Research

The Usage of Apology and Justification to Repair Integrity and Benevolence-Based Trust Violations in a Stigmatized Social Enterprise

Helen Agbornso Ashu [1], *Xiaobao Peng[1*]*, *Zhang Xuehe[1]*, *Olayemi Hafeez Rufai* [2], *Annabelle Gadubu[1], Bashiru Ibrahim[1], Angwi Tassang[3] , Adebayo Olufemi David[4]*

[1] *School of Public Affairs, University of Science and Technology of China Anhui. 230026, PR China*

[2]*School of Sciences and Humanities, Department of Culture and Media Communication, University of Science and Technology of China Anhui. 230026, PR China.*

[3]*School of Public Administration, Department of Sociology, Hohai University, Nanjing, PR China*

[4]*College of Teacher Education, Department of Comparative Education, Zheijiang Normal University, Zhejiang , PR China*

[*]Corresponding Author:

Pxb1982@ustc.edu.cn

Abstract: This study investigates social entrepreneurs' management of stigma and trust violations. In a quantitative analysis, the study analyses self-administered questionnaires of three hundred and four (304) consumers of a fictitious food processing enterprise in Cameroon using structural equation modeling and hierarchical regression analysis to confirm the relationship between apology and justification in trust repair. Findings from the study show that in repairing trust and maintaining relationship, the marketing strategy of an organization takes two forms; tendering apology and justification with integrity, benevolence as moderators. The linear regression analysis shows that benevolence has the strongest effect on trust repair than apology, justification and integrity. The study concludes that apology and justification when combined with benevolence and integrity can be much more effective for the repair of trust in a stigmatized social enterprise.

Keywords: Social Enterprise, Event Stigma, Trust Repair, Integrity, Benevolence, Apology, Justification, Cameroon

1.   Introduction

It has been argued that interpersonal interaction is not only determined by individuals' desire to maximize the benefits and minimize costs of interactions but also by a long-term investment of emotional cultivation and intelligence with a mutual benefit (Dai & Wu, 2015b). This integration of the "economic man" and the "social man" is crucial to social entrepreneurs as they offer unique value propositions in a number of ways which earns them the trust of the consumers. Thus, trust is pervasive in social life; being a fundamental element of both intimate and distant interpersonal relations. It has been said to be a dynamic interpersonal construct which is subject to change and constant renegotiation through communicative and social interaction (Dai and Wu, 2015a). Defined as a willingness to accept vulnerability based on positive perception of other people's intentions or behavior (Kim, Cooper, Dirks, and Ferrin, 2013), trust is especially important in the context of social entrepreneurship as the success of a social enterprise is among other factors, determined by the social capital it accumulates where social capital includes information, support, respect, friendliness and access to resources (Jenner and Oprescu, 2016). As such, trust is a risk in that it is fragile, and relatively vulnerable since it involves both transaction costs and emotional cultivation (Cui, Zhang, Peng, and Chu, 2018; Kim et al., 2013), the breach of which exposes organizations to situations that threaten their organizational legitimacy (Kunnel & Quandt, 2016) and exposes them to other vulnerabilities such as stories of corrupt practices (Eberl, Geiger, & Aßländer, 2015), negative publicity (Cao, Shi, & Yin, 2014), product failure (Tomlinson & Mayer, 2009) and above all stigmatization.

A number of studies exist on the concept of stigmatization. For instance, Goffman et al. (1963) describes stigma as a discrediting attribute that transforms the stigmatized person's perception "from an ordinary to a stigmatized, discounted person". Hudson et al. (2018) identifies two forms of stigma thus: *event-stigma* resulting from isolation, anomalous, episodic

events; and *core stigma* resulting from the essence of organizations core attributes–what it is, what is does, and whom it serves-not just from an anomalous negative event. The later, from which stems organizational stigma, is the focus of this research. It has been described as a mark embodying a group-specific view of a collective stakeholder's perception that an organization has an underlying, deep-seated weaknesses that de-individuates the organization and discredits it (Goffman et al., 1963). Research in the fields of stigma, reputation, and crisis management have proposed a number of mechanisms including specialist strategies (Gao & Yang, 2014), hiding strategies (Bryant A. Hudson et al., 2018), structural responses, network-level responses, impression management, concealment (Dai & Wu, 2015b; Weitzl, 2016), defiance, boundary management and strategic co-optation of negative labels (Bryant A. Hudson et al., 2018) as potentially effective strategies to manage stigma (Tracey & Phillips, 2016). However, a combination of justification and apology as a means of repairing trust violation in stigmatized social enterprise has not been adequately studied. This creates a lacuna in the study of trust repair through benevolence and integrity.

Drawing on the causal attribution theory, this research investigates how social entrepreneurs handle instances of event stigma using apology and justification as a way of mitigating trust violations based on benevolence and integrity. Our main goal is to examine how organizational stigma can be remedied using apology and justification. It seeks to explore the use of apology and justification to resolve benevolence and integrity based trust violations in social enterprises as a means of proffering solution to organizational stigmatization.

## 2.	Materials and Methods

2.1 Stakeholder's Trust

Trust research spans a broad range of academic fields due to the vital role that trust plays in society. Trust is a broad and complex, multidimensional construct, and trust always originates from individuals, the target of trust may be either another person (Kramer, Pittinsky, &

Williams, 2012; Urbano, Paula Rocha, & Oliveira, 2013), technological artifacts (Chopra & Wallace, 2003), or organizations (Kim & Harmon, 2014; Peter H Kim, Kurt T Dirks, & Cecily Cooper, 2009)(Kramer et al., 2012),(Matteo Fuoli, 2017). This makes it notoriously difficult to define (Stewgee, 2015) making it difficult to operationalize, measure, and interpret (Simpson, 2007). Regardless, (Rousseau, Sitkin, Burt, & Camerer, 1998)defined trust as "the psychological state to accept vulnerability based on positive expectations of the intensions or behavior of another" (Yubao Cui, 2018). In this study we focus on stakeholder trust in social enterprises. Therefore, in this context, then, individual stakeholders are the trustors, who make themselves vulnerable to the actions of an organization based on positive expectations(Al-Hujran, Al-Debei, Chatfield, & Migdadi, 2015)(Matteo Fuoli, 2017). Trust is an important factor in entrepreneurial success (Goyal et al., 2013). Moreover, where trust is high people are more likely to engage in exchange (Oprescu, 2016).

