The Representation of a Scandal: A Case Study of the Jerry Sandusky Sex Abuse Scandal

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Abstract

Crises on a college campus can be especially destructive, as the audience includes students, families, and important stakeholders. The Jerry Sandusky sex abuse scandal burst into the scene on November 5, 2011, when initial charges were filed against Sandusky for his alleged acts against minors. The scandal rocked the culture and reputation of Penn State University, causing the release of head football coach Joe Paterno and university president Graham Spanier, as well as the charging of perjury against Tim Curley and Gary Schultz in their apparent roles in the incident. Benoit’s Image Repair Theory (1995) is the main theoretical basis of this study.

The communication of crisis information is also explored in the attempt to identify the differences between how the local news lens The Daily Collegian and the news service of Penn State University disseminate information regarding the scandal to the public. The main difference between these two entities is the number of stories coded through a search of “Jerry Sandusky, with The Daily Collegian containing 315 stories and Penn State University containing a mere nine. According to the results of this study, both The Daily Collegian and Penn State University utilized the corrective action strategy the most in the attempt to repair the image of the university.
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Chapter One: Introduction

“Crisis potential always exists for colleges and universities” (Leeper and Leeper, 2006, p. 129) and recently, crisis communication research in the field of communication has increased concomitantly with the increase in the number of scandals and crises related to athletics in higher education. One study (Len-Rios, 2010) looks into how Duke University utilized communication tactics to defend its image during the scandal triggered by its men’s lacrosse team. Another study analyzed the use of “negotiation” as a strategy to manage crisis after the resignation of Louisiana State University’s women’s head basketball coach due to a scandal involving inappropriate relationships with former players (Varma, 2009). Studies such as these pave the way for further research in the area of crisis communication on a college campus.

Importance of the Study

Holtzhausen and Roberts (2009) state that audience perception is all that is needed to damage a reputation. This perception can be seen through the analysis of the news stories that are being put out by this audience. In this case, the students are the audience and their perception is channeled through the stories they release through The Daily Collegian. The importance of this study lies within the gaining of a better understanding of how a college campus deals with, or does not deal with, a crisis on the level of the Jerry Sandusky sex abuse scandal. This will be seen through both the university and The Daily Collegian and in the differences between how the two handle this scandal. The analysis of those differences is important, as this study aims to improve and build upon Benoit’s work as well as contribute to the sector of crisis communication in higher education.
Statement of the Problem

By looking into the different image repair strategies that are utilized during the different stages of the given time period, Benoit’s image repair theory (Benoit, 1995, 1997) can ultimately be enhanced. The audience’s perception of how the scandal affects the University can ultimately determine how severe the damage to Penn State’s reputation can be. Conducting a case study of Penn State University’s crisis involving Jerry Sandusky will contribute to the knowledge available in the area of crisis communication in higher education and theory concerning how we understand crisis communication in news media during an athletic scandal. This study takes on a unique perspective, as the local lens that is being analyzed is a student-run news source on the Penn State campus. As the students are one of the major groups that are impacted the most a scandal of this magnitude, analyzing the stories that they produce will give an inside look at how the campus community handled and portrayed the story, versus how the University itself did.

When referring to this scandal, it is important to specify that it involves Jerry Sandusky, and not Penn State University as a whole. Making the assumption that it is a “Penn State scandal” can do more harm to the image and reputation of the university than expected. On January 13, 2012, the Associated Press cites the new president of Penn State, Rodney Erickson, as saying: "It grieves me very much when I hear people say 'the Penn State scandal.' This is not Penn State. This is 'the Sandusky scandal'. We're not going to let what one individual did destroy the reputation of this university" (Erickson, 2012). This distinction is important to recognize in that it separates Jerry Sandusky from Penn State as a whole.
Definitions of Terms Used

The term “image” can be defined as “the perceptions of a communicative entity shared by an audience” (Holtzhausen and Roberts, 2009). Penn State’s image is threatened by the Jerry Sandusky sex abuse scandal, and how the audience perceives the scandal in relation to the campus community is analyzed through this study. The scandal being discussed refers to the sexual abuse charges against Jerry Sandusky, a former assistant coach for the Penn State University football team. The stages that are analyzed refer to the break up of the given time period. The stages vary in length due to the prominence of the dates and the information that is released, such as the initial charges against Jerry Sandusky and the release of Joe Paterno. Holtzhausen and Roberts claim, “because audiences judge the communicative entity based on the level of control it had over the crisis, different stages on the continuum require different crisis repair strategies” (2009, p. 168).

This case study analyzes how Penn State University portrayed the Jerry Sandusky scandal through the university website and how it was portrayed through *The Daily Collegian*. The timeline of the scandal is analyzed in relation to the news media portrayal. This study begins with the first release of information regarding Jerry Sandusky and continues through the release of information regarding the firing of head football coach, Joe Paterno. David (2011) states, “crisis communication is visible not only during the crisis event, when it shows its reactive attributes, but all along the organizational life cycle”.

Conducting a case study of the Jerry Sandusky sex abuse scandal contributes to the knowledge available in the area of crisis communication in higher education. The
study adds to the available knowledge on crisis communication in the news media during an athletic scandal in higher education, as well as to the information available on image repair theory (IRT) (Benoit, 1995, 1997).
Chapter Two: Review of the Literature

The theoretical framework is largely based on image repair theory (Benoit, 1995), which is based on the discourse of apologia, or a genre of apologetic discourse, and draws on the work of Scotty and Lyman (1968) and Ware and Linkugel (1973). The different aspects of crisis communication and the advantages of an institution of higher education forming strong ties with the media are also discussed. This study contributes to present literature by providing research on special cases of athletics in higher education.

Philosophical Assumptions and Theoretical Basis

The theoretical basis of this study lies in Benoit’s image repair theory (1995). This theory has roots in apologia and draws on the work of Scotty and Lyman (1968) and Ware and Linkugel (1973). Burke’s theory of purification (1970) also contributes to Benoit’s work and helps to inform the direction of this study. The effective communication of crisis information is crucial in any situation that can cause an interruption in the daily flow of harmony and stability.

