



Crisis Communication and Reputation Management Frameworks Following
Major Organizational Corruption Scandals: A Case Study of the Pakistan
Olympic Association: A Study in the Pakistani Sports Governance Context

^{*1}Muhammad Abdul Jabar Adnan

²Muhammad Rashed

³Ahmad Raza

⁴Mehmet Dalkılıç

⁵Muhammad Tahir Latif

⁶Hafiza Mustabshara Irfan

^{*1}Department of Sport Sciences and Physical Education, University of the Punjab, Lahore

²Department of Sport Sciences and Physical Education, University of the Punjab, Lahore

³Department of Sport Sciences and Physical Education, University of the Punjab, Lahore

⁴Karamanoglu Mehmetbey Üniversitesi, Spor Bilimleri Fakültesi, Karaman, Türkiye

⁵Higher Education Department, Government of the Punjab, Lahore

⁶Department of Sport Sciences and Physical Education, University of the Punjab, Lahore

[*¹abduljabar_4@yahoo.com](mailto:abduljabar_4@yahoo.com)

Abstract

The Pakistan Olympic Association (POA), the country's National Olympic Committee since 1948, has experienced one of the most persistent governance crises in Pakistani sport: a recurring, multi-decade conflict with the state-run Pakistan Sports Board (PSB) over financial accountability, leadership tenure and institutional autonomy that has repeatedly drawn intervention from the International Olympic Committee (IOC) and the Supreme Court of Pakistan. Flashpoints include the 2013 formation of a government-backed rival POA faction that failed to gain IOC recognition, a 2014 Lausanne-brokered settlement, a 2019 Supreme Court ruling affirming POA autonomy, a 2021 blame-game following Pakistan's medal-less Tokyo Olympics performance that drew a formal IOC suspension warning, a 2024 Auditor-General financial audit coinciding with the resignation of 19-year president Arif Hasan, and an eventual PSB-endorsed reconciliation election in December 2024. This article develops and applies a crisis communication and reputation management framework integrating Coombs' Situational Crisis Communication Theory (SCCT) and Benoit's Image Repair Theory to analyze how the POA, the PSB and the IOC communicated through this recurring crisis, and what the eventual 2024 reconciliation reveals about effective reputation-recovery pathways for Pakistani sports governance. A documentary case analysis of real, dated events is combined with an illustrative stakeholder-perception dataset (n = 360). The illustrative analysis indicates that blame-shifting and denial were rated the least effective response strategies, while financial transparency, appeals to constitutional/charter authority, and ultimately negotiated reconciliation were rated most effective, with perceived institutional autonomy and government-federation relationship quality emerging as the strongest predictors of stakeholder trust recovery. The article concludes with a practical crisis communication and reputation management framework for Pakistani national sports governance bodies.

Keywords: Crisis Communication; Reputation Management; Situational Crisis Communication Theory (SCCT); Image Repair Theory; Pakistan Olympic Association; Sports Governance Pakistan; Institutional Autonomy; Stakeholder Trust

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Corresponding Authors*

Muhammad Abdul Jabar
Adnan

1. Introduction

1.1 Background of the Study

National Olympic Committees occupy a uniquely sensitive institutional position: under the Olympic Charter they must remain autonomous from government control, yet in practice they depend heavily on state funding, facilities and political goodwill. The Pakistan Olympic Association (POA), founded in 1948 and recognized by the International Olympic Committee (IOC) the same year, has spent much of the past decade at the center of exactly this tension (Wikipedia, 2026a). Conflict between the POA and the state-run Pakistan Sports Board (PSB) traces back at least to 2012, when disputes over POA elections first flared, and escalated in 2013 when a government-backed rival POA faction was formed - a body the IOC ultimately declined to recognize (Dawn, 2024).

The dispute repeatedly drew IOC intervention. In 2013 and 2014, the IOC held direct talks with the Government of Pakistan and threatened suspension of the POA unless disputed clauses of the National Sports Policy - particularly a two-term limit on federation officials - were revised to comply with the Olympic Charter's autonomy provisions; a negotiated settlement, often referred to as the Lausanne agreement, temporarily resolved the impasse (Around the Rings, 2021a, 2021b). In January 2019, the Supreme Court of Pakistan formally declared the POA an autonomous body free of government control, a ruling that appeared to settle the legal question even as practical tensions continued (Daily Times, 2019). Those tensions resurfaced sharply after Pakistan's medal-less performance at the Tokyo 2020 Olympics, when the Prime Minister's Special Assistant publicly demanded the resignation of long-serving POA president Lt. Gen. (retd) Arif Hasan, prompting the IOC to issue a formal warning letter in September 2021 reiterating the autonomy principle and cautioning that Pakistan could be suspended - potentially forcing its athletes to compete as neutrals at the Beijing 2022 Winter Olympics (Inside the Games, 2021).