However, in this study, we investigate apology and justification as mechanisms for repairing trust in stigmatized social enterprises. We argue for trust violations as antecedents to organizational stigma.

2.2 Organizational Stigma

Organizational stigma does not necessarily span from a history of outcomes or behaviors. Instead, as Jensen & Sandström (2016) notes, "the critical feature of the deviant-defining process is not the behavior of individuals who are defined as deviants, but rather the interpretations others make of their behaviors, whatever those behaviors may be." Hence, an important antecedent of organizational stigma is that stakeholders perceive that an organization threatens the existing social order because its values are globally and completely incongruent with the stakeholder group's values (Bryant A. Hudson et al., 2018). However, given that it is a collective phenomenon, in order for stigma to arise, the perception that the focal organization is a dangerous deviant must diffuse across a critical mass of members to the point at which it becomes self-sustaining within the stakeholder group (Drukkers, 2015; Eerolainen et al., 2015).

In the domain of entrepreneurship, individual stakeholders are the trustors who make themselves vulnerable to an organization's decision based on their perceived positive prospect of such an organization (Matteo Fuoli, 2017), and are determined by among other factors the social capital it accumulates. Such social capital includes information, support, respect, friendliness, access to resources among others (Jenner & Oprescu, 2016). Nonetheless, trust is a risk, fragile, and relatively vulnerable since it involves both transaction costs and emotional cultivation. When violated, the trustors (organizations or social entrepreneurs) bear the brunt as they are faced with situations that threaten organizational legitimacy (Kunnel & Quandt, 2016), stories of corrupt practices (Eberl, Geiger, & Aßländer, 2015), negative publicity (Cao, Shi, & Yin, 2014), product failure (Tomlinson & Mayer, 2009) and stigmatization.

Studies focusing particularly on stigma in the context of social entrepreneurship have mostly investigated factors preventing people from pursuing social entrepreneurship. Researchers have found that the stigma of failure affects social entrepreneurship entry decisions (Group, 2017; Lee, 2015). Results of a multi-level analysis carried out by Lee, 2015 from 22 countries found that the stigma of failure is positively linked to the social entrepreneurship decision (Chong Kyoon Lee, 2015). In an inductive analysis, Tracey & Phillips, 2016, by examining its relationship with organizational identity, the focus of stigma research moves across organizational boundaries. Using a social enterprise in the East of England- of Keystone as an example, that became stigmatized after initiating a support program for a group of migrants in its society, the researchers established that not only can the internal impacts of stigmatization on identity be controlled, but can also support unexpected positive outcomes for organizations (Phillips, 2013).

2.3 Trust Repair

Empirical trust repair studies on organizational stigmatization have looked at the circumstances under which trust is broken and which corrective actions are most useful in repairing the relationship. For instance, it has been suggested that to mitigate corporate reparation and

recover the resulting loss of trust, social enterprises will have to consider how trust became destroyed in the first place because different means of undermining trust are likely to require specific reparative responses (Cui et al., 2018; Hudson et al., 2018)promises, réticence (Schniter, Sheremeta, & Sznycer, 2013), justification (Kim & Harmon, 2014), excuses (Brühl, Basel, & Kury, 2018), compensation (Cui et al., 2018), substantive acts, such as regulation, penance, and reparation and other verbal reactions (Simon & Jiang, 2017). Bachmann, Gillespie, & Priem (2015) proposed that an analysis of trust repair must take into consideration whether the violation was based on ability, benevolence, or integrity. As such, scholars propose various ways of repairing trust including apologies (Ehrismann & Stegwee, 2015; Kunnel & Quandt, 2016). Cui et al. (2018) in their research add that trust would be restored more successfully if the mistrusted parties apologize with an external attribution for infringement of integrity-based trust whereas for infringement of competence-based trust, apologizing with an internal attribution is the better response. Bachmann et al. (2015) among others provide useful insights into the importance of understanding the cause of an organizational trust violation as a way of repairing such a trust. Non among these existing studies have examined both apology and justification as trust repair strategies in stigmatized organizations. This study therefore aims to examine the effect of apology and justification on a breached trust (benevolence and integrity based trust violation) in a stigmatized social enterprise.

3. Theoretical Framework and Hypothesis Development

In order to repair trust following a perceived violation, the trust breaker will need to take remedial actions aimed at improving the trusting beliefs and intentions of the trustor (Kim H., Cooper D., Ferrin L., & Dirks T., 2004). Communication is a fundamental means through which trust repair attempts are carried out. It plays a particularly important role in organizational trust repair, given the relative unobservability of companies' behavior (Fuoli & Paradis, 2014a). Recent studies have focused primarily on the role of apologies (Bagdasarov,

Connelly, & Johnson, 2019; Cao et al., 2014; Ma et al., 2018). Apology and denial are two of the most basic and common verbal trust repair strategies (Kim H. et al., 2004). However, in this study, we investigate apology and justification as mechanisms for repairing trust in stigmatize social enterprises.

3.1 Apology

An apology conveys a statement that acknowledges both responsibility and regret for the violation and may also convey a desire to reconcile and continue the relationship (Cao et al., 2014; Kim et al., 2013; Schniter et al., 2013).

Tomlinson & Mayer (2009) classified the type of apology into three categories: one type is a "no-apology" response without ever making an explicit apology to placate the victim; the second type attributes the cause of the violation to internal factors, and the third type attributes the violation to external causes.

More simply, an apology with internal attribution is one which admits that the offender's shortcomings and weaknesses caused the violation, whereas an apology with external attribution is one that blames external causes (e.g., circumstances, other entities) for the violation. An apology with internal attributions may be more effective in stimulating willingness to reconcile because the offender is accepting greater personal responsibility for the violation instead of attempting to shift blame. Those who make excuses to reduce personal responsibility may seriously compromise their credibility and character in the eyes of others (Cui et al., 2018). Following Kim et al. (2013), apology is defined here as a statement whereby the accused party acknowledges responsibility for a violation, and expresses regret for it. Previous work on apology have emphasized the positive role of apology in improving stakeholders' impressions of a company following a crisis (Cao et al., 2014; Kim et al., 2013; Schniter et al., 2013). An apology signals redemption (Schniter et al., 2013); it suggests that the company has learned its lesson and is committed to avid similar violations in the future. It can thus help to soothe people's anger and influence their opinions in a more positive direction

(Ma et al., 2018). In crisis communication research, there have been a number of experimental studies investigating the comparative effectiveness of different crisis response strategies, including apology and denial. Except for two studies that found no significant differences between the two strategies (Bagdasarov et al., 2019; Kim & Harmon, 2014), previous experiments show that apology outperforms denial in repairing a company's image in the wake of a crisis (Cao et al., 2014; Kim et al., 2013; Schniter et al., 2013).

