion, scholars have emphasized the role of affect in communication, in areas such as advertising or public relations. “Affect” refers to feeling, emotions, moods, or personalities (Izard, 1993), and scholars have explained that affect plays a significant role in affecting cognitive thinking (e.g., Arnold, 1985; Dillard & Wilson, 1993). Batra (1986) defined “affect” as “feeling toward a stimulus that leads to relative preferences toward that stimulus out of a class of similar stimuli” (p. 54). From a psychological perspective, public evaluation on objects is always associated with some kind of affective evaluation (Morris, Squires, Taber, & Lodge, 2003).

Focusing on affective priming effects, scholars have stated that political terms are affective in nature, adding that “it has been speculated that affective evaluations are stored in memory for all political concepts that have been repeatedly evaluated in the past, and that these affective responses are automatically elicited when the concept is activated in memory” (Morris et al., 2003, p. 742). Scholars have explained that the affective attribute will direct the public’s emotional responses and shape the overall evaluation of the message (e.g., Kiousis et al., 1999; Lopez-Escobar, Llamas, McCombs, & Lennon, 1998b). The valence (or tone) of a message has been widely used to investigate the effect of an affective attribute of agenda building and agenda setting; however, the role of affective attributes has been developed in agenda building and agenda setting.

Dealing with the affective dimension of communication messages, Lang, Dhillon, and Dong (1995) showed that arousing messages can increase the overall effectiveness of advertising, and Keller and Block (1996) found that emotionally arousing messages can affect the public’s cognitive information processing. Other

scholars have also emphasized the importance of emotions in evoking rational information processing (e.g., Coleman & Wu, 2010; Marcus, Neuman, & MacKuen, 2000). Coleman and Wu (2010) showed that emotional attributes of political candidates are essential to the formation of an overall impression of a candidate's qualifications.

In addition to valence (tone), another dimension exists of an affective attribute of messages, as suggested by previous scholars: emotional arousal (stimulating or not) (e.g., Clore, Schwarz, & Conway, 1994; Dunn & Schweitzer, 2005; Forgas, 1995; Gorn, Pham, & Sin, 2001; Schachter & Singer, 1962). According to Dunn & Schweitzer (2005), emotional arousal is distinguished from valence (mood or tone), and its impact is greater than the valence on cognitive information-processing and overall evaluation of an object.

The role of affect in cognitive and overall judgment of an object leads to the compelling argument and priming effect of agenda building and agenda setting. Taken from McCombs's (2004, p. 92) book, *Setting the Agenda: The Mass Media and Public Opinion*, Figure 1-1 in that book presents the effects of attribute on object salience to explain the compelling-argument hypothesis.

Compelling Argument and Priming Effects

McCombs (2004) explained that the first-level agenda setting is associated with the strength of an opinion, while the second-level agenda setting is associated with the direction of the opinion. However, scholars also argue that the strength and the direction cannot be separated from each other in the agenda-building and agenda-setting processes (e.g., Lee, 2010; Sheafer, 2007). Lee (2010) insisted that the direction of an opinion needs to be considered with the strength of that opinion. "It would not be meaningful to gauge the opinion's strength without considering its direction, especially

when thinking of priming effects, which generally measures how much to support or oppose something” (Lee, 2010, p. 773).

For example, when the media bring up unemployment as a subtopic of the economy, media coverage not only affects the importance of unemployment, but also affects the importance of the overall economy. Scholars have referred to this relationship as a “compelling arguments” hypothesis between object and attribute level of agenda building and agenda setting (e.g., Kioussis, 2005; McCombs, 2004; McCombs & Ghanem, 2001; Severin & Tankard, 2001; Yioutas & Segvic, 2003).

To deal with the attribute, McCombs (2004) explained that an object “has numerous attributes, those characteristics and properties that fill out the picture of each object” (p. 70). A certain attribute of the media affects the accessibility of both the object and the attributes on the public (e.g., Ghanem, 1997; McCombs, 2004; McCombs & Ghanem, 2001). Severin and Tankard (2001) defined priming as “the process in which the media attend to some issues and not others and thereby alter the standards by which people evaluate objects in the real world” (p. 226), and Iyengar and Kinder (1987) found the relationships between agenda-setting effects and priming. The priming function has been emphasized as a consequence of agenda-building and agenda-setting effects, and priming is related to both first- and second-level of salience (McCombs, 2004).

Emphasizing the role of attribute salience, previous scholars have tried to explore the logical processes among affective attribute, cognitive attribute, and attitude strength (e.g., Golan & Wanta, 2001; Kioussis, 2005). From a psychological perspective, scholars have explained that the increased volume of thinking leads to a more plausible

framework of the relationship between media agenda salience and public attitude strength (e.g., Abelson, 1995; Judd & Johnson, 1981; Tesser, 1978). Evidence shows a stronger effect of substantive attributes than affective attributes on voters' perception of political candidates (Golan & Wanta, 2001); however, several other scholars have also emphasized the role of affective (evaluative) attribute in affecting public opinion toward the object (candidates or issues) (e.g., Lee & Yoo, 2004; Sheafer, 2007).

Sheafer (2007) addressed the role of the evaluative aspect (both strength and direction) on the evaluation of the objects saying that “the “regular” priming hypothesis ignores this affective component and therefore does not fully explain how people use the primed issue when evaluating political actors and making electoral decisions” (p. 34). In a regular priming effect, people usually make a judgment on a leader based on cognitive characteristics such as the leader's performance associated with important issues. They then try to assess whether the leader's performance is good or bad in dealing with the issues (Sheafer, 2007). However, Sheafer (2007) argued that it is illogical for people to expend lots of cognitive effort to assess a leader's performance. Instead, Sheafer (2007) suggested the concept of affective priming. “When economic growth is primed, people will evaluate the president or the incumbent party based on the affective evaluation (positive or negative) they attach to the economic growth (for instance, is it growing and positive or declining and negative)” (Sheafer, 2007, p. 26). Sheafer (2007) stated that the affective attributes (positive or negative) of information reduces the cost for people to make an evaluation about the object. Explaining attribute priming effects, Kim et al. (2002) stated that the priming effect assumed that the media impacted the public's evaluation: “Specifically, attribute priming hypothesizes that

certain issue attributes emphasized in the media will become significant dimensions of issue evaluation among the public” (pp. 11-12). Kiousis (2003) also examined the association between media coverage and multiple public opinion based on priming and agenda setting. For example, while examining the effects of the Monica Lewinsky scandal in the late 1990s on presidential evaluations, Kiousis (2003) suggested that the media have different effects on cognitive and emotional public opinion.

Corporate Communication and Issues in Business

The following section provides a definition of stakeholder and corporate communication, presents the agenda-building theory in a business context, and explores the role of issues in business in terms of the issue ownership theory.

Corporate Communication and Stakeholders

Developing theoretical frameworks around activism and issues management, public relations scholars have focused on active publics (Hallahan, 2001). Dewey (1927) defined a “public” as a group who recognizes problems, and Blumer (1966) defined a “public” as a group of people who are facing and engaging in issues. J. Grunig and Repper (1992) explained different stages to understand the characteristics of publics, such as stakeholders, public, or issue stages:

An organization has a relationship with stakeholders when the behavior of the organization or of the stakeholder has consequences on the other. Public relations should do formative research to scan the environment and behavior of the organization to identify these consequences. Ongoing communication with these stakeholders helps to build a stable, long-term relationship that manages conflict that may occur in the relationship. (J. Grunig & Repper, 1992, p. 124)

Stakeholders then become publics when they recognize a problem, and they enter the issue stage when they organize and create issues from the problem. The emphasis on activism and issue is grounded in the normative theory perspective in public relations. In

a normative theory, scholars value a two-way symmetrical model of public relations, and activism is the ultimate role of public relations (Hallahan, 2001). However, when considering corporate entities, the asymmetrical model has also been suggested. Corporations build an unbalanced power relationship with an environmental group, a labor union, or a competing corporation since they have more resources and control power (Coleman, 1982). Including both active and inactive publics, this study considered publics and stakeholders as exchangeable terms, and followed a broad definition of a public as a potential audience of messages.

Luoma-aho and Vos (2010) emphasized the importance of understanding stakeholders (publics) in both corporate communication and public relations areas. Decades ago, managers considered stakeholders as obstacles to their business, and they ignored stakeholders in order to avoid communication with them. This was one of the reasons that public relations had such a negative connotation in dealing with the media (Wartick, 1992). However, more recent research has suggested that public relations and corporate communication professionals should consider the relationship with stakeholders as a valuable asset of their business, and should focus on building a long-term relationship rather than short-term performance outcomes.

From an organizational standpoint, a stakeholder is an individual or a member of a group who affects and is affected by an organization's performance, and a satisfactory balance of interests among diverse stakeholders is essential to reaching organizational goals (Freeman, 1984a or 1984b; Harrison & Freeman, 1999). The impact of stakeholders has been discussed in a stakeholder theory or issue management model rooted in public relations (Luoma-aho & Vos, 2010). Relationship management scholars

have suggested there is a critical impact required for building long-term relationship necessary to satisfy stakeholders, and, consequently, to affect the organization's reputation (e.g., Ledingham & Bruning, 2000a or 2000b; Wilson, 2000; J. Grunig & Huang, 2000).

Not only not-for-profit organizations but also for-profit organizations and corporations are now involved with many social issues, such as global warming, public health, or human rights. These corporate social responsibility issues have become prominent concerns for corporations. A corporate-stakeholder relationship perspective suggests that corporate social responsibility activities influence corporate agendas and become major sources of dialogue between companies and their stakeholders (Bhattacharya, Korschun, & Sen, 2008; Clark, 2000). Studies defined this concept as “a commitment to improve community well-being through discretionary business practices and contributions of corporate resources” (Kotler & Lee, 2004, p. 3). Bhattacharya et al. (2008) emphasized the significance of the role of corporate social responsibility activities in affecting company-favoring outcomes, such as greater benefits to stakeholders and better quality of relationships.

Organizations and corporations give their opinions on various community issues, engage in public debate, and deal with the issues that affect the reputation of the organization (Luoma-aho & Vos, 2010). For example, an energy company is involved in the debate on a new energy resource and its economic or environmental consequences. The company's contributions to the issue debate, that is, interacting with government agencies, environmental advocacy groups, investors, and customers, will affect the reputation of the energy company.

Due to communication technology and globalization trends, corporate communication has become predictable. Multiple stakeholders are involved in the corporate communication about issues, and the stakeholders' interaction is critical both online and in traditional media settings. Hence, the role of public relations and corporate communication professionals should be broadening into relationship management or issue management (Luoma-aho & Vos, 2010).

Agenda Building in the Business Context

The significant role played by public relations message strategies has been emphasized as affecting the media and the public agenda, not only in political communication settings but also in corporate communication (Cameron, Sallot, & Curtin, 1997; Curtin, 1999; Gandy, 1982). A variety of information subsidies exist, and news releases are a public relations effort from organizations to journalists.

Carroll and McCombs (2003) stated that the salience transfer is the key idea of agenda setting, so the process and the effect of agenda setting can fit well into business news context. As discussed in the Chapter 2, two levels of agenda building and agenda setting occur. The second level of agenda building and agenda setting is associated with the salience of the attributes of a certain object. At the first level, agenda-building and agenda-setting effects concern the attention of the media and the public, while at the second level, agenda-building and agenda-setting effects concern the comprehension of the issue or the object by the media and the public. Also, attribute salience has been described in terms of two aspects: substantive and evaluative (or cognitive and affective) (Behr & Iyengar, 1985; Iyengar & Kinder, 1987; Iyengar, Peters, & Kinder, 1982; Lee, 2010; McCombs & Shaw, 1993). In terms of the first level

association, the salience of objects has been explored regarding political figures, institutions, corporations, and issues.

While corporations can be associated with various attributes, little empirical research has been done to investigate the relationship between the news media and public perceptions in corporate communication settings. Also, few studies have been conducted to establish the link between public relations and media coverage, and between public relations and public opinion grounded in the agenda-building theory.

Public relations professionals provide information subsidies, such as news releases, speeches, or press conferences, to shape media agendas and to affect public opinion (Curtin, 1999). These information subsidies have been commonly utilized by journalists to save cost to find information themselves (Miller, 2010). The influence of public relations on media content is critical in terms of public perception. Carroll and McCombs (2003) explained that much of the customers' perception about the corporation is related to how the firm is described in the news media.

The relationship between the first- and second-level of agenda building and agenda setting was also investigated proposing a compelling arguments hypothesis (Figure 1-1). The compelling arguments hypothesis has been studied in an experimental design research to observe the causal association among variables in the agenda-building and agenda-setting processes and effects. Kiousis (2005) stated that the compelling arguments hypothesis may be more appropriate for issues than political candidates, and Meijer and Kleinnijenhuis (2006) emphasized the effect of issues in business news on corporate reputation. Organizations and corporations deal with several issues, such as investment, profits, or service quality, as well as some societal

issues, such as the environment, corruption, or energy. These issue-oriented media agendas affect how experts and other stakeholders evaluate the corporation, and the evaluation consequently affects their decisions about purchasing products or investing money. The effect of issue in business is also emphasized in the issue management domain of public relations (Botan & Taylor, 2004).

Comparing data between media content analysis and a panel survey results, Meijer and Kleinnijenhuis (2006) provided empirical evidence on the second level of agenda-setting effects on public opinion. They observed issue ownership as the second level attribute of messages. In the business arena, the effect on business has been explored in return on investment or reputation (e.g., Carroll, 2004; Carroll & McCombs, 2003; Deephouse, 2000). Ohl et al. (1995), supporting second-level agenda building, found the effects of public relations efforts in changing attribute salience in media coverage.

Zoch and Molleda (2006) also reviewed communication literature to examine the effects of organizations and the media in building an agenda for publics. Focusing on the media relations function of public relations, Zoch and Molleda (2006) reviewed and interconnected concepts between framing, information subsidies, and the agenda-building theory. Framing, as second-level agenda building, has functions to define social problems, to diagnose causes, to make judgments, and to suggest solutions. Practitioners try to frame media, public, and policy agendas through information subsidies. Due to its impact on policy agenda, an organization or a corporation has been considered as an organizational policy actor (Andsager & Smiley, 1998):

Policy actors are entities – such as government agencies, large corporations, elite professional organizations and even citizen-activists –

who are outside the media but, because of their size and influence, also possess the ability to intervene in the production of news. Policy actors employ public information officers to communicate their frames. (Andsager & Smiley, 1998, p. 185)

Lang and Lang (1981) suggested the agenda-building process as a reciprocal communication process through feedback between an organization and its publics. For example, not only political candidates but also voters can set issue agendas for a political campaign (Walters, Walters, & Gray, 1996). Interdependency and reciprocity among diverse publics in the relationships emphasize the role of proactive information management, and practitioners prepare proactive messages by scanning the environment and identifying various issues (Zoch & Molleda, 2006).

The agenda-building hypothesis is also suggested in the international context. Several studies have focused on the role of international public relations in cultivating images of other nations (Kunczik, 1997, 2003; Zhang & Cameron, 2003). Exploring the relationships between international public relations messages, U.S. media coverage, and public opinion on other countries, Kioussis and Wu (2008) found that the increase in public relations counsel results in decreasing bad news about those countries in the U.S. news media and in changing American public opinion. Zhang and Cameron (2003) also studied the impact of the Chinese government's public relations campaign in U.S. media coverage about China. The goal of the campaign was to present a new image of China to American publics through cultural events. Sino-U.S. relations have been shaped by public images and perceptions, and the images affect policy outcomes between the two nations (Isaacs, 1972). Zhang and Cameron (2003) showed that a similar pattern among major U.S. newspapers concerning coverage of China created mostly negative news stories, and international public relations efforts had an effect in reducing negative

coverage on China. Wilcox, Ault, and Agee (1989) stated that a national government tried to affect foreign publics' perception toward the nation through lobbying and public information dissemination. This process is called "public diplomacy." According to the scholars, public diplomacy efforts have incorporated cultural aspects of foreign relations aimed at improving images of a country. Kunczik (1997) also emphasized governments' efforts to cultivate their national images for foreign publics.

The Role of Issues in Business

Corporations or business institutions have been considered as interest groups in the policy process (Berger, 2001), and they try to control issue agendas among the media, public, and policy through information subsidies (Schattschneider, 1960). The corporate agenda has been neglected in the traditional agenda-setting process; however, scholars have increased their attention to corporate agenda-building power by considering the source's influence on the media (Berger, 2001). Gandy (1982) emphasized the role of information subsidies (e.g., news releases, spokespersons, satellite feeds, etc.) in affecting the media and policy agendas. Berger (2001) proposed an alternative agenda-setting model placing corporate issues in the center of the process. In a corporate model, corporate political actors play a powerful role in shaping federal policy agendas through lobbying, public relations, advertising campaigns, or political debates (Domhoff, 1970; Domhoff, 1979; Gandy, 1982). Scholars have stated that agenda building can be successful when information subsidies are accepted by the media and policy professionals (Cameron et al., 1997).

Highlighting the role of corporation agenda building in the public agenda, scholars have incorporated the idea of issues management (Heath & Cousino, 1990). Renfro (1993) stated that corporations play a "larger role in the public issues process than

government” (p. 2), and the role of business in public agenda building is enhanced when conflict issues are debated (Berger, 2001), and when the conflict is privatized (Schattschneider, 1960). Explaining framing of issues, Hallahan (1999) defined an issue as “a dispute between two or more parties, usually over the allocation of resources or the treatment or portrayal of groups in society” (p. 217). Issues are frequently constructed by interest groups who put the issues up for public discussion (Best, 1995). Through a process of agenda building, social problems (or issues) receive social acknowledgement, and public support for the issues is mobilized (Cobb & Elder, 1972). Miller (2010) suggested marketplace advocacy as a form of issue advocacy in the domain of an organization’s image promotion: “Some researchers suggest that marketplace advocacy may be an effective means of both image building and influencing policy, because of its ability to persuade without seeming to do so” (p. 85).

The purpose of issue advocacy campaigns is to inform, educate, and persuade publics about how the business contributes to its society and community (Sethi, 1979), and through marketplace advocacy (a type of issue advocacy), business has been involved in promoting public issues such as health, energy, and environment. Miller (2010) described the benefits of marketplace advocacy for business as having both “economic and psychological benefits” (p. 89). Using the case study of the coal industry which has a great impact on the environment, Miller (2010) stated that marketplace advocacy results in greater approval for the advocated coal industry.

Definition of issue-arena

Emphasizing the role of the organization, Aula and Mantere (2008) viewed arenas in which an organization’s reputation is created through interaction with the organization’s publics. Even though the definition focused mainly on the role of

organization, scholars have also stated that the role of the media cannot be ignored (e.g., Miel & Faris, 2008; Phillips & Young, 2009; Solis, 2009). Changes in media systems and technology affect the interaction between an organization and its public, and those changes affect the reputation of the organization as well.

Luoma-aho and Vos (2010) suggested several factors that influence the issue-arena interaction: the number of actors involved, the amount of media visibility, and the intensity of public interest in the issue (e.g., Schattschneider, 1960). In a society, numerous issues and events occur, and it is impossible for all the issues to be debated simultaneously; hence, the issues compete with each other to enter the media and public agenda (e.g., Berger, 2001; Berger, Hertog, & Park, 2002; Hilgartner & Bosk, 1988).

This study aimed to observe the role of issue agenda in affecting public opinion on the issues and the organization that owned the issue. Previously, scholars argued that what the stakeholders perceived about an organization affects the images of the organization, and an organization's reputation is built on the assessments by different stakeholders (e.g., Bernstein, 1984; Bromley, 1993).

