


INTRODUCTION



**KAREN FREBERG,
PH.D
UNIVERSITY OF
LOUISVILLE
@KFREBERG**



**LAURA FREBERG,
PH.D
CAL POLY SLO
@LFREBERG**



**MAJ KRISTIN
SALING
US ARMY
@KCSALING**

OVERVIEW

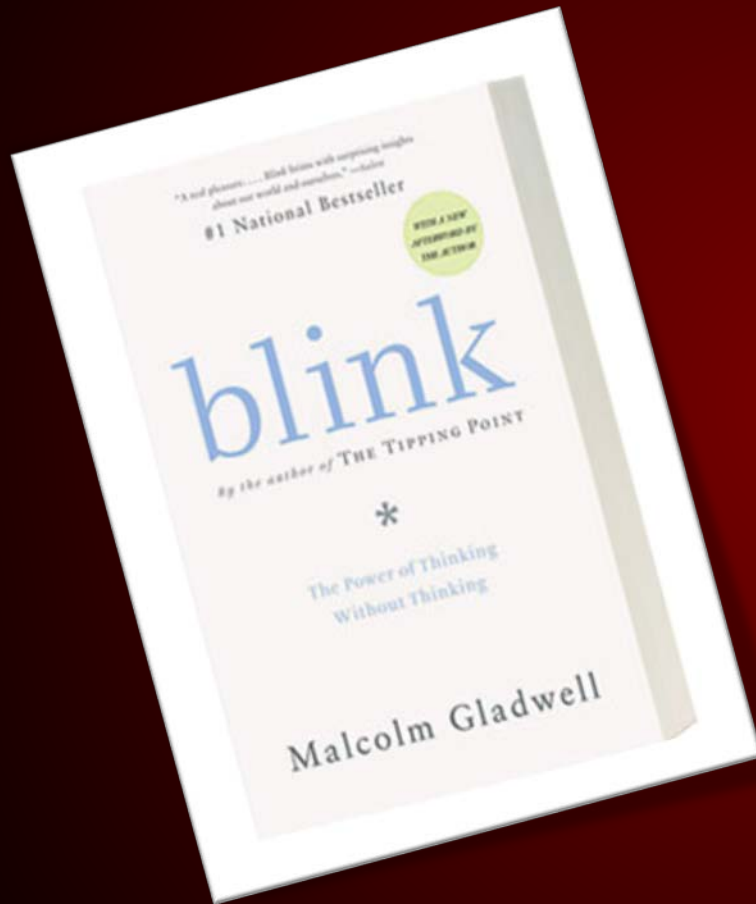
- **The Situational Q-Sort allows us to record and quantify subjective first impressions.**
 - **By subjectively quantifying crisis professionals' impressions of a crisis situation, we gain some significant insights.**
- **We can take these insights and craft crisis strategies for our crisis action playbook.**



LITERATURE REVIEW

- **Exploring Situations and Message strategies (SCCT, Coombs, 1995)**
- **Message strategies and impact on reputation in a crisis situation (Page et al., 2013) and the medium in which they appear in (Freberg, 2012; Freberg et al., 2013).**
- **Experiments, surveys, case studies, and interviews have been popular methodologies for exploring crisis situations.**

WHY Q-SORT?



- **The brain takes in a tremendous amount of information in a first impression**
- **Many have argued that these can be catalogued and used to form impressions**
- **The Situational Q-Sort records and quantifies those first impressions**

Malcolm Gladwell, *Blink*.
<http://gladwell.com/blink/>

JUSTIFICATION

- **Behavior response to a crisis will be from a combination of individual & situational variables.**
- **Previous research has explored two types of crises w/ responses to situation (Freberg, Saling, & Freberg, 2013)**



JUSTIFICATION



- **Crisis professionals deal with many different types of crises in many different ways.**
- **When developing a crisis action playbook, experts need to know commonalities and key characteristics.**

The UN Cluster System
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PERCEPTION OF CRISES

Research Questions

- **RQ1: How can the situational q-sort help crisis communicators understand perception factors in a crisis situation?**
- **RQ2: What can we learn about the emotional, social, and communication characteristics that crisis professionals associate with a crisis?**

METHOD

- **SITUATIONAL QSORT**

- **Riverside Situational Q-sort (RSQ; Funder, Guillaume, Kumagai, Kawamoto, & Sato, 2012; Sherman, Nave, & Funder, 2010)**
- **Q-sorting** refers to the assignment of attributes to categories ranging from 1 (extremely uncharacteristic) to 9 (extremely characteristic).

