EFFECTS OF FACEBOOK AS A SOCIAL MEDIA ON STUDENTS' CRISIS COMUNICATION
(STUDY AREA- MAASAI MARA UNIVERSITY)

BY

JOAN MAINA

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A Research Project submitted to the department of media, film, communication and public relations in the school arts and social science in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the award of a Bachelor of Science (communication and public relations) of Maasai Mara University.

DECLARATION

This project is my original work and has not been presented for a degree program in any other university.

SIGNATURE ………………………………….. DATE ……………………

NAME   JOAN MAINA

ADM NO: BPR/040/2012

This project has been submitted for examination with my approval as the University Supervisor.

SIGNATURE……………………………. DATE ……………………

SUPERVISOR'S NAME: CLARIS KASAMBA

ABSTRACT

This project is my research that I carried out in the three month on the topic titled effects of social media on crisis communication in organizations my case being Maasai Mara University. My objectives being, to examine how organizations use social media in crisis communication, to find out the challenges of using social media in crisis communication in organizations, and to find out how social media can be used to enhance crisis communication in organizations.

In chapter two a theoretical framework is presented which is of use for this research and especially for giving answers to the research questions. The framework will give an outline on the situational crisis communication theory to determine the effects of social media on crisis communication.

In chapter three the methodological framework is presented. With the aid of the questionnaires and interview, I was in a position to collect data from my various target population, analyze and present the findings.

In chapter four I have analyzed and presented the data collected. Also the findings are well explained in that chapter. Finally, in chapter five the research questions have been answered in the summary. I have also given recommendations and suggestions of further research.

DEDICATION

This research project is a special dedication to my parents, Zachariah Maina and Jane

Njeri, my sisters, and friends for their financial, moral and social support. I also dedicate

to my Research to all my fellow Communication Students for their company, assistance,

encouragement and support during my study period.

May God bless you all.

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DEFINITION OF TERMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

Social media   - a group of Internet-based applications that build on the ideological and

technological foundations of Web, and that allow the creation and

Exchange of user-generated content

Facebook   - an online social media networking website where people can

create profiles, share information and respond to the information

posted by others

Crisis   - the perception of an event that threatens important experiences of

Stakeholders and can impact the organization's performances

Organization   - a group of people structured and managed to meet a common goal

CM   - Crisis management

SCCT   - Situational crisis communication theory

CRS   -Crisis response strategy

CHAPTER ONE

1.0 INTRODUCTION

This chapter describes the background of the study, statement of the problem, research objectives, research questions, significance of the study and the research scope

1.1 Background of the study

The social media plays an increasing role in people's everyday life and the use of the social media has become more and more important as a way of communicating in the last couple of years It is evident that social media tools, the web-based communication channels serving billions of users worldwide, are changing crisis communication and the way practitioners develop and distribute information to their publics. The diverse and ever growing social media channels including Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and blogs are restructuring how organizations connect and interact with communities in times of crisis. Social media tools and their capabilities are also reshaping organizational crisis messages and the way practitioners communicate them to their publics. "Technological advances are transforming how crisis management professionals and researchers view, interact with, and disseminate information to affected communities in a crisis situation (Veil, Buhner & Palencha, 2011).

The most popular online social media site, Facebook, has more than one billion users worldwide (Facebook, 2012). Facebook's Founder, Mark Zuckerberg, first launched the social site from his Harvard University dorm room in 2004, and, since then, the social site has grown tremendously. In the first quarter of 2012, the social network generated an average of 3.2 billion likes and comments per day from its users, (Facebook 2012). Eighty percent of the company's users, according to Facebook (2012), are outside the United States and Canada, and the social network is available in

more than 70 languages. On May 17, 2012, Zuckerberg made history by announcing the company's initial public offering of shares. Those shares began to trade on the NASDAQ Global