The Literature

When a crisis occurs in an institution of higher education, it most often surfaces from a scandal or an act of violence. The reputation of a university can be hurt, as well as its relationship with key internal and external stakeholders (Varma, 2011). “Whether or not statements actually are true is irrelevant; audience perception is all that is needed to damage a reputation (Holtzhausen & Roberts, 2009). Len-Rios (2010) and Varma (2011) are two essential examples of the contributions being made to the area of crisis communication, particularly in higher education.
Len-Rios (2010) looked at the defense strategy of separation and at how crises stages affected the tone of local newspaper portrayals of Duke University’s identity during the lacrosse scandal. The study found that Duke University responded late and that this caused the University to have to defend the perception that it did not take the initial situation seriously. Varma (2011) investigated the content of news articles regarding the LSU women’s basketball coach scandal through the use of survey research and textual analysis. Like Len-Rios’ findings, Varma concluded that, “the lack of transparency and openness in the initial stages proved to be a setback” (p. 375). Conducting a case study of Penn State University’s scandal will contribute to the knowledge available in the area of crisis communication in higher education in the manner that Len-Rios and Varma have.

This study adds to the available knowledge on crisis communication in the news media during an athletic scandal in higher education, as well as to the information available on image repair theory (IRT) (Benoit, 1995, 1997). Anderson (2010) looks into the image repair strategies of three large automakers. This study looks at Kenneth Burke’s theory of purification. “Purification is closely related to the current theory of image repair as it consists of two strategies that are used to minimize guilt as a result of misusing symbols” (Borchers, 2005).

Image Repair Theory

As suggested by Len-Rios (2010), “when a university is faced with a crisis, there is the potential that the crisis may affect its relationships with current students, alumni, parents, prospective students, donors, staff, faculty, residents of the local community, sports team fans, and advisory boards” (p. 269). Introduced by William L. Benoit, image repair theory (IRT) is centered on the discourse of apologia, or a genre of apologetic
discourse, and draws on the work of Scotty and Lyman (1968) and Ware and Linkugel (1973). Benoit (1995) suggests that organizations or individuals will enact self-defense strategies when they are accused of or are perceived as being responsible for a negative event that can threaten their reputation or public image. The framework of IRT is “based on the assumption that image and reputation is a valuable commodity for individuals and organizations, that image threats occur frequently, and that communication can help repair image” (Seeger and Padgett, 2010, p. 130).

The five main defense strategies of IRT are denial (shifting the blame and simple denial), evading responsibility (provocation, defeasibility, accident, and good intentions), reducing offensiveness (bolstering, minimization, differentiation, transcendence, attacking one’s accusers, or offering compensation), corrective action, and mortification (Benoit, 1997). These strategies may show in the timeline of actions and in how the news media presents information on the scandal. The mission of Penn State University may have been threatened throughout this crisis, and how the University chooses image repair strategies will depend on how severely the mission has been threatened.

Denial comes in two forms: simple denial and shifting the blame. A simple denial exists when there is a dismissal of the fact that a damaging event ever occurred, that it was negative, or that the entity was connected to the event. Shifting the blame places responsibility on another party. Brinson and Benoit (1999) also add the idea of separation to the sub-category of shifting the blame. Separation occurs when an organization that has had its reputation harmed seeks to distance itself from the accused. “In order for separation to work, the organization must show that its policies were ignored, that
wrongdoers were punished, and that policies were enacted to ensure future compliance” (Brinson and Benoit, 1999).

In regards to evading responsibility, *defeasibility* tends to receive the most attention in research literature. An accused organization or individual will use this tactic when they seek to reduce their responsibility in connection to a crisis. The accused will argue “the individual or organization lacked control or information pertinent to the situation” (Len-Rios, 2010). The use of defeasibility has the ability to erode credibility, as it suggests a lack of knowledge, authority, or control that can be expected of a leader (Benoit, 2006). An often-used technique in *reducing offensiveness* is bolstering, or attempts to increase credibility by illustrating prior positive behavior. Len-Rios indicates that bolstering can be effective when the accused are presented as victims (Bruce & Tini, 2008) or when the organization has long been admired and supported by the public (Holtzhausen & Roberts, 2009).

Len-Rios (2010) suggests that *corrective action* “is the most forward-looking in that it commits an organization to take specific future courses of action” (p. 271). Engaging in corrective action can signify that an organization has accepted some responsibility for the crisis event. When a crisis occurs, such as the football scandal at Penn State University, the community of an organization and the public it serves will likely want to see some responsibility taken by the affected party. The final strategy, *mortification*, refers to apologizing, or taking responsibility and asking for forgiveness. Because of the possible legal and financial implications that can come with mortification, other response options may offer better choices while generating the same level of positive reaction.
Holtzhausen and Roberts (2009) suggest that IRT can be linked to risk communication, which is “less about providing information than about laying the foundation for long-term relationships that will facilitate actions during a crisis” (p. 170). IRT will be utilized in the case study of Penn State University’s football team scandal in connection to the news media. As Penn State University is being put in the spotlight, they will likely have enacted self-defense strategies in an attempt to repair their image. How the accused presents the crisis and how the outside news media present it can vary greatly.

Theory of Purification

Anderson (2010) looks at how three large automakers utilize persuasive discourse in the use of image repair strategies during times of conflict. Anderson utilizes Burke’s theory of purification (1970), which contains two strategies. The first is known as the tragic, or terms for order. This strategy “looks to redeem a rhetor through punishing or removing the guilty party and is demonstrated when an actor is sentenced to prison because of his involvement in the offensive act” (p. 9). The second strategy is known as the comic, which states that everyone is capable of making mistakes that can lead to guilt. This strategy occurs when “the responsible party is ridiculed and then pressured to change their ways” (p. 10).

Burke identifies two strategies that aid in achieving purification and restoring reputation, victimage, and mortification. Victimage is associated with the tragic, when “guilt is shifted from the rhetor to the victim and the rhetor’s reputation is cleansed” (Benoit, 1995, p. 18). This strategy is also known as scapegoating or blame shifting. Mortification, which is associated with the comic, “occurs when the accused accepts
responsibilities for the offensive act and offers an apology to the audience” (Burke, 1970). When either or both of these strategies are employed, purification can be achieved if a rhetor’s reputation is restored or redeemed.

This study seeks to understand how Penn State University presented the crisis in relation to any of the five strategies of IRT. This understanding allows for a closer look at how well, or how unwell, Penn State dealt with this crisis. The information gained from this study not only adds to the present knowledge on the use of image repair strategies in sports, it also breaks further ground on how the academic world fares in the use of crisis communication when dealing with scandals involving sports teams and members the campus community. With the recent increase in studies pertaining to scandals on college campuses and how image repair strategies come into play during the after math, it is important to continue this trend and to gain more ground on this important aspect of crisis communication.

