

CHINESE AND AMERICAN STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF PUBLIC
APOLOGIES

A Dissertation

by

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Submitted to the Office of Graduate and Professional Studies of
Texas A&M University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

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December 2013

Major Subject: Curriculum and Instruction

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to examine Chinese and American students' perceptions of public apologies issued by Reed Hastings, the CEO of Netflix, and Akio Toyoda, the CEO of Toyota. The researcher conducted two independent studies by collecting both quantitative and qualitative data through two survey questionnaires and four focus group interviews. The findings indicated that Chinese and American participants evaluated the effectiveness of public apologies based on their cultural schemas of the verbal and non-verbal cues used by the apologizer. The participants' perceptions of recognizing the effectiveness of the apology were related to their cultural perspectives regarding the key elements of public apologies. Related to the verbal strategies for conveying sincerity, both groups indicated that offering compensation is an important component of a sincere apology. However, each group has different cultural perspectives regarding non-verbal cues such as making eye contact, dress code, facial expressions, setting, body posture, and tone of voice. For example, Chinese emphasized the importance of professional dress code, having remorseful facial expressions, formal setting, bowing a head, and lowering voice tone. In contrast, Americans emphasized the importance of maintaining eye contact, body posture embodying attentiveness, and varying intonation to convey the apologizer's feelings. They indicated that the choice of clothing may be changed according to the severity of the offense, the relationship between the apologizer and the offended person, and the location of the apology.

DEDICATION

“But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.” - Matthew 6:33 -

I would like to dedicate this dissertation to my LORD. There is no way I could have done this without Jesus Christ who is my savior. God is the one who guides my life.

I also would like to dedicate this dissertation to my mother Do-Wha Park, whose unconditional love shaped the lives of Song’s family. Through your life, you modeled me the highest form of love.

“And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.” - Romans 8:28-

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First, I would like to thank my committee chair, Dr. Zohreh Eslami, and the executive director of the University Writing Center, Dr. Valerie Balester—both of you have my deepest respect and gratitude. I would like to thank my committee members, Dr. Janet Hammer, Dr. Joyce Juntune, Dr. Radhika Viruru, and Dr. Wen Luo for their guidance and insightful feedback.

Second, I would like to extend my gratitude to my father Mun-Whan Song, my sister Si-Hyun Song and her husband Sung-Su In, and my brother Tae-Young Song for their encouragement and love.

Third, I would like to thank my undergraduate advisor Dr. Seon-Hee Park and graduate advisor Dr. Dauk-Suhn Hong for their guidance and support throughout the course of my academic journey.

Fourth, I would like to thank my spiritual mentors, Judy Marshall and Kent Marshall. Without your love and prayer for me, I would not have made it through the last year with as much energy and spirit as I have.

Last, I would like to thank my friends, Emin, Edith, Ji-Nang, Haiping, Hang-mi, Monet, Sunny, Eun-Hye, and Shuang for their encouragement.

I pray that God bless each of you with an abundance of happiness, health, and prosperity.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
ABSTRACT	ii
DEDICATION	iii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	iv
TABLE OF CONTENTS	v
LIST OF FIGURES	viii
LIST OF TABLES	ix
CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION	1
Statement of problem	4
Purpose of the study	6
Background on the Netflix apology of 2011	6
Background on the Toyota apology of 2010	7
Research questions	8
Organization of the dissertation	10
CHAPTER II LITERATURE REVIEW	11
Pragmatics	11
Cross-cultural pragmatics	13
Cross-cultural pragmatic failure	13
Speech act theory	15
Definition of apology	17
Apology strategies	18
Research on the speech act of apology	19
Gender and apologies	24
Cultural influences	26
Cross-cultural apology studies: Chinese and Americans	28
Cross-cultural apology studies: Japanese and Americans	31
Non-verbal communication	35
Public apologies	43
Research on corporate apologies	45
Unwillingness to issue an apology	47
Negative publicity and trust	48
Time and apology	50

Compensation.....	51
Providing sufficient information	52
Conclusion.....	53
CHAPTER III STUDY 1: THE NETFLIX 2011 APOLOGY	55
Overview	55
Introduction	56
Literature review	58
Methodology	68
Results and findings	73
Summary	86
Discussion and conclusion	87
CHAPTER IV STUDY 2: THE TOYOTA 2010 APOLOGY	94
Overview	94
Introduction	95
Literature review	97
Methodology	108
Results and findings	114
Summary	126
Discussion and conclusion	127
CHAPTER V COMPARISON/CONTRAST AND CONCLUSION	133
Introduction	133
The verbal strategies of Hastings’ and Toyoda’s apologies	136
Non-verbal cues in Hastings’ and Toyoda’s apologies	147
Participants’ overall perceptions of each apology.....	153
Conclusion.....	156
REFERENCES	159
APPENDIX A	177
APPENDIX B	179
APPENDIX C	183
APPENDIX D	184
APPENDIX E.....	186
APPENDIX F	190

APPENDIX G	191
APPENDIX H	194
APPENDIX I	197
APPENDIX J	199

LIST OF FIGURES

	Page
Figure 1. Netflix triangulation matrix	71
Figure 2. Netflix CFA three-factor model.....	77
Figure 3. Netflix CFA one-factor model.....	79
Figure 4. Toyota triangulation matrix	112
Figure 5. Toyota CFA three-factor model.....	117
Figure 6. Toyota CFA one-factor model.....	119

LIST OF TABLES

	Page
Table 1. Internal consistency estimates for Netflix subscales and the total score.....	70
Table 2. Descriptive statistics of Netflix survey scores	74
Table 3. Standardized estimated parameters for Netflix three-factor model	78
Table 4. Standardized estimated parameters for Netflix one-factor model.....	79
Table 5. Internal consistency estimates for Toyota subscale and the total score	111
Table 6. Descriptive statistics of Toyota survey scores	114
Table 7. Standardized estimated parameters for Toyota three-factor model	118
Table 8. Standardized estimated parameters for Toyota one-factor model.....	119
Table 9. Opening	137
Table 10. Body	138
Table 11. Closing	142
Table 12. Non-verbal cues used by participants in evaluating each apology	150
Table 13. Statistical results regarding participants' evaluations of each apology.....	153

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A growing number of public apologies made by states, governments, international corporations, and public figures have led to an apology culture. As Brooks (1999) claims, we are living in “the age of apologies” (p. 3). The number of public apologies has increased threefold since the 1980s (Lazare, 2004). Compiled collections of public apologies such as James Dickerson’s *I’m So Sorry* (2000), Paul Slansky and Arleen Sorkin’s *My Bad* (2006), and Jennifer M. Lind’s *Sorry States* (2010) can be taken as evidence demonstrating how public apologies are widely given by public figures. Public apologies have become a ritual process to relieve public anger and criticism caused by a crisis that occurs in an interpersonal, national, or international situation. Public figures admit their responsibility publicly by making an apology and attempt to recover their reputation. The rise of public apologies indicates that the offering and accepting of apologies have grown in importance, particularly in the public arena.

How to apologize to the public during a crisis is becoming a significant issue for corporations. Knowing how to apologize correctly is an important marketing and management tool in commerce (Friedman, 2006). Research has found that apologies from corporations serve to raise consumers’ satisfaction after service failures (Goodwin & Ross, 1992) as well as to protect an organization’s reputation after a crisis (Coombs & Holladay, 2008). When corporations face problems such as product recall, disasters caused by a manufacturing plant, technical-error accidents, human-error accidents, or a

CEO's corruption, strategic and effective apologies play an important role in helping corporations resolve the conflicts on the issues. Corporate apologies have been issued for a wide variety of wrongs committed by corporations: from Toyota Motor Corporation's President Akio Toyoda's 2010 apology for alleged mechanical deficiencies to Barclays' chairman Marcus Agius' 2012 apology for a rate-rigging scandal. A corporate apology is a basic conflict resolution technique for dealing with crisis situations (Frantz & Bennigson, 2005).

Social media platforms like Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube have changed the dynamics of communication between corporations and individuals. Social media platforms are the places in which individuals share and spread their positive or negative comments toward a corporation when they want to communicate with the corporation. The corporations seek to benefit their business by actively utilizing social media as a communication tool to interact with their current and potential customers. The increasing use of social media among individuals has led corporations to be vulnerable to unpredictable crises in their relationship with the public. When a corporation fails to handle an individual's problem, that one problem may result in increasing negative publicity through social media (Aula, 2010). Corporate leaders who plan to apologize publicly as a way of handling crisis need to keep in mind that social media provides greater opportunities for a mass audience to cause considerable controversy. What a corporate leader says and does while apologizing can be publicly broadcasted in a matter of seconds through social media platforms. Thus, a corporate apology is more likely to

be subject to public cynicism by individuals globally, who are active on social media platforms regardless of whether they are customers or not.

In order to attain successful communication in our modern globalized marketplace, corporate leaders who plan to effectively give a heartfelt public apology need to consider that their audiences may have different cultural norms. Appropriately apologizing in business contexts may vary from culture to culture because the ways of expressing and receiving an apology are culture-bound. Cross-cultural differences in signaling verbal and non-verbal cues for apologizing can lead to intercultural miscommunication (Lakoff, 2001). Consequently, interlocutors from different cultures may misjudge each other's linguistic performances and responses with regard to their respective apologies due to the lack of adequate cross-cultural knowledge. Thus, understanding the meaning and function of an apology and how to appropriately apologize in different cultures can help individuals make better strategic decisions as to when and why an apology may be an effective strategy to resolve conflicts, repair trust, and facilitate negotiations (Maddux, Kim, Okumura, & Brett, 2011).

Although a substantial amount of literature exists regarding research on cross-cultural apologies (Bergman & Kasper, 1993; Blum-Kulka & Olshtain, 1984; Coulmas, 1981; Eslami, 2004; Garcia, 1989; Meier, 1998; Olshtain, 1989; Olshtain & Cohen, 1983; Trosborg, 1987), scholars have not paid much attention to how individuals' cultures have an impact on their responses to public apologies which attempt to address public displeasure or condemnation. Consequently, little is known about how cultural specificity, in terms of the key elements of a heartfelt public apology, affects

individuals' decisions not only in appraising the sincerity of an apology but also in accepting an apology. More research into this domain is necessary in order to establish appropriate speech patterns of a public apology in a global business context, and to achieve the effective interpersonal communication among culturally diverse interlocutors.

Statement of problem

Both the message content and the perceived quality of non-verbal communication when apologizing have an impact on recipients' appraisals of apology sincerity and their determination whether the recipients accept or reject the apology. The vast majority of literature on corporate apologies focuses on analyzing the verbal elements of an issued apology while paying attention to the benefits for the apologizer (Coombs & Holladay, 2008; Hargie, Stapleton, & Tourish, 2010; Kellerman, 2006; Wohl, Hornsey, & Philpot, 2011). Consequently, culturally diverse recipients' evaluations regarding the verbal and non-verbal elements of an issued apology have yet to receive adequate attention in research on corporate apologies. Researchers need to examine how an apologizer may garner more positive responses from the recipients and to make the recipients more prone to accept the apology as sincere through verbal and non-verbal communication. More research investigating the role of verbal and non-verbal communication in apologizing is necessary to better understand how recipients' cultural expectations affect their perceptions of apology sincerity.

Customers' different cultural expectations regarding the verbal and non-verbal indicators of apologizing may profoundly impact their evaluations of the sincerity of an

apology. Previous cross-cultural research on the speech act of apologizing has shown that the function and meaning of an apology may differ considerably depending on the cultural context (Barnlund & Yoshioka, 1990; Byon, 2005; Eslami, 2004; Hatfield & Hahn, 2011; Kim, 2008; Lee & Park, 2011; Sugimoto, 1997). As the function and meaning of an apology may differ across cultures, the issued public apology may create different evaluations among multicultural customers regarding the sincerity of the apology. Despite the high incidence of public apologies made by corporations in a globalized business context, there is no empirical study identifying how recipients' cultural views on verbal and non-verbal cues influence their judgments about the sincerity of a corporate apology. Thus, researching how apologies are perceived by a global community is essential to improve intercultural communication among interlocutors who have diverse cultural backgrounds.

Recognizing such gaps in our present understanding of public apologies, this study aimed to inform research and practice by studying public apology from a cross-cultural perspective, specifically, how Chinese students and American students similarly or differently appraise a corporate leader's public apology. Cultural expectations regarding a heartfelt public apology were examined in terms of the verbal strategies as well as non-verbal cues. The research findings of this study provided insight into some of the successful ways that corporate leaders can best convey apology through both verbal and non-verbal communication. In addition, this study provided corporate leaders with a better understanding of the key elements of a heartfelt apology that may bring

benefits to the business itself after a crisis, while increasing the positive image of the corporation among culturally diverse recipients.

Purpose of the study

The primary purpose of this study was to investigate how culture has an impact on recipients' perceptions of the effectiveness of public apologies. By comparing data provided by Chinese students and American students, this study attempted to identify specific verbal and non-verbal cues that are correlated with students' evaluations of public apologies. The results from this study will be useful for strengthening intercultural communication and understanding among interlocutors who use English as a lingua franca. Additionally, the promotion of intercultural awareness in multinational and intercultural business service encounters will assist business leaders in overcoming cultural conflicts.

To examine Chinese and American students' perspectives of public apologies, the following two corporate apologies were used: (a) Study 1 – Reed Hastings, Netflix CEO, and (b) Study 2 – Akio Toyoda, President of Toyota Corporation.

Background on the Netflix apology of 2011

On Monday, September 19, 2011, Netflix CEO, Reed Hastings sent an apologetic email titled “An Explanation and Some Reflections” to the users of Netflix service (see Appendix A for a full copy of the email.). Prior to this email, on July 12, 2011, Netflix had separated its movie and television offerings based on whether the user was streaming them via the internet or was exchanging DVDs via postal mail. After separating the service, the company increased the price for users who received movies

and television shows in both forms. Due to the policy and price changes, Netflix lost approximately 800,000 customers of its 25 million customers over two months. The value of Netflix stock was at \$ 304.79 in early 2011, but it fell to \$ 169.25 by September, 15, 2011 (Seitz, 2011). The dramatic change in stock value is assumingly what led to Reed Hastings' email apology. However, his e-mail apology was issued over two months (i.e., September 19, 2011) after the offense occurred. On the same day, Netflix posted a video apology made by Hastings and Andy Rendich, co-founder on the Netflix's blog and website. Although Netflix's video apology was addressed to previous and current customers, the video apology was disseminated among people through social media.

Background on the Toyota apology of 2010

In the congressional testimony on Wednesday, February 24, 2010, Toyota CEO, Akio Toyoda publicly apologized to the United States Congress and American Toyota owners for the safety defects in the company's cars that led to the deaths of 52 Americans and worldwide recalls of Toyota vehicles (Choi & Chung, 2012). The main cause of the safety defects was known to be related to a faulty operation that caused the accelerator pedal to stick in the floor mats (Madslie, 2010). For instance, on August 28, 2009, four passengers riding in Lexus ES350 were killed in an accident because the vehicle's brakes did not work. According to one of the passengers who called 911, the gas pedal became stuck and raced down Highway 125 at over 100 mph (Healy, 2010). As the 911 tape was released to the public, Toyota's long standing reputation as being one of the best car manufacturers was questioned. The next month (September 2009),

Toyota recalled 4.2 million Toyota and Lexus vehicles, claiming that removing floor mats would fix the problem of unintended acceleration.

Unfortunately, after removing the floor mats, Toyota drivers had continued accelerator pedal issues. Before the congressional testimony, there were recalls five times, from November 25, 2009 to February 12, 2010, regarding potential accelerator pedal entrapment problems (Toyota.com, 2010). Despite the recalls, reports regarding the unintended acceleration accidents continued, so it increased suspicions among customers related to whether the company had identified all safety defects. Mass media blamed the company for its response to the safety issues, and the public began to turn against Toyota. Subsequently, the reputation of Toyota in the United States as high quality cars, which built the company over time had been seriously damaged. Since 2009, Toyota has recalled more than 16 million vehicles globally due to the variety of problems (Rechtin & Greimel, 2011).

Research questions

This study investigated the following research questions:

Study 1: Netflix CEO Reed Hastings' 2011 video apology

Research questions:

- Is there a significant difference between Chinese and American university students' perceptions regarding the necessity of Hastings' apology?

- Is there a significant difference between Chinese and American university students' perceptions regarding the verbal strategies of Hastings' apology?
- Is there a significant difference between Chinese and American university students' perceptions regarding the non-verbal cues of Hastings' apology?
- Is there a significant difference between Chinese and American university students' perceptions regarding the effectiveness of Hastings' apology?

Study 2: Toyota president Akio Toyoda's 2010 apology in the U.S. congress

Research questions:

- Is there a significant difference Chinese and American university students' perceptions regarding the necessity of Toyoda's apology?
- Is there a significant difference Chinese and American university students' perceptions regarding the non-verbal cues of Toyoda's apology?
- Is there a significant difference Chinese and American university students' perceptions regarding the verbal strategies of Toyoda's apology?
- Is there a significant difference Chinese and American university students' perceptions regarding the effectiveness of Toyoda's apology?

Organization of the dissertation

The dissertation is separated into five distinct chapters. It should be noted that Chapters III-VI are written as manuscripts that serve as independent pieces to be submitted for publication in peer-reviewed journals. Chapter V compares/contrasts the verbal strategies and non-verbal cues in Hastings' and Toyoda's apologies. In addition, Chapter V synthesizes the findings of Study 1 and Study 2 while drawing key conclusions that concern the characteristics of public apologies in the 21st century.

Below is a description of each of the chapters herein:

- Chapter I: States the rationale and purpose of the study and research questions.
- Chapter II: Discusses the current body of literature regarding the speech act of apologizing in terms of pragmatics, the speech act theory, public apologies, and non-verbal communication.
- Chapter III: Presents Study 1-the Netflix 2011 apology.
- Chapter IV: Presents Study 2-the Toyota 2010 apology.
- Chapter V: Compares/contrasts apology strategies used by Hastings and Toyoda and summarizes the findings of Study 1 and Study 2.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

This study was grounded in four areas of inquiry: pragmatics, speech act theory, public apologies, and non-verbal communication. The field of cross-cultural pragmatics was of special interest to the study because the main purpose of this study was to investigate how culture had an impact on individuals' perceptions of appraising the key elements of a public apology.

Pragmatics

Pragmatics is a disciplinary study which focuses on understanding human linguistic interaction among interlocutors (Wierzbicka, 1991). Pragmatics explains how human beings are able to perform a variety of language functions through utterances. The definition of pragmatics has been proposed by different scholars such as Levinson (1983), Crystal (1985), and Mey (1993). According to Levinson (1983), pragmatics is the systematic study of examining how human beings understand another speaker's intended meaning that go beyond the literal interpretation of the words. In the same context, Crystal (1985) defines pragmatics as the study of language based on the perspectives of users, while investigating their choices of linguistic forms, encountered social constraints, and consequences of language use. Mey (1993) follows a similar approach to Levinson, defining pragmatics as the study of language use that is governed by social contexts. In sum, researchers in pragmatics consider language as a tool for understanding human interaction among interlocutors.

To further define pragmatics, Leech (1983) divides pragmatics into two components: sociopragmatics and pragmalinguistics. Leech (1983) describes sociopragmatics as the “sociological interface of pragmatics” (p. 10). In other words, sociopragmatics concerns the pragmatic performance of speech acts within a specific social and cultural context. Sociopragmatics investigates the effect of constraints such as social status and social distance on language use. Pragmalinguistics refers to the linguistic side of pragmatics, considering “the particular resources which a given language provides for conveying particular illocutions” (Leech, 1983, p. 11). Thus, pragmalinguistics pays attention to the range of language resources from which a speaker makes use when using that language. Such resources include pragmatic strategies (e.g., directness and indirectness) and pragmatic routines (e.g., using appropriate formula for greeting).

Pragmatic competence refers to an individual’s “ability to use language effectively in order to achieve a specific purpose and to understand language in context” (Thomas, 1983, p. 92). Additionally, Leech (1983) considers pragmatic competence as an individual’s ability to use language effectively and understand others’ communicative intentions. In other words, pragmatic competence can be defined as a speaker’s ability to use language for different purposes (e.g., request, apologize, complain) and understand the motives of utterances (e.g., *Can you give me a hand?*). For instance, ‘Can you give me a hand?’ can be used between interlocutors who know the figurative meaning of hand, standing for the person. The semantic meaning of the sentence is asking a help to the listener.

Cross-cultural pragmatics

Cross-cultural pragmatics is a subdiscipline of pragmatics that compares “the ways in which two or more languages are used in communication” (House-Edmonson, 1986, p. 282). It examines cross-cultural differences in the ways of speaking, expectations of linguistic behavior, and use of linguistic signaling devices such as bodily conduct, intonation, stress, and pitch. These variations across languages and cultures can be understood “in terms of independently established different cultural values and cultural priorities” (Wierzbicka, 1991, p. 69). Cross-cultural pragmatics systematically studies how an individual’s speech acts (e.g., requests, apologies, and complaints) are expressed in different social contexts across various cultures and languages.

Different languages and cultures have different ways of dealing with pragmatic issues as well as different ways in which people perform speech acts (Blum-Kulka, House & Kasper, 1989). Thus, speakers from different languages and cultures may have different expectations for what they intend by what they say, and they may also have different values for interpreting what they hear. When a speaker fails to convey or understand a pragmatic intention in another language and culture, the speaker or listener experiences cross-cultural pragmatic failure.

Cross-cultural pragmatic failure

Cross-cultural pragmatic failure, termed by Thomas (1983), occurs when a speaker does not have enough sociopragmatic and pragmalinguistic competence in the target language and culture in a particular situation. According to Thomas (1983), there are two types of cross-cultural pragmatic failure: one is “sociopragmatic failure” and the

other is “pragmalinguistic failure” (p. 91). A speaker who lacks sociopragmatic skills often fails to vary the use of language according to different situations (e.g., requesting, apologizing, offering, expressing thanks, complimenting, and greeting). For instance, if a speaker did not respond after hearing a compliment “You have such a lovely accent,” it indicates that the speaker failed to recognize and respond to the compliment (Ellis, 1994, p. 155). Sociopragmatic failure should not be a matter of correction but of discussion because it is related to a speaker’s system of beliefs in terms of linguistic knowledge (Thomas, 1983). The lack of pragmalinguistic skills leads a speaker to use linguistic forms inappropriately. For example, let us suppose that there is a conference in which an invited professor is to give a keynote speech. After giving an introduction for the guest speaker while referring to the topic of his talk, if a person said to the guest speaker: “Professor X, please begin your talk,” instead of saying “I would like to hand it over to Professor X,” it indicates that the person used ‘please’ as an imperative form. The guest speaker “had already been asked to give a talk, and he had accepted the invitation, which is why he was present, ready, and waiting to speak” (White, 1992, p.1990). Therefore, to request him in the use of imperative form sounded rude.

Sociopragmatic failure can be overcome by developing a speaker’s awareness of the target language’s social and cultural “values and beliefs,” whereas pragmalinguistic failure can be overcome by helping a speaker learn “conventionalized usages” as “part of the grammar” through language instruction (Thomas, 1983, p. 91). Influenced by Thomas’ work, Brian (2007) further refines the notion of cross-cultural pragmatic failure. He explains that sociopragmatic failure comes from the lack of knowledge in

terms of “understanding different cultural perceptions and expectations of culture-specific acts of performance,” whereas pragmalinguistic failure occurs when speakers “transfer the procedure and linguistic means of realizing a speech act” from their native language to their target language (Brian, 2007, p. 69).

Cross-cultural pragmatics aims at accessing information “conventionally associated with particular linguistic structure in a culture” that will provide individuals with valuable insights into cultural differences in communication styles (Ogiermann, 2009, p. 18). Without knowing culture-specific patterns of using language, an individual communicating with people from other cultures cannot help avoiding cross-cultural pragmatic failure. Cross-cultural pragmatics is concerned with how individuals carry out speech acts appropriately and effectively across cultures and aims to reduce pragmatic failures which can lead to negative judgment and stereotyping.

Speech act theory

The field of pragmatics was triggered by the work of John L. Austin, a British language philosopher and further developed by John Searle. In his book entitled *How to Do Things with Words*, Austin (1962) suggests three descriptive terms regarding the meanings of three speech acts:

- (1) Locutionary act is a basic act of utterance, producing the literal meaning of words. For example, *I am hungry* is a statement that indicates the speaker is hungry.

(2) Illocutionary act is an utterance including the intended meaning. For instance, when a speaker says *It's hot here* it could be an indirect request for opening the window.

(3) Perlocutionary act is an utterance with the intention of achieving an effect on the listener. For example, after hearing the above statement *It's hot here* the listener might open the door.

Based on Austin's illocutionary act Searle (1976), who was a student of Austin, proposed five classifications regarding illocutionary acts in terms of the purpose of speech acts from the speaker's perspective:

(1) Representatives, which include speech acts that describe the speaker's beliefs, assertions, or claims. For example, *It is very hot in this room.*

(2) Directives, which include speech acts in which the speaker makes the listener to do something. For example, *Clean your room, Open the window please, Would you hold this door?*

(3) Commissives, which include speech acts in which the speaker commits him/herself to do something in the future. For example, *I promise you to return the book by Monday, We can guarantee your safety.*

(4) Expressives, which include speech acts that express the speaker's feeling and attitude. For example, *Thank you, I apologize for being late, Congratulations!*

(5) Declarations, which include speech acts that will change a certain situation if the speech act successfully is performed by the speaker. For example, *I now pronounce you husband and wife, You are fired, I name this ship Hallelujah.*

According to Searle (1975), the speech act is an utterance (action) intended to have an effect on the listener. He defines language use as the performance of a specific action or as doing something through words such as requesting, apologizing, complimenting, complaining, warning, refusing, or promising. Within the above classification, the speech act of apologizing belongs to the classification of *Expressives* (Searle, 1969).

Definition of apology

The word apology is a derivative of the Greek legal term *apologia*. Within the Greek legal system, to deliver an *apologia* meant making a formal speech or giving an explanation to reply and rebut the charges (Tavuchis, 1991). An apology is a speech act, a form of oral communication from the apologizer to the recipient designed to carry out several specific simultaneous and moral functions (Tavuchis, 1991; Govier & Verwoerd, 2002). The definition of an apology has been discussed by Goffman (1971); Fraser (1981); Olshtain (1989); and Holmes (1990):

An apology is a gesture through which an individual splits himself into two parts, the part that is guilty of an offense and the part that dissociates itself from the delict [i.e., offense] and affirms a belief in the offended rule (Goffman, 1971, p. 113).

For Fraser (1981), “to apologize is to do two things: taking responsibility for an offensive act, and express regret for the offense committed, though not necessarily for the act itself” (p. 262). Influenced by Fraser’s work, Olshtain (1989) further defined an apology “as a speech act which is intended to provide support for the H (hearer) [i.e., listener] who was actually or potentially malaffected by violation X” (p. 56). Holmes

(1990) proposed another definition based on Brown and Levinson's politeness theory (1987):

An apology is a speech act addressed to B's face-needs and intended to remedy an offense for which A takes responsibility, and thus to restore equilibrium between A and B (where A is the apologizer, and B is the person offended) (p. 159).

Goffman's description of an apology focuses largely upon the wrongdoer's self-perception or relationship to the person offended, whereas Olshtain, Fraser, and Holmes concentrate on the benefit to the recipient. A conception of an apology focused on the recipient is that an apologizer strives to console or comfort the person offended.

Apology strategies

Olshtain and Cohen (1983) proposed the apology strategies consisting of five main strategies with sub-strategies. The five main strategies are:

1. An expression of Apology

E.g., *I apologize, I am sorry.*

2. An explanation or account of the situation

E.g., *The traffic was terrible, the bus was late.*

3. An acknowledgement of responsibility

E.g., *It is my mistake, I did not mean to.*

4. An offer of repair

E.g., *I will pay for the damage.*

5. A promise of forbearance

E.g., *This will not happen again.*

Other studies (Goei, Robert, Meyer, & Carlyle, 2007; Haris, Grainger, & Mullany, 2006; Meier, 1998) added four more features to the components of an apology and then delineated the features of taxonomies of an apology.

6. Appealing for forgiveness

E.g., Please forgive me.

7. Expressing remorse

E.g., I feel terrible about this.

8. Denying of intent

E.g., I never meant to upset you.

9. Expressing repentance

E.g., I am such an idiot.

Overall, nine components were identified as the main features of an apology in previous studies. Surprisingly, although non-verbal apology strategies are a significant consideration in examining the speech act of apologizing, non-verbal apology strategies were not included in either Olshtain and Cohen (1983) or other studies' categories of apology strategies. Consequently, a need exists to investigate the role of non-verbal cues while apologizing.

Research on the speech act of apology

The speech act of apologizing not only depends on its content by use of particular words, but also the way it is presented. Research on the act of apologizing has generated more research in the past four decades from a variety of disciplines such as

speech act theory, pragmatics, sociolinguistics, social psychology, and social exchange theory (Blanchard & McBride, 2003; Brown & Levinson, 1987; Goffman, 1971; Govier & Verwoerd, 2002; Holmes, 1990; Lazare, 2004; Olshtain & Cohen, 1983; Scher & Darley, 1997; Searle, 1969; Tannen, 2001).

Research on apology by speech act theorists analyzes apology performance by focusing on its function. Searle (1969) defines an apology as a speech act used to express one's regret for what was done. According to Searle, regret is the primary information intended to be conveyed by the speech act of apologizing. Thus, an apology without an expression of regret does not decrease the negative feelings of the receiver. Goffman (1971) followed similar approach but regarded the act of an apology as a process of remedial exchanges in which an offender distinguishes the bad self, who needs to apologize for a particular event, from the good self. In other words, the apologizer splits him/herself into two parts while attempting to recover the lost credibility by the bad self. For him, the speech act of apologizing is a remedial interchange that aims to improve the impaired image of the sender. As a result, the apologizer can reduce his/her feelings of guilt through the confession of wrongs.

In a similar vein, some scholars understand an apology as the moral act of respect conveying the expression of sorrow or regret to the offended (Govier & Verwoerd, 2002; Thompson, 2008; Scher & Darley, 1997). An apology is the process of signaling through which the offender announces that the offended person's pain was caused by the sender's carelessness. In other words, the offender is admitting that he/she did not treat the offended with proper respect. Therefore, avoiding issuing an apology can be

regarded as leaving a serious wrong unaddressed while attempting to characterize the offended as unworthy of moral respect (Verdeja, 2010). Besides, if an apology excludes the expression of heartfelt remorse and respectfulness, it may weaken the purpose of an apology aimed to regain moral integrity of both the offender and the offended.

According to the interpretation of social psychologists such as Blanchard and McBride (2003) and Lazare (2004), an apology is the speech act that involves a complicated psychological tension between the sender and the receiver. In his book, *On Apology*, Lazare (2004) takes a psychological approach to explaining apologies by referring to emotions like shame, guilt, and humiliation. According to Lazare, an apology involves the exchange of shame and power between the issuer and the receiver. By apologizing, the issuer is willingly taking the shame of his/her offense and giving the receiver the power to forgive. Consequently, the act of an apology is in the dynamics of uncertain psychological process for both the offender and the offended. When people prepare for issuing an apology, they need to focus on the emotional setting of an apology (Blanchard & McBride, 2003). To maximize the benefits of apologizing, people need to pay attention to understanding it in the context of psychological processes for forgiveness.

