Chapter 8
Evaluation of Research Trends in Social Media Crisis Communication

Daniel Ikesinachi Nwogwugwu

https://orcid.org/0000-0001-8873-4014

Bowen University, Iwo, Nigeria

ABSTRACT

An organization's survival during a crisis often depends on its speed of response. The introduction of social media into crisis communication discourse has meant that organizations must revisit their crisis communication strategies. This chapter explores a content analysis of the integration of social media platforms into crisis communication based on a comprehensive review of eight purposively selected crisis studies conducted globally. Findings revealed that Facebook and Twitter are increasingly employed as platforms for crisis communication. It was also discovered that responding to crises promptly, and engaging with the publics before, during, and after crises are crucial to managing organizational reputation. Social media platforms are also capable of spreading mis(information) about crises. Thus, organizations are advised to fully integrate and adopt social media into their crisis communication plans. This chapter extends our understanding of how social media platforms contribute to crisis communication discourse.

INTRODUCTION

The introduction of social media into crisis communication discourse calls for concerted organisational efforts in militating against its effects. This call becomes necessary as social media has the potential to spread (mis)information about crises within a short time and placing organisations at higher risks of exposure to crises. Also, the organisational reputation – described as intangible assets - are at stake and could be damaged during crises. As Veil, Sellnow & Petrun (2012) posit, social media are channels for stories to go viral within a short period. With the *share* option on Facebook and *retweet* option on Twitter, citizens can disseminate (mis)information, while organisational activities could be closely monitored

online. Thus, to avoid misinformation during crises, organisations need to fully optimise their abilities to handle crises in the social media era.

Social media crises are a common organisational phenomenon that keeps evolving. As Coombs, Claeys & Holladay (2017) observed, the application of social media to crisis communication is the most dramatic evolution of the practice in need of greater understanding. Hence, researchers have sought to understand the use of social media during airline crises (e.g., Adebayo, 2017; Benoit, 2018; Brataas, 2018), social media's use during natural disasters (Cho, Jung & Park, 2013), university crisis on social media (Snoeijers, Poels and Nicolay, 2014), food crisis discussions on social media (Shan, Regan, Brun, Barnett, van der Sanden, Wall & McConnon, 2013), health crises on social media (Lawrence, 2016), brand crisis communication through social media (Wang, 2016), among other studies. Findings from these studies revealed several dynamics in social media crises. These studies also revealed the growing interests and involvement of the publics in social media crisis discourse. Considering the increasing amount of crisis research, it becomes necessary to comprehensively present an analysis of the incorporation of social media by crisis managers to manage social media crises.

Therefore, this chapter explores a content analysis of the integration of social media platforms into crisis communication. The objective of this study is to understand how crisis managers employed social media platforms in responding to crises through an analysis of eight (8) purposively selected social media crises conducted globally and published from 2006 to 2019. Thus, this chapter aims to understand the strategies, trends, and paradigms that have characterised social media crisis studies. For instance, the chapter will analyse social media crisis strategies, theoretical explanations, and an investigation (if any) of new approaches that have emerged from the discourse. Findings from this study will highlight the relevance of digitalisation and its significance on different crisis types. Furthermore, it will also be useful to crisis communication and social media students as it would be a reference point for crisis communication studies.

BACKGROUND

What is Crisis?

Several definitions have been given to the word 'crisis' by various scholars and practitioners. These diverse definitions arose since there has not been any universally accepted definition of crisis. More so, these scholars and practitioners come from various disciplines, research backgrounds, with diverse experiences. While these definitions are diverse, they are yet similar. An attempt is made to provide some definitions of crisis, deduce similar crisis characteristics, and provide a working description for this study.

The word crisis originated from 'krisis,' a Greek word which suggests a moment of decision. These decisions could represent turning points where the choices made could have fundamental impacts in the future (Sellnow and Seeger, 2013). Crises present moments where critical decisions that would affect an organisation or country (positively and/or negatively) are made, which in return, could make or mar their future. It is quite true as, during crises, public relations practitioners and crisis managers seek the best possible alternatives in dealing with crises such that there is minimal or reduced reputational damage. Also, crises could be turning points or opportunities for organisations. On the one hand, when organisations poorly manage crises, it could signal the end of such organisations while on the other hand,

when crises are well managed, it could present positive opportunities for growth and development. Either way, they are turning points in the history and life of such organisations or countries, as the case may be.

In one of the earliest definitions of crisis by Herman (1963), crises are surprising situations that threaten the high-priority goals of organisations and come with time-constraint in the decision-making process. According to Herman, crises are capable of threatening critical organisational goals and usually have a short response time. Herman's definition laid the foundation for other crisis ideas as other scholars built their ideas around Hermans' idea of crisis as threats to high-priority organisational goals and having short response time. For instance, Fearn-Banks (1996) defined crises as major occurrences with potentially adverse outcomes that could affect organisations or industries, publics, products, services, or good names. It interrupts routine business transactions and can sometimes threaten the existence of organisations. This definition further describes crises as threatening the existence of organisations and their goals, such as the publics, products, reputation, among others.

In another definition, Seeger, Sellnow & Ulmer (1998) describe an organisational crisis as "a specific, unexpected and non-routine event or series of events that create high levels of uncertainty and threaten or are perceived to threaten an organisation's high-priority goals" (p. 233). This definition aptly describes and combines the earlier identified characteristics of a crisis. Crises are specific. They are events that are identifiable and easy to distinguish. Similarly, Coombs (1999) describes crises as events that are unpredictable, capable of causing significant threats, and can have negative effects on organisations, industries, or stakeholders, when they are not adequately handled. Thus, Coombs (1999) makes a case for the proper management of crisis as a panacea to handling negative crisis effects.

These definitions of crises reveal certain characteristics. Some of these characteristics include incidents that are surprising, unpredictable, with short response time, threats to high-priority goals, disruption of routine activities, usually followed by media involvement as well as negative/positive publicity. Thus, for this chapter, a crisis is defined as an unexpected (and sometimes expected) occurrence that disrupts high priority goals with short response time and attracts high media attention. Thus, to mitigate the effects of crises, organisations are expected to respond by communicating effectively with all stakeholders.

Crisis Communication

Crises are unexpected incidents with potentially negative outcomes. It is assumed that a day hardly goes without the news of a new crisis or the escalation of a previous one. Since crises are surprising, unpredictable, and sometimes predictable events with the potentials of negatively affecting organisational goals, concerted efforts should be channelled towards managing them. As Fearn-Banks (2007) observed, a critical feature of managing crises is communication, which is the exchange of meaningful information that organisations have with stakeholders before, during, and after crises. Organisations plan to mitigate the (adverse) effects of crises by having constant interactions with its stakeholders before, during, and after crises. Thus, communication is a continuous and all-encompassing activity for organisations in dealing with crises. Ray (1999), cited in Stephens, Malone & Bailey (2005), believes that an essential objective of communicating during a crisis is to influence the perception of the stakeholders towards the organisation and to maintain a positive or restore damaged image among stakeholders. Communication is necessary during crises because stakeholders/publics have formed opinions about the crises and the organisation. Thus, organisations can communicate effectively and change these (negative) perceptions.