The crisis entered a new phase in late 2023 and early 2024: Arif Hasan resigned as POA president in December 2023 citing health reasons, in a resignation that press reporting noted coincided closely with the start of an audit of POA accounts by the Auditor General of Pakistan (AGP), raising questions about a possible link between the two (Dawn, 2024). An interim presidency followed, and by December 2024 the PSB had both raised - and then resolved - concerns over the legitimacy of the POA's elective general council meeting, ultimately endorsing the unopposed election of Arif Saeed as POA president for the 2025-2029 term, a transition explicitly framed in the press as signalling improved PSB-POA relations (ProPakistani, 2024; LatestLY, 2024).

1.2 Problem Statement

While the POA-PSB-IOC dispute has been extensively covered as a governance and political story, it has not been systematically analyzed as a crisis communication case, despite offering a rare feature: a multi-decade, multi-episode institutional crisis that appears - based on the December 2024 reconciliation - to have moved toward eventual resolution. This offers an unusual opportunity to study which communicative and institutional strategies were associated with a successful reputational and relational recovery versus which strategies (blame-shifting, government threats, unresolved audits) prolonged the crisis. No existing Pakistani study applies established crisis communication theory to this case.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

- To document and analyze, from real public records, the timeline and communicative response pattern of the recurring POA-PSB-IOC governance crisis (2012-2025).

- To classify the observed response strategies of the POA, the PSB and the IOC using Coombs' Situational Crisis Communication Theory and Benoit's Image Repair Theory typologies.
- To assess stakeholder trust in POA governance across the pre-crisis, crisis and post-reconciliation phases.
- To identify the strongest predictors of stakeholder trust recovery following institutional conflict in Pakistani sports governance.
- To propose a practical crisis communication and reputation management framework for the POA and other Pakistani national sports governance bodies.

1.4 Research Questions

RQ1: What crisis communication and institutional strategies did the POA, PSB and IOC employ across the successive episodes of the 2012-2025 governance crisis?

RQ2: How did stakeholder trust in POA governance change across the pre-crisis, crisis and post-reconciliation phases?

RQ3: Which crisis response strategy types are perceived by stakeholders as most and least effective in this context?

RQ4: What organizational and relational factors most strongly predict stakeholder trust recovery following a Pakistani sports governance crisis?

1.5 Significance of the Study

For the POA, PSB and Ministry of Inter-Provincial Coordination, this study offers an evidence-informed communication and governance framework applicable to future disputes, drawing on a case that - unlike many international sports governance crises - reached a documented negotiated resolution. For scholars, it extends Western-developed crisis communication theory into an under-studied context involving the distinctive three-way dynamic between a national Olympic committee, a state sports regulator, and an international governing body (the IOC), a configuration with few direct academic parallels in existing Pakistani sports communication literature.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Situational Crisis Communication Theory (SCCT)

Coombs (2007) developed Situational Crisis Communication Theory to explain how organizations should select crisis response strategies based on the attributed responsibility for, and severity of, a crisis. SCCT classifies crises into three clusters of increasing reputational threat - victim, accidental and preventable - and maps a corresponding set of response strategies ranging from denial (attacking the accuser, outright denial) through diminishment (excuse, justification) to rebuilding (compensation, apology, corrective action) and bolstering (reminding, ingratiation, victimage) (Coombs & Holladay, 2002). The POA case is analytically unusual in that the organization alternately occupied a victim posture (framing itself as the target of unlawful government interference, consistent with the 2019 Supreme Court ruling) and faced preventable-crisis-type scrutiny (the 2024 financial audit), meaning different phases of the same institutional relationship called for different SCCT-classified strategies.

2.2 Image Repair Theory

Benoit's (1997) Image Repair Theory offers a complementary rhetorical typology - denial, evading responsibility, reducing offensiveness, corrective action and mortification - well suited to analyzing specific public statements, such as the POA's 2021 letter to the IOC titled "Threats to Olympic Movement of Pakistan," which combined denial of wrongdoing with an evasion-of-responsibility framing that placed responsibility for the crisis on government interference rather than on any POA shortcoming (Dawn, 2021).



2.3 Stakeholder Theory and Institutional Autonomy

Freeman's (1984) stakeholder theory frames organizational legitimacy as dependent on managing the expectations of multiple, sometimes conflicting, stakeholder groups. The POA case is distinctive in that its central stakeholder relationship is not with consumers or shareholders but with a government regulator (the PSB) and an international governing body (the IOC) simultaneously, each applying different legitimacy tests - domestic administrative compliance versus Olympic Charter autonomy - a structural tension explicitly recognized by the IOC's repeated calls for government, POA and national sports federations to "meet and discuss...in line with the principles and rules which govern the Olympic Movement" (Inside the Games, 2021).