The literature on interpersonal apologies and forgiveness conducted by social psychologists and social exchange theorists argues that apologies are prerequisite for forgiveness in the sense that they can improve thoughts and feelings about the offender (Amstutz; 2005; Tavuchis, 1991; Wohl, Kuiken, & Noels, 2006). Forgiveness theorists posit that apologizing involves an emotional change not just in the offender, but also the

offended. Forgiveness is the process of granting pardon for an offense by ceasing to feel resentment, humiliation, embarrassment, indignation, or anger. By offering an apology, an offender tries to deescalate a conflict and create a change (i.e., more forgiveness and less anger) in the offended. Before the practice of forgiveness, a forgiver struggles because it involves the painful decisions: putting behind the harm, overcoming negative feelings, and letting go of those feelings.

The ability of an apologizer to choose how to treat these negative feelings is a significant factor in bringing out forgiveness. The findings of many studies support that apologies decrease an offended's negative feelings about the offender, restore a sense of equity in the relationship, and rebuild trust that was lost as a result of the harm (Coombs & Holladay, 2008; Govier & Verwoerd, 2002; Kellerman, 2006). What an offender tries to accomplish by the act of forgiveness is to repair the relationship with the offender who did something wrong to the offended. Even though forgiveness is a moral option for the offended, it provides both the offender and the offended with a basis for the process of negotiation and reconciliation (Amstutz, 2005; Bachman & Guerrero, 2006; Govier & Verwoerd, 2002; Thompson, 2008; Wohl et al., 2006). The primary purpose of apologies is to promote the desire for having harmonious relationships between the offender and the offended.

Another purpose of apologies suggested by the politeness theory is to recover the offender's ruined positive self-image damaged by the wrongdoing to the offended. Brown and Levinson (1987) propose the term "face threatening acts" in order to describe a speaker's communicative acts that threaten a listener's self-esteem (p. 62). According

to their work, issuing an apology is a particular expression of politeness recovering face threatening consequences. While putting the emphasis on recovering the offender's ruined positive self-image, Brown and Levinson (1987) suggest two terms, namely, "positive face" and "negative face" in order to make a distinction between an individual's concern for acceptance by others (i.e., positive face) and that for autonomy (i.e., negative face) (p. 62). An individual's positive face is maintained when his/her identity is respected by others; whereas, it is threatened when the person's identity is rejected, resented, or criticized. A person's negative face is supported when the person is treated as free from constraints by others or threatened when the person is obligated by others. Three social variables such as social distance, social power, and imposition are involved in changing the weight of face threat (Brown & Levinson, 1987). The findings of Brown and Levinson (1987) demonstrate that apologies are more elaborate by consisting of more apology strategies when social distance is greater.

Issuing an apology is an attempt to redress a face threatening act by indicating that the apologizer has damaged the listener's positive or negative face. The apologizer needs to adjust his/her face goals depending on situational factors, such as the level of taking responsibility, the seriousness of the consequences, and the closeness of the relationship, that have influenced the seriousness of the offense between the offender and the offended person (Han & Cai, 2010; Scher & Darley, 1997). For instance, an apologizer needs to decide how to deliver an apology (i.e., a face-to-face apology or a written apology) by considering the severity of offense. According to Engel (2001), a face-to-face apology is usually more helpful than a written apology in ascertaining the

apologizer's sincerity. However, a written apology can be better than a face-to-face apology in not making the receiver feel unpleasant. For instance, if the offended person was the victim of a violent crime, he/she would feel threatened or afraid to meet the offender.

Sociolinguistic studies (Holmes, 1990; Tannen, 2001) influenced by Brown and Levinson's politeness theory (1987) focus on discovering situational factors such as social distance, social power, and gender in relation to the apology speech act. Holmes (1990) examined how situational factors affect the degree of complexity and length of apologies that were used by people in New Zealand. However, the results of this study were not consistent with what was expected in Brown and Levinson in that apologies were found to be the longest and the most elaborate between friends. According to Holmes, women apologize more than men. Tannen (2001) noted that not issuing an apology when needed causes a conflict in communication between a husband and a wife since husbands tend to avoid apologies in family talk. The findings of Holmes (1990) and Tannen (2001) indicated that the identified situational factors by the offended have an impact on deciding whether he/she will accept or reject an apology. In order to maximize the effects of an apology, an apologizer needs to consider situational factors while apologizing.

Gender and apologies

Gender and language are interrelated. Previous research on language and gender indicates that women pursue connections with others; whereas, men attempt to assert their independence (Tannen, 1994; Wood, 2000). According to Tannen (1994), men and

women “grow up in what are essentially different cultures,” thus the conversation between men and women should be regarded as “cross-cultural communication” (p.18). In a similar vein, Wood (2000) maintains that women and men are “typically socialized in discrete speech communities” (p.207). In sum, research on gender differences regarding communicative styles suggests that a talk between a woman and a man should be considered as cross-cultural communication. Women and men belong to different communicative cultures in the use of language (Holmes 1995).

Previous research on gender and language indicates that men and women differ in the use of apologies (Bataineh & Bataineh, 2005; Baker & Bower, 1997; Holmes, 1995; Tannen, 1994). Tannen (1994) analyzed workplace conversations that occurred among men in the United States. Based on her data, she suggests that women are more willing to apologize than men. In her book, Holmes (1995) proposes that the speech act of apologizing reflects gender specific functions between men and women in New Zealand. According to her, women regard the speech act of apologizing as a positive behavior that expresses their care for others; whereas, men consider it as a negative behavior that admits their “weakness, inadequacy or failure” (Holmes, 1995, p. 175). Bate and Bowker (1997) also suggest that “caring” is the attribute that makes women different from men in the speech act of apologizing.

Bataineh and Bataineh(2005) investigated gender differences in the use of apology strategies. They developed a questionnaire including ten apologetic situations based on Sugimoto’s (1997). The participants were 240 male and 265 female students in the United States. The findings indicate that female students used more statements of

remorse strategy than male students. Both male and female students were similar in the use of four strategies (i.e., accounts, reparation, compensation, and self-castigation) as their primary apology strategies, but female students used them more frequently than male students. Based on their findings, the authors suggest that female students are more likely to apologize than male students. This result is consistent with Tannen (1994)'s finding: women apologize more often than men.

Cultural influences

Previous research proposes that cultural differences are important factors that influence individuals' interpretations regarding speech acts (Han & Cai, 2010; Park & Guan, 2009). Culture gives individuals a sense of how they should behave and of what they should be doing.

Collectivism and individualism are socio psychological terms identifying individuals according to the manner in which whether they prioritize the goals of the group or those of individuals. For instance, individuals from a collectivistic society place a great value on fitting into the group, behaving in ways that are in line with social norms. Thus, they seek to group solidarity. Individuals from collectivistic countries such as China, Japan, and Korea are bounded through strong personal and protective ties based on loyalty to the group during one's lifetime (Hofstede, 1980). Thus, the ties between individuals are very strong, and the family is given much more weight. Researchers found that typical values of collectivism are collective achievement and responsibility such as family's good name and status, harmony, cooperation, respect, loyalty, and modesty (Hofstede, 1980, Triandis, Brislin, & Hui, 1988). Members of

collectivistic cultures emphasize establishing harmonious relationships among individuals by fitting in group's values and including others in one's self-concept (Markus & Kitayama, 1991).

On the other hand, individuals from individualistic countries such as France, Canada, and the United States are expected to look out for themselves. In an individualist culture, typical values are personal time, freedom, and challenge (Hofstede, 1980). Individuals from these societies tend to form relationships with larger numbers of people, but the ties between individuals are very weak (Hofstede, 1980). Members of individualistic societies tend to reinforce individual achievement and rights (Hofstede, 1980; Triandis et al., 1988). In both the Hofstede (1980) and Oyserman, Coon, and Kemmelmeier (2002) studies, China and Japan got lower scores on individualism and higher scores on collectivism than did the U.S. As a result, China and Japan are considered as collectivist cultures while the U.S. is considered as an individualist culture.

Cross-cultural apology researchers discussed the impact of cultural dimensions as important factors that can lead to different apology realization patterns among Chinese, Japanese, and Americans (Barnlund & Yoshioka, 1990; Eslami, 2004; Han & Cai, 2010; Lee, Park, Imai, & Dolan, 2012; Maddux et al., 2011; Park & Guan, 2006, 2009; Sugimoto, 1997).

In the following sections, previous research on cross-cultural comparison of the use of apology strategies by Chinese, Japanese, and Americans will be examined. Although participants of this study are Chinese and American students for both Study 1

and 2, cross-cultural apology studies conducted in the U.S. and Japan will also be reviewed. The reason for including cross-cultural apology studies between Americans and Japanese is to recognize cultural factors that have an impact on the two CEOs' apologies used in this study.

Cross-cultural apology studies: Chinese and Americans

Researchers have found that cultural differences exist between Chinese and Americans regarding the speech act of apologizing (Han & Cai, 2010; Park & Guan, 2006, 2009). These studies show that there are cultural differences in the two speech communities in regards to how apologies are used and evaluated. Park and Guan (2006) conducted a survey to examine cultural differences between Americans and Chinese in terms of the effect of culture on the relationship between an individual's face concerns and intention to apologize. They developed a questionnaire including scenarios varied in relationship types and situation types. Data were collected from 183 American students in the Mid-western United States and 134 Chinese students in the Northeast of China. They found that compared to Chinese students, American students showed stronger intention to apologize as they threatened an individual's autonomy (i.e., desire of protecting his/her freedom of action and imposition). In contrast, compared to American students, Chinese students showed stronger intention to apologize as they threatened an individual's positive self-image (i.e., concern for acceptance by others). This result is consistent with the findings of Ting-Toomey (1988): the people of collectivist cultures, compared to those of individualistic cultures, are more likely to show concern for protecting other's positive face than their own. Overall, Park and Guan (2006) offered a

discerning analysis of the deep connections between cultural dimensions and face concerns related to the speech act of apologizing.

In another research, Park and Guan (2009) studied Chinese and American students' cultural differences in terms of the verbal and non-verbal strategies of apologizing. Based on the findings, the authors suggest that Chinese travelers in the U.S. when stepping on an American's foot needs to state their unintentionality during apologizing. They advise that Americans who are about to apologize to a Chinese friend need to modify apology strategies than they apologize to a Chinese stranger. Another interesting finding was that Chinese students generated more non-verbal cues than did American students in order to convey an intention for apologizing. This study seems to be the only research considering non-verbal strategies while apologizing. These strategies include "speaking in a sincere tone, smiling, nodding head, gesturing, patting shoulder, combination, and no non-verbal reply" (p. 79). The authors pointed out, a limitation of this study was that they did not measure participants' perceptions of the effectiveness of each verbal or non-verbal apology strategy. Thus, the authors could not explain why Chinese or American students preferred to choose certain apology strategies.

Park and Guan (2009) found that compared to American students, Chinese students tended to "have higher reliance on non-verbal cues" to convey sincerity and state their unintentionality (p. 76). This result indicated that the weight put on the non-verbal aspect of communication while apologizing among Chinese is higher than that of Americans. Further research accessing individuals' perceptions regarding "how

necessary and effective each apology strategy or a combination of strategies” can shed light on the causes of cultural differences between Chinese and Americans in the choice of verbal and non-verbal apology strategies (p. 84).

Similarly, to understand cultural differences in the usage of apology strategies between Chinese and Americans, Han and Cai (2010) investigated how three situational factors (i.e., offender responsibility, offense severity, and relationship) are related to an apologizer’s concerns for his/her image and that of the offended person when apologizing. They administered two questionnaires produced in Chinese and English, including eight scenarios, to 116 American students in the Eastern United States and 118 Chinese students in the Southwest of China. Their findings indicate that culture is an important moderator influencing participants’ concerns for protecting their image or others according to the perceived degree of responsibility, severity, and the closeness of relationships. Chinese showed high level of concerns for themselves as well as the offended person’s image across different relationship types or different levels of responsibility. In contrast, Americans showed different levels of concerns for themselves as well as others when apologizing according to situational factors (i.e., the offender responsibility and the seriousness of the consequences) and relational cues (i.e., the closeness of the relationship). For instance, Americans showed higher concerns for the offended person’s negative face when the offended person was a close friend or when responsibility was high (Han & Cai, 2010).

The research findings by Park and Guan (2006, 2009) and Han and Cai (2010) demonstrate that there is a significant relationship between culture and individuals’

perceptions of the need to apologize and concerns for positive or negative face aspects of apologizing.

Cross-cultural apology studies: Japanese and Americans

Cultural differences on the use and appropriateness of apologies between Japanese and Americans are investigated by a number of researchers (e.g., Barnlund & Yoshioka, 1990; Lee et al., 2012; Maddux et al., 2011; Sugimoto, 1997).

Barnlund and Yoshioka (1990) conducted a questionnaire study including 12 critical incidents drawn from interviews with 40 Japanese and American university students. The authors asked the interviewees to describe a recent incident in which someone had apologized to them and one in which they had apologized to someone else. Then they developed their questionnaire based on the interview data. The questionnaires were administered to 120 Japanese in Japan and 120 Americans in the United States. The results revealed that the Japanese seemed to prefer apologizing directly without explaining their actions. Although the Americans also seemed to prefer apologizing directly, they seemed to favor explanations as a form of apology in order to justify their acts. The promise of compensation was one of the frequent strategies used by Japanese. This preference was explained by the Japanese's collective concerns with restoring balance and social harmony for attending to others' needs, which seemed to supersede a desire to protect autonomy, self-esteem, and self-determination. The authors suggest that for the collectivistic Japanese, the group seems to take priority over the individual.

In another research, Sugimoto (1997) compared the apology styles of 200 American and 181 Japanese college students who responded to an open-ended

questionnaire on situations warranting an apology. Students completed one of three forms of a questionnaire, each containing 4 situations. The findings of the study showed that regarding the use of statement of remorse strategy, in order to magnify their apology message, Japanese repeated apology words by saying “sorry, sorry, I am very sorry”; whereas, Americans intensified their apology by saying “I’m terribly sorry” (p.360). Another finding was that Japanese students were more likely to apologize than American students. Regarding the use of accounts strategy, Japanese explicitly suggested the lack of intention for the offense; whereas, Americans implicitly stated it. The author proposes that the symbolic meaning of apologizing verbally in Japan is greater than in the U.S.

According to Sugimoto, in Japan, having the offender verbally apologize is important because it can be satisfying actual remediation. Consequently, the symbolic meaning of apologizing verbally in Japan is greater than in the U.S. An offer of compensation for the offense was the secondary strategy preferred by the Japanese students, whereas that of American students was an explanation for the offense. Sugimoto proposes that these differences may reflect cultural differences of the magnitude of offense in different situations. In this sense, being late could be perceived as more severe in Japan, “where tourists depend on the rigid schedule of public transportation” than in the U.S., “where spring break trips typically involve driving and thus the loss of 1 hour can be recovered more easily” (Sugimoto, 1997, p. 362).

Similar to Sugimoto (1997), Lee et al. (2012) also investigated cultural differences between Japanese and Americans in the use of apologies and thanks in favor-asking e-mail messages. They conducted three studies. Three questionnaires were

produced in both English and Japanese. Participants in the study completed the questionnaires in their first languages. In Study 1, 78 American university students and 74 Japanese university students were asked to compose a favor-asking email message for a given situation. The results of Study 1 indicated that Japanese prefer apologies over thanks. In contrast, Americans seemed to prefer thanks over apologies.

Based on their findings of the data, Lee et al. (2012) suggest that Japanese speakers seem to have a tendency to consider the listener before they make a request. For example, Japanese speaker's typical request had begun, "I am sorry to ask, but would you let me borrow your pencil?" In contrast, American speaker's typical request had begun, "Would you let me borrow your pencil? Thank you." Japanese speakers follow collectivistic culture so they focus on minimizing the negative face of the receiver; whereas, American speakers are more individualistic so they focus on the speakers rather than the receiver. The authors suggest that cultural dimensions can be useful for the explanation of the difference between the Japanese speaker and the American speaker.

Participants in Study 2 (322 Americans, 312 Japanese) and in Study 3 (200 Americans, 217 Japanese) filled out one of four versions of a questionnaire designed to assess their perceptions of face threats associated with favor asking. The findings of Study 2 and 3 revealed that Japanese repeated their apologies to reduce the perceptions of face threats; whereas, Americans repeated their thanks. Lee et al. (2012) reported that although repeated apologies reduced various face threats among Japanese, repeated thanks seemed not to reduce the face threats associated with favor-asking for each

culture. Japanese seemed to consider a message with repeated apologies as reducing more face threats while Americans seemed not to think a message with repeated thanks reduces face threats. The authors suggest that if Americans prefer to use “an apology” followed by “thank you” instead of including only “thank you” when asking a favor of Japanese, they may be more attuned to the cultural norms of Japan. The findings of this study regarding cultural preferences in the usage of apologies and thanks between Japanese and Americans indicate that people from diverse cultures may favor different speech acts for various reasons.

Maddux et al.’s (2011) study also found that Japanese and Americans have different cultural norms for the speech act of apologizing. They suggest that culture is a significant factor associated with the effectiveness of apologizing. Maddux et al. (2011) employed cultural dimensions as an explanation for why the meaning and function of apologizing vary in the U.S. and Japan. According to them, apologizing in Japan is “to maintain social order”; whereas, apologizing in the U.S. is “to establish who is at fault” (p. 411). By noticing cultural differences in the meaning and function of apologizing between two cultures, they pointed out that Americans may interpret Toyota vehicles, CEO Akio Toyoda’s apology in the United States Congress as “a response to a competency violation,” or “an integrity violation” and they “may not forgive Toyota readily” (p. 420). In contrast, Japanese may regard the apology as a socially normative way that is “situationally appropriate” by considering the offense “as more correctable than Americans” (p. 420). According to Maddux et al., Japanese social media are occasionally “more critical” to the observed non-verbal apology cues, rather than “the

content of the apology itself” (p. 420). For Japanese, the gesture of “90-degree bow[ing]” during apology plays a significant role in conveying the sincerity of apologizing (Maddux et al., 2011, p. 420). The findings of this study have made important contributions to cross-cultural apology studies by showing that Japanese and Americans have different perceptions of the meaning and function of apologizing as well as expectations for conveying the sincerity of apologizing through non-verbal cues.

Research findings conducted by Barnlund and Yoshioka (1990), Sugimoto (1997), Maddux et al. (2011), and Lee et al. (2012) demonstrate that cultural differences exist between Japanese and Americans regarding their preferred verbal and non-verbal apology strategies.

As discussed above, cross-cultural comparative research on the speech act of apologizing by Chinese, Japanese, and Americans demonstrate how culture has an impact on individuals’ perceptions of the need for apologizing and choices of apology strategies. To sum up, the following conclusions can be made: cultural differences cause individuals to have different valuations of the meaning and function of apologizing (e.g., Barnlund & Yoshioka, 1990; Maddux et al., 2011), the frequency of using apology words (e.g., Lee et al., 2012; Sugimoto, 1997), the effect of situational factors in apologizing (e.g., Han & Cai, 2010; Park & Guan, 2006), and the role of non-verbal apology cues (e.g., Maddux et al., 2011; Park & Guan, 2009).

Non-verbal communication

Culture is the most important factor that controls individuals’ perceptions of non-verbal expressions in communication (Matsumoto, 1989). Research on intercultural

communication has shown that cultural differences exist in non-verbal communication (Elfenbein & Ambady, 2002; Ekman, 2003; Fernández, Carrera, Sánchez, Paez, & Candia, 2000; Hofstede, 1991). The findings of Fernández et. al. (2000) showed that individuals from collectivistic countries prefer to use silence strategically in “a habitual and automatic manner” in order to indicate social distance while communicating (p. 85). This result provides supportive evidence for the previous finding of Hofstede (1991): Keeping silent is one way to convey appropriate respect to higher status people in collectivistic countries.

Recognizing cultural differences in non-verbal communication is difficult because certain aspects of usage, values, and beliefs regarding non-verbal behavior can be shared among interlocutors who are in the same culture. Elfenbein and Ambady (2002) conducted a meta-analysis in order to investigate the evidence for the universality and cultural specificity of emotion recognition across cultures. They found that individuals from “the same national, ethnic, or regional group” share cultural norms for decoding or judging the appropriateness of non-verbal cues (p. 203). Non-verbal cues are “used consistently with social and cultural usages and cultural expectations” that individuals “adhere to” (Bitti & Garotti, 2011, p. 94). In this sense, scholars maintain that interlocutors from different cultures may misjudge each other’s expressed non-verbal cues (Matsumoto, 1989; Mesquita & Frijda, 1992; Scherer, Banse, & Wallbott, 2001).

Non-verbal communication and eye contact

The act of looking directly into another's eyes is regarded as one of the meaningful non-verbal cues conveying messages for both the speaker and the listener in interpersonal interaction. Eye contact differs from gazing in that eye contact occurs when both individuals look into one another's eyes. On the other hand, gazing occurs anytime one individual looks at another. Eye contact performs various communication functions (Anderson, 2008; Adams & Kleck, 2003; Kendon, 1967). For instance, the speaker uses the presence of eye contact in sensing whether the listener is interested in and respects what the speaker says (Anderson, 2008). Thus, the lack of eye contact with the speaker can be interpreted as a sign that the listener is either not interested in or does not respect. Eye contact is part of the process of indicating that the listener comprehends what the speaker says (Adams & Kleck, 2003).

Eye contact is a culturally-influenced, non-verbal communication behavior (Johannasen, 2010; Samovar, Portar, & McDaniel, 2010). Beebe (1974) found that an increase in the amount of eye contact generated by the speaker increased the speaker's credibility. In an American culture, eye contact is considered as a positive value, indicating interest, affection, hospitality, or attraction (Johannasen, 2010). Statistics indicate that when White Americans listen to a speaker, they make eye contact with the speaker about 80 % of the time; whereas, as they speak to others they make infrequent eye contact about 50 % of the time (Sue, 1990). Consequently, conversing without eye contact is perceived as rude, disinterested, inattentive, shy, and/or deceptive (Sue, 1981).

In contrast, in some cultures avoiding eye contact is interpreted as a polite trait that recognizes authority. For instance, some Native Americans teach children to show adults their respect by avoiding eye contact (Samovar et al., 2010). Similarly, in Asian cultures, continuous eye contact can be considered very impolite because it directly challenges authority (Johannasen, 2010). In China, direct eye contact is not common, especially when walking in public places (Axtell, 1998). Japanese and Korean parents teach their children to avoid direct eye contact. For them, direct eye contact is considered intimidating (Axtell, 1998).

In Korean culture, based on my personal background as a Korean, as Johannasen and Axtell pointed out, an apologizer's sustained eye contact to the offended person while apologizing can be interpreted as a rude behavior. It must be noted that Johannasen and Axtell generalized their statements without specific evidence. Moreover, surprisingly, there is little research yet that has examined cultural differences between Asians and Americans with respect to making eye contact. Thus, there is clearly a need for more cross-cultural research on the relationship between culture and the meaning of making eye contact.

Non-verbal communication and vocal cues

Human voice provides instant emotional communication between people (Anderson, 2008; Justin & Laukka, 2003). Vocal cues are one of the important elements that enable individuals to communicate with one another. An individual's speech is uninterpretable without vocal cues. Research shows that non-verbal elements of the voice such as pitch, volume, and tempo variation play an important role in interpersonal

immediacy (Beebe, 1980; Ray & Floyd, 2006). Vocal cues provide the listener important additional information to the spoken message. Low pitch is often associated with a vocal power cue; whereas, high pitch is a sign of tension, submissiveness, or childish immaturity (Leary & Kowalski, 1995). According to Ketrow (1990), fast speech rates have more persuasive impact than slow rates. He suggested that an individual can maximize his/her credibility when speaking fluently and slightly faster with a moderately loud voice.

The use of vocal cues varies according to gender (Anderson, 2008; Lakoff, 1975; Hall, Coates, & LeBeau, 2005). According to Lakoff (1975), women tend to use more vocal variation and often end sentences in a rising pitch, implying a qualified answer or a lack of certainty. Hall et al. (2005) found that men are more likely to use louder voices because they associate one's louder voice with power. Similarly, Anderson (2008) found that many men speak in low-pitched or harsh voices as they exaggerate their masculinity, and many women use high-pitched, breathy voices as they emphasize their femininity. An individual's accuracy in identifying others' emotions through vocal expressions is more easily recognized within one's own culture than cross-culturally (Scherer, 2003).

The ability to correctly interpret vocal cues is an important communication skill that enables individuals to identify other people's emotion. Each culture ascribes different meanings to qualities of vocal cues (Anderson, 2008; Hall et al., 2005). Tone of voice varies from culture to culture. For instance, German voice patterns tend to be somewhat slower and more reflective than American voice patterns (Ness, 2000). This

result reminds us that when we communicate with someone from a different country or culture, we need to be aware that our tone of voice may mean something different than we intend.

Non-verbal communication and facial expressions

The ability to interpret emotional communications has a significant influence on how individuals perceive and interact with others. The ability to read emotions in facial expressions is a very necessary skill in order for children to develop successful relationships (Nowicki & Mitchell, 1998). Facial expressions allow individuals to easily understand the opinions and attitudes of others (Ekman, 2003). Researchers studying emotion recognition found that group membership has an influence on the decoding of emotion displays (Elfenbein & Ambady, 2002; Kirouac & Hess, 1999; Matsumoto & Ekman, 1989). Individuals are generally more accurate at judging emotions that are expressed by members of their own cultural group rather than by members of a different cultural group. Matsumoto and Ekman's (1989) study showed cultural differences in emotion expression and emotion recognition between Japanese and Americans. The findings indicated that Americans rated facial expressions more intensely than Japanese. Americans believed that there was a difference between what was shown and what was felt; whereas, Japanese indicated that it would be impolite to assume that a person was not being honest in displaying facial expressions. Displays of emotion, such as fear, anger, and exuberance are rare among Japanese because they are taught to suppress those feelings, especially in public (Axtell, 1998).

People from certain cultures are encouraged to express emotion nonverbally, especially in their faces and voices. Smiling has functions such as a display of submission or appeasement, a sign of friendliness and harmlessness (Anderson, 2008). Different levels of fear, such as alarm, anxiety, and dread are more likely to reflect cultural differences. Research shows that facial expressions more clearly communicate power and status (Carney, Hall, & LeBeau, 2005; Hall et al., 2005). Powerful people tend to display more frequent and intense facial expressions (Carney et al., 2005).

Non-verbal communication and the choice of clothing

The role of clothing in non-verbal communication is emphasized in books and articles written to guide the reader on how to improve opportunities for finding jobs. Damhorst and Reed (1986) found that clothing color and features were important factors that influenced the interviewer's evaluation of the job applicants. Clothing features and colors are important to make an impact on impressions. Researchers found that people's perceptions of others differ according to what is worn (Damhorst & Reed, 1986; Johnson, Schofield & Yurchisin, 2002; McCracken & Roth, 1989; O'Neal & Lapitsky, 1991). The findings of O'Neal and Lapitsky (1991) showed that what an advertiser wears has an impact on people's perceptions of the credibility of the message source as well as their intention to purchase the product.

An individual's choice of dress plays a significant role to communicate information about that individual. Clothing carries cultural meaning (i.e., a code) that can be shared among the members of social groups or communities (McCracken & Roth, 1989). Thus, without the knowledge about the code, an outsider is not able to understand

information that a wearer represents through clothing communication. The choice of clothing is an important means of non-verbal communication that can evoke different judgments and interpretations among interlocutors. In this regard, Johnson et al. (2002) maintain that individuals use clothing, type of suit, shoes, color, and fit of garments to make a good first impression.

Non-verbal communication and apologizing

Non-verbal cues such as tone of voice and facial expressions used by an apologizer have an impact on recipients' perceptions of the sincerity of an apology. The findings of Mesquita and Frijda (1992) and Scherer et al. (2001) showed that non-verbal cues such as tone of voice and rhythm have an impact on an individual's accuracy of emotion recognition. As stated by Lakoff (2001), in American culture an apologizer's breaking voice while apologizing plays a role in "signif[ing] appropriate shame"; whereas, the presence of smiling while apologizing is often identified by Americans as a "smirk," so it decreases the sincerity of an apology (p. 204).

The non-verbal cues used by an apologizer may reveal more than what is said. According to Edward T. Hall (1959), in American culture, 65% of a message is non-verbal and 35% is verbal. When the verbal message contradicts the non-verbal, people usually believe the non-verbal over the verbal (Hall, 1959). Thus, sending non-verbal cues that match up with verbal messages is important to communicate effectively with others. An apologizer needs to be aware that the non-verbal cues are vital forms of signaling the apologizer's thoughts and feelings.

The findings of previous research on non-verbal communication indicates that an individual, who apologizes cross-culturally, cannot garner the effectiveness of his/her act of speaking without recognizing stylistic differences across cultures in the use of non-verbal apology cues. In sum, an individual who is involved in a cross-cultural apology situation needs to acquire a cross-cultural knowledge regarding the function of non-verbal cues during apologizing.

Public apologies

Public apologies are public expression of remorse and accountability for personal or institutional wrongdoing. By identifying the number of people involved in the speech act of apologizing, Tavuchis (1991) suggested three types of public apologies: from “One to Many,” from the “Many to One,” and from “Many to Many” (p. 48). An example of public apology from the one to many is President Bill Clinton’s apology to the people of Rwanda about not intervening in the 1994 Rwandan genocide. An apology from a company to a customer due to the company’s product damage is an example of public apology from the many to one. From nation to nation is an example of public apology from many to many.

Another definition of public apologies was suggested by Lazare (2004). He defined public apologies as apologies that occurred between two persons in the presence of a broader audience with national or international press. Compared to Tavuchis, Lazare proposed only one type of a public apology: one person to many. Thus, in this study, I followed the definition of Tavuchis (1991) and defined a corporate apology as a public apology from a group to an individual or to many individuals.

Corporate apologies are one type of public apologies. But, they need to be distinguished from public apologies made by celebrities such as politicians, entertainers, athletes, etc. that are from an individual to the public. The main purpose of public apologies made by politicians, entertainers or athletes is to recover their image damaged by their personal wrongdoings such as sex scandals, bribery scandals, drug abuse, or alcohol addiction. Their audience is not directly involved in the consequence of the offense. They are bystanders instead of offended people. For them, the celebrities' apologies are just gossip. Through public apologies, they admit their faults, express their regrets for what they did, and promise that they will not do it again. As public figures who influence many people, especially impressionable young people, they apologize for the fact that they disappointed the public. Thus, the celebrities' apologies get less attention because the situation does not directly affect the lives of the public.