The organization-centered mechanism has been shifted to the relationship standpoint emphasizing the role of stakeholders interacting in the issue-arena. As a response to shifts in the media landscape and business environment, issue management has bloomed since the 1970s, and scholars have focused more on reciprocal relationships than on a unidirectional one (Berger, 2001). Professionals also need to monitor media content and to follow dialogues between an organization and

publics to better manage issues in which they are involved. Luoma-aho and Vos (2010) suggested the following axioms for future directions in research:

- An issue-arena is a place where the public debate about an issue is conducted.
- The interaction takes place in the traditional or virtual media.
- The actors can be active or passive, one could say “on the stage” or “in the audience.”
- The arena is dynamic; actors may be more or less active when time passes or leave entirely to go to another area.
- An organization can be active in multiple arenas, monitoring actions of other parties and/or actively engaging in the interaction.
- As the arenas are interrelated an organization needs to coordinate and balance its communication strategies (Luoma-aho & Vos, 2010, p. 324).

Issue Ownership

In a business context, Meijer and Kleinnijenhuis (2006) emphasized the effects of issues on corporate reputation. The effects of business news involving issues have been widely assumed, but little empirical research has tested the effects. This research aimed to apply the concept of issue ownership to the agenda-building process. The effect of issues has been widely studied in the area of political communication to show how ideological and controversial issues affect the images and assessment of the involved political party. When the media emphasize the social welfare policy, publics would evaluate the conservative party more positively since they perceive that the issue is owned by the conservative party (Zaller, 1992). Scholars have noted that when the issue is primed in the public domain, issue-owned parties would receive more attention from the public and acquire electoral gains (e.g., Kleinnijenhuis et al., 2001; Petrocik, 1996; Petrocik et al., 2003; Sheafer & Weimann, 2005).

Scholars examined the effects of news on public opinion toward a political party and subsequent public behavior through election outcomes (Kleinnijenhuis et al., 2001). Issue news benefits the issue-owned party when the media covers the issue in a positive light, while issue news benefits the opposite party (not the party owning the issue) when the media covers the issue in a negative light (Kleinnijenhuis et al., 2001). Petrocik (1996) stated that issue problems are recognized by the news media through the framing and priming process, and the issues set the criteria for voters when they evaluate a party. Issue-owned parties are selected based on the perceived competency of the party in dealing with certain problem issues (Petrocik, 1996). Petrocik et al. (2003) explored the priming efforts of political campaigns in presidential election cases. Some issues, such as social welfare, have been owned by Democrats; issues, such as the size of the government or taxes, have been owned by Republicans; and issues, such as the economy or security, have not been owned by a single party (Petrocik et al., 2003). Petrocik et al. (2003) noted that issue ownership of vague issues is based on how much credit or blame is given to each party.

Sheafer and Weimann (2005) pointed out the effective role of the media in an Israeli election context by summarizing the agenda-setting and agenda-building processes as follows: Associations between reality and media attention, associations between the media and public opinion, linkages to voting behavior, and priming effects on actual voting results. The results indicate that the media help voters to set their evaluation criteria (Sheafer & Weimann, 2005).

According to an issue-ownership perspective, whether or not an organization owned an issue would determine that organization's influence on public perception.

Budge and Farlie (1983) argued that a political party takes advantage when the election campaign promotes issues that the party has emphasized. The assumption of the effects is that voters would like to vote for a candidate and/or party when the candidate and/or party is perceived competent in handling certain salient issues (Belanger & Meguid, 2008; Cha, Song, & Kim, 2010; Elmelund-Praestekaer, 2011; Green & Hobolt, 2008).

On the topic of corporate issue ownership, Cha, Song, and Kim (2010) measured issue ownership by a corporation's capability to solve certain issues. Meijer and Kleinnijenhuis (2006) pointed out that when the issue in business news transfers its salience to the public's mind, the issue salience becomes a yardstick to evaluate the corporation, and salience affects the reputation of the corporation:

If there is news about an issue that the public perceives the organization to be handling successfully, that is, an owned issue, then the reputation of the organization will improve. If there is news about an issue that the public regards the organization as being incapable of handling, that is, a poorly owned issue, then the reputation of the organization will worsen. (Meijer & Kleinnijenhuis, 2006, p. 545)

To explore the effects of issue ownership, scholars have generated a cross-sectional study based on the agenda-setting hypothesis and have showed that the amount of news about business issues involved affects the salience of an issue and the reputation of the corporation (Meijer & Kleinnijenhuis, 2006). Scholars have suggested considering the issue ownership theory in terms of the substantive dimension of the attribute level of agenda setting (Carroll & McCombs, 2003).

Emotional Mediating Factor in the Agenda-Building Process

This section provides definitions and measurement of the mediator in this study, emotional arousal, also known as a contingent condition for agenda-setting effects. Wu

and Coleman (2009) found that “negative information has more power to transfer the media’s agenda of candidate attributes to the public” (p. 775). Previous studies have showed that the agenda-building and agenda-setting effects would depend on the degree of some other variables, such as an issue’s obtrusiveness, size of effect, time, level of media exposure, or respondents’ educational level (e.g., Dearing & Rogers, 1996; Kim & McCombs, 2007; Wanta, 1997; Weaver, 1977; Winter & Eyal, 1981; Zucker, 1978; Yagade & Dozier, 1990).

Yagade and Dozier (1990) explored agenda-setting effects between two types of issues – concrete (drug abuse, energy) and abstract issues (nuclear arms race, federal budget deficit) – and found that the effects are greater with concrete issues than with abstract issues. Kim and McCombs (2007) also showed that the media effects on public opinion are greater for heavy media users than light users.

Among the various factors, the effects of affective and emotional factors have been less developed compared to those of cognitive factors. Hence, this study mainly focused on the effects of emotional arousal to explore the role of affective attributes in agenda-building research, and trust also plays a pivotal role in the business reputation study.

Previous studies have suggested a critical role for affective attributes in leading emotional responses to a message and in shaping the overall composition of the story (e.g., Kioussis et al., 1999; Lopez-Escobar, Llamas, & McCombs, 1998a). Using the tone of a story, studies have demonstrated how the tone affects the overall evaluations of the object (issues or political figures) in the messages. When a news story covers a political candidate positively, the audience would evaluate the political candidate favorably.

Scholars have focused on the role of affect in cognitive and overall thinking about an object (e.g., Arnold, 1985; Batra, 1986; Dillard & Wilson, 1993). “Affect” was defined as “feeling toward a stimulus that leads to relative preferences toward that stimulus out of a class of similar stimuli” (Batra, 1986, p. 54). Scholars have found supportive evidence that explains the effects of affective attributes on overall evaluation of objects (e.g., Kioussis et al., 1999; Lopez-Escobar et al., 1998b).

Emotion is complex and dynamic in nature (e.g., Dunn & Schweitzer, 2005; Smith & Ellsworth, 1985). Compared to mood (positive or negative feelings), Dunn and Schweitzer (2005) indicated that emotion has multiple appraisal cues. For example, negative feelings contain anger or fear, and positive feelings contain happiness or satisfaction. According to Dunn and Schweitzer (2005), these different appraisals are related to different subsequent behaviors or judgments:

Anger is characterized by high other-person control, sadness by high situational control, and guilt by high personal control. That is, when assessing a negative situation, people typically feel angry if they perceive another person to be responsible, sad if they perceive nonhuman factors (e.g., illness or natural disaster) to be responsible, and guilt if they perceive themselves to be responsible. (Dunn & Schweitzer, 2005, p. 738)

Also, the attribution process of emotion is unclear, and there is always a chance to misattribute the causes of feeling (Dunn & Schweitzer, 2005). When multiple incidents (or people) are interrelated with someone’s angry feelings, he/she can blame a wrong incident (or person) for his/her angry feeling. Smith and Ellsworth (1985) proposed the following dimensions of appraisal: pleasantness, anticipated effort, certainty, attentional activity, self-other responsibility/control, situational control, and emotion. These dimensions of appraisal vary depending on the types of appraisal.

Scholars have traditionally suggested two dimensions of emotion – pleasantness and arousal (e.g., Dunn & Schweitzer, 2005; Smith & Ellsworth, 1985). The valence of a message has been widely used to explore the role of affective attributes in agenda building and agenda setting; however, the role of affect still has been underdeveloped in agenda building and agenda setting. Scholars have stated that emotionally arousing messages can influence cognitive information processing by evoking rational thinking (e.g., Coleman & Wu, 2010; Keller & Block, 1996; Marcus et al., 2000). Lang et al. (1995) explored the effects of arousing messages on the overall effectiveness of advertising. Coleman and Wu (2010) also showed that emotional attributes of a political candidate affect the overall impression of the candidate's qualifications. Comparing the effects between affective and cognitive assessments, Coleman and Wu (2010) found that an audiences' emotional assessment toward a political candidate has greater influence on the overall evaluation of the candidate than cognitive assessment, such as a candidate's qualifications. These studies have argued that emotions can evoke in-depth and cognitive information processing about an object (Coleman & Wu, 2010; Marcus et al., 2000). Dunn and Schweitzer (2005) also found that emotions can enhance the level of cognitive thinking to make a judgment toward an object. Sheafer (2007) also addressed the idea that the affective priming effect should be explored further.

Emphasizing theory-based tests to understand why and when the agenda-setting effects occur, Miller (2007) suggested a more proximal factor of mediated agenda-setting effects, relevance determined by affect, inference, and personal importance. Affect determines the relevance through the “emotional reactions a news story arouses”

(Miller, 2007, p. 692). Miller (2007) stated that the valence of emotion (positive or negative) affects judgments toward objects, emotional arousal is generally related to the prominence judgments, and specific negative emotions mediate the effects:

The most likely negative emotion to mediate agenda setting is anxiety or fear. Specifically, if a news story arouses anxiety or fear, people may pay more attention to the specific content of the story, cognitively elaborate on the information, and come to a conclusion that the issue is an important one for the country. (Miller, 2007, p. 693)

The affective attributes were measured mainly by two dimensions: valence (positive or negative) and arousal (stimulating or not) (e.g., Clore et al., 1994; Forgas, 1995; Gorn et al., 2001; Schachter & Singer, 1962). Compared to valence, emotions are “shorter in duration and more intense” (Dunn & Schweitzer, 2005, p. 737). From a social psychology perspective, scholars have explained emotions as the level of arousal distinguished from valence (positive or negative) (e.g., Dunn & Schweitzer, 2005; Forgas, 1995; Hirt, Levine, McDonald, Melton, & Martin, 1997). Emotional arousal is distinguished from valence (mood or tone), and its impact is greater than the valence on the cognitive information processing and overall evaluation of an object (Dunn & Schweitzer, 2005). In Miller’s (2007) study, emotion was measured by asking which participants felt angry, sad, proud, hopeful, happy, and afraid while reading the stimuli story. Furthermore, this study explores several emotional conditions such as anger, pride, guilt phase, gratitude, happiness, and sadness, as suggested by Dunn and Schweitzer (2005). For example, anger “is characterized by high other-person control, sadness by high situational control, and guilt by high personal control” (Dunn & Schweitzer, 2005, p. 8). Pride and guilt are self-oriented and happiness and sadness are situational judgments (Dunn & Schweitzer, 2005). Emotions in each dimension were suggested as follows:

- Anger: angry, mad, irritated
- Gratitude: appreciative, grateful, thankful
- Guilt: guilty, remorseful, sorry
- Pride: proud, self-fulfilled
- Happiness: joyful, happy, elated
- Sadness: gloomy, sad, upset (Dunn & Schweitzer, 2005)

This study explored the effects of emotion in the agenda-building process in addition to the valence (tone) of a message. The influence of affective attributes on cognitive and overall evaluation of an object would expand the understanding of the compelling-arguments hypothesis. Moreover, this study aimed to expand the knowledge in the corporate communication context. Morris et al. (2003) showed that evaluations of certain objects are always somewhat associated with affective evaluation, and their study explored the affective priming effects in political contexts. However, affective priming effects have not been fully explored, particularly in corporate communication.

Trust as a Relationship Quality Outcome

This section reviews the relationship perspective of public relations. Particularly, based on a corporate communication perspective, this study reviews the concept of trust, one of relationship quality outcome variables.

Definition and Measurement of Trust

Emphasizing the need for theory development in public relations, Ferguson (1984) suggested a relationship between an organization and its public as the central unit of a public relations study. From a relationship perspective, Cutlip, Center, and Broom (1994) viewed public relations as “the management function that establishes and maintains mutually beneficial relationships between an organization and the publics on whom its success or failure depends” (p. 2). Scholars have stated that organizations should develop a long-term relationship with their public to achieve their organizational

goals effectively (e.g., Dozier, L. Grunig, & J. Grunig, 1995; Hon, 1997; Huang, 1999). The organization-public relationship concept has been largely studied by scholars to define the characteristics of effective public relations and to emphasize the managerial role of public relations (e.g., J. Grunig, 2006; L. Grunig, J. Grunig, & Dozier, 2002; J. Grunig & White, 1992; Ledingham & Bruning, 1998). Huang (1998) defined the concept as “the degree that the organization and its publics trust one another, agree on who has rightful power to influence, experience, experience satisfaction with each other, and commit oneself to one another” (p. 12).

Ki and Hon (2009) also stated that “studies of organization-public relationships include three stages: (a) antecedents of relationships, (b) relationship maintenance strategies, and (c) relationship quality outcomes” (p. 1). Relationship maintenance strategies mean “any organizational behavioral efforts that attempt to establish, cultivate, and sustain relationships with strategic publics” (Ki & Hon, 2009, p. 5). Ki and Hon (2009) suggested six dimensions of relationship outcomes: access, positivity, openness, sharing of tasks, networking, and assurances. Scholars have pointed out that these relationship cultivation strategies can be used to make better relationship outcomes. Antecedents of relationships mean collective social norms or environmental factors that affect relationship building, and consequences of the relationship mean outcomes of relationship such as trust (e.g., Hon & J. Grunig, 1999; Ki & Hon, 2009). In measuring the effectiveness of public relations efforts, scholars have suggested relationship quality outcomes including control mutuality, satisfaction, trust, and commitment (e.g., Hon & J. Grunig, 1999; Yang & J. Grunig, 2005).

Ledingham and Bruning (1998, 2000a, 2000b) suggested the concept of an organization-public relationship operationalizing the concept with five dimensions including trust, openness, involvement, investment, and commitment. Hon and J. Grunig (1999) suggested a multiple-item scale for measuring relationship quality outcomes: control mutuality, satisfaction, and commitment. Trust is one of the relationship quality outcomes that act as a predictor of public attitudes toward an organization, and scholars have suggested a multidimensional construct to measure the trust concept: integrity, dependability, and competence (Hon & J. Grunig, 1999). These constructs refer to whether or not an organization is fair and just, whether or not an organization will do what it says it will do, and whether an organization has the ability to do what it says it will do. As Yang and J. Grunig (2005) mentioned, trust (relationship quality outcomes) can influence subsequent judgments of an organization such as organizational reputation.

Corporate Communication and Trust

Seltzer and Zhang (2011) applied the organization-public relations framework to political communication and stated that political parties could get favorable public attitudes from trust, which is one of the relationship quality outcomes. Trust also can play an essential role in the relationship-building process for other types of organizations, such as business firms. Building a good relationship with publics has become one of the most important goals of an organization due to its positive consequences (Swift, 2001; Yang & J. Grunig, 2005). Swift (2001) considered trust as the main domain of business:

Central to the notion of accountability and to contemporary social accounting practice is the concept of trust. Accountability is based upon a distrust of corporate management, whereas corporate reputation building is

about strategically seeking to establish trust in stakeholder relationships in order to negate formal accountability requirements. (Swift, 2001, p. 16)

From an organization-public relationship perspective, scholars have suggested antecedents and consequences of relationship (McKnight & Choudhury, 2001; McKnight, Choudhury, & Kacmar, 2002a, 2002b). The communication process is the factor that links relationship dynamics. Walton (1969) stated that “the dynamics of the organization can best be understood by understanding its systems of communication” (p. 109). Antecedents of relationships are the factors that cause relationship formation, including public perceptions, motives, needs, and behaviors, and consequences are relationship outcomes, such as goal achievement (Cutlip et al., 1994). J. Grunig and Huang (2000) also explained the antecedents and consequences of organization-public relationships, and emphasized communication strategies that link the relationship blocks. According to scholars, social and cultural norms, collective perceptions and expectations, need for resources, and legal/voluntary necessity were suggested as antecedents of the relationship; goal achievement, dependency/loss of autonomy, and routine and institutionalized behavior were suggested as consequences of the relationship. The concept of relationships was explained as the properties of exchanges and communication activities (J. Grunig & Huang, 2000). As one of the relationship quality outcomes, this study explored trust as a critical factor to evaluate public relations communication strategies (e.g., King-Casa, Tomlin, Anen, Camerer, Quartz, & Montague, 2005; Swift, 2001; Yang & J. Grunig, 2005).

Corporate Reputation

This section provides a definition of corporate reputation, presents the measurement of corporate reputation, and explores the relationship between message exposure and corporate reputation.

Definition of Corporate Reputation

Corporate image has been a domain of public relations research. Image is something built in people's mind and public relations professionals aim to improve their organization's image by sending out communication messages to the public (Olasky, 1987). J. Grunig (2003) criticized use of image in public relations due to its ambiguity and negative connotation. People use image interchangeably with the related terms of message, reputation, perception, or attitude, and people consider that the word "image" means something is manipulated, that is, making a good corporate image could mean deceiving the public about the reality of the corporation (J. Grunig, 2003). Also, corporate image refers to only superficial symbolic meaning of corporation based on the identity built through logos, trademark, or name of the corporation (Olins, 1978; Goffman, 1959). Impression management or symbolic communication activities (e.g., advertising) have been emphasized as the role of public relations practitioners (J. Grunig, 2003).

However, behavioral relationship has been getting more attention since scholars have focused on long-term relationship building (Ferguson, 1984; J. Grunig & White, 1992). J. Grunig (2003) indicated that cognitions attributed to an object are accumulated in people's mind to create a long-term memory, and that memory is used when people think (evaluate) about the object. Corporate reputation is an example of this long-term schema that represents behavioral relationships (J. Grunig, 2003).

Kiousis and Wu (2008) stated that “public relations scholars have frequently looked at agenda-building and agenda-setting within the domains of corporate image-building or social issue promotion” (p. 70). Wartick (1992) defined the corporate reputation as “the aggregation of a single stakeholder’s perceptions of how well organizational responses are meeting the demands and expectations of many organizational stakeholders” (p. 34). A stakeholder is defined as “any group or individual who can affect or is affected by the achievement of the organization’s objectives” (Freeman, 1984, p. 64, cited in Wartick, 1992). Milgrom (1981) showed that corporate reputation is related to favorable public assessments; that is, a corporation has a better reputation when the corporation is viewed more favorably than other competitors.

Corporate reputation is the public’s perception about the corporation’s effectiveness, and multiple public (stakeholders) are involved in the process (Wartick, 1992; Winfrey, 1989). Multiple public or stakeholders exist in the relationship between an organization and the public, and they would have a different perception about the corporate reputation. The definition of a stakeholder would affect the evaluation of corporate reputation. Gotsi and Wilson (2001) defined corporate reputation as follows:

A stakeholder’s overall evaluation of a company over time. This evaluation is based on the stakeholder’s direct experiences with the company, any other form of communication and symbolism that provides information about the firm’s actions and/or a comparison with the actions of other leading rivals. (Gotsi & Wilson, 2001, p. 29)

Summarizing common elements of corporate reputation, Gotsi and Wilson (2001) explained the characteristics of the concept as follows: 1) the concept is dynamic, 2) it needs time to build, 3) corporate reputation and corporate image are related, and 4) a company can have different reputations held by multiple stakeholders (e.g., Fombrun, 1996; Gray & Balmer, 1998).