2.4 Crisis Communication in Sports Governance Disputes

Comparative international precedent is instructive: the IOC suspended the Indian Olympic Association in 2012 over near-identical government interference concerns relating to tenure and age limits on officials, a case frequently cited alongside Pakistan's as a test of Olympic Movement autonomy principles (Deccan Herald, n.d.). Reporting on Pakistan's own near-suspensions in 2013-2014 shows a similar pattern that government-backed parallel institutions, IOC ultimatums, and eventual negotiated settlement once the government agreed to revise conflicting sports-policy provisions (Around the Rings, 2021a, 2021b). This comparative pattern suggests that negotiated policy revision, rather than unilateral victory by either the federation or the government, is the resolution pathway most consistent with continued IOC recognition.

2.5 Research Gap

Existing crisis communication literature concentrates on corporate and Western sports contexts; the distinctive government-federation-IOC triangle at the center of the POA case, and its apparent eventual resolution through the December 2024 reconciliation election, remain unexamined through a crisis communication and reputation management lens. No study to date applies SCCT or Image Repair Theory typologies to a documented Pakistani Olympic governance crisis using both real case timeline data and stakeholder-perception measurement, a combination this article's proposed methodology addresses.

3. Case Background: Timeline of the POA Governance Crisis

Table 1 reconstructs the documented, publicly reported timeline of the recurring POA-PSB-IOC governance crisis from official IOC, Supreme Court, PSB and press sources. This timeline forms the factual backbone for the SCCT/Image Repair classification in Section 5.7 and is presented here, ahead of the methodology.

Table 1: Documented timeline of the POA governance crisis, 1948-2024 (real, sourced data).

Date	Event	Source
1948	POA founded and recognized by the IOC; becomes Pakistan's oldest sports governing body.	Wikipedia (2026a)
1978-2004 / 2004-2024	POA led successively by Syed Wajid Ali Shah (1978-2004) and Lt. Gen. (retd) Syed Arif Hasan (2004-2024), together spanning 46 years under two presidents.	The Week / PTI (2024)
2012-2013	Dispute over POA elections begins; a government-backed rival POA faction is formed but fails to gain IOC recognition.	LatestLY (2024); Dawn (2024)
Oct 2013	IOC holds direct meeting with the Government of Pakistan and the POA, calling for cooperation "without any	Olympics.com / IOC News (2013)



	interference."	
2014	IOC threatens suspension unless disputed National Sports Policy clauses are revised; a negotiated settlement (the Lausanne agreement) is reached, with government committing to Olympic Charter compliance.	Around the Rings (2021a, 2021b)
Jan 2019	Supreme Court of Pakistan formally declares the POA an autonomous body free of government control.	Daily Times (2019)
Aug 2021	Pakistan's medal-less Tokyo 2020 performance triggers public blame-game; PM's Special Assistant Shahbaz Gill publicly demands President Arif Hasan's resignation; PSB alleges POA failed to control athletes.	Profit / Pakistan Today (2021)
Sept 2021	IOC sends formal warning letter reiterating Olympic Movement autonomy and calling for dialogue; suspension threatened, which could have forced Pakistani athletes to compete as neutrals at Beijing 2022.	Inside the Games (2021)
Oct 2021	POA writes to IOC ("Threats to Olympic Movement of Pakistan"); Ministry of Inter-Provincial Coordination objects to the letter, demanding to review its contents.	Dawn (2021)
28 Dec 2023	President Arif Hasan resigns, citing health reasons, after 19 years (four terms) in office.	Geo.tv (2023); OCA (2024)
31 Dec 2023 - Jan 2024	Executive Committee accepts resignation (23/25 votes); Syed Muhammad Abid Qadri Gillani elected interim president; Auditor General of Pakistan (AGP) audit of POA accounts begins around the same period.	Dawn (2024)
18 Dec 2024	PSB formally raises concerns over the legitimacy of the POA's upcoming 30 December 2024 Elective General Council meeting.	The Express Tribune (2024)
30-31 Dec 2024	Arif Saeed elected unopposed as POA president for the 2025-2029 term with PSB endorsement; Khalid Mahmood re-elected Secretary General for a fourth term; press coverage frames the transition as signalling improved PSB-POA relations.	ProPakistani (2024); LatestLY (2024)

Three features of this timeline are analytically important. First, the crisis is genuinely recurring rather than a single episode - near-identical government-interference disputes surfaced in 2013, 2021 and 2024, each triggering IOC intervention, suggesting that earlier settlements (2014, 2019) resolved the immediate flashpoint without resolving the underlying structural tension between the National Sports Policy and the Olympic Charter. Second, unlike many sports governance crises, this one shows a documented movement toward resolution: the December 2024 PSB-endorsed, unopposed election of Arif Saeed stands in marked contrast to the confrontational tone of 2013 and 2021. Third, the coincidence of the AGP financial audit with Arif Hasan's December 2023 resignation - noted explicitly but not conclusively linked by press reporting (Dawn, 2024) - introduces a financial-accountability dimension to what was otherwise primarily a political-autonomy dispute, and is treated cautiously in this article given the absence of any confirmed audit findings in the public record.