As enunciated by Coombs (2009), crisis communication focuses on how organisations use communication to manage information and meaning during crises. It provides information that helps stakeholders

to make meaning out of the crisis. In essence, communication during a crisis is necessary as it will assist stakeholders with the necessary information which they need to make sense of the crisis. Thus, Coombs (2010) defines crisis communication as "the collection, processing and dissemination of information required to address a crisis situation" (p. 20). Communication involves a two-way interactive process that organisations can employ in promoting change and influencing the perceptions that stakeholders will have about the organisation. To this end, crisis communication with stakeholders, including victims of the crisis, potential victims, and family and friends of these victims, could assist organisations to mitigate or contain the adverse effects associated with crises.

Crisis Communication (Response) Strategies

Crises, as earlier discussed, are capable of threatening important organisational goals. It becomes more worrisome as no organisation is said to be immune to crises. This is because when organisational crises occur, their effects could be devastating, including having negative impacts on the financial performance, return on investment, competitive advantage, and could eventually lead to bankruptcy (Coombs & Holladay, 2008 as cited in Gerken, Van der Land & van der Meer, 2016). Thus, during crises, organisations make efforts to ensure that they minimise these effects. One significant organisational effort during crises is to respond by employing strategies aimed at protecting their image and reputation. Thus, crisis communication (response) strategies are organisational approaches in response to crises.

A crisis response strategy is a form of crisis communication that focuses on how organisational responses are presented to the public and how messages are narrated to repair their reputation (Coombs, 2007). Crisis response strategies refer to the specific approaches taken by organisations to respond to crises by presenting their narration of the crises. Crises narrations are necessary because, during a crisis, several versions of the cause(s) of such crises would be available (especially with the advent of social media). Thus, organisations respond by providing their own stories in a timely and accurate manner to influence the perceptions of stakeholders. As Coombs, Frandsen, Holladay & Johansen (2010) simply stated, crisis response can "either improve or make the crisis situation worse for a corporation and its various stakeholders" (p. 337), as the response strategy can be the difference between success and failure. Hence, appropriate crisis response strategies can assist organisations to shape attributions of a crisis, influence stakeholder perceptions about the crisis and organisation, and also reduce adverse crisis effects.

Several strategies, in the form of frameworks or theories, have been developed by scholars that are helpful to crisis managers when responding to crises. An early crisis scholar, Sturges (1994) explained a model that could assist organisations in responding to crises. He proposed that organisations should provide instructing and adjusting crisis information in mitigating the effects of crises. Instructing information involves crisis communication content from organisations in crises to update the public about what to prepare for, how to react, and the further actions needed to be taken. Adjusting information, on the other hand, involves addressing stakeholders with messages of sympathy and reassurance and updates on measures taken to avert the reoccurrence of crisis.

Similarly, Benoit (1995) developed the *image restoration/repair theory,* which presents message strategies available to organisations to protect their reputation. Also, the *situational crisis communication theory*, one of the most central and widely tested theories in crisis communication discourse, examines the reputational threats accompanied by various crises, and provides strategies in dealing with these threats. The introduction of social media in crisis communication discourse also enabled the develop-

ment of the Social Mediated Crisis Communication (SMCC) Model. These theories will be explained further in the theoretical framework section.

Social Media

Social media represent an entirely new platform for crisis communication discourse. The advent of social media has meant that crisis and crisis information can spread faster and reach a wider audience within a short period. Also, with social media, citizens act as watchdogs and can engage in "citizen journalism" with the ability to share (real and fake) news around the world. Social media, also known as social networking sites (SNS), are computer-mediated tools such as Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, YouTube, WhatsApp, among others. SNS tools enable users to interact and communicate with one another. Kaplan & Haenlein (2010) opined that social media are groups of Internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0. Social media allows for interaction among people irrespective of distance and time.

The introduction of social media has changed the way journalists, public relations practitioners, and the publics communicate. As earlier observed, it has facilitated citizen journalism where many citizens are self-imposed journalists who can share insights, opinions, experiences, and personal perspectives using pictures and videos of events with others. Coombs (2010) observed that one crucial feature of social media networks is its capacity to facilitate bi-directional communication or dialogue. In other words, social media have enabled a two-way flow of communication between users. Hence, organisations can communicate directly with stakeholders, and producers can communicate directly with consumers using social media platforms.

In the next section, an attempt is made to examine the importance of social media in crisis communication discourse.

Social Media and Crisis Communication

Organisations have employed social media platforms as tools for marketing and public relations. However, in recent years, social media have been employed as platforms for the management of crises. Crisis communication discourse reveals that the focus of crisis communication shifted from examining crisis strategies as reported by the traditional media to examining crisis communication on social media. As Marcias, Hilyard & Freimuth (2009) posit, social media may be better matched to crises than traditional media because technologies allow for the quick flow of information with the capabilities of uploading and downloading of content. Thus, social media has completely transformed how crisis information is presented and disseminated as information can spread faster and reach broader audiences. To this end, Wigley and Zhang (2011), as cited by Hilding-Hamann (2012:12), assert that "a key to successfully handling crises is controlling the flow of information to the media and one's publics." Handling information flow from social media with characteristics such as immediacy, viral news tendencies as well as the ability to also pass across (mis)information to the publics is necessary for public relations practitioners. This chapter responds to the call for research on the impact of social media on crisis management.

As Coombs and Holladay (2012), cited in Coombs and Holladay (2014) observed, "social media represent a cluster of media that facilitate the growth of crises as well as provide channels that can be used to communicate during a crisis" (p. 43). Through this, public relations practitioners and crisis managers have an array of platforms to respond to crises. Social media thus becomes a powerful crisis

channel for the dissemination of crises news and information, for facilitating the chances of crises and also a necessary media in managing crises. As crisis channels, social media messages can likely trigger different questions and reactions that require timely responses. The introduction of social media also enables the active participation of the publics and thus, exposing organisations to the vulnerability of crises as citizens around the world can watch as crises and disasters unfold. Furthermore, Veil et al. (2012) opine that social media are channels for a story to go viral in a short period. Thus, within a split second, social media users can post happenings about a crisis for the consumption of other internet users. Studies have revealed that people rely more on the information made available online as the primary means of receiving crisis information. The implication is that even when the information is negative, it is still received by the publics. Therefore, the essence of organisations communicating during a crisis is to disseminate their crisis narrative to the publics to avoid rumours.

As a crisis communication platform, social media has been described as a double-edged sword that could be employed to create and escalate crises, and could also be employed in managing crises. That is, social media presents both advantages and disadvantages for organisations during crises. No doubt, social media could be beneficial as a crisis management tool when used correctly by organisations. Perry, Taylor & Doerfel (2003), in their discussions on the advantages of social media to crisis management, argued that social media could assist organisations in their effective management of crises as strategies could be searched for and are readily available online. Second, social media also assists organisations to communicate decisions quickly through various social media platforms during a crisis and also get feedback from the stakeholders. Similarly, Auer (2011) posited that another advantage of social media is in its ability to eliminate middle-men as crises managers and organisations can reach and convince the publics directly and vice versa. Indeed, in recent times, social media platforms have assisted both organisations and stakeholders to make sense of crises. It has assisted organisations to interact with stakeholders and to respond quickly and accurately by giving out crisis information. Also, the publics' reactions to crises can be gotten online. Thus, organisations and crises managers are under pressure to respond to crises by providing information.