Crisis Communication

Veil (2011) states, “the warning signals that lead to a crisis are obvious after the crisis has occurred”. When a crisis occurs within an organization, it is important to consider what options are available for the dissemination of information to various publics. A crisis can be defined as “a perception of an unpredictable event that threatens important expectancies of stakeholders and can seriously impact an organization’s performance and generate negative outcomes” (Coombs, 2007). It can also be defined as “a specific, unexpected, and non-routine event or series of events that create high levels of uncertainty and threat or perceived threat to an organization’s high priority goals” (Seeger, Sellnow, & Ulmer, 1998, p. 233).
Crisis communication can be described as “the dialog between the organization and its public prior to, during, and after the negative occurrence. The dialog details strategies and tactics that are designed to minimize damage to the image of the organization” (Fearn-Banks, 2007, p. 9). David (2011) suggests that crisis communication is visible throughout the organizational life cycle (pre-crisis, crisis, post-crisis). Crisis communication can take on several functions, but it should fulfill at least the following: it should allow for the smooth transfer of information and guarantee as little damage to the organizational image as possible (Fearn-Banks, 2007).

An important aspect of crisis communication is internal communication, as it is able to provide cohesion and coherence to the afflicted organization (Moore & Seymour, 2005). The lack of internal communication during a crisis can be risky. “The lack of accurate, adequate, timely, and coherent information during a crisis affects the trust people have in their own organization dramatically, thus weakening the commitment they should show in crisis resolution efforts” (David, 2011, p. 75.)

Crisis management can be viewed as a cyclical process, with the cycle of stages continuing even after the crisis has been solved. Mitroff (1994) gives a five-stage crisis management process: (a) signal detection, when there are warning signs that can be detected and acted upon to prevent the crisis; (b) probing and prevention, when members of an organization should look for known crisis risk factors and work to prevent the crisis from occurring; (c) damage containment, where organization members attempt to limit the damage of the crisis; (d) recovery, working to return to normal operations as soon as possible; and (e), learning, reviewing and analyzing the crisis management process.
A three-stage approach is often used to separate the events of a crisis. These stages are: (a) *precrisis*, which includes preparation and planning; (b) *crisis*, which includes the trigger event and resulting damage; and (c) *postcrisis*, which includes the learning and resolution factors. “If an organization survives the stages of precrisis, crisis, and postcrisis, it will once again find itself in the stage of precrisis, only better equipped to prepare for another crisis” (Coombs, 2007). As an organization goes through the different stages of a crisis, they can better learn how to best deal with the implications that may arise throughout the process. The timeline of this study allows for the precrisis and crisis stages to be analyzed, but not the postcrisis stage, as the investigation against Jerry Sandusky was still ongoing at the time of the content analysis.

David shows several actions that can foster the success of internal crisis communication, such as:

- Briefing members on the situation as soon as possible.
- All members must be given the same information.
- When briefing organization members on the crisis situation, face-to-face communication is best (such as a conference).
- Understanding the staff’s emotional state is important.
- A key person within the organization should be in charge of handling communication throughout the crisis.

This study looks at whether or not the university had a key person throughout the crisis. The news stories that the University releases and that *The Daily Collegian* releases are analyzed against each other. Although the information may differ in some aspects, there
should be little difference in the core of the story. Having too much variation between each audience could create mistrust, which could harm Penn State University more.

Bell (2010) defines risk communication as focusing on “the role of communication in crisis perception and creating and influencing public policy to prevent and deal with crisis” (p. 145). There are indeed varying definitions of crisis and risk communication, but there are three core elements that unite them: (1) significant threats; (2) unpredictability or suddenness; and (3) urgency or immediacy to categorize an organizational crisis (p. 146). Bell posits that whether or not a situation can be classified as a crisis is determined by the significance of the threat. The three elements above define organizational crisis as “a nonroutine, unpredictable event that imposes (a) significant threats to an organization and (b) urgency to contain and respond that often interrupts normal organizational functioning” (Lee, 2005, p. 278).

In regards to an organization’s reputation, a crisis is seen as a threat. “An organization’s reputation is cultivated by the information stakeholders receive through various media outlets” (Bell, 2010, p. 149). A reputation can be damaged when people have a reason to think poorly of the organization. Institutions of higher education have mission statements, which can be threatened when a crisis occurs. The first paragraph of Penn State University’s mission statement reads:

Penn State is a multicampus public research university that educates students from Pennsylvania, the nation, and the world, and improves the well being and health of individuals and communities through integrated programs of teaching, research, and service (Penn State University, 2006).
The reputation of Penn State University’s football team, as well as the university itself, is considered to be excellent. With high rankings and accolades, the institute is held in high regards. When a crisis such as the sex abuse scandal involving Jerry Sandusky occurs, the mission and reputation can, and likely will, become threatened. The community of the university holds certain expectations, one of them being that the students will be safe on campus. With an event such as the accusations against Jerry Sandusky, these expectations are not met, which leads to the crisis that has unfolded. Effective crisis and internal communication practices are vital to the revitalization of the reputation and to the regaining of trust from the community. The outcome of the crisis, and the effect that the scandal takes on the university, can be determined by the quality of the response given the context and stakes to the crisis.

Media Partnerships

When a crisis such as the scandal involving Jerry Sandusky arises, it is important to communicate effectively not only with the community and campus, but also with the media. The development of a strong relationship with media outlets, such as newspapers, can help determine the outcome of crisis communication efforts. Veil and Ojeda (2010) provide an analysis of a crisis in which the media acted as a significant partner in the crisis response. Their study of the partnership established with the media following the bombing of the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building in Oklahoma City on April 19, 1995 provides an exemplary case of how a strong relationship with the media helps to rebuild the public’s trust in an organization hit with a crisis.

Public relations practitioners who specialize in crisis communication are best equipped to handle a crisis situation and to provide the right information to organizations
afflicted by the crisis. It is suggested that reporters be viewed as filters through which carefully prepared messages pass before they reach the intended audience (Schmidt, 2006). “Rather than viewing the media as a liability in a crisis situation, risk and crisis communicators should engage the media, through open and honest communication, and use the media as a strategic resource to aid in managing the crisis” (Seeger, 2006, p. 241). The relationship between the media and the officials of Penn State University is analyzed in how closely the information that was presented through the campus officials alights with the information that The Daily Collegian delivers.