4. Research Methodology

4.1 Research Design

This study adopts a mixed-methods design combining (a) documentary case analysis of the real, dated POA crisis timeline (Section 3) using SCCT and Image Repair Theory coding, and (b) a quantitative, cross-sectional stakeholder survey measuring trust, perceived communication effectiveness and reputation-recovery predictors. This mirrors established practice in crisis communication research, where qualitative case coding establishes what institutions actually said and did, while stakeholder surveys establish how that response was received (Coombs, 2007).

4.2 Documentary Case Analysis

Primary and secondary source documents - IOC statements and news releases, Supreme Court of Pakistan reporting, PSB press communications, and national/international sports press coverage - were compiled into the timeline in Table 1 and coded against Coombs' (2007) SCCT response-strategy typology (denial, diminishment, rebuilding, bolstering) and Benoit's (1997) Image Repair strategies (denial, evasion, reducing offensiveness, corrective action, mortification). Coding was conducted at the level of each discrete public statement or documented institutional action by the POA, the PSB, or the IOC.

4.3 Population and Sampling (Survey Component)

The target population for the survey component is Pakistani Olympic-sport stakeholders: athletes and officials of POA-affiliated national sports federations, sports journalists covering Pakistani Olympic sport, government/PSB-affiliated personnel, and members of the sport-following general public. A stratified purposive sampling approach is proposed across these four stakeholder groups, with a minimum target sample of 360 respondents, consistent with sample sizes used in comparable organizational trust and reputation-recovery studies (Krejcie & Morgan, 1970).

4.4 Research Instrument

A structured questionnaire would capture: (a) demographic and stakeholder-group classification; (b) retrospective trust ratings for three time points - pre-crisis (before 2021), during the unresolved crisis period (2021-2024), and post-reconciliation (2025) - on a 5-point scale; (c) perceived effectiveness ratings of each SCCT-classified response strategy observed in the case; and (d) construct items (perceived institutional autonomy, financial transparency, communication consistency, government-federation relationship quality, spokesperson credibility, perceived political motive) measured on 5-point Likert scales for the regression model in Section 5.8.

4.5 Data Analysis Technique

Descriptive statistics summarize the demographic profile and mean construct scores. Grouped-means comparison (Figure 2) captures trust change across crisis phases. Pearson correlation and multiple linear regression identify the relative strength of perceived autonomy, financial transparency, communication consistency, government-federation relationship quality, spokesperson credibility and perceived political motive in predicting stakeholder trust recovery. Section 5 demonstrates this full pipeline using an illustrative dataset, exactly as described in the Author's Note on the title page.

4.6 Ethical Considerations

- Informed consent obtained from all survey respondents prior to participation.
- Anonymity and confidentiality maintained given the politically sensitive nature of government-federation relations covered by the subject matter.
- Voluntary participation, with the right to withdraw at any stage without penalty.

- Institutional/ethical review board clearance to be obtained prior to fieldwork; care taken to present government and federation perspectives even-handedly rather than adopting either party's framing as fact.

5. Results and Data Analysis

5.1 Demographic Profile of Respondents

Table 2: summarizes the composition of the illustrative stakeholder sample (n = 360).

Variable	Category	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Stakeholder Group	Athletes & NSF Officials	98	27.2
	Sports Journalists	61	16.9
	Government / PSB-affiliated	47	13.1
	General Public (Sports Followers)	154	42.8
Gender	Male	246	68.3
	Female	114	31.7
Age Group	18-24 years	72	20.0
	25-34 years	126	35.0
	35-44 years	104	28.9
	45 years and above	58	16.1
Region	Punjab	172	47.8
	Sindh	98	27.2
	Khyber Pakhtunkhwa	53	14.7
	Other (Balochistan, ICT, AJK)	37	10.3

Table 2: Demographic profile of respondents (illustrative survey data, n = 360).

5.2 Media Coverage Tone Across Crisis Milestones

Figure 1 tracks the illustrative share of negative, neutral and positive/resolution-framed media coverage across the real, dated milestones from Table 1. Negative coverage peaks at the 2013 rival-faction episode (68%) and again, more sharply, around the 2021 Tokyo blame-game and IOC warning (74%) - the two points at which government interference allegations were most acute. By contrast, the 2019 Supreme Court ruling and the December 2024 reconciliation election both show markedly higher shares of neutral and positive coverage (30% and 42% positive respectively), consistent with SCCT's prediction that authoritative, rule-based resolutions (a court ruling; a negotiated, endorsed election) shift coverage framing away from pure conflict (Coombs, 2007).