However, these studies mainly focus on corporate image or reputation, rather than trust (Fuoli et al., 2017a).

Hypothesis 1: After negative publicity about a product or service, apology has a positive relationship with Trust Repair

3.2 Justification

Instead of lessening their responsibility, individuals may accept responsibility while attempting to reframe their behavior as in accordance with some type of superordinate goal or value, or by providing a more positive interpretation of the negative outcome (Kim & Harmon, 2014; Waddock & Steckler, 2016; Weitzl, 2016). Trustees may attempt to convince trustors to reassess the magnitude or nature of the transgression itself (Schniter et al., 2013).

This type of account provides a justification (Kim & Harmon, 2014) for behavior that is initially perceived negatively by pointing to reasons that it is legitimate and consistent with moral values. As such, this account "serves the purpose of making the action seem less negative (or even positive)". Justifications not only involve the acceptance of responsibility but also point out that the act in question was appropriate owing to the nature of the situation (Bozic, 2017).

The trustee may subsequently be able to alter the extent to which the trustor considers the behavior unfair by justifying the behavior in some way. To the extent that trustors value the goal underscored by the trustee's justification, trustors should consider the incident fairer than they might have initially presumed, and thereby exhibit higher trust toward that party than if

the justification had not been conveyed (Pavlou, 2018). Thus, in most cases justifications refer the trustor to a situational factor, such as a norm, that the trustor may not have recognized but that when taken into consideration reflects a positive or appropriate motive (Kim & Harmon, 2014).

Although the potential value of justifications has been suggested by the broader literature on social accounts (Manley, 2013) and distributive justice (Hadi A. A L-Abr row, Mohammad Shaker Ardakani, Alireza harooni, & Hamidreza Moghaddam pour, 2013), as well as recent trust repair theory (Kim et al., 2013), their implications for trust after its violation remains empirically unexplored. Kim & Harmon (2014) investigated how efforts to justify a transgression as an attempt to address matters of equity, equality, or need would affect the implications of an apology for trust after its violation, and how this would depend on the intended beneficiary.

Although combining a justification with an apology tended to elicit higher trust relative to an apology alone when the violation benefited another party, doing so was ineffective or harmful when the violation benefited the violator (Kim & Harmon, 2014). W. Shu, Chen, Lin, & Chen (2018), found that observers were more likely to approve of a harmful action when the action was explained to be the result of a good rather than bad motive.

Kramer et al. (2012) study of organizational actions in the California cattle industry observed that efforts to justify controversial actions by referencing normative and socially endorsed organizational practices (e.g. federally approved guidelines) provided an effective means of managing organizational legitimacy.

The effectiveness of a justification will depend on the violation type.

Hypothesis 2: After negative publicity about a product or service, justification has a positively relationship with Trust Repair.

3.3 Trust Violations

A trust violation occurs when evidence disconfirms confident, positive expectations regarding another's conduct and redefines the nature of the relationship in the mind of the injured party (Tomlinson & Mayer, 2009). Weiner (2008) causal attribution theory facilitates understanding into how trust is damaged and the processes that take place in updating perceptions of trustworthiness. In his theory the perception of a negative outcome leads to a general emotional reaction of displeasure, which causes the individual to identify the outcome's cause (Mayer & Tomlinson, 2009). Negative emotions such as disappointment, frustration, anger, and outrage by the harmed individual following a violation have been well-documented (Ma et al., 2018). However, individuals do not experience the full range of these emotions when considering the feelings of others who have had their trust violated (Kramer et al., 2012).

Thus, it is possible that violation carrying personal consequences (i.e. outcomes relevant to oneself) will evoke stronger reactions than organizational consequences (i.e. outcomes relevant for the entire organization than one particular person) (Bagdasarov et al., 2019). Nevertheless, the perceived cause is referred to as a causal ascription.

Based on whether the trust violation concerns matters of competence, integrity or benevolence, Cao et al. (2014) in their study of competence-based and integrity-based trust violations found that individuals tend to weigh positive information about competence more heavily than negative information about competence and tend to weigh negative information about integrity more heavily than positive information about integrity (Cui et al., 2018). But the trustee's actions may also undermine perceptions of his or her benevolence when interpreted as evidence of disregard for the trustor's wellbeing and interests (Fuoli et al., 2017a). An example of this is the Deepwater Horizon oil spill on 20th April 2010 which was provoked by the explosion and sinking of an offshore oil platform operated by British Petroleum (BP) in the Gulf of Mexico. Efforts to show benevolence were hampered by the controversial public statements of

its president and CEO, Tony Hayward. In particular, the now infamous 'I want my life back' comment in an interview at the peak of the crisis, alluded to the idea that the CEO and, by extension, BO placed other priorities ahead of solving the crisis (Fuoli & Paradis, 2014b).

We argue for trust violations as antecedents to organizational stigma. Organizational stigma does not necessarily develop from a history of behaviors or outcomes. Instead, as Jensen & Sandström (2016) notes, "the critical feature of the deviant-defining process is not the behavior of individuals who are defined as deviants, but rather the interpretations others make of their behaviors, whatever those behaviors may be." Hence, an important antecedent of organizational stigma is that stakeholders perceive that an organization threatens the existing social order because its values are globally and completely incongruent with the stakeholder group's values (Bryant A. Hudson et al., 2018). However, given that it is a collective phenomenon, in order for stigma to arise, the perception that the focal organization is a dangerous deviant must diffuse across a critical mass of members to the point at which it becomes self-sustaining within the stakeholder group (Drukkers, 2015; Eerolainen et al., 2015).

Hypothesis 3a: After negative publicity about a product or service, Benevolence based trust has a moderating effect on apology in repairing trust violation.

Hypothesis 3b: After negative publicity about a product or service, Benevolence based trust has a moderating effect on justification in repairing trust violation.