Several key factors affect corporate reputation: company size, product quality, or prices. As agenda-setting and agenda-building scholars have emphasized, media exposure also plays a critical role in building corporate reputation. Focusing on the business-media interaction, scholars have shown a correlation between the media and corporate reputation (Wartick, 1992). Wartick (1992) showed that the tone of media exposure is associated with the change in corporate reputation.

Measurement of Corporate Reputation

Hutton et al. (2001) suggested reputation management as a driving philosophy of corporate public relations. Corporate reputation or image is an intangible concept that cannot be managed directly; however, scholars have stated that it can direct publics' attitude and behavior toward a corporation. Measuring corporate reputation is not an easy process, and the factors that go into developing corporate reputation are still not understood fully. Hutton et al. (2001) indicated that corporate reputation is a "meaningful concept only as it applies to specific audiences or publics, and that no across-the-board measure of reputation is or can be valid for all stakeholders" (p. 249). In other words, reputation can vary by who is doing the measuring (e.g., customers, donors, or employees). In the Harris/Impulse study, budget spending and corporate reputation indicated a positive relationship; while in Fortune's Most Admired Company study, a relationship was found between company size and reputation. In regard to the types of communication, scholars have pointed out that proactive communication has a more positive relationship with reputation than reactive communication (Hutton et al., 2001).

Kiousis et al., (2007) defined "corporate reputation" as a multidimensional construct with eight variables including financial performance. Adopted as a multidimensional item from the Reputation Quotient by Harris Interactive and the

Reputation Institute, six attributes and 20 sub-attribute items were suggested to measure stakeholders' perceptions about corporate reputation (Kiousis et al., 2007):

- Vision and leadership: market opportunities, company has excellent leadership, and company/management has clear vision for the future;
- Social responsibility: company supports good causes, company is environmentally responsible, and company is responsible in the community;
- Emotional appeal: feel good about company, company inspires admiration and respect, and company inspires trust;
- Products and services: high quality products and/or services, innovative products and/or services, company provides good value for money, and company stands behind its products and/or services;
- Workplace environment: rewards employees fairly, good place to work, and good employees; and
- Financial performance: outperforms competitors, company has record of being profitable, company is a low risk investment with growth prospects (Kiousis et al., 2007, p. 155)

Relationship between Message Exposure and Corporate Reputation

From a long-term relationship-building perspective, corporations are involved in several social issues (global warming, health, or human rights) through socially responsible activities. Corporate reactions toward the social problems or issues affect the public's perception about the corporation (Botan & Taylor, 2004; Miller, 2010). The corporate social responsibility actions are one of the dimensions of corporate reputation measurements (Hutton et al., 2001). Bhattacharya et al. (2008) suggested the influence of corporate social responsibility activities on relationship quality outcomes. Issues have become one of the most prominent concerns for corporations, and scholars have linked agenda-building and agenda-setting concepts to an issue management perspective (e.g., Heath & Cousino, 1990; Miller, 2010). Miller (2010) found that public relations practitioners can play a significant role as an issue advocacy agent who informs and

persuades the public about certain social issues. Successful issue advocacy activities can benefit organizations with better relationship outcomes, such as approval rating toward the industry (Miller, 2010).

From agenda-building and agenda-setting perspectives, the role of media exposure is critical for corporate reputation. Media exposure was defined as “the aggregated news reports relating to a specific company within a prescribed period” (Wartick, 1992, p. 34). Wartick (1992) stated that media exposure of organizations’ activities is a critical factor in affecting corporate reputation. A case study showed that the magnitude of negative media exposure of four companies resulted in the decline of the corporations’ reputation (Weinberger & Romeo, 1989). Eyestone (1978) emphasized the role of mass media in developing social movements and issues and in shifting corporate reputation. Kioussis et al. (2007) explored the influence of public relations and the media on corporate reputation, as suggested as an outcome of public relations. However, empirical research between media exposure and corporate reputation is still limited. Fombrun and Shanley (1990) found that more media exposure had negative effects on corporate reputation no matter how the media portrayed the corporation (negatively or positively). Griffin, Babin, and Attaway (1991) noted that the relationship between media exposure and corporate reputation is mediated by other factors, such as source credibility, history, and other situational dynamics.

On an international level, corporate reputation was not thoroughly explored in an agenda-building and agenda-setting framework. However, some studies have been conducted in terms of national reputation context (e.g., Kioussis & Wu, 2008; Zhang & Cameron, 2003). Analyzing U.S. media coverage before and after a Chinese

government's public relations campaign, scholars found significant changes in negative news coverage after the nation image campaigning (Zhang & Cameron, 2003). Also, Kioussis and Wu (2008) found similar results showing that the increase of public relations counsel can reduce the number of negative foreign news coverage of a particular nation. The role of media exposure has been emphasized since media portrayals of an object (nation-state or organizations) can affect how the public evaluates the object. Previous study results have also indicated that public relations efforts can influence the tone of media coverage (e.g., Kioussis & Wu, 2008; Miller, 2010; Zhang & Cameron, 2003). Hence, the role of public relations professionals through media relations is critical to making changes in corporate reputation or national reputation (e.g., Carroll, 2004; Carroll & McCombs, 2003; Kioussis & Wu, 2008; Zhang & Cameron, 2003).

Hypotheses and Research Questions

This study predicted the linkages among public relations messages, agenda-building effects, and corporate reputation. Emotional arousal is tested as a mediator to link public relations and the salience of the agenda-building process. The mediating effect refers to the "effect of a third variable/construct intervening between two other related constructs" (Hair, Black, Babin, Anderson, & Tatham, 2006, p. 844), and "the addition of a third variable to this X → Y relation, whereby X causes the mediator, M, and M causes Y, so X → M → Y" (Lavigne & Bourbonnais, 2010, p. 125).

This study attempted to examine: 1) the relationship between the independent variables (issue ownership and issue attributes) and the mediator (emotional arousal), 2) the relationship between the mediator (emotional arousal) and the dependent variables associated with agenda salience (issue and attribute salience), 3) the relationship between the independent variables (issue ownership and issue attributes)

and the dependent variables associated with agenda salience (issue and attribute salience), and 4) the relationship between the dependent variables associated with agenda salience (issue and attribute salience) and ones associated with public opinion (priming effect, trust, and corporate reputation). Also, this study presented the direct effect between independent variables and agenda-building salience, while controlling for the indirect, mediated effect.

In the relationship between the independent variables (issue ownership and issue attributes) and the mediator (emotional arousal), the following hypotheses and research questions were proposed:

H1: When the issue is owned by the corporation in public relations messages, the participants will have higher emotional arousal.

H2: The negative tone of issue attributes in a public relations message will be positively related to higher levels of emotional arousal of participants than the positive tone of issue attributes.

RQ1: Does an interaction exist between the perceived issue ownership and the tone of issue attribute in a public relations message on the level of emotional arousal of participants?

Also, in the relationship between the mediator (emotional arousal) and the dependent variables associated with agenda salience (issue and attribute salience), the following hypotheses and research questions were proposed:

H3: The higher the level of emotional arousal that participants have, the higher the level of issue salience transfer of participants.

H4: The higher the level of emotional arousal that participants have, the higher the level of attribute salience transfer of participants.

Then, in the relationship between the independent variables (issue ownership and issue attributes) and the dependent variables associated with agenda salience (issue

and attribute salience), the following hypotheses and research questions were proposed:

H5: When the issue is owned by the corporation in public relations messages, the participants will have a higher issue salience transfer.

H6: When the issue is owned by the corporation in public relations messages, the participants will have a higher attribute salience transfer.

H7: The negative tone of issue attributes in a public relations message will be positively related to the higher levels of issue salience transfer of participants than the positive tone of issue attributes.

H8: The negative tone of issue attributes in a public relations message will be related more to the higher level of attribute salience transfer of participants than the positive tone of issue attributes.

RQ2a: Does an interaction exist between the perceived issue ownership and the tone of issue attribute in a public relations message on the level of issue salience transfer of participants?

RQ2b: Does an interaction exist between the perceived issue ownership and the tone of issue attribute in a public relations message on the level of attribute salience transfer of participants?

The relationships from the previous set of hypotheses are also explored for the direct effect while controlling for the indirect, mediated effect. With the first mediator, that is, the level of emotional arousal, the following four hypotheses are proposed:

H9: The level of emotional arousal of participants mediates the relationship between issue ownership perception and the level of issue salience transfer.

H10: The level of emotional arousal of participants mediates the relationship between issue ownership perception and the level of attribute salience transfer.

H11: The level of emotional arousal of participants mediates the relationship between the tone of issue attributes in a public relations message and the level of issue salience transfer.

H12: The level of emotional arousal of participants mediates the positive relationship between the tone of issue attributes in a public relations message and the level of attribute salience transfer.

RQ3: How do the mediating effects of emotion differ, depending on the mode of emotions (anger, gratitude, guilt, pride, happiness, and sadness)?

In the relationship between the dependent variables associated with agenda salience (issue and attribute salience) and ones associated with public opinion (priming effect, trust, and corporate reputation), the following six hypotheses and research questions are proposed:

H13: The higher the level of the issue salience transfer of participants, the higher the level of priming effect participants will have about the corporation in its public relations messages.

H14: The higher the level of the issue salience transfer of participants, the higher the level of perceived trust participants will have about the corporation in its public relations messages.

H15: The higher the level of the issue salience transfer of participants, the more participants will have a favorable perceived corporate reputation about the corporation from its public relations messages.

H16: The higher the level of the attribute salience transfer of participants, the higher the level of priming effect participants will have about the corporation in its public relations messages.

H17: The higher the level of the attribute salience transfer of participants, the higher the level of perceived trust participants will have about the corporation in its public relations messages.

H18: The higher the level of the attribute salience transfer of participants, the more participants will have a favorable perceived corporate reputation about the corporation from its public relations messages.

RQ4a: Does an interaction effect exist between the levels of issue and attribute salience transfer of participants on the priming effect of the corporation?

RQ4b: Does an interaction exist between the levels of issue and attribute salience transfer of participants on the perceived trust of the organization?

RQ4c: Does an interaction exist between the levels of issue and attribute salience transfer of participants on the perceived corporate reputation?

Finally, the last two hypotheses propose the relationship between the priming effect, trust, and corporate reputation:

H19: The higher the level of priming effect that participants have, the higher the level will be of the public's perceived trust of the corporation in its public relations messages.

H20: The higher the level of the public's perceived trust on the corporation that participants have, the more favorable perceived corporate reputation participants will have.

This chapter has presented a review of literature about the agenda-building theory, corporate communication and issue ownership, trust, and corporate reputation.

Hypotheses and research questions were derived from theoretical frameworks discussed in this chapter. A graphical representation of the basic conceptual framework is presented in Figure 2-1, and a more detailed conceptual model representing the relationships between each of the variables is shown in Figure 2-2. Furthermore, Figure 2-3 shows the rest of the theoretical relationships among variables not tested in this study: 1) the direct relationships between public relations (issue ownership and issue attributes) and public opinion (priming effect, trust, and reputation), 2) the relationships between emotion and public opinion (priming effect, trust, and reputation), 3) the relationship between issue salience and attribute salience, and 4) the relationship between dependent variables (priming effect and reputation).

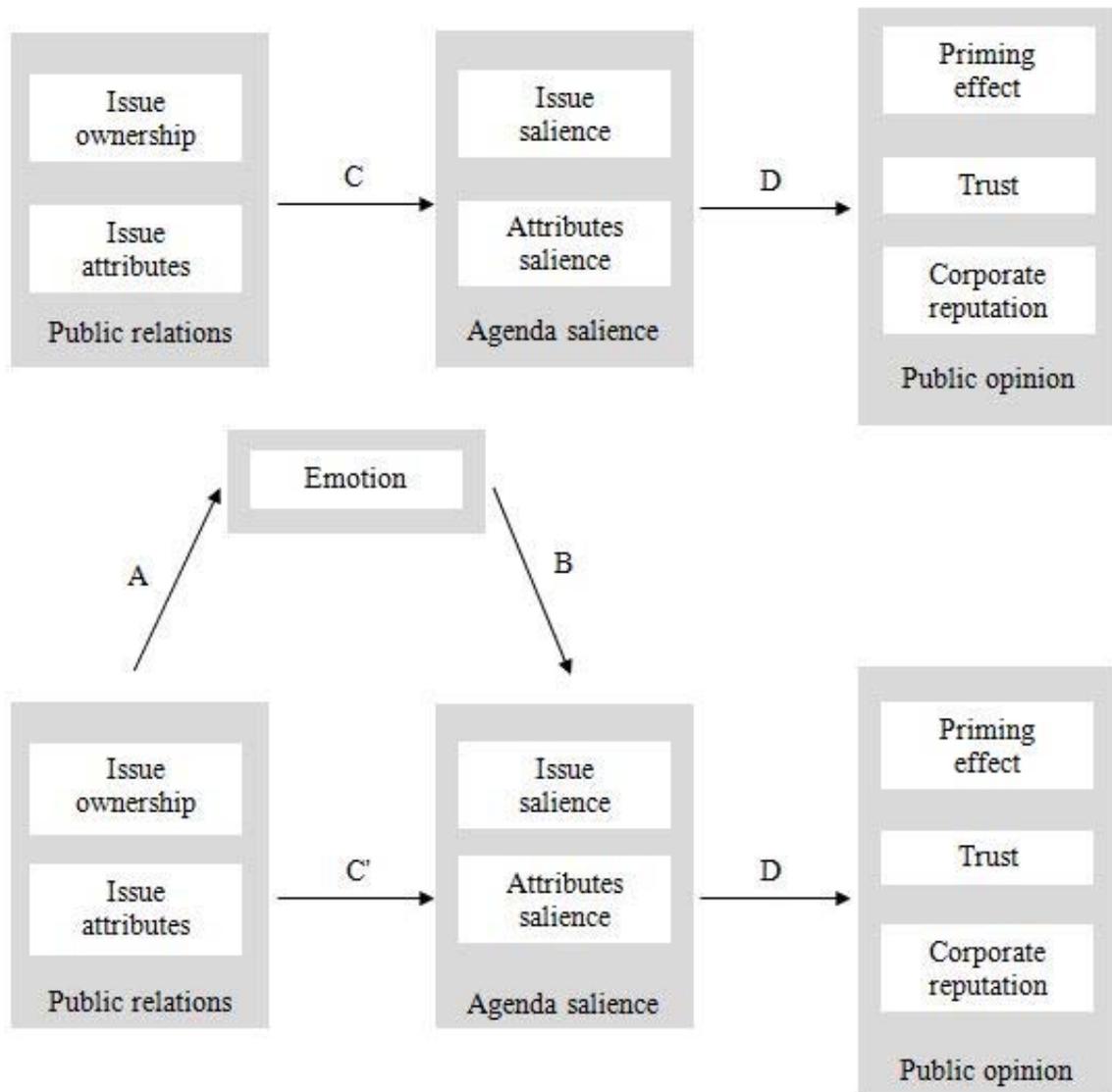


Figure 2-1. A theoretical framework: Explaining the relationship between public relations, emotional mediator, agenda salience, and public opinion. A: a relationship between the independent variables (issue ownership and issue attributes) and the mediator (emotion) B: a relationship between the mediator (emotion) and the dependent variables associated with agenda salience (issue and attribute salience). C: a relationship between the independent variables (issue ownership and issue attributes) and the dependent variables associated with agenda salience (issue and attribute salience). C': the direct effect while controlling for the indirect, mediated effect. D: a relationship between the dependent variables associated with agenda salience (issue and attribute salience) and ones associated with public opinion (priming effect, trust, and corporate reputation).

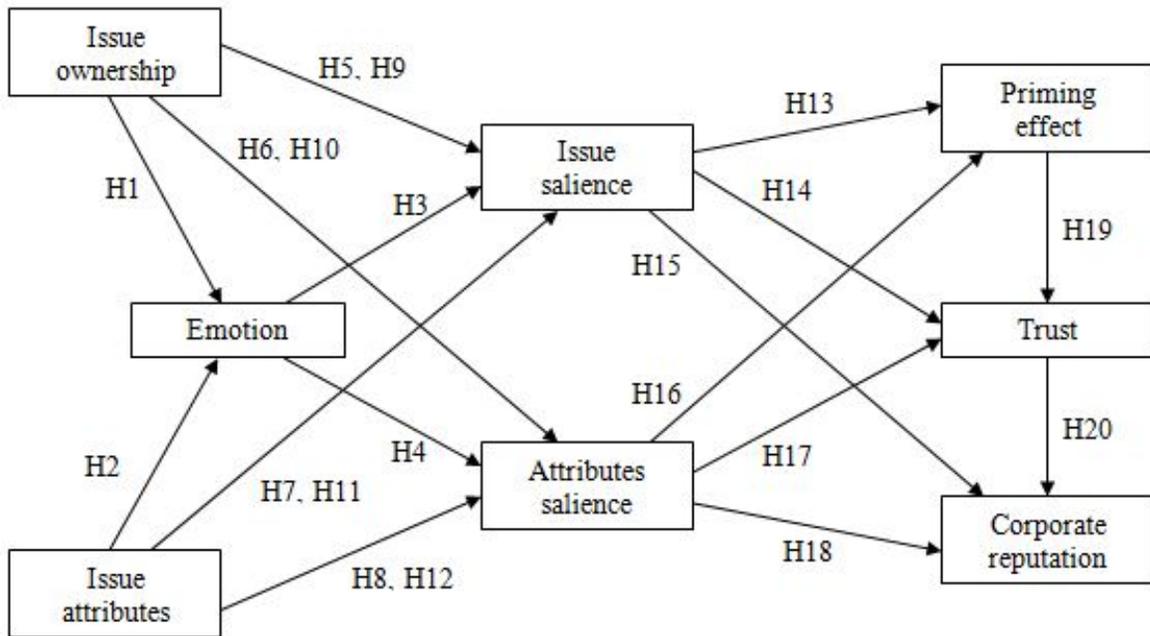


Figure 2-2. Proposed comprehensive conceptual model

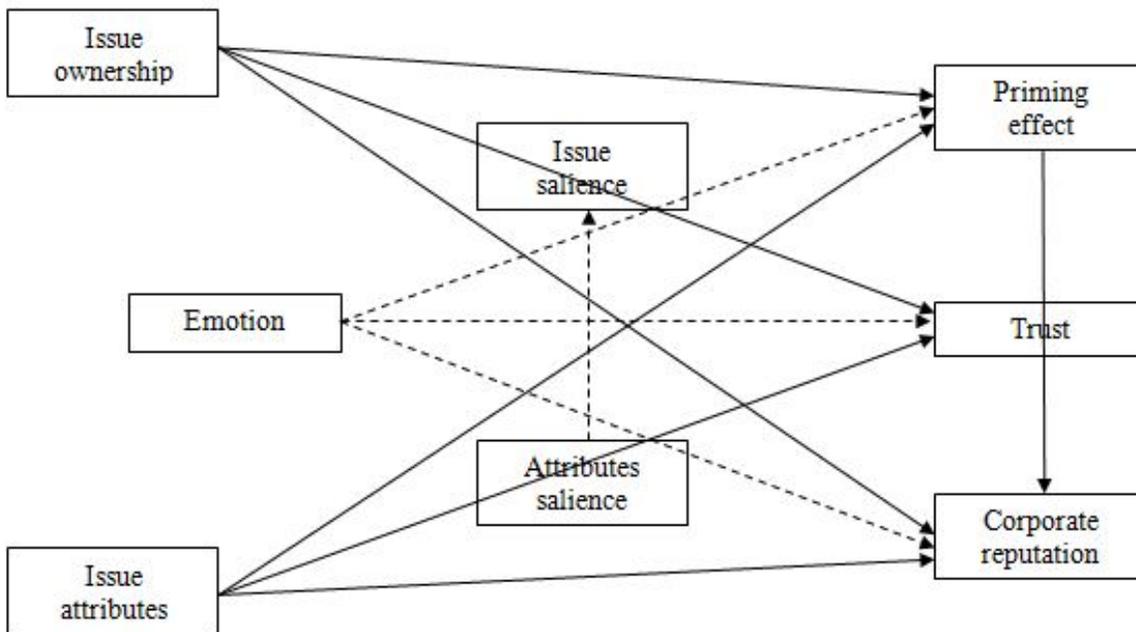


Figure 2-3. Untested relationships among variables

CHAPTER 3 METHODS

This chapter describes the method employed in this research. It presents the choice of method, descriptions of the participants, manipulation, questionnaire construction, experimental procedure, pretest, and statistical analyses.