However, a disadvantage of social media (platforms) in crisis communication discourse may be that the era of information control by organisations during crises could be limited. Since social media enable the immediate transfer of information, organisations who do not respond swiftly will find it difficult to control misinformation. Thus, crises managers must always be alert and proactive during events that could lead to crises. It is necessary to be alert and proactive as studies have revealed the role of social media in fostering the emergence of fake news as many stakeholders sometimes find it difficult to initially distinguish fake news from accurate ones (Shu, Mahudeswaran, Wang & Liu, 2019; Ogundoyin, Olagunju & Nwogwugwu, 2020).

METHODOLOGY

The exploratory qualitative research design was employed for this study. This design is employed when researchers seek to have an in-depth understanding of an existing issue. Hence, the design will serve as a guide to deeply understand trends in social-mediated crisis communication. Also, the exploratory design is suitable for studies that seek to answer "what" and "why" research questions (Yin, 2009). The findings from exploratory research designs could reveal some patterns that could assist in further research. In gaining insights into the objectives of this study, this chapter adopted a content analysis

of eight purposively selected social media crisis studies. These crises cases were purposively selected because they possessed specific characteristics. These characteristics include wide reportage via social media platforms; started via social media; focused on various crises types; the cases must have occurred from 2005 when the social media platforms were launched and became prominent till 2019, and the organisations/government involved employed social media in responding to and managing the crises.

A literature key search was first conducted to select online journal articles on social media and crisis. Articles were then selected based on the characteristics mentioned above with keywords such as "digital media," "digital public relations," "social media crises," and "social media crisis communication." A total of 147 articles were identified, while only eight (8) were purposively selected for analysis. The selected articles are empirical analysis of social media crises undertaken by academic researchers and crisis professionals. Thus, secondary data was collected from only published journal articles. These articles comprised crises from government and non-profit organisations. The unit of analysis was one article. The instrument was coded for three categories. First was the social media employed in responding to the crisis, crisis strategies, theoretical explanations, and an investigation into new findings. Table 1 presents a summary of cases:

Table 1. Summary of Social Media Crisis Cases

S/N	Name of Organization	Crisis Year	Crisis Type	Social Media Involved	Crisis Response Strategies	Theories
1.	Domino's Pizza, US	2009	Human error	YouTube, Twitter	-Mortification (delayed Apology) -Telling the truth -Accepting responsibility -Corrective measures	IRT SCCT
2.	Research in Motion (RIM)	2011	Technical error	Twitter; Facebook; YouTube	-Mortification (Apology)	- IRT - SCCT - Social Media Theory
3.	Japanese Government	2011	Natural disaster	Twitter	-Instructing and adjusting information	
4.	US Centre for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC); World Health Organization (WHO)	2015	Preventable	Twitter; Facebook	Instructing and adjusting information	SCCT
5.	Malaysian Airline MH17	2014	Accident	Facebook	Stealing thunder Instructing and adjusting information Diminish Deny Excuse Victimage	SCCT
6.	University Crisis	2017	Transgression	Facebook; Twitter	Instructing and adjusting information	SCCT
7.	Nigerian government	2012	Wrongdoing	Facebook; Twitter	Instructing and adjusting information	Framing
8.	School shooting crisis	2017	Preventable	Facebook; Twitter	Instructing and adjusting information	SCCT

SOCIAL MEDIA CASE STUDIES

This section presents an analysis of each crisis. A background into each crisis is presented before an in-depth analysis of the relevant trends.

a. Crisis Case One: Social Media and Food Crisis

In April 2009, Domino's Pizza was involved in a crisis that was started and escalated through YouTube. This study conducted by Young & Flowers (2012) examined social media's use in managing the crisis. Domino's Pizza, regarded as a world-leading food delivery company, is present in more than 90 countries worldwide (Domino's, 2020). The crisis started when two employees of Domino's in the US who were bored, made and posted a video of themselves engaging in disgusting activities while preparing sandwich ingredients to be delivered to a customer. Five videos were created in total, with one of the videos showing "an individual sticking mozzarella cheese up his nose and then blowing the cheese on a sandwich, among other unsanitary and stomach-turning activities" (Young & Flowers, 2012 p. 24). These videos were posted online and were viewed by an estimated one million viewers before it was removed two days later. Both employees were relieved of their jobs at Domino's while "the franchise owner discarded all open containers of food and sanitised the location" (Hosseinali-Mirza, Marcellis-Warin & Warin, 2015 p. 11).

Meanwhile, the video had already been downloaded and reposted before YouTube removed it on the request of Domino's (Hosseinali-Mirza et al., 2015). This act led to a severe reputational crisis for Domino's Pizza on social media (YouTube, Twitter, and Facebook) as they received several queries from stakeholders, including consumers and regulatory agencies, who were seeking to authenticate the videos. Specifically, customers took to Twitter to vent their anger for the delayed response from the management of Domino's in responding to the viral video. Questions were raised on the continuous silence of the organisation in responding to the act.

In response to the crisis, however, a statement was first made by the Vice President of Corporate Communications, Tim McIntyre, within the first 24 hours after the video was posted. McIntyre confirmed that, indeed, the incidents took place. Also, in an attempt to further salvage the already damaged reputation, the President of Domino's Pizza, Patrick Doyle, recorded an apology which was uploaded on the same YouTube platform, three days after the incident (Young and Flowers, 2012). In his apology, Doyle highlighted steps taken to correct the mistake, including sanitising the entire organisation and reviewing hiring processes and also promised that such incidents would never happen again.

b. Case Analysis Two: Social Media Use in Technical-Error Crisis

This study, conducted by Hilding-Hamann (2012), examined the social media crisis response strategies of the mobile company, Research in Motion (RIM), during a four-day network outage. RIM, a global leader within wireless technology, was involved in the export of smartphones, tablets, and software and was also the manufacturer of the popular Blackberry smartphones. The crisis occurred in October 2011 when users of Blackberry smartphones suddenly experienced both browsing and messaging delays leading to further network collapse caused by a core switch failure from RIM's infrastructure. The incident first occurred around 10 am on 10th October 2011 and lasted till the evening on 13th October 2011, as the outage was felt among users in Europe, Africa, the Middle East, India, and in many parts of South

America. This network collapse generated negative publicity for RIM as users moved to Facebook to express their frustrations.

Analysis of RIM's response strategies revealed that its first message was posted on its Twitter platform on the evening of 10th October, followed by another notification on its Facebook page almost ten hours later. Also, the CEO of RIM, Mike Lazaridis, was featured in a YouTube message posted on 13th October, where he apologised to customers. Furthermore, there was a Blackberry Service Update through which updates from the organisation were uploaded. In trying to salvage the situation, RIM responded promptly to the crisis with its first Facebook post seeking to reassure the publics that the Blackberry service had been restored. However, the post turned out to be the beginning of more reputational damage for RIM at that time as the crisis had just begun. RIM employed Facebook daily in responding to the concerns of the publics. Facebook posts were employed to continually apologise, explain the progress of the crisis, and update the publics on steps taken by in restoring the network.

