An Active Shooter Training Video and the Extended Parallel Process Model: The Role of Dismissive Contexts

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Introduction

- Organizations often require employees to watch active shooter training videos in order to prepare them for active shooter events.

- *Avoid Deny Defend* (ADD; Martaindale & Blair, 2019) is a frequently used video (D'Innocenzio & Olson, 2019).

- The ADD video teaches civilians to use a multi-option survival method that has shown to decrease civilian injury and mortality (Jonson, 2017).

- ADD is only effective, however, when employees adopt the recommended behaviors.

- *The Extended Parallel Process Model* (EEPM; Witte, 1992; Witte, 1994) offers an explanation as to why employees may or may not adopt the behaviors recommended in ADD.

- The EEPM posits that fear appeals, or persuasive messages that arouse fear, are comprised of three key components: fear, perceived threat, and perceived efficacy (Witte & Allen, 2000).

- Low perceived threat ➔ No response to fear appeal

- High perceived threat ➔ Fear arousal ➔ Efficacy appraisal

    - Low perceived efficacy ➔ Fear control response

    - High perceived efficacy ➔ Danger control response

- *Fear control response*: Individuals will control their fear by reacting defensively or dismissing the message.

- *Danger control response*: Individuals will control their fear by adopting the recommended behaviors.

- **Hypothesis 1A: Participants will report higher levels of perceived threat and efficacy after viewing the ADD video.**

- **Hypothesis 1B: Participants who display higher shifts in perceived threat and efficacy will display higher levels of danger control responses compared to participants who display lower shifts in perceived threat and efficacy.**

- The context in which the video is viewed may play an important role.

- Responding to the video with joking behavior creates a *dismissive context*.

    - Dismissive contexts (e.g., joking behavior) can be emotionally contagious (Weber & Quiring, 2019).

- Dismissive contexts may give way to fear control responses and prevent danger control responses.

- Threat perceptions influence the strength of danger/fear control responses and efficacy perceptions influence whether danger or fear control responses are elicited (Witte & Allen, 2000).

- **Hypothesis 2: Context moderates the positive relationship between the level of perceived threat and the level of danger control responses, such that highly dismissive contexts attenuate the relationship.**