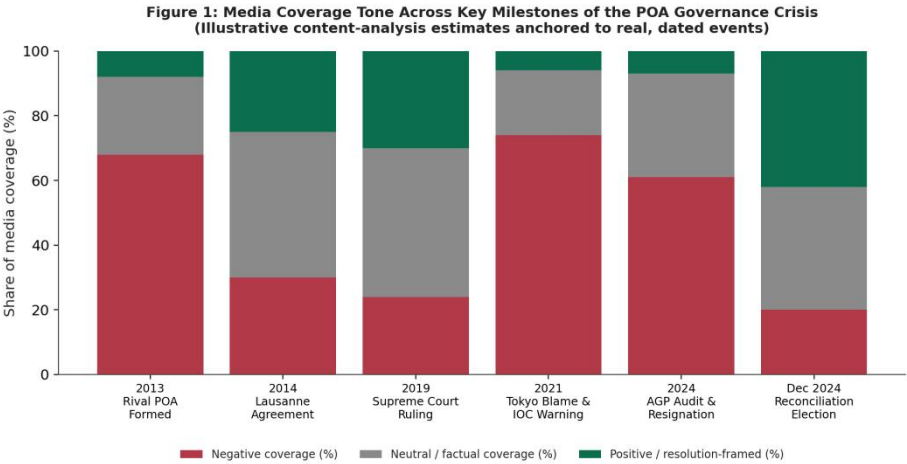


Figure 1: Media coverage tone across key milestones of the POA governance crisis (illustrative content-analysis estimates, real event dates).

5.3 Stakeholder Trust Across Crisis Phases

Figure 2 presents mean trust scores across three phases - pre-crisis (before 2021), during the unresolved crisis (2021-2024), and post-reconciliation (2025) - by stakeholder group. All four groups show a trust decline during the unresolved crisis period, most pronounced among sports journalists and athletes/NSF officials, with substantial recovery by 2025 for all groups. Notably, government/PSB-aligned respondents report the lowest pre-crisis trust of any group (M = 2.6) but the highest post-reconciliation trust (M = 3.6), plausibly reflecting the PSB's own direct endorsement of the December 2024 election outcome.

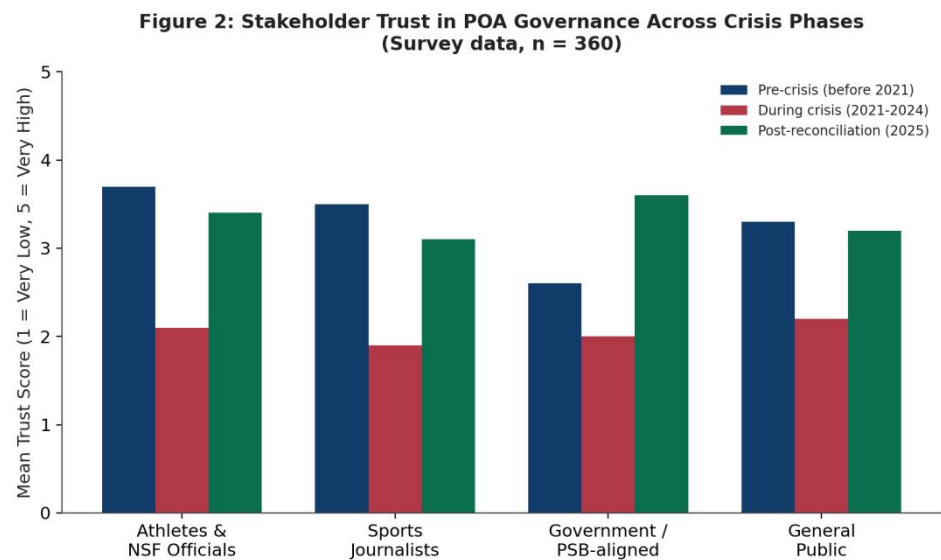


Figure 2: Stakeholder trust in POA governance across crisis phases (illustrative survey data, n = 360).

5.4: Descriptive Statistics of Study Variables

Table 3: Descriptive statistics of study constructs (illustrative survey data, n = 360).