In contrast, corporate apologies are from a group to the offended people. Corporations apologize for the offense that caused harm to many individuals either financially, physically, or emotionally. Corporate apologies get more attention from mass media because there is a possibility that more people may be directly/indirectly involved in the offending situation as time goes by. Corporate apologies are addressed to the offended people as well as current customers and the public who worry about the consequence of the offense. In this regard, mass media pays attention to the content of an apology regarding how the corporation will take responsibility for the offense and recover their lost credibility. Compared to public apologies made by politicians, entertainers, and athletes, corporate apologies are discussed in a matter of public concern

rather than personal concern. Thus, mass media keeps an eye on what the corporation will do after the apology to protect the public from the future offense.

Public apologies with broadcast media enable an audience to see and hear vividly the verbal and non-verbal cues of apologizing. Thus, the audience can use an apologizer's intonation, gestures, appearance, and speed of delivery as criteria for evaluating the sincerity of apologizing. Surprisingly, little is known about how culture affects individuals' values and beliefs with respect to evaluating certain aspects of non-verbal cues used in a public apology. Therefore, a need exists to examine what kinds of non-verbal cues and verbal strategies have an impact on recipients' evaluations as they determine the sincerity of a public apology.

The identified recipients' criteria regarding the appropriate elements of verbal and non-verbal elements of public apologies from Study 1 and 2 will contribute to our understanding of how to make better strategic decisions as to what constitutes an effective public apology. As a result, corporate leaders will be better able to resolve conflicts, repair trust, and facilitate negotiations on a multinational level.

Research on corporate apologies

Corporations face a lot of potential crises such as management misconduct, workplace violence, and harmful products. A corporate apology is an official apology given by a representative of a corporation to the offended for injustices committed by the business officials or members. Research on public apologies suggests that a leader should publicly apologize because his/her apology can serve an important individual, institutional, intergroup, or moral purpose (Coombs, 2007; Hargie et al, 2010;

Kellerman, 2006; Mills, 2001; Wohl et al., 2011). When the leader apologizes publicly, his/her apology is always a high-risk move since he/she speaks on behalf of his/her members. For example, through the public apology, the leader aims to restore the legitimacy of a company or the integrity of an individual and to recover lost trust. Hence, the act of a corporate leader's apology can be personal as well as political.

The leader's public apology is an official performance in which every word and gesture is highly symbolic, meaningful, and vulnerable. It is carried out not only at the level of the individual but also at the level of the institution. Scholars divide the purpose of a corporate leader's apology into two types; one is the apology offered for physical injuries and the other one is for emotional injuries to individuals' feelings and for perceived violations of psychological space and boundaries (Coombs, 2007; Fineman & Gabriel, 2010; Lazare, 2004). Issuing a public apology means that the leader takes responsibility not only for his/her own behavior but also for that of his/her members. Before issuing a public apology, leaders need to decide if they should be the representative for the apology in handling the crisis.

The importance of corporate leaders as the representative for public apologies has been discussed. Kellerman (2006) suggests five specific situations in which a leader should apologize: (1) when it "serves an important purpose," (2) when the offense results in "serious consequence," (e.g., CEO Akio Toyoda's 2010 apology at the World Economic Forum in Davos related to acceleration problems in many of Toyota's vehicles) (3) when the leader is supposed to be the right person to take "responsibility for the offense," (e.g., former President Bill Clinton's 1998 apology) (4) when there is

no one else to “get the job done,” and (5) when “the cost of saying something is likely lower than the cost of staying silent” (p. 81).

If the top leader fails to restore the broken relationship after the crisis due to the improper handling of the apology, his/her apology can actually do more harm than good. In this sense, knowing how to manage an apology is very important because it contributes to solving the conflicts and reducing negative outcomes. The apologizer who speaks on behalf of the corporation needs to be aware that the apology addressing the issue may lead to negative consequences such as direct loss of position due to the mishandling of the apology (Coombs, 2007; Hargie et al., 2010; Kellerman, 2006).

Unwillingness to issue an apology

Reports suggest that business leaders may be resistant to apologize publicly, fearing that an apology shows weakness and threatens their authority (Tucker, Turner, Barling, Reid, & Elving, 2006). Scholars explain that their reasons can be either personal or institutional. One reason why corporate leaders are not willing to practice an apology is that they try to avoid damaging their images. Business leaders are highly visible; therefore, their public apologies are likely to be personally uncomfortable and professionally risky (Hargie et al., 2010; Kellerman, 2006; Mills, 2001). Public apologies are risky because they are weighed against not only the leaders' capabilities but also their moral integrity. As Mills (2001) argues, corporate leaders are aware that offering an apology and asking forgiveness can be a sign of weakness. In this respect, they consider issuing apologies as an admission of failure, error, or moral weakness. Therefore, leaders have a tendency to avoid issuing an apology.

Second, business leaders are afraid that the admission of a mistake will damage the organization for which they are responsible due to the possible threat of litigation (Kellerman, 2006). For instance, Raymon Gimartin, CEO of Merck from 1994 to 2005, refused to apologize for the company's selling of the painkiller Vioxx that was linked to 139,000 heart attacks or deaths (Kellerman, 2006). When he addressed this issue in public, he was defensive rather than apologetic. As a result, he failed to lessen the negative feelings toward himself and his company. Consequently, Gimartin led people to question his leadership ability for running businesses and produced greater negative evaluations of himself as the CEO. For the legal reasons, leaders may tend to blame others and to cover up their mistakes in order to avoid taking responsibility for their actions. In this regard, Brown (2004) argues that an apology motivated by an apologizer's self-interest is likely to seem insincere and hollow.

Negative publicity and trust

The use of social media such as blogs, websites, and Twitter can be used in enhancing corporations' positive publicity. However, it can be also utilized in decreasing their profits and damaging their reputation because social media can be used in promoting negative publicity toward the corporation and its products. Many research studies on corporate apologies have put an emphasis on the role of trust in soothing customers' anger after negative publicity (Ferrin, Cooper, Kim, & Dirks, 2007; Moorman, Zaltman, & Deshpande, 1992; Morgan & Hunt, 1994; Pulling, Netemeyer, & Biswas, 2006; Schoorman, Mayer, & Davis, 2007; Sirdeshmukh, Singh, & Sabol, 2002; Xie & Peng, 2009).

Trust is a willingness to rely on an exchange partner in whom one has confidence and the expectation held by the consumer that the service provider is dependable and can be relied on to deliver its promises (Moorman et al., 1992; Sirdeshmukh et al., 2002). Research on trust and its role in marketing identifies that once negative publicity about a corporation is widespread, multiple aspects of the corporation can be damaged in the marketplace (Coombs & Holladay, 2008; Lyon & Cameron, 2004; Morgan & Hunt, 1994; Pulling et al., 2006; Xie & Peng, 2009). Effectively repairing destroyed customer trust after harmful publicity is a central factor in decreasing negative publicity toward the corporation and repairing the relationship (Morgan & Hunt, 1994).

Existing research on corporate trust repair suggests that competence, benevolence, and integrity are the three elements determining costumers' interpersonal trust with a corporation (Kim, Ferrin, Cooper, & Dirks, 2004). Competence refers to the ability that can be developed when the corporation holds adequate leadership. Benevolence is connected to the degree of corporate concerns for customers' interests and the motivation for doing good things for them. Integrity refers to the adherence to moral and ethical principles. The findings of previous research support that consumer perceptions of corporate competence, benevolence, and integrity in responding to negative publicity play a significant role in determining the extent of consumer forgiveness (Chung & Berverland, 2006; Schoorman et al., 2007; Xie & Peng, 2009).

In order to reduce negative publicity, a corporation needs to focus on enhancing customers' positive judgment about a company's ability in handling a crisis, by offering enough information related to the cause and effect. The findings of studies by Kim et al.

(2004) and Ferrin et al. (2007) support that an apology has power to make customers' negative beliefs positive when a corporation effectively handles competence and integrity based trust violations. They reveal that an apologetic response rather than a denial or reticent response following negative publicity is very beneficial for a corporation in that it improves customers' perceptions of corporate trustworthiness as well as minimizes subsequent harmful consequences. The results of the experimental study by Xie and Pang (2009) confirm that trustworthiness factors such as competence, integrity, and benevolence are necessary for gaining customer forgiveness.

Time and apology

Regarding advice on the speech act of apologizing, some scholars emphasize the role of timing as one of the significant elements that distinguishes a good apology from a poor one. Experimental research examines how the timeliness of an apology has an impact on the outcome of the apology (Frantze & Bennigson, 2005; Hargie, et al., 2010; Shuman, 2000). They find that people have a tendency to disregard apologies that are too short or too late. Related to the question "What is the proper timing for an apology?" researchers advise against conducting extremely early or extremely late apologies since they are likely to be ineffective.

An improperly timed apology can be perceived as insincere. Thus, it can arouse suspicion in the mind of the offended. For this reason, many scholars agree that an apology should be the result of introspection on the part of the offender because if it comes too early or spontaneously and too late, it can be ineffective since it is likely to be viewed as shallow and insincere (Blanchard & McBride, 2003; Brown, 2004; Fineman

& Gabriel, 2010; Frantze & Bennisson, 2005; Kellerman, 2006; Shuman, 2010). The process of introspection should precede an apology because it will enable the offender to reflect upon the harm done and prepare a sincere apology. Time and introspection are the necessary elements for issuing an effective apology.

Compensation

The practice of compensation helps the issuer to satisfy the requirements of giving a genuine apology. An apology without promises of amends, such as money or goods given for the loss, damage, injury, or insult, can seem like insincere words (Amstutz, 2005; Wohl et al., 2011). The apology speech act without the offer of compensation may be perceived to be insincere, and it can exacerbate the receiver's negative reactions because of failing to heal the wound of a past harm. However, the presence of compensation improves the perceptions of the sender's identity as well as increases the perceptions of the apology's appropriateness (Xie & Peng, 2009). Offering compensation is directly connected to the remedial function of an apology. The act of offering compensation indicates that the sender tries to make the situation right. In this sense, as Scher and Darley (1997) suggest, it has a symbolic function serving as a form of self-punishment of the guilty self.

The apology with the promise of compensation reinforces the sincerity of the apology since it strengthens the desire of reconciliation while repairing the damaged trust (Greiff, 2008). The public expression of compensation is the essential characteristic of a genuine apology showing the issuer's effort to reestablish relations of equity and respect with the receiver. In sum, an apology coupled with compensation can be a

powerful facilitator for the reconciliation, rather than an apology on its own. It ameliorates the negative feelings of the offended by increasing the percentage of being accepted by the offended. As part of the apology speech act set, offering compensation aims to remedy the broken social relationship that has been threatened by the apologizer.

Providing sufficient information

The acceptance of responsibility and expression of regrets are the components of an apology that changes customers' feelings, attitudes, and perceptions toward the corporation. Research on how leaders apologize effectively after the crisis reveals that a corporation cannot succeed in accomplishing a heartfelt apology without an explicit statement of taking responsibility and an expression of regret (Coombs, 2007; Hearit, 1994; Patal & Reinsch, 2003). The findings of experimental study conducted by Pace, Fedicuk, and Bostero (2010) reveal that the more a corporation explicitly accepts responsibility with a detailed explanation and expression of regret for the crisis, the less anger customers feel toward the corporation. An apology with perceptions of corporational responsibility and regrets leads a corporation to reduce reputation damage and gain customer forgiveness (Bachman & Guerrero, 2006; Chung & Berverland, 2006; Hearit, 1994; Pace et al., 2010). Thus, clarifying responsibility and expressing regret increase customers' positive perceptions of the corporation's reputation.

In contrast, a corporate apology that is short of detailed explanation and expression of regret on the crisis may result in more reputation damage by rapidly spreading negative publicity concerning the corporation over others (Hargie et al., 2010). Consequently, it will weaken customer satisfaction, purchase intention, and the

evaluation of the corporation (Pulling et al., 2006). The findings of these studies support the argument presented by Patel and Reinsch (2003) that issuing an apology does not necessarily lead to the changes of customer perceptions if a corporation offers a simple apology in order to avoid criticism that the company is responsible for the crisis. In this sense, the necessity of providing customers with the sufficient information and expression of regret is regarded as a crucial strategy, effectively aiding a corporation to recover customer trust (Moorman et al., 1992; Morgan & Hunt; 1994; Sirdeshmukh et al., 2002; Xie & Peng, 2009).

Despite the remarkable rise of corporate apologies in a global business context, what has not been questioned is the effectiveness of a corporate apology perceived by multicultural customers. The meaning of what an apology is and the function for which apologies are used may differ considerably depending on the cultural context. According to different cultural contexts, corporate apologies may be evaluated differently and causes more serious harm to corporations.

Conclusion

As the previous sections have shown, the literature review on pragmatics, speech act theory, and public apologies indicates that the speech act of apologizing is a prominent event that individuals face in daily interactions. As noticed in cross-cultural apology studies between Japanese, Chinese, and Americans, the lack of knowledge concerning cultural differences in apologizing may lead to cross-cultural misunderstanding among interlocutors. The previous studies on public apologies have identified the key elements of a heartfelt apology. However, there are relatively few

cross-cultural investigations regarding public apologies addressed to culturally diverse interlocutors in a global business context.

Despite the remarkable rise of public apologies within different countries, what has not been questioned is how public apologies are perceived by different cultural groups. By investigating culturally diverse individuals' perceptions regarding the use of verbal and non-verbal components of two public apologies, this study attempts to find apology strategies that will be helpful to maintain harmonious relationships among interlocutors who are from different cultures. Considering a growing promotion of business and trade affairs between China and America, this study focuses on examining Chinese and American participants' cultural perceptions regarding the verbal and non-verbal components of two public apologies. The findings will provide information that corporate leaders need to take into consideration to accomplish the speech act of public apologies effectively.

CHAPTER III

STUDY 1: THE NETFLIX 2011 APOLOGY

Overview

The aim of this study was to explore Chinese and American university students' perceptions of a public apology made by Reed Hastings, the CEO of Netflix. Data was collected through a survey questionnaire and two focus group interviews. The survey participants consisted of 82 Chinese and 99 Americans. Each focus group consisted of a mix of 3 males and 3 females. The findings indicated that participants evaluated the effectiveness of Hastings' apology based on their cultural perspectives regarding the key verbal and non-verbal elements of the apology. Both groups indicated that offering compensation is a significant verbal component of an apology because it shows an apologizer's willingness to take responsibility for the offense. However, each group had different cultural perspectives regarding non-verbal cues such as eye contact, choice of dress, facial expressions, body posture, and setting. Chinese emphasized the importance of a formal setting, professional dress, bowing posture, and serious and remorseful facial expressions. In contrast, Americans emphasized the importance of eye contact and body posture embodying attentiveness. In addition, setting and choice of dress may differ depending on the severity of the offense, the location of the apology, and the relationship between the apologizer and the offended person. Overall, the majority of participants from each group evaluated Hastings' apology as ineffective.

Introduction

The increasing use of social media platforms such as Twitter, Google+, and Facebook has changed the dynamics of communication between corporate leaders and individual customers. Social media has contributed to expanding the scope of corporate communication channels. A lot of corporations have been actively utilizing social media as communication tools to reach out to their current or potential customers who are ethnically and racially diverse. In order to successfully communicate in our modern globalized marketplace, business leaders need to keep in mind that they work within situations in which they meet multi-cultural and multi-lingual individuals.

Despite the remarkable increase of public apologies made by states, governments, international corporations, nations, and public figures, what has not been questioned is whether public apologies have the same meaning in all societies. The speech act of apologizing can be present in any culture. However, the meaning of an apology may differ considerably from its function depending on the cultural context (Barnlund & Yoshioka, 1990; Blum-Kulka et al., 1989; Meier, 1998; Garcia, 1989; Trosborg, 1987). Individuals from different cultures may apologize differently. Thus, cultural variations in the speech act of apologizing may lead to a cross-cultural misunderstanding among interlocutors (Sugimoto, 1997; Coulmas, 1981).

A substantial amount of literature exists regarding research on cross-cultural apologies (Barnlund & Yoshioka, 1990; Eslami, 2004; Han & Cai, 2010; Lee et al, 2012; Maddux et al., 2011; Park & Guan, 2009; Sugimoto, 1997) and public apologies (Coombs, 2007; Hargie et al., 2010; Kellerman, 2006; Mills, 2001; Wohl et al., 2011).

These studies have done much to conceptualize the definition of apologizing and key elements of a public apology. Their findings indicate that an individual who apologizes cross-culturally cannot guarantee the effectiveness of his/her speech act without recognizing stylistic differences across cultures in the use of public apologies.

According to different cultural contexts, issued public apologies may be evaluated differently and cause more serious harm to corporations. However, there are relatively few cross-cultural investigations regarding public apologies addressed to culturally diverse interlocutors in a global business context. By investigating the perceptions of culturally diverse individuals regarding the use of verbal and non-verbal components of a public apology, this study aimed to find apology strategies that would be helpful to maintain harmonious relationships among interlocutors who are from different cultures. Considering growing business and trade affairs between China and America, this research investigated cultural variations between Chinese and American students in appraising a corporate apology made by Reed Hastings, the CEO of Netflix.

Hastings sent an apology e-mail titled “An explanation and some reflections” to Netflix customers regarding the company’s recent policy changes that took place on July 12, 2011 and consumer reactions to those changes. At the same time, he posted the apology as a video on the Netflix blog/website. The policy changes were that Netflix would split into two different companies: one for DVD rentals by mail (called Qwikster) and one for streaming videos (called Netflix). Customers were very dissatisfied with the fact that they had to pay for two separate accounts, costing \$6 (60% rate price increase) more per month to keep both services. After changing the service, Netflix lost

approximately 800,000 of its 25 million Netflix customers over two months and the value of Netflix stock dropped 52% from \$304.79 (early 2011) to \$169.25 (September 15, 2011). The apology was issued more than two months later (September 19, 2011) after the policy changes had occurred. The following section examines previous research on cross-cultural pragmatics, the speech act of apology, cross-cultural apologies, public apologies, and non-verbal communication.

Literature review

Cross-cultural pragmatics systematically studies how an individual's speech acts (e.g., requests, apologies, and complaints) are expressed in different social contexts across various cultures and languages. Variations across languages and cultures can be understood "in terms of independently established different cultural values and cultural priorities" (Wierzbicka, 1991, p. 69).

Different languages and cultures have different ways of dealing with pragmatic issues as well as different ways in which people perform speech acts (Blum-Kulka, House, & Kasper, 1989). Thus, speakers from different languages and cultures may have different intentions by what they say, and they may also have different values for interpreting what they hear. When a speaker fails to convey or understand a pragmatic intention in another language and culture, the speaker or listener experiences cross-cultural pragmatic failure.

Cross-cultural pragmatics aims at accessing information "conventionally associated with particular linguistic structure in a culture" that will provide individuals with valuable insights into cultural differences in communication styles (Ogiermann,

2009, p. 18). Without knowing culture-specific patterns of using language, an individual communicating with people from other cultures may experience cross-cultural pragmatic failure. Cross-cultural pragmatics is concerned with how individuals carry out speech acts appropriately and effectively across cultures and aims to reduce pragmatic failures which can lead to negative judgment and stereotyping.

Research on the speech act of apology analyzes apology performance by focusing on its function. According to Searle (1969), an apology is a speech act used to express one's regret for what was done. According to Searle, an apology intends to convey regret. Thus, an apology without an expression of regret does not decrease the negative feelings of the receiver. Goffman (1971) followed a similar approach and regarded the act of an apology as a process of remedial exchanges in which an offender distinguishes the bad self, who needs to apologize for a particular event, from the good self. In other words, the apologizer splits him/herself into two parts while attempting to recover the lost credibility by the bad self. For him, the speech act of apologizing is a remedial interchange that aims to improve the impaired image of the sender. As a result, the apologizer can reduce his/her feelings of guilt through the confession of wrongs.

In a similar vein, some scholars understand an apology as the moral act of respect conveying the expression of sorrow or regret to the victim (Govier & Verwoerd, 2002; Scher & Darley, 1997; Thompson, 2008). An apology is the process of signaling through which the offender announces that the offended person's pain was caused by the offender's carelessness. The offender is admitting that he/she did not treat the offended person with proper respect. Thus, avoiding issuing an apology can be regarded as

leaving a serious wrong unaddressed while attempting to characterize the offended person as unworthy of moral respect (Verdeja, 2010). In addition, if an apology excludes the expression of heartfelt remorse and respectfulness, it may weaken the purpose of an apology aimed to regain moral integrity of the offender and the offended person.

According to socio psychologists such as Blanchard and McBride (2003) and Lazare (2004), an apology is the speech act that involves a complicated psychological tension between the sender and the receiver. An apology involves the exchange of shame and power between the issuer and the receiver (Lazare, 2004). By apologizing, the issuer is willingly taking the shame of his/her offense and giving the receiver the power to forgive. Consequently, the act of an apology is in the dynamics of uncertain psychological process for both the offender and the offended. To maximize the benefits of apologizing, people need to pay attention to understanding it in the context of psychological processes for forgiveness (Blanchard & McBride, 2003).

What constitutes an apology in terms of its component parts has been discussed by scholars (e.g., Goei et al., 2007; Haris et al., 2006; Meier, 1998; Olshtain & Cohen, 1983). According to them, an apologizer may emphasize different strategies according to the severity of the offense. Olshtain and Cohen (1983) proposed the apology strategies consisting of five main strategies: (1) an expression of Apology, (2) an explanation or account of the situation, (3) an acknowledgement of responsibility, (4) an offer of repair, and (5) promise of forbearance. Other scholars (e.g., Goei et al., 2007; Haris et al., 2006; Meier, 1998) added four more components to an apology speech act set: (6) appealing for forgiveness, (7) expressing remorse, (8) denying of intent, and (9) expressing

repentance. Overall, nine components are identified as the main features of an apology in previous studies. Hastings used three out of the nine apology strategies: an explanation or account of the situation, an expression of apology, and expressing remorse respectively.

Regarding advice on the speech act of apologizing, some scholars emphasize the role of timing as one of the significant elements that distinguishes a good apology from a poor one. Experimental research examines how the timeliness of an apology has an impact on the outcome of the apology (Frantze & Bennigson, 2005; Hargie et al., 2010). They find that people have a tendency to disregard apologies that are too short or too late. Related to the question “What is the proper timing for an apology?” researchers advise against conducting extremely early or extremely late apologies since they are likely to be ineffective.

Research on cross-cultural apology studies has shown that different cultural values can cause misunderstandings and even pragmatic failure in communication (Bergaman & Kasper, 1993; Meier, 1998; Garcia, 1989; Trosborg, 1987). These studies reported that cultures possessed different conditions concerning apologies and the rules of appropriateness. People from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds may have different perspectives on what constitutes an offense and also differ in their assessment of contextual factors like the relative status of the interlocutors. These differences may lead to diverse evaluations of apology strategies used in different contexts (Bergman & Kasper, 1993).

Culture gives individuals a sense of how they should behave and of what they should be doing. The impact of cultural dimensions as important factors that can lead to different apology realization patterns among different cultures (Barnlund & Yoshioka, 1990; Eslami, 2004; Han & Cai, 2010; Lee et al., 2012; Maddux et al., 2011; Park & Guan, 2009; Sugimoto, 1997). The following section examines cultural differences between Chinese and Americans in the use of apology strategies.

Cultural differences exist between Chinese and Americans regarding the speech act of apologizing (Han & Cai, 2010; Park & Guan, 2009). Park and Guan (2009) conducted a survey to examine cultural differences between Chinese and American students' perceptions in terms of the verbal and non-verbal strategies of apologizing. In the first study, the authors provided two apology scenarios to participants and then asked them to write their apologies to the scenarios. In their second study, the authors developed a survey questionnaire designed to ask participants to choose single or multiple verbal and non-verbal apology strategies. The findings of this study showed that overall, both groups mostly used a simple apology statement "I am sorry" for the given apology situation. They found that Chinese and Americans have different cultural perceptions of the need to apologize and concerns for positive or negative face aspects of apologizing. For example, Americans did not show significant differences in choosing apology strategies for a close friend or a stranger. In contrast, Chinese tended to use more elaborate strategies when they apologized to a stranger. In addition, they chose a sincere tone of voice when they apologized to a stranger than a close friend in order to convey an intention for apologizing.

In a similar vein, Han and Cai (2010) investigated how three situational factors (i.e., offender responsibility, offense severity, and relationship) are related to an apologizer's concern for his/her image and that of the offended person. They developed a questionnaire including eight apology scenarios that differed in the degree of offender responsibility, offense severity, and the relationship between parties. Data was collected from 116 Americans in the U.S. and 118 Chinese in China. There was a significant difference between them regarding concerns for protecting the images of apologizers and the offended according to the perceived situational factors. Chinese showed a high level of concern for themselves as well as the offended person's image across different relationship types and different levels of responsibility. For example, they showed a higher level of concern for the offended person when apologizing to a closer friend. In contrast, Americans showed a different level of concern for themselves as well as others according to situational factors.

Public apologies

Corporations face a lot of potential crisis such as management misconduct, work place violence, and harmful products. Research on public apologies suggests that a leader should publicly apologize when his/her apology can serve an important individual, institutional, intergroup, or moral purpose (Coombs, 2007; Hargie et al., 2010; Kellerman, 2006; Mills, 2001; Wohl et al., 2011). Scholars divide the purpose of a corporate leader's apology into two types; one is the apology offered for physical injuries and the other one is for emotional injuries to people's feelings and for perceived violations of psychological space and boundaries (Fineman & Gabriel, 2010; Combs,

2007; Lazare, 2004). The apologizer who speaks on behalf of the corporation needs to be aware that the apology addressing the issue may lead to negative consequences, such as direct loss of position due to the mishandling of the apology (Combs, 2007; Hargie et al., 2010; Kellerman, 2006).

Research has shown that an apology with either compensation or taking responsibility and expressing regrets has proven to be an effective apology for recovering damaged relationships (Bachman & Guerrero, 2006; Chung & Berverland, 2006; Greiff, 2008; Hearit, 1994; Pace, et al., 2010; Wohl et al., 2011). The apology with the promise of compensation reinforces the sincerity of the apology (Greiff, 2008; Wohl et al., 2011). It strengthens the desire of reconciliation while repairing the damaged trust. The public expression of compensation is the essential characteristic of a genuine apology showing the issuer's effort to reestablish relations of equity and respect with the receiver. In sum, depending on the severity of the offense, the apology coupled with compensation may be a powerful facilitator for the reconciliation, rather than the apology on its own.

An apology with high perceptions of corporational responsibility and regrets leads a corporation to reduce reputation damage and gain customer forgiveness (Bachman & Guerrero, 2006; Chung & Berverland, 2006; Hearit, 1994; Pace et al., 2010). The acceptance of responsibility and expression of regrets play an important role in changing customers' feelings, attitudes, and perceptions toward the corporation. In contrast, a corporate apology, which is short of detailed explanation and expression of regret on the crisis, may result in more reputation damage by rapidly spreading negative

publicity concerning the corporation over others (Hargie et al., 2010). Consequently, it will weaken customer satisfaction, purchase intention, and the evaluation of the corporation (Pulling et al., 2006).

As examined above, previous research on the speech act of apology, cross-cultural apology studies, and public apologies focused on the role of verbal apology strategies although non-verbal cues also play a significant role while apologizing. Consequently, a need exists to investigate the role of non-verbal cues such as eye contact, choice of dress, tone of voice, and facial expressions to supplement verbal apology. The next section presents previous research on non-verbal communication.

Non-verbal communication

The non-verbal cues used by an apologizer may reveal more than what the apologizer said. According to Edward T. Hall (1959), in American culture, 65% of a message is non-verbal and 35% is verbal. When the verbal message contradicts the non-verbal, people usually believe the non-verbal over the verbal (Hall, 1959). Thus, sending non-verbal cues that match up with verbal messages is important to communicate effectively with others. Certain aspects of usages, values, and beliefs regarding non-verbal behavior are shared among interlocutors who are in the same culture (Bitti & Garotti, 2011; Elfenbein & Ambady, 2002).

Eye contact is a culturally-influenced, non-verbal communication behavior (Johannasen, 2010; Samovar et al., 2010). In American culture, eye contact is considered as a positive value, indicating interest, affection, hospitality, or attraction (Sue, 1990). In contrast, in some cultures avoiding eye contact is interpreted as a polite trait that

recognizes authority. For instance, in Asian cultures, continuous eye contact can be considered very impolite because it directly challenges authority (Johannasen, 2010). In China, direct eye contact is not common, especially when walking in public places (Axtell, 1998).

The choice of clothing can evoke different judgments and interpretations among interlocutors. People's perceptions of others differ according to what is worn (Damhorst & Reed, 1986; Johnson, Schofield & Yurchisin, 2002; O'Neal & Lapitsky, 1991). What an advertiser wears affects people's perceptions of the credibility of the message source as well as their intention to purchase the product (O'Neal & Lapitsky, 1991). Clothing carries cultural meaning that can be shared among the members of social groups or communities (McCracken & Roth, 1989). Thus, without the knowledge about the code, an outsider is not able to understand information that a wearer represents through clothing.

Furthermore, non-verbal cues such as tone of voice and facial expressions used by an apologizer have an impact on recipients' perceptions of the sincerity of an apology. As stated by Lakoff (2001), in American culture an apologizer's breaking voice while apologizing plays a role in signifying a feeling of shame; whereas, the presence of smiling while apologizing is often identified by Americans as a "smirk," so it decreases the sincerity of an apology (p. 204). In this regard, Ekman emphasizes the role of facial expressions in communication. According to Ekman (2003), facial expressions allow individuals to express their emotions as well as understand the opinions and attitudes of others.

As discussed above, the literature review on cross-cultural pragmatics, the speech act of apology, cross-cultural apology studies, public apologies, and non-verbal communication indicate that cultural variations exist among individuals or countries in the use of apology strategies. However, the increased trend of public apologies has occurred without regard to how apologies are viewed in a different cultural context. In addition, there has been little attempt to examine how an individual's culture influences his/her responses to a corporate apology addressed to multicultural customers. Thus, more research into this domain is necessary in order to achieve the effective interpersonal communication among culturally diverse interlocutors.

With the goal of investigating cultural differences in appraising the effectiveness of a public apology, this study examined the participants' perceptions of the Netflix apology. The following are the research questions that guided this study:

- 1) Is there a significant difference between Chinese and American university students' perceptions regarding the necessity of Hastings' apology?
- 2) Is there a significant difference between Chinese and American university students' perceptions regarding the verbal strategies of Hastings' apology?
- 3) Is there a significant difference between Chinese and American university students' perceptions regarding the non-verbal cues of Hastings' apology?
- 4) Is there a significant difference between Chinese and American university students' perceptions regarding the effectiveness of Hastings' apology?

Methodology

A mixed method approach was used to quantitatively and qualitatively assess students' perceptions of the Netflix 2011 apology. In order to complement the quantitative research results, two focus group interviews were conducted for this study.

Participants

The participants of the survey were 181 students at Texas A&M University in the United States. The mean age of participants was 27.86 (SD = 9.36). Of the participants, 61 (33.7 %) were male and 120 (66.3 %) were female. In addition, 82 (45.3 %) of the participants indicated that they were Chinese and 99 (54.7%) were white Americans.

Kitzinger (1996) suggested that four to eight participants in a focus group lead to better interactions among participants and generate rich data. Participants with homogeneous social and cultural backgrounds feel more comfortable talking to each other and are willing to talk openly (Morgan, 1997). Thus, each focus group consisted of six students (i.e., 3 males and 3 females) who were previous roommates, current roommates, or classmates.