Select Market on May 18, 2012. Facebook's mission is to make the world more open and connected. People use Facebook to stay connected with friends and family, to discover what's going on in the world, and to share and express what matters to them. On the other hand, Twitter, the real-time information network consisting of short status updates of 140 characters, has more than 145 million members (Twitter, 2012). "Twitter was founded in San Francisco, but it's used by people in nearly every country in the world. The service is available in more than 20 languages (Twitter, 2012). In addition to Facebook and Twitter, YouTube has provided a forum for people around the world to share, interact and connect through videos. YouTube allows billions of people to discover, watch, and share originally-created videos (YouTube, 2012). Blogs have also become extremely popular. On average, people create 1.4 blogs every second, according to Jin & Liu (2010). "And 1.5 million blog posts are made every day. Publics consider the Internet to be the most reliable source for news, especially ideal for generating timely communication, unique information, and interactive conversation (Liu, Austin & Jin, 2011)

No organization, no matter how financially successful, powerful or reputable, is immune to crises (Regester and Larkin, 2005). Crises are threats that actually do or have the potential to severely damage an organization (Coombs, 1999). An organization faces a variety of challenges during a crisis. One challenge is to protect the organization's reputation (Coombs, 2004). Regester and Larkin explain that the forces of the internet are pushing us from a so called "traditional world", dependent on the value of physical assets such as property and equipment, to a "new world" characterized by the intangible assets of reputation, knowledge, competencies, innovation, leadership, culture and loyalty.

Social media can have both positive and negative effects on an organization's image. Users of social media often use this communication tool to discuss their experiences with a company and especially their customer service experiences. If a user is upset, they can often tell their story online with blogs, Facebook or Twitter. This can bring much unwanted negative attention to an organization if the person has a large following. On the other hand, social media can allow organizations to participate in two-way communication with their stakeholders. Organizations can use social media to take part in the conversations on the Internet and can quickly respond to any issues that may arise. Social media can allow companies to have stronger relationships with their stakeholders through constant communication. Unfortunately, few of the organizations are able to incorporate them into their crisis communication strategies successfully. Therefore, it is necessary to gain a better understanding of the characteristics of the world that crisis departments are now navigating in, as well as which beneficial strategies to adopt and how to administer them. There exists a scarce amount of theory-grounded research on effective handling of a crisis within the online world (Jin, Liu & Austin, 2011). Many scholars highlight effects based results, which include reception analysis and qualitative surveys in order to determine the consequences of specific communicative decisions (e.g. Coombs & Holladay, 2009). The research will look at Facebook as a social media and which possibilities, as well as limitations, it provides organization with in times of crisis.

Interestingly, the interactivity among users highly increases when a crisis occurs. During a major crisis or disaster, the public spends a tremendous amount of time online discovering, analyzing, and conversing. The public also uses social media during a major crisis to seek and share information, and look for emotional support. "Social media provide emotional support for publics after crisis as well as a way for publics to virtually band together, share information, and demand resolution" (Liu, et. al. 2011). The social media tools and their capabilities have shifted the power of communication from the organizations' communicators to users. In addition, according to (Veil, et al,2011) social media

tools offer more opportunities to communicate as well as provide new avenues for global outreach in crisis communication. "These new media platforms are low cost or free forums for the expression of ideas, information, and opinion. For instance, the 2010 Haiti earthquake that killed more than 300,000 people became a hugely popular and trending topic on Twitter. According to Smith (2010), weeks following the earthquake thousands of Haiti-related tweets were uploaded every hour creating major awareness across the globe. "Through Twitter, users discussed relief efforts in Haiti, including participating organizations and individuals (Smith, 2010). As a result, organizations such as the American Red Cross, public figures, and celebrities used Twitter, Facebook, and other social networking sites to communicate with the public about the disaster and raise millions of dollars. In addition, during the 2009 Mumbai terrorist attack, Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and blogs became important tools used by citizen journalists to share original stories, raw and unfiltered information and opinions quickly and efficiently.