3.4   Intentions to Re-engage

The theory of reasoned action propounded by Ajzen and Fishbein (Pavlou, 2018) posits that behavioral intentions, which are the immediate antecedents to behavior, are a function of salient information or beliefs about the likelihood that performing a particular behavior will lead to a specific outcome. The theory divides the beliefs antecedents to behavioral intentions into two conceptually distinct sets: behavioral and normative. The behavioral beliefs are postulated to be the underlying influence on an individual's attitude toward performing the behavior,

whereas the normative beliefs influence the individual's subjective norm about performing the behavior. Hence, information or salient beliefs affect intentions and subsequent behavior either through attitudes and/or through subjective norms.

The theory of planned behavior proposed by includes perceived behavioral control as an exogenous variable that has both a direct effect on behavior and an indirect effect on behavior through intentions. Trust involves expectation and behavioral intention.

Expressions of trust not accompanied by behavioral intention indicate that the trust relationship is weak (Fuoli et al., 2017a). From a firm's perspective, if its image and reputation have been damaged by negative publicity, repairing trust will enhance the customers' tolerance and restore engagement intentions (Wolfe & Blithe, 2015). Thus, the following hypotheses are suggested:

Hypothesis 4a: After negative publicity about a product or service, Integrity-based trust has a moderating effect on apology in repairing trust violation.

Hypothesis 4b: After negative publicity about a product or service, Integrity-based trust has a moderating effect on justification in repairing trust violation.

4. Methodology

The foremost objective of this section is to investigate how trust could be repaired when the trust violator adopts the strategy of apology and justification. The research techniques provide a logical and systematic approach to the investigation, which links to the comprehensive framework of the analysis unit, data collection techniques, sample concentration, interpretation techniques and analysis plan. Scenario-based experiments have been conducted to test the above hypotheses and evaluate the results of trust repair strategy after a suspected breach of trust based on integrity and benevolence. The experiments involved a 2 x 2 between-subjects design with **trust violation type x 2** (benevolence vs integrity) and **trust repair strategies x 2** (apology vs justification).

A fictitious social enterprise organization that is primarily involved in providing services to humanity was used to create four scenarios. An imaginary seasoning company (Eco-health) was chosen as the research context because seasoning is a typical high-risk product that is closely related with the health of the customers. The physical damage caused by defective seasoning products can be serious and difficult to repair. At the same time, it is difficult for ordinary customers to judge seasoning products' quality. This makes them a widely consumed high-risk product. Almost every family consumes seasoning products every day. The company is a social enterprise which primary motive is using its return for humanitarian purposes such as building orphanage homes. However, the company is suffering from a lack of customer trust caused by the negative publicity as it was accused of adding too much monosodium glutamate (MSG) to their products (Eco-Noodles). Since then, the company has been facing stigmatization as most consumers are unwilling to patronize their products.

4.1. Questionnaires

The survey consisted of four sections. The first part describes the objectives of the study and the socio-demography of the respondents followed by a general depiction of the fictitious social enterprise organization. The issues showing that the Seasoning Company was exposed as producing goods that negatively affect human health and the cause of the incidence (benevolence-based vs, integrity-based trust violation).

The participants played the role of customers who bought the noodles that was said to have too much monosodium glutamate (MSG). The respondents were given a scenario describing how the fictitious social enterprise organization reacted to handling the event regarding apology and justification. They replied to a series of questions about key variables and test objects for manipulation.

Manipulations

In accordance with our 2x2 experimental designs, four variance of the scenario are present in the questionnaires. Each version contained an identical general depiction of the focal company and the rumor that Eco-Health organization produced and sold products that contained too much monosodium glutamate. The other segments of the scenario containing the three manipulations specified the differing scenario conditions for types of violation.

Violation type

The breach of trust was framed either on the basis benevolence or on integrity. The violation was described in such a manner that it was consistent with the theoretical conceptual of benevolence and integrity presented earlier in the article (Kim H. et al., 2004). In both conditions, the focal company was accused of selling noodles with too much monosodium glutamate added. The respondents were told this about the focal company for the state of benevolence violation: "Ecohealth has been charged for adding too much monosodium glutamate to the noodles"

EcoHealth was accused of knowing the harmful effect of the products for the integrity condition, but went ahead and sold it for profit at a 50% discount rate.

Apology type

Upon reporting the breach of trust, ecohealth apologizes for putting the lives of children at risk by promising that it would take additional measures to ensure the health and safety of its products, including those of the kids. She expressed her deep regrets and apologized for the incident and promised it's committed to taking necessary steps to ensure that this unfortunate situation never happens again.

Justification type

For the justification condition, the respondent is told that: "Eco-Health has justified its action of adding monosodium glutamate stating that research into its effects are not concrete and do not support the claims that its harmful. It also stated that many other organizations added MSG to its products to give that added flavor people love so much. She also added that she has been

using this ingredient for the past 5 years and have never received a single complain. Eco Health stated that it's committed to promoting health safety and nutrition in children in order to ensure a better future for the nation. Eco-health further stated that the organization is also committed that adhering to safety standards set by the bureau of health and safety standards.

Participants

Data were collected via offline survey by using random sampling technique in the Eastern Region of Cameroon during the second quarter of the year 2019. The questionnaires were distributed to 304 participants. Out of 304 individuals, 135 (44.4%) were male, and 169 (55.6%) were female. The response rate in female was high due to the fact that they are the mothers of the affected children. The theme and objectives of this study were explained to the respondents before the questionnaires were administered. Participants were informed in the instructions that participation in the study is voluntary, that the questionnaire is anonymous (no names required but demographic information required), and that by responding to the survey they are giving their consent for their data to be used for the purposes of the study. Completing the questionnaires took about 10 minutes. The respondents were recruited in exchange for a bottle of juice to motivate them in answering the questions, after which the participants were debriefed and thanked for their participation. In addition, majority of the respondents were aged between 30-39 years 143 (44.0%). 32 (10.0%) respondents had secondary school certificate (SSC), 50 (16.4%) had professional diploma (PD), 129 (42.4%) had bachelor's degree (BSc), 76 (25.04%) had master's (MSc) and 17 (5.6%) had doctorate degree (PhD). A total of 117 (38.5%) respondents were unemployed, 68 (22.4%) were intern, 48 (15.8%) were part-time worker, 58 (19.1%) were full-time worker and 13 (4.3%) were business owners. See Table 1.