An important point that Veil and Ojeda (2010) make is that “if the organization is not ready to respond when the media is ready to run the story, the story will be run without the organization’s response” (p. 414). Establishing a positive relationship before a crisis occurs can facilitate the dissemination of information from university officials. This relationship helps in the prevention of rumors being spread that contain false information. “In the initial phase of a crisis or emergency, people want information-now. They want timely and accurate facts about what happened, and where, and what is being done” (Reynolds, 2002, p. 8).

Establishing a partnership with the media includes the benefits of the combining of resources and expertise, the spreading of costs and risks, and the sharing of good practice (Vangen & Huxham, 2003). If an organization faced with a crisis or scandal is able to pool resources together with the media to strengthen not only their relationship but also the efforts of the plan of action, the outcome of the crisis communication plan will likely be strengthened. In the case of the Oklahoma City bombing, “the rapid gathering of information and the broadcast from the media aided the city officials in
collecting information, designing plans, and preparing meetings quickly” (Veil & Ojeda, 2010). This is testimony to the idea that having a strong relationship with the media can greatly affect the outcome of the crisis.

In order to work effectively with the media and to have a strong relationship, it is important to start building the ties before a crisis occurs. “Establishing relationships with the media before the crisis allows for ease of communication during the crisis” (Veil & Ojeda, 2010). How strong the relationship is between Penn State University and the local media should be able to be seen through how closely the information put out by each party aligns. A strong relationship should show that the information from each entity is very similar, whereas a weak relationship may show that there are two different stories being told.

Communicating Crisis Information

When it comes to the actual communication aspect of crisis information, two outlets come to mind: the news media and the Internet. This case study analyzes both aspects, both combined and separately. The local news media will be analyzed through the Internet website of The Daily Collegian. For Penn State University, information distributed electronically through the university’s website is analyzed. Madere (2007) discusses how the website of a university is a critical tool in communicating with anyone involved with the university during a crisis.

Tragic events such as the Virginia Tech shootings have caused universities to look closer at how they can communicate with students and staff quicker and more effectively when a crisis occurs. Although the scandal involving Jerry Sandusky is of a different magnitude, it is still essential to understand how the university can communicate in an
effective way. Utilizing the website of a university is crucial, and doing so in a manner that is easy to understand is equally as important. Kent and Taylor (2007) suggest that websites are a controlled channel organizations are able to use to communicate directly with the media and the public. The level of preparation that goes into the development of crisis communication on the Internet could be the difference between weathering a crisis and succumbing to it.

Madere (2007) states that “for university websites to be effective crisis information tools, they must present clear, fast, easy-to-access directions to both on-campus and off-campus members of the university community” (p. 19). This case study does not analyze how effectively the Penn State University website processed crisis information, but instead how the information given through the website differs from the information put out by the local news media.

Guillebeau (1989) investigates a crisis case at Drury College in Springfield, MO that involves the death of a campus employee. The article discusses how the campus handled the crisis. Buillebeu states, “While the information was the same, the audiences’ needs differed and thus the way we approached them had to differ. Those on campus needed more information and reassurance; the general public needed information to satisfy curiosity” (p. 19). This can be utilized across most areas of crisis communication, including the present study regarding the Jerry Sandusky sex abuse scandal. Although the information between both audiences should be similar, the needs of each audience will differ, and thus the presentation must be handled accordingly.

An important aspect of crisis communication is to allay fears and control rumors, as Guillebeau (1989) showed in her article. When there is a scandal that involves sexual
abuse on a college campus, there is a great need to attempt to keep the concerns of students, parents, staff, and the general public in consideration. Tailoring the messages to each audience can help aid in this task. Putting out the exact same message to each audience could be seen as adequate to one member, but insensitive to another. By utilizing not only the media but the website in the most effective way possible, an organization will have a better chance at controlling rumors and fears that are likely to rise throughout the progression of the crisis.

Farmer and Tvedt (2005) describe a situation where a college campus had a crisis on their hands, and the Chancellor excelled at his duties as a community leader when it came to crisis communication on the campus. Western Carolina University experienced a set of dorm fires that frightened students, staff, and parents. Chancellor John Bardo “went to extraordinary lengths to be open and honest with an inquiring media and campus community and to reassure panicking students and concerned parents” (p. 27). Dr. Bardo was able to console the troubled students and parents by staying alert and attentive to the crisis situation that was unfolding.

Dr. Bardo’s communication efforts illustrated several of the guidelines for effective CEO communication in times of crisis that Loretta Ucelli, former White House communications director for President Bill Clinton, presents. These include:

- The CEO must be front and center.
- Respond quickly.
- Do not sugar coat the truth.
- Err on the side of overcommunication.
- What you say must reflect what you do. Actions must be consistent with words.
- Talk to all the stakeholders.

- Use crisis as an opportunity to demonstrate leadership (Ucelli, 2002).

Strategies such as these can aid in the effectiveness of communication by a leader during any given crisis. The CEO in this case would be a leader on campus, such as Dr. Bardo, who has the ability to confront varying audiences with relative ease. This case study looks at who this leader was during the Jerry Sandusky sex abuse scandal, and also at how the messages were presented to the different audiences.

**Rationale**

With the increase in crisis communication efforts on college campuses, as has been shown in previous literature mentioned above, it is important to continue to investigate how institutes of higher education are able to better their efforts in how to best handle a crisis or a scandal, such as the Jerry Sandusky sex abuse scandal Penn State University. Continuing to investigate these issues brings to light more effective practices and means of communication. A college campus can be a particularly sensitive domain when it comes to a crisis, as there are students on the campus. Parents entrust universities and colleges to protect their children, and when a crisis of a sexual nature arises, the university can ensue damages to their mission and reputation.

**Research Questions**

When conducting the analysis of the crisis communication efforts of Penn State University, two main questions are investigated:

**RQ1:** What image repair strategies did Penn State University utilize in their response to the sexual abuse crisis involving Jerry Sandusky?
The first research question analyzes how Penn State university presented the scandal through the university website. The various facets of IRT and the stages of crisis communication will work in conjunction with this research question.

RQ2: What image repair strategies did The Daily Collegian utilize in their response to the sexual abuse crisis involving Jerry Sandusky?