However, social media channels have also often been used to criticize and attack organizations and their crisis response strategies. Under the stress of a crisis, the immediacy of digital communication might produce misinformation and speculation, which can be daunting to organizations, (Veil et al., 2011). Stakeholders can use social media to create and disseminate their own influence, de-centralizing the dissemination of information and reducing official control. For instance, the public harshly criticized British Petroleum for its response to the Deepwater Horizon oil spill disaster that nearly destroyed the waters in the Gulf of Mexico. A few days after the disaster occurred, an anonymous, [BP] satirical Twitter account, had four times as many followers within a week as the official BP site @ BP_America.

Despite this, organizations have doubts about the trustworthiness of social media. Many communicators also have reservations about the credibility of the social networks, while other organizations do not have a strategic crisis plan to convey their messages on those sites, according to

Liu et al. (2011). But how are organizations embracing social media when a crisis occurs? Do they have a strategic communication plan to convey critical crisis messages to the public using social media tools? How does the public respond and perceive those social media messages? To determine how organizations, communicate on Facebook during a crisis, from a relationship management perspective, the researcher conducted an experimental study to investigate how interactivity, responsiveness, and transparency affect their Fan page

1.2 Statement of the problem

The popularity of Facebook has increased in the last couple of years which also brought consequences with it for crisis communication. Where crisis communication was previously conducted by making use of the traditional media, Facebook has given a whole new perception to crisis communication. Not only new media devices can be used in crisis communication, but also a pressure on the quick dissemination of information can be seen as a result of Facebook. This research focuses on the effects of Facebook as a social media can have on crisis communication and how organizations navigate during a crisis in an online world.

1.3 Research objectives

1.3.1 General objectives

The purpose of the study was to establish the effects of Facebook as a social media on crisis communication in organizations

1.3.2 Specific objectives

1. To ascertain the effectiveness of Facebook in managing crisis communication in Maasai mara university

2. To identify the challenges of using Facebook to manage crisis communication in Maasai mara university

3. To determine better ways of using Facebook to manage crisis communication

4. To examine how Maasai mara students and management use social media in crisis communication.

1.4 Research questions

1. How effective is the use of Facebook in managing crisis communication in Maasai mara university?

2. What challenges exists in using Facebook to manage crisis communication in Maasai mara university?

3. In what ways can Facebook be used to effectively manage crisis communication in maasai mara university?

4. How does Maasai mara university use the social media to handle crisis?

1.5 Significance of the study

This study will benefit organizations in the sense that it will help them come up with better crisis response strategies. They will learn how to incorporate Facebook and other social media during crisis communication so as to minimize reputational damage. The study will

Additionally, this study will also benefit the Maasai Mara University fraternity in the sense that they will learn how they can use Facebook to take part in the conversations on the Internet and can quickly respond to any issues that may arise. The administration will be able to use social media to have stronger relationships with their stakeholders especially students through constant communication. The study will be beneficial to other institution of education in managing crises through Facebook.

1.6 Scope of the study

The study is confined to Maasai Mara University in Narok County. The target population is the students. The study will be focused on the effects of using Facebook on crisis communication in the university particularly on the students. Maasai mara university has a population of approximately 6000 students, the study will target 60 students which will comprise of 15 students every year, both male and female. Facebook formed the independent variable while crisis communication was the dependent variable

1.7 Limitation of the study

Poor cooperation from the target population in the sense that some of them were not willing to fill in the questionnaires.

Given the limited time available for research, the research was limited to cover a study scope and may t within the given time frame and may therefore, have less desirable and accurate.

A limited financial budget limits the study scope, especially the sample size, as a lot of money could be needed to collect data from the entire population under study at Masaai Mara.

Some of the information required for this study was confidential information. Students will probably withhold vital information, which was relevant to the study, as they are afraid to provide some information.

CHAPTER TWO

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction.

This chapter discusses literature, with respect to social media in crises communication, as proposed by different scholars. It covers topics such as social media, types of crises and crises communication. It also covers other factors important in crises communication such as social media as tool in crises communication, methodologies in past research, critical review of literature, theoretical framework and summary of the review.