Experimental Design

Several methods were used to investigate the use, influence, and effects of public relations (Cornelissen, 2000). Particularly, Cornelissen (2000) explained the survey, discourse analysis, and experimental design methods. The survey (including interviews) was used to identify information that respondents received and to explore the factors used in information processing. The discourse analysis (also known as “social framework analysis”) was used to explore specific terms and vocabulary used by professionals and publics. Cornelissen (2000) also defined experimental designs: Where use is assessed through the control of extraneous influences and the purposive manipulation of “treatments” to groups of respondents (p. 323).

This study aimed to test the influence of issue ownership and attribute of public relations messages on public opinion regarding corporate trust and reputation through the agenda-building process. This study proposed relationships among eight variables (independent variables, a mediator, and dependent variables). Quantitative experimental research was conducted to establish whether a relationship was found among these eight variables and also to determine the direction of the effect.

Corporate reputation is affected by media exposure (Griffin et al., 1991; Wartick, 1992; Weinberger & Romeo, 1989). Expanding the linkages in the social media context, this research attempted to establish that the related variables in agenda-building affect

corporate reputation as the consequences of the agenda-building process. In particular, this study conducted a 2 x 2 between-subjects factorial design experiment, manipulating public relations messages in terms of whether issues were owned by a corporation, as well as how positively or negatively the issue was exposed by the media and the public. This research followed the quantitative and causal research design tradition.

Traditionally, scholars have stated that agenda-setting effects came from accessibility in memory (e.g., Iyengar & Kinder, 1987; Krosnick & Kinder, 1990). However, prior evidence was not enough to demonstrate a causal relationship in the agenda-setting process (Miller, 2007).

Zikmund (2003) defined “causal research” as research to “identify cause-and-effect relationships amongst variables” (p. 56). In a causal nature, this study attempted to determine the relationships among attributes of public relations messages, salience of agenda, and public opinion about the issue and corporate reputation. This study explored the effect of each independent variable, as well as the interaction between the variables and mediating effects with the emotional arousal variable. The study included the interaction effect between two independent variables that have different levels, using a factorial causal design. A factorial design “allows for the simultaneous manipulation of two or more independent variables at various levels” (Zikmund, 2003, p. 283).

Since the study is a 2 x 2 factorial design, it needs four groups that have at least 24 participants in each group. The sample size was determined by the combination of an effect size and power when the significant alpha level was set to .05. Due to the exploratory nature of this study, the medium effect size and power were used. The

effect size was set to .06, and the power was set to .60 (Erdfelder, Faul, & Buchner, 1996, cited in Keppel & Wickens, 2004, p. 173). Each group was assigned to a particular combination of treatment conditions, which allowed this study to test the interaction effect. The combinations of each condition and each group design are shown in Tables 3-1 and 3-2, respectively.

Participants

Participants in this study consisted of adults (18 years old or older), and the unit of analysis was therefore the individual. The unit of analysis was defined as “what or whom is being studied” (Babbie, 2004, p. 94). In exploring the relationship between public relations effects and corporate reputation, Wartick (1992) noted that researchers should be careful about who evaluates corporate reputation.

Corporate reputation was defined as a “perception by some individual or group on the effectiveness of the corporation” (Winfrey, 1989, p. 3), and Wartick (1992) explained that different stakeholders would have various corporate reputation perceptions. According to Wartick (1992), “corporate reputation will be predicted on the single stakeholder’s view of company responses to their own expectations as well as the expectations of stakeholders other than itself” (p. 35).

This study recruited participants from a crowd-sourcing web service called “Mechanical Turk.” The subjects of the service were considered representative of the U.S. population (Buhrmester, Kwang, & Gosling, 2011; Paolacci, Chandler, & Ipeirotis, 2010). The reward was usually less than \$1 and the typical hourly wage was approximately \$1.40 (Horton & Chilton, in press). The monetary reward for participants (15-20 minute experimental study) was \$.20 per person.

Procedure

Public relations materials were designed to be associated with a fictitious international/global corporation involved in a global health issue. With the two independent variables (issue ownership and affective attribute of a public relations message), four copies of an online survey questionnaire were prepared. Participants were randomly assigned to one of the four conditions, and each participant read a corporate message (e.g., history and public relations campaign messages) along with news messages distributed by the corporation. After participants read the manipulated materials, they viewed the list of questions of dependent and mediating variable items.

Pretest and Manipulation Check

This section describes the procedure of pretests and a description of the manipulation checks of the two independent variables, with discussion about how these variables were operationally defined.

Pretests Procedure

To observe that the two independent variables were manipulated successfully, a separate pretest was conducted. Participants were recruited and then assigned to four different cells. After confirming consent information, each participant reads the corporate public relations messages regarding an issue-related campaign along with redirected news stories about a global health issue. With regard to issue ownership, the study included owned and non-owned conditions, while positive and negative conditions were included with regard to the issue tone. Participants were randomly assigned to one of the four conditions. After reading the stimuli messages, participants answered a questionnaire about their perception about issue ownership status and the valence of the issue.

Stimuli 1: Issue Ownership

The operational definition of issue ownership received more attention from a medium associated with an issue in the context of corporate public relations messages (Meijer & Kleinnijenhuis, 2006). The issue ownership hypothesis proposed that the more an organization received media attention, the higher the likelihood that the issue would become salient with an issue associated with an organization.

Scholars have measured issue ownership by asking how well people think a political party (or an organization) handles a specific issue (e.g., Elmelund-Praestekaer, 2011; Green & Hobolt, 2008). Belanger and Meguid (2008) also asked which political party would be the best at dealing with certain issues. Elmelund-Praestekaer (2011) used a competence index ranging from -100 to +100. Cha et al. (2010) measured the degree of capability to solve certain problems or issues. Adopted from previous scholarship (e.g., Elmelund-Praestekaer, 2011; Green & Hobolt, 2008; McKnight et al., 2002a), the level of perceived issue ownership was measured by three seven-point Likert scale items:

- How well do you think the organization handles global health issues?
- How well do you think the organization can solve problems related to global health issues? and
- I believe that the corporation is very knowledgeable about global health issues.

Stimuli 2: Tone of Issue Attributes

A seven-point semantic scale was used to measure the affective attribute of the public relations messages. The tone of an issue in the public relations messages was measured by whether the tone was positive or negative and whether the tone was

pleasant or unpleasant (e.g., Dunn & Schweitzer, 2005; Miller, 1997; Smith & Ellsworth, 1985).

Pretest Results

A pretest was conducted to ensure that the stimuli messages were manipulated accordingly. Using the Mechanical Turk service, 31 people participated in the pretest. The average duration of a complete survey was approximately 13 minutes ($M = 13.00$, $SD = 10.85$), and answers completed in less than three minutes were excluded. One answer was excluded in this process. Among 30 participants, 17 people randomly viewed an issue owned message while 13 viewed a non-owned issue ownership message. Also, 15 of the total participants randomly read a negative tone from the message while 15 read a positive tone from the message.

Cronbach's alpha was calculated to examine the reliability of each index score of variables. The issue ownership index was the sum of three items (Cronbach's $\alpha = .88$) and the tone of the issue index was the sum of two items (Cronbach's $\alpha = .89$). The independent sample t-test was run to check the manipulation conditions of the two variables. The t-test revealed a statistically significant difference among the mean scores of owned ($M = 16.00$, $SD = 2.42$) and non-owned ($M = 11.54$, $SD = 4.61$) issue ownership conditions ($t(17.035) = 3.169$, $p < .05$). Also, a statistically significant difference occurred between the mean scores of negative ($M = 5.60$, $SD = 2.44$) and positive ($M = 11.93$, $SD = 1.58$) tone of issue conditions ($t(28) = 8.430$, $p < .001$).

Questionnaire Construction and Measures

The questionnaire for this study consisted of scales for dependent variables (issue salience, attribute salience, priming, trust, and corporate reputation), mediating factors (emotional arousal), demographic items, and open-ended questions. Demographic data

included age, religion, education, gender, race, country of origin, occupation, and income (Balmas & Sheafer, 2010; Kiouisis & McDevitt, 2008). These socioeconomic items were used in previous agenda-setting and agenda-building studies. Every scale was revised by replacing the subject in the original statement with “the corporation in the message.” Individual items for six variables of the proposed model are presented in the following sections (Table 3-3), and the copies of the consent form and questionnaire are included in Appendix C.

Issue Salience

A measure of issue salience transfer is the participants’ beliefs about the importance of the issue as presented in the message. Iyengar and Kinder (1987) measured the salience of global health issues:

- In your opinion, how important are global health issues today?
- How many news reports about global health issues do you regularly pay attention to?
- To what extent do you think global health issues are deserving of additional government action? and
- How often do you talk about global health issues in your everyday conversation?

Adopted from Iyengar and Kinder (1987), an overall salience was measured to determine whether or not the participants considered the issue on the message as prominent, significant, important, and well known.

Cronbach’s alpha for issue salience items was .71. According to Langdrige (2004), “Cronbach’s alpha coefficient is used to assess the internal reliability of items with scaled responses (e.g., strongly agree to strongly disagree)” (p. 77), and .70 or higher is considered as an acceptable level. The scales were summed up to form an

index score for issue importance (first-level agenda-setting effects). The response choices consisted of Likert scales ranging from 1 = “Not at all” to 7 = “Extremely.”

Attribute Salience

To measure attribute salience transfer, the participants’ beliefs about the valence of the issue were presented in the message. Two seven-point semantic Likert scale items were used to measure the valence of issue attribute (positive and pleasant to negative and unpleasant). Cronbach’s alpha for the two items was .86. The response choices consisted of Likert scales ranging from 1 = “Negative/unpleasant” to 7 = “Positive/pleasant.”

Emotion

The level of emotional arousal after reading a message was associated with how such messages provoked emotional appeal. To calibrate the corporation’s emotional appeal, a Likert scale item was used to ask participants to identify how much they would agree with the statement, “I feel excited.” The response choices consisted of Likert scales ranging from 1 = “Not at all” to 7 = “Extremely.”

Dunn and Schweitzer (2005) proposed several emotional conditions such as anger, pride, guilty, gratitude, happiness, and sadness. Anger has been “characterized by high other-person control, sadness by high situational control, and guilt by high personal control” (Dunn & Schweitzer, 2005, p. 8). Pride and guilt are more self-oriented, and happiness and sadness are more situational judgments (Dunn & Schweitzer, 2005). Emotions were also measured as follows: anger (angry, mad, irritated), gratitude (appreciative, grateful, thankful), guilt (guilty, remorseful, sorry), pride (proud, self-fulfilled), happiness (joyful, happy, elated), and sadness (gloomy, sad, upset). Cronbach’s alpha for emotional items was .90 (anger: .93; gratitude: .95; guilt: .86;

pride: .81; happiness: .92; and sadness: .93). The response choices consisted of Likert scales ranging from 1 = “Not at all” to 7 = “Extremely.”

Priming Effect

Priming effects were measured using responses from the following question: “Do you support or oppose the efforts to solve global health issues?” (e.g., Lee, 2010). A seven-point Likert scale, anchored by “extremely oppose” and “extremely support,” asked the subjects whether they personally supported or opposed the global issue shown in the message.

Trust

The perceived level of trust is a multidimensional concept (e.g., whether the organization is fair or whether it will do what it says) was measured based on previous research (e.g., Hon & J. Grunig, 1999; McKnight et al., 2002a). The following statements were used to measure perceived trust (Hon & J. Grunig, 1999, pp. 28-29):

- This corporation would treat customers fairly;
- Whenever this corporation makes an important decision, I know it will be concerned about its customers;
- This corporation can be relied on to keep its promises;
- I believe that this corporation takes the opinions of customers into account when making decisions;
- I feel very confident about this corporation;
- This corporation has the ability to accomplish what it says it will do;
- I believe sound principles guide the corporation’s behavior;
- I am very willing to let this corporation make decisions for customers like me; and
- I believe the corporation does not mislead customers.

The responses from the nine seven-point Likert scale items were then summed to measure perceived trust in the organization, where higher scores indicated higher trust. Cronbach's alpha for trust items was .93. The response choices consisted of Likert scales ranging from 1 = "Strongly disagree" to 7 = "Strongly agree."

Corporate Reputation

To measure corporate reputation, *Fortune's* "most admired corporations" was widely used by many businesses and society scholars (Fombrun & Shanley, 1990; Wartick, 1992; Winfrey, 1989). Wartick (1992) defined the concept as "the aggregation of a single stakeholder's perceptions of how well organizational responses are meeting the demands and expectations of many organizational stakeholders" (p. 37).

Operationally, this study adopted a multidimensional item from the Reputation Quotient by the Harris Interactive and the Reputation Institute to measure stakeholders' perceptions about corporate reputation using six attributes and 20 sub-attribute items (Kioussis et al., 2007, p. 155):

- Vision and leadership: market opportunities, company has excellent leadership, and company/management has a clear vision for the future;
- Social responsibility: company supports good causes, company is environmentally responsible, and company is responsible in the community;
- Emotional appeal: feel good about company, company inspires admiration and respect, and company inspires trust;
- Products and services: high quality products and/or services, innovative products and/or services, company provides good value for money, and company stands behind its products and/or services;
- Workplace environment: rewards employees fairly, good place to work, and good employees; and
- Financial performance: outperforms competitors, company has record of being profitable, company is a low risk investment with growth prospects.

Cronbach's alpha for corporate reputation items was .95 (vision and leadership: .84; social responsibility: .85; emotional appeal: .91; products and services: .86; workplace environment: .85; and financial performance: .81), and the scales were summed up to form an index score for reputation. The response choices consisted of Likert scales ranging from 1 = "Strongly disagree" to 7 = "Strongly agree."

Methodological Concerns

As Golan and Wanta (2001) mentioned, exposure of media content is essential in the agenda-building and agenda-setting processes, with no guarantee that participants have actually seen and read the manipulation materials. Also, an unequal amount of message exposure existed among participants. Since this study used an online survey panel, less control occurred to force them to read stimuli messages and carefully answer the questionnaire. To reduce this concern, the consent form clearly indicated that each participant should read the public relations messages carefully before answering the questionnaires.

Participants were exposed only to a few messages from the corporation, perhaps not enough to evaluate corporate reputation. Moreover, some intrinsic or prior interests in the issue or participants' ordinary level of issue salience may have influenced the agenda-building process and effects.

Statistical Analysis

To test the 20 hypotheses and seven research questions, various data analyses were undertaken, as described below.

A two-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used to test both interaction and the main effects of the two independent variables on each dependent variable. In the first part, issue and attribute salience were considered as dependent variables; in the

second part, priming, trust, and corporate reputation were the dependent variables (Figure 2-2). To establish the relationship between these dependent variables (e.g., relationship between agenda salience and priming effect), a correlation and regression analysis was run.

A path analysis was administrated using LISREL 8.80 statistical package to see whether or not the two mediating factors mediated the relationship between an independent and a dependent variable. According to Iacobucci (2008), mediation analysis is defined as follows:

A set of statistical procedures used to investigate whether a particular data set exhibits a mediational structure. A mediational structure posits a particular conceptualization of the mechanism through which an independent variable might affect a dependent variable—not directly, but rather through an intervening process, captured by the mediator variable. (Iacobucci, 2008, p. 1)

In the path of $X \rightarrow M \rightarrow Y$, X referred to an exogenous variable while M and Y referred to endogenous variables (Iacobucci, 2008). Structural equations modeling (SEM) examines “the process by which an independent variable X is thought to affect a dependent variable Y, directly, as $X \rightarrow Y$, or indirectly through a mediator, $X \rightarrow M \rightarrow Y$ ” (Iacobucci, 2010, p. 93).

Table 3-1. Treatment condition combinations of independent variables

Independent variable: Issue ownership	Independent variable: Issue attributes (tone)
Issue ownership	Positive
	Negative
Non-issue ownership	Positive
	Negative

Table 3-2. Representation of each research cell

Cell	Independent variable: Issue ownership	Independent variable: Issue attributes (tone)	Minimum group size
Cell 1	Issue ownership	Positive	24
Cell 2	Issue ownership	Negative	24
Cell 3	Non-issue ownership	Positive	24
Cell 4	Non-issue ownership	Negative	24

Table 3-3. Measures

Variables	Description
Issue ownership	
IO1	How well do you think that the company handles global health issues?
IO2	How well do you think that the company can solve problems related to global health issues?
IO3	I believe that the company is very knowledgeable about global health issues.
Issue attribute	
IA1	Positively
IA2	Pleasantly
Issue salience	
IS1	In your opinion, how important is global health issues today?
IS2	How many news reports about global health issues do you regularly pay attention to?
IS3	To what extent do you think global health issues is deserving of additional government action?
IS4	How often do you talk about global health issues in your everyday conversation?
Attribute salience	
AS1	Please identify your general belief about the issue: negative-positive
AS2	Please identify your general belief about the issue: unpleasant-pleasant
Emotion	
E0	I feel excited
E1	I feel angry
E2	I feel mad
E3	I feel irritated
E4	I feel appreciative
E5	I feel grateful
E6	I feel thankful
E7	I feel guilty
E8	I feel remorseful
E9	I feel sorry
E10	I feel proud
E11	I feel self-fulfilled
E12	I feel joyful
E13	I feel happy
E14	I feel elated
E15	I feel gloomy
E16	I feel sad

Table 3-3. Continued

Variables	Description
E17	I feel upset
Priming effect	
P1	Do you support or oppose the efforts to solve the issues?
Trust	
T1	This company would treat customers fairly.
T2	Whenever this company makes an important decision, I know it will be concerned about its customers.
T3	This company can be relied on to keep its promises.
T4	I believe that this company takes the opinions of customers into account when making decisions.
T5	I feel very confident about this company's skills.
T6	This company has the ability to accomplish what it says it will do.
T7	I believe sound principles guide the company's behavior.
T8	I am willing to let this company make decisions for customers like me.
T9	I believe the company does not mislead customers.
Corporate reputation	
CR1	The company has market opportunities
CR2	The company has excellent leadership
CR3	The company has clear vision for the future
CR4	The company supports good causes
CR5	The company is environmentally responsible
CR6	The company is responsible in the community
CR7	I feel good about company
CR8	The company inspires admiration and respect
CR9	The company inspires trust
CR10	The company has high quality products and/or services
CR11	The company has innovative products and/or services
CR12	The company provides good value for money
CR13	The company stands behind its products and/or services
CR14	The company rewards employees fairly
CR15	The company is a good place to work
CR16	The company has good employees
CR17	The company outperforms competitors
CR18	The company has record of bring profitable
CR19	The company is low risk investment
CR20	The company's growth prospects

CHAPTER 4 ANALYSES AND RESULTS

This chapter describes data analysis procedures to test hypotheses and to answer research questions. Statistical analysis for descriptive statistics, analysis of variance, regression, and the structural equation model are explained.

Description of Collected Data

Two hundred twenty eight people completed the study during the three-week period in March, 2012. Among them, three responses were excluded due to their outstanding study duration longer than 200 minutes. When the three responses were excluded, the range of study duration dropped to 47 minutes ($M = 9.48$, $SD = 5.31$) from 627 minutes ($M = 15.54$, $SD = 57.17$). The average age of the three respondents was 26 years old and the majority were white (67%). There were no significant differences in demographic information between the removed responses and the responses analyzed. As a result, a total of 225 responses were used for the final data analysis.