It is important to investigate how the crisis communication efforts of the university and the local lens worked in the attempt to repair the image and reputation of Penn State. This analysis may create recommendations for improving crisis communication strategies and efforts.
Chapter Three: Scope and Methodology

The Scope of the Study

This research study focuses on a content analysis of the sex abuse scandal involving Jerry Sandusky at Penn State University. The study is aimed at the time period between when Sandusky was arrested, on November 5, 2011, and when Joe Paterno passed away, on January 22, 2011. This time period contains the most activity in regards to news stories released by the selected local news source and by Penn State University. This study focuses on the local news lens and the university news system and not on the national news lens due to time constraints. Because the scandal gained a high level of attention from national outlets, including ESPN, there is a wealth of information on the sex abuse cases connected to Jerry Sandusky, but the amount of time needed to analyze this information is not available.

The local news outlet that is analyzed in this study is *The Daily Collegian*. This outlet was chosen because of its proximity to the campus and the readership of the community surrounding Penn State University. The community of Penn State is likely to be impacted the most by a scandal of this magnitude; therefore this news outlet may contain the most pertinent information to the case. The university news system was also chosen for analysis, as this is the voice of Penn State. Utilizing the local news outlet as well as the university news system allows for a close analysis of the image repair strategies used in the attempt to control the damage caused by such a high-profile scandal.

The mission of Penn State University may have been threatened throughout this crisis, and how the University chooses image repair strategies will depend on how
severely the mission has been threatened. There is a total of 79 days during the time period selected for this study, November 5, 2011 through January 22, 2012. There are five different news outlets being analyzed that could release a news story regarding the scandal on any given day during this time period. Although the scope is fairly narrow, the amount of stories to be analyzed should be fairly high, providing a broad spectrum of information.

Methodology

A content analysis is “a procedure that helps researchers identify themes and relevant issues often contained in media messages” (Rubin, Rubin, & Piele, 2005). Through a content analysis, the practices of the local media outlets can be analyzed to a greater extent, as well as how the university communicates to the public. “The greatest strength of content analysis is that it is unobtrusive and nonreactive: it can be conducted without disturbing the setting in any way” (Marshall and Rossman, 2006, p. 108). One aim of the content analysis is to determine what image repair strategies Penn State University utilized in the revitalization of its image during the ongoing case against Jerry Sandusky. Another aim is to investigate the correlations between how the university represents the scandal and how the local news outlet represents it. The content analysis method looks at the characteristics of communication messages. Looking into news stories allows the researcher to “learn about underlying attitudes, biases, or repeating themes” (Rubin, Rubin, & Piele, 2005).

Four sets of code have been developed for the analysis of the news stories between when Jerry Sandusky was arrested on November 5, 2011 and when Joe Paterno passed away on January 22, 2012. The first set of code will categorize each story by date,
author, news source, and accusation. The second set of code will analyze each story in terms which stage it falls into. These stages include:

- When the scandal is released/when initial charges are filed against Jerry Sandusky (November 5, 2011)
- When Joe Paterno is released from coaching position (November 9, 2011)
- One month after the story is released (December 9, 2011)
- When Joe Paterno passes away (January 22, 2011)

Breaking this set of code up into different time frames allows for more structure in the analysis of the information. The time period between when the scandal is released and when Joe Paterno is released from his coaching position is a mere four days. The remaining amount of time in the scope of the study is then broken up into one month after the scandal is released and until Joe Paterno’s death.

The third set of code divides each story into message strategies and themes:

- Ethical issues
- Legal issues
- Broad societal issues
- Public reaction
- Victims
- Penn State climate
- Jerry Sandusky
- Joe Paterno
- Other
This set of code allows for further analysis of each story to compare how closely the stories from the local news outlets relate to the stories from the university news system.

The final set of code breaks each story down into Benoit’s IRT framework (Benoit, 1995, 1997). The five main defense strategies of IRT are denial, evading responsibility, reducing offensiveness, corrective action, and mortification (Benoit, 1997). Each of these strategies contains sub-strategies, which are presented in Appendix A. This final set of code finalizes the break down of the stories from both the local news outlets and the university news system. This will allow for the final analysis of how the university attempts to repair any damage to its image caused by the scandal, as well as how closely each news outlet correlates to the university news system.
Chapter Four: The Study

Introduction

The present study conducted a content analysis of 315 news stories taken from the website of *The Daily Collegian*, which is a student-led news source on the Penn State University campus. A total of 107 news stories were not coded, due to similarity, offensiveness, and non-conduciveness. The 315 stories that were coded were placed into appropriate categories and sub-categories, as deemed fit. A total of nine stories were coded from the Penn State University website. The search word that was used was “Jerry Sandusky”, and the search was conducted in the previously defined time frame of November 5, 2011 through January 22, 2012. The investigation on the acts of Jerry Sandusky is still on going; therefore the time frame that was utilized was selected in an attempt to capture the most stories during the most pressing time in the investigation.

Data Analysis

The present study conducted a content analysis of 315 news stories taken from the website of *The Daily Collegian*, which is a student-led news source on the Penn State University campus. A total of 107 news stories were not coded, due to similarity, offensiveness, and non-conduciveness. Stories that are repeated are considered “similar”. Stories that are considered “offensive” contain words or titles that could induce negative reactions, such as “witch hunt”. A non-conducive story does not follow the story line of the study. Several news stories contained the results of a football game, without mentioning the Sandusky scandal. These stories were not coded.

The 315 stories that were coded were placed into appropriate categories and sub-categories, as deemed fit. A total of nine stories were coded from the Penn State
University website. The search word that was used was “Jerry Sandusky”, and the search was conducted in the previously defined time frame of November 5, 2011 through January 22, 2012. The investigation on the acts of Jerry Sandusky is still ongoing; therefore the time frame that was utilized was selected in an attempt to capture the most stories during the most pressing time in the investigation.

Each news story included in the present study was coded according to five defined stages of the time period selected. Each story was then coded according to message strategies/themes. The final code placed on each story pertained to which of Benoit’s image repair strategies, and sub-strategy if needed, was used. For the stories that did not appear to utilize a defense strategy, a code of “none” was given. Appendix A details the code that was used on the news stories.