METHOD

- **Unlike Likert scales, which allow a participant to rate all attributes in a set the same way, the q-sort forces a distribution and prioritization by restricting the number of attributes assigned each number.**
- **Participants were presented with a crisis scenario and asked to explore and quantify their perceptions of emotional, social, and communication characteristics they associate with a crisis situation.**

FINDINGS

- **Experts see a crisis as featuring the following attributes (in order of strength):**
 - 1. Rational thinking is called for.**
 - 2. Success requires cooperation.**
 - 3. A quick decision or quick action is called for.**
 - 4. A decision needs to be made.**
 - 5. A job needs to be done.**
 - 6. Affords an opportunity to demonstrate intellectual capacity.**
 - 7. Situation is uncertain.**
 - 8. Someone needs help.**
 - 9. Assertiveness is required to accomplish a goal (tie with #10).**
 - 10. Situation is complex (tie with #9).**

FINDINGS

- **Experts agreed that crises did **NOT** feature the following attributes (in order of strength):**
 - 1. Situation is humorous or potentially humorous.**
 - 2. Situation is playful.**
 - 3. Situation includes stimuli that could be construed sexually.**
 - 4. Situation includes aesthetic stimuli.**
 - 5. Situation is potentially enjoyable.**
 - 6. P is being abused or victimized.**
 - 7. Potential romantic partners for P are present.**
 - 8. Affords an opportunity to express masculinity.**
 - 9. Affords an opportunity to express femininity.**

Applying Model

Divergence from Expert Model: Items in Expert Model not in Food Recall

- **A job needs to be done. (Ranked a 7 in FR)**
- **Affords an opportunity to demonstrate intellectual capacity. (Ranked a 6)**
- **Situation is uncertain. (Ranked a 5)**
- **Someone needs help. (Ranked a 5)**
- **Assertiveness is required to accomplish a goal (Ranked a 6)**
- **Situation is complex (Ranked a 7)**

Applying the Model

Divergence from Expert Model: Items in Food Recall not in Model

- **Situation is relevant to bodily health of P (e.g. possibility of illness; a medical visit) (Ranked a 4 in EM)**
- **Someone is trying to convince P of something (Ranked 5 in EM)**
- **Situation would make some people tense and upset (Ranked 7 in EM)**
- **Situation is potentially anxiety-producing (Ranked 7 in EM)**
- **Someone other than P is counted on to do something (Ranked 4 in EM)**
- **Situation entails or could entail stress or trauma (Ranked 7 in EM)**

IMPLICATIONS

- **Creating an “expert” model for understanding crisis situations**
 - **Could help us anticipate emotional, social, and communication factors to address in our crisis action playbooks**
 - **The model could be improved by asking experts to perform the q-sort as if they were a population segment currently experiencing a crisis.**

FUTURE RESEARCH

- **Exploring further perceptions, impressions, and insights based on**
 - **Experience**
 - **Industry**
 - **Training**
- **Integrating experts from other specialized fields of crisis communications**
 - **Practitioners v. Academics**
 - **Humanitarian Operations Experts**
 - **Experts in Political/Military Crisis Events**

CONCLUSION

- **The situational q-sort provides a new methodology to explore perceptions of crises based on situations as well as crisis experts.**
- **Further research is necessary and continue the bridge between different disciplines as well as between practitioners and academics in crisis communications.**
- **Strong applications towards theoretical and applied practices in the field.**

QUESTIONS OR COMMENTS?

 **#THANKYOUVERYMUCH**

CONTACT INFORMATION:

 **KAREN.FREBERG@LOUISVILLE.EDU**

 **LFREBERG@CALPOLY.EDU**

 **KRISTIN.SALING@GMAIL.COM**