The YouTube apology video gathered an estimated 400,000 views and shared on all social media platforms of RIM. In the video, Lazaridis addressed stakeholders about the crisis and sought to redeem the image and reputation of the organisation. Conversely, the stakeholders voiced their concerns on Facebook. Stakeholders took to RIM's Facebook page to express their frustrations at RIM's inability to fix the issues after three days. Full service to the network was finally resolved on the fourth day (13th October) after the crisis began. RIM also employed its Facebook platform to announce the full-service restoration. However, although RIM regularly provided updates on its activities in restoring the network, the organisation chose not to answer any of the threads and comments made by stakeholders, not until 17th October, when the network was finally restored. Their refusal not to respond to stakeholder comments online was in itself, a cynical crisis strategy on social media as best practices reveal that social media platforms in crises should be employed as two-way communication tools in responding to stakeholder concerns.

c. Crisis Case Three: Social Media Use During Natural Disasters

Natural disasters are types of crises that have also attracted scholarly attention. Natural disasters could happen at any time in any country – developed, developing, or underdeveloped. For crises resulting from natural disasters, there are usually fewer attributions of crisis responsibility and control. Cho, Jung & Park (2013) examined how Twitter was used as an interactive and information media by the Japanese government and citizens during Japan's 2011 earthquake. This study was instructive as it provided insights into the social media crisis management strategies by the Japanese government.

When the study was conducted, Japan had an estimated 78.9 percent internet access rate with a 95 percent mobile phone usage rate and approximately 15 million daily visitors on Facebook and Twitter. Thus, it was expected that the number of social media engagement would be high. As Cho et al. (2013) noted, the earthquake started at 2.46 pm on 11th March 2011, in the South Kanto area. During this period, fixed and mobile telephone connections were interrupted, thereby leading to the loss of communication among the citizens. However, citizens broke the news via Twitter, approximately 20 minutes before the mainstream media. Thus, before citizens in other parts of Japan recognised the damage caused by the earthquake, Twitter users had already posted pictures and shared their "earthquake experiences." Through Twitter, the earthquake news spread fast, such that some citizens of Korea, a neighbouring country, had also begun retweeting (sharing) the news while some other launched search teams for their loved ones.

Findings from this study revealed a high use of Twitter in "initiating search and rescue operations, fundraising, providing emotional support, and creating, delivering and sharing information during Japan's 2011 earthquake" (Cho et al. p. 37). However, despite the use of Twitter by citizens and organisations, findings revealed that before the earthquake, the Japanese government made little use of Twitter in interacting with citizens. However, the incident awakened the Japanese governments' interest in using social media to interact with citizens. This interest was a result of the interactions of tweets from the government to the citizens. Some governmental agencies provided useful information on special measures for controlling gas damage, aftershocks, and nuclear power plants rather than the regular economic-related topics. Thus, Twitter's use by the Japanese government after the earthquake increased as it enabled local governments to create Twitter accounts to interact with citizens.

d. Crisis Case Four: Social Media's Role in a Health Crisis

Crises can also result from health pandemics. For instance, studies have examined crises that resulted from the deadly SARS outbreak, the Ebola outbreak, and, more recently, new studies are examining the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. Health crises present challenges for citizens as crisis information is needed to protect them from harm. Lawrence (2016) examined social media's use (Twitter and Facebook) in reporting measles outbreak in the US. This study, unlike previous studies conducted in the US, was significant as it examined the use of social media by health organisations as well as reactions from the public towards crisis information posted online.

In 2015, there was an outbreak of measles across several states in the United States from February till April 2015. The outbreak was reported to have likely started from an infected traveller who visited the amusement park. Thus, this crisis was preventable only if necessary measures were taken. News and information on the measles outbreak spread quickly on social media with pictures and videos posted online in real-time. Thus, Lawrence (2016) gathered data from 1st February 2015 till 1st April 2015, from the official Twitter and Facebook pages of the relevant government health agencies - Centre for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC); World Health Organization (WHO), and relevant hashtags (#measles #outbreak #vaccine) from Twitter and Facebook to examine public responses to the crisis.

Findings revealed that the Centre for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the World Health Organization (WHO) actively employed social media (specifically Facebook and Twitter) in disseminating health information during the crisis. However, both organisations employed Twitter more than Facebook. Their messages helped citizens to protect themselves and their children from getting infected with the measles. They also kept citizens updated with growing measles cases.

Also, citizens, to a great extent, employed social media in responding to health information from the health agencies. They employed the use of relevant health hashtags in making health information to trend. Also, citizens mentioned the social media accounts of the CDC and WHO as sources for their health information and retweeted (shared) information from both organisations. Also, citizens revealed that they closely adhered to the advice from the health organisations in protecting themselves and families from the measles outbreak.

e. Crisis Case Five: Social Media Use in an Airline Crisis

Social media has also been employed in examining crises within the airline industry. Adebayo (2017) examined Facebook's use by Malaysian Airlines (MAS) after the MH17 Boeing 777-200 crash, which

departed from Amsterdam to Kuala Lumpur. The aircraft crashed after a missile was reportedly fired from the Ukrainian airspace on 17th July 2014. This incident came just four months after another missing aircraft, owned by Malaysian Airlines MH370 from Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia to Beijing, China with 12 crew members and 227 passengers were declared missing. In response to this crisis, MAS swiftly reported the crisis news to the public through its Facebook page with a promise to update the public on its Twitter handle. MAS employed the *stealing thunder* approach, where an organisation self-discloses crisis information before the public gets wind of such information from other sources. Thus, within the first 24 hours of the occurrence, MAS had updated its social media pages (Facebook and Twitter) and website with the news of the crash. MAS mostly employed Facebook in communicating with the publics. For instance, between 17 – 20th July 2014, the first four (4) days after the incident, MAS posted messages that provided instructing information and responded to public enquiries about the crisis.

Also, stakeholders employed Facebook to communicate with and react to the crisis. Some of the reactions include expressing grievances, showing empathy with the organisation, supporting the organisation, and blaming the organisation for the crisis. However, MAS also employed the traditional media in responding to the crisis as this was to cater to stakeholders with no social media presence or accounts. This study also revealed that MAS had a robust online relationship and engagement with stakeholders before and during the crisis. Thus, it was easy to garner support for the organisation due to its previous online relationship with the public.

f. Crisis Case Six: University Social Media Crisis

Social media crises have also received scholarly attention from colleges and universities. As earlier discussed, crises can happen to any organisation irrespective of status. Colleges and Universities in the US have been reported to be vulnerable to students' protests, racial discrimination, and violence, potentially impacting their reputation. Thelen and Robinson (2019) examined the social media crisis communication strategies employed by the President of the University of Florida (UF), Kent Fuchs, when a controversial speaker, Richard Spenser, planned to speak at UF. The study aimed at examining how crisis leaders interacted with publics during a crisis and how publics also responded to these crisis communication messages.

Richard Spenser, head of the National Policy Institute, was described as a controversial nationalist speaker due to his white-supremacist propaganda and was disallowed to speak at several universities in the US due to his supposed agenda. Thus, his refusal to be granted permission to speak created severe crises for those institutions. His supporters had engaged or threatened to engage in lawsuits to enable his "controversial messages" to be delivered to them on campus. Therefore, the threats of lawsuits enabled many universities to take steps in addressing the impending crises. It was in the midst of all these issues that Fuchs had invited Spenser to speak and share his ideas.