2.2 Defining social media

 What is social media? Social media are the various electronic tools, technologies, and applications that facilitate interactive communication and content exchange, allowing the user to move back and forth easily between the roles of the audience and content producers, (Currie 2011). The explosion of social media, including social networking sites, blogs, and video channels has dramatically changed the way crisis communicators look and plan their overall strategic risk messages. During a time of emergency, in particular, social media can be used to broadcast "critically important information" instantly to as many people as possible. "It speeds up communication, and for all practical purposes, it speeds up awareness," (Currie, 2011).

According to (Wigley and Zhang ,2011), social media are changing the way everyone, including journalists and public relations practitioners, communicate. (Kaplan and Haenlein,2010) define social media as "a group of Internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web, and that allow the creation and exchange of user-generated content. (Coombs,2010) claims that "one key component found in these newer media is the capacity to

facilitate bi-directional communication, or dialogue". What can be drawn from these quotes is that a number of technological conquests have made social media possible, and that the various mediums have indeed facilitated communication.

Once this has been said, an obvious trait of social media ought to be mentioned, namely immediacy (Wigley& Zhang, 2011). It can be argued that traditional media such as the telephone or newspaper also facilitate communication. What is unique about social media though is that they have enabled near immediate communication. And this is one of the most dominant factors affecting PR (and crisis communication in particular), along with the ability to reach large masses without the limitation of geography (Auer, 2011). Through these two traits social media makes for one powerful game changer.

2.3 Social media as a tool

According to Wigley& Zhang (2011), a key to successfully handling crises is controlling the flow of information to the media and one's publics. If this statement is true the aforementioned traits of social media, immediacy and the dissolving of geographical boundaries, must have had a substantial effect on crisis handling. Wigley and Zhang state that, social media have allowed for news to break almost instantly and once it hits a conduit such as Twitter or Facebook it is only a matter of minutes before the story is spread virally to thousands or even millions of people (2011). This means that the old mantra of crisis communication regarding control of information flow has become almost impossible for companies to perform. Public relations professionals no longer have time to plan before crises reach social media and the public. Thus, crisis communicators have been given the reactive role and with that they are forced to begin reputational damage control once the public has already discovered and evaluated the crisis (Wigley& Zhang, 2011).

So what does this mean for the way crisis communication is designed today? Naturally, there are both advantages and drawbacks by this development. However, there is no doubt that social media can be used as a tool by organizations, and, if used correctly, a very beneficial one. One of the advantages could be a higher degree of transparency and interactivity between company and consumer. Coombs posits that before social media "people were having trouble reaching many of the organizations considered at the heart of the crisis" (2010).

Companies now have various channels to communicate from and, more importantly, they have access to a tool that allows for a message to be delivered without delay (Auer, 2011). Another advantage is the reduced significance of the so-called "middle-men", who until now have served as a form of filter that messages passed through before reaching the public. An example of this could be censors or editors interfering with communication. When using social media, the message instead goes directly from sender to receiver without delay or modifications, this has speeded up communication time substantially (Auer, 2011).

This development may also include drawbacks; some argue that social media in terms of credibility fall short (Sunstein, 2006; Auer, 2011). This is specifically due to the immediate nature, which allows a minimum of proof reading and accuracy compared to other media tools. This factor can be important for organizations when trying to convince stakeholders. If credibility of a message does drop when using social media, this means organizations must take extra care in tailoring communication when using these conduits (Auer, 2011).

2.4 Social media as two-way communication

Another important feature of social media is their ability to enable two-way communication between organization and stakeholder. They provide the opportunity to invite consumers to respond to a crisis

after which the organization can then deal with it in a personal manner. This being said, these opportunities also foster greater expectations on behalf of the stakeholders. They now expect near immediate communication that is well planned and answers to their concerns (Coombs, 2010). These expectations could be a potential drawback, seeing as research at the moment suggests that companies have yet to embrace social media fully, some still focus on the threats connected with the concept rather than the potentials (Wigley& Zhang, 2011).