Procedure

Participants' email addresses were accessed through Texas A&M University student organizations. The survey was sent to 300 students for each group. Each participant received an email with a cover letter embedded into the body that introduced the study and provided a survey link on Qualtrics.com. The response rate was 30.33 percent.

After analyzing the survey data, two focus group interviews (i.e., the Chinese group and the American group) were conducted to discover factors that were associated with participants' evaluations of the apology. Among the survey participants, the researcher recruited 6 participants from each group for the group interviews. The interviews were facilitated by the researcher. Each interview took approximately one hour. The group interview with Chinese students was conducted in English mostly because they preferred to speak in English. When code switching occurred, participants helped each other choose the right words in English or Chinese. Each interview was audio-recorded and then immediately transcribed by the researcher.

Instruments

Two instruments used in this study were a survey questionnaire and a focus group interview questionnaire. The researcher developed the survey questionnaire based on classroom discussions on business apologies in general and the Netflix apology in particular. Additionally, the literature on public apologies informed the design of the survey items. The survey questionnaire (see Appendix B) consisted of 24 items that examined how Chinese and American students perceived the apology. It included seven demographic questions, two questions regarding participants' familiarity with Netflix, and 11 Likert scale items. The Likert scale choices ranged from 1 (least) to 5 (most). These questions consisted of four components: (1) the necessity of apologizing, (2) the verbal cues, (3) the non-verbal cues, and (4) the effectiveness of the apology. According to Babbie (2007), Likert scale type questions are useful for measuring participants' attitudes. The forced-choice survey enables researchers to gather data with a greater

uniformity of responses. It also enables researchers to administer the instrument easily and collect the data from a large number of participants (Merriam & Simpson, 1995). Four open-ended questions were also used to examine participants' expectations regarding the verbal and non-verbal elements of a public apology and Hastings' apology.

The focus group interview questionnaire (see Appendix C) consisted of open-ended guiding questions. The interview questions were used to gain insight into Chinese and American students' perceptions of Hastings' apology and their cultural expectations regarding the key verbal and non-verbal elements of a public apology. The researcher employed a semi-structured interview format and used probing questions to further clarify participants' answers.

Reliability

The survey questionnaire was examined to estimate its reliability. Reliability depends on the sample size of the study. According to Thorndike, Cunningham, Thorndike, and Hagan (1991) a reliability coefficient of .50 or above is recommended for groups over 100. Cronbach's alpha of each component ranged from .688 to .855. Thus, they were securely above the .50 recommendation. Table 1 presents the internal reliability for each component of the questionnaire.

Table 1. Internal consistency estimates for Netflix subscales and the total score

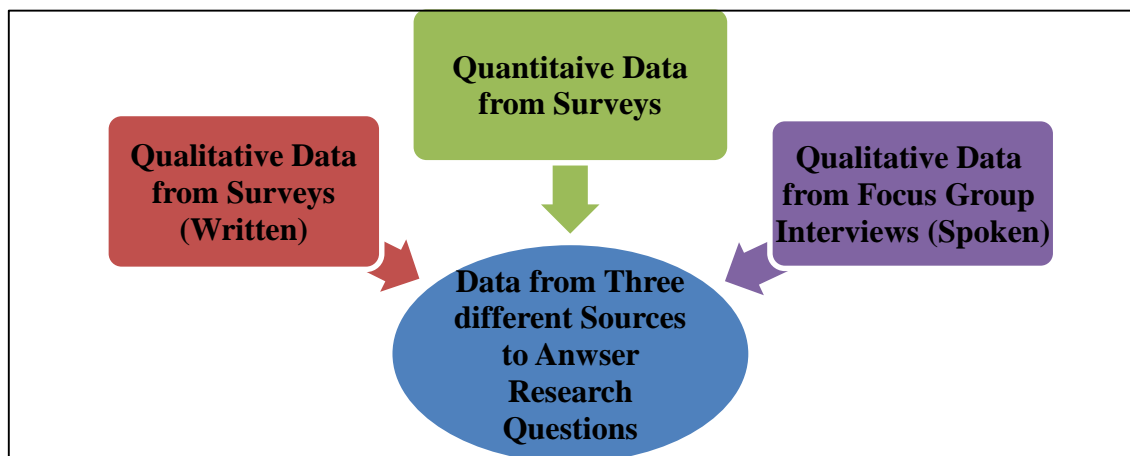
Subscales	No. of items	Cronbach's alpha
Component 1: The necessity of apologizing	2	.688
Component 2: The verbal strategies	2	.699
Component 3: The non-verbal cues	4	.820
Component 4: The effectiveness of the apology	3	.855
Total	11	.766

Member checking was used to establish the credibility of findings from interviews (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Each participant of group interviews was invited to read the findings and review them for accuracy.

Data analysis

In order to enhance the credibility of the study, the researcher used a “methodological triangulation,” which refers to the use of more than one method for gathering data (Denzin, 1970; McMillan & Schumacher, 2006). Figure 1 shows how the researcher synthesized quantitative data and qualitative data collected in this study.

Figure 1. Netflix triangulation matrix



Quantitative data analysis

Two statistical programs, IBM SPSS 19 and Mplus, were used to analyze the data in this study. Descriptive statistics were used to analyze the demographic information of the participants and to summarize the data. Confirmatory factor analysis

(CFI) was conducted to identify factors that statistically explained the variation and covariation among measures as well as verify the validity of the items. Hypothesis for the CFI was that the proposed four-factor model would be a good fit, with model fit as demonstrated by the comparative fit index (CFI) being .90 or larger, Tucker-Lewis index (TLI) being .95 or larger, the standardized root mean square residual (SRMR) being .05 or less, and the root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) being .06 or less (Hu & Bentler, 1999). These ranges are suggested in confirmatory factor analysis (Jackson, Gillaspay, & Purc-Stephenson, 2009). Last, one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used to test for group differences in evaluating Hastings' apology.

Qualitative data analysis

Qualitative data analysis included two data sources. One was written comments from survey participants. The other was audio-recorded and transcribed comments from two focus group interviews. Both of them were coded to identify major themes and sub-themes within the data. The interview data were transcribed and categorized. According to Lincoln and Guba (1985, p. 203), "utilizing" and "categorizing" are two general ways to analyze qualitative data. Utilizing refers to separating raw data into small units to understand information and categorizing refers to organizing the utilized data into new categories to provide descriptive and inferential information.

Written comments from surveys and transcribed interview data were coded to discover themes embedded in the comments. Themes were formed by grouping the common responses of the participants that implied the same meaning of the underlying idea. For example, each interview was divided into text segments which were paragraphs,

sentences, or phrases that related to a distinct concept. Each text segment was classified into topical category labeled with a code. They were grouped under the relevant category. The number of occurrences for each theme was recorded (see Appendix D).

Ethical consideration

The researcher followed Institutional Review Board (IRB) rules and ethical regulations that were outlined in the Belmont Report. Strict confidentiality was maintained by assigning pseudonyms to each of the survey participants and the focus group interview participants. Consequently, strict anonymity was maintained for every participant.

Results and findings

Quantitative data

Descriptive statistics were used to describe the participants' perceptions of different items related to Hastings' apology. Average scores hold the following meanings for items: 1-1.49 indicates "strongly disagree", 1.5-2.24 "disagree", 2.25-2.99 "slightly disagree", 3-3.74 "slightly agree", 3.75-4.49 "agree", and 4.5-5 "strongly agree." Table 2 presents the means and standard deviations of items and the total mean of each component of the survey.

Table 2. Descriptive statistics of Netflix survey scores

Variables	Item no.	82 Chinese		99 American	
		Mean	SD	Mean	SD
<i>Component 1: The necessity of apologizing</i>	1. Severity of the offense	2.80	1.09	2.57	0.89
	2. Necessity of an apology	3.28	1.22	3.04	1.12
	Total	3.03	1.00	2.80	0.88
<i>Component 2: The verbal strategies</i>	3. Explanation of the offense	2.28	0.93	2.56	0.94
	9. Taking responsibility for the offense	2.66	1.03	2.80	1.08
	Total	2.45	0.86	2.67	0.86
<i>Component 3: The non-verbal cues</i>	5. Appropriateness of smiling	2.20	1.05	2.22	1.03
	6. Appropriateness of dress choice	2.16	0.94	2.51	1.05
	7. Appropriateness of eye contact	2.89	1.12	3.26	1.04
	8. Evaluation of non-verbal cues	2.33	0.90	2.59	0.99
	Total	2.38	0.82	2.64	0.85
<i>Component 4: The effectiveness of the apology</i>	4. Congruence between verbal messages & non-verbal cues	2.57	0.93	2.71	0.93
	10. Sincerity of the apology	2.43	0.99	2.51	1.10
	13. Acceptance of the apology	2.25	0.95	2.55	1.15
	Total	2.41	0.82	2.58	0.95

The first component displays participants' perceptions regarding the necessity of apologizing. It includes items 1 and 2. Related to "severity of the offense," the results showed that Chinese ($M = 2.80$, $SD = 1.09$) felt the offense was more severe than Americans ($M = 2.57$, $SD = 0.89$). For "necessity of an apology," Chinese ($M = 3.28$, $SD = 1.22$) also felt issuing an apology was more necessary than Americans ($M = 3.04$, $SD = 1.12$). The total component means of Chinese 3.03 ($SD = 1$) and Americans 2.80 ($SD = 0.88$) indicated that overall, Chinese evaluated the severity of offense higher than Americans. As a result, the need for the apology was rated higher by Chinese as well.

The second component examines participants' perceptions regarding the verbal strategies of the apology. It includes items 3 and 9. For "explanation of the offense," Chinese ($M = 2.28$, $SD = 0.93$) felt Hastings' detailed explanation regarding the company's recent policy changes was less effective than Americans ($M = 2.56$, $SD = 0.94$). Related to "taking responsibility of the offense," Chinese ($M = 2.66$, $SD = 1.03$) felt Hastings was less responsible for the offense than Americans ($M = 2.8$, $SD = 1.08$). The total component means of Chinese 2.45 ($SD = 0.86$) and Americans 2.67 ($SD = 0.86$) indicated that the Chinese and American participants slightly disagreed that Hastings' two verbal strategies used for apologizing were effective.

The third component investigates participants' perceptions regarding the non-verbal components of the apology. It includes items 5, 6, 7, and 8. For "appropriateness of smiling," both groups similarly indicated that Hastings' smile during the apology was slightly inappropriate (Chinese $M = 2.2$, $SD = 1.05$; Americans $M = 2.22$, $SD = 1.03$). Related to "appropriateness of dress choice," Chinese evaluated Hastings' casual dress more negatively ($M = 2.16$, $SD = 0.94$) than Americans ($M = 2.51$, $SD = 1.05$). For "appropriateness of eye contact," Chinese ($M = 2.89$, $SD = 1.12$) evaluated Hastings' eye contact more negatively than Americans ($M = 3.26$, $SD = 1.04$). Related to "evaluation of non-verbal cues," Chinese indicated that they were more dissatisfied with Hastings' non-verbal cues ($M = 2.33$, $SD = 0.9$) than Americans ($M = 2.59$, $SD = 0.99$). The total component means of Chinese 2.38 ($SD = 0.82$) and Americans 2.64 ($SD = 0.85$) indicated that the Chinese and American participants slightly disagreed that Hastings' non-verbal cues used during the apology were effective.

The fourth component addresses participants' perceptions regarding the effectiveness of Hastings' apology. It includes items 4, 10, 11, and 13. For "congruence between verbal strategies & non-verbal cues," Americans (M = 2.71, SD = 0.93) perceived that Hastings' verbal communication matched his non-verbal cues more than Chinese (M = 2.57, SD = 0.93). Related to "sincerity of the apology," Americans (M = 2.51, SD = 1.1) perceived that Hastings' apology to was less sincere than Chinese (M = 2.43, SD = 0.99). For "acceptance of the apology," Americans (M = 2.55, SD = 1.15) indicated that they were more likely to accept the apology than Chinese (M = 2.25, SD = 0.95). The total component means of Chinese 2.41 (SD = 0.81) and Americans 2.58 (SD = 0.95) indicated that overall, the Chinese and American participants slightly disagreed that Hastings presented his apology effectively.

The results of confirmatory factor analysis

A CFA of survey scores using Mplus was conducted to test the goodness of fit of a four-factor model. The theoretical formulation for the proposed four-factor model is based on the literature on the speech act of apology, public apologies, and non-verbal communication. The four factors identified were the necessity of apologizing (factor 1), the verbal strategies (factor 2), the non-verbal cues (factor 3), and the effectiveness of the apology (factor 4). The first CFA results showed that the correlation between factor 2 and factor 4 was 1.032. This result was not in a reasonable range because the correlation cannot exceed 1. Thus, another CFA excluding factor 4 was conducted. The second CFA results indicated the three-factor model fit the data well (e.g., $\chi^2(17) = 35.540$, $p = .0053$; CFI = .958; TLI = .932; SRMR = .046; RMSEA = .077). Figure 2 illustrates the

unstandardized factor loadings of the items and other parameter estimates in the three factor model.

Figure 2. Netflix CFA three-factor model

Note: Standard errors are presented in the parentheses

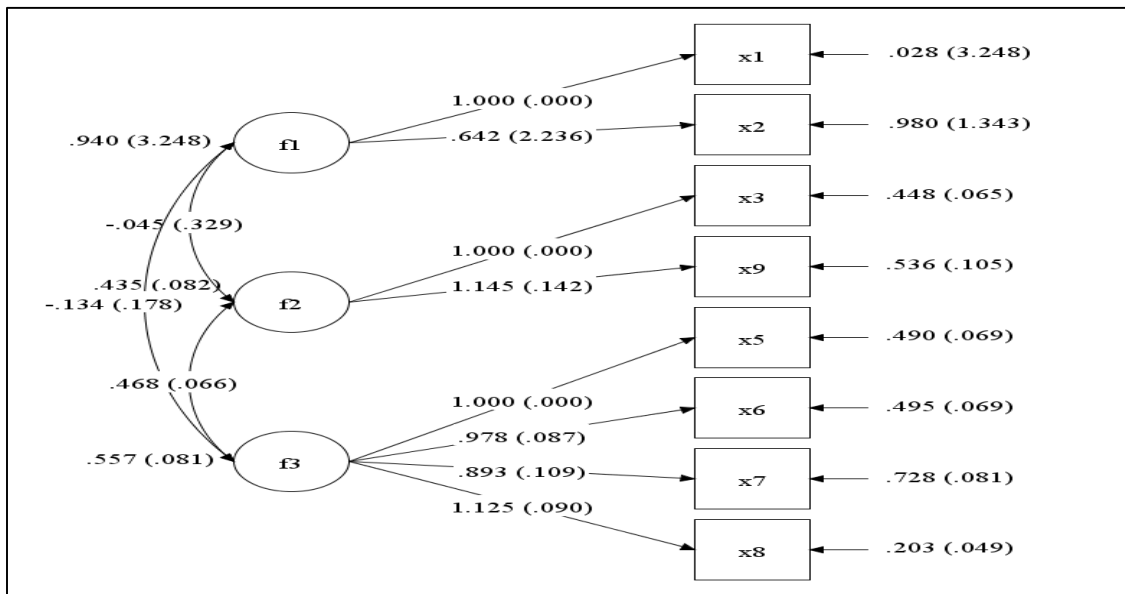


Table 3 presents the results of factor loadings and correlations between variables. In a sample of 200 respondents, factor loadings of .40 and above are significant (Hair, Black, Babin, & Anderson, 2010). Standardized factor loadings ranged from .532 to .985. Consequently, all items met the minimum criterion.

Table 3. Standardized estimated parameters for Netflix three-factor model

Factor loadings			
Item	f1	f2	f3
1	.985*		
2	.532*		
3		.702*	
9		.718*	
5			.730*
6			.720*
7			.615*
8			.881*

Correlations			
F1	1		
F2	.070	1	
F3	.185	.95*	1

*p<.01

The statistical results showed that factor 2 and factor 3 were highly correlated with each other.

Factor 4 was tested on its own using a one-factor model because the model was a saturated model with zero degree of freedom. The model fit was perfect. Figure 3 presents unstandardized parameter estimates in the model.

Figure 3. Netflix CFA one-factor model

Note: Standard errors are presented in the parentheses

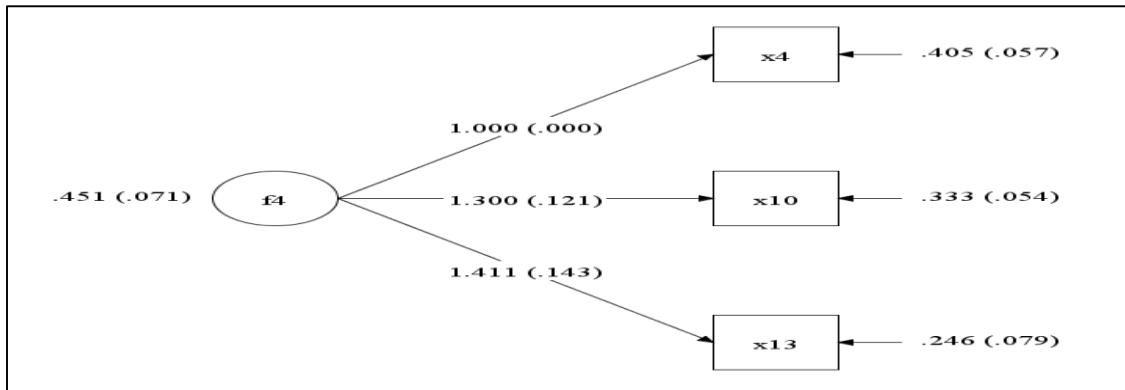


Table 4. Standardized estimated parameters for Netflix one-factor model

Factor loadings	
Item	f4
4	.726*
10	.834*
13	.886*

*p<.01

Standardized factor loadings are depicted in Table 4. They ranged from .726 to .886. Consequently, all items met the minimum criterion.

ANOVA results

A one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted to examine participants' perceptions of each factor. Bonferroni approach was used to control for Type I error. With this method, each comparison is tested at the alpha level for the

ANOVA divided by the number of comparisons (i.e., $.05/4 = .125$). The first ANOVA was conducted to investigate the difference between Chinese and Americans regarding factor 1. The independent variable, “the group,” included two levels: the Chinese group and the American group. The dependent variable was the composite scores of factor 1 (i.e., items 1 and 2). The ANOVA was not significant, $F(1, 179) = 2.619$, $p = .107$. This result indicated that there was no significant difference between Chinese and Americans in appraising the severity of offense and the necessity of Hastings’ apology.

The second ANOVA was conducted to examine the difference between Chinese and Americans regarding factor 2. The dependent variable was the composite scores of factor 2 (i.e., items 3 and 9). The ANOVA was not significant, $F(1, 179) = 2.912$, $p = .09$. This result indicated that there was no significant difference between Chinese and Americans in appraising the verbal strategies of Hastings’ apology.

The third ANOVA was conducted to examine the difference between Chinese and Americans regarding factor 3. The dependent variable was the composite scores of factor 3 (i.e., items 5, 6, 7, and 8). The ANOVA was not significant, $F(1, 179) = 4.576$, $p = .034$ ($p < .125$). This result indicated that there was not a significant difference between Chinese and Americans in appraising the non-verbal cues of Hastings’ apology.

Last, the researcher conducted another one-way ANOVA to examine the difference between Chinese and Americans regarding factor 4. The dependent variable was the composite scores of factor 4 (i.e., items 4, 10, and 13). The ANOVA was not significant, $F(1, 179) = 1.633$, $p = .203$. This result indicated that there was no significant difference between Chinese and Americans in appraising the effectiveness of

Hastings' apology. Both Chinese and Americans believed that Hastings presented his apology ineffectively.

Qualitative data

Content analysis was conducted for analyzing written comments from the surveys and the interview data. Seven themes emerged from these two qualitative sources regarding participants' perceptions of Hastings' apology.

Theme 1. Sincerity of the apology

Both Chinese and Americans indicated that they felt Hastings' apology was superficial. They described his apology as a commercial that aimed to promote the changed rental service. They felt that Hastings did not appear to care about customers. Tao from the focus group indicated if he was a Netflix customer, he would cancel his subscription as soon as he saw the video. Another participant, Cai, commented that Hastings made his customers feel that he was interested in increasing business benefits rather than focusing on customer dissatisfaction. Similarly, an American participant, Julie, commented that she could not count it as an apology because it did not follow an apology format. For instance, according to her, Hastings said he was sorry, but he did not explain why he was sorry.

Theme 2. Compensation and justification

Both Chinese and Americans indicated that Hastings should have made his apology sincere by offering compensation. During the interview, all Chinese participants indicated that Hastings should have provided customers with some compensation. They explained that the lack of compensation led them to evaluate Hastings' apology as

ineffective. Similarly, American participants indicated that offering compensation would have helped to reduce customer dissatisfaction. For instance, an American participant, Beth, suggested that some kind of compensation, like a free month bill, would have showed that Hastings was taking responsibility.

The American group also found the apology insincere for another reason. They felt Hastings spent too much time defending his decisions to change the policy and prices. During the interview, John said that Hastings' explanation was like a lecture to customers. Another participant, James from the survey, felt that he was getting an explanation from a parent who had just robbed his college fund to pay for a cruise. Their comments showed that Hastings' detailed explanation regarding the big changes made them feel that Hastings was saying it was the right decision. In this regard, they criticized Hastings for making the apology based on his needs and interests.

Theme 3. Eye contact

Another reoccurring theme in the data was 'eye contact.' Both groups indicated that they were satisfied with Hastings' eye contact. However, they indicated different perspectives regarding the role of eye contact during the apology. Americans emphasized that continuous eye contact is important to convey sincerity; whereas, Chinese commented that not having continuous eye contact during the apology is helpful to express regretful feelings. For instance, an American participant from the survey, Peter, stated that if an apologizer cannot make eye contact, the apologizer does not seem sincere. His statement showed how Americans consider eye contact important in

communication. Similarly, all American participants from the focus group indicated that an apologizer needs to make eye contact with the offended person to convey sincerity.

Compared to Americans, fewer Chinese participants paid attention to the role of making eye contact in an apology and they thought it was less important. Two Chinese participants from the survey specifically illustrated their cultural expectations regarding the use of eye contact in an apology. For instance, Hong stated that keeping eye contact is helpful, but an apologizer often needs to bow his/her head to convey his/her feelings such as shame, embarrassment, or regret. Similarly, another participant, Chen, suggested that eye contact is necessary, but an apologizer should not look at people all the time. The comments by Hong and Chen showed that Chinese people expect to see an apologizer bow his/her head and avoid continuous eye contact.

Theme 4. Clothing

Another issue brought up by most of the participants was related to Hastings' clothing. In the video, Hastings was wearing a very bright blue unbuttoned shirt (see Appendix I). Both Chinese and Americans indicated that Hastings' casual dress was inappropriate for a CEO apologizing on behalf of the company. Their comments on Hastings' style of dress revealed how an apologizer's dress choice has an impact on the offended person's evaluation regarding the sincerity of an apologizer. For instance, a Chinese participant from the survey, Chen, stated that she was dissatisfied with his clothes and suggested that he should have dressed more formally. Likewise, all participants from the Chinese focus group indicated that they were dissatisfied with Hastings' dress choice.

Similarly, an American participant from the survey, Mark, stated that Hastings looked very relaxed due to his unbuttoned collar. Another participant, Esther, commented that his clothes were not what she would expect when a CEO apologized to millions of subscribers. All participants from the American focus group indicated that his clothing was inappropriate for a formal public apology. According to Julie, business casual is appropriate for showing that an apologizer takes the situation seriously. However, one interesting comment from the interview was that Hastings' choice of clothing could have been intentional. James pointed out that Hastings strategically chose to wear the bright t-shirt for this video. He further explained that Hastings probably wanted to look like a typical Netflix customer. But, James and the other participants indicated that Hastings should have been in business attire.

Theme 5. Facial expressions

Both Chinese and Americans indicated that Hastings' facial expressions were an inappropriate behavior for apologizing publicly. His smile led them doubt the sincerity of his apology. During the interview, a Chinese participant, Xu, said that his smile reflected that he did not take the apology seriously. He further explained that in China an apologizer's smile may be interpreted as evidence of the apologizer's irresponsible attitude toward the offense. Another Chinese participant, Mun, added that Chinese do not smile while apologizing because it is unacceptable.

In a similar vein, all American participants from the focus group interpreted Hastings' smile as an indicator of his irresponsible attitude. For instance, Beth pointed out that Hastings smiled for the entire time and this could be an indication that he did not

know what was wrong. Another participant, Brian, commented that his smile did not fit the mood of a sincere apology. Both groups indicated that Hastings' smile was inappropriate for a public apology. They described Hastings' smile as condescending. According to them, an apologizer needs to convey sincerity by looking sad, regretful, downhearted, or sullen.

Theme 6. Posture

Both Chinese and Americans pointed out that Hastings' posture of relaxed sitting decreased the sincerity of his apology. American participants during the interview specifically pointed out that Hastings was sitting back in his chair so he looked very comfortable. They modeled the appropriate sitting posture embodying attentiveness. According to them, Hastings should have leaned toward the camera to indicate his attentiveness toward the audience and the object being discussed.

Chinese were similar to Americans in that they evaluated Hastings' posture as inappropriate. However, they had different expectations regarding the appropriate body posture of an apologizer. Three interesting comments were discovered from the interview. According to Tao, Hastings should have stood up when he was apologizing. Another participant, Cai, commented that Hastings should have been standing with his hands at his side. When supporting Cai, Wei added that Hastings should have bowed with modestly clasped hands. The comments by Tao, Cai, and Wei showed that Chinese people usually stand up with either their hands at their side or clasped hands as they apologize. The other participants agreed that bowing is a symbolic gesture transferring

the apologizer's attitude with regard to the message. Asked to clarify how to bow, they described the appropriate angle between 30 to 45 degrees.

Theme 7. Setting

Both Chinese and Americans evaluated the setting as informal and relaxed. They commented that Hastings should have chosen a different place for issuing his apology. For instance, a Chinese participant from the focus group, Xin, pointed out that the video should have been filmed in an office setting instead of sitting outside. Similarly, American participants from the focus group commented that Hastings' apology might be better received if he was in an office, not sitting outside on patio furniture surrounded by a parking lot. Both groups indicated that their attention was distracted by the informal setting that included wind noise, a laptop computer, and sunglasses on the table.

Chinese emphasized that an apologizer should apologize in a well-planned way. For instance, Wei commented that Hastings should have made his apology in front of media at press conference while surrounded by photographers, reporters, and cameras. Likewise, an American participant, Mark, pointed out that he would have expected him to be in an official press room, not outside. Americans indicated that their expectations regarding an apologizer's filming location can be flexible according to circumstances such as the severity of the offense and the relationship between the apologizer and the offended person.

Summary

Quantitative and Qualitative data from the surveys and the focus group interviews showed that Chinese and Americans paid attention to the verbal and non-

verbal elements of Hastings' apology. The majority of participants evaluated the apology as ineffective since they believed that Hastings' verbal and non-verbal messages were inconsistent with a sincere apology. The findings of this study identified five elements that contributed to the participants' perceptions regarding the effectiveness of Hastings' apology. These elements include: (1) lack of compensation, (2) smiling, (3) casual dress, (4) inattentive body posture, and (5) informal setting.

Discussion and conclusion

This study aimed to answer four research questions. The first research question asked: Is there a significant difference between Chinese and American university students' perceptions regarding the necessity of Hastings' apology? The ANOVA result showed that there was not a significant difference between the two groups in appraising the necessity of Hastings' apology. Both the Chinese and American participants believed Hastings' apology was necessary.

The second research question asked: Is there a significant difference between Chinese and American university students' perceptions regarding the verbal strategies of Hastings' apology? The ANOVA result showed that there was not a significant difference between the two groups in appraising the verbal strategies of Hastings' apology. Both the Chinese and American participants evaluated the verbal strategies of the apology as ineffective. The qualitative data similarly showed that the Chinese and American participants believed Hastings should have provided financial compensation. This result is consistent with the finding of previous studies: An apology with the promise of compensation (e.g., additional service benefits such as a subscription fee

discount) reinforces the sincerity of the apology since it strengthens the desire to reconcile (Greiff, 2008; Wohl et al., 2011).

The third research question asked: Is there a significant difference between Chinese and American university students' perceptions regarding the non-verbal cues of Hastings' apology? The ANOVA result showed that there was not a significant difference between the two groups in appraising the non-verbal cues of Hastings' apology. The findings based on the qualitative data supported the statistical result. For instance, regarding eye contact, both groups positively evaluated Hastings' eye contact. An interesting finding was that an American apologizer's sustained eye contact may be perceived by Chinese people as a sign of disrespect or rudeness because in Chinese apology culture avoiding continuous eye contact is an action of contrition and a plea for forgiveness. Looking down is seen as a way of saying the apologizer is not worthy to look at the offended person. This act implies deep introspection brought on by shame and concern for what is causing the emotion. These cultural differences between the two groups regarding eye contact support the findings of previous research. Americans put a great value on eye contact in communication (Johannasen , 2010; Sue, 1990). Individuals from Asian cultures interpret having continuous eye contact as an indicator of challenging authority (Johannasen, 2010). In China, direct eye contact among strangers is considered impolite (Axtell, 1998).

Another interesting finding was that Chinese people use 30 to 45 degree bows as a means of conveying sincerity. The Chinese participants indicated that they do not use bowing for introductions, appreciation or greetings like Koreans or Japanese. Moreover,

they do not expect 90 degree bows as Japanese people do to indicate respect or emotion. This result provides some evidence to previous studies. Individuals from the same national, ethnic, or regional group share cultural norms for decoding or judging the appropriateness of non-verbal cues (Elfenbein & Ambady, 2002). In addition, non-verbal cues are used consistently with cultural expectations that people adhere to (Bitti & Garotti, 2011).

Regarding the choice of clothing, both the Chinese and American participants expected a CEO to be in business attire for a public apology. They commented on the inappropriateness of Hastings' casual dress for a public business apology. As research shows, the clothing color worn by an individual in a certain situation has an impact on perceived characteristics of the wearer (Damhorst & Reed, 1986; Johnson et al., 2002; O'Neal & Lapitsky, 1991). In addition, the choice of clothing carries cultural meaning shared among the members of social groups (McCracken & Roth, 1989).

The Chinese and American participants evaluated Hastings's non-serious facial expressions as inappropriate. They indicated that Hastings' verbal messages contradicted his non-verbal messages. Hastings' smile seemed to have generated a negative impression of his apology. As submitted by researchers, an apology excluding heartfelt remorse or sorrow expressions weakens the purpose of an apology aimed to regain integrity of both the apologizer and the offended person (Govier & Verwoerd, 2002; Thompson, 2008; Scher & Darley, 1997). When an apologizer prepares for issuing an apology, the apologizer needs to pay attention to the emotional setting of an apology (Blanchard & McBride, 2003). In American culture the presence of smiling while

apologizing is often considered by the offended person as a “smirk” so it decreases the sincerity of an apology (Lakoff, 2001).