Among the 225 participants, about 43% of them were male and 57% of them were female, and the average age of the participants was 35 years old. The majority of the participants was white (75%), followed by Asian (11%), Hispanic/Latino (7%) or African American (5%), and Native Hawaiian or other Pacific islander (2%). Almost 90% of the participants originally came from the U.S. The majority of participants held bachelor's degree (38%), high school diplomas (31%), associate's degrees (14%), or master's degrees (11%). About 44% of participants were employed for wages, followed by self-employed (16%), a student (14%), and currently out of work (13%). The income range for the majority of participants was between \$10,000 and \$49,999 (51%). About 20%

earned less than \$10,000 and about 13% earned between \$50,000 and \$69,999 (Table 4-1).

Descriptive Statistics

Issue Ownership and Issue Attributes Manipulation

Among 225 participants, 60 people randomly viewed an issue ownership and positive tone condition, 51 viewed an issue ownership and negative condition, 63 viewed a non-issue ownership and positive condition, and 51 viewed a non-issue ownership and negative condition (Table 4-2 and Table 4-3). Considering unequal cell sizes, Type III Sum of Squares were used in the factorial analysis of variance (Muenchen & Hilbe, 2010). The Shapiro-Wilk test was used to check normality of data, and the normality assumption was satisfactory for all dependent variables ($p > .05$) (Shapiro & Wilk, 1965). Then, the Levene's test results indicated that the data met homogeneity assumption ($p > .05$) (Keppel & Wickens, 2004). Cronbach's alpha was used to check the reliability of the index score of issue ownership and attribute tone of the condition. Reliability scores were satisfactory for both issue ownership (Cronbach's $\alpha = .92$) and tone of the issue (Cronbach's $\alpha = .92$).

Independent sample t-test results show that our two manipulation conditions were manipulated accordingly. Mean differences between issue-ownership ($M = 5.49$, $SD = 1.06$) and non-issue ownership ($M = 4.56$, $SD = 1.56$) conditions were statistically significant ($t(223) = 5.254$, $p < .001$). Mean differences between positive ($M = 5.54$, $SD = 1.34$) and negative ($M = 3.59$, $SD = 1.78$) conditions were also statistically significant ($t(223) = 9.318$, $p < .001$).

Issue Salience

An average score of four seven-point Likert scale items was reported to indicate the level of issue salience ($M = 4.67$, $SD = 1.07$) (Cronbach's $\alpha = .71$). Higher scores mean that participants would consider the issues more salient and they would pay more attention to the issues (Table 4-4).

Attribute Salience

Two seven-point Likert scale items were used to measure the attribute salience ($M = 3.53$, $SD = 1.51$). Higher scores mean that participants perceive the issues more pleasantly (Cronbach's $\alpha = .86$).

Priming Effect

Priming effect was measured by a seven-point Likert scale item, and its mean score was 5.73 ($SD = 1.24$). The answer ranged from one (extremely opposed) to seven (extremely supported).

Emotion

Participants' emotions were measured by how much they felt excited, ranging from one (not at all) to seven (extremely) ($M = 3.19$, $SD = 1.46$). This study also measured different types of emotions: anger, gratitude, guilt, pride, happiness, and sadness. Among the 17 items, nine items were used to measure the degree of negative feelings (anger, guilt, and sadness); while eight items were used to measure the degree of positive feelings (gratitude, pride, and happiness). A principal axis factor analysis was run to see whether there are two components extracted for the type of emotion. Using the Oblimin rotation method (when variables are assumed to be related with each other), 17 items were loaded onto the two factors, and the two factors were named as emotional pain and emotional pleasure, respectively (Table 4-5). An emotional pleasure

index was created from the average of eight items measuring gratitude, pride, and happiness (Cronbach's $\alpha = .93$, $M = 3.33$, $SD = 1.39$), and an emotional pain index was created from the average of nine items measuring anger, guilt, and sadness (Cronbach's $\alpha = .94$, $M = 2.42$, $SD = 1.31$).

Trust

Nine seven-point Likert scale items were used to measure the perceived trust toward the company. Higher scores mean that participants perceive the company more trustworthy (Cronbach's $\alpha = .93$, $M = 5.01$, $SD = 1.01$).

Corporate Reputation

Twenty seven-point Likert scale items were used to measure the perceived corporate reputation. Higher scores mean that the participants consider the company's reputation more favorable. Overall, the average score of the corporate reputation was 5.03 (Cronbach's $\alpha = .95$, $SD = .85$).

Evidence for Research Questions and Hypotheses

Hypotheses Testing and Answering Research Questions

The first set of hypotheses and a research question were proposed in the relationship between the two independent variables (issue ownership and issue attributes) and emotional appeal. No interaction effects were found between the two independent variables on emotions (Table 4-6). H1 predicted that participants who viewed a message in the issue ownership condition would have more emotional arousal than those in the non-issue ownership condition. Two-way analysis of variance results showed that there was no main effect of issue ownership on the level of emotional arousal ($F = 2.127$, $df = 1$, $p > .05$). There are no significant differences between the issue-ownership ($M = 3.05$, $SD = 1.49$) and non-issue ownership ($M = 3.33$, $SD = 1.43$)

conditions. The results are consistent for the two types of emotion: pain ($F = .243$, $df = 1$, $p > .05$) and pleasure ($F = .351$, $df = 1$, $p > .05$) (Table 4-7). H1 was not supported.

H2 predicted that participants who viewed a message in the negative condition would have more emotional arousal than those in the positive condition. The two-way analysis of variance results showed that there was no main effect of issue ownership on the level of emotional arousal ($F = 1.505$, $df = 1$, $p > .05$) (Positive $M = 3.30$, $SD = 1.46$; Negative $M = 3.06$, $SD = 1.46$). H2 was not supported. However, the main effect was found when the two types of emotion were separately observed: pleasure ($F = 15.293$, $df = 1$, $p < .001$) and pain ($F = 3.584$, $df = 1$, $p > .05$). As shown in Table 4-7, participants who viewed a message in the positive tone condition showed greater levels of emotional pleasure (Positive $M = 3.65$, $SD = 1.32$; Negative $M = 2.94$, $SD = 1.39$) than those who viewed a message in the negative condition.

The first research question asked whether an interaction effect exists between issue ownership and issue tone on the level of emotional appeal. The two-way analysis of variance results showed no interaction effects between issue ownership and the tone of the issue on emotional appeal ($F = .170$, $df = 1$, $p > .05$), pleasure ($F = .121$, $df = 1$, $p > .05$), and pain ($F = 1.253$, $df = 1$, $p > .05$) (Table 4-6).

The second set of hypotheses was proposed to examine the relationship between emotional arousal and issue and attribute salience. H3 predicted that participants who have higher levels of emotional arousal would have higher levels of issue salience. Table 4-8 shows a correlation matrix among the variables. Emotional appeal and issue salience had significant correlations ($r = .31$, $p < .001$). To test H3, a regression analysis was run with the level of emotion as the independent variable and issue salience as the

dependent variable. The results revealed that emotional appeal was a significant predictor of issue salience ($\beta = .310$, $t(223) = 4.861$, $p < .001$), and it accounted for about 9.6% of the total variance in issue salience. Hence, H3 was supported. Moreover, emotional pain was positively correlated with the issue salience ($r = .20$, $p < .001$) while emotional pleasure was not significantly correlated with issue salience. About 4% of the total variance in issue salience was explained by emotional pain ($\beta = .198$, $t(223) = 3.003$, $p < .05$).

H4 proposed that participants who have higher levels of emotional arousal would have higher levels of attribute salience. Overall, emotional appeal did not have a significant correlation with issue attribute salience ($\beta = .110$, $t(223) = 1.642$, $p > .05$). H4 was not supported. When the two types of emotion were separately observed, regression analysis results showed that emotional pleasure is a significant predictor of the level of attribute salience ($r = .28$, $p < .001$) ($\beta = .279$, $t(223) = 4.328$, $p < .001$), and it accounted for about 7.8% of the total variance in attribute salience.

The third set of hypotheses and research questions were proposed looking at the relationships between the two independent variables (issue ownership and issue tone) and the dependent variables (issue and attribute salience). H5 predicted that participants who viewed a message in the issue ownership condition would have a higher level of issue salience than those in the non-issue ownership condition. No interaction effects were found between the two independent variables on both issue and attribute salience (Table 4-9). The two-way analysis of variance results showed that there is no main effect of issue ownership on the level of issue salience ($F = .852$, $df = 1$, $p > .05$). There was no significant difference between the issue-ownership ($M = 4.60$,

$SD = 1.01$) and non-issue ownership ($M = 4.73$, $SD = 1.12$) conditions (Table 4-10). H5 was not supported.

H6 predicted that participants who viewed a message in the issue ownership condition would have higher levels of issue attribute salience than those in the non-issue ownership condition. The two-way analysis of variance results showed that there is no main effect of issue ownership on the level of issue attribute salience ($F = .067$, $df = 1$, $p > .05$). There was no significant difference between issue-owned ($M = 3.55$, $SD = 1.56$) and non-issue owned ($M = 3.50$, $SD = 1.46$) conditions. H6 was not supported.

H7 predicted that participants who viewed a message in the negative condition would have higher levels of issue salience than those in the positive condition. The two-way analysis of variance results showed that there is no main effect of issue tone on the level of issue salience ($F = .114$, $df = 1$, $p > .05$). There was no significant difference between the positive ($M = 4.64$, $SD = 1.03$) and negative ($M = 4.69$, $SD = 1.12$) conditions. H7 was not supported.

H8 predicted that participants who viewed a message in the negative condition would have a higher level of issue attribute salience than those in the positive condition. The two-way analysis of variance results showed that there is a main effect of issue tone on the level of issue attribute salience ($F = 6.664$, $df = 1$, $p < .05$). There was a significant difference between the positive ($M = 3.76$, $SD = 1.52$) and negative ($M = 3.25$, $SD = 1.45$) conditions. Hence, H8 was not supported. However, a main effect was found in an opposite direction.

RQ2a asked whether an interaction effect exists between issue ownership and issue tone on the level of issue salience. The two-way analysis of variance results

showed that there is no interaction effect between issue ownership and the tone of issue on the level of issue salience ($F = .511, df = 1, p > .05$)

Research Question 2b asked whether an interaction effect exists between issue ownership and issue tone on the level of issue attribute salience. The two-way analysis of variance results found no interaction effect between issue ownership and the tone of issue on the level of issue attribute salience ($F = 1.237, df = 1, p > .05$) (Table 4-9).

The fourth set of hypotheses and a research question were proposed to explore the mediated effect of emotion in the relationship between the two independent variables (issue ownership and issue tone) and the two dependent variables (issue salience and issue attributes salience). Path analysis was run using LISREL 8.80 to test Hypotheses 9, 10, 11, and 12. An estimated model was drawn with three endogenous variables (emotional appeal, issue salience, and issue attributes salience) and two exogenous variables (issue ownership and issue tone). The estimated model fits the data ($\chi^2(1) = 1.31, p = 0.25; CFI = .99, NNFI = .93, RMSEA = 0.04$). Goodness of fit of a model was estimated with the Comparative Fit Index (CFI), Non-Normed Fit Index (NNFI), and Root-Mean-Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA). When the critical value of the CFI and NNFI is .90 or larger, and the model which has CFI and NNFI value above .95, it is considered an excellent model (Kline, 2005). The reasonable value range of RMSEA is between .06 and .08, and an RMSEA value less than .06 is excellent (i.e., Hu & Bentler, 1999; Zaccchilli, Hendrick, & Hendrick, 2009).

H9 examined the indirect effect of issue ownership on issue salience through emotion, and it was not supported (indirect effect coefficient = .03, standard error = .02, $p > .05$) (Table 4-11). H10 predicted that there is an indirect effect of issue ownership on

issue attribute salience through emotion. Table 4-11 showed that the indirect effect was not supported (indirect effect coefficient = $-.01$, standard error = $.01$, $p > .05$). H11 and H12 were also not supported because the indirect effect of issue tone on issue salience through emotional arousal (indirect effect coefficient = $-.01$, standard error = $.01$, $p > .05$) and the indirect effect of issue tone on issue attribute salience through emotion (indirect effect coefficient = $.01$, standard error = $.01$, $p > .05$) were not significant (Table 4-11).

Moreover, RQ3 asked whether the indirect effects are different based on the types of emotions: emotional pleasure and emotional pain. The estimated model fits the data for both emotional pain ($\chi^2(1) = .015$, $p = 0.90$; CFI = 1.00, NNFI = 1.42, RMSEA = 0.01) and emotional pleasure ($\chi^2(1) = .93$, $p = 0.76$; CFI = 1.00, NNFI = 1.19, RMSEA = 0.01). Only emotional pleasure mediated the indirect effect of issue tone on issue salience (indirect effect coefficient = $-.05$, standard error = $.02$, $p < .05$) and issue attribute salience (indirect effect coefficient = $-.06$, standard error = $.02$, $p < .001$) (Table 4-11).

The next set of hypotheses and research questions were proposed to explore effects on public opinion in terms of priming, trust, and corporate reputation. H13 proposed that participants who have higher levels of issue salience would have higher levels of priming effect supporting the activities regarding the issues. As shown in Table 4-8, there is a significant correlation between issue salience and priming effects ($r = .58$, $p < .001$). Regression analysis results revealed that issue salience was a significant predictor of a priming effect ($\beta = .581$, $t(223) = 10.657$, $p < .001$), and this accounted for about 34% of variance in issue attribute salience. Hence, H13 was supported.

H14 predicted that the participants who have higher levels of issue salience would have higher levels of perceived trust in the messages of the corporation. Significant correlations were found between the two variables ($r = .18, p < .001$) (Table 4-8), and the regression analysis showed that issue salience was a significant predictor of perceived trust ($\beta = .179, t(223) = 2.716, p < .05$). Issue salience accounted for about 3% of the variance in the perceived trust. H14 was supported.

H15 proposed that participants who have higher levels of issue salience would have higher levels of perceived corporate reputation. Two variables were strongly correlated with each other ($r = .32, p < .001$) (Table 4-8). The regression analysis revealed that issue salience was a significant predictor of perceived corporate reputation ($\beta = .324, t(223) = 5.100, p < .001$), and it accounted for about 11% of total variance. H15 was supported.

H16 proposed that participants who have higher levels of issue attribute salience would have higher levels of priming effects supporting the activities regarding issues. As shown in Table 4-8, a significant correlation was found between issue salience and priming effects ($r = -.23, p < .001$). Regression analysis results revealed that issue attribute salience was a significant predictor of priming effect ($\beta = -.232, t(223) = -3.566, p < .001$). Hence, H16 was supported.

H17 predicted that participants who have higher levels of issue attribute salience would have a higher level of perceived trust on the corporation in the messages. No significant correlation was found between the two variables (Table 4-8). Regression analysis also showed that issue attribute salience was not a significant predictor of perceived trust ($\beta = -.057, t(223) = -.849, p > .05$). Hence, H17 was not supported.

H18 proposed that participants who have higher levels of issue attribute salience would have higher levels of perceived corporate reputation. There was no significant correlation found between these two variables (Table 4-8). Regression analysis results also revealed that issue attribute salience was a not significant predictor of perceived corporate reputation ($\beta = -.119$, $t(223) = -1.784$, $p > .05$). H18 was not supported.

To answer the RQ4a, 4b, and 4c, issue and issue attribute salience variables were centered by subtracting the mean value from the original issue and issue attribute salience values. Then an interaction term was created as a product of the two centered variables (issue salience and issue attribute salience). Finally, regression analysis was conducted (Aiken & West, 1991).

Research Question 4a asked whether an interaction effect between issue and attribute salience exists on a priming effect. The regression analysis revealed that there is a significant interaction effect on priming ($\beta = .154$, $t(223) = 2.322$, $p < .05$), and it accounted for about 2.4% of total variance. Research Question 4b asked whether an interaction effect between issue and attribute salience exists on the perceived trust. The regression analysis revealed that there was a significant interaction effect ($\beta = .194$, $t(223) = 2.940$, $p < .05$) and it accounted for about 4% of total variance. Then, Research Question 4c asked whether an interaction effect between issue and attribute salience exists on perceived corporate reputation. A significant effect was found as a result of regression analysis ($\beta = .247$, $t(223) = 3.783$, $p < .001$), accounting for about 6% of total variance.

The last two hypotheses were proposed to explore the relationship between priming effect, trust, and corporate reputation. H19 predicted that participants who have

higher levels of priming effect would have higher levels of perceived trust in messages from the corporation. The two variables were significantly correlated ($r = .31, p < .001$), and regression analysis revealed that a priming effect was a significant predictor of perceived trust ($\beta = .314, t(223) = 4.934, p < .001$). This accounted for about 10% of the variance of perceived trust. H19 was supported.

Finally, H20 proposed that participants who have higher levels of perceived trust would have higher levels of perceived corporate reputation. There was a strong correlation between the two variables ($r = .86, p < .001$) (Table 4-8). Regression analysis revealed that perceived trust was a significant predictor of perceived corporate reputation ($\beta = .855, t(223) = 24.579, p < .001$). This accounted for about 73% of the variance of perceived trust. Hence, H20 was supported. Figure 4-2 summarized the results of proposed model.

Additional Analysis: Path Analysis of Proposed Model

In addition to ANOVA and regression analysis, a structural equation model was estimated to analyze all the relationships simultaneously. The model includes both manipulated (Issue ownership and issue tone dummy variables) and measured variables (e.g., issue salience, emotion, priming effect, trust, and corporate reputation). The original path model did not fit the data ($\chi^2(30) = 135.59, p < 0.001$). Based on the modification indices, the following paths were added: from the perceived issue ownership and perceived issue tone to trust, from the perceived issue ownership and perceived issue tone to corporate reputation, from emotional pain to priming effect, and from emotional pleasure to trust and to corporate reputation. Even though these relationships were not included in the proposed hypotheses, the direct paths from the

two independent variables and public relations outcomes (e.g., trust or corporate reputation) can be explained theoretically.

The modified path model fits the data ($\chi^2(23) = 28.39, p = 0.20$; CFI = .99, NNFI = .98, RMSEA = 0.03). Significant path loadings were also found from emotional appeal to issue salience (coefficient = .28, $p < .001$), emotional pain to issue salience (coefficient = .14, $p < .05$), emotional pleasure to issue attributes salience (coefficient = .22, $p < .001$), issue salience to priming (coefficient = .62, $p < .001$), issue salience to corporate reputation (coefficient = .16, $p < .001$), attribute salience to priming (coefficient = -.20, $p < .001$), priming effects to trust (coefficient = .26, $p < .001$), and trust to corporate reputation (coefficient = .76, $p < .001$). These relationships were supported from the hypotheses testing in the previous section, and the structural equation model added evidence to show that these relationships are robust (Figure 4-3).

The analysis of variance (ANOVA) results showed that there were no direct relationships from issue ownership to emotional reactions (emotional appeal, emotional pleasure and emotional pain); however, a structural equation model reported significant coefficients from issue ownership to emotional appeal (coefficient = .17, $p < .05$). Also, a significant coefficient was found from attribute salience to corporate reputation (coefficient = .08, $p < .05$) as a result of the structural equation modeling.

Moreover, the modified model included the following significant relationships: from perceived issue ownership to trust (coefficient = .39, $p < .001$), from perceived issue ownership to corporate reputation (coefficient = .12, $p < .001$), from perceived issue tone to trust (coefficient = .17, $p < .001$), from emotional pain to trust (coefficient = -.19, $p < .001$), and from emotional pleasure to trust (coefficient = .17, $p < .001$). These

relationships were not tested in the hypotheses since the main goal of this current research was to test indirect influence of issue ownership and issue tone on the public opinion outcomes. However, the relationships can also be drawn theoretically (Figure 2-3 in Chapter 2). Hence, the path analysis results in Figure 4-3 suggest that there are some direct relationships between perceived issue ownership and perceived issue tone on some public opinion outcomes (e.g., trust and corporate reputation), in addition to the indirect influences through emotions and agenda salience as proposed in the current research.