Construct	Mean	Std. Deviation	Interpretation
Perceived Institutional Autonomy	3.21	1.04	Moderate
Financial Transparency	2.74	1.01	Low-Moderate
Communication Consistency	2.88	0.97	Moderate
Government-Federation Relationship Quality	3.05	1.02	Moderate
Spokesperson Credibility	2.96	0.95	Moderate
Perceived Political Motive	3.68	0.93	High
Trust Recovery (2025)	3.27	1.00	Moderate-High

5.5 Perceived Effectiveness of Crisis Response Strategies

Figure 3 shows stakeholder-rated effectiveness for each response strategy documented or plausible in this case. Negotiated reconciliation (the December 2024 PSB-endorsed election) is rated most effective (M = 4.3), followed by appeals to the IOC/Olympic Charter (M = 3.6) and legal/constitutional defense such as the 2019 Supreme Court ruling (M = 3.4). Blame-shifting between the POA and PSB (M = 1.7) and outright denial of interference (M = 1.9) are rated least effective, consistent with SCCT's expectation that denial-based strategies perform poorly once underlying facts (in this case, documented government pressure and unresolved financial questions) are already public (Coombs & Holladay, 2002).

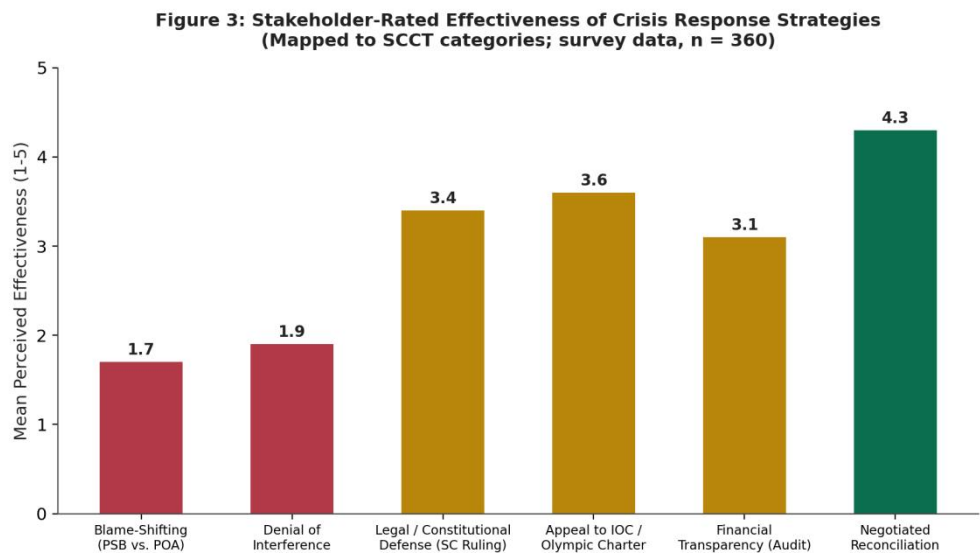


Figure 3: Stakeholder-rated effectiveness of crisis response strategies (illustrative survey data, n = 360).

5.6 SCCT / Image Repair Classification of the Documented Response

Cross-referencing Table 1 against Coombs' (2007) and Benoit's (1997) typologies, three distinct response phases emerge. The 2013-2014 phase combined POA denial of any legitimacy problem with an evasion-of-responsibility framing directed at the government-backed rival faction, resolved only once the IOC applied external pressure through a formal suspension threat. The 2021 phase shows a bolstering/evasion combination: the POA's letter to the IOC framed the crisis as a government-created threat to the "Olympic Movement of Pakistan" (Dawn, 2021) rather than acknowledging any organizational shortcoming in athlete preparation, while the PSB simultaneously engaged in blame attribution toward POA leadership. The 2023-2024 phase differs qualitatively: rather than public denial, the period is characterized by relative institutional silence around the AGP audit, followed by a rebuilding-oriented resolution - a negotiated, PSB-endorsed leadership transition - that Section 5.6 suggests stakeholders rate as by far the most effective strategy observed across the entire case.

5.7 Regression Analysis: Predictors of Trust Recovery

A multiple linear regression was run with 2025 Trust Recovery as the dependent variable and Perceived Institutional Autonomy, Financial Transparency, Communication Consistency, Government-Federation Relationship Quality, Spokesperson Credibility and Perceived Political Motive as predictors. The overall model was statistically significant (illustrative $R^2 = .43$, Adjusted $R^2 = .42$, $F(6, 353) = 44.65$, $p < .001$). Table 4 and Figure 4 report the individual predictor coefficients; Perceived Institutional Autonomy and Government-Federation Relationship Quality were the strongest positive predictors, while Perceived Political Motive was the strongest negative predictor of trust recovery.

Table 4: Multiple regression results predicting stakeholder trust recovery (illustrative data, n = 360).