Table 1: Demographics of respondents

Category		Frequency	Percentage %
Gender	Male	135	41.4
	Female	169	55.6

Age	18-29 years	118	33.8
	30-39 years	143	47.0
	40-49 years	41	13.5
	50-59 years	2	7.0
	60-above	0	0
Level of education	Secondary school certificate	32	10.5
	Professional diploma	50	16.4
	Bachelor's degree	129	42.4
	Master's degree	76	25.0
	PhD	17	5.6
Occupation	Unemployed	117	38.5
	Intern	68	22.4
	Part-time	48	15.8
	Full-time	58	19.1
	Business owner	13	4.3

Manipulation checks:

The participants answered two manipulation test questions, designed to determine whether participants understood the categorically different experimental conditions assigned to them. Each of the manipulation checks were multiple choice questions in which participants were provided with several answer options. On the first administration of the questionnaire, two manipulation check questions were included regarding whether participants understood the violation and response. For instance, participants were asked

1.   What does this accusation bring into question?

a.   Eco-Health's integrity

b.   Eco-Health's benevolence

2.   What was Eco-Health's response to the accusation?

a.   Eco-Health's responded with an apology

b.   Eco-Health's responded with a justification

Participants responded to some dependent measures after answering the two manipulation check questions (See Appendix).

Dependent measures

Since most prior research indicated that the consumer's perceived reliability of social enterprise subsequently determines consumer reliance of the organization (Bozic, 2017; Eberl et al., 2015; Jenner & Oprescu, 2016), we should measure perceived trustworthiness and trust at the same time. Following the social enterprise measures to repair trust, our survey perceived trustworthiness (integrity and benevolence) have been adopted from (Eberl et al., 2015; Gillespie & Dietz, 2009) who revised the measures from other literature (Charles, 2016; Kim H. et al., 2004) to fit the sustainable environment. Consumer intention to re-engage was measured by seven items, ("Generally speaking, I trust EcoHealth", "EcoHealth is reliable", "EcoHealth is dependable", "I wouldn't let EcoHealth have any influence over issues that are important to me", "I would engage with EcoHealth to solve a problem that was critical to me i.e. environmental or health-related", "I would recommend EcoHealth to friends, neighbors, and relatives" and "I feel very confident about the intentions of EcoHealth" (Goyal et al., 2013; Mayer, Roger C.; Davis, 1995; Peter H Kim et al., 2009; W. Shu et al., 2018). On a 5-point Likert scale all items were evaluated (1 strongly agree, 5 strongly disagree) and can be seen in Table 2.

Table 2: Measurement

Variables	Items	Sources
Justification	1. Ecohealth has provided evidence to prove its products are now up to international quality standard. 2. Ecohealth has provided evidence to prove its current quality of its products. 3. Ecohealth has provided evidence to prove its other products to be qualified. 4. Ecohealth has proven its innocence by justifying that its products are not to harm its consumers.	(Cao et al., 2014)
Apology	1. Ecohealth has made an obvious apology to the victims and the public. 2. Ecohealth has taken consumers emotions into consideration. 3. Ecohealth has taken responsibility of its action. 4. Ecohealth has apologized for its carelessness.	(Cao et al., 2014)
Benevolence Based Trust	1. EcoHealth seems very concerned about the welfare of people. 2. The needs and desires of people seem to be very important to EcoHealth 3. EcoHealth seems to be interested in the well-being of people, not just themselves. 4. Judging from EcoHealth's response, I believe that when customers have problems, the social enterprise will respond constructively and with care. 5. EcoHealth treats customers with respect when responding to negative publicity.	Adapted from Mayer & Davis (1995) Adapted from Kim et al. (2009) Adapted from Cui et al. (2018)

Integrity Based Trust	1. I believe that EcoHealth's response is honest.	Adapted from Mayer & Davis (1995)
	2. Judging from EcoHealth's response, I believe the social enterprise has a good value system.	Adapted from Kim et al. (2009)
	3. Sound principles seem to guide EcoHealth's behavior.	
	4. Eco Health seems to have a great deal of moral integrity.	Adapted from W. Shu et al., (2018)
Intention to Re-Engage (Trust Repair)	1. Generally speaking, I trust EcoHealth.	Adapted from Choi & Kim (2013)
	2. Generally speaking, EcoHealth is reliable.	
	3. Generally speaking, EcoHealth is dependable.	Adapted from Mayer & Davis (1995)
	4. I wouldn't let EcoHealth have any influence over issues that are important to me.	Adapted from Kim et al. (2009)
	5. I would engage with EcoHealth to solve a problem that was critical to me i.e. environmental or health-related.	
	6. I would recommend EcoHealth to friends, neighbors, and relatives.	Adapted from Cui et al. (2018)
	7. I feel very confident about the intentions of EcoHealth	

Pilot study

We conducted a pilot study before the data collection. The questionnaires were issued to 60 individuals in Cameroon's Eastern Region. To access the reliability and validity of the calculation, the exploratory factor analysis (EFA). The results showed that the measurements' reliability and validity were quite good.

Data Analysis

Data was analyzed using SPSS 23 & AMOS 21 with the technique of structural equation modeling. To begin with, we used the descriptive analysis to find the demographic information of the respondents, mean, standard deviation for all variables. Secondly, Pearson correlation was used to examine the relationship between the constructs. Thirdly, the exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was carried out to address the reduction of the size of the items and to examine the reliability, convergent validity and discriminant validity of the model of the research. We examine the reliability of the model by using Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability in order to test the internal consistency. Convergent validity was tested to determine the factor loadings, composite reliability and average variance extracted from each variable. At the same time, we tested the discriminant validity of each variable by taking the square root of AVE values. Furthermore, confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was employed to confirm our measurement model fit indices, as it is the most suitable and recognized technique for validating the measurement model. Ultimately in order (Farooq & Vij, 2017; Men & Tsai, 2013) to check benevolence and integrity based trust, we used hierarchical regression analyses moderate the relationships between the independent variables apology and justification with the aim to restore trust in a stigmatized social enterprise.