Table 4-1. Demographic profiles

Variables	Value	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Female	127	56.4
	Male	97	43.1
Age (years)	18-19	10	4.4
	20-29	89	39.6
	30-39	55	24.4
	40-49	30	13.3
	50-59	24	10.7
	60-69	10	4.4
	70-79	2	.9
	Unidentified	1	.4
Race	Hispanic or Latino	16	7.1
	Asian	24	10.7
	African American	12	5.3
	Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander	4	1.8
	White	168	74.7
Education	No schooling completed	5	1.0
	Nursery school to 12 th grade (no diploma)	1	.5
	High school graduate	70	31.3
	Associate's degree	29	14.6
	Bachelor's degree	77	38.9
	Master's degree	21	10.6
	Professional degree	4	2.0
	Doctoral degree	2	1.0
Occupation	Employed for wages	100	44.4
	Self-employed	37	16.4
	Out of work and looking for work	29	12.9
	A homemaker	17	7.6
	A student	31	13.8
	Retired	6	2.7
	Unable to work	4	1.8
Income	Less than \$10,000	47	20.9
	\$10,000 to \$29,999	51	22.7
	\$30,000 to \$49,999	62	27.6
	\$50,000 to \$69,999	30	13.3
	\$70,000 to \$89,999	19	8.4
	\$90,000 to \$109,999	10	4.4
	\$110,000 to \$129,999	4	1.8
	\$130,000 or more	1	.4

Table 4-2. Participants in each manipulation condition

Cell	Independent variable: Issue ownership	Independent variable: Issue attributes (tone)	Total group size
Cell 1	Issue ownership	Positive	60
Cell 2	Issue ownership	Negative	51
Cell 3	Non-issue ownership	Positive	63
Cell 4	Non-issue ownership	Negative	51

Table 4-3. Frequency for each condition

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Issue ownership		
Issue-owned	111	49.3
Non-issue owned	114	50.7
Issue tone		
Positive	123	54.7
Negative	102	45.3

Table 4-4. Means and standard deviations for measures

Variables	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
<i>Overall: Issue salience</i> (Cronbach's $\alpha = .75$)		
In your opinion, how important is global health issues today?	5.85	1.17
How many news reports about global health issues do you regularly pay attention to?	4.34	1.51
To what extent do you think global health issues is deserving of additional government action?	5.27	1.49
How often do you talk about global health issues in your everyday conversation?	3.20	1.61
<i>Overall: Issue attribute salience</i> (Cronbach's $\alpha = .86$)		
Positive	3.72	1.69
Pleasant	3.33	1.53
<i>Overall: Emotion</i>		
I feel excited	3.19	1.46
<i>Overall: Emotion</i> (details) (Cronbach's $\alpha = .86$)		
I feel angry	2.04	1.39
I feel mad	2.03	1.41
I feel irritated	2.21	1.43
I feel appreciative	3.78	1.64
I feel grateful	4.05	1.65
I feel thankful	4.04	1.68
I feel guilty	2.50	1.70
I feel remorseful	2.32	1.66
I feel sorry	2.86	1.78
I feel proud	2.95	1.74
I feel self-fulfilled	2.92	1.68
I feel joyful	3.02	1.82
I feel happy	3.19	1.82
I feel elated	2.71	1.68
I feel gloomy	2.64	1.69
I feel sad	2.59	1.70
I feel upset	2.56	1.65

Table 4-4. Continued

Variables	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
<i>Overall: Priming effect</i>		
Do you support or oppose the efforts to solve the issues?	5.73	1.24
<i>Overall: Trust (Cronbach's $\alpha = .94$)</i>		
This company would treat customers fairly.	5.21	1.18
Whenever this company makes an important decision, I know it will be concerned about its customers.	5.08	1.21
This company can be relied on to keep its promises.	4.95	1.17
I believe that this company takes the opinions of customers into account when making decisions.	5.18	1.15
I feel very confident about this company's skills.	5.00	1.26
This company has the ability to accomplish what it says it will do.	5.11	1.29
I believe sound principles guide the company's behavior.	5.18	1.22
I am willing to let this company make decisions for customers like me.	4.47	1.56
I believe the company does not mislead customers.	4.86	1.24
<i>Overall: Corporate reputation (Cronbach's $\alpha = .95$)</i>		
The company has market opportunities	5.39	1.22
The company has excellent leadership	5.06	1.16
The company has clear vision for the future	5.42	1.24
The company supports good causes	5.70	1.16
The company is environmentally responsible	5.11	1.30
The company is responsible in the community	5.24	1.22
I feel good about company	5.07	1.31
The company inspires admiration and respect	5.01	1.34
The company inspires trust	4.98	1.27
The company has high quality products and/or services	5.17	1.18
The company has innovative products and/or services	5.31	1.13
The company provides good value for money	4.74	1.08
The company stands behind its products and/or services	5.27	1.09
The company rewards employees fairly	4.54	.98
The company is a good place to work	4.74	1.14
The company has good employees	4.80	1.12
The company outperforms competitors	4.76	1.10
The company has record of bring profitable	4.75	1.14
The company is low risk investment	4.42	1.18
The company's growth prospects	5.01	1.16

Table 4-5. Principle Axis Factor loading of emotion

Measurement items	Extracted factors*	
	Emotional pain	Emotional pleasure
I feel angry	.802	
I feel mad	.818	
I feel irritated	.633	
I feel appreciative		.723
I feel grateful		.747
I feel thankful		.735
I feel guilty	.760	
I feel remorseful	.797	
I feel sorry	.775	
I feel proud		.741
I feel self-fulfilled		.798
I feel joyful		.881
I feel happy		.832
I feel elated		.778
I feel gloomy	.787	
I feel sad	.868	
I feel upset	.866	
Eigenvalue	6.311	4.288
% of explained variance	37.124	25.222

*Rotation method: Oblimin with Kaiser Normalization

Table 4-6. Two-way analysis of variance of issue ownership and issue tone on emotion

Main and interaction effects	Mean	SD	F	df	p	eta ²	power
Emotional appeal							
Issue ownership			2.127	1	.15	.009	.31
Issue-ownership	3.05	1.49					
Non-issue ownership	3.33	1.43					
Issue tone			1.505	1	.22	.007	.23
Positive	3.30	1.46					
Negative	3.06	1.46					
Interaction			.170	1	.68	.001	.07
Ownership and Positive	3.12	1.59					
Ownership and Negative	2.96	1.39					
None and Positive	3.48	1.32					
None and Negative	3.16	1.54					
Emotional pain							
Issue ownership			1.750	1	.41	.001	.08
Issue-ownership	2.38	1.37					
Non-issue ownership	2.46	1.25					
Issue tone			29.738	1	.12	.012	.33
Positive	2.27	1.30					
Negative	2.60	1.29					
Interaction			.121	1	.73	.001	.06
Ownership and Positive	2.19	1.34					
Ownership and Negative	2.59	1.39					
None and Positive	2.34	1.28					
None and Negative	2.61	1.20					
Emotional appeal							
Issue ownership			.379	1	.65	.002	.05
Issue-ownership	3.38	1.36					
Non-issue ownership	3.29	1.43					
Issue tone			12.113	1	.18	.064	.22
Positive	3.65	1.32					
Negative	2.95	1.39					
Interaction			1.253	1	.26	.005	.20
Ownership and Positive	3.61	1.27					
Ownership and Negative	3.11	1.42					
None and Positive	3.69	1.37					
None and Negative	2.78	1.36					

Note: Levene's test was run to confirm the homogeneity of the sample ($p > .05$)

Table 4-7. Main effects of issue ownership and issue tone on emotion

Main effects	Mean	SD	F	df	p	eta ²	power
Emotional appeal							
Issue ownership			2.127	1	.15	.009	.31
Issue-ownership	3.05	1.49					
Non-issue ownership	3.33	1.43					
Issue tone			1.505	1	.22	.007	.23
Positive	3.30	1.46					
Negative	3.06	1.46					
Emotional pain							
Issue ownership			.243	1	.62	.001	.08
Issue-ownership	2.38	1.37					
Non-issue ownership	2.46	1.25					
Issue tone			3.584	1	.06	.016	.47
Positive	2.27	1.30					
Negative	2.60	1.29					
Emotional pleasure							
Issue ownership			.351	1	.55	.001	.09
Issue-ownership	3.38	1.36					
Non-issue ownership	3.29	1.43					
Issue tone			15.293	1	.00*	.065	.97
Positive	3.65	1.32					
Negative	2.94	1.39					

Note: Levene's test was run to confirm the homogeneity of the sample ($p > .05$)

* $p < .001$

Table 4-8. Pearson product-moment correlation coefficients

	1	2	3	4	5	5.1	5.2	6	7	8	9	10
1. Issue ownership	1											
2. Issue tone	n.s.	1										
3. Perceived issue ownership	n.s.	n.s.	1									
4. Perceived issue tone	n.s.	-.53**	.18**	1								
5. Emotional arousal (excited)	n.s.	n.s.	.20**	n.s.	1							
5.1 Pain	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.	.23**	1						
5.2 Pleasure	n.s.	-.25**	.24**	.26**	.47**	.17*	1					
6. Issue salience	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.	.31**	.20**	n.s.	1				
7. Issue attribute salience	n.s.	-.17*	n.s.	.34**	n.s.	n.s.	.28**	n.s.	1			
8. Priming	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.	.58**	-.23**	1		
9. Trust	-.14*	n.s.	.49**	.25**	.15*	n.s.	.28**	.18**	n.s.	.31**	1	
10. Corporate reputation	-.15*	n.s.	.52**	.17*	.23**	n.s.	.29**	.32**	n.s.	.41**	.86**	1

Note: Issue ownership was coded as 0 (non-ownership) and 1 (ownership); and issue tone was coded as 0 (positive) and 1 (negative). n.s. refers to not significant. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .001$ (two-tailed)

Table 4-9. Two-way analysis of variance of issue ownership and issue tone on salience

Main and interaction effects	Mean	<i>SD</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>eta</i> ²	<i>power</i>
Issue salience							
Issue ownership			1.419	1	.45	.003	.08
Issue-ownership	4.60	1.01					
Non-issue ownership	4.73	1.12					
Issue tone			.234	1	.71	.001	.06
Positive	4.64	1.03					
Negative	4.69	1.12					
Interaction			.511	1	.48	.002	.11
Ownership and Positive	4.53	.96					
Ownership and Negative	4.68	1.07					
None and Positive	4.75	1.09					
None and Negative	4.70	1.17					
Attribute salience							
Issue ownership			.105	1	.80	.001	.05
Issue-ownership	3.55	1.56					
Non-issue ownership	3.50	1.46					
Issue tone			5.342	1	.26	.029	.14
Positive	3.76	1.52					
Negative	3.25	1.45					
Interaction			1.237	1	.27	.005	.20
Ownership and Positive	3.68	1.60					
Ownership and Negative	3.39	1.50					
None and Positive	3.83	1.44					
None and Negative	3.10	1.40					

Note: Levene's test was run to confirm the homogeneity of the sample ($p > .05$)

Table 4-10. Main effects of issue ownership and issue tone on salience

Main effects	Mean	SD	F	df	p	eta ²	power
Issue salience							
Issue ownership			.852	1	.36	.004	.15
Issue-ownership	4.60	1.01					
Non-issue ownership	4.73	1.12					
Issue tone			.114	1	.74	.001	.06
Positive	4.64	1.03					
Negative	4.69	1.12					
Attribute salience							
Issue ownership			.067	1	.79	.001	.06
Issue-ownership	3.55	1.56					
Non-issue ownership	3.50	1.46					
Issue tone			6.664	1	.01*	.030	.73
Positive	3.76	1.52					
Negative	3.25	1.45					

Note: Levene's test was run to confirm the homogeneity of the sample ($p > .05$)

* $p < .05$

Table 4-11. Direct and indirect effects on endogenous variables

Endogenous variables	Paths	Coefficients	Standard errors
Emotional appeal ($X^2(1) = 1.31, p = 0.25; CFI = .99, NNFI = .93, RMSEA = 0.04$)			
Issue salience	Issue ownership → issue salience	.03	.06
	Issue ownership → emotion → issue salience	.03	.02
	Issue tone → issue salience	.25**	.06
	Issue tone → emotion → issue salience	-.03	.02
Attribute salience	Issue ownership → issue attribute salience	-.01	.07
	Issue ownership → emotion → issue attribute salience	-.01	.01
	Issue tone → issue salience	-.18**	.07
	Issue tone → emotion → issue attribute salience	.01	.01
Emotional pain ($X^2(1) = .015, p = 0.90; CFI = 1.00, NNFI = 1.42, RMSEA = 0.01$)			
Issue salience	Issue ownership → issue salience	.06	.07
	Issue ownership → emotion → issue salience	.01	.01
	Issue tone → issue salience	.20**	.07
	Issue tone → emotion → issue salience	.02	.01
Attribute salience	Issue ownership → issue attribute salience	-.03	.07
	Issue ownership → emotion → issue attribute salience	.01	.01
	Issue tone → issue salience	-.19**	.07
	Issue tone → emotion → issue attribute salience	.02	.01
Emotional pleasure ($X^2(1) = 0.93, p = 0.76; CFI = 1.00, NNFI = 1.19, RMSEA = 0.01$)			
Issue salience	Issue ownership → issue salience	.07	.06
	Issue ownership → emotion → issue salience	-.01	.01
	Issue tone → issue salience	.27**	.07
	Issue tone → emotion → issue salience	-.05*	.02
Attribute salience	Issue ownership → issue attribute salience	-.01	.06
	Issue ownership → emotion → issue attribute salience	-.01	.02
	Issue tone → issue salience	-.11	.07
	Issue tone → emotion → issue attribute salience	-.06**	.02

Note: ** $p < .01$, * $p < .05$ (two-tailed)

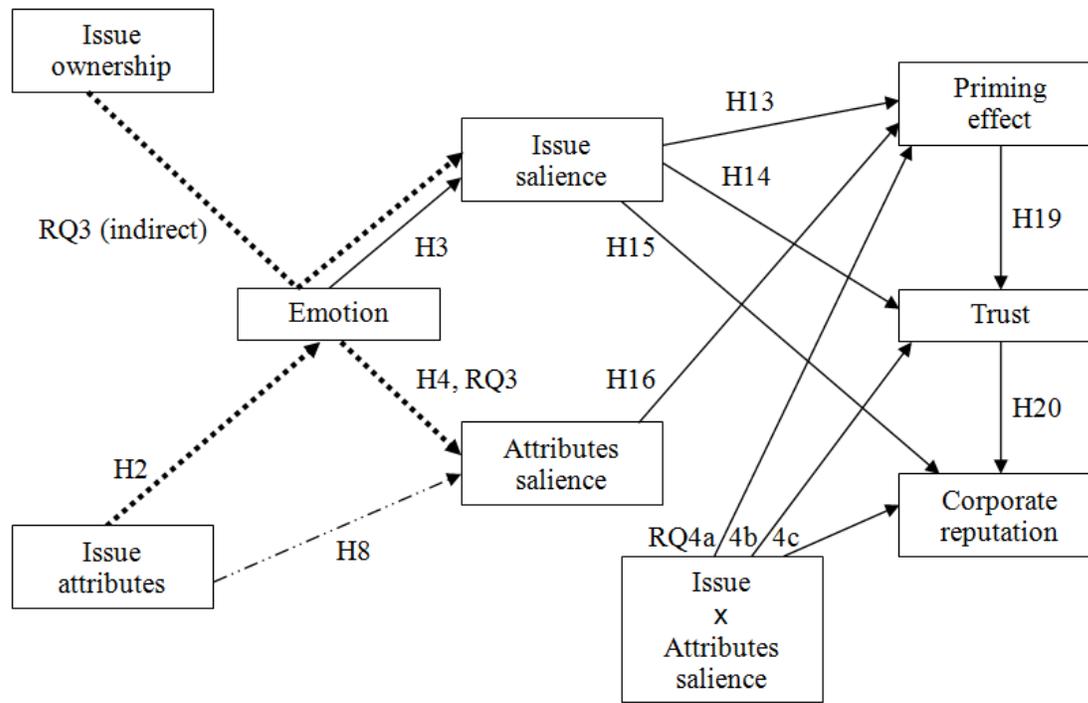
Table 4-12. Summary of hypotheses testing

	Relationship	ANOVA or Regression	SEM Coefficient
H1	Issue ownership → Emotional appeal	Not significant	.17**
	Issue ownership → Emotional pleasure	Not significant	n.s
	Issue ownership → Emotional pain	Not significant	n.s
H2	Issue tone → Emotional appeal	Not significant	n.s
	Issue tone → Emotional pleasure	Not significant	n.s
	Issue tone → Emotional pain	Significant	.16**
H3	Emotional appeal → Issue salience	Significant	.28**
	Emotional pleasure → Issue salience	Not significant	n.s
	Emotional pain → Issue salience	Significant	.14**
H4	Emotional appeal → Issue attribute salience	Not significant	n.s
	Emotional pleasure → Issue attribute salience	Significant	.22**
	Emotional pain → Issue attribute salience	Not significant	
H5	Issue ownership → Issue salience	Not significant	n.s
H6	Issue ownership → Issue attribute salience	Not significant	n.s
H7	Issue tone → Issue salience	Not significant	n.s
H8	Issue tone → Issue attribute salience	Significant	n.s
		(opposite direction)	
H9	Issue ownership → Emotional appeal → Issue salience		n.s
	Issue ownership → Emotional pleasure → Issue salience		n.s
	Issue ownership → Emotional pain → Issue salience		n.s
H10	Issue ownership → Emotional appeal → Issue attribute salience		n.s
	Issue ownership → Emotional pleasure → Issue attribute salience		n.s
	Issue ownership → Emotional pain → Issue attribute salience		n.s
H11	Issue tone → Emotional appeal → Issue salience		n.s
	Issue tone → Emotional pleasure → Issue salience		-.05*
	Issue tone → Emotional pain → Issue salience		n.s
H12	Issue tone → Emotional appeal → Issue attribute salience		n.s
	Issue tone → Emotional pleasure → Issue attribute salience		n.s
	Issue tone → Emotional pain → Issue attribute salience		n.s

Table 4-12. Continued

	Relationship	ANOVA or Regression	SEM Coefficient
H13	Issue salience → Priming	Significant	.62**
H14	Issue salience → Trust	Significant	n.s
H15	Issue salience → Corporate reputation	Significant	.16**
H16	Issue attribute salience → Priming	Significant	-.20**
H17	Issue attribute salience → Trust	Not significant	n.s
H18	Issue attribute salience → Corporate reputation	Not significant	.08*
H19	Priming → Trust	Significant	.26**
H20	Trust → Corporate reputation	Significant	.76**

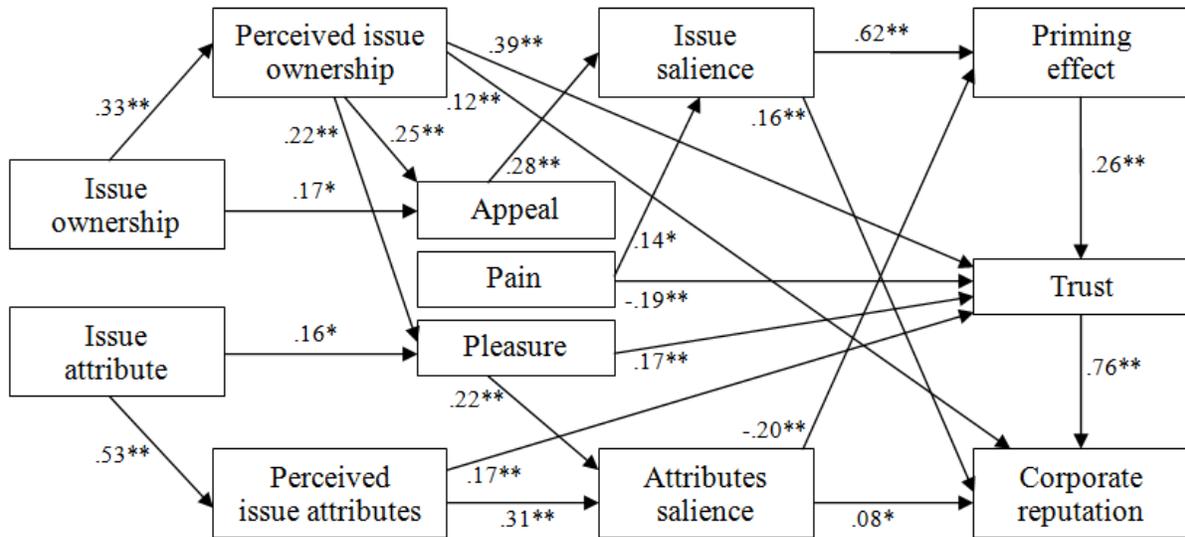
Note: ** $p < .01$, * $p < .05$ (two-tailed)



*Partially supported

(—→ supported hypothesis,→ only emotional pleasure, - - - - -→ opposite direction)

Figure 4-2. Results of proposed model



** $p < .01$, * $p < .05$ (two-tailed)

Figure 4-3. Path analysis of the proposed model ($X^2(23) = 28.39$, $p = 0.20$; CFI = .99, NNFI = .98, RMSEA = 0.03) (errors were correlated among emotional appeal, emotional pleasure, and emotional pain)

CHAPTER 5 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

This chapter presents a summary of results with theoretical and practical implications. It also offers the study's limitations, provides conclusions, and addresses future research direction.