Both the Chinese and American participants commented Hastings should have held a press conference for appeasing disgruntled customers instead of shooting the video near a parking lot with wind noise and distracting objects. Hastings’ apology shows how the offender makes the situation worse with a poorly organized and executed public apology.

In sum, cultural differences were found between the two groups in terms of the role of eye contact and appropriate body posture during apologies. The Chinese and American participants indicated that Hastings’ casual dress, smiling facial expressions, and filming location were inappropriate and contributed to the ineffectiveness of the apology.

The fourth research question asked: Is there a significant difference between Chinese and American university students’ perceptions regarding the effectiveness of Hastings’ apology? The ANOVA result showed that there was not a significant difference between the two groups. Moreover, the findings based on the qualitative data showed that Hastings’ apology was perceived by the Chinese and American participants as ineffective. The comments from Chinese and Americans indicated that their expectations regarding what constitutes a sincere apology was not met. In addition, they perceived the lengthy explanation about policy changes and his justification for price changes as inappropriate. Both groups had an impression that Hastings’ apology was like a commercial rather than an apology. Hastings on behalf of Netflix failed to issue an

apology that contributed to healing a damaged relationship between the company and customers. Consequently, he increased customer dissatisfaction. The improper handling of an apology may make the situation worse by making people angrier (Combs, 2007) and by showing the apologizer's self-interest (Brown, 2004).

To sum up, the findings of quantitative and qualitative data show that both the Chinese and American participants evaluated Hastings' apology as ineffective. This result indicated that Hastings' apology may not effectively reduce customer dissatisfaction or retain customers for his business. These results are aligned with Netflix customers' comments on the Netflix blog in that many of them had made a decision to unsubscribe after they watched his apology.

Implications of the study results

The analysis of similarities and differences between Chinese and American students' perceptions of Hastings' apology helped identify the key verbal and non-verbal elements of a public apology addressed to culturally diverse audiences. A business leader's lack of communication skills using appropriate verbal and non-verbal strategies in a public apology targeting multicultural customers may further complicate the situation and make customers more disappointed. Being an effective global corporate leader entails knowing what multicultural customers expect from a public corporate apology. In this regard, the current research suggests that business leaders should consider the following tips as they issue a public apology. First, a detailed justification may sound like they are making an excuse to avoid taking full responsibility. As a result, they may fuel customers' dissatisfaction. Second, they need to offer specific

compensation. The findings of this study show that the apology without the specific promise of compensation will not persuade customers disappointed with the company's actions. Last, they need to pay attention to both verbal and non-verbal communication. The findings of this study indicate how the non-verbal cues of an apology have a significant impact on the offended person's evaluation of the sincerity of an apology.

Limitation and recommendation for future research

This study provided insight into Chinese and American university students' perceptions regarding the verbal and non-verbal elements of one public apology. A limitation of the study was that the participants were limited to Chinese and American students enrolled in Texas A&M University. Future research needs to use random samples of Chinese and American participants. Also future research needs to collect data from previous/current Netflix customers who were directly affected by the policy and price changes. These studies would help to determine if the findings are reflective of multicultural customers' perceptions of the apology. Another limitation was an inability to collect the data from Chinese students in China. Thus, there is a possibility that some of Chinese participants have acculturated to American culture. In this regard, future study needs to gather survey data from Chinese people residing in China and to conduct focus group interviews with them. The last limitation was that all participants were young adults. Thus, the samples of this study are not representative of all generations. Related to this, future research needs to gather data from participants of different ages in order to improve the generalizability of study results. Additional data will provide useful

insight on how people perceive public apologies according to their own concepts regarding the verbal and non-verbal elements of a sincere apology.

CHAPTER IV

STUDY 2: THE TOYOTA 2010 APOLOGY

Overview

The purpose of this study was to investigate Chinese and American university students' perceptions of a public apology made by Akio Toyoda, the CEO of Toyota. A survey questionnaire and two focus group interviews were used to identify cultural schemas affecting participants' perceptions of Toyoda's apology. The survey participants consisted of 87 Chinese and 99 Americans. Each focus group consisted of a mix of 3 males and 3 females. Results showed that participants evaluated the apology based on their cultural perspectives regarding the verbal and non-verbal elements of the apology. Related to the verbal strategies, Chinese indicated that Toyoda should have offered compensation and the apology should have been at the beginning of the statement. They criticized Toyoda's non-verbal cues were different from the traditional Japanese apology. They suggested Toyoda should have lowered his tone of voice and bowed his head to convey sincerity. In contrast, Americans indicated that they applied a different criterion for evaluating Toyoda's apology because he is not a native speaker of English. They expected his apology would be different from an apology performed by an American. Thus, although they were not fully satisfied with his non-verbal cues such as eye contact and tone of voice, they evaluated Toyoda's apology as effective based on the content of his verbal messages. Overall, Americans perceived Toyoda's apology more positively than Chinese.

Introduction

The number of public apologies has increased threefold since the 1980s (Lazare, 2004). Public apologies by business leaders have been issued for various reasons such as product recalls, human-error accidents, and disasters caused by a manufacturing plant or CEO corruption. Through issuing a public apology, a corporate leader attempts to maintain, defend, or repair the image of an organization that was damaged due to the offense. How to apologize to the public during a crisis is becoming a significant issue for corporations. Research has found that apologies from corporations serve to raise customers' satisfaction after service failures (Goodwin & Ross, 1992). Thus, knowing how to apologize correctly is an important marketing and management tool in commerce (Friedman, 2006).

Despite the increase of public apologies made by corporate leaders in a globalized business context, there is no empirical study identifying how recipients' cultural schemas of verbal and non-verbal cues influence their judgments about the effectiveness of a corporate apology. Although there are cultural variations in the meaning of apologizing and the use of apology strategies, the increased trend of public apologies has occurred without considering how the act of apologizing is viewed in different cultural contexts. Previous cross-cultural research on the speech act of apologizing has shown that the function and meaning of an apology may differ considerably depending on the cultural context (Barnlund & Yoshioka, 1990; Byon, 2005; Eslami, 2004; Hatfield & Hahn, 2011; Kim, 2008; Lee & Park, 2011; Sugimoto, 1997). Consequently, an apologizer's lack of knowledge of cultural difference in public

apologies may lead the apologizer and the targeted audience to a cross-cultural misunderstanding.

A considerable body of research on cross-cultural apology studies has shown that cultural differences exist among individuals in the use of apology strategies (Barnlund & Yoshioka, 1990; Eslami, 2004; Han & Cai, 2010; Lee et al., 2012; Maddux et al., 2011; Park & Guan, 2006; Sugimoto, 1997). Their findings indicate that individuals' cultures influence their perceptions of the need for apologizing and choices of apology strategies. In addition, research on intercultural communication has shown that cultural differences exist in non-verbal communication (Elfenbein & Ambady, 2002; Fernández et al., 2000; Hofstede, 1991). Although cultural variations exist among individuals in the use of verbal and non-verbal apology strategies, there has been little attempt to investigate how individuals' cultures affect their evaluations to a public apology. Thus, more research is needed to understand cultural differences in appraising a public apology addressed to multicultural interlocutors.

With the goal of finding apology strategies that facilitate intercultural communication, this study investigated Chinese and American university students' perceptions of a public apology made by Akio Toyoda. Toyoda is the official president of Toyota Motor Corporation that is headquartered in Japan. In 2010, Toyota recalled approximately 9 million vehicles globally across its sub-brands due to problems associated with unintended acceleration (Toyota website). Toyoda issued his public apology at a news conference in Tokyo on February 5, 2010. He was invited to testify in front of a U.S. congressional committee related to massive safety recalls. On February

24, 2010, Toyota publicly apologized to the U.S. Congress committee members and American Toyota owners for the safety defects in the company's cars which led to the deaths of 52 Americans (Choi & Chung, 2012). The safety defects were known to be related to the faulty of sticky accelerator pedal caused the accelerator pedal getting to stick in the floor mats (Madslie, 2010). Although Toyota could have requested the assistance of a translator, he read his testimony in English. The following section presents previous research on the speech act of apology, cross-cultural apology studies, public apologies, and non-verbal communication.

Literature review

Research on the speech act of apology examines apology performance by focusing on its function. Searle (1969) defines an apology as a speech act used to express one's regret for what was done. According to Goffman (1971), the act of an apology is a process of remedial exchanges in which an offender distinguishes the bad self, who needs to apologize for a particular event, from the good self. The apologizer splits him/herself into two parts while attempting to recover the lost credibility by the bad self. Remedial interchanges in apologizing aim to improve the impaired image of the sender. The addressed apology reduces the apologizer's feelings of guilt through the confession of wrongs.

Similarly, some scholars describe an apology as the moral act of respect conveying the expression of sorrow or regret to the offended person (Govier & Verwoerd, 2002; Thompson, 2008; Scher & Darley, 1997). Offering an apology is a process of showing empathy through which the apologizer is capable of feeling the

offended person's pain that was caused by the apologizer's intentional or unintentional action. An apology including an expression of empathy signals to the offended person that the apologizer will avoid causing the offended person's pain in the future.

For social psychologists such as Blanchard and McBride (2003) and Lazare (2004), an apology is the speech act that involves a complicated psychological tension between the offender and the offended person. According to Lazare (2004), offering an apology is a process of exchanging shame and power between the offender and the offended person. By offering an apology, the offender willingly takes the shame of his/her offense and gives the offended person the power to forgive. Thus, the speech act of apologizing is in the dynamics of uncertain psychological process for both the offender and the offended person. Blanchard and McBride (2003) suggest that to maximize the benefits of apologizing, individuals need to pay attention to understanding it in the context of psychological processes for forgiveness.

What constitutes an apology in terms of its component parts in general is influenced by disciplinary perspectives and emphasis. There are different accounts of how apologies work because an apologizer may emphasize different strategies depending on how serious the situation is. Olshtain and Cohen (1983) proposed the apology strategies consisting of five main strategies: (1) stating illocutionary force indicating device (IFID; e.g., I am sorry, I apologize for that), (2) explaining or accounting for the violation (e.g., I was not paying attention), (3) accepting responsibility (e.g., It was entirely my fault), (4) offering compensation (e.g., I will pay

for the damage), and (5) promising not to repeat the offense (e.g., This will not happen again).

Other studies add four more features to the components of an apology and then delineate the features of taxonomies of apology (Goei et al., 2007; Haris et al., 2006; Meier, 1998): (6) appealing for forgiveness, (e.g., Please forgive me), (7) expressing remorse (e.g., I feel terrible about this), (8) denying of intent (e.g., I never meant to upset you), and (9) expressing repentance (e.g., I am such an idiot). Overall, nine components have been identified as the main features of an apology. Toyota used five out of the nine apology strategies: an acknowledgement of responsibility, an explanation or account of the situation, expressing remorse, an expression of apology, and a promise of forbearance respectively.

The effectiveness of an apology is affected by the ability of combining different apology components in relation to the severity of the offense and social factors such as age, power, and relationship status. Furthermore, it can be different according to how an apologizer delivers an apology to the offended person. An apology expert, Engel (2001) advises that an apologizer needs to decide how to deliver his/her apology (i.e., a face-to-face apology or a written apology) by considering the severity of offense. A face-to-face apology is usually more helpful than a written apology in ascertaining the apologizer's sincerity (Engel, 2001). However, a written apology may be better than a face-to-face apology in order not to make the receiver feel unpleasant. For instance, if the offended person was the victim of a violent crime, he/she would feel threatened or afraid to meet the offender.

Research has shown that cultural differences exist between Chinese and Americans regarding the speech act of apologizing (Han & Cai, 2010; Park & Guan, 2006). Cultural dimensions have been discussed as important factors that can lead to different apology realization patterns among different cultures (Barnlund & Yoshioka, 1990; Eslami, 2004; Han & Cai, 2010; Lee et al., 2012; Maddux et al., 2011; Park & Guan, 2006; Sugimoto, 1997). The following section discusses previous research that investigated cultural differences in the use of apology strategies between Chinese, Japanese, and Americans.

The research findings by Park and Guan (2006) and Han and Cai (2010) demonstrate that there is a difference between Chinese and Americans in terms of the need to apologize and concerns for politeness. Park and Guan (2006) conducted a survey with 134 Chinese and 183 American students. After providing two scenarios about apologizing, they asked participants to fill out a questionnaire. The authors found that Chinese indicated stronger intentions to apologize when they threatened the offended person's positive face (i.e., desire of being appreciated/ approved); whereas, Americans had stronger intentions when they threatened the offended person's negative face (i.e., freedom of action/from imposition). These results indicate that maintaining positive face may be more significant for Chinese than for Americans, while maintaining negative face may be more important for Americans than for Chinese.

Similarly, Han and Cai (2010) examined how three situational factors such as the degree of responsibility, severity, and the closeness of relationships influence an apologizer's concern for his/her image as well as that of the offended person. They

conducted a survey with 116 Americans in the U.S. and 118 Chinese in China. A survey questionnaire included eight apology scenarios providing participants with different conditions of situational factors. Their findings indicated that culture was an important moderator influencing participants' concerns for protecting their image or others according to situational factors. For instance, Chinese apologizers mainly showed a high level of concern for themselves as well as the offended person's image regardless of the different conditions of situational factors. On the other hand, American apologizers tended to vary their concern depending on situational factors.

Research findings conducted by Sugimoto (1997) and Maddux et al. (2011) demonstrate that cultural differences exist between Japanese and Americans regarding their preferred verbal and non-verbal apology strategies. According to Sugimoto, the symbolic meaning of apologizing verbally in Japan is greater than in the U.S. since it can be satisfying actual remediation. Maddux et al.'s (2011) study found that Japanese and Americans have different cultural norms for the speech act of apologizing. They noticed that for Japanese, the speech act of apologizing maintains harmony between individuals. For Americans, the purpose of apologizing is to admit fault and take responsibility. In Japan, the gesture of 90 degree bowing is considered an important non-verbal cue used by an apologizer to convey sincerity. Japanese social media are occasionally very critical to the observed non-verbal apology cues rather than the verbal message (Maddux et al., 2011).

Public apologies

Research on public apologies suggests a leader should publicly apologize when his/her apology can serve an important individual, institutional, intergroup, or moral purpose (Coombs, 2007; Hargie et al., 2010; Kellerman, 2006; Mills, 2001; Wohl et al., 2011). Kellerman (2006) suggests five specific situations in which a leader should apologize: (1) when it “serves an important purpose,” (2) when the offense results in “serious consequence,” (3) when the leader is supposed to be the right person to take “responsibility for the offense,” (4) when there is no one else to “get the job done,” and (5) when “the cost of saying something is likely lower than the cost of staying silent” (p. 81). According to this category, Toyoda was the right person to apologize on behalf of the company because his company’s products hurt people emotionally, physically, and economically.

A corporate apology is an official apology given by a representative of a corporation to the offended for injustices committed by the business officials or members or for offense caused by the management misconduct, workplace violence, or harmful products. The apologizer who speaks on behalf of the corporation needs to be aware that the apology addressing the issue may lead to negative consequences such as direct loss of position due to the mishandling of the apology (Coombs, 2007; Hargie et al., 2010; Kellerman, 2006). If the top leader fails to restore the broken relationship after the crisis due to the improper handling of the apology, his/her apology can actually do more harm than good.

Corporate leaders need to know how to manage a public apology because it will help them to solve the conflicts while reducing negative outcomes after the offense. An apologetic response rather than a denial or reticent response following negative publicity is very beneficial for a corporation in that it improves customers' perceptions of corporate trustworthiness as well as minimizes subsequent harmful consequences (Ferrin et al., 2007; Kim et al., 2004). To reduce negative publicity, a corporation needs to focus on enhancing customers' positive judgment about a company's ability in handling a crisis, by offering enough information related to the cause and effect (Ferrin et al., 2007; Kim et al., 2004).

Research on corporate apologies emphasizes the role of trust and compensation in soothing customers' anger after negative publicity (Greiff, 2008; Pulling et al., 2006; Schoorman et al., 2007; Wohl et al., 2011). The findings of Chung and Berverland (2006) and Xie and Pang (2009) show that consumer perceptions of corporate competence, benevolence, and integrity in responding to negative publicity play a significant role in determining the extent of consumer forgiveness.

Research has shown that an apology with the promise of compensation provides interlocutors with a major initial step toward recovering the injured relationship resulted from the wrongdoing (Greiff, 2008; Wohl et al., 2011). The apology with the promise of compensation reinforces the sincerity of the apology. It strengthens the desire of reconciliation while repairing the damaged trust. The public expression of compensation is an essential characteristic of a genuine apology showing the issuer's effort to reestablish relations of equity and respect with the receiver.

Previous research on the speech act of apology, cross-cultural apology studies, and public apologies has focused on the role of verbal apology strategies although non-verbal cues play an important while apologizing. Thus, a need also exists to examine the role of non-verbal cues during apologies. The following section presents previous research that investigated cultural differences among individuals in the use of non-verbal cues.

Non-verbal communication

The ability to interpret emotional communication allows individuals to easily understand the opinions and attitudes of others. Research has shown that group membership has an influence on the decoding of emotion displays (Elfenbein & Ambady, 2003; Kirouac & Hess, 1999; Matsumoto & Ekman, 1989). Individuals are generally more accurate at judging emotions that are expressed by members of their own cultural group rather than by members of a different cultural group. Matsumoto and Ekman's (1989) study showed cultural differences in emotion expression and emotion recognition between Japanese and Americans. The authors found that Americans rated facial expressions such as happiness, anger, sadness, and surprise more intensely than Japanese. In addition, both groups differed in recognizing the level of emotions such as anger, disgust, fear, and sadness. They interpret that Japanese express their emotions less intensely than Americans so they rated facial emotions less intensely. According to Axtell (1998), displays of emotion, such as fear, anger, and exuberance are rare among Japanese because they are taught to suppress those feelings, especially in public.

Individuals from certain cultures are encouraged to express emotion nonverbally, especially in their faces and voices. Smiling has functions such as a display of submission or appeasement, a sign of friendliness and harmlessness (Anderson, 2008). Different levels of fear, such as alarm, anxiety, and dread are more likely to reflect cultural differences. Research has shown that facial expressions more clearly communicate power and status (Carney et al., 2005; Hall et al., 2005). According to Carney et al. (2005), powerful people tend to display more frequent and intense facial expressions.

Eye contact is a culturally-influenced, non-verbal communication behavior (Johannasen, 2010; Samovar et al., 2010). In American culture, eye contact is considered as a positive value, indicating interest, affection, hospitality, or attraction (Johannasen, 2010). In this regard, conversing without eye contact is perceived as rude, disinterested, inattentive, shy, and/or deceptive (Sue, 1981). Similarly, in Asian cultures, continuous eye contact can be considered very impolite because it directly challenges authority (Johannasen, 2010). For instance, in China, direct eye contact is not common, especially when walking in public places (Axtell, 1998). Japanese and Korean parents teach their children to avoid direct eye contact. For them, direct eye contact is considered intimidating (Axtell, 1998).

Human voice provides instant emotional communication between individuals (Anderson, 2008; Justin & Laukka, 2003). Research has shown that non-verbal elements of the voice such as pitch, volume, and tempo variation play a significant role in interpersonal immediacy (Beebe, 1980; Ray & Floyd, 2006). Vocal cues provide the

listener important additional information to the spoken message. For example, low pitch is often associated with a vocal power cue; whereas, high pitch is a sign of tension, submissiveness, or childish immaturity (Leary & Kowalski, 1995). Fast speech rates have more persuasive impact than slow rates (Ketrow, 1990). According to Ketrow, an individual can maximize his/her credibility when speaking fluently and slightly faster with a moderately loud voice.

An individual's accuracy in identifying others' emotions through vocal expressions is more easily recognized within one's own culture than cross-culturally (Scherer, 2003). The ability to correctly interpret vocal cues is an important communication skill that enables individuals to identify other people's emotion. Each culture ascribes different meanings to qualities of vocal cues (Anderson, 2008; Hall et al, 2005). Tone of voice varies from culture to culture. For instance, German voice patterns tend to be somewhat slower and more reflective than American voice patterns (Ness, 2000).

Clothing features and colors are important to make an impact on impressions. Researchers found that people's perceptions of others differ according to what is worn (Damhorst & Reed, 1986; Johnson et al., 2002; McCracken & Roth, 1989; O'Neal & Lapitsky, 1991). An individual's choice of dress plays a significant role to communicate information about that individual. The clothing an advertiser wears influences people's perceptions of the credibility of the message source as well as their intention to purchase the product (McCracken & Roth, 1989; O'Neal & Lapitsky, 1991).

People can use clothing, type of suit, shoes, color, and fit of garments to make a good first impression (Johnson et al., 2002). Clothing carries cultural meaning that can be shared among the members of social groups or communities. Thus, without the knowledge about the cultural meaning, an outsider is unable to understand information that a wearer represents through clothing communication. In this regard, the choice of clothing can be used as an important means of non-verbal communication that can evoke different judgments and interpretations among interlocutors.

As discussed above, appropriately apologizing in business contexts may vary from culture to culture because the ways of expressing and receiving an apology are culture-bound. Thus, individuals from different cultures may misjudge each other's linguistic performance and responses regarding their respective apologies due to the lack of adequate cross-cultural knowledge. Previous research on cross-cultural apology studies and non-verbal communication has shown that cross-cultural differences in signaling verbal and non-verbal cues for apologizing can lead to intercultural miscommunication. In this regard, identifying cultural schemas that influence recipients' perceptions of a corporate apology will provide insight into some of the successful ways that corporate leaders can best convey apology through both verbal and non-verbal communication.

At the beginning of his testimony, Toyoda said that he would like to explain to the American people, as well as Toyota customers around the world, how seriously his company takes the quality and safety of its vehicles. Although Toyoda said that he was

deeply sorry for any accidents that Toyota drivers experienced, his apology mainly focused on American customers rather than global customers.

Considering China's rapid economic growth and its increasing role in the world, this study investigated Chinese and American students' perceptions of the Toyota 2010 apology in terms of verbal as well as non-verbal messages. Findings of this study will provide corporate leaders with a better understanding of the key elements of a heartfelt apology. These findings will bring benefits to the business itself after a crisis while increasing the positive image of the corporation among culturally diverse recipients.

The following four questions guided this study:

- 1) Is there a significant difference between Chinese and American university students' perceptions regarding the necessity of Toyoda's apology?
- 2) Is there a significant difference between Chinese and American university students' perceptions regarding the non-verbal cues of Toyoda's apology?
- 3) Is there a significant difference between Chinese and American university students' perceptions regarding the verbal strategies of Toyoda's apology?
- 4) Is there a significant difference between Chinese and American university students' perceptions regarding the effectiveness of Toyoda's apology?

Methodology

A mixed approach was used to quantitatively and qualitatively examine the participants' perceptions of Toyoda's apology. After collecting the quantitative data, two focus group interviews were conducted in order to complement the quantitative research results.

Participants

The participants of the survey were 186 students at Texas A&M University in the United States. The mean age of participants was 27.66 with a standard deviation of 9.55. Of the participants, 68 (33.6 %) were male and 118 (63.4 %) were female. In addition, 87 (46.8 %) of the participants indicated that they were Chinese and 99 (55.2 %) were White Americans.

The participants of two focus group interview sessions were held with 6 participants from each group. Each focus group interview consisted of 3 males and 3 females who knew each other before the interview. According to scholars such as Liamputtong (2011), Morgan (1997), and Peek and Fothergill (2009), participants with homogeneous characteristics in terms of age, level of educational, and social and cultural backgrounds are appropriate to generate insight into participants' attitudes, beliefs, or values about a specific issue. Both groups consisted of friends who were classmates or bible study members.

Procedure

For Chinese participants, the researcher sent email invitations to the participants through the representatives of Grace Bible Chinese Mandarin Church and Chinese Student Association at Texas A&M University. For American participants, the researcher sent email invitations to students who were taking classes offered by three professors in the department of Teaching, Learning, and Culture. The participants completed an electronic questionnaire on Qualtrics.com. From 600 potential participants 186 responded, which constituted a response rate of 32.3 percent.

After analyzing survey data, among the survey participants, 6 participants from the Chinese group and the American group were invited for the group interviews. Each focus group interview session lasted approximately one hour and was facilitated by the researcher. The interview with Chinese students was conducted in English because they preferred to speak in English. When code switching was occurred, group members helped each other to use the right words in English or Chinese. The conversations were audio-recorded and then transcribed.

Instruments

Two instruments used in this study were a survey questionnaire and a focus group interview questionnaire. The researcher developed the survey questionnaire based on classroom discussions on business apologies in general and Toyota apology in particular. In addition, the literature on public apologies and the speech act of apology informed the construction of the survey. The survey questionnaire consisted of 22 items (see Appendix E). It included seven demographic questions and 11 Likert scale questions (1 least; 5 most). The Likert scale questions measured participants' perceptions of Toyoda's apology in terms of the necessity of apologizing, the non-verbal cues, the verbal cues, and the effectiveness of the apology. Four open-ended questions were used to explore participants' cultural expectations regarding Toyoda's apology and the key elements of a public apology.

The focus group interview questionnaire (see Appendix F) consisted of open-ended questions that were used to gain insight into participants' perceptions of Toyoda's

apology and their cultural expectations regarding the key verbal and non-verbal elements of a public apology. Probing questions were used to further clarify participants' answers.

Reliability

Four internal consistency estimates of reliability were computed for each subscale on the survey. Cronbach's alpha score of .7 or higher is desired for a high level of reliability (Pallant, 2009). Reliability depends on the study's sample size. According to Thorndike et al. (1991), a reliability coefficient of .50 is necessary for groups greater than 100. Cronbach's alpha of each construct ranged from .526 to .906. Thus, they were securely above the .50 recommendation. Table 5 depicts the internal reliability for each component of the survey.

Table 5. Internal consistency estimates for Toyota subscale and the total score

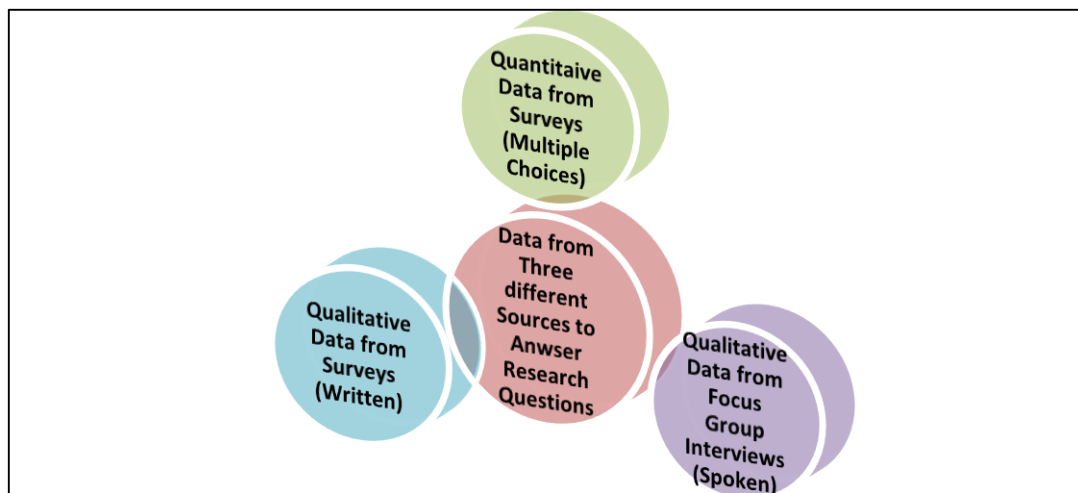
Subscales	No. of items	Cronbach's alpha
Component 1: The necessity of apologizing	2	.526
Component 2: The non-verbal cues	3	.768
Component 3: The verbal-verbal strategies	2	.770
Component 4: The effectiveness of the apology	4	.906
Total	11	.743

The member checking method suggested by Lincoln and Guba (1985) was used to establish the credibility of findings from interviews. Each participant of group interviews was invited to read the findings and review them for accuracy.

Data analysis

A methodological triangulation (see Figure 4) was used to enhance the trustworthiness of data analysis. It refers to the use of more than one method for gathering data (Denzin, 1970). Triangulation is defined to be “a validity procedure” as the researcher “search[es] for convergence among multiple and different sources of information to form themes or categories in a study” (Creswell & Miller, 2000, p. 126).

Figure 4. Toyota triangulation matrix



Quantitative data analysis

IBM SPSS 19 and Mplus were used to analyze survey data. Descriptive statistics were used to report the demographic information of respondents and to present the data. In addition, confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was conducted to test whether the data fit the hypothesized measurement model. Hypothesis for the CFI was that the proposed

four-factor model would be a good fit, with model fit as demonstrated by the comparative fit index (CFI) being .90 or larger, Tucker-Lewis index (TLI) being .95 or larger, the standardized root mean square residual (SRMR) being .05 or less, and the root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) being .06 or less (Hu & Bentler, 1999). These ranges are suggested in confirmatory factor analysis (Jackson et al., 2009). Additionally, one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted to test for group differences in evaluating apology.

Qualitative data analysis

Qualitative data analysis included written comments from the surveys and transcribed interview data. Lincoln and Guba (1985) suggested two general ways of analyzing qualitative data: One is “utilizing” and the other is “categorizing” (p. 203). Utilizing refers to separating raw data into small units to understand information and categorizing refers to organizing the utilized data into new categories to provide descriptive and inferential information.

Both written comments and interview data were coded to examine major and sub themes embedded in the qualitative comments. Data was broken down into themes according to topics. Themes were formed by grouping words, sentences, or phrases that had similar meanings. Keywords or phrases were highlighted with a pen, and then they were placed in the same category. The number of occurrences for each theme was recorded in word files (see Appendix I).

Results and findings

Quantitative data

Descriptive statistics were used to analyze the participants' perceptions of Toyota's apology. Average scores hold the following meanings for items: 1-1.49 indicates "strongly disagree", 1.5-2.24 "disagree", 2.25-2.99 "slightly disagree", 3-3.74 "slightly agree", 3.75-4.49 "agree", and 4.5-5 "strongly agree." Table 6 presents the means and standard deviations of items and the total mean of each component of the survey.

Table 6. Descriptive statistics of Toyota survey scores

Variables	Item no.	87 Chinese		99 Americans	
		Mean	SD	Mean	SD
<i>Component 1: The necessity of apologizing</i>	1. Severity of the offense	3.43	1.21	3.98	1.10
	2. Necessity of flying to the U.S.	3.99	1.09	4.04	0.94
	Total	3.70	0.88	4.01	0.91
<i>Component 2: The non-verbal cues</i>	3. Appropriateness of tone of voice	2.77	0.98	3.38	0.79
	4. Appropriateness of facial expressions	2.82	1.07	3.26	0.88
	5. Appropriateness of dress choice	3.48	0.98	4.22	0.61
	Total	3.02	0.85	3.62	0.58
<i>Component 3: The verbal strategies</i>	6. Explanation & promise of forbearance	2.79	0.97	3.56	0.87
	10. Taking responsibility	2.95	1.03	3.78	0.70
	Total	2.87	0.90	3.66	0.68
<i>Component 4: The effectiveness of the apology</i>	7. Congruence between verbal messages & non-verbal cues	2.77	1.09	3.56	0.87
	8. Sincerity of the apology	2.78	1.02	3.46	0.87
	9. Expressing feeling of regret	2.77	1.07	3.80	0.71
	11. Satisfaction with the apology	2.66	1.03	3.66	0.87
	Total	2.41	0.82	2.58	0.95

Component 1 displays participants' perceptions of the necessity of apologizing. It includes items 1 and 2. For "severity of the offense," the statistical results showed that more Americans ($M = 3.98$, $SD = 1.10$) than Chinese ($M = 3.43$, $SD = 1.21$) believed that the offense was severe. Related to "necessity of flying to the U.S.," more Americans ($M = 4.04$, $SD = 0.94$) than Chinese ($M = 3.99$, $SD = 1.09$) believed that Toyota's face-to-face apology in the U.S. was necessary. The total component means of Americans ($M = 4.01$, $SD = 0.91$) and Chinese ($M = 3.70$, $SD = 0.88$) showed that Americans evaluated "severity of the offense" higher than Chinese. Consequently, the need for the apology was rated higher by Americans as well.