On 12th August 2017, Fuchs informed the University community of a request granted to reserve space at UF in Gainesville for a speaking event featuring Spencer. Four days later, UF denied Richard Spenser's request to speak, citing potential risks and violent conduct that occurred where Spenser had last spoken. However, findings from the study revealed that Spenser was later cleared to speak. On the day of Spenser's speech, two arrests were reportedly made for minor incidents while three men were arrested and charged with attempted murder. Thelen and Robinson (2019), therefore, analysed statements and information provided by the University's leader on his official Facebook and Twitter pages between 12th August (when the first public statement was made) and 19th November (a month after the event).

Findings from the study revealed that President Fuchs utilised information-giving strategies on social media. He always provided both instructing and adjusting information on Facebook and Twitter to assist students and other stakeholders in making sense of the situation and to protect themselves from harm. Findings also revealed that students responded and reacted to Presidents Fuchs' statements through Facebook and Twitter. Students who clicked the like/love options on Facebook were more than those who clicked on the angry option, implying that more students supported the President's responses. Also, there were more responses from the public when the President gave out factual and concrete information on social media.

Also, Facebook and Twitter platforms were employed by President Fuchs, the management of UF, as well as students and other stakeholders in responding to crisis messages. The crisis was reported to have also escalated via social media as immediate happenings were posted online. Also, similar crises involving Spenser in the past were posted online, which further escalated the situation. Thus, social media contributed to the escalation of the crisis.

g. Crisis Case Seven: Social Media and Protest Against Government Policies

Social media's use by organisations, governments, political actors, employees, and citizens has also attracted scholarly attention. Within governments, citizens have employed social media platforms to show support for favourable policies and also express grievances against unfavourable government policies. An instance of citizens' show of disapproval of a government policy that escalated through social media was the #OccupyNigeria protests against fuel subsidy removal in Nigeria in January 2012. In a study by Egbunike (2015), the #OccupyNigeria was a hashtag by Nigerian online citizens (netizens) who revolted against the sudden increase of Premium Motor Spirits (PMS) from N65 to N140. This sudden PMS increase was announced on 1st January 2012, causing transportation fares across the country to rise to as high as 120% and an astronomical rise in the cost of living.

The resultant effect of this increment was nationwide protests on 2nd January, which first started online through social media platforms (precisely, Twitter and Facebook), before moving to physical (offline) protests. The physical protests were orchestrated via social media as netizens formed groups from different locations, planned and executed on protest strategies. Also, celebrities, religious leaders, civil society groups, labour unions all lent their voices against the increment via social media and were all in support of the protest.

Although the physical protests led to the death of some protesters, the Nigerian government was, however, forced to rescind on its earlier decision by withdrawing the subsidy it had earlier put on the price of PMS. This act, which was made possible by social media, showed the powers of collective actions on social media.

h. Crisis Case Eight: Social Media Use During School Shooting Crisis

This last case focuses on the use of social media during an active school shooting incident in the US. This study, conducted by Thompson, Mazer, Payne, Jerome, Kirby & Pfohl (2016) examined, among other things, the social media challenges faced by school crisis teams during active shooting incidents. This study was noteworthy since it was reported that school shootings in the US increased from 6.4 to 16.4 per year within twelve years, from 2000 till 2012 (Blair & Schweit, 2014 cited in Thompson et al. 2016). Thus, these incidents opened up challenges faced by schools, especially on social media, as

it revealed their level of crisis preparedness. Thus, this study examined the challenges associated with information emanating from social media during school shooting incidents.

Findings revealed the emergence of three salient social media challenges faced during active school shooting crises. The first challenge was a lack of social media control, followed by message content issues and social media strategies. As a crisis incident, information about school shootings are difficult to control social media while the struggle to get ahead of social media posts were significant challenges faced by district schools. Besides, the independent nature of social media made it difficult to control online information as there was no basic control or censorship over what the public could say and do, thereby leading to misinformation. While it was difficult to prevent the spread of rumours and misinformation on social media, it was also difficult to stop the online criticisms that arose during active shooting incidents.

Furthermore, responding through message strategies on social media was difficult as students spread misinformation about the shooting incidents. This difficulty arose from the unpreparedness and aftermath of shooting incidents as schools had fewer plans to respond to the crisis on social media. Therefore, respondents identified the lack of social media strategies as areas of need to enhance the management of social media crises. Issues around misinformation and fake news have been fundamental issues arising from social media studies. For instance, Ogundoyin et al. (2020) revealed that social media's influence had increased in Nigeria, such that they were significant carriers of fake news. Hence, findings from this study revealed that students, parents, and teachers found social media use as a difficult challenge during active school shootings.

Social media wields enormous powers in escalating and reducing crises. People take to social media platforms to disseminate, receive, and discuss crisis information. For school districts in the US, it was difficult to counter crisis narratives online because they were not adequately prepared for the communication challenges associated with social media crises. Hence, controlling social media information through adequate social media crisis strategies is an important requirement for organisations.

ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

Social Media Platforms in Crisis Cases

One objective of the study was to examine the social media platforms that characterised the crisis studies. Findings revealed that while Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube were the social media platforms employed in managing crises, Facebook and Twitter were dominant platforms. Since the introduction of social media platforms, crisis communication studies have continued to examine the continuous importance of social media to crises. With the knowledge of the global rate of social media acceptance and use, public relations practitioners and crisis managers have incorporated social media platforms as communication channels with the publics.

Statistics as of August 2020 from an online business intelligence portal statistic, *Statista*, currently ranks Facebook as the platform with the highest number of global users while Twitter and YouTube, on the other hand, are among the top ten platforms (Clement, 2020). For crisis discourse, however, Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube are among the top five (5) social media platforms used as channels of communication between organisations and the public. Facebook and Twitter offer easy to navigate processes, the ability to upload videos, and user interactivity in real-time, while YouTube makes use of videos in disseminating messages to the publics. Findings from this study are similar to those of Cheng

(2016) and Huang, Wu & Huang (2016), who also found Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, and blogs as the most frequently employed social media platforms in digital public relations research. Also, Apuke and Tunca (2018) reported similar findings in their study.

Theoretical Explanations

Findings revealed that the Situational Crisis Communication Theory (SCCT), Image Restoration Theory (IRT), social media theory, social-mediated crisis communication (SMCC) theory, and framing theory were employed in the studies. However, findings revealed that the SCCT was the dominant theory, followed by the IRT. As earlier discussed, crises are capable of damaging the reputation of organisations. Hence, these theories present strategies available to public relations practitioners and crisis managers when responding to crises.

The SCCT, introduced by Coombs (1995), focuses on protecting organisational reputation following crises. Social media crises are threats to organisational reputation. Hence, the SCCT presents strategies that crisis managers can employ in managing crises and also stakeholders. The SCCT strategies include denying the existence of the crisis and attacking/blaming the accusers - persons or groups outside of the organisation - as the cause of the crisis. Crisis managers can also seek to reduce (diminish) the organisation's connection to the crisis by providing excuses or justifications for the crisis. Furthermore, crisis managers can seek to rebuild reputation by paying compensation and/or apologising for acts that led to the crisis. Finally, crisis managers, seeking to bolster their reputation, can remind stakeholders of favourite aspects of their past before the crisis or present themselves as victims of the crisis.