Theoretical Implications

This study examined 1) the relationship between the independent variables (issue ownership and issue attributes) and the mediator (emotion), 2) the relationship between the mediator (emotional arousal) and the dependent variables associated with agenda salience (issue and attribute salience), 3) the relationship between the independent variables (issue ownership and issue attributes) and the dependent variables associated with agenda salience (issue and attribute salience), and 4) the relationship between the dependent variables associated with agenda salience (issue and attribute salience) and with public opinion (priming effect, trust, and corporate reputation).

Twenty hypotheses were proposed to test the relationships: seven were supported and a relationship was found in the opposite direction from the prediction (Table 4-12 in Chapter 4). In the relationship between the independent variables (issue ownership and issue attributes) and the mediator (emotional appeal), the hypotheses testing results showed that only issue tone was related to emotional appeal. This study predicted that a negative tone would lead to more emotional reactions; however, results showed that a positive tone would lead to more emotional appeal. A structural equation model also strengthened the positive relationship between issue tone and emotion.

No direct effects were reported from issue ownership to emotions as a result of the analysis of variance; however, a structural equation model showed a significant

relationship between issue ownership and emotional appeal. The mediator (emotional appeal) was then a significant predictor of issue salience. The results suggested that issue ownership indirectly influences issue salience via emotional appeal.

Consequently, issue salience directly and indirectly influences public opinion (e.g., priming, trust, and corporate reputation). The direct effects of issue salience were found for priming and corporate reputation, while an indirect effect was found for perceived trust. Moreover, there was an indirect effect on public opinion through attribute salience. Issue tone was suggested as a significant predictor of issue attribute salience, and issue attribute salience was a predictor of priming and corporate reputation effects. Also, interaction effects were found between Issue salience and attribute salience on priming, trust, and corporate reputation.

Agenda-Building Theory

One of the main theoretical contributions of this study was the exploration of agenda-building theory in detail in a corporate communication setting. Particularly, this study suggested issue ownership and issue tone as antecedents of agenda-building effects, and public opinion (e.g., priming, trust, and corporate reputation) as consequences of agenda salience. Issue ownership was operationalized as to whether or not the company, which distributed the messages, handled the issues mentioned in messages successfully, and issue tone was about whether or not the issues were portrayed positively or negatively. No direct effect was found supporting the relationship between issue ownership and agenda salience. However, the results showed that the relationship was mediated by emotional appeals.

Expanding from an agenda-setting perspective (McCombs & Shaw, 1972), the agenda-building concept was explored by several public relations scholars (e.g., Kaid,

1976; Kiousis et al., 2006; Miller, 2010; Ohl et al., 1995). These public relations scholars emphasized the role of public relations efforts (e.g., information subsidies) in building the media and the public agenda (e.g., Kaid, 1976; Miller, 2010; Ohl et al., 1995). A large portion of agenda-building research has focused on whether agenda salience transfer exists between information subsidies and media coverage or between information subsidies and public opinion. The study tried to expand the scope by focusing on what conditions agenda salience transfer would exist. As the results suggested, issue ownership and issue tone played a role of antecedence of agenda salience mediated by emotions.

Two independent variables were proposed to explore the relationship between the first-level and second-level of agenda building. Scholars defined the salience of objects as the first-level of agenda building, and defined the salience of attributes as the second-level of agenda building (e.g., Kiousis, 2005; McCombs & Shaw, 1972). For example, the first-level of agenda building focuses on what to talk about (e.g., issues, organizations, or candidates), while the second-level focuses on how to talk about the objects (e.g., frames or tone). Scholars have noted that first-level agenda setting is associated with the strength of an opinion, and that second-level of agenda setting is associated with the direction of the opinion (e.g., Kiousis, 2005; Lee, 2010; McCombs & Shaw, 1972; Sheafer, 2007). Also, scholars have explored the relationships between the first-level and second-level of agenda building. The compelling-arguments hypothesis was tested by demonstrating the influence of attributes on object evaluations (Lee, 2010; Sheafer, 2007).

Moreover, two dimensions exist on the second-level of agenda-setting and agenda-building: substantive and affective attributes (Kiousis, 2005; Lee, 2010; McCombs & Shaw, 1972; Sheafer, 2007). Substantive attributes are related to cognitive thinking of objects, and affective attributes are related to the emotional (affective) evaluation of objects. In this study, issue ownership was suggested as an example of substantive attributes, and issue tone was suggested as an example of affective attributes in global issue-related messages. Based on the compelling arguments, hypotheses we tested to see whether or not the attributes of the messages influenced the overall evaluation of objects. In a political communication context, scholars have showed that voters would like to vote for a candidate who is competent regarding the issues salient to them (Belanger & Meguid, 2008; Cha et al., 2010; Green & Hobolt, 2008). Results of this study have also suggested that people would evaluate a company as being trustworthy or reputable when the company showed issue ownership of certain issues. Moreover, through indirect relationships, this study explained that issue ownership would lead to higher emotional appeal that played as a predictor of issue salience, priming, trust, and reputation.

In addition to issue ownership, the role of issue tone was explored and supported in the relationship. Participants, who viewed negative issue messages, reported a higher level of attribute salience for the issue, meaning that issues would have a stronger impact on how people perceived the valence of the issues when they are negatively described. On the other hand, the effect of issue tone was different on issue salience. Participants in the positive issue condition reported a higher level of emotional appeal, which led to a higher level of issue salience. Still the effect of the valence of the

issue is open for debate. While some studies have highlighted the role of negative affective attributes in affecting overall issue importance (Semetko, 1992; Sheafer, 2007), some researchers have stated that positive attributes would also have an influence on the evaluation of the political candidate (Kim & McCombs, 2007). The results showed that information processing may be different based on valence of the issues.

This study also suggested exploring the consequences of agenda building in a corporate communication context. Priming, trust, and corporate reputation were the three most important public opinion consequences of agenda building. Scholars explored the agenda-building concept not only in the area of political communications but also in corporate communication settings (e.g., Cameron et al., 1997; Curtin, 1999; Gandy, 1982). Carroll and McCombs (2003) pointed out that the key idea of agenda setting (or agenda building) is the transfer of agendas from one to another political party, and the theory can be easily applied to a corporate communication context. As with job approval ratings in a political communication context, trust, and corporate reputation were suggested as the most emphasized outcomes of corporate communication efforts (Meijer & Kleinnijenhuis, 2006).

Because Ferguson (1984) suggested a relationship as the central unit of public relations, the organization-public relationship has been greatly studied and scholars have developed measurement items for the relationship outcomes. The most widely used dimensions of the measurement were trust, openness, or commitment. In particular, trust has been suggested as one of the most essential outcomes of relationships (e.g., Swift, 2001; Yang & J. Grunig, 2005). In addition to trust, corporate reputation was suggested as a critical measurement of public opinion in a corporate

communication context. Wartick (1992) defined “corporate reputation” as the publics’ perception about a corporation’s effectiveness, and emphasized the role of media portrayals of a company as a predictor of corporate reputation. In the public relations literature, scholars have also suggested corporate reputation as an important outcome of public relations efforts influenced by information subsidies and media coverage (Kiousis et al., 2007).

In spite of its importance, the effect on corporate reputation has not yet been fully explored. Scholars have noted that the role of media coverage on reputation or the role of mediating factors (e.g., source credibility, history, or other situational factors) needs to be explored further (Fombrun & Shanley, 1990; Griffin et al., 1991). Results of this study added some evidence concerning the direct and indirect effects on corporate reputation, exploring the two message factors (issue ownership and issue tone) and mediating influences (emotion). Also, the results suggested that participants’ perception of trust is a significant predictor of the perception of corporate reputation.

Finally, this study demonstrated a causal relationship in an agenda-building framework. Many previous agenda-setting or agenda-building studies have used content analysis along with surveys (e.g., Iyengar & Kinder, 1987; Kiousis & McDevitt, 2008; Kiousis et al., 2006). Scholars have supported agenda-setting (or building) influences by showing correlation results between information subsidies and media coverage, and between media coverage and public opinion. However, this study aimed to explore causal relationships in agenda building by conducting an experimental study. The 2 x 2 factorial design experiment showed both direct and indirect effects of the message attributes on agenda salience transfer and further public relations outcomes of

the agenda-building effects. Hence, this study added to our theoretical understanding of the process of the agenda-building effect.

Corporate Communication and Issues in Business

The two independent variables of this study (issue ownership and issue tone) were proposed in consideration of the role of issues in corporate communication. Not only non-profit organizations but also for-profit organizations are now involved in various social issues, such as global warming, human rights, or public health. Scholars have suggested that corporate social responsibility has become one of the most prominent agendas for business corporations (Bhattacharya et al., 2008; Clark, 2000).

Bhattacharya et al. (2008) stated that corporate social responsibility activities can be a significant predictor of the relationship quality of the corporation with publics. Results of this study found supportive evidence of the role of issue-related activities of a company in affecting public perceptions of the company in terms of both trust and reputation.

Emphasizing the role of media coverage, Carroll (2004) found that media description of issues or other attributes of a firm were associated with the public's perceptions about the firm. In a corporate communication context, Carroll and McCombs (2003) suggested several substantive attribute variables, such as familiarity, corporate citizenship, leadership, or credibility. In addition, the issue ownership concept was suggested as an example of substantive attributes in this study. Traditionally, the issue ownership concept was widely explored in a political communication context, and the agenda-building process has also been greatly studied in political communication settings, such as presidential election campaigns.

Carroll and McCombs (2003) explained that the same theoretical framework can be applied to other communication contexts such as corporate communication.

However, empirical research evidence in a corporate communication context was limited compared to political communication areas. This study provided useful empirical evidence of the importance of an agenda-building process and the effects in a corporate communication context. Depending on how a company portrays issue-related information in its public relations messages, the public may perceive the issue more salient than other issues. The company's level of issue salience would then affect the public's overall evaluations about the company.

Due to the multiple stakeholder interactions and reciprocal dialogue capability, issue-arena communications became an essential management strategy for an organization. Previous scholarship has suggested several predictors of public opinion outcomes, such as the number of involved actors, the amount of media visibility, or the intensity of public interest in the issue (Luoma-aho & Vos, 2010). This study suggested two issue-related attributes as critical predictors of communication outcomes. Issue ownership and the tone of issues were explored together in the agenda-building process. In addition, this experimental study also measured the level of emotional appeal to examine the role of affect in the relationship.

Emphasizing the role of an evaluative tone of news media coverage on a political candidate, previous scholarship found the role of affective attributes in affecting public opinion about objects (e.g., Kepplinger et al., 1989; Kim & McCombs, 2007). For example, a candidate's positive or negative portrayal in the media coverage was the predictor of public opinion about that candidate (Kim & McCombs, 2007). On the other hand, some previous studies highlighted the role of negative affective attributes in

shaping overall issue importance, mentioning that a positive tone of media coverage would decrease the issue importance (Semetko, 1992; Sheafer, 2007).

The results of this investigation also suggested that the tone of an issue has a significant influence on issue salience. For example, supporting the indirect and direct effects of issue attributes on issue salience, the results suggested that a negative tone would have more of an impact on affective evaluations of issues; on the other hand, a positive tone would also have an impact on the overall evaluations of the issues at the object level. Even though more empirical evidence should be added to compare the effects of the different types of affective attributes on issue salience, this study has attempted to expand the understanding of the role of affective attributes in the agenda-building process.

Mediating Factor in the Agenda-Building Process

Several studies have emphasized the importance of the effects of affective attributes in affecting cognitive thinking (e.g., Arnold, 1985; Dillard & Wilson, 1993). Scholars have found that emotionally arousing messages can affect the public's cognitive information processing (Keller & Block, 1996), and the affective tone of messages can affect the overall evaluation of the objects (e.g., political leaders) (Sheafer, 2007). However, the role of affective attributes has not been explored as much, when compared to substantive attributes such as frames.

From the agenda-setting or agenda-building literature, only the tone of objects or messages has been widely observed in terms of affective attributes. Defined as the “feeling toward a stimulus that leads to relative preferences toward that stimulus out of a class of similar stimuli,” affects or emotions are the dynamic concept (Batra, 1986, p. 54). In addition to the valence (positive or negative), scholars have also noted that

another dimension of affect is related to the level of arousal (e.g., Dunn & Schweitzer, 2005; Smith & Ellsworth, 1985). The effects of emotionally arousing messages on cognitive information processing or overall evaluation toward an object have not yet been fully explored in the agenda-setting or agenda-building literature. In this study, emotion (emotional appeal, emotional pleasure, and emotional pain) was established as a successful mediator of issue ownership and issue attributes for the level of issue salience. Hence, the results of this study contributed to expanding our understanding of the role of affective attribute in agenda building.

Dunn and Schweitzer (2005) suggested six different dimensions of emotions: anger, gratitude, guilt, pride, happiness, and sadness. Seventeen items were used to measure the six dimensions of the emotion type. From the factor analysis results, 17 items were divided into two factors. Eight items were grouped to define the factor of emotional pleasure (gratitude, pride, and happiness items), while nine items were used to define the factor of emotional pain (anger, guilt, and sadness items). These various emotional items showed different mediating effects between issue ownership and issue salience dependent variables. Issue ownership has an indirect effect on issue salience via emotional appeal (single item measured by emotional excitement). The path analysis results also showed that issue tone has an indirect effect on trust through emotional pleasure.

By demonstrating mediating relationships, these results added empirical evidence to the argument, explaining that emotionally arousal messages influence further cognitive or rational thinking about certain objects (Coleman & Wu, 2010; Keller & Block, 1996). The emotionally aroused feeling is a predictor of the prominence judgment of the

objects (e.g., Miller, 2007). In addition to the general emotional appeal, this study conducted a factor analysis and suggested two emotional appeal factors: emotional pleasure and emotional pain.

Still, the direction and strength of the effects of emotions are underdeveloped. Wu and Coleman (2009) said that “negative information has more power to transfer the media’s agenda of candidate attributes to the public” (p. 775). Sheafer (2007) further stated that negative affective attributes would have a stronger influence on the public's perception about issue importance. This current study added evidence that a negative message successfully draws participants' attention to an issue, consequently affecting the level of perceived corporate reputation. Operationally, scholars defined the public agenda as one of the most important problems facing the nation (Sheafer, 2007; Wu & Coleman, 2009), and the public would perceive an issue more prominently when the issue is described negatively or problematically.

On the other hand, this study also emphasized the impact of positive emotions on the perceived trust toward a corporation, consequently affecting a corporation's perceived reputation. Researchers showed that the media’s evaluative assessments of an object were closely related to public opinion about the object (Kepplinger et al., 1989). Kim and McCombs (2007) found that the media’s evaluative assessments of a politician shifted public opinion about that politician. For example, positive news coverage of a nation would have a positive influence on the international community's perception of that nation in question (Wanta & Mikusova, 2010). The results of this study showed that a negative emotion has an effect on corporate reputation through perceived issue prominence while a positive emotion has an effect on the corporation's

reputation through perceived trust. Even though it expanded our understanding of the effects by the type of emotions, the direction and strength of the effects should be tested further.

Trust as a Relationship Quality Outcome and Corporate Reputation

One of the primary goals of this study was to demonstrate the antecedents and consequences of the agenda-building process. Perceived trust and corporate reputation were suggested as the consequences of agenda building. These consequences were the most critical public relations outcomes in a corporate communication context (e.g., Swift, 2001; Yang & J. Grunig, 2005). From a relationship management perspective, communication strategy plays an important role in cultivating the quality of relationships. J. Grunig and Huang (2000) explained that communication strategies would link the antecedents and consequences of an organization-public relationship. The concept of relationships is understood as a byproduct of communication activities. This study explored the effect on trust as one of the relationship's outcomes to evaluate the communication strategies in a corporate communication context. Moreover, the public's overall evaluation of a company was measured in terms of corporate reputation. Previous research has suggested the role of communication efforts (e.g., information subsidies or media coverage) in affecting corporate reputation (e.g., Gotsi & Wilson, 2001; Wartick, 1992).

As a result, issue ownership and issue tone were suggested as important predictors of trust and corporate reputation, and the results showed that agenda building can provide a useful framework to evaluate communication strategies in a corporate communication setting. Based on the compelling argument of an agenda-building perspective (e.g., Kioussis, 2005), this study supported the effects of the

attribute-level of agenda on the object-level and other public opinion consequences. More importantly, the research expanded our understanding of the predictors or mediators (emotion) in the agenda-building process.

Practical Implications

The issue management perspective has grown since the 1970s (Berger, 2001), and the role of public relations has also been emphasized to educate the public about certain issues, to manage communication about those issues, or to build relationships with the public's involvement in the issues (Curtin, 1999; Miller, 2010). From a corporate-stakeholder relationship perspective, corporate social responsibility has also become one of the most prominent concerns for corporations (Bhattacharya et al., 2008; Clark, 2000). Previous research has suggested that corporations are concerned more about their commitment towards the well-being of a society or a community, and these corporate social responsibility activities affect the relationship quality or reputation outcomes of the corporation (Bhattacharya et al., 2008; Kotler & Lee, 2004). Moreover, corporate social responsibility activities have been suggested as one of the measurement items of the overall corporate reputation (Hutton et al., 2001).

Emphasizing the role of issues in a corporate communication context, this study explored the role of public relations in affecting the perceived corporate reputation through communication strategies. This study particularly explored communication strategies grounded in an agenda-building framework. Miller (2010) emphasized the role of public relations practitioners in informing and persuading the public about certain social issues. When an issue is successfully advocated, the organization (or corporation) involved in the issue would receive favorable evaluations (e.g., higher approval rating) by the public (Miller, 2010). From a public relations perspective,

communication strategies have played a significant role in educating and informing the public about the involvement of corporations regarding certain issues. Scholars have explored the role of media exposure in affecting corporate reputation, suggesting that the news media are among the most important communication channels (Wartick, 1992).