Coombs also talks about how "newer media allow for individual stakeholders to virtually meet, share information, and potentially band together" (2010, p. 390). This can be a positive development, seeing as it can give a nuanced discussion of a crisis. It can also become a negative trait if a collective of stakeholders decides to portray a company as "the villain" and spread this perception (2010). Ultimately, what can be said about entering such an electronic community is that it is a place where user opinions and values are shared, a place that can

"spawn commentary, sway views, and spur action" (Auer, 2011). There is no doubt that Facebook has created endless possibilities to allow organizations to engage in two-way communications with friends and fans in good or bad times. Through fan pages, wall posts, picture comments, videos, live chat boxes, tabs, likes, and dislikes, organizations can quickly and effectively interact with their publics allowing communicators to deliver messages based on their needs during times of crisis. Because of those easy-to-use and easy-to-implement Facebook tools, organizations can be highly interactive with their publics during and after a major disaster, which can help them manage relationships and sustain their Fan page relevance, importance, and appeal. To achieve that goal, it is important for companies to think outside the box and stand out from the crowd. Facebook has thousands of interactive tools including Live Chat boxes, welcome/call-to-action boxes, apps, tags, and photo and video sections, which allow organizations to humanize and personalize their message.

As a result, every person who likes an organization's page will get special attention quickly and efficiently. Third party apps such as the Hoot Suite, a social media management dashboard, help organizations manage, measure, schedule, and analyze their Facebook posts.

In addition, Ki & Hon (2009) state that organizations that develop positive relationships with their publics are more effective in achieving their organizational goals. Several relationship cultivation strategies, originally adopted by Hon & Grunig (1999), including networking, sharing of tasks, access, positivity, and openness can produce better relationship quality outcomes, (Ki & Hon 2009). Relationship cultivation strategies, according to Ki & Hon (2009), help build and sustain quality relationships between businesses and their publics.

One of the strategies that organizations could utilize through interactivity on Facebook, is networking. Ki & Hon (2009) state, networking can be formed through conversation, friendship, information exchange, and anything that builds the basis of a relationship. (Ki & Hon 2009) define networking "As the degree of an organization's effort to build networks or coalitions with the same groups that their publics do, such as environmentalists, unions, or community groups.

Through continuous interactions, organizations can network, develop and maintain relationships. Waters, Burnett, Lamm & Lucas' (2009) research shows interactivity plays an important role in maintaining and developing healthy relationships online with stakeholders. Additionally, Briones, Kuch, Liu & Jin's (2011) research results show, online two-way conversations are essential components to maintaining those relationships. Briones et al. (2011) conducted 40 in-depth interviews with American Red Cross employees to explore how social media tools are used to build relationships with customers. A few participants in their research, who talked about the importance of

a two-way dialogue when building relationships on social media, said, 'You want to be part of the conversation ;'Don't just issue a press release, try to have a conversation'.

One example of a successful Facebook campaign after an emergency is the University of Canterbury's interactivity with users after the earthquake hit the Canterbury region in the South Island of New Zealand in 2010, (Dabner 2012). The response from the university was immediate and carefully coordinated with the university's web-based environment and a responsive site developed on Facebook, according to Dabner (2012). Research results from Dabner (2012) show Facebook became the university's prominent source of support for many months. "A new Facebook community was immediately established, enabling ongoing dialogue and information sharing between staff at the institution and the wider educational community" (. Dabner (2012) also states that the Facebook site went live one day after the earthquake, and "Quickly became one of the highly effective, well utilized multi-media spaces and tools used by the university to provide community support over the next 3 months.