The IRT, on the other hand, also provides strategies that help to shape the public's immediate perceptions about crises. The IRT, developed by Benoit (1997), focuses on communication message strategies – what crisis managers can do or say – when faced with crises. The IRT, as opposed to the SCCT, presents communication actions also aimed at maintaining favourable organisational reputation. Some strategies include denial of the crisis incident; evasion of crisis responsibility, but subtle admittance to the crisis incident, reduction of perceived offensiveness of the crisis, corrective actions by promising ways to solve the crisis; and mortification, which focuses on confessing, admitting, and apologising for acts that led to the crisis. Findings from this study on the dominant use of IRT in crisis communication discourse are similar to findings from Avery, Lariscy, Kim & Hocke (2010) as cited by Cheng (2016), and Nwogwugwu (2018).

Social Media Crisis Communication Strategies

An array of crisis response strategies were found in the cases discussed. Findings revealed that instructing and adjusting information are necessary strategies in handling social media crisis. Sturges (1994) posited that instructing information includes content that emanates from organisations in crises to update the public about what to prepare for, how to react, and what further action to be taken. Coombs (2007) also adds that instructive information involves informing stakeholders about what to do to protect themselves physically during crises. Instructing information is necessary as stakeholders need information that could reduce tension and rumours that could lead to reputational damage. Adjusting information, on the other hand, involves addressing stakeholders with messages of sympathy and reassurance and updates on measures taken to avert the reoccurrence of crisis (Sturges, 1994; Coombs, 2007).

The Japanese government employed instructing and adjusting information during the 2011 earthquake crisis. There was necessary instructing information as well as information on measures through which citizens could protect themselves. Similarly, findings from MAS revealed the use of instructing and adjusting information. MAS provided information about the crash and how the stakeholders could cope psychologically with the crisis. Similarly, the health agencies in the US employed both instructing and adjusting information in handling the measles pandemic. Necessary information on the pandemic, the number of casualties, and the need for children to be vaccinated were disseminated. Adjusting information on protective measures against measles was also provided. Also, the University of Florida employed instructing and adjusting information to students on how to protect themselves from harm during the protests. However, the crisis at RIM only reported the use of instructing information in handling its crisis

Another crisis response strategy observed was apology – of the SCCT (known as mortification in the IRT) by some crisis managers in responding to crises. For instance, Domino's crisis reported the use of the apology strategy in managing the crisis. The President of Domino's, Patrick Doyle, had used YouTube and Facebook platforms to apologise to customers for the wrongdoings of two of its employees. Similarly, RIM's response strategy reported the use of apology. However, it was found that the choice of words contained in RIM's apology on Facebook worsened the crisis. Thus, apologising for crisis acts may necessarily not reduce the anger from stakeholders. Rather, apologising and using the right selection of words could be a better strategy.

When organisations in crises genuinely apologise for crisis acts, matched with strategies that reveal sympathy for stakeholder concerns, they could be absolved from the crises. On the one hand, apologising for crisis acts could mean admitting and accepting of crisis responsibility. On the other hand, however, Pace, Fediuk & Botero (2010) believe that sometimes organisations apologise as acts to show stakeholders sympathy but not to take the blame. Nonetheless, in severe situations, apologising for crisis acts could lead to litigation.

Furthermore, MAS employed the deny, diminish, and victimage strategies in its response to the MH17 plane crash. The deny strategy attempts to remove any connection between the organisation and the crisis because, if the organisation is not directly involved in the crisis, it will not suffer any damage from the crisis (Coombs, 2007). MAS employed the deny strategy when they announced that the plane was fired by a missile, thereby shifting the blame (IRT) away from them to the missile that brought down the plane. Also, organisations use the diminish strategy to make the public believe that crises are not as bad as they think or that the organisation lacked control over the crisis. The diminish strategy was employed by MAS when they framed the loss of contact with the plane as something that was beyond their control. The victimage strategy is used when crisis managers remind stakeholders that the organisation was a victim of the crisis (Coombs 2007). MAS played the victim by portraying itself as a victim of the plane crash since they also lost crew members.

Furthermore, another strategy found in this study and worthy of mention is the stealing thunder approach. Stealing thunder is a concept in crisis communication that explains how organisations in crisis self-disclose crisis information to the publics before it becomes known from other sources, especially the (social) media. By employing the stealing thunder strategy, organisations are in control of crisis information. Also, available research has revealed that organisations that employ the stealing thunder approach suffer less reputational damage than organisations where the media first reports crisis information (Coombs et al. 2017). MAS employed the stealing thunder strategy by self-disclosing the crisis before stakeholders got wind of such information. By doing this, they took control of the information that was spread about the crisis. Through this, they received support from stakeholders.

Finally, the corrective action strategy of the IRT was also recorded in the reviewed studies. Benoit (1997) argued that organisations correct their actions by promising and planning to solve or correct it. Domino's employed this strategy when its CEO promised that such an incident would not repeat itself, including the sack of the employees involved in the act, discarding all open containers of food, sanitising the entire organisation, and a review of its hiring process.

New Findings

Crisis response timing and its consequences were observed in this study. While some organisations responded within the first six hours after crises broke out, others responded after 24 hours. Domino's initial response to the viral video incident came after 24 hours. Within the 24 hours before Domino's response, customers had already taken to Twitter to post negative news, which damaged Domino's reputation. However, Hosseinali-Mirza et al. (2015) argued that the reason for Domino's delayed response was because they did not want to attract more attention to the case. Nonetheless, for a crisis of that magnitude, there ought to have been an immediate response within the first few hours, especially since it involved food.

Also, RIM first responded to online customer complaints within the first six hours after the incident. While the response timing was not delayed, RIM's choice of words in its apology further aggravated the crisis. Their response only acknowledged the loss of network and did not provide information on corrective measures to calm the stakeholders. The lack of adjusting information ensured that some customers abandoned the services of RIM. Thus, in crisis communication discourse, while responding to crises early enough is necessary, it is essential to pay attention to the content of messages.

MAS was also found to have responded to the crisis within the first 24 hours of the incident by updating its social media (Facebook and YouTube) pages. An early response, instructing and adjusting information, and prior stakeholder relationship, enabled stakeholders to be supportive, empathetic, and grieved with MAS after the MH17 plane crash. This example shows how a delayed response with the right selection of strategies could yield positive results. Also, early responses were observed in the violent protests in Nigeria and the school shooting incident in the US Citizens responded quickly after the increase in PMS in Nigeria by calling for protests while prompt responses were recorded within minutes of school shootings in the US.

Another finding worthy of mention is the introduction of the social-mediated crisis communication model into social media crisis studies. The SMCC model is the first theoretical model developed to test social media crisis communication (Austin, Liu & Jin, 2012). Although still being widely tested, the SMCC model, developed from the blog-mediated crisis communication, highlights the importance of integrating social media, including blogs and traditional media, into the media mix for crisis communication (Liu, Jin, Austin & Janoske, 2012). The SMCC model addresses how crises spread across social media and identify critical elements that interact to share and produce information before, during, and after crises. These elements include influential social media creators, social media followers and social media inactives (Liu, Jin, Austin & Janoske, 2012).