- **Hypothesis 3: Context moderates the relationship between the level of perceived efficacy and the type of responses elicited, such that participants in highly dismissive contexts will elicit higher levels of fear control responses.**
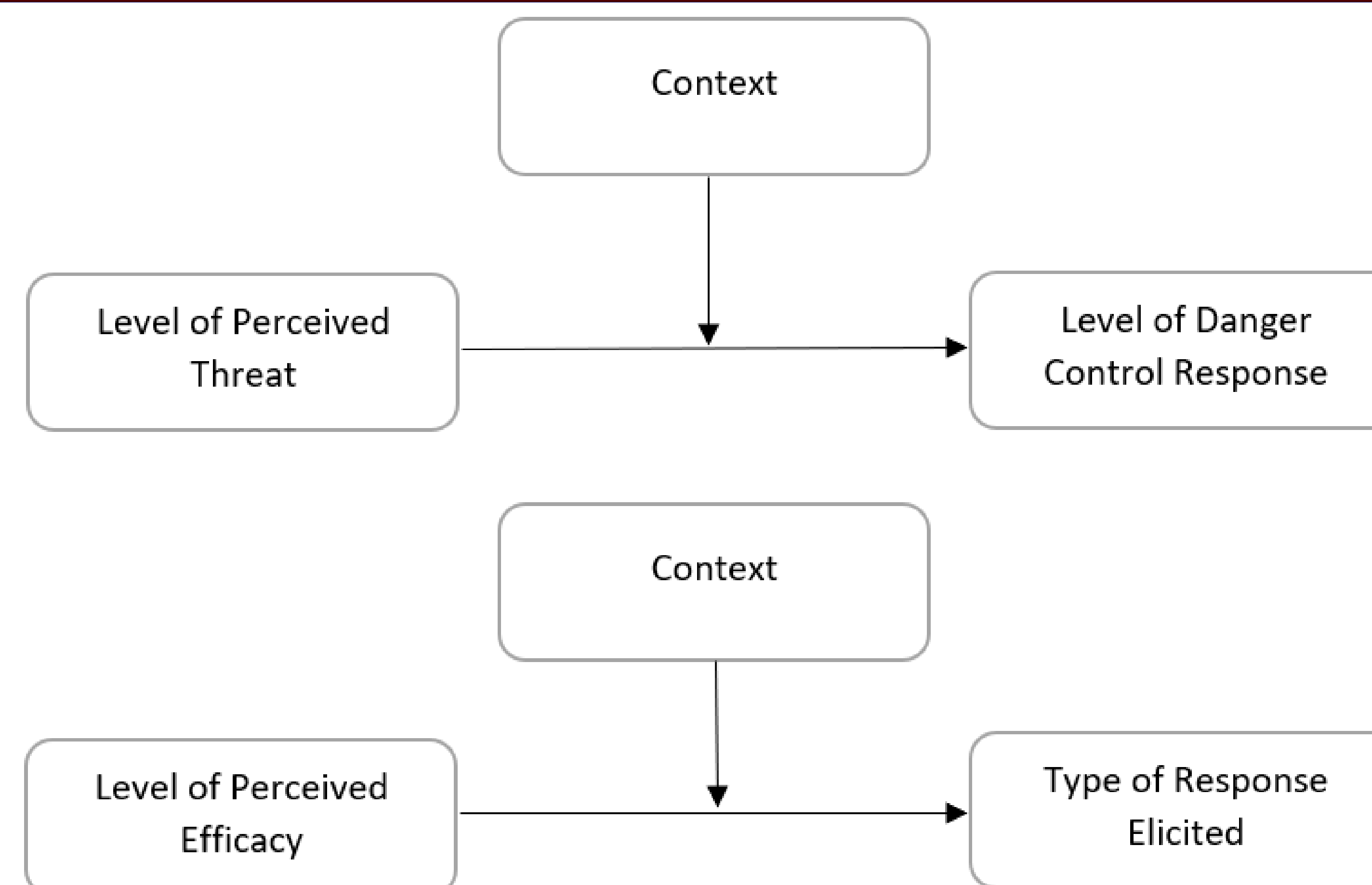
Figure 1: Avoid Deny Defend Video
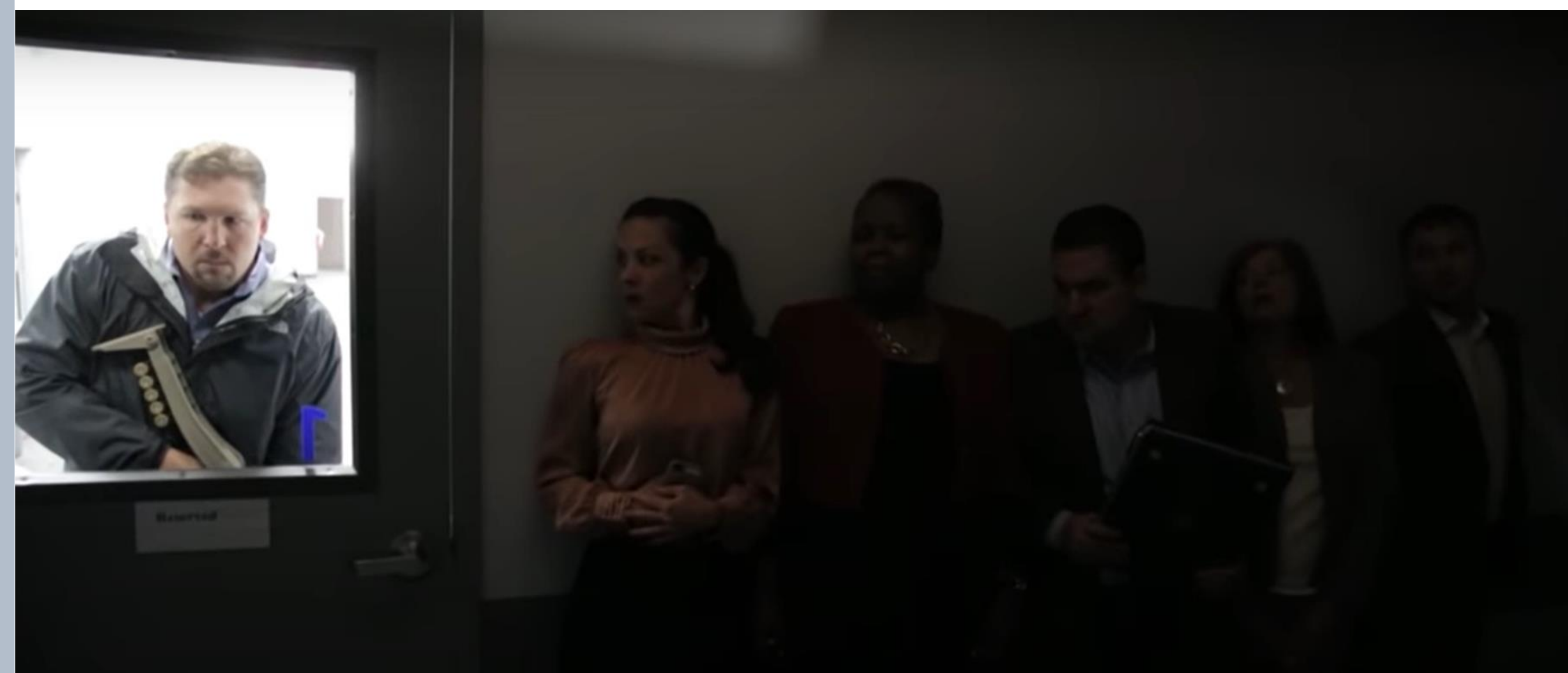
Model 1: The Extended Parallel Process Model (EPPM)
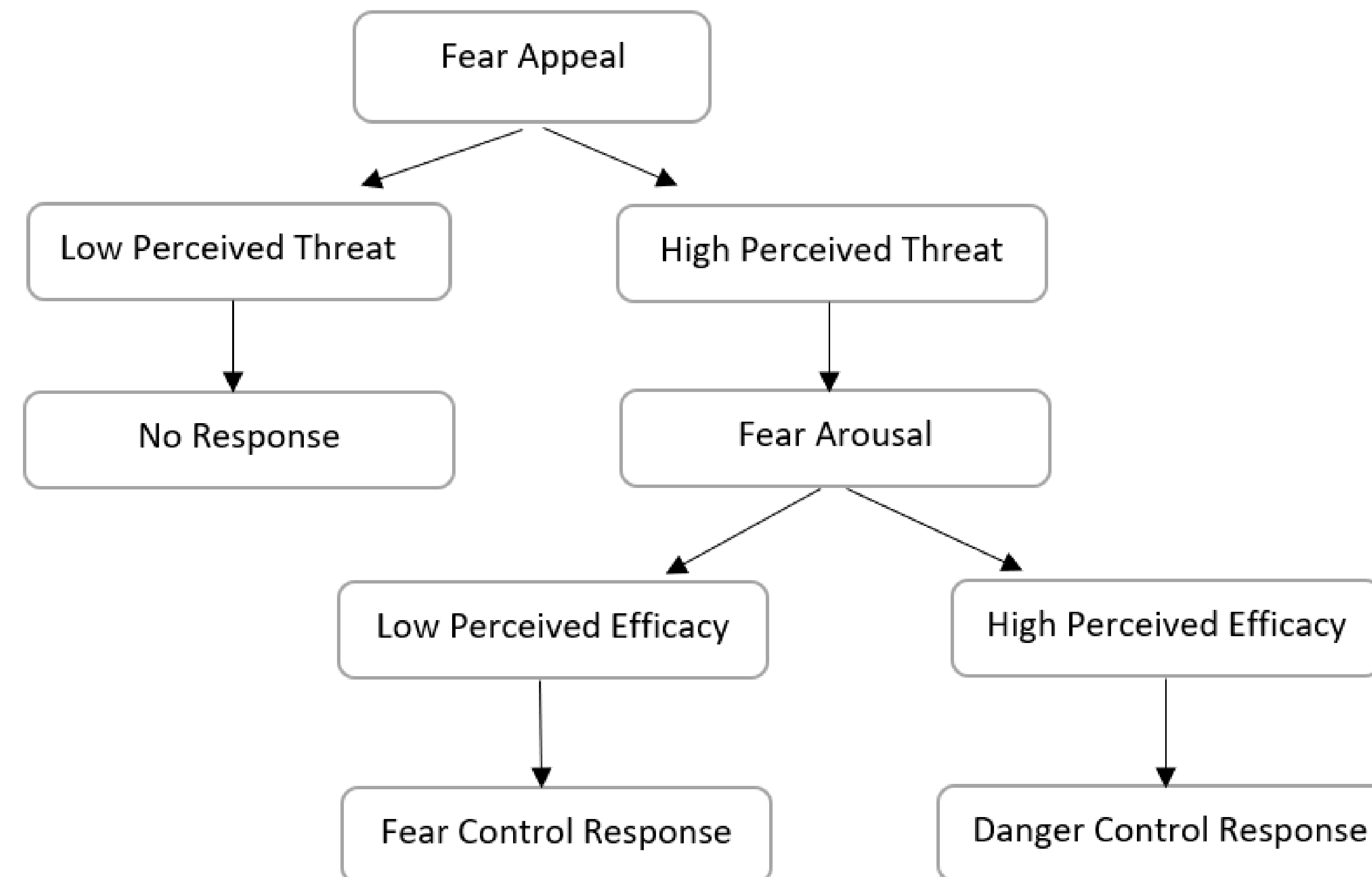
Model 2: Proposed Moderating Effects