Results

Validity and reliability

To determine the validity and factor loading (FL) of each item, we used exploratory factor analysis (EFA). In particular, the loading of each element observed above the lower cut-off value of 0.4 also found to have no cross-loading effect and recommended for the further studies (Weitzl, 2016). By using the principal components method with varimax rotation, We performed EFA and suppressed values less than 0.30. Table 3 shows the factor loading of all items. All factor loadings are in the range of 0.57 and 0.93 while the recommended values should be substantial and exceed than 0.5. We also looked at the average variance extracted (AVE) to ensure the reliability and

convergent validity of the items. In our data, all of the AVE values were greater than the minimum recommended threshold of 0.50, which suggest that the items meet the convergent validity requirements criteria. We used composite reliability (CR) and Cronbach's alpha (CA) to measure the reliability of constructs values. Values of CR and CA are acceptable when it scores greater than 0.7. Table 4 shows that all CR and CA values exceed 0.7, verifying measurement reliability (Weitzl, 2016). Discriminant validity is established by initially ensuring that the outer loading of an indicator on a variable is greater than cross-loading with other variables, and then ensuring that the square root of the AVE is higher than the outer correlations of each variable (Hair & Gabriel, 2014). The results thus show that all outer loadings are greater than cross-loading for each item and that the square root of AVEs is higher than outer correlations (Table 4). The findings confirm discriminant validity. Overall, findings show high reliability and validity of the posited measurement model. In addition, the structural equation model was tested using IBM AMOS 21 for the validated measures. The overall fitness indices are within the context of the confirmatory factor analysis (CFA). The value of CMIN/df is 2.613 which is within the preferred range of CMIN to be ranged between 1 and 3. Moreover, fitness indices include the relative (NFI, IFI, and TLI) and non-centrality indices (RMSEA and CFI) (Hu & Bentler, 1999). We found NFI 0.958, IFI 0.969 and TLI 0.972 which supporting that the values should be higher than 0.95. Regarding the non-centrality indices, the values of RMSEA and CFI are .073 and 0.968 respectively. The finding supports previous literature that both values of RMSEA and CFI should be <0.08 and >0.90 respectively (Hu & Bentler, 1999). Therefore, the outcomes show a valid model fit as shown in Table 4.

Table 3: Validity and reliability of constructs

Variable	Items	Factor loading	Cronbach's Alpha	AVE	CR
Justification	J1	.82	.89	.69	.90
	J2	.85			
	J3	.83			
	J4	.83			
Apology	AP1	.82	.85	.60	.85
	AP3	.84			

	AP3	.83			
	AP4	.57			
Benevolence based trust	BBT1	.91	.96	.85	.97
	BBT2	.93			
	BBT3	.92			
	BBT4	.93			
	BBT5	.92			
Integrity based trust	IBT1	.89	.94	.80	.94
	IBT2	.90			
	IBT3	.92			
	IBT4	.87			
Intention to re-engage (Trust repair)	TR1	.79	.89	.92	.85
	TR2	.81			
	TR3	.77			
	TR4	.85			
	TR5	.73			
	TR6	.80			
	TR7	.79			

Note: J = Justification, AP = Apology, BBT = Benevolence based trust, IBT = Integrity based trust and TR = Intention to re-engage (Trust repair)

Mean, standard deviation and correlations

The means, standard deviations (SD), and correlations results of the study's variables including justification, apology, benevolence-based trust, integrity-based trust and intention to re-engage (trust repair) are summarized in Table 5. As predicted, justification was significantly correlated to Apology (AP) (0.659**, P < .01), benevolence-based trust (BBT) (0.535**, P < .01), integrity-based trust (IBT) (0.462**, p < .01) and trust repair (TR) (0.171**, p < .01). This shows that justification plays a critical role in restoring consumers intentions to re-engage (trust repair). In addition, Apology (AP) significantly correlates with Benevolence-based trust (BBT) (0.660**, p < .01), Integrity based trust (IBT) (0.468**, p < .01) and Trust repair (TR) (0.265**, p < .01).

Moreover, Benevolence-based trust (BBT) significantly have a relationship with Integrity Based Trust (IBT) (0.605**, p < .01) and Trust repair (TR) (0.148**, p < .01). Integrity-based trust (IBT) also correlates significantly with Trust repair (TR) (0.376**, p < .01). Therefore, benevolence-based trust (BBT) and integrity-based trust (IBT) serves as moderators in strengthening the desires consumers' re-engagement intentions.

Table 4: Mean, standard deviation and correlations.

	MEAN	SD	J	AP	BBT	IBT	TR
J	5.16	1.31	(0.83)				
AP	5.07	1.6	0.659**	(0.77)			
BBT	6.7	1.8	0.535**	0.660**	(0.92)		
IBT	5.2	1.4	0.462**	0.468**	0.605**	(0.89)	
TR	1.7	0.5	0.171**	0.265**	0.148**	0.376**	(0.79)

**. Correlation at the 0.01 level (2-tailed) is significant. Note: J = (Justification), I = (Integrity), BBT= (benevolence-based trust), IBT = (Integrity based-trust) and TR = (Trust repair). The discriminant validity of the study variables are the bold values in the parentheses

Table 5: Fitness indices for the proposed Model.

Fitness indices	Observed values in CFA	Recommended values
CMIN/df	2.613	Less than 3.0 (Hu & Bentler, 1999)
NFI	.958	Above .90 (Tarka, 2018)
IFI	.969	Above .95 (Hu & Bentler, 1999)
TLI	.972	Above .95 (Hu & Bentler, 1999)
CFI	.968	Above .95 (Tarka, 2018)
RMSEA	.073	Less than .08 (Bélanger & Carter, 2005)

Regression Analysis

To examine the relative effect of independent variables on trust repair, linear regression analysis was performed. Table 7 shows the results of the linear regression analysis. As the table revealed, apology had a significant positive relationship with Trust Repair (B=0.364; t=3.621, p<0.05). H1 was supported. Justification was used as the independent variable and has a significant positive relationship with trust repair (B=0.377; t=6.548, p<0.05). H2 was supported. To further analyze the result, the relationship between benevolence-based trust, integrity-based trust and trust repair were tested. The effect of benevolence (B=0.44; t=3.402, p<0.05) was the greatest showing that it

is critical in bringing back and maintaining customer relationships after trust has been violated. However, the standardized beta coefficient for the effect of integrity on trust repair was negative (B= -0.09; t=-1.10, p>0.05), which is non-significant. This does not provide support for the argument developed in this study that integrity is an antecedent to trust repair and is a contradiction to the earlier studies of integrity in corporate marketing (Cao et al., 2014)where integrity was significantly reported.