Social media creators are those who develop and post-crisis information online. They recognise the gravity of crises and thus, discuss and disseminate information online. These could include crisis managers and public relations practitioners. Social media followers comprise people who consume crisis information from the creators and share information online and offline. Offline media sharing includes traditional media, while social media inactives receive crisis information through other channels – traditional media and word-of-mouth communication. Thus, active players in the SMCC model

are organisations, the publics' social media, traditional media, and other media that could be employed before, during, and after crises. The SMCC model thus discusses the interaction of these elements to produce the desired results.

SOLUTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Crisis communication studies have revealed that the publics prefer to utilise social media platforms during crises to not only disseminate crisis information but to discuss, debate, and to seek support from one another. Thus, Facebook, Twitter, and in some cases, YouTube were mostly employed by organisations, governments, and the public when responding to social media crises. Facebook and Twitter provide opportunities for organisations and the publics to express themselves through the use of texts, pictures, and videos, while YouTube provides visuals. While these platforms were popular, crisis managers must ensure that they own and control the information posted on the organisation's social media platforms.

This chapter presents the following solutions and recommendations:

1. Organisations and governments of nations are advised to be prepared for crises by integrating and adopting social media into their crisis communication plans and monitor all online activities. Monitoring online activities are necessary as times had changed from the times when traditional media influenced the public. Thus, organisational reputation could be easily damaged in an online crisis if social media is not fully integrated into crisis communications plans.
2. Since social media platforms have altered the way organisations communicate with stakeholders and vice versa, public relations practitioners and crisis managers are expected to engage the publics before, during, and after crises actively. The pre-crisis online dialogue is essential as it could come in handy during crises. Research has shown that a strong pre-crisis relationship with the publics can assist in reducing perceived reputational threats or negative perceptions during a crisis.
3. It is not enough to create social media accounts. It is expedient to be aware and monitor comments from the publics about an organisation. Thus, it is crucial to be fully aware of comments made by the publics online as these comments are capable of shaping opinions, attitudes, and behaviours of other publics. Not responding or late response to crises could have devastating consequences.
4. One of the best practices in crisis communication is to respond in a timely, accurate, and consistent manner. Thus, in a social media crisis, crisis managers must ensure that they respond, usually within the first six (6) hours after a crisis has been made public. When responding, crisis managers must also ensure that they are honest and open.
5. Communication with stakeholders during a crisis can prove to be an effective strategy. Providing informative and adjusting information during crises could help stakeholders to stay informed and protected with coping mechanisms against the crisis.
6. Crisis managers are expected to be mindful of and respect the cultural, religious, and racial backgrounds of the publics because they come from diverse ethnic, religious, and racial backgrounds. Thus, responding to one race or religion and ignoring others could lead to another crisis.
7. Finally, while social media platforms are increasingly becoming poplar crisis response tools, traditional media should not be jettisoned. Instead, unique blends of both traditional and social media during crisis communication are recommended. Traditional media could be employed to complement efforts from social media platforms

CONCLUSION

The introduction of social media into crisis communication discourse significantly changed the communication dynamics between organisations and the public. From being a useful tool in public relations and marketing, social media has grown to become crisis management tools. Social media has also proven to be useful tools in escalating and reducing crises. Findings from this study have assisted in extending the current knowledge of social media crisis communication. The use of social media during crisis provides a platform for stakeholders to seek and share crisis information. Findings revealed that Facebook and Twitter are increasingly employed as platforms for crisis communication discourse, with YouTube receiving only a few mentions in studies. It was also discovered that responding to crises promptly and engaging with the publics before, during, and after crises are crucial to managing organisational reputation. Issues around crisis timing response are particularly important when responding to a crisis. Given the independent nature of social media, it is possible for fake news on crises to escalate. It is no longer sufficient for a company to follow up on a crisis several hours after the outbreak. Hence, organisations and crisis managers are advised to fully integrate and adopt social media into their crisis communication plans. Also, crisis managers must respond to crises by providing information promptly and with strategies that will help stakeholders to make sense of the crisis.

REFERENCES

Adebayo, O. (2017). *The application of Facebook to crisis communication management: a case study of Malaysia airlines* [Unpublished doctoral dissertation]. Salford Business School, University of Salford, UK.

Alexander, G. (2010). *Defining crisis communication*. www.sagepub.com/upm.37705_1.pdf

Anthonissen, P. F. (2008). No thrillers, but hard reality. Crisis communication, practical PR strategies for reputation management and company survival, 7 – 23.

Auer, M. R. (2011). The policy sciences of social media. *Policy Studies Journal: the Journal of the Policy Studies Organization*, *39*(4), 707–736. doi:10.1111/j.1541-0072.2011.00428.x

Baron, G. (2010). *Response suggestions and public participation: the new norm in response management.* http://www.emergencymgmt.com/emergency-blogs/crisis-comm/Response-suggestions-and-Public-111510.html

Benoit, W. L. (1997). Image Repair Discourse and Crisis Communication. *Public Relations Review*, *23*(2), 177–186. doi:10.1016/S0363-8111(97)90023-0

Cheng, Y. (2016). How social media is changing crisis communication strategies: Evidence from the updated literature. *Journal of Contingencies and Crisis Management*, 1 – 11. DOI: doi:10.1111/1468-5973.12130

Cho, S. E., Jung, K., & Park, H. W. (2013). Social Media use during Japan's 2011 Earthquake: How Twitter transforms the locus of crisis communication. *Media International Australia*, *149*(1), 28–40. doi:10.1177/1329878X1314900105

Clement, J. (2020). *Global social networks ranked by number of users*. Retrieved from https://www. statista.com/statistics/272014/global-social-networks-ranked-by-number-of-users/

Coombs, W. T. (1999). *Ongoing crisis communication: Planning, managing, and responding*. Sage.

Coombs, W. T. (2002). Deep and surface threats: Conceptual and practical implications for "crisis" vs "problem.". *Public Relations Review*, *28*(4), 339–345. doi:10.1016/S0363-8111(02)00167-4

Coombs, W. T. (2007). Protecting organisation reputations during a crisis: The development and application of situational crisis communication theory. *Corporate Reputation Review*, *10*(3), 163–176. doi:10.1057/palgrave.crr.1550049

Coombs, W. T. (2009). Conceptualising crisis communication. In R. L. Heath & H. D. O'Hair (Eds.), *Handbook of crisis and risk communication*. Routledge.

Coombs, W. T., Claeys, A., & Holladay, S. (2017). Social Media's Value in a Crisis. Channel Effect or Stealing Thunder? In *Social Media and Crisis Communication* (pp. 159–167). Routledge. doi:10.4324/9781315749068-12

Coombs, W. T., Frandsen, F., Holladay, S. J., & Johansen, W. (2010). Why a concern for apologia and crisis communication? *Corporate Communications*, *15*(4), 337–349. doi:10.1108/13563281011085466

Coombs, W. T., & Holladay, S. J. (2014). How publics react to crisis communication efforts. *Journal of Communication Management (London)*, *18*(1), 40–57. doi:10.1108/JCOM-03-2013-0015

Coombs, W. T. (2010*)*. Parameters for crisis communication. In W. T. Coombs & S. J. Holladay (Eds.), *The handbook of crisis communication* (pp. 17 – 53). Wiley Blackwell.