Component 2 examines participants' perceptions of the non-verbal components of the apology. It includes items 3, 4, and 5. Related to "appropriateness of tone of voice," Americans ($M = 3.38$, $SD = 0.79$) believed more than Chinese ($M = 2.77$, $SD = 0.98$) that Toyota's tone was authentic. For "appropriateness of facial expressions," more Americans ($M = 3.26$, $SD = 0.88$) than Chinese ($M = 2.82$, $SD = 1.07$) believed that Toyota's facial expressions were appropriate. Related to "appropriateness of dress choice," more Americans ($M = 4.22$, $SD = 0.61$) than Chinese ($M = 3.48$, $SD = 0.98$) perceived that Toyota's dress choice was appropriate. The overall component means showed that more Americans ($M = 3.62$, $SD = 0.58$) than Chinese ($M = 3.02$, $SD = 0.85$) perceived Toyota's non-verbal cues positively.

Component 3 investigates participants' perceptions regarding the verbal components of the apology. It includes items 6 and 10. Related to "explanation & the promise of forbearance," more Americans ($M = 3.56$, $SD = 0.87$) than Chinese ($M =$

2.79, SD = 0.97) believed Toyoda's explanation of offense (Toyoda's comment on the cause of the recalls) and promise of forbearance (plans for managing quality control) were effective.

For "taking responsibility," more Americans (M = 3.78, SD = 0.70) than Chinese (M = 2.95, SD = 1.03) believed that Toyoda took responsibility for the offense. The total component means of Americans (M = 3.66, SD = 0.68) and Chinese (M = 2.87, SD = 0.90) indicated that more Americans perceived Toyoda's verbal strategies positively.

Component 4 addresses participants' perceptions of the effectiveness of the apology. It includes items 7, 8, 9, and 11. Related to "congruence between verbal strategies & non-verbal cues," more Americans (M = 3.56, SD = 0.87) than Chinese (M = 2.77, SD = 1.1) believed that Toyoda's verbal communication matched his non-verbal cues. For "sincerity of the apology," more Americans (M = 3.46, SD = 0.87) than Chinese (M = 2.78, SD = 1.03) believed that Toyoda's apology was sincere. For "expressing feeling of regret," more Americans (M = 3.80, SD = 0.71) than Chinese (M = 2.77, SD = 1.07) believed that Toyoda showed regret for the offense. Related to "satisfaction with the apology," more Americans (M = 3.36, SD = 0.87) than Chinese (M = 2.66, SD = 1.03) indicated satisfaction with Toyoda's apology. The overall component means of Americans 2.58 (SD = 0.95) and Chinese 2.41 (SD = 0.82) showed that both groups slightly disagreed that Toyoda presented his apology effectively.

The results of confirmatory factor analysis

A CFA of survey scores using Mplus was conducted to test the goodness of fit of a four-factor model. The theoretical formulation for the proposed four-factor model is

based on the literature on the speech act of apology, public apologies, and non-verbal communication. The four factors identified were the necessity of apologizing (factor 1), the non-verbal cues (factor 2), the verbal cues (factor 3), and the effectiveness of the apology (factor 4). The first CFA results showed that the correlation between factor 3 and factor 4 was 1.016. This result was not in a reasonable range because the correlation cannot exceed 1. Thus, another CFA excluding factor 4 was conducted. The CFA results indicated the three-factor model fit the data well (e.g., $\chi^2(11) = 26.651$, $p = .0052$; CFI = .958; TLI = .920; SRMR = .039; RMSEA = .087). Figure 5 illustrates the unstandardized factor loadings of the items and other parameter estimates in the three factor model.

Figure 5. Toyota CFA three-factor model

Note: Standard errors are presented in the parentheses

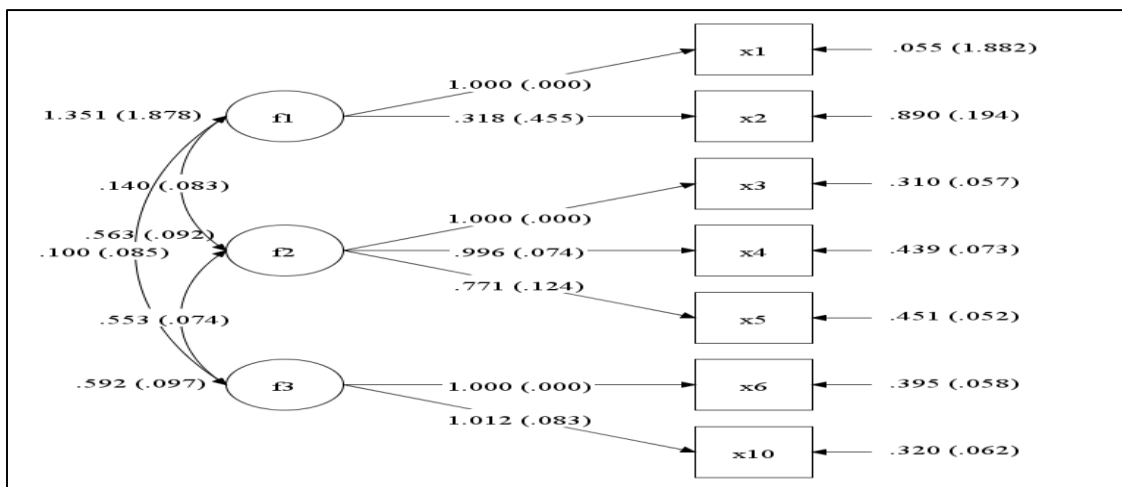


Table 7 reports the results of factor loadings and correlations between variables.

Hair, Black, Babin, and Anderson (2010) suggest that factor loadings of .40 and greater

are significant for a sample size of 200 participants. Standardized factor loadings ranged from .464 to .985 and thus, all items met the minimum criterion.

Table 7. Standardized estimated parameters for Toyota three-factor model

Factor loadings			
Item	f1	f2	f3
1	.985*		
2	.464*		
3		.803*	
4		.784*	
5		.653*	
6			.774*
10			.809*

Correlations			
	F1	F2	F3
F1	1		
F2	.161	1	
F3	.112	.959*	1

*p<.01

The statistical results showed that factor 2 and factor 3 were highly correlated with each other.

Factor 4 was tested on its own way using a one-factor model because the model was a saturated model with zero degree of freedom. The model fit was perfect. Figure 6 presents the unstandardized parameter estimates in the model.

Figure 6. Toyota CFA one-factor model

Note: Standard errors are presented in the parentheses

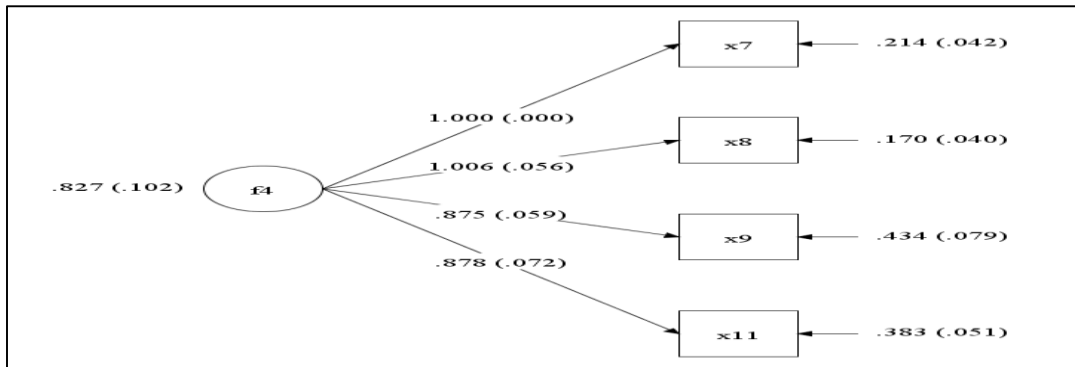


Table 8 presents standardized factor loadings. Standardized factor loadings ranged from .770 to .912.

Table 8. Standardized estimated parameters for Toyota one-factor model

Factor loadings	
Item	f4
7	.891*
8	.912*
9	.770*
11	.790*

*p<.01

Consequently, all items met the minimum criterion.

ANOVA results

Four ANOVAs were conducted to investigate participants' perceptions of Toyoda's apology. Bonferroni approach was used to control for Type I error. With this

method, each factor is tested at the alpha level for the ANOVA divided by the number of factors (i.e., $.05/4 = .125$). The first ANOVA was conducted to examine the difference between Chinese and Americans regarding factor 1. The independent variable, “the group,” included two levels: the Chinese group and the American group. The dependent variable was the composite scores of factor 1 (i.e. items 1 and 2). The ANOVA was not significant, $F(1, 184) = 5.265, p = .023 (p < .125)$. This result indicated that there was not a significant difference between the two groups in evaluating the necessity of Toyoda’s apology. Both groups felt Toyoda needed to apologize.

The second ANOVA was conducted to examine the difference between Chinese and Americans regarding the non-verbal cues of Toyoda’s apology. The dependent variable was the composite scores of factor 2 (i.e., items 3, 4, and 5). The ANOVA was significant, $F(1, 184) = 31.909, p = .000, \eta^2 = .148$. This result indicated that there was a significant difference between the two groups in evaluating the non-verbal cues of the apology. More Americans than Chinese evaluated the non-verbal cues of Toyoda’s apology positively.

The third ANOVA was conducted to examine the difference between Chinese and Americans regarding the verbal strategies of Toyoda’s apology. The dependent variable was the composite scores of factor 3 (i.e., items 6 and 10). The ANOVA was significant, $F(1, 184) = 46.358, p = .000, \eta^2 = .201$. This result indicated that there was a significant difference between the two groups in evaluating the verbal strategies of the apology. More Americans than Chinese evaluated the verbal strategies of Toyoda’s apology positively.

Last, the researcher conducted another ANOVA to examine the difference between Chinese and Americans regarding the effectiveness of Toyota's apology. The dependent variable was the composite scores of factor 4 (i.e., items 7, 8, 9, and 11). The ANOVA was significant, $F(1, 184) = 46.302, p = .000, \eta^2 = .201$. This result indicated that there was a significant difference between the two groups in appraising the effectiveness of the apology. More Americans than Chinese evaluated Toyota's apology positively.

Qualitative data

Content analysis was conducted for analyzing the qualitative data collected via surveys and interviews. Seven themes related to participants' perceptions of Toyota's apology emerged from these two qualitative data.

Theme 1. Face-to-face apology

Both Chinese and Americans indicated that Toyota needed to come to the U.S. A Chinese participant from the survey, Xia, stated that the severity of offense was high since it caused many people's deaths or injuries. Another Chinese participant from the interview, Hong, commented that Toyota needed to apologize in person to convey sincerity. Similarly, American participants pointed out that Toyota needed to put time, money, energy, and thought into his apology because the consequence of offense was high. According to John from the survey, the face-to-face apology was helpful to show sincerity in dealing with the situation. Another participant from the interview, Joshua, commented Toyota's face-to-face apology made him seem more sincere since he made a conscious effort to take the blame by flying to America.

Theme 2. Compensation

Chinese indicated that they were dissatisfied with Toyoda's apology since he did not offer any compensation. They emphasized that compensation plays a significant role in reducing customer dissatisfaction. During the interview, participants Fu and Hong strongly expressed that if they were Toyota's customers, they would not accept Toyoda's apology. The other participants further added that they paid attention to whether Toyoda provided the offended customers with compensation. They stressed that Toyoda should have addressed how the company would compensate the victims of car accidents and recipients of recalls. Unlike Chinese, Americans during the interview did not mention compensation. Some American participants from the survey pointed out that Toyoda should have announced compensation for the families directly affected by the deaths of those 52 people.

Theme 3. Verbal structure of the apology

Toyoda structured his apology in the following order: he took responsibility, explained the situation, expressed remorse, apologized, and stressed a promise of forbearance. Chinese indicated the verbal structure of Toyoda's apology was not organized well. According to them, Toyoda spent too much time talking about Toyota's philosophy and his family name on vehicles. In addition, Toyoda made an unacceptable excuse by saying "I myself, as well as Toyota, am not perfect." They commented that Toyoda should have switched the order to make his apology more acceptable. During the interview, Fu suggested Toyoda should have apologized at the beginning of his statement before he explained the philosophy and values of his company in detail. The

other participants further commented that if they were Toyota's customers, they would be more interested in compensation than Toyoda's philosophy.

In contrast, Americans indicated the structure of Toyoda's apology was well-organized. They felt that Toyoda's comments on Toyota's philosophy and his family name on vehicles strengthened the sincerity of the apology. According to Peter from the survey, Toyoda's verbal messages demonstrated that the defects of vehicles not only hurt the company but also brought shame upon himself. Likewise, during the interview, Matthew said that Toyoda's two comments made his apology believable and personal. The other participants added that they felt Toyoda truly wanted to make the situation right. The comments by Americans showed that they perceived the structure of Toyoda's apology more positively than Chinese.

Theme 4. Eye contact

Americans indicated they had difficulty reading Toyoda's emotions due to his lack of eye contact. According to David from the survey, Toyoda should have made more eye contact to convey his sincerity. Another participant, Claire, suggested that he should have looked at the audience and into the camera. During the interview, John commented that Toyoda read the script in a way that looked forced and programmed. According to him, Toyoda's delivery was robotic and did not convey his thoughts/feelings. The other participants agreed that Toyoda seemed to be following an assignment.

In contrast, Chinese perceived Toyoda made enough eye contact. For instance, a Chinese participant from the interview, Hao expressed that Toyoda's eye contact

conveyed his embarrassment. Similarly, another participant, Wen, commented that Toyoda maintained enough eye contact. The other participants indicated that they were also satisfied with Toyoda's eye contact. The comments made by Chinese and Americans showed that they had different cultural expectations regarding the amount and method of eye contact. It seems that Chinese do not expect to receive as much eye contact from an apologizer as Americans do.

Theme 5. Tone of voice

Both Chinese and Americans indicated that Toyoda's tone of voice did not sound remorseful and sincere. However, they had different opinions on conveying sincerity through tone of voice or speech rate. Americans commented that Toyoda should have practiced intonation to make his apology sound sincere. In contrast, Chinese emphasized that Toyoda's voice should have been filled with deep regret and sorrow. In addition, he should have spoken slowly while lowering his tone of voice to carry sincerity.

According to Fu from the Chinese focus group, an apologizer's slow speed rate indicates that he/she contemplates what he/she says. Another Chinese participant, Xue, explained that an apologizer's low tone of voice indicates his/her feelings of regret or shame.

In contrast, Americans emphasized that Toyoda should have changed his intonation according to the content of the apology in order to convey his emotions. According to Rebecca from the survey, Toyoda's tone of voice sounded authoritative rather than apologetic. She suggested that Toyoda should have used apologetic words with appropriate intonation to convey a sense of sorrow. Another participant, Peter, described a calm and caring tone of voice as appropriate for an apologizer. James

commented that he did not expect Toyoda to apologize like an American. Similarly, the other participants indicated that they did not apply the same criteria to Toyoda because he is not a native English speaker. Thus, his monotone voice was acceptable.

Theme 6. Formal dress

In the congressional hearing, Toyoda was wearing a gray suit with a white dress shirt and striped blue tie (see Appendix J). Both Chinese and Americans evaluated Toyoda's formal dress as appropriate. However, they had different expectations of an apologizer's choice of clothing. Chinese believed that an apologizer needs to wear a dark colored suit and white shirt with a solid colored tie. According to Wang from the survey, an apologizer's dress shows his/her attitude in dealing with the situation. He further added that in China, when people apologize publicly they dress formally. Similarly, all Chinese participants from the interview agreed that dressing formally is essential for an individual who apologizes publicly.

In contrast, Americans indicated that an apologizer's choice of clothing may be changed according to the apologizer's location and whom he/she apologizes to. According to Noah from the survey, if Toyoda's apology would have been issued on the website, he might have dressed less formally. Similarly, during the interview, David commented that apologizing to parents was different than apologizing to an entire nation. The other participants pointed out that an apologizer's choice of clothing does not determine the sincerity of the apology. Thus, the choice of clothing can be flexible depending on the severity of the offense, the relationship between parties, and the place in which the apology is happening.

Theme 7. Facial expressions

Chinese and Americans evaluated Toyoda's facial expressions differently.

Chinese indicated that Toyoda's facial expressions did not reflect his remorseful feelings. According to Yan from the survey, his facial expressions did not show sorrow when sending his condolences to the Saylor family. Another participant, Fei, commented that Toyoda looked nervous rather than regretful. Likewise, all participants from the Chinese focus group indicated that they disliked his facial expressions. In this regard, during the interview, Fu suggested that Toyoda should have shown his grief for the Saylor family and regret for the offense.

In contrast, Americans indicated that Toyoda's serious facial expressions showed his serious attitude in dealing with the situation. For instance, Katherine from the survey described his facial expressions as sincere, sad, and somber. In addition, Americans paid attention to the location of the apology. David from the survey pointed out that Toyoda was surrounded by many cameras and microphones. Thus, the setting did not allow Toyoda to express much emotion. Similarly, during the interview, Peter commented that it was evident that Toyoda was in an uncomfortable situation. The other participants agreed that his facial expressions showed his sincerity.

Summary

Quantitative and Qualitative data from the survey and the interview indicated that Chinese and Americans paid attention to the verbal strategies and non-verbal cues of Toyoda's apology. Compared to Americans, Chinese evaluated Toyoda's apology more negatively. An interesting finding was both Chinese and Americans indicated that they

applied different criteria in evaluating Toyoda's apology because Toyoda is Japanese. In addition, he is using English as a foreign language. Chinese indicated that they were dissatisfied with the apology since they had specific cultural expectations regarding the way a Japanese leader apologizes publicly. Americans indicated that they focused on understanding Toyoda's verbal messages because his non-verbal cues such as eye contact and tone of voice were different from those of Americans. Cultural differences between the Chinese and American participants in appraising a Japanese CEO's public apology issued in English showed that culture played a significant role in understanding information shared in cross-cultural communication.

Discussion and conclusion

This study examined four research questions. The first research question asked: Is there a significant difference between Chinese and American university students' perceptions regarding the necessity of Toyoda's apology? The ANOVA result showed that there was not a significant difference between them in appraising the necessity of Toyoda's apology. The Chinese and American participants believed that Toyoda needed to apologize. Overall, both groups indicated that Toyoda chose the right method of delivering his apology to convey sincerity. This result is consistent with apology experts' suggestions regarding when a leader should apologize and how to deliver an apology. A leader should apologize when the offense results in serious consequences and when the leader is supposed to be the right person to take full responsibility for the offense (Kellerman, 2006). A face-to-face apology is better than a written apology in

ascertaining the apologizer's sincerity, unless the offended person would feel threatened or afraid to meet (Engel, 2001).

The second research question asked: Is there a significant difference between Chinese and American university students' perceptions regarding the non-verbal cues of Toyoda's apology? The ANOVA result showed that there was a significant difference between them in appraising the non-verbal cues of the apology. Four themes were found. More Chinese than Americans evaluated Toyoda's eye contact positively. Americans indicated that Toyoda should have made more eye contact. The findings of this study show that Americans put a great value on maintaining eye contact in communication (Johannasen , 2010). Americans evaluate avoiding eye contact as a negative trait that can be characterized by adjectives such as shy, unassertive, sneaky, or depressed (Sue, 1981). Eye contact is a culturally influenced non-verbal communication behavior (Johannasen, 2010; Samovar et al., 2010).

Both Chinese and Americans evaluated that Toyoda's tone of voice did not sound remorseful. The statistical difference between them showed that more Americans than Chinese evaluated Toyoda's tone of voice positively. Americans commented that if Toyoda varied intonation, his emotions could have been more intelligible. Interestingly, Americans indicated that they were willing to understand Toyoda's monotone as an excuse because Toyoda is not a native speaker of English. This result is consistent with the findings of Lindemann (2005) and Rubin (1990): The more Americans exposed to intercultural sensitization with non-standard accents, the more they react positively toward foreign-accented speech. Moreover, according to Chinese, Toyoda should have

talked slowly by contemplating the meaning of the words. Especially, he should have lowered his voice when expressing condolences. These results show that different cultures ascribe different meanings to qualities of vocal cues (Anderson, 2008; Hall et al., 2005). Individuals' accuracy in interpreting others' emotions expressed via vocal cues is greater within one's own culture than cross-culturally (Scherer, 2003).

Both Chinese and Americans evaluated Toyoda's formal dress as appropriate. Chinese indicated that an individual should always wear business professional clothing for a public apology. For them, dressing professionally with a suit and tie is a very necessary part of conveying sincerity while apologizing in public. In contrast, Americans indicated that the choice of clothing may be changed according to the severity of the offense, the relationship between parties, and the apology's location. These results provide some evidence to the findings of previous studies. The choice of clothing carries cultural meanings that can be shared among the members of social groups (McCracken & Roth, 1989). An individual's perception of another person differs according to what is worn (O'Neal & Lapitsky, 1991).

Chinese felt that Toyoda's facial expressions did not show his remorse. In contrast, Americans described Toyoda looked sincere and serious. The difference between the Chinese and American participants shows that group membership has an influence on the decoding of emotion displays (Elfenbein & Ambady, 2003; Kirouac & Hess, 1999; Matsumoto & Ekman, 1989).

The third research question asked: Is there a significant difference between Chinese and American university students' perceptions regarding the verbal strategies of

Toyota's apology? Chinese perceived the verbal structure of the apology as disorganized. They suggested that the apology should have been at the beginning of the statement. In addition, Toyota should have offered specific compensation to the families of victims and injured people. In contrast, Americans perceived the verbal strategies as well-organized. They indicated that the verbal messages showed customers how Toyota took the situation seriously and what he would do to recover the trustworthiness of Toyota. These results are consistent with the findings of previous studies. Cultural differences exist between Chinese and Americans in the use of apology strategies (Han & Cai, 2010; Park & Guan, 2006). Offering compensation reinforces the sincerity of the apology since it desires to reconcile while repairing the damaged trust (Greiff, 2008; Wohl et al., 2011). Consumer perceptions of corporate competence, benevolence, and integrity when responding to negative publicity play a significant role in determining the extent of consumer forgiveness (Chung & Berverland, 2006; Xie & Peng, 2009).

The fourth research question asked: Is there a significant difference between Chinese and American university students' perceptions regarding the effectiveness of Toyota's apology? The ANOVA result showed that there was a significant difference between them in appraising the effectiveness of Toyota's apology. More Americans than Chinese perceived that the apology was effective. This result provides some evidence to previous studies: Cultural differences exist between Chinese and Americans in the use of apology strategies (Han & Cai, 2010; Park & Guan, 2006).

In sum, the findings of qualitative and quantitative data showed that both groups evaluated Toyota's apology based on their cultural schemas of the verbal and non-

verbal elements of a public apology. Chinese pointed out that Toyoda's apology was different from the traditional Japanese apology. For instance, Toyoda did not bow his head. Based on their experience, they pointed out that bowing a head is an important non-verbal gesture to convey sincerity in a Japanese apology culture. In contrast, Americans indicated that they used a different criterion for appraising Toyoda's apology because he is not a native speaker of English. In addition, they expected his apology would be different from an apology performed by an American. Consequently, although Americans were not fully satisfied with his non-verbal cues such as eye contact and tone of voice, they evaluated Toyoda's apology as effective based on the content of his verbal messages. To sum up, more Americans than Chinese perceived Toyoda's apology positively.

Implications of the study results

The analysis of similarities and differences between the Chinese and American students' perceptions of Toyoda's apology helped identify the key verbal strategies and non-verbal cues of a public apology addressed to multicultural audiences. In this regard, the current research suggests that business leaders consider the following tips as they prepare a public apology addressed to culturally diverse customers. First, they need to pay attention to the role of verbal and non-verbal cues in communication. Without a clear understanding of apology usage in different cultures, business leaders are unable to issue effective apologies that will reduce negative publicity toward their companies after committing an offense. Second, business leaders in a cross-cultural communication

should arm themselves with specific knowledge about how to best convey sincerity before issuing an apology.

Limitation and recommendations for future research

This study provided insight into Chinese and American university students' perceptions regarding the verbal and non-verbal elements of one public apology. This study has a limitation that provides a potential direction for further research. The participants of the study were limited to Chinese and American university students enrolled in Texas A&M University. Therefore, in order to generalize the findings of this study, future research needs to expand to previous/current Toyota's customers who were directly affected by the unintended acceleration deaths and recalls. Another limitation was that data was collected from the Chinese students who resided in the U.S. Thus, there is a possibility that they have acculturated to American culture. In this regard, future research needs to collect surveys from Chinese participants who are in China and to conduct focus group interviews with them. Moreover, all participants are university students. Consequently, the samples of this study are not representative of all generations. In order to generalize the findings, future research needs to collect data from participants of various ages. Additional data from them will provide useful insight on whether cultural differences exist between generations in appraising the verbal and non-verbal elements of a public apology.

CHAPTER V

COMPARISON/CONTRAST AND CONCLUSION

Chapter I introduced the topic of this study. Chapter II presented a comprehensive review of the literature related to the speech act of apologizing in terms of pragmatics, speech act theory, public apologies, and non-verbal communication. Chapter III (Study 1) examined Chinese and American university students' perceptions of a public apology made by Reed Hastings, the CEO of Netflix, while Chapter IV (Study 2) investigated Chinese and American university students' perceptions of a public apology made by Akio Toyoda, the CEO of Toyota. In addition, Chapter III and IV presented the process of conducting the study, discussed the methodology used in collecting the data, and reported the findings gathered from the surveys and the focus group interviews. Chapter V has two parts. The first part of Chapter V compares/contrasts the verbal strategies and non-verbal cues in Hastings' and Toyoda's apologies. The second part of this chapter synthesizes the findings of Study 1 and Study 2 while drawing key conclusions that concern the characteristics of public apologies in the 21st century.

Introduction

The purpose of this research was to examine how an individual's culture influences his/her evaluations of public apologies. The researcher purposely chose Hastings and Toyoda's apologies because they were different in terms of each company's history, offense severity, CEO's ethnicity, and setting formality.

Company's history

Netflix, Inc. is an American company established in 1997 and is headquartered in California, in the U.S. Netflix provides customers with a DVD rental service by mail and an Internet streaming service. In April, 2013 Netflix had approximately 37.6 million streaming subscribers (29.8 Million in the U.S. and 7.75 million outside of the U.S. (News.yahoo.com). In contrast, Toyota Motor Corporation was founded in 1933 and is headquartered in Toyota city in Japan. Toyota is known as one of the world's largest car companies and has maintained a long-standing reputation for one of the best carmakers. Toyota manufactured its 200-millionth vehicle in July 2012 (Flynn, 2012). Although Netflix is a smaller company and has a shorter history than Toyota's, both companies are similar in that they have multicultural customers all over the world.

The severity of the offense

Hastings' apology was in response to customer dissatisfaction related to the company's policy and price changes. In July 2011, Hastings announced that Netflix separated into two divisions: one for DVD rentals by mail called Quikster and one for online rental called Netflix. Moreover, he decided to increase service prices as much as 60 %. After the policy and price changes, Hastings lost approximately 800,000 of its 25 million customers over two months. In addition, Netflix's shares had fallen from \$ 304.79 in early 2011 to \$169.29 in September 15, 2011 (Seitz, 2011). Hastings uploaded his video apology on Netflix's blog and website more than two months later (September 19) after the policy and price changes which resulted in customers'

dissatisfaction. He apologized for poorly communicating with customers regarding the price increases. He tried to explain why the company had separated the service.

In contrast, Toyoda's apology was due to a serious offense. On August 28, 2009, there was a highly publicized fatal car accident in the U.S., involving a Lexus ES 350. Four passengers of a family riding inside the car were killed due to the sudden acceleration. This accident triggered Toyota's largest recalls. In 2010, Toyota recalled approximately 8.1 million of vehicles globally across its sub-brands (Toyota website). On February 5, 2010, Toyoda apologized publicly at a press conference in Tokyo. However, the U.S. House Oversight and Government Reform Committee asked Toyoda to attend a hearing scheduled for February 24, 2010 to examine the recalls. At the hearing, Toyoda said that he took all responsibility for the recalls. He apologized to the United States Congress and American Toyota owners for the safety defects in the company's cars which led a series of incidents and accidents that had caused the deaths of 50 Americans. Toyoda was involved in a severe offense that hurt the customers physically, emotionally, and financially.

CEO's ethnicity

The owner of each company has different cultural and linguistic backgrounds. Reed Hastings is an American and his apology was issued in the U.S. However, Akio Toyoda is Japanese so he flew to the U.S. to address his American customers in their own community. Hastings and Toyoda's apologies were similar in that the main target audience was Americans, as well as multicultural customers residing in the U.S.

Setting

The atmosphere of each apology was different. Hastings' setting was informal and relaxed; whereas, Toyoda's was formal. For instance, Hastings was sitting on a patio chair with his laptop computer and sunglasses on the table. In contrast, Toyoda was in a congressional hearing surrounded by many cameras and reporters.

The verbal strategies of Hastings' and Toyoda's apologies

The researcher transcribed Hastings' apology (see Appendix K) in order to compare and contrast the verbal apology strategies used by Hastings and Toyoda. For Toyoda's apology, the researcher used a full text transcribed by a CBS news reporter, Brian Montopoli. To see CBS transcript, go to CBS website <http://www.cbsnews.com/news/akio-toyoda-congressional-testimony-i-am-deeply-sorry-full-text> (captured for preservation and provided in Appendix J). Before analyzing the apology strategies used by Hastings and Toyoda, it is important to recall the components of an apology speech act set. As discussed in Chapter II, any or a combination of the following strategies can be used to make an apology (Goei et al, 2007; Haris et al., 2006; Meier, 1998; Olshtain & Cohen, 1983):

1. An expression of Apology (E.g., *I apologize, I am sorry.*)
2. An explanation or account of the situation (E.g., *The traffic was terrible, the bus was late.*)
3. An acknowledgement of responsibility (E.g., *It is my fault.*)
4. An offer of repair (E.g., *I will pay for the damage.*)
5. A promise of forbearance (E.g., *This will not happen again.*)

6. Appealing for forgiveness (E.g., *Please forgive me.*)
7. An expression of remorse (E.g., *I feel terrible about this.*)
8. A denial of intent (E.g., *I never meant to upset you.*)
9. An expression of repentance (E.g., *I am such an idiot.*)

Hastings’ apology took 3 minutes and 23 seconds; whereas, Toyoda’s apology took 10 minutes and 23 seconds. Hastings and Toyoda used 580 and 1622 words respectively. The verbal contents of Hastings’ apology and those of Toyoda’s apology were analyzed in terms of opening, body, and closing while taking into account the nine apology strategies. The verbal contents are presented in the order of their occurrence. Table 9 presents the opening of each apology. Hastings’ opening time (8 s) was shorter than Toyoda’s (38 s).