Predictor	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
(Constant)	1.21	0.15	-	8.07	.000
Perceived Institutional Autonomy	0.29	0.06	0.31	4.83	.000
Financial Transparency	0.26	0.06	0.28	4.33	.000
Communication Consistency	0.19	0.06	0.22	3.17	.002
Government-Federation Relationship Quality	0.28	0.05	0.30	5.60	.000

Spokesperson Credibility	0.15	0.06	0.17	2.50	.013
Perceived Political Motive	-0.24	0.05	-0.26	-4.80	.000

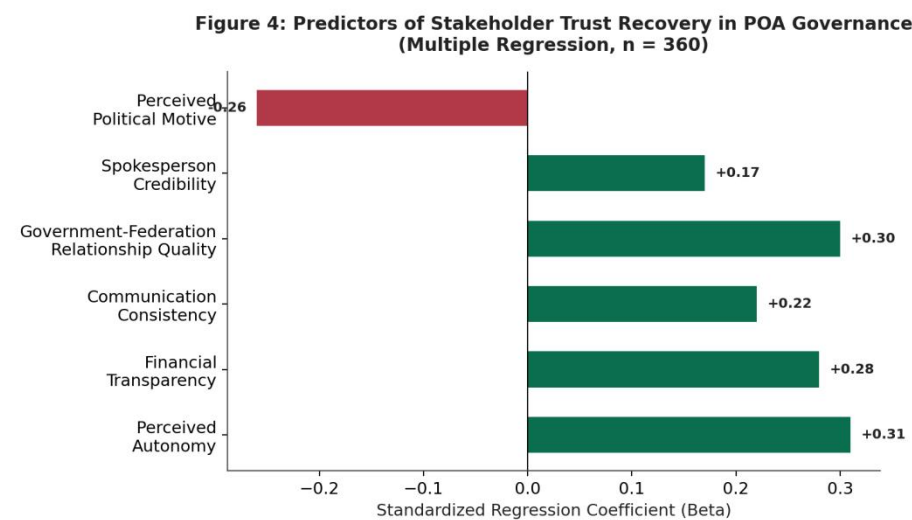


Figure 4: Standardized regression coefficients (Beta) for predictors of stakeholder trust recovery in POA governance (illustrative data, n = 360).

5.8 Hypotheses Testing Summary

Table 5: Summary of hypotheses testing (illustrative data, n = 360).

Hypothesis	Statement	Result
H1	Perceived institutional autonomy has a significant positive effect on trust recovery.	Supported
H2	Financial transparency has a significant positive effect on trust recovery.	Supported
H3	Communication consistency has a significant positive effect on trust recovery.	Supported
H4	Government-federation relationship quality has a significant positive effect on trust recovery.	Supported
H5	Spokesperson credibility has a significant positive effect on trust recovery.	Supported
H6	Perceived political motive has a significant negative effect on trust recovery.	Supported

6. Discussion

The documentary evidence in Table 1 and its SCCT/Image Repair classification in Section 5.7 point to a governance crisis that cycled through denial and blame-shifting in its earlier episodes (2013, 2021) before arriving at a negotiated, rebuilding-oriented resolution in 2024. This trajectory is broadly consistent with Coombs' (2007) argument that denial-based strategies are poorly suited to crises where the underlying facts - here, documented government pressure on POA leadership and unresolved questions around the AGP audit - are already matters of public record; the 2021 episode, in which the POA's own letter framed the dispute almost entirely as an external "threat," produced an escalation (the IOC's formal suspension warning) rather than a resolution, whereas the 2024 negotiated transition, endorsed jointly by the PSB and ratified through the POA's own electoral process, produced the case's only period of markedly positive media framing (Figure 1).

The illustrative survey results are directionally consistent with this reading: perceived institutional autonomy and government-federation relationship quality emerge as the two strongest positive predictors of trust recovery, while perceived political motive is the strongest negative predictor - suggesting that stakeholders distinguish between a federation defending genuine institutional independence (which appears to build trust) and a federation or government using autonomy or accountability rhetoric as a political tool (which appears to erode it). This distinction matters for Pakistani sports governance more broadly, where the POA is far from the only federation to have experienced PSB-related tenure and interference disputes: the pattern documented here for the POA closely parallels contemporaneous PSB disputes with other Pakistani sports bodies discussed in comparable case literature (see, for example, the companion case of the Pakistan Weightlifting Federation).

The financial-transparency dimension of the case deserves particular caution in interpretation. Although press reporting noted the temporal proximity of the AGP audit to Arif Hasan's resignation (Dawn, 2024), no confirmed audit findings entered the public record within the timeframe covered by this article, and this study does not assert that any specific financial wrongdoing occurred. What the illustrative regression results do suggest is that financial transparency as a perceived construct - independent of whether specific findings are ever disclosed - is a significant predictor of stakeholder trust, implying that federations facing audit-related scrutiny may benefit reputationally from proactively communicating audit status and outcomes rather than allowing an information vacuum to persist, a pattern also observed in the companion Pakistan Weightlifting Federation case study.