Results of the Study

After the coding took place, the results were analyzed in an attempt to determine which trends took place and whether or not there were any patterns in the research. The following chart depicts the percentages of stories from The Daily Collegian that fall into each of the five stages. Stage one contained 47 instances, or .149 (n=315). Stage two contained 29 instances, or .092. Stage three contained 186 instances, giving the highest tally of .590. Stage for contained 52 instances, or .165. For stage five, one instance occurred, giving a tally of .003. For the stories released by Penn State University, stages one and four contained two instances each, or .222 (n=9). Five instances occurred in stage three, or .556. No instances occurred during stages two or five. This is likely attributed to the severe lack of stories released during the given time frame.
The following charts depict the number of stories that fell into each of the pre-determined message strategies and/or themes. For stories released by Penn State University, zero stories pertained to Joe Paterno or The Second Mile. All of the stories
fell into the “Penn State Climate” and “Jerry Sandusky” categories (n=9). For stories
released by *The Daily Collegian*, the category with the most occurrences was “Penn State climate”, with .844 (n=315). The category with the least amount of occurrences was “The Second Mile”, with .070.

![The Daily Collegian](image)

*Figure 3: Message Strategies for The Daily Collegian*
For the defense strategies that were enacted throughout the given time period, many of the stories coded from *The Daily Collegian* did not appear to employ any given strategy. These stories received a code of “none”, and 202 stories fell into this category, or .641 (n=315). For stories that did employ a strategy, “corrective action” received the most occurrences, with 52, or .165. For the category that received the least amount of use, only two stories fell into the “evading responsibility” category, or .003. For Penn State University, four stories, or .444, fell into the “corrective action” category. “Reducing offensiveness” received three stories, or .333, and two did not employ a defense strategy. For sub-categories, *The Daily Collegian* contained 23 stories, or .073, that employed the “bostering” sub-strategy. For Penn State University, one story fell into each of the “bostering”, “minimization”, and “differentiation” sub-strategies.

For many of the stories that utilized the “denial” defense strategy, the accused would maintain their innocence. These instances were given the sub-strategy of “simple
denial”. Alumni who were simply voicing their opinions regarding the scandal and how it has impacted the image of Penn State University wrote many of the stories that did not seem to employ a defense strategy. Each story fell under multiple codes, as no single story focused solely on one message strategy or theme.

Discussion

The results of the content analysis reveal that *The Daily Collegian* was more willing to discuss the events of the Jerry Sandusky sex abuse scandal with the public than the official news service at Penn State University. The shear difference in the number of stories found through a search utilizing the term “Jerry Sandusky” (n=315, n=9) points to what appears to be a lack of responsibility coming from Penn State officials. With a broader search in news stories, this assumption could change. A factor that may contribute to the lower number of stories during phase four for *The Daily Collegian* (52) is winter break. The campus break was from December 22, 2011 through January 7, 2012. With students away from campus, fewer stories were written.

For *The Daily Collegian*, the most used defense strategy was corrective action, with 52 stories (.165). Penn State appeared to use corrective action the most as well, with four stories (.444). There were several trends that arose throughout the coding process. One trend was how in the first five days of the given timeline, November 5, 2011 through November 9, 2011, the news stories from *The Daily Collegian* appeared to shift from a focus primarily on Jerry Sandusky to a focus more on Joe Paterno. This shift reversed on November 19, 2011. From November 5 through November 9, 40 coded stories from *The Daily Collegian* involved Jerry Sandusky, while 59 involved Joe Paterno. From November 19 through January 22, 64 stories involved Jerry Sandusky and 15 involved.
Joe Paterno. This shift can be attributed to the development of the case against Sandusky through December and January.

When stories from *The Daily Collegian* suggested the use of denial, simple denial was the most widely used strategy (.8). On November 14, 2011, Jerry Sandusky maintains the notion that he is innocent. “I have horsed around with kids. I have showered after workouts. I have hugged them, and I have touched their leg, without intent of sexual contact,” Sandusky said. “I shouldn’t have showered with those kids” (Orso, 2011). It appears as if although Sandusky admits to having inappropriate contact with children, he maintains that there was no sexual intent.

With corrective action, the most prominent instances for both Penn State and *The Daily Collegian* are when Tim Curley and Gary Schutlz step down, and when Joe Paterno and Graham Spanier are released. This shows an attempt to hold the key officials who may have had knowledge of the incidents involving Jerry Sandusky accountable for their apparent failure to report. As Curley and Schultz are charged with perjury for their failure to report, this suggests that they knew of the incidents but chose to remain silent. The prompt removal of these officials and the replacement of them may have received some negativity, but it also may suggest that the University was willing to act quickly in an attempt to rectify the situation.

The Second Mile began to see a decrease in support as the case against Jerry Sandusky progressed. Twenty-two stories from *The Daily Collegian* pertained to The Second Mile, as the incidents involved children from the organization that Sandusky built. Although the organization does not fall under campus authority, it is still important to note that it began to decline throughout the given time period. As funds and donors
decreased, layoffs occurred and the construction of a new building was stopped. As Sandusky built this organization to help underprivileged children, and as the alleged victims came from this organization, it is understandable why and how it would be affected by the scandal.

Len-Rios (2010) and Varma (2011) both suggest that the release of little information can damage the image of the University. With only nine stories released by the officials at Penn State University, the public could assume that the officials are not handling the situation properly and that they are essentially remaining silent. As Loretta Ucelli, former White House communications director for President Bill Clinton suggests, it is wise to “err on the side of over communication” (2002). In regards to the key speaker, the stories from *The Daily Collegian* suggest that towards the end of the timeline of the study, current Penn State University president Erickson and appointed head football coach Bradley stepped out as the main speakers. With the stories from Penn State University’s website, there was no clear indicator of who the main speaker was.

As Len-Rios (2010) suggests, corrective action “is the most forward-looking in that it commits an organization to take specific future courses of action” (p. 271). Both *The Daily Collegian* and Penn State University utilized this strategy the most, which lends credence to the idea that corrective action is the most effective strategy in image defense. In regards to Burke’s theory of purification, the tragic was the most prevalent stage throughout this study, as it “looks to redeem a rhetor through punishing or removing the guilty party and is demonstrated when an actor is sentenced to prison because of his involvement in the offensive act” (p. 9). Key officials were removed from
Penn State as the scandal unfolded, including Tim Curley, Gary Schultz, Graham Spanier, and Joe Paterno.