Table 9. Opening

Moves	Netflix	Moves	Toyota
Greeting	“Hi”	Thanks	“Thank you Chairman Towns.”
Self-introduction	“I’m Reed Hastings, CEO & a co-founder of Netflix.” (4 s)	Self-introduction	“I am Akio Toyoda of Toyota Motor Corporation.” (4 s)
Self-introduction	“I’m Andy Rendich & I head up DVD operations in Netflix.” (8 s)	Small talk	“I would first like to state that I love cars as much as anyone, & I love Toyota as much as anyone.” (11 s)
		Commitment	“I take the utmost pleasure in offering vehicles that our customers love, & I know that Toyota’s 200,000 team members, dealers, & suppliers across America feel the same way.” (38 s)

Hastings’ opening included a greeting and self-introduction. In contrast, Toyoda’s opening included thanks, self-introduction, small talk, and commitment. Hastings began his speech by using an informal expression “hi” instead of a formal

“hello” and then introduced himself. Following that, Andy Rendich briefly introduced himself.

Toyoda started his speech by thanking Chairman Towns and then he introduced himself. He continued his greeting by using small talk related to his love toward cars and his company. Furthermore, he expressed his and Toyota employees’ pleasure in serving customers. It should be noted that Hastings’ greeting was less formal than Toyoda’s. According to Koehn (2013), the use of formal language during corporate apologies is generally better than informal speech in establishing a bond with the offended person. Toyoda’s use of formal language in the greeting could be related to the consequences of the offense, which resulted in deaths and injuries. In addition, his targeted audience was mainly adults attending the hearing, as well as families of victims and customers. However, the informal tone of Hastings’ apology could be attributed to the nature of the offense, which was minor in that it involved only a moderate fee increase for each customer. Moreover, he assumed that his audience was relatively young.

Table 10 depicts the body of each apology. In the body, Hastings used three out of the nine apology strategies; whereas, Toyoda used five apology strategies.

Table 10. Body

Moves	Netflix	Moves	Toyota
An expression of apology	Hastings: “We are making this video today to apologize in person or at least on camera, for something that we did recently.” (17 s)	Explanation An acknowledgment of responsibility	Toyoda: “However, in the past few months, our customers have started to feel uncertainty about the safety of Toyota’s vehicles.” “I take full responsibility for that” (54 s)

Table 10. Continued

Moves	Netflix	Moves	Toyota
An explanation of the situation	Hastings: “A few months ago ... we realized overtime DVD & streaming were becoming more and more different....I didn’t make the communication, & we didn’t explain why we were doing it.” (51 s)	Thanks	Toyoda: “I would like to express my appreciation to Chairman Towns & Ranking Member Issa, as well as the members of the House Oversight & Government Reform Committee, for giving me this opportunity to express my thoughts today.” (1 min 50 s)
Explanation of new service	Rendich: “You know DVD service has been around for over 12 years....we’re gonna have them for the Xbox 360, the PS3, and the Wii.” (2 min 53 s)	Topic explanation	“I would like to focus my comments on three topics – Toyota’s basic philosophy regarding quality control, the cause of the recalls, & how we will manage quality control going forward.” (2 min 5s)
An expression of remorse	Hastings: “I wish we had handled the communication in a forthright manner directly from me & explained those choices.” (3 min 20 s)	A promise of forbearance	“[First; Safety, Second; Quality, Third; Volume] priorities became confused & we were not able to [...] listen to customers’ voices to make better products has weakened somewhat.” (4 min 53 s)
		Explanation	
		An acknowledgement of responsibility	“I regret that this has resulted in the safety issues described in the recalls we face today.” (5 min 9 s)
		An expression of remorse	“I am deeply sorry for any accidents that Toyota drivers have experienced.” (5 min 23 s)
		An expression of apology + intensifier	“Especially, I would like to extend my condolences to the members of the Saylor family, for the accident in San Diego. I would like to send my prayers again....” (5 min 34 s)
		Sending condolences & prayers	“I will do everything in my power to ensure that such a tragedy never happens again.” (5 min 47 s)
		A promise of forbearance	“I will also strive to devise a system in which we can surely execute what we value.” (6 min 50 s)
		A promise of forbearance	“Third, I would like to discuss how we plan to manage quality control as we go forward what we lacked was the customers’ perspective.” (7 min 25 s)
		3 promises of forbearance	“we will devise a system in which customers’ voices around the world we will form a quality advisory group.... we will invest heavily in quality in the U.S....” (8 min 48 s)
		A promise of forbearance	Toyoda: “Even more importantly, I will ensure that members of the management team actually drive the cars I intend to further improve on the quality of Toyota vehicles and fulfill our principle of putting the customers first.” (9 min 56 s)
		A promise of forbearance	

Hastings used three apology strategies in the following order: he apologized, explained the situation, apologized again, and then expressed remorse. Right after the opening, Hastings used the first apology strategy (i.e., an expression of apology) by explaining the purpose of the video: “to apologize in person at least on camera, for something” that they did. He expressed his duty to apologize by using the active verb formulated in present tense. It should be noted that the time to the apology word “apologize” was 17 seconds from the time Hastings started his speech.

Following that, Hastings started explaining why he decided to separate Netflix into two divisions (i.e., an explanation or account of the situation). He apologized for not having provided enough information to customers regarding the policy and price changes (i.e., the offense). However, he did not apologize for the drastic price increase (60%), which made most of the customers unhappy. Hastings continued defending his decision for the big changes by emphasizing the potential growth of online TV streaming services globally. In addition, he introduced Andy Rendich, the new CEO of DVDs by mail service and then let Rendich spend two minutes and two seconds (more than half of the total time) explaining the changed DVD rental service and the available rental games.

When Rendich finished introducing the games, Hastings started closing the video by saying “to wrap up.” He consecutively used two more apology strategies. He apologized for the way he communicated with customers regarding the policy changes (i.e., an expression of apology). It should be noted that Hastings apologized twice. He apologized at the beginning (19 s) and the end (2 min 57 s) of the video. In addition, he

expressed his regret by indicating that he should have clearly communicated with customers before the changes took place (i.e., an expression of remorse).

In contrast, Toyoda used five apology strategies in the following order: he took responsibility, explained the situation, expressed remorse, apologized, and provided promises of forbearance regarding specific plans he devised to prevent future tragedies. After the opening, Toyoda explicitly announced that he was the one to blame for the offense (i.e., an acknowledgment of responsibility). In addition, he indicated that the purpose of his speech was to explain to Americans, as well as global Toyota customers, how the company considers the quality and safety of Toyota's vehicles seriously. Moreover, he expressed his appreciation to Chairman Towns, Ranking member Issa, and the members of Committee on Oversight and Government Reform for giving him the opportunity to testify.

Toyoda went on to say that his comments would focus on three topics to show the company's commitment to his customers. He discussed Toyota's basic philosophy regarding quality control, the cause of the recalls, and the plans for managing quality control. Before he started talking about the philosophy of Toyota's quality control, he accepted responsibility by saying "[he], as well as Toyota, [is] not perfect." He emphasized that Toyota did not intentionally hide the defects of its products nor did they avoid confronting safety recalls (i.e., a denial of intent).

Toyoda moved on to the second topic, the cause of the recalls, and then used three apology strategies consecutively. He explained in detail about the cause of offense for two minutes and seven seconds (i.e., an expression or account of the situation).

Furthermore, Toyoda commented that the lack of paying attention to customers’ voices led the company to face massive recalls (i.e., an acknowledgment of responsibility). He expressed his remorse for not listening to customers’ needs (i.e., an expression of remorse) and then apologized for the accidents that customers experienced by shifting from “... we face today” to “I am deeply sorry for any accidents that Toyota drivers have experienced” (i.e., an expression of apology + intensifier).

Following his apology, Toyoda sent his condolences and prayers to one of the victim’s families and then moved on to the third topic, how Toyota will manage quality control going forward (i.e., a promise of forbearance). He consecutively used “a promise of forbearance” strategy eight times before he moved on to the closing. He promised that he will do his best to prevent future tragedies, strive to devise a system for executing what Toyota values, devise a system for improving the recall decision making process, form a quality advisory group consisting of outside experts from the world, invest money for improving product quality, and put the customers first.

Table 11 presents the closing of each apology. Hastings’ closing included only thanks; whereas, Toyoda’s closing consisted of personalization, intensifiers, and thanks.

Table 11. Closing

Moves	Netflix	Moves	Toyota
Thanks	Hastings: “For all of your patience, I say thank you.” (3 min 23 s)	Personalization	“My name is on every car.” (10 min 9 s)
		A promise of forbearance + intensifiers	“You have my personal commitment that Toyota will work vigorously and unceasingly to restore the trust of our customers.” (10 min 19 s)
		Thanks	“Thank you.” (10 min 23 s)

Hastings' closing was shorter than Toyoda's. Hastings and Toyoda were similar in that they finished their speech with an expression of "thank you." The way Hastings used "thank you" was specific. He sent his appreciation to customers who were patient for the big changes. Again, Hastings did not address the price increase, which was the main reason of customer dissatisfaction.

Toyoda used the last "promise of forbearance" strategy before closing the testimony. He emphasized his personal commitment by referring to his name on Toyota vehicles. In addition, he stressed the strength of his commitment by using two intensifiers: "vigorously" and "unceasingly."

The content analysis showed that Hastings and Toyoda were different in constructing the verbal contents of their apologies. Hastings used three out of the nine apology strategies; whereas, Toyoda used five strategies. Hastings and Toyoda were similar in using three of the same apology strategies: they apologized explicitly, explained the cause of the offense, and expressed their remorse for their wrongdoings. Toyoda used two more apology strategies than Hastings: an acknowledgement of responsibility and a promise of forbearance.

Toyoda included all of the key components of a sincere apology. Kellerman (2006) suggests that a sincere apology consists of four components: (1) an acknowledgement of the wrongdoing, (2) an acceptance of responsibility, (3) an expression of regret, and (4) a promise of forbearance. According to Kellerman, Hastings partially used two of them (i.e., an acknowledgement of the wrongdoing and an expression of regret). He just admitted one fault by apologizing for the way he handled

communication with the customers regarding the policy and price changes. However, Hastings did not provide customers with the specific reason for price changes and did not provide any promise of forbearance. It indicated that unlike Toyota, Hastings did not take responsibility for the company's price increase. Research on corporate apologies has shown that a corporation cannot succeed in accomplishing a heartfelt apology without an explicit statement of taking responsibility (Coombs, 2007; Hearit, 1994; Patal & Reinsch, 2010). An apology with perceptions of corporational responsibility leads a corporation to reduce reputation damage and gain customer forgiveness (Bachman & Guerrero, 2006; Chung & Berverland, 2006; Hearit, 1994; Pace et al., 2010).

In addition, Hastings did not offer any compensation to his customers (e.g., a free month bill). If he was concerned about customers' needs and wants, he should have offered some kind of compensation, like a free month bill, to the customers. According to Amstutz (2005) and Wohl et al. (2011), an apology without promises of amends, such as money or goods given for the offended person, can seem like insincere words. Research has shown that the apology with the promise of compensation reinforces the sincerity of the apology since it strengthens the desire of reconciliation while repairing the damaged trust (Bachman & Guerrero, 2006; Chung & Berverland, 2006; Greiff, 2008; Wohl et al., 2011).

Toyota clearly showed his concern for the customers by expressing sympathy and condolences to one of the families. Through these expressions, Toyota signaled to the offended people that he felt regret for the pain that was caused by his company. Toyota's acceptance of responsibility had legal and financial consequences for his

company. Knowing that, he publicly and explicitly accepted responsibility for losing sight of quality control of his products.

Clarifying responsibility and expressing remorse increase customers' positive perceptions of the corporation's reputation. Research has shown that the more a corporation explicitly accepts responsibility with a detailed explanation and expression of remorse for the offense, the less anger customers feel toward the corporation (Bachman & Guerro, 2006; Chung & Berberland, 2006; Pace et al., 2010). Although Hastings' last apology strategy was "an expression of remorse," he did not address the customers' main concern (i.e., price changes). Hastings just stated his regret for the way he had communicated with customers regarding the policy and price changes. Thus, he did not address the customers' complaints regarding the price increase.

Toyoda's last apology was "a promise of forbearance." Toyoda repeated his commitment to prevent future offenses in many different ways. The repetitive use of "a promise of forbearance" strategy showed that Toyoda acknowledged the consequences of the offense. He fully admitted that Toyota became complicit in the escalating crisis because the company ignored customers' voices. Besides, Toyoda clearly demonstrated that he will reform Toyota's internal structures and policies to limit any chance of future wrongdoing. Furthermore, Toyoda provided the audience with the specific plans that his company will go through to rebuild customer trust.

Compared to Toyoda's apology, Hastings' apology was belated. The timing of an apology influences the recipients' perceptions of the apology. Research on the speech act of apology and public apologies has shown that the timeliness of an apology influences

the apology's outcome (Hargie et al., 2010; Kellerman, 2006). When an apology comes either too early or too late, it can be ineffective since it is likely to be viewed as insincere (Blanchard & McBride, 2003; Fineman & Gabriel, 2010). Thus, researchers emphasize that an apologizer needs to make an apology in a timely manner not to arouse suspicion in the mind of the recipients (Frantze & Bennigson, 2005; Shuman, 2000). In Toyota's case, Toyoda apologized in Japan first and then flew to the U.S. Therefore, Toyoda's apology at the hearing was his second public apology. In Netflix's case, Hastings' apology occurred more than two months after the policy and price changes.

It should be noted that the consequence of Hastings' apology was due to a minor offense (i.e., policy and price changes and the lack of communication). On the other hand, that of Toyoda's was related to physical injuries and deaths. The act of apologizing after accidents or injuries potentially creates legal problems for a company (Fitzpatrick & Rubin, 1995). In fact, Toyoda was involved in hundreds of lawsuits over acceleration problems (Ramsey, 2012). In this regard, it is evident that Toyoda's apology was reviewed by officers and lawyers who were concerned with protecting the corporation from lawsuits. To sum up, Toyoda's apology included necessary elements of a sincere apology. Although Hastings' apology also included main apology strategies, the apology was issued more than two months after the offense. Moreover, Hastings did not address the customers' real concern regarding the price changes and did not provide any compensation that can be a token of sincerity. The following section compares/contrasts non-verbal cues in Hastings' and Toyoda's apologies.

Non-verbal cues in Hastings' and Toyoda's apologies

Non-verbal cues used by an apologizer may reveal more than what the apologizer reveals through verbal apology strategies. The speech acts not only depend on their linguistic content, but are also presented (Lakoff, 2001; Maddux et al., 2011; Park & Guan, 2009). The recipients tend to regard a speaker's conflicting messages between verbal and non-verbal as an indicator of deception or duplicity (Mabry, 2002). Thus, when a speaker sends non-verbal cues different from his/her spoken words, the speaker may arouse doubts among interlocutors.

Culture is the most significant factor that influences individual's perceptions of non-verbal cues in communication (Matsumoto, 1989). Research has shown that cultural differences exist in non-verbal communication (Elfenbein & Ambady, 2002; Fernández et al., 2000; Hofstede, 1991). Individuals from the same culture share cultural norms for using, decoding, or judging the appropriateness of non-verbal cues (Bitti & Garotti, 2011; Elfenbein & Ambady, 2002). Thus, interlocutors from different cultural backgrounds may misunderstand each other's expressed non-verbal messages (Matsumoto, 1989; Mesquita & Frijda, 1992; Scherer et al., 2001).

Non-verbal messages during apologies can be sent through eye contact, vocal cues, facial expressions, and the choice of clothing. Research has shown that eye contact is a culturally-influenced, non-verbal communication behavior (Johannasen, 2010; Samovar et al., 2010). For Americans, eye contact is regarded as a positive value, indicating interest, attentiveness, honesty, or attraction (Johannasen, 2010). Thus, conversing without eye contact is perceived as rude, disinterested, inattentive, shy,

and/or deceptive (Sue, 1981). However, in Asian cultures, continuous eye contact can be considered very impolite because it directly challenges authority (Johannasen, 2010). For instance, in China direct eye contact is not common, especially when walking in public places because direct eye contact is considered intimidating (Axtell, 1998).

Vocal cues provide the listener important additional information to the spoken message. Low pitch is often associated with a vocal power cue; whereas, high pitch is a sign of tension, submissiveness, or childish immaturity (Leary & Kowalski, 1995). According to Ketrow (1990), fast speech rates have more persuasive impact than slow rates. Tone of voice varies from culture to culture because each culture ascribes different meanings to qualities of vocal cues (Anderson, 2008; Hall et al., 2005). As a result, an individual's accuracy in identifying others' emotions through vocal expressions is more easily recognized within one's own culture than cross-culturally (Scherer, 2003).

Facial expressions enable individuals to easily understand the emotions of other people. Research has shown that individuals are generally more accurate at judging emotions that are expressed by members of their own cultural group rather than by members of a different cultural group (Elfenbein & Ambady, 2003; Ekman, 2003; Kirouac & Hess, 1999; Matsumoto & Ekman, 1989). The ability to read emotions in facial expressions is a very necessary communication skill in developing successful relationships (Ekman, 2003).

An individual's choice of clothing also plays an important means of non-verbal communication that can evoke different judgments and interpretations among interlocutors. Individuals use clothing, type of suit, shoes, color, and fit of garments to

make a good first impression (Johnson et al., 2002). The findings of Damhorst and Reed (1986) showed that clothing color and features were important factors that influenced the interviewer's evaluation of the job applicants. Similarly, other researchers found that individuals' perceptions of other people differ depending on what is worn (Johnson et al., 2002; McCracken & Roth, 1989). What an advertiser wears influence individuals' perceptions of the credibility of the message source as well as their intention to purchase the product (O'Neal & Lapitsky, 1991).

The non-verbal cues used by Hastings and Toyoda were different in terms of eye contact, choice of clothing, facial expressions, setting, and posture. During the apology, Hastings maintained eye contact with the camera and also was smiling while he made the apology. His smile could be perceived as condescending since he was supposed to show regret for the customer's lack of satisfaction. Consequently, his smile did not fit the mood of a public apology. Moreover, the setting was too relaxed and informal because Hastings was sitting on the patio chair with his laptop computer and sunglasses on the table. His clothing (bright, unbuttoned blue shirt) was causal and informal. Consequently, his posture of relaxed sitting, smiling, and casual dress played a role in decreasing the sincerity of his apology.

On the other hand, unlike Hastings, Toyoda did not make eye contact because he was reading his testimony. However, his facial expressions were more appropriate than Hastings' in that he looked very serious and nervous. Toyoda's setting was more formal than Hastings' because he was in the congressional hearing. Like Hastings, Toyoda was sitting on a chair, but he was surrounded by many people, cameras, and microphones. In

addition, Toyoda was wearing a gray suit with a white dress shirt and striped blue tie. Considering the apology’s location, Toyoda’s dress choice was appropriate. Toyoda did not vary his tone of voice according to the textual and apology strategies that he used. His voice sounded authoritative rather than apologetic. Overall, except for eye contact, Toyoda’s non-verbal cues were more appropriate than Hastings’.

As discussed in the literature on non-verbal communication, the findings of Study 1 and Study 2 showed that non-verbal cues used by Hastings and Toyoda impacted the participants’ perceptions of each apology. Related to Hastings’ non-verbal cues, five themes were found: (1) eye contact, (2) clothing, (3) smiling, (4) posture, and (5) setting. For Toyoda’s non-verbal cues, four themes were found: (1) eye contact, (2) tone of voice, (3) formal dress, and (4) facial expressions. Table 12 summarizes perceived non-verbal cues from Study 1 and Study 2 that influenced the participants’ evaluations of each apology.

Table 12. Non-verbal cues used by participants in evaluating each apology

Participants’ Evaluations	Hastings’ Apology	Toyoda’s Apology
Negatively perceived non-verbal cues by Chinese	Smiling	Unremorseful facial expressions
	Dressing casually Informal setting	Unremorseful tone of voice
Positively perceived non-verbal cues by Chinese	Eye contact	Dressing professionally Eye contact
Negatively perceived non-verbal cues by Americans	Smiling	The lack of eye contact
	Dressing casually Inattentive body posture Informal setting	Monotone voice
Positively perceived non-verbal cues by Americans	Eye contact	Dressing professionally Facial expressions

As indicated in Table 12, the Chinese and American participants evaluated Hastings' and Toyoda's non-verbal cues negatively or positively based on their cultural schemas. They were similar in that they paid attention to an apologizer's facial expressions in appraising the effectiveness of an apology. For Hastings' apology, they negatively appraised Hastings' smiling. This result shows that as discussed by Lakoff (2011), the presence of smiling while apologizing negatively influenced the participants' perceptions of Hastings' apology. In this regard, an individual who apologizes publicly needs to avoid smiling. However, for Toyoda's apology, the Chinese and American participants appraised Toyoda's facial expressions differently. The Chinese participants believed that Toyoda's facial expressions did not show his remorse; whereas, the American participants described his facial expressions as serious and sincere. This result indicates cultural differences between the Chinese and American participants in appraising an apologizer's emotions. Moreover, it shows that group membership has an influence on the decoding of emotion displays (Elfenbein & Ambady, 2003; Ekman, 2003; Kirouac & Hess, 1999; Matsumoto & Ekman, 1989).

Related to an apologizer's choice of clothing, the Chinese and American participants were similar in that they negatively perceived Hastings' casual dress and positively perceived Toyoda's formal dress. This result indicates that the clothing color worn by an individual in a certain situation has an impact on perceived characteristics of the wearer (Damhorst & Reed, 1986; Johnson et al., 2002). It also shows that an individual's perception of another person differs depending on what is worn (O'Neal &

Lapitsky, 1991). In this regard, it seems that for a CEO, dressing professionally for a public apology will be the safe choice to avoid criticism regarding the choice of clothing.

Unlike Hastings' apology, one unique recurring theme in Toyoda's apology was his tone of voice. The Chinese and American participants were similar in that they evaluated Toyoda's tone of voice did not sound remorseful. However, they had different perspectives on how to convey sincerity through a tone of voice or speech rate. According to the Chinese participants, Toyoda needed to speak slowly while lowering his tone in order to convey remorseful emotions. The American participants emphasized the necessity of varying intonation depending on the meaning of words. The difference between the Chinese and American participants regarding an apologizer's tone of voice shows that different cultures ascribe different meanings to qualities of vocal cues (Anderson, 2008; Hall et al., 2005).

For an apologizer's eye contact, the Chinese and American participants perceived Hasting's eye contact positively; whereas, they perceived Toyoda's eye contact differently. They had different cultural expectations regarding the amount and method of eye contact. According to the Chinese participants, Toyoda maintained enough eye contact. For the American participants, Toyoda should have made more eye contact. These differences between the Chinese and American participants indicate that eye contact is a culturally influenced non-verbal communication behavior (Johannasen, 2010; Samovar et al., 2010). It also shows that Americans put a great value on maintaining eye contact in communication (Johannasen, 2010; Sue, 1990). The next

section below presents the Chinese and American participants' overall perceptions of each apology based on the statistical results.

Participants' overall perceptions of each apology

To synthesize the participants' overall perceptions of each apology, the quantitative results are summarized in Table 13 in terms of four components: (1) the necessity of apologizing, (2) the verbal strategies, (3) the non-verbal cues, and (4) the effectiveness of the apology.

Table 13. Statistical results regarding participants' evaluations of each apology

Participants' Evaluations	Hastings' Apology	Toyoda's Apology
The necessity of apologizing	There was no significant difference between the two groups.	There was no significant difference between the two groups.
The verbal strategies	There was no significant difference between the two groups.	There was a significant difference between the two groups.
The non-verbal cues	There was no significant difference between the two groups.	There was a significant difference between the two groups.
The effectiveness of the apology	There was no significant difference between two groups.	There was a significant difference between two groups.

For Hastings' apology, both the Chinese and American participants felt his apology was not heartfelt. Similarly, they perceived that both Hastings' verbal messages and non-verbal cues did not convey sincerity. The content analysis of Hastings' apology

showed that Hastings partially used two of Kellerman (2006)'s four essential apology strategies: an acknowledgement of the wrongdoing and an expression of regret.

According to Kellerman, in order to make his apology sincere, Hastings should have included two more strategies: an acceptance of responsibility and a promise of forbearance. In addition, the participants' perceptions regarding Hastings' non-verbal cues showed the importance of sending non-verbal cues matching up with verbal messages while apologizing. This result indicated that both the message content and the perceived quality of non-verbal cues profoundly influenced the participants' perceptions in appraising the effectiveness of Hastings apology.

The Chinese and American participants were different from each other in appraising Toyoda's verbal strategies, non-verbal cues, and the effectiveness of the apology. The content analysis of Toyoda's apology showed that he used all of the key components of a sincere apology suggested by Kellerman (2006). The American participants believed that Toyoda's verbal messages were sincere. They described the structure of Toyoda's apology as well-organized. They felt that Toyoda's comments on the company's philosophy and his family name on cars strengthened the sincerity of the apology. In contrast, the Chinese participants believed that Toyoda's apology was ineffective because he did not organize the testimony well. For them, Toyoda spent too much time talking about the philosophy and the family name. In this regard, the Chinese indicated that Toyoda should have apologized from the beginning of his speech. They also believed that Toyoda should have provided compensation during the apology.

The difference between the two groups regarding compensation may be explained by differences in consumer protection laws between China and America in regard to product recalls and claim for car accidents. Compared to the Chinese participants, it is evident that the American participants were more familiar with the process of recalls and compensation in the U.S. Thus, they were satisfied with Toyota's acknowledgment of responsibility. They may have known that Toyota could not specifically mention compensation because his company was involved in numerous lawsuits due to unintended gas-pedal acceleration. They may also have expected that the specific compensation regarding recalls, injuries, and deaths would be distributed in the future. In fact, the settlement happened approximately three years later. On December 26, 2012, Toyota announced a settlement in the lawsuit (Ramsey, 2012).

In addition, the Chinese participants commented that Toyota's non-verbal cues were different from those of a traditional Japanese apologizer. They indicated that Toyota should have bowed and lowered his voice to convey sincerity. This result supports previous studies that cultural differences exist between the Chinese and Americans in the use of apology strategies (Han & Cai, 2010; Park & Guan, 2006, 2009).

On the other hand, the American participants indicated that they expected Toyota's apology would be different from an apology performed by an American. Thus, although they were not fully satisfied with Toyota's non-verbal cues such as tone of voice and eye contact, they felt Toyota apologized in a professional manner. Related to Toyota's tone of voice, the American participants especially indicated that they did not

apply the same criteria to Toyoda, as he is not a native speaker. Thus, his monotone voice was acceptable. This result supports the findings of Lindemann (2005) and Rubin (1990): The more Americans exposed to intercultural sensitization with non-standard accents, the more they react positively toward foreign-accented speech. Moreover, the Americans were aware that Toyoda was reading his apology. As a result, he could not maintain sufficient eye contact. In this regard, Toyoda's lack of eye contact was acceptable, too. To sum up, the American participants perceived Toyoda's apology as effective; whereas, the Chinese participants perceived it as ineffective.

Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to examine Chinese and American students' perceptions of public apologies issued by Reed Hastings, the CEO of Netflix and Akio Toyoda, the CEO of Toyota. The literature review on public apologies in Chapter II indicated that there were relatively few cross-cultural investigations regarding cultural differences in evaluating the effectiveness of public apologies. The contribution that this research makes to the extant literature is that it is the first study to develop and establish instruments to measure individuals' perceptions of public apologies. The researcher conducted two independent studies by collecting both quantitative and qualitative data through two survey questionnaires and four focus group interviews. The overall findings of Study 1 and Study 2 indicated that culture played a substantial role in the Chinese and American participants' evaluations of public apologies. Cultural differences between the two groups in their evaluations of two public apologies have proven to be statistically

significant. The statistical results are further supported by the analysis results from the qualitative data.

The researcher discovered some significant cross-cultural differences in evaluating the verbal and non-verbal elements of public apologies, which are worth consideration in the interaction of the individuals from Chinese and American cultures. Related to the key verbal elements of a sincere apology, both the Chinese and American participants indicated that the presence of offering compensation has an impact on their evaluations of the sincerity of the apology. This result indicates that compensation may play a significant role in reducing the offensiveness of an action (Amstutz, 2005; Greiff, 2008; Wohl et al., 2011). The promise of compensation with the formal apology seems to mitigate the offended individuals' negative feelings toward the corporation.

Related to the key non-verbal elements of a sincere apology, the Chinese participants emphasized the importance of dressing professionally, remorseful facial expressions, and lowering voice tone. In contrast, the American participants emphasized the importance of maintaining eye contact and varying intonation to convey the sincerity of an apology. In addition, they indicated that the choice of clothing may be changed according to the severity of the offense, the apology's location, and the relationship between the apologizer and the offended person. Although the Chinese and American participants had different cultural expectations regarding the key verbal and non-verbal elements of public apologies, they were the same in emphasizing the importance of sending facial expressions matching up with verbal messages.

Final remarks

Corporate leaders working for global organizations need to acquire sophisticated communication skills. They are supposed to interact with individuals from various linguistic and cultural backgrounds. Competent global leaders should know how to communicate with culturally diverse customers while reducing the potential for misunderstanding. In that sense, corporate leaders need to acquire knowledge of culture-specific values that will enable them to ensure better understanding among interlocutors. Moreover, it will bring positive outcomes to the company. In this regard, before performing a public apology, corporate leaders need to have a clear understanding of the elements of a sincere public apology. Furthermore, they need to recognize diverse cultural values in apologizing and the significant factors that affect the recipients' decisions on accepting an apology.

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APPENDIX A

Dear *****,

I messed up. I owe you an explanation.

It is clear from the feedback over the past two months that many members felt we lacked respect and humility in the way we announced the separation of DVD and streaming and the price changes. That was certainly not our intent, and I offer my sincere apology. Let me explain what we are doing.

For the past five years, my greatest fear at Netflix has been that we wouldn't make the leap from success in DVDs to success in streaming. Most companies that are great at something – like AOL dialup or Borders bookstores – do not become great at new things people want (streaming for us). So we moved quickly into streaming, but I should have personally given you a full explanation of why we are splitting the services and thereby increasing prices. It wouldn't have changed the price increase, but it would have been the right thing to do.

So here is what we are doing and why.

Many members love our DVD service, as I do, because nearly every movie ever made is published on DVD. DVD is a great option for those who want the huge and comprehensive selection of movies.