Previous research has found some evidence of the role of the mass media in shifting the public's perceived corporate reputation (Eyestone, 1978; Fombrun & Shanley, 1990; Weinberger & Romeo, 1989). Weinberger and Romeo (1989) found that negative media exposure of a corporation would certainly not enhance its reputation (Weinberger & Romeo, 1989). On the other hand, Fombrun and Shanley (1990) found that the visibility of a corporation in the media affects corporate reputation negatively no matter how the corporation is portrayed in media coverage. Scholars have also pointed out that the relationship between media exposure and corporate reputation may be mediated by several factors, such as history or credibility (Griffin et al., 1991). Hence, evidence of the relationship between media exposure and corporate reputation is still underdeveloped.

The results of this study have also added empirical evidence of the role of communication exposure in affecting public relations outcomes. Even though the negative tone of an issue would affect attribute salience more than a positive tone, the results showed that a positive tone of an issue would have more influence on issue salience (mediated by emotion) and the perceived level of trust. In the second-level agenda-building relationship, a negative tone of an issue had a stronger impact on the public's level of attribute salience, while in the compelling arguments relationship (between the second-level and first-level agenda building), the role of a positive tone of

an issue was more significant. Moreover, the results showed that the compelling arguments relationship was mediated by emotional appeal. In this experimental study, participants in the positive tone of an issue reported a higher emotional appeal than those in the negative tone of an issue.

Also, this study defined the two types of emotional appeal, such as pleasure and pain, based on factor analysis. The role of the mediating factor of the emotional pleasure was found in affecting perceived trust, while the role of emotional pain was found in affecting the issue salience and priming effect. The emotional pain (index of anger, guilt, and sadness) showed more impact in drawing attention to the issue. The effect of emotional pleasure (index of happiness, gratitude, and pride) is limited on issue attention; however, the results showed more effects on public opinion outcomes, such as trust. When designing communication strategies using emotional appeal, practitioners need to carefully consider their purpose of the communication. For example, they should think about whether or not their major goal of communication is to draw the public's attention to the issue itself. Even though the relationship should be explored further, this study suggested that practitioners should bear in mind how to deal with issues, not only what issues should be discussed. This study emphasized the role of affective attributes in public relations messages in affecting public relations outcomes, such as trust and reputation.

Hence, the results of the study suggest that practitioners should monitor the issue-related discussions in media coverage and among the public closely. Corporate social responsibility became one of the important criteria for overall corporate reputation. The results showed that the public's evaluations of corporate social actions are affected not

only by the corporation's one-time actions but also by its long-term effectiveness and the outcomes of various actions. To meet their goal, corporations need communication strategies to inform the public not only about what they are doing but also how the effects are portrayed in media coverage and public opinion. Better public opinion outcomes follow when the public understands the corporation's concern about the effectiveness and outcomes of its corporate actions. In other words, the public relations' goal can be reached when a corporation becomes concerned about long-term communication outcomes instead of a superficial symbolic corporate action.

Communication strategies in this current study can be criticized if it means deceiving or manipulating the public about the reality of the corporation. For example, corporate image, as one of the domains of public relations research, has been criticized due to its negative connotation. The perception is that attempts to develop a good image would mean deceiving the public about the corporation (Grunig, 2003). Hence, the results of this study suggested that the role of public relations practitioners would be to monitor how the media cover the issues, to listen to what the public says about the issues, and to communicate transparently, no matter whether the issues are portrayed negatively or positively. Also, this study suggested that the reciprocal communication efforts with the media and the public should be expanded in future agenda-building research studies.

In addition to affective attributes, this study also explored the role of issue ownership in corporate messages. In a political communication context, scholars have pointed out that issue-owned political parties would receive more attention from the public, and they would receive more electoral gains when the issue is primed well

among the public (e.g., Kleinnijenhuis et al., 2001; Petrocik, 1996; Sheaffer & Weimann, 2005).

Even though no direct effects were supported, this study found that issue ownership has a significant indirect effect on the agenda-building process. Also, the path analysis results have suggested that perceived issue ownership would have an influence on the public's perceived trust and corporate reputation outcomes. When considering a corporation competent on certain social issues, the public would have a higher emotional appeal leading to stronger issue salience and priming effects. Consequently, the emotional appeal also affects further public relations outcomes, such as trust and corporate reputation. This result would suggest that public relations practitioners can benefit their respective corporations by educating the public about the corporation's professionalism on certain social issues and by showing continued social responsibility. On a practical scale, this result would provide recommendations to practitioners about how to choose relevant social actions for their corporations. As the results suggested, corporate reputation is directly and indirectly affected by the perceived issue ownership, and the effects would increase when corporations have a good fit with their supporting social causes.

This current study tested the role of issue ownership when a corporation's socially responsible actions reflected the industry category of the corporations. For example, a technology-based corporation, created for an experimental study, had issue ownership when its technology was used for a social cause. The results of this study showed that issue ownership could be viewed as an association between the industry category and social actions of a corporation, and issue ownership has a consequent effect on public

opinion toward the corporation. Still, the concept of issue ownership is somewhat vague (Petrocik et al., 2003), and what issues a corporation should become involved in and how the corporation should take action have not yet been fully studied (Meijer & Kleinnijenhuis, 2006). Hence, applying the concept of issue ownership, this study has expanded the understanding of the role of issues in an agenda-building process.

Limitations and Suggested for Future Research

This study showed that the agenda-building process and effects can be found not only in a political communication context but also in a corporate communication context. Emphasizing the role of issues in corporate communication, the purpose of this study was to explore a compelling argument demonstrating the relationship between attribute-level and object-level of agenda building. Some indirect relationships were found through emotional appeal based on the compelling arguments hypotheses. In spite of its theoretical and practical contributions to the field, the study is not free from certain limitations.

First, the study suggested the priming effect, trust, and corporate reputation as public opinion outcomes of agenda building. Through an experimental design, the effects were measured after a one-time exposure of a public relations message. However, some public relations outcomes may need a longer time period to be examined. Trust, for instance, has been suggested as one of the relationship quality outcomes, including satisfaction and commitment. The relationship perspective of public relations has been emphasized in long-term relationship-building between an organization and its publics. Hence, future research may need to conduct a longitudinal design study to measure long-term relationship quality outcomes.

To explore the role of issues in a corporate communication context, this study suggested issue ownership as an important predictor of agenda salience and public relations outcomes. Issue ownership is about a company's capability to deal with certain social issues, and this experimental study designed public relations messages with a fictitious firm. The firm was a technology-based business, and a global health issue was selected to manipulate messages.

Emphasizing the importance of the corporate social responsibility activities, the role of issues has become significant in affecting corporate reputation. However, an understanding of the direction and the strength of the relationship is much more complicated. In this study, an interaction effect between issue ownership and issue tone has been explored, and the role of emotional appeal has been examined. However, further evidence should be conducted to test the effects by the type of industry, size of the company, or other situational conditions.

To explore the causal relationships of the agenda-building process, the main goal of the project was to demonstrate relationships among antecedent, agenda salience, and consequences of agenda building. Even though the direct effects were not predicted in the original hypotheses between antecedents and consequences of agenda building, an additional path analysis tested both direct and indirect relationships among these three components (antecedents, salience, and consequences). Few previous studies have attempted to demonstrate causal relationships in an agenda-building framework, and more empirical evidence should be added. Future research studies may apply this framework to other communication settings.

This study concentrated on exploring the role of affect in the agenda-building process. Traditionally, the valence of objects (positive or negative) has been widely used in terms of affective attribute of agenda, and affective attributes have been less explored compared to substantive attributes (e.g., frames). In addition to the valence, this study suggested emotion as another dimension of affects, and the results of the study expanded our understanding of the role of emotion in the agenda-building process. More empirical evidence needs to be added. Also, future research should be developed in terms of the diverse measurement of emotion. In addition to a single excitement measure, this study measured different types of emotion, such as anger, happiness, sadness, or pride. Two emotional factors were then suggested. Hence, future research will be added to confirm the role of these emotional factors.

Finally, exploring the mediating role of the emotional factors, the study also contributed to our understanding of a contingent condition of agenda-setting and agenda-building processes. Scholars have explored in what conditions agenda-setting or agenda-building effects would be found (McCombs, 2004; Weaver, 1980; Wu & Coleman, 2009). Among the various contingent conditions, the emotional factors have also been emphasized by prior scholars. Wu and Coleman (2009) found that negative information would have stronger agenda-setting effects. Including the emotional factors, future studies should test more contingent conditions of the agenda-building process (e.g., cultures, prior issue propositions, or expectations for corporate social responsibility). For example, McCombs (2004) suggested that the need for orientation is the most critical condition for the agenda-setting process. Weaver (1980) said that people who actively seek information would be more susceptible to agenda-setting

effects. The future research would help to understand the agenda-building effects in an interactive media environment where the active role of the audience is emphasized.

Conclusions

To examine the role of issues in public relations, this study focused on the role of public relations communication strategies grounded in an agenda-building framework. Particularly, this study examined 1) the relationship between the independent variables (issue ownership and issue attributes) and the mediator (emotion), 2) the relationship between the mediator (emotional arousal) and the dependent variables associated with agenda salience (issue and attribute salience), 3) the relationship between the independent variables (issue ownership and issue attributes) and the dependent variables associated with agenda salience (issue and attribute salience), and 4) the relationship between the dependent variables associated with agenda salience (issue and attribute salience) and with public opinion (priming effect, trust, and corporate reputation).

Twenty hypotheses were proposed to test the relationships and seven of them were supported. Also, a relationship was found in an opposite direction from the prediction (Table 4-12 in Chapter 4). As a result, major contributions of this study demonstrated causal relationships in an agenda-building framework to apply this framework into a corporate communication context, to find empirical evidence of the relationship between message exposure and corporate reputation, and to expand our understanding of the role of attributes testing compelling arguments hypotheses. Furthermore, emphasizing the role of affects in the agenda-building relationship, both valence and arousal level of affects have been explored. Finally, the mediating role of emotion was discussed.

APPENDIX A
STATEMENT OF INFORMED CONSENT

Dear participants:

I am currently conducting an online study to explore the linkages between corporate messages and public opinion about the corporation. In particular, you will make evaluations on the corporation after reading corporate messages. Please take your time to read the corporate site, so you read all the given messages carefully.

This experimental study will take about 10 minutes. Your response is extremely important and valuable. Your answers will be kept for statistical purposes only and your identity will be kept confidential to the extent provided by law. You have the right to withdraw from the study at anytime without consequence.

If you have any question about this survey, please contact the researcher at jy.kim@ufl.edu. If you have any questions about your rights as a study participant, please contact the University of Florida Institutional Review Board at (352) 392-0433.

Thank you for your time and help in advance.

Ji Young Kim
Ph.D. Candidate
College of Journalism and Communications
University of Florida
jy.kim@ufl.edu

APPENDIX B EXPERIMENTAL STIMULI

Company background

Company name: **itTech**

We are the digital technology leader!

itTech is a technology company that operates in more than 170 countries around the world.

We provide consumers a wide range of products and services from personal digital entertainment devices and to business computing systems. This comprehensive portfolio helps us match the right products, services and solutions to our customers' specific needs.

For more than 30 years, **itTech** has empowered countries, communities, customers and people everywhere to use technology to realize their dreams.



itTech's commitment: Better IT, better global health

Expert in mobile health

Mobile Health (mHealth) is an area of electronic health (eHealth) and it is the provision of health services and information via mobile technologies such as mobile phones and Personal Digital Assistants (PDAs).

itTech has been joining health experts from nongovernmental organizations, research institutions, enterprises, and governments. Together, we're focused on bringing existing solutions to underserved communities and creating new e-health solutions that advance lifesaving care and research.

itTech is also partnering with a world-class medical center on pioneering research with the potential to transform the practice of medicine. We're pushing the boundaries of information technology to accelerate personalized care, which may one day allow clinicians to customize treatments based on a patient's DNA. These and other examples illustrate how we're expanding the role of technology from a tool for productivity into a force for improving society.

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Succeeded to establish careful standards and evaluation for mobile med tech @JHUmHealth



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IT service

IT Service Management is a software solution that integrates and automates service management and quality control of the IT services that the business depends upon.

itTech has been focused on service design, operations, and delivery so staff can evaluate opportunities for improvement throughout the service lifecycle. The powerful process driven nature of IT Service Management gives you the control and consistency you need to constantly and continually deliver quality IT services. Its strong integration capabilities mean you can seamlessly integrate IT systems management or business systems with service management processes.

itTech is also partnering with a world-class information center on pioneering research with the potential to transform the practice of finance. We're pushing the boundaries of information technology to accelerate personalized financial service, which may reduce financial risk, protect assets from long term care costs and avoid probate to ensure the desired distribution of your assets.

Research

In partnership with the center of science research, we are teaming up to educate residents on the importance of science education. We award scholarships and fellowships to chemists at 48 colleges and universities in the United States.

Today, The Center for Collaborative Research & Education continues to facilitate our partnerships with universities and government laboratories; collaborates with our Business Units to deploy incomplete technologies and develop new revenue sources from intellectual property; and invests in science education programs to ensure science literacy, workforce preparation and business and community sustainability.

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APPENDIX C
QUESTIONNAIRE

Section 1. Salience of issue, issue attribute, and priming

1. Now, you have read the company’s messages. I’d like ask your opinion again about global health issues. Please identify your answers with each statement ranging from 1 = “Not at all” to 7 = “Extremely.”

	Not at all			Moderately			Extremely	
In your opinion, how important is global health issues today?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
How many news reports about global health issues do you regularly pay attention to?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
To what extent do you think global health issues is deserving of additional government action?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
How often do you talk about global health issues in your everyday conversation?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	

2. Also, please identify your general belief about the issue again: “I feel that global health issues are.....”

	Strongly disagree			neutral			Strongly agree	
Negative	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Positive
Unpleasant	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Pleasant

3. Please identify your answer with the following statement again ranging from 1 = “Extremely Oppose” to 7 = “Extremely Support.”

	Extremely oppose			Moderately			Extremely support	
Do you support or oppose the efforts to solve global health issues?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	

Section 2. Emotion

1. In this section, I'd like to ask your feeling after reading the messages. Please identify your answer with the following statement ranging from 1 = "Not at all" to 7 = "Extremely."

	Not at all			Moderately			Extremely	
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
I feel excited	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	

2. The following question asks more details on how you feel. I'd like to ask your feeling after reading the public relations messages. Please identify your answers with each statement ranging from 1 = "Not at all" to 7 = "Extremely."

	Not at all			Moderately			Extremely	
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
I feel angry	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
I feel mad	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
I feel irritated	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
I feel appreciative	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
I feel grateful	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
I feel thankful	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
I feel guilty	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
I feel remorseful	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
I feel sorry	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
I feel proud	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
I feel self-fulfilled	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
I feel joyful	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
I feel happy	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
I feel elated	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
I feel gloomy	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
I feel sad	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
I feel upset	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	

Section 3. Trust

In this section, I ask how you feel about the company's relationship with their stakeholders. Nine statements are listed below. Please identify your level of agreement or disagreement with each statement.

	Strongly disagree		neutral			Strongly agree	
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
This company would treat customers fairly.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Whenever this company makes an important decision, I know it will be concerned about its customers.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
This company can be relied on to keep its promises.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I believe that this company takes the opinions of customers into account when making decisions.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I feel very confident about this company's skills.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
This company has the ability to accomplish what it says it will do.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I believe sound principles guide the company's behavior.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I am willing to let this company make decisions for customers like me.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I believe the company does not mislead customers.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Section4. Corporate reputation

In this section, I ask how you feel about the company's reputation with their stakeholders. 20 statements are listed below. Please identify your level of agreement or disagreement with each statement.

	Strongly disagree		neutral			Strongly agree	
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
The company has market opportunities	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
The company has excellent leadership	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
The company has clear vision for the future	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
The company supports good causes	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
The company is environmentally responsible	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
The company is responsible in the community	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I feel good about company	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
The company inspires admiration and respect	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
The company inspires trust	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
The company has high quality products and/or services	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
The company has innovative products and/or services	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
The company provides good value for money	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
The company stands behind its products and/or services	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
The company rewards employees fairly	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

	Strongly disagree		neutral			Strongly agree	
The company is a good place to work	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
The company has good employees	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
The company outperforms competitors	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
The company has record of bring profitable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
The company is low risk investment	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
The company's growth prospects	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Section 5. Manipulation items

1. Regarding the company's prior commitment activities you read (on the left column of the previous page), please indicate your level of agreement or disagreement with each statement about the company described on the messages.

	Extremely little		neutral			Extremely well	
How well do you think that the company handles global health issues?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
How well do you think that the company can solve problems related to global health issues?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I believe that the company is very knowledgeable about global health issues.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

2. The message described what news media and people say about global health issues. How was the issues described on the messages?

Negatively	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Positively
Unpleasantly	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Pleasantly

Section 6. Demographic information

Now, the following questions ask demographic information.

1. In what year were you born? _____
2. What is your gender? Male Female
3. How would you describe yourself?
 - Hispanic or Latino
 - Asian
 - African American
 - Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander
 - White
4. What is your religious affiliation?
 - Protestant Christian
 - Roman Catholic
 - Evangelical Christian
 - Jewish
 - Muslim
 - Hindu
 - Buddhist
 - Other: _____
5. Where is your country of origin? _____
6. What is your highest level of school you have completed? If currently enrolled, mark the previous grade or highest degree received.
 - No schooling completed
 - Nursery school to 12th grade (no diploma)
 - High school graduate
 - Associate's degree (e.g., AA)
 - Bachelor's degree (e.g., BA or BS)
 - Master's degree (e.g., MA, MS, or MBA)
 - Professional degree (e.g., MD or JD)
 - Doctoral degree (e.g., PhD or EdD)
7. What is your occupation?
 - Employed for wages
 - Self-employed
 - Out of work
 - A homemaker
 - A student
 - Retired
 - Unable to work

8. How would you describe your employer?

- For-profit company
- Not-for-profit organization
- Local government
- State government
- Federal government
- Self-employed
- Others (Specify: _____)

9. What is your average income level?

- Less than \$10,000
- \$10,000 to \$29,999
- \$30,000 to \$49,999
- \$50,000 to \$69,999
- \$70,000 to \$89,999
- \$90,000 to \$109,999
- \$110,000 to \$129,999
- \$130,000 or more

10. What role do you believe issue-related information (i.e., global health) plays in your attitudes, beliefs, and perception about the company?

11. If you have additional comments or thoughts on this study, please list them below.

Thank you so much for your participation!

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BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Ji Young Kim received her Ph.D. from the University of Florida majoring in mass communication in the summer of 2012. Her specialty is public relations and her outside concentration is international business. As an alumni fellow, Ji Young has taught several courses in the Public Relations Department, including Public Relations Research, Public Relations Campaigns, and International Public Relations.

Ji Young's primary research interests fall under public relations and strategic communications in both international and national contexts. To date, Ji Young has presented several research papers at major national and international research conferences in the field, and some of the work won best research awards at the Association for Journalism and Mass Communication (AEJMC, 2009), the International Communication Association (ICA, 2010 & 2011), and the International Public Relations Research Conference (IPRRC, 2011). She also received an outstanding international student award from the University of Florida in 2010. Six of her collaborative articles have been published in journals including, *Public Relations Review* and *Public Relations Journal*, and she has an upcoming manuscript which will be published in *Journalism and Mass Communication Quarterly*.

Ji Young also has professional experience as a graduate intern at the International Organization for Migration in Switzerland, a daily newspaper, and a communication consultancy firm in Korea. Prior to attending the University of Florida, Ji Young earned a master's degree in New Media at Syracuse University in 2006, and she was enrolled in the Public Diplomacy program at Syracuse University between 2007 and 2008. She received her bachelor's degrees in Business Administration and Mass Communications from Sogang University in Korea in 2005.