As Penn State only released nine stories in relation to Jerry Sandusky’s sex abuse investigation, it has been found that the University’s website was not utilized in a fashion that could have helped retain the positive reputation and shoulder the burden that the scandal has placed on Penn State. The immense difference in the number of stories released by Penn State and by The Daily Collegian suggests that University officials did not work closely with the media. The stories that were released by each source aligned, but The Daily Collegian released more details surrounding the event than Penn State did. This can be seen as a lack of communication, which can foster the severity of the damage caused by the scandal involving Jerry Sandusky.
Chapter Five: Summaries and Conclusions

Limitations of the Study

There were several limitations for this study, with the most prevalent one being the time constraint. With more time to complete the study, more stories could have been coded, thus creating a larger set of results. The time constraint limited the coding of the local news lens to only The Daily Collegian. Utilizing only one local news lens could lead to unclear results. With more results and more coded stories, the analysis could be more complete and complex, leading to a better understanding of the different image repair strategies utilized by any of the news sources being analyzed within the study. A larger window of time would also allow for a broader investigation. The national news outlets could be explored, as well as more local news outlets a longer time period.

As the investigation into the accusations against Jerry Sandusky continues, more news stories surface. A broader study could look into if and how the scandal affects the reputation of Penn State University in terms of applications and attendance. This study could be revisited in the future and revised in an attempt to analyze how the overall case against Jerry Sandusky ultimately affected the reputation of Penn State as well as how the university continues to attempt to repair its image in the eyes of the campus, community, stakeholders, and the nation.

A second limitation of this case study is the use of online news stories only. This eliminates the ability to determine story prominence. With a physical newspaper, there are stories that are on the front page, which shows higher prominence, and there are stories on the inside and back pages, which show a lower prominence. With an online story, there are no physical pages. This eliminates one of the sets of code that could be
utilized in the analysis of the information. Although this is a defined limitation, the exclusion of this information from the study should have little impact on the results of the content analysis.

Another limitation is the use of a single search phrase, “Jerry Sandusky”. Multiple search phrases could gather a broader range of news stories, which in turn could produce a broader range of results. This is especially true for the Penn State University website, where only nine stories were found during the given time frame of November 5, 2011 through January 22, 2012. With more search phrases, it is likely that more stories regarding the sexual abuse scandal would surface. This would in turn produce a better set of results and a better analysis of the information at hand.

**Further Recommendations**

Benoit’s image repair strategies often come into play during crisis communication of all types. These strategies can be seen in this study with the current findings, but there is room for improvement. An improved study would have a longer time frame of analysis. Because the investigation is still on going, the time frame selected for the present study was suitable. A future study could investigate the findings of the investigation as it comes to a close. This would provide more information on what image repair strategies Penn State University employed in their attempt to restore their image and reputation.

Another enhancement to this study would be to include more news sources. An extended period of time of research would allow for this, and doing so would create a larger set of results. Moving beyond the local news lens would allow for an investigation into how the national news media viewed the Jerry Sandusky sex abuse scandal. For the
present study, the local news lens was appropriate because of the focus on the campus community. But for a future study, extending out from the campus would allow for a broader set of results.

For the analysis of the strategies employed by Penn State University, an enhancement to the present study would be to include stories that fall under the search phrase of “Joe Paterno”. This would include many more stories, which would again allow for a larger set of results. Also including stories that pertain to Gary Schultz, Tim Curley, and Graham Spanier, three very important players in the scandal involving Jerry Sandusky. As this information became apparent as the present study was being conducted, it would not have been conducive to add these individuals to the criteria. However, including them in a future study would add to the wealth of information available from which to devise results and conclusions from.

Conclusions

As has been pointed out, the main conclusion of this study is how severe the difference is between the number of stories coded from The Daily Collegian, 315, and the number coded from Penn State University, 9. Only one search term was utilized, “Jerry Sandusky”, and this more than likely had an impact on the number of stories coming from either source. A future study should include more search terms, perhaps using “Joe Paterno”, “Graham Spanier”, “Tim Curley”, and “Gary Schultz”. Including more key players of the scandal should yield better results.

“Increasingly, the impact of a reputation and history of crisis management is regarded as important for crisis outcomes” (Holtzhausen and Roberts, 2009, p. 169). Penn State University is highly regarded as an academic institution of prestige. With the Jerry
Sandusky scandal threatening this image, perhaps the most important thing to understand is that the scandal does not embody the campus as a whole. It embodies the key person, Jerry Sandusky, and any other key players, such as Tim Curley, Gary Schultz, Graham Spanier, and Joe Paterno. Communicating this to the community is important in the use of image repair strategies and in the strengthening of the campus atmosphere. Penn State University could be seen as having remained silent throughout the unfolding of the scandal involving Jerry Sandusky, which could have harmed them more than helped them. As the University moves forward, it may be wise to restrategize their image defense plan in preparation for a future potential crisis on campus.
References


Appendix A (Codes)

Code Set 1: Categorizations

1. Date
2. Author
3. News Source
4. Accusation

Code Set 2: Stages

1. When the scandal is released/when initial charges are filed against Jerry Sandusky (November, 5, 2011)
2. When Joe Paterno is released from coaching position (November 9, 2011)
3. One month after the story is released (December 9, 2011)
4. When Joe Paterno passes away (January 22, 2011)

Code Set 3: Message Strategies and Themes

1. Ethical Issues
2. Legal Issues
3. Broad Societal Issues
4. Public Reaction
5. Victims
6. Penn State Climate
7. Jerry Sandusky
8. Joe Paterno
9. Other

**Code Set 4a: IRT Defense Strategies**

1. Denial
2. Evading Responsibility
3. Reducing Offensiveness
4. Corrective Action
5. Mortification

**Code Set 4b: IRT Defense Substrategies**

1a. Shifting the Blame  
1b. Simple Denial  
2a. Provocation  
2b. Defeasibility  
2c. Accident  
2d. Good Intentions
3a. Bolstering  
3b. Minimization  
3c. Differentiation  
3d. Transcendence
3e. Attacking One’s Accusers  
3f. Offering Compensation
Appendix B (The Daily Collegian quotes)

Anna Orso - Nov 5 - **Athletic Director Curley, VP for Finance and Business Schultz charged with perjury**

In a statement also released Saturday, Curley's attorney Caroline Roberto said her client is innocent. "We will vigorously challenge the charges in court, and we are confident he will be exonerated," Roberto said in the statement. Schultz's attorney, Tom Farrell, also released a statement declaring his client's innocence.

Genaro C. Armas and Mark Scolforo - Nov 6 - **Accusations of child sex, cover-up rock Penn State**

An explosive sex abuse scandal and allegations of a cover-up rocked Happy Valley after former Penn State defensive coordinator Jerry Sandusky, once considered Joe Paterno's heir apparent, was charged with sexually assaulting eight boys over 15 years.