I also love our streaming service because it is integrated into my TV, and I can watch anytime I want. The benefits of our streaming service are really quite different from the benefits of DVD by mail. We need to focus on rapid improvement as streaming technology and the market evolves, without maintaining compatibility with our DVD by mail service.

So we realized that streaming and DVD by mail are really becoming two different businesses, with very different cost structures, that need to be marketed differently, and we need to let each grow and operate independently. It's hard to write this after over 10 years of mailing DVDs with pride, but we think it is necessary: In a few weeks, we will rename our DVD by mail service to “Qwikster”. We chose the name Qwikster because it refers to quick delivery. We will keep the name “Netflix” for streaming.

Qwikster will be the same website and DVD service that everyone is used to. It is just a new name, and DVD members will go to qwikster.com to access their DVD queues and choose movies. One improvement we will make at launch is to add a video games upgrade option, similar to our upgrade option for Blu-ray, for those who want to rent Wii, PS3 and Xbox 360 games. Members have been asking for video games for many years, but now that DVD by mail has its own team, we are finally getting it done. Other improvements will follow. A negative of the renaming and separation is that the Qwikster.com and Netflix.com websites will not be integrated.

There are no pricing changes (we're done with that!). If you subscribe to both services you will have two entries on your credit card statement, one for Qwikster and one for Netflix. The total will be the same as your current charges. We will let you know in a few weeks when the Qwikster.com website is up and ready.

For me the Netflix red envelope has always been a source of joy. The new envelope is still that lovely red, but now it will have a Qwikster logo. I know that logo will grow on me over time, but still, it is hard. I imagine it will be similar for many of you.

I want to acknowledge and thank you for sticking with us, and to apologize again to those members, both current and former, who felt we treated them thoughtlessly. Both the Qwikster and Netflix teams will work hard to regain your trust. We know it will not be overnight. Actions speak louder than words. But words help people to understand actions.

Respectfully yours,

-Reed Hastings, Co-Founder and CEO, Netflix

p.s. I have a slightly longer explanation along with a video posted on [our blog](#), where you can also post comments.

APPENDIX B

PERCEPTION SURVEY ON THE NETFLIX APOLOGY OF 2011 –VIDEO

Please indicate your opinion after each statement or questions by circling the one that best describes how you feel or think personally.

Section 1-Demographic Information:

Q1. What is your age range?

1. 18-23 2. 24- 29 3. 30-35 4. 36-41 5. 42-47 6. Over 48

Q2. Gender: 1. Male 2. Female

Q3. Please indicate which degree you are seeking.

1. Bachelor's degree 2. Master's degree 3. Doctoral degree 4. Other (Please specify) _____

Q4. Which best describes your race/ethnicity?

1. Chinese 2. White 3. African American 4. Hispanic 5. Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander 6. Middle Eastern/Arab 7. American Indian 8. Other (Please specify) _____

Q5. What is your first language?

1. English 2. Chinese 3. Other (Please specify) _____

Q6. Were you born in the United States?

1. Yes 2. No 3. Other (Please specify) _____

Q7. How long have you lived in the United States?

1. Grew up & Raised in the U.S.A 2. 1-2years 3. 3-4 years. 4. 5-7 years
5. 8-10 years 6. More than 11years

Please provide your e-mail contact information if you want to. (Your e-mail contact information is required to be entered into the prize drawing.)

Section 2 – Familiarity with Netflix

Q1. Had you ever heard of the Netflix Company before you saw this video?

1. Yes. I heard about this company through family, friends, or media such as internet, TV, radio
 2. No. I just heard about it today.
- Q2. Are you a customer of Netflix?
1. Yes
 2. No
 3. I was a customer previously but not now

Section 3- Recipient Responses on Reed Hastings' Apology

Netflix CEO Reed Hastings sent an apology e-mail titled "An explanation and some reflections" to Netflix customers regarding the company's recent policy changes that took place on July 12, 2011 and consumer reactions to those changes. At the same time, he posted this video on the Netflix blog/website. The policy changes were that Netflix would split into two different companies: one for DVD rentals by mail (called Qwikster) and one for streaming videos (called Netflix). Customers were very dissatisfied with the fact that they had to pay for two separate accounts, costing \$6 (60% rate price increase) more per month to keep both services. After changing the service, Netflix lost approximately 800,000 of its 25 million Netflix customers over two months and the value of Netflix stock dropped 52% from \$304.79 (early 2011) to \$169.25 (September 15, 2011). The apology was issued over two months (September 19, 2011) after the offense occurred.

Q1. How would you rate the intensity/severity of the offense?

1. Not at all offensive
2. Slightly offensive
3. Moderately offensive
4. Very offensive
5. Exceedingly offensive

Q2. How do you rate the necessity of an apology for this offense?

1. Not at all necessary
2. Slightly necessary
3. Moderately necessary
4. Very necessary
5. Exceedingly necessary

Please share under what circumstances would you think a business leader should apologize publicly?

Q3. How do you rate the effectiveness of Hastings' apology on justifying customers' negative responses regarding the company's recent policy changes?

1. Not at all effective
2. Slightly effective
3. Moderately effective
4. Very effective
5. Exceedingly effective

Q4. How do you rate the degree of congruence (i.e., the quality of corresponding) between Reed Hastings' non-verbal communication and the words that he was saying?

1. Not at all congruent
2. Slightly congruent
3. Moderately congruent
4. Very congruent
5. Exceedingly congruent

Q5. How do you rate the appropriateness of Hastings' smiling while apologizing?

1. Not at all appropriate
2. Very inappropriate
3. Moderately appropriate
4. Very appropriate
5. Exceedingly appropriate

Please share your cultural expectations regarding non-verbal cues (e.g., facial expressions, eye contact, gestures, choice of dress, tone of voice, etc.) that help the person who is apologizing to convey a sincere apology.

Please describe how a person who is apologizing can convey sincerity through non-verbal cues.

Q6. How do you rate the appropriateness of Hastings' choice of dress?

1. Not at all appropriate
2. Very inappropriate
3. Moderately appropriate
4. Very appropriate
5. Exceedingly appropriate

Q7. How do you rate the appropriateness of Hastings' eye contact while apologizing?

1. Not at all appropriate
2. Slightly appropriate
3. Moderately appropriate
4. Very appropriate
5. Exceedingly appropriate

Q8. How did Hastings' non-verbal behavior meet your cultural expectations regarding the sincerity of the apology?

1. Did not meet my expectations
2. Somewhat less than I expected
3. Somewhat met my expectations
4. Adequately met my expectations
5. Completely met my expectations

Please comment on how Hastings' non-verbal behavior met or did not meet your expectations.

Q9. How do you rate the degree of his taking responsibility for the offense?

1. Not at all responsible
2. Slightly responsible
3. Moderately responsible
4. Very responsible
5. Exceedingly responsible

Q10. How do you rate the degree of sincerity of Reed Hastings' apology?

1. Not at all sincere
2. Very insincere
3. Moderately sincere
4. Very sincere
5. Exceedingly sincere

Q11. If you were a customer, would you have been satisfied with Reed Hastings' apology?

1. Not at all satisfied
2. Slightly satisfied
3. Moderately satisfied
4. Very satisfied
5. Exceedingly satisfied

Q12. Do you agree that Hastings should have offered some form of compensation to his customers to make his apology more sincere (e.g., one month free service)?

1. Strongly disagree
2. Disagree
3. Undecided
4. Agree
5. Strongly Agree

Q13. Overall, if you were a Netflix customer, how likely would you accept Hastings' apology?

1. Not at all likely to accept
2. Very unlikely to accept
3. Moderately unlikely to accept
4. Very likely to accept
5. Exceedingly likely to accept

Thank you very much for your time.

APPENDIX C

NETFLIX 2011 VIDEO APOLOGY FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEW

QUESTIONNAIRE

Evaluations of Hastings' Apology:

1. What is your first impression of Hastings' apology?
 2. If you were a Netflix customer, would you have been satisfied with Hastings' apology?
 3. If you were a Netflix customer, would you accept Hastings' apology?
 4. What is one thing you like about Hastings' apology?
 5. What is one thing you dislike about Hastings' apology?
- Non-verbal Communication:
6. Which of the non-verbal cues (e.g., facial expressions, eye contact, body movements, and gestures) was the most influential in deciding the sincerity of Hastings' apology for you?
 7. Would you tell us the way you are evaluating the sincerity of Hastings' apology?
 8. How did you feel about Hastings' smiling while apologizing? (Does it match up your cultural expectations?)
 9. How did you feel about Hastings' making eye contact while apologizing? (Does it match up your cultural expectations?)
 10. How did you feel about Hastings' choice of dress while apologizing? (Does it match up your cultural expectations?)
 11. How did you feel about Hastings' apology filming location while apologizing? (Does it match up your cultural expectations?)
 12. How did you feel about Hastings' tone of voice while apologizing? (Does it match up your cultural expectations?)
 13. How did you feel about Hastings' body movements while apologizing? (Does it match up your cultural expectations?)

Expectations for a Heartfelt Public Apology:

14. When you think of public apologies, what comes to mind?
15. Please describe the key elements of a heartfelt public apology that will be broadcasted to a mass audience who have different cultural backgrounds.
16. Our purpose today was to find out more about your cultural expectations regarding the key elements of a public apology. What other suggestions do you have for business leaders who are planning to announce a public apology to the people of your country?

APPENDIX D

NETFLIX. THEMES, EXAMPLES OF CODE WORDS, AND NUMBER OF OCCURRENCES FOR WRITTEN COMMENTS FROM THE SURVEYS

	Examples of Code Words	Number of Comments from Chinese	Number of Comments from Americans
When should a leader apologize publicly?	When the leader lost public's trust	19	19
	When the leader did something wrong personally	9	5
	When the company caused customer's dissatisfaction	47	59
Expectations of public apologies	Serious facial expressions with no smile	39	50
	Continuous eye contact	12	46
	Formal setting	48	11
Evaluations regarding Hastings' non-verbal cues	Condescending smile	18	20
	Eye contact	0	10
	Casual dressing	36	21
	Informal setting	8	13
	Inattentive body movements	13	37

NETFLIX. THEMES, EXAMPLES OF CODE WORDS, AND NUMBER OF
OCCURRENCES FOUND IN FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEW

Example Code Words	Positive Comments by Chinese	Positive Comments by American	Negative Comments by Chinese	Negative Comments by American
Justification of the offense		3	4	4
Accept or reject the apology			6	7
Satisfied or dissatisfied with the apology			6	7
No compensation			6	
Attention was distracted by new CEO introduction				3
Selling product	1		2	5
Scripted/Rehearsed				6
Relaxed setting	2		3	13
Condescending smile			6	6
Eye contact	3	5		1
Color too bright			1	4
Clothing too casual			3	6
Body movements	2	3	1	5

APPENDIX E

PERCEPTION SURVEY ON TOYOTA 2010 APOLOGY

Please indicate your opinion after each statement or questions by checking the one that best describes how you feel or think personally.

Section 1-Demographic Information:

Q1. In which of the following age categories do you fall?

1. 18-23 2. 24- 29 3. 30-35 4. 36-41 5. 42-47 6. Over 48

Q2. Gender: 1. Male 2. Female

Q3. Please indicate which degree you are seeking.

1. Bachelor's degree 2. Master's degree 3. Doctoral degree
4. Other (Please specify)_____

Q4. Which best describes your race/ethnicity?

1. Chinese 2. White 3. African American 4. Hispanic 5. Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander 6. Middle Eastern/Arab 7. American Indian 8. Other (Please specify)

Q5. What is your first language?

1. English 2. Chinese 3. Other (Please specify) _____

Q6. Were you born in the United States?

1. Yes 2. No 3. Other (Please specify) _____

Q7. How long have you lived in the United States?

1. Grew up & Raised in the U.S.A 2. 1-2years 3. 3-4 years. 4. 5-7 years 5. 8-10 years 6. More than 11years

Please provide your e-mail contact information if you want to. (Your e-mail contact information is required to be entered into the prize drawing.)

Section 2- Recipient Responses on Akio Toyoda's Apology

In the congressional testimony on Wednesday, February 24, 2010, Toyota CEO, Akio Toyoda publicly apologized to the United States Congress and American Toyota owners for the safety defects in the company's cars which led to the deaths of 52 Americans and worldwide recalls (Choi & Chung, 2012). The safety defects were known to be related to

the faulty of sticky accelerator pedal caused the accelerator pedal getting to stick in the floor mats (Madslie, 2010).

Participants will be asked to watch a video and then answer the following questions:

Q1. How would you rate the intensity/severity of the offense?

1. Not at all offensive
2. Slightly offensive
3. Moderately offensive
4. Very offensive
5. Exceedingly offensive

Q2. Do you think that it was necessary for Toyoda to fly to the U.S. to make the apology for this offense?

1. Not at all necessary
2. Slightly necessary
3. Moderately necessary
4. Very necessary
5. Exceedingly necessary

Please share why do you think Toyoda needed to come or did not need to come to America to apologize publicly?

Q3. In general, how do you rate the authenticity of Toyoda's apology when considering the words he spoke (words communication) compared to what you felt from his tone of voice?

1. Not at all authentic
2. Slightly authentic
3. Moderately authentic
4. Very authentic
5. Exceedingly authentic

Please share your cultural expectations regarding the tone of voice that will help the person who is apologizing to convey apology sincerity.

Q4. How do you rate the appropriateness of Toyoda's facial expressions during his apology?

1. Not at all appropriate
2. Slightly appropriate
3. Moderately appropriate
4. Adequately appropriate
5. Exceedingly appropriate

Q5. How do you rate the appropriateness of Toyoda's choice of dress?

1. Not at all appropriate
2. Slightly appropriate
3. Moderately appropriate
4. Very appropriate
5. Extremely appropriate

Please share your cultural expectations regarding conveying sincerity through the choice of clothing while apologizing.

Q6. How do you rate the appropriateness of Toyoda's comment on the cause of the recalls and how the company will manage quality control going forward during his apology?

1. Not at all appropriate
2. Slightly appropriate
3. Moderately appropriate
4. Very appropriate
5. Extremely appropriate

Q7. How do you rate the degree of congruence (i.e., the quality of corresponding) between Toyoda's non-verbal communication and the words that he was saying?

1. Not at all congruent
2. Slightly congruent
3. Moderately congruent
4. Very congruent
5. Exceedingly congruent

Please share your cultural expectations regarding conveying sincerity through non-verbal cues such as eye contact, body posture, or apology place.

Q8. How did Toyoda's apology meet your cultural expectations regarding the sincerity of his apology?

1. Did not meet my expectations
2. Somewhat less than I expected
3. Somewhat met my expectations
4. Exactly met my expectations
5. Exceedingly met my expectations

Q9. How do you rate the degree to which Toyoda was sorry for the incident?

1. Not at all sorry
2. Slightly sorry
3. Moderately sorry
4. Very sorry
5. Exceedingly sorry

Q10. How do you rate the degree to which Toyoda accepts responsibility for the offense?

1. Not at all responsible
2. Slightly responsible
3. Moderately responsible
4. Very responsible
5. Exceedingly responsible

Q11. If you were a customer, would you have been satisfied with Toyoda's apology?

1. Not at all satisfied
2. Slightly satisfied
3. Moderately satisfied
4. Very satisfied
5. Extremely satisfied

Q12. Do you agree that Toyoda's comment on Toyota's philosophy regarding quality control make his apology more sincere?

1. Strongly disagree
2. Disagree
3. Undecided
4. Agree
5. Strongly Agree

Q13. After watching Toyoda's apology, how likely would you buy Toyota's cars in the future?

1. Not at all likely to buy
2. Slightly likely to buy
3. Moderately likely to buy
4. Very likely to buy
5. Extremely likely to buy

Thank you very much for your time.

APPENDIX F

TOYOTA 2010 APOLOGY FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEW QUESTIONNAIRE

Evaluations of Toyoda' Apology:

1. What is your first impression of Toyoda's apology?
2. If you were a Toyota customer, would you accept Toyoda's apology?
3. If you were a Toyota customer, would you have been satisfied with Toyoda's apology?
4. What is one thing you like about Toyoda's apology?
5. What is one thing you dislike about Toyoda's apology?
6. Please comment on why the sincerity of Toyoda's apology met your expectations?
7. Please comment on why the sincerity of Toyoda's apology did not meet your expectations?
8. Do you think that Toyoda's comment on Toyota's philosophy regarding quality control make his apology more sincere?

Expectations for a Heartfelt Public Apology:

9. When you think of public apologies, what comes to mind?
10. What do you expect from a public apology?
11. Under what circumstances would you think a business leader should apologize publicly?
12. Would you describe the key elements of a heartfelt public apology that will be broadcasted to a mass audience who have different cultural backgrounds?

Implication for a Future Public Apology:

13. What advice would you give to Toyoda in order to increase the sincerity of his verbal apology?
14. Do you feel there are any changes necessary for enhancing the sincerity of Toyoda's non-verbal communication during his apology?
15. Our purpose today was to find out more about your cultural expectations regarding the key elements of a public apology. What other suggestions do you have for business leaders who are planning to announce a public apology to the people of your country?

APPENDIX G

TOYOTA. THEMES, EXAMPLES OF CODE WORDS, AND NUMBER OF OCCURRENCES FOUND IN WRITTEN COMMENTS FROM THE SURVEYS

Theme	Examples of Code Words	Number of Comments from Chinese	Number of Comments from Americans
Fly to America to apologize	Yes. Severe offense caused the deaths of 52 people	30	42
	Yes. To show his sincerity for the offended people	13	5
	No. He should have apologized to global customers	1	3
	No. Via a letter, video, or Toyota's Website	1	4
	No. Caused by a conflict of interest as the U.S. government owned shares in General Motors	1	1
Expectations regarding an apologizer's tone of voice	Toyoda's voice reflected sincerity	5	19
	The monotone of his voice did not reflect sincerity	5	25
	Sound remorseful, sincere while talking slowly in a serious voice	29	0
	Sound remorseful, sincere while having inflection with emotion	0	48
Expectations regarding an apologizer's	Toyoda's formal dress was appropriate	50	71

choice of dress			
The sincerity of Toyoda's apology met or did not meet my expectations.	His apology met my expectation	21	58
	His apology did not meet my expectation	27	31

TOYOTA. THEMES, EXAMPLES OF CODE WORDS, AND NUMBER OF OCCURRENCES FOUND IN GROUP INTERVIEWS

Example Code Words	Positive Comments by Chinese	Positive Comments by American	Negative Comments by Chinese	Negative Comments by American
A sincere apology or not		3	2	
The length of apology was too long or not		6	4	
Accept the apology or not		6	6	
Satisfied with the apology or not		6	6	
Well-organized content or not	2	6	4	
Apologizing in English		3		
Serious facial expression	4	6	2	
Difficult to read his feeling due to the same tone of voice			6	
Too much explanation for the philosophy of company	2	6	4	

Reading the script was too slow	2	2	3	4
Words reflected the sincerity of his apology	4	6	2	
Eye contact			1	6
Toyota's philosophy regarding quality control was necessary	2	6	4	
Public figures such as politicians, business leaders, athletes, & actors	6	6		1
Dark colored clothing	6	3		
Formal clothing	6	6		
Separating apology for each culture while hiring public relation experts	1	3		
Offering compensation	6	2		

APPENDIX H

PROJECT TITLE: CHINESE AND AMERICAN STUDENTS' PERCEPTION OF PUBLIC APOLOGIES

You are invited to take part in a research study being conducted by Si Chun Song, a researcher from Texas A&M University. The information in this form is provided to help you decide whether or not to take part. If you decide to take part in the study, you will be asked to sign this consent form. If you decide you do not want to participate, there will be no penalty to you, and you will not lose any benefits you normally would have.

Why Is This Study Being Done?

The purpose of this study is to examine cultural factors influence participants' perceptions regarding the key elements of a heartfelt public apology.

Why Am I Being Asked To Be In This Study?

You are being asked to be in this study because you are Chinese English as a second language students or American students who are enrolled in Texas A&M University.

How Many People Will Be Asked To Be In This Study?

24 people (participants) will be invited to participate in this study locally. Overall, a total of 24 people will be invited at Harrington building of Texas A&M University.

What Are the Alternatives to being in this study?

No, the alternative to being in the study is not to participate

What Will I Be Asked To Do In This Study?

You will be asked to watch a video including a public apology. A facilitator will give participants specific questions related to this video. Your participation in this study will last up to 1.5 hours.

Will Photos, Video or Audio Recordings Be Made Of Me during the Study?

An audio recording will be taken.

Language for Required recordings:

The researchers will make an audio recording during the study so that the researcher can analyze the content of discussion in order to examine participants' perceptions of a public apology. If you do not give permission for the audio recording to be obtained, you cannot participate in this study.

Language for Optional recordings:

The researchers will make an audio recording during the study so that the research can analyze the content of discussion in order to examine participants' perceptions of a public apology only if you give your permission to do so. Indicate your decision below by initialing in the space provided.

_____ I give my permission for an audio recording to be made of me during my participation in this research study.

Are There Any Risks To Me?

The things that you will be doing are minimal risk for you. Being a participant of this study will not cause any physical, emotional, social harm to you.

Are There Any Benefits To Me? (*If there are no direct benefits, this section may be omitted) The direct benefit to you by being in this study is to have an opportunity to share your personal thoughts regarding the verbal and non-verbal components of a heartfelt apology.

Will There Be Any Costs To Me?

Aside from your time, there are no costs for taking part in the study.

Will I Be Paid To Be In This Study?

You will not be paid for being in this study.

Will Information From This Study Be Kept Private?

(if applicable) The records of this study will be kept private. No identifiers linking you to this study will be included in any sort of report that might be published. Research records will be stored securely and only Si Chun Song will have access to the records.

Information about you will be stored in a locked file cabinet located in Harington, 359. This consent form will be filed securely in an official area.

People who have access to your information include the Principal Investigator and research study personnel. Representatives of regulatory agencies such as the Office of Human Research Protections (OHRP) and entities such as the Texas A&M University Human Subjects Protection Program may access your records to make sure the study is being run correctly and that information is collected properly.

Information about you and related to this study will be kept confidential to the extent permitted or required by law.

Who may I Contact for More Information?

You may contact the Principal Investigator, Zohreh Eslami, Ph.D. to tell him/her about a concern or complaint about this research at zeslami@tamu.edu. You may also contact Si Chun Song at liacscc@tamu.edu.

For questions about your rights as a research participant; or if you have questions, complaints, or concerns about the research, you may call the Texas A&M University Human Subjects Protection Program office at (979) 458-4067 or irb@tamu.edu.

What if I Change My Mind About Participating?

This research is voluntary and you have the choice whether or not to be in this research study. You may decide to not begin or to stop participating at any time. If you choose not to be in this study or stop being in the study, there will be no effect on you. Any new information discovered about the research will be provided to you. This information could affect your willingness to continue your participation.

STATEMENT OF CONSENT

I agree to be in this study and know that I am not giving up any legal rights by signing this form. The procedures, risks, and benefits have been explained to me, and my questions have been answered. I know that new information about this research study will be provided to me as it becomes available and that the researcher will tell me if I must be removed from the study. I can ask more questions if I want, and I can stop participating in this study. A copy of this entire consent form will be given to me.

Participant's Signature

Date

Printed Name

Date

INVESTIGATOR'S AFFIDAVIT:

Either I have or my agent has carefully explained to the participant the nature of the above project. I hereby certify that to the best of my knowledge the person who signed this consent form was informed of the nature, demands, benefits, and risks involved in his/her participation.

Signature of Presenter

Date

Printed Name

Date

APPENDIX I

The following content was transcribed by the researcher for the convenience of analyzing Reed Hastings' speech regarding Netflix policy and price changes on July 2011.



Reed Hastings

Netflix President & CEO

The full text of Reed Hastings' apology

Hastings: Hi I'm Reed Hastings, CEO and a co-founder of Netflix.

Rendich: I'm Andy Rendich and I head up DVD operations in Netflix.

Hastings: We've been working for the past 14 years to build Netflix year by year into the best possible service we could build. We're making this video today to apologize in person, or at least on camera, for something that we did recently. A few months ago when we looked forward at our business, we realized overtime DVD and streaming were becoming more and more different. And that we could do a better job for both services if we separated them. When we communicated that to our subscribers and it involved substantial price increase for most both members. I didn't make the communication, and

we didn't explain why we were doing it. If I had communicated it directly to all of our members it wouldn't change the actual price increase. But I would have said, over the long term DVD and streaming are gonna get more and more different. Streaming has incredible television shows. Streaming has incredible television shows. Streaming is instant, streaming is fairly global. Streaming has many things that make it different from DVD. And that over time both DVD and streaming will be much better because they're separate. And in fact, we think that the DVD service needs its own brand, so that we can advertise it. So we've named our DVD service Quikster and I asked Andy Rendich, sitting here with me, to be the CEO of Quikster. Now Andy has been with Netflix for 12 years and he's been running the DVD service for 4 years. So other than the name change, it's not that big a change. But I think it'll be great for us to have a separate brand and a separate website and for Andy to be able to innovate at a great rate. So with that, let me introduce to you the CEO of Quikster, our DVD by mail service, Andy Rendich.

Rendich: You know DVD service has been around for over 12 years. In fact, we have pretty humble roots. We started with a couple thousand shipments a day, and now we're up to millions of shipments a day. And you know, I'm absolutely thrilled to be a part of it as I always have been. There'll be a couple of changes for our customers. First, our website, it'll have the same look and feel, but it will be Quikster.com. That iconic red envelope that you've all known and love will actually have some slight changes. You'll see that, really, just the logo is changing on there. It's gonna be the same great service that you've all known. You know, we've innovated a lot over the years and we'll continue to innovate. One of the innovations that we're gonna introduce is games. We gonna have games available as an additional charge just like a blue ray. And we're gonna have them for the Xbox 360, the PS3, and the Wii.

Hastings: To wrap up, I just want to say again how sorry I am of the way we handled the communication around these big changes. We do think, over the long term, it will help us innovate much faster, build a better DVD service, a better streaming service and they're in everybody's interest. But I wish we had handled the communication in a more forthright manner directly from me and explained those choices. For all of your patience, I say thank you.

APPENDIX J

Akio Toyoda's speech in the congressional hearing on February 24, 2010 was used to analyze his apology strategy. The following content was captured for preservation from CBS website, <http://www.cbsnews.com/news/akio-toyoda-congressional-testimony-i-am-deeply-sorry-full-text>.



Akio Toyoda
Toyota Motor Corporation President & CEO

The full text of Akio Toyoda's apology

Akio Toyoda: Thank you Chairman Towns.

I am Akio Toyoda of Toyota Motor Corporation. I would first like to state that I love cars as much as anyone, and I love Toyota as much as anyone. I take the utmost pleasure in offering vehicles that our customers love, and I know that Toyota's 200,000 team members, dealers, and suppliers across America feel the same way. However, in the past few months, our customers have started to feel uncertain about the safety of Toyota's vehicles, and I take full responsibility for that. Today, I would like to explain to the American people, as well as our customers in the U.S. and around the world, how seriously Toyota takes the quality and safety of its vehicles. I would like to express my appreciation to Chairman Towns and Ranking Member Issa, as well as the members of

the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee, for giving me this opportunity to express my thoughts today.

I would like to focus my comments on three topics – Toyota’s basic philosophy regarding quality control, the cause of the recalls, and how we will manage quality control going forward.

First, I want to discuss the philosophy of Toyota’s quality control. I myself, as well as Toyota, am not perfect. At times, we do find defects. But in such situations, we always stop, strive to understand the problem, and make changes to improve further. In the name of the company, its long-standing tradition and pride, we never run away from our problems or pretend we don’t notice them. By making continuous improvements, we aim to continue offering even better products for society. That is the core value we have kept closest to our hearts since the founding days of the company.

At Toyota, we believe the key to making quality products is to develop quality people. Each employee thinks about what he or she should do, continuously making improvements, and by doing so, makes even better cars. We have been actively engaged in developing people who share and can execute on this core value. It has been over 50 years since we began selling in this great country, and over 25 years since we started production here. And in the process, we have been able to share this core value with the 200,000 people at Toyota operations, dealers, and suppliers in this country. That is what I am most proud of.

Second, I would like to discuss what caused the recall issues we are facing now. Toyota has, for the past few years, been expanding its business rapidly. Quite frankly, I fear the pace at which we have grown may have been too quick. I would like to point out here that Toyota’s priority has traditionally been the following: First; Safety, Second; Quality, and Third; Volume. These priorities became confused, and we were not able to stop, think, and make improvements as much as we were able to before, and our basic stance to listen to customers’ voices to make better products has weakened somewhat. We pursued growth over the speed at which we were able to develop our people and our organization, and we should sincerely be mindful of that. I regret that this has resulted in the safety issues described in the recalls we face today, and I am deeply sorry for any accidents that Toyota drivers have experienced.

Especially, I would like to extend my condolences to the members of the Saylor family, for the accident in San Diego. I would like to send my prayers again, and I will do everything in my power to ensure that such a tragedy never happens again.

Since last June, when I first took office, I have personally placed the highest priority on improving quality over quantity, and I have shared that direction with our stakeholders. As you well know, I am the grandson of the founder, and all the Toyota vehicles bear my name. For me, when the cars are damaged, it is as though I am as well. I, more than anyone, wish for Toyota’s cars to be safe, and for our customers to feel safe when they use our vehicles. Under my leadership, I would like to reaffirm our values of placing safety and quality the highest on our list of priorities, which we have held to firmly from the time we were founded. I will also strive to devise a system in which we can surely execute what we value.

Third, I would like to discuss how we plan to manage quality control as we go

forward. Up to now, any decisions on conducting recalls have been made by the Customer Quality Engineering Division at Toyota Motor Corporation in Japan. This division confirms whether there are technical problems and makes a decision on the necessity of a recall. However, reflecting on the issues today, what we lacked was the customers' perspective.

To make improvements on this, we will make the following changes to the recall decision making process. When recall decisions are made, a step will be added in the process to ensure that management will make a responsible decision from the perspective of "customer safety first." To do that, we will devise a system in which customers' voices around the world will reach our management in a timely manner, and also a system in which each region will be able to make decisions as necessary. Further, we will form a quality advisory group composed of respected outside experts from North America and around the world to ensure that we do not make a misguided decision. Finally, we will invest heavily in quality in the U.S., through the establishment of an Automotive Center of Quality Excellence, the introduction of a new position – Product Safety Executive, and the sharing of more information and responsibility within the company for product quality decisions, including defects and recalls.

Even more importantly, I will ensure that members of the management team actually drive the cars, and that they check for themselves where the problem lies as well as its severity. I myself am a trained test driver. As a professional, I am able to check on problems in a car, and can understand how severe the safety concern is in a car. I drove the vehicles in the accelerator pedal recall as well as the Prius, comparing the vehicles before and after the remedy in various environmental settings. I believe that only by examining the problems on-site, can one make decisions from the customer perspective. One cannot rely on reports or data in a meeting room.

Through the measures I have just discussed, and with whatever results we obtain from the investigations we are conducting in cooperation with NHTSA, I intend to further improve on the quality of Toyota vehicles and fulfill our principle of putting the customer first.

My name is on every car. You have my personal commitment that Toyota will work vigorously and unceasingly to restore the trust of our customers.

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