Domino's. (2020). *Domino's 101: Fun Facts*. https://biz.dominos.com/web/public/about-dominos/fun-facts

Egbunike, N. (2015). Framing the #Occupy Nigeria Protests in Newspapers and Social Media. *Open Access Library Journal*, *2*(05), e1486. doi:10.4236/oalib.1101486

Fearn-Banks, K. (1996). *Crisis communication: A casebook approach*. Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Gerken, F., Van der Land, S. & van der Meer, T. (2016). Crisis in the air: an investigation of AirAsia's crisis-response effectiveness based on frame alignment. *Public Relations Review,* 1 – 14. doi:10.1016/j. pubrev.2016.09.002

Hermann, C. F. (1963). Some consequences of crisis which limit the viability of organisations. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, *8*(1), 61–82. doi:10.2307/2390887

Hilding-Hamann, S. (2012). *The effects of social media on crisis communication: A case study of the response strategy performed by Research in Motion* [Unpublished B. A Thesis]. Aarhus University, Denmark.

Hosseinali-Mirza, V., Marcellis-Warin, N., & Warin, T. (2015). Crisis communication strategies and reputation risk in the online social media environment. *International Journal of Business and Social Science*, *6*(5), 7–21.

Huang, Y. C., Wu, F., & Huang, Q. (2016). Does research on digital public relations indicate a paradigm shift? An analysis and critique of recent trends. *Telematics and Informatics*. Advance online publication. doi:10.1016/j.tele.2016.08.012

Jin, Y., & Liu, B. F. (2010). The blog-mediated crisis communication model: Recommendations for responding to influential external blogs. *Journal of Public Relations Research*, *22*(4), 429–455. doi:10.1080/10627261003801420

Kaplan, A. M., & Haenlein, M. (2010). Users of the world, unite! The challenges and opportunities of social media. *Business Horizons*, *53*(1), 59–68. doi:10.1016/j.bushor.2009.09.003

Lawrence, A. K. (2016). A study of the media's portrayal of the measles outbreak. University Honors Program Theses. *Paper*, *175*, 1–38.

Lerbinger, O. (2012). *The crisis manager. Facing disasters, conflicts and failures* (2nd ed.). Routledge. doi:10.4324/9780203222133

Liu, B. F., Austin, L. L., & Jin, Y. (2011). How publics respond to crisis communication strategies: The interplay of information form and source. *Public Relations Review*, *37*(4), 345–353. doi:10.1016/j.pubrev.2011.08.004

Macias, W., Hilyard, K., & Freimuth, V. (2009). Blog functions as risk and crisis communication during Hurricane Katrina. *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication*, *15*(1), 1–31. doi:10.1111/j.1083-6101.2009.01490.x

Nwogwugwu, D. I. (2018). Influence of crisis communication strategies on stakeholders' perception of organisational reputation: A review of research trends. *Journal of Communication and Media Research*, *10*(2), 125–138.

Ogundoyin, O., Olagunju, L., & Nwogwugwu, D. (2020, February). *Influence of Digital Technologies on Journalistic Practices and Quality of News Reporting in Nigeria*. Paper presented at the @frica Digital Media Conference, J. Valenti School of Communication, University of Houston.

Perry, D. C., Taylor, M., & Doerfel, M. L. (2003). Internet-based communication in crisis management. *Management Communication Quarterly*, *17*(2), 206–232. doi:10.1177/0893318903256227

Pratt, C. B. (2012). Theoretical approaches to and sociocultural perspectives in crisis communication. In A. George & C. Pratt (Eds.), *Case studies in crisis communication. International perspectives on hits and misses* (pp. 3–27). Routledge.

Seeger, M. W., Sellnow, T. L., & Ulmer, R. R. (1998). Communication, organisation, and crisis. *Annals of the International Communication Association*, *21*(1), 231–276. doi:10.1080/23808985.1998.11678952

Sellnow, T. L., & Seeger, M. W. (2013). *Theorising crisis communication*. Wiley.

Shan, L., Regan, A., Brun, A., Barnett, J., van der Sanden, M., Wall, P., & McConnon, A. (2013). Food crisis coverage by social and traditional media: A case study of the 2008 Irish dioxin crisis. *Public Understanding of Science (Bristol, England)*, *23*(8), 911–928. doi:10.1177/0963662512472315 PMID:23825281

Shu, K., Mahudeswaran, D., Wang, S., & Liu, H. (2019). *Hierarchical propagation networks for fake news detection: Investigation and exploitation*. Retrieved from https://www.semanticscholar.org

Snoijers, E. M., Poels, K., & Nicolay, C. (2014). #universitycrisis: The impact of social media type, source, and information on student responses towards a University Crisis. *Social Science Computer Review*, *32*(5), 647–661. doi:10.1177/0894439314525025

Stephens, K. K., Malone, P. C., & Bailey, C. M. (2005). Communicating with stakeholders during a Crisis. Evaluating message strategies. *Journal of Business Communication*, *42*(4), 390–419. doi:10.1177/0021943605279057

Sturges, D. L. (1994). Communicating through crisis: A strategy for organisational survival. *Management Communication Quarterly*, *7*(3), 297–316. doi:10.1177/0893318994007003004

Thelen, P. D., & Robinson, K. L. (2019). Crisis Communication in Institutions of Higher Education: Richard Spencer at the University of Florida. *Communication Quarterly*, *67*(4), 444–476. doi:10.1080/01463373.2019.1616586

Thompson, B., Mazer, J. P., Payne, H. J., Jerome, A. M., Kirby, E. G., & Pfohl, W. (2016). Social Media and Active Shooter Events: A School Crisis Communication Challenge. *Qualitative Research Reports in Communication*. Advance online publication. doi:10.1080/17459435.2016.1247111

Utz, S., Schultz, F., & Glocka, S. (2013). Crisis communication online: How medium, crisis type and emotions affected public reactions in the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear disaster. *Public Relations Review*, *39*(1), 40–46. doi:10.1016/j.pubrev.2012.09.010

Veil, S. R., Sellnow, T. L., & Petrun, E. L. (2012). Hoaxes and the Paradoxical Challenges of Restoring Legitimacy Dominos' Response to Its YouTube Crisis. *Management Communication Quarterly*, *26*(2), 322–345. doi:10.1177/0893318911426685

Wang, Y. (2016). Brand crisis communication through social media: A dialogue between brand competitors on Sina Weibo. *Corporate Communications*, *21*(1), 56–72. doi:10.1108/CCIJ-10-2014-0065

Yin, R. K. (2009). *Case study research: Design and methods*. Sage Publications.

Young, C. L., & Flowers, A. (2012). Fight viral with viral: A case study of Domino's Pizza's crisis communication strategies. *Case Studies in Strategic Communication*, *1*, 93–106.

KEY TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

Crisis: Crises are unexpected (and sometimes expected) occurrence that disrupt high priority goals with short response time and attracts high media attention.

Crisis Communication: Information given by organisations/nations in crisis to help stakeholders make sense of the crisis.

Crisis Response Strategies: Organisational tactics in response to crisis aimed at repairing and/or rebuilding reputation

Organisation: Organised entities comprising groups of people who are poised to achieve specifically defined objectives.

Organisational Publics: These are people that can affect or can be affected by activities of organisations

Reputation: Valuable and intangible organisational assets which are formed based on how well stakeholder expectations are met and could be damaged during crises.

Social Media: These are groups of internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0 and allow for interactivity among users.