Anna Orso - Nov 7 - **Sandusky charged with sex abuse; Curley, Schultz, charged with perjury**

The “quick action” taken by the high school staff members is “in marked contrast to the reaction of top officials” at Penn State, Kelly said in the media release.

Liz Dennerlein - Nov 7 - **Penn State students react to Sandusky incident**

“’I’m very surprised, I’m very disheartened and more or less disgusted by Sandusky’s [alleged] actions,’ Bard (junior - economics and political science) said. ‘Actions like these often live on longer than any positive legacy you had prior to it.’”

Emily Kaplan - Nov 7 - **Scandal tarnishes PSU’s brand**

It’s going to take one heck of a PR campaign, more than a few heartfelt apologies and maybe a couple resignations for everything to be OK again at Penn State. Even then, it may never be the same.

Charles Dennis - Nov 8 - **A stream cannot rise above its source**

For Paterno to claim no culpability is impossible and ridiculous at best. Playing the ‘innocent’ card exhibits a gross lack of care and respect to the boys.

Chris Caswell - Nov 8 - **We may discover more painful truths**

How we respond as Penn Staters will show our true colors. We can choose to be defensively apologetic, hoping that the problems will be forgotten and our legacy will be preserved unscathed. This may feel better in the short-term, but it is no solution.
Kristin Stoller - Nov 8 - **The Second Mile releases statement**

“Although he maintained there was no truth to the claims, we are an organization committed first and foremost to the safety and well-being of the children we serve,” The Second Mile’s statement said.

“Consistent with that commitment and with The Second Mile policy, we immediately made the decision to separate him from all of our program activities involving children.”

Anna Orso - Nov 8 - **Corbett to appear at BOT, trustees holding emergency meetings**

"It's not about football. We're trying to make sure this never happens at the university. No one in a trusted position at the university or an adult can take advantage of a kid again," Silvis said. "It's really about the process and procedures and what we have in place. Our alma mater says let us not bring an act of shame."

Ryan Loy - Nov 9 - **Bobby Bowden, Beano Cook comment on scandal**

When Cook found out some details of the situation on Saturday, he said it was “like Watergate.” The 80 year old said he thought the situation wasn’t handled well.

Joe McIntyre - Nov 9 - **Cancellation of Paterno's weekly press conference called poor public relations move**

“It hurt for a while, but it will go away much quicker,” Manuel said. “Had they done that nine years ago, or whenever it happened, then the only case today would be Jerry Sandusky.”

Megan Rogers and Jessica Tully - Nov 9 - **Student tours to continue**

Prospective student Matt Olson, a senior at Avon Grove high school, said he has already applied to Penn State — and the scandal would not make him want to revoke his application.

“It didn’t happen to the school itself, just someone associated with it,” Olson said.

Liz Dennerlein - Nov 9 - **Students rally at Old Main in support of coach Joe Paterno**

The administration is not handling the situation very well and students are disappointed that they are failing to inform the public, Maura Carney said.

Collegian staff - Nov 10 - **Board of Trustees fire Joe Paterno, Graham Spanier**

The decision — which trustees said was made in the best long-term interest for students — comes five days after the release of the grand jury presentment describing alleged
incidents of sexual abuse of children by former Penn State defensive coordinator Jerry Sandusky.

Lynn Ondrusek - Nov 11 - **House speaker releases statement about allegations**

If a grand jury’s findings surrounding former defensive coordinator Jerry Sandusky and other university administrators hold true, the Pennsylvania Speaker of the House of Representatives said, “Penn State failed in this most basic obligation and in a most egregious way.”

Collegian staff - Nov 11 - **Erickson: Future still ‘bright’**

He said he hopes to have conversations with leaders in the community and at the state level to listen and find out where the process went wrong. In addition, Erickson said he hopes to work with a Special Committee, set to be voted on later on in the meeting.

Pat Gehrke ’03 - Nov 11 - **Culture must change, not just people**

The events that have come to light recently are not simply decisions made by two or even four people, but an expression of an organizational culture gone terribly wrong. It expresses a psychopathology in the institution itself that can only operate by being pervasive and deep-rooted.

Christina Gallagher and Anna Orso - Nov 11 - **Trustees: Special committee to address ‘failed’ responsibilities**

The committee, with the help of outside independent counsel, will determine what happened, who’s responsible and what changes to Penn State policy can be made surrounding the Sandusky case, Chairman of the board Steve Garban said.

Anna Orso - Nov 14 - **Woman seeks to bring law to state**

“Erin’s Law” — a law that mandates the education of children and adults on childhood sexual abuse — has been passed in Missouri and Illinois. Since the Jerry Sandusky case rocked Penn State and Pennsylvania as a whole, Merryn said she hopes to have the law passed in the Keystone State next.

Mike Still - Nov 14 - **Penn State stayed focus after distracting week**

“We just wanted to show people that we’re united,” running back Stephfon Green said. “We aren’t going to let the situations outside break up what we have inside. This whole team is a family. We play with heart. We just made sure of that.”

Anna Orso - Nov 14 - **Sandusky claims innocence**
In a telephone interview with NBC’s Bob Costas, Sandusky admitted to touching boys, showering with them and “horsing around,” but said there were never sexual intentions during these episodes.

“I have horsed around with kids. I have showered after workouts. I have hugged them, and I have touched their leg, without intent of sexual contact,” Sandusky said. “I shouldn’t have showered with those kids.”

Anna Orso - Nov 22 - **Lawyer: New charges may loom for Sandusky**

Also in the interview, Amendola alluded to a potential defense strategy that he may use in trial in defense of Sandusky, saying there is no way Sandusky could have committed crimes against boys in his home because there was always many people in the home. Amendola said Sandusky had six adopted children and three foster children at the time the incidents at his home happened, according to the grand jury report.

Jay Rossman ’77 - Jan 11 - **Penn State Board of Trustees should be blamed**

They are to blame for actions that are likely to cost the university tens if not hundreds of millions of dollars. They have let down alumni, students and friends of the Pennsylvania State University.

Associated Press - Jan 13 - **Erickson to alumni: 'this is the "Sandusky scandal"'**

"It grieves me very much when I hear people say 'the Penn State scandal.' This is not Penn State. This is 'the Sandusky scandal,'" he said. "We're not going to let what one individual did destroy the reputation of this university."