Method

Participants and Procedure

- 100 undergraduate students will be randomly assigned to either the control or experimental condition.

- All participants will complete a pretest before and a posttest immediately after viewing the 11.5 minute ADD active shooter training video.

- Another posttest will be administered three weeks after viewing the video.

- Experimental condition: context will be manipulated using a confederate. The confederate will joke about and be dismissive toward the video.

Measures

- **Perceived Threat and Perceived Efficacy** will be measured at the pretest and immediate posttest with items adapted from the Risk Behavior Diagnosis Scale (Witte et al., 1996) to reflect active shooter events. An example item is, "I believe that active shooter events are serious," (threat severity).

- **Danger Control Responses** will be operationalized using two measures (Intentions and Behaviors). *Intentions* will be measured at the immediate posttest using three items created for this study. An example item is, "I intend to take mental notes of exit routes in my surroundings that I may use to avoid an active shooter." *Behaviors* will be measured at the three-week posttest using two items adapted from Witte (1994). An example item is, "I took mental note of exit routes in my surroundings."

- **Fear Control Responses** will be operationalized using two measures (Defensive Avoidance and Reactance). *Defensive Avoidance* will be measured at the three-week posttest using two items adapted from Witte (1994). An example item is, "How much time did you spend thinking about the video?" *Reactance* will be measured at the immediate and three-week posttests using four items adapted from Witte et al. (1996). An example item is, "The video was exaggerated."

- **Manipulation Check**: Dismissive context will be measured at the immediate posttest using two items created for this study. An example item is, "My peers took the video seriously."

Potential Implications

General Discussion

- The effectiveness of active shooter training videos has rarely been examined (Peterson et al., 2015).

- No study has examined the effectiveness of active shooter training videos in the context of the EPPM.

- The current study offers one route that researchers may take when examining employee intentions to adopt recommended behaviors in active shooter training videos.

- The current study also examines how the role of the context in which the video is viewed may impact the effectiveness of active shooter training videos.

Implications for Practice

- Management and other organizational leaders are better able to make decisions on how to train employees to respond to active shooter events when given information regarding the effectiveness of training videos.

- If dismissive context is found to give way to fear control responses and prevent danger control responses, then organizations may use this information to enhance training effectiveness.

    - For example, organizations may require employees to view active shooter training videos alone in order to eliminate the potential detriment of dismissive contexts.