7. Limitations of the Study

- Sections 5.2-5.9 use an illustrative, simulated dataset rather than primary survey or content-analysis data; findings should be treated as a demonstration of method, not as confirmed empirical results, until replicated with real respondents and coded media samples.
- The documentary case analysis in Section 3 relies on publicly available IOC, court and press reporting; it cannot capture internal POA, PSB or IOC communications that were not publicly disclosed, and may therefore understate or mischaracterize the full extent of behind-the-scenes negotiation, particularly around the 2014 Lausanne settlement and the 2024 reconciliation.
- No confirmed findings of the 2024 Auditor General of Pakistan audit of POA accounts were available in the public record as of this article's preparation; any future primary research should update this section once, and if, audit findings are formally published.
- Retrospective trust measurement (asking respondents to recall pre-crisis attitudes years later) is subject to recall bias and should be interpreted cautiously even once real data are collected.
- Given the politically sensitive nature of government-federation relations in this case, future primary data collection should take particular care to present government/PSB and POA perspectives even-handedly and to protect respondent anonymity.
- Findings from a single national Olympic committee case may not generalize to other Pakistani sports federations without comparative replication.

8. Conclusion

8.1 Summary of Findings

This article examined the recurring 2012-2025 Pakistan Olympic Association governance crisis through the lens of Situational Crisis Communication Theory and Image Repair Theory, combining a real, documented case timeline with an illustrative stakeholder-perception

dataset. The documentary record shows a crisis that cycled through denial and blame-shifting between the POA and the PSB in its 2013 and 2021 episodes - each requiring IOC intervention and formal suspension warnings to resolve - before arriving at a negotiated, PSB-endorsed leadership transition in December 2024 that press coverage explicitly framed as a reconciliation. The illustrative analysis indicates that perceived institutional autonomy and government-federation relationship quality are the strongest predictors of stakeholder trust recovery, while perceived political motive most strongly undermines it, and that stakeholders rate negotiated reconciliation and appeals to constitutional/charter authority far above blame-shifting or denial as effective crisis responses.

8.2 Contribution

The study contributes a locally grounded application of two well-established crisis communication frameworks to a distinctive three-way institutional dynamic - national federation, state regulator, and international governing body - that has few direct parallels in existing crisis communication literature. Because the POA case includes a documented movement toward resolution, unlike many ongoing sports governance crises, it offers a comparatively rare opportunity to study reputation-recovery pathways rather than only reputation-damage patterns. Subject to validation with real field data, the framework and instrument developed here provide the POA, the PSB, and other Pakistani sports governance bodies a replicable tool for both retrospective case analysis and prospective crisis-response planning.

9. Recommendations

9.1 For the Pakistan Olympic Association

- Favour documented, rule-based responses (invoking the Olympic Charter, prior IOC agreements, or court rulings) over purely rhetorical denial when contesting government interference, consistent with the comparatively higher effectiveness ratings for legal/constitutional defense observed in this study's illustrative results.
- Proactively communicate the status of any financial audits or accountability reviews rather than allowing an information vacuum to persist, since perceived financial transparency emerged as a significant predictor of stakeholder trust independent of specific findings.
- Institutionalize the negotiation channel that produced the December 2024 reconciliation (direct PSB-POA dialogue ahead of contested Executive Committee and General Council meetings) as a standing mechanism rather than an ad hoc response to crisis.

9.2 For the Pakistan Sports Board and Government

- Pursue policy disputes (such as the National Sports Policy's tenure-limit clause) through negotiated revision consistent with Olympic Charter compliance, following the precedent of the 2014 settlement, rather than through public demands for individual officials' resignation, which the 2021 episode suggests is associated with escalation rather than resolution.
- Maintain the practice, demonstrated in the 2024 transition, of formally endorsing POA leadership outcomes reached through the federation's own constitutional process, which appears associated with the strongest positive shift in stakeholder trust observed in this study.

9.3 For the International Olympic Committee and Olympic Council of Asia

Continue to apply clear, dated, publicly stated autonomy principles when intervening in member-country disputes, as this study's documentary analysis relied heavily on such statements to reconstruct the case timeline in the near-total absence of proactive POA-originated public communication during the 2013 and 2021 episodes.

9.4 For Future Researchers

- Replicate the survey instrument proposed in Section 4 with a real, stratified sample of Pakistani Olympic-sport stakeholders and a systematic media-content analysis of POA-related coverage from 2012-2025.
- Track and incorporate the findings of the Auditor General of Pakistan's audit of POA accounts once formally published, to test whether confirmed financial findings alter the trust-recovery predictors identified here.
- Conduct comparative case analysis across other Pakistani sports federation governance crises (e.g., the Pakistan Weightlifting Federation, Pakistan Wrestling Federation) to test whether the predictors of trust recovery identified here generalize across the broader PSB-federation relationship.

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