Table 6: Regression analysis

Dependent variable	Independent variables	Std. Beta	T	Sig.
Trust repair	Justification	0.377	6.548	.000
	Apology	0.364	3.621	.000
	Benevolence	0.438	3.402	.000
	Integrity	-0.09	-1.100	.281

R^2 =0.19, standardized R^2=0.18, Std. error 0.47, F = 17.306, Significance 0.000.

Results of Hierarchical Regression Analysis

Analysis of regression was used to estimate the correlation between trust repair, justification, apology and other variables in the conceptual framework. In order to explore the nature of effect of benevolence and integrity on trust repair, hierarchical regression analysis method devised by (Sharma, Durand, & Gur-arie, 1986) was employed. The literature discusses two types of moderators-pure and quasi. A pure moderator by definition is a variable that interacts with an independent variable while having a negligible correlation with the dependent variable (Cohen, Cohen, West, & Aiken, 2003; Sharma et al., 1986). In addition to interacting with the independent variable, a Quasi-moderator variable is also an independent variable it self (Sharma et al., 1986). Following this method, hierarchical regression analysis was performed by steps in the terms x, z, and x^*z, respectively, for test the nature of variable's moderating effect:

Step (1) $y = a + b_1x$

Step (2) $y = a + b_1x + b_2z$;

Step (3) $y = a + b_1x + b_2z + b^3(x^*z)$;

Where y is the trust repair, b the regression coefficients, x the justification/apology, z the benevolence/integrity, x^*z the interaction of x and z.

Tables 8 and 9 present the results of the hierarchical regression analysis. There are two sets of regressions since the moderating effect has to be measured for justification as well as apology. In

order to identify a moderator variable, it is necessary to determine whether a significant interaction is present between the hypothesized moderator variable, z; and the predictor variable x; by the hierarchical regression analysis procedure (by seeing if Eqs. (2) and (3) are different, i.e., b_3 is not equal to 0). Next, if there is a significant interaction, the relationship between z and the criterion variable is determined (by seeing if Eqs. (1) and (2) are different, i.e., if b_2 is not equal to 0). There would be a quasi moderating effect of benevolence and integrity on trust repair if b(x), b(z) and b(x*z) were significant, whereas there would be a pure moderating effect would exist if b(x) and b(x*z) were significant and b(z) were non-significant.

It follows from table 8 below, it follows that both the coefficients for benevolence and the interactive term (i.e., apology X benevolence) differ significantly from 0. H3a is supported. At the same time, the interactive term between (justification and benevolence) is also significant. H3b is supported. Thus, benevolence is a quasi-moderator variable on the effect of the relationship between apology and justification on trust repair. The regression coefficient for integrity is not significant but the interactive term (i.e., apology X integrity) has a significant beta coefficient, thereby supporting H4a. However, the interactive term between (justification and integrity) is not significant. H4b not supported. Consequently, integrity is identified as a pure moderator on the relationship between apology and trust repair but integrity is not seen as moderating the relationship between justification and trust repair.

Table 7: Results of hierarchical regression analysis for apology and justification when benevolence is a moderating variable

Dependent variable - Trust repair	Beta coeff. b(x)	Significance	Beta coeff. b(z)	Significance	Beta coeff. b(x X z)	Significance	F value
Step 1	0.75	0.000					47.91
Step 2	0.52	0.000	0.44	0.000			32.50
Step 3	0.86	0.000	0.87	0.000	-0.72	0.003	31.66
x = Apology z = Benevolence							
Step 1	0.75	0.000					47.91
Step 2	0.62	0.000	-0.32	0.003			26.83
Step 3	0.72	0.000	0.61	0.000	0.08	0.001	38.77
x = justification z = benevolence							

*Non-significant. Note: dependent variable = trust repair

Table 8: Results of hierarchical regression analysis for apology and justification when integrity is a moderating variable

Dependent variable - Trust repair	Beta coeff. b(x)	Significance	Beta coeff. b(z)	Significance	Beta coeff. b(x X z)	Significance	F value
Step 1	0.60	0.000					22.809
Step 2	0.52	0.000	-0.58	0.736*			21.60
Step 3	0.52	0.000	0.58	0.000	0.72	0.001	21.60
x = Apology z = Integrity							
Step 1	0.17	0.003					9.114
Step 2	0.62	0.000	-0.32	0.083*			26.83
Step 3	0.12	0.000	0.32	0.050	0.035	0.172*	16.590
x = Justification z = Integrity							

*Non-significant. Note: dependent variable = trust repair

5. Discussion of Results and Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to investigate the implications simultaneously using apology and justification for trust repair in a stigmatized social enterprise. After a breach of trust based on benevolence vs. integrity the implication of apology and justification for reparing trust in a stigmatized social enterprise., The results of the study suggest that repairing trust and maintaining relationship marketing strategy in an organization takes four forms i.e., organizational integrity, benevolence, tendering apology and justification. The linear regression analysis shows that showing benevolence has the strongest effect (greater than apology, justification and integrity) on trust repair. This has some useful implications for the organization. Benevolence can sustain the customers relationships in ensuring intention to re-engage. The study provides useful insights by studying the nature and constituents of benevolence and integrity on justification and apology. Compared to previous studies strategies of repairing trust (e.g Cui et al., 2018; Kim et al., 2013), this study distinguishes strategies of repairing trust into justification and apology . First, justification, apology and benevolence are all positively related to intention to re-engage (trust

repair). This depicts that findings of the study reveal that justification and apology have significant positive relationships with benevolence-based trust. Similarly, benevolence-based trust significantly boosted the intention to re-engage by customers which is a way of repairing trust that has been violated. In this study, benevolence and integrity are found to play a moderating role in the relationship between justification, apology and intention to re-engage.

Through a scenario questionnaire survey, the study provided support for all of the hypotheses. Hypotheses 1 and 2 focused on the strategies of repairing trust. The relationship among apology, justification and trust repair, and the moderating effect of benevolence and integrity-based trust, could find support in other causal attribution studies (e.g Tomlinson & Mayer, 2009)

The verification of Hypotheses 3a and 3b confirmed that trust based on benevolence had a significant moderating effect on the positive relationship between apology, justification and trust repair. This shows that apology and justification are a good combination factor that can be used for repairing trust in a stigmatized social enterprise. With the help of benevolence, consumers can easily accept to re-engage with the organization after trust violation.

More so, integrity-based trust had a moderating effect on apology and trust repair because the consumers perceived Ecohealth's apology as a form of integrity on their side which confirms that H4b is a moderator. However, we found that integrity is not a moderating factor between justification and trust repair eventually not confirming H4a. This shows that in the process of repairing trust violation, applying justification without apology does not really show the integrity of the organization.

One important constituent of benevolence is psychological impact it will have on the customers in retaining loyalty to the organizations patronage. Reduction of prices of goods to the existing customers can promote this. It would not be out of place to mention that customers are likely to accept apology through benevolence if the organization is able to justified the negative events. Kim & Harmon (2014) observes that justification is valuable to the customers and it can act as an antecedent to maintaining integrity because for a customer, it is harder to believe that only apology is sufficient to retain their loyalty to the organization. Another factor to increase benevolence is giving back to the society in form of humanitarian services part of the profits generated by the organization. This will develop smooth and cordial relationship between the organization and the customers thereby enabling intention to re-engage. The importance of organizational representative's should be stressed. Some of the customers during an interview suggest that good

listening skill, engaging in regular contact, prompt response to queries and paying individual attention to the customers' complaints are the most important factors that promote trust. Second facet of trust repair strategy is that customers expect apology from the trust violator which in this case is the organization. Apology is important because it plays a key role in maintaining relationship. Without the organization taking responsibility of the negative occurrence, the relationship is likely not to be repaired and the multiplier effect is such that the organization will lose its reputation, customer loyalty, sales revenue reduction and eventually become stigmatized in the society which can lead to the organization folding up. The study findings show that apology develops through benevolence and a proper way of justification is sufficient in repairing trust violation. Organization ought to do this in order to maintain their integrity. Showing benevolence is also a major predictor in repairing trust. It is strongly recommended that organizations regularly engage in social community development services in a way that demonstrate their form of benevolence thereby promoting the relationships with consumers.

This research investigation concluded that the effects of simultaneous justification and apology on promoting intention to re-engage is more effective in preserving a relationship and customers loyalty when there is benevolence involvement and integrity approach than justification without apology.

5.1   Implications for Research on Trust Repair

These findings contribute to a growing research body that examines how trust might be repaired after a breach of trust. While previous investigations in this arena have reached conclusions that many repair strategies (apology, explanation, compensation) contribute to the effective repair of trust, research has only recently begun to investigate how these trust-repair elements work together in combination or sequence to improve the effectiveness of trust-repair. Desmet & Dijk (2011) investigated the effects of simultaneous financial compensation and apologies on preservation of relationship and concluded that financial compensation with an apology is more effective than financial compensation without apology in preserving a relationship. These insights are further extends in two ways by the present study. First, the study reveals the effectiveness when there is a form of showing benevolence (reduction of prices and engaging in societal humanitarian services) together with the apology, and when there is justification intent in a form of maintaining the organization's integrity. The consequences of choosing the repair strategy choice also depend on

the type breach of trust. Second, the study investigates these relationships in the social enterprise environment.

5.2   About Apology and Justification.

Despite previous research reaching conclusions regarding the benefits of an apology for repairing trust, Kim et al. (2013) extended these insights by revealing that, even if an apology can be justified, another critical choice must be made. Specifically, they classified apologies into apologies with an internal vs. external attribution and found that the optimal choice of type of apology depends on the type of trust violation. The present study further extends these insights by exploring apology and showing benevolence through humanities in social enterprise and also incorporating another substantive strategy (i.e., justification) at the same time. Very few studies have combined apology and justification for subsequent assessment of trustworthiness, particularly when considering the various types of breach of trust. Cui et al. (2018) revealed that internal attributions are more effectively in repairing trust for competence-based violations and external attributions repaired trust more effectively for integrity-based violations. Whereas this present study reveals that the effects of simultaneous justification and apology on promoting intention to re-engage is more effective in preserving a relationship and customers loyalty when there is benevolence involvement and integrity approach than justification without apology.

5.3   Practical implications

These findings highlight the effectiveness of the different combinations of apology and justification for trust repair after a benevolence-based or integrity-based trust violation in the social enterprise setting. The study extends understanding of the implications of apology and justification and thereby provides a basis for social enterprises to decide how to use apology and justification to repair trust after event stigma.

Our results indicate that when Eco-Health has been accused of an integrity-based trust violation, an apology offers a stronger signal that honest behavior would be forthcoming, and admitting blame repairs trust more effectively. Consumers may however be prepared to accept both justification and apology for a benevolence-based trust violation, given their belief that Ecohealth had a good intention by providing a 50% discount even though it resulted in a negative outcome as a result of adding too much monosodium glutamate. Meanwhile, for an integrity-based trust violation, it was realized that both apology and justification were insignificant because consumers don't believe in repairing trust with just integrity without showing benevolence.

5.4 Limitations and future directions

This study has limitations that provide potential directions for further research. One issue that may be raised regarding the present methodology is that it uses a scenario-based experimental design to examine consumer attitude towards a stigmatized organization as a result of trust violation and determined efforts of repairing the trust. Although scenario design has been widely used in organizational research and has obvious advantages, it also limits the external validity of the results to some extent.

Several issues can be investigated in future research such as an empirical investigation of the antecedents of benevolence, e.g., apology and justification. Only stigmatized social enterprise organization were considered for the present study, which poses a constraint on the generalizability of the findings. Using samples from different sector or industry, e.g., medical, dental, legal, is required for further investigation of the studies construct. The response time for tendering the apology for trust repair should be put into consideration. The present study did not ascertain when the apology was actually made. Future study may wish to examine the effectiveness of immediate apology when the negative events occur or apology after in alliance with other factors.

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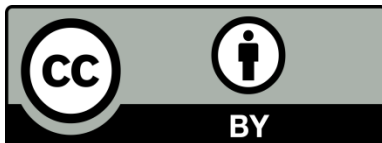
Acknowledgments

Dedication

Dedicated to my family and friends

Conflicts of Interest

There are no conflicts to declare.