 2.5 Facebook Interactivity, Responsiveness & Transparency's Effect on Organizational Fan Page Relevance, Importance, and Appeal

Scholarly research shows interactivity, responsiveness, and transparency on

Facebook are key when responding to an organizational crisis, incident or scandal. Research also proves that those strategies have an effect on relevance, importance, and appeal-which ultimately affect user's trust and commitment toward an organization's brand. Facebook tools including Live Chat Boxes, easy-to-navigate photos, fast downloading videos, and other Live and personalized interactive features allow companies to personally connect with fans and develop relevant, important,

and appealing Fan pages. By doing that, they can create messages that are tailored specifically, and eventually develop long lasting relationships. Organizations that used

Facebook tools and features to engage in an immediate, honest and compassionate two-way communication with their publics appeared to suffer fewer consequences. For example, one of (Coombs,2008) crisis response strategies, "deal posture," was used in many successful crisis messages. "Deal posture represents a set of strategies that seek to improve the organization's reputation in some way.

Through these strategies, organizations can show high concern about victims and accept responsibility when a crisis occurs (Coombs 2008). This pattern was seen through the organizations' continuous interactivity, responsiveness, and transparency with the public. Some deal posture strategies, which Coombs emphasizes, include concern, regret, and apology. "By protecting victims and accepting responsibility, crisis managers encourage stakeholders to judge the organization more positively or less negatively. Therefore, crisis managers responsible for communicating those messages to the public, shared and disseminated the information in a very timely fashion using Facebook features such as status updates, links, videos, and photos demonstrating their sympathy for the victims if any, regret, and concern about the situation. According to an experimental research design conducted by Sweeter & Metzger (2007), which investigated the impact of blogs using relationship management during a crisis, the perceived state of crisis decreased as communication increased and got closer to the organization itself. "These findings suggest that organizations in crisis should continue to employ open communication practices during crisis situations,

2.6 Crises

A crisis is a situation where if not handled in time it may turn into a disaster. for example, in in a learning institution student may be complaining about some issues such as water shortage and the management do not handle the situation on time it can lead to a strike which can lead to destruction of properties and sometimes in can cause the institution to close down.

A crisis is the perception of an unpredictable event that threatens important expectancies of stakeholders" and can seriously affect an organization's performance and reputation as well as generate negative outcomes (Liu et al. 2011) on the other hand, defined a crisis as a major occurrence with a potentially negative outcome affecting an organization as well as its publics, services, products, and/or good name. "An issue [crisis] is a contestable point, a difference of opinion regarding fact, value, or policy, the resolution of which has consequences for the organization's strategic plan and future success or failure," (Liu, et al. 2011). In addition, an issue or a crisis that emerges online can take a dramatic turn more quickly than a crisis emerging offline, (Liu, et al. 2011). Therefore, the way organizations respond and manage online messages when a crisis occurs is crucial.

In The Handbook of Crisis Communication (2010) Coombs defines a crisis as "the perception of an event that threatens important experiences of stakeholders and can impact the organization's performances". In other words, a crisis occurs when a company's reputation is in jeopardy. A reputation is an evaluation of an organization formed by its stakeholders, who in turn are the people who are affected by or can affect an organization (Mitchell et al, 2007). The stakeholders evaluate how well an organization is meeting their expectations based on prior behavior. Reputation is therefore a valuable asset and important to protect. According to Coombs (2007), a tarnished

reputation may drive away customers and as a direct effect the company will suffer the consequences often made blatant by the bottom line.

Although there is no one accepted definition of a crisis, a few generic things can be said about the concept. Firstly, a crisis is perceptual. This means that a crisis is defined by the perceptions held about it. Stakeholders perceive crises in a certain way and it is the organization's job to adjust its crisis communication to their beliefs. Secondly, a crisis is unpredictable. This is nevertheless not the same as being unexpected. A crisis can be anticipated, and intelligent companies are aware of the potential crises in the offing. Thirdly, crises disturb stakeholder expectations. It is expected that a company complies with the rules and regulations of society but also that it delivers products as promised.

Coombs (2006) states that, Stakeholders put a great deal of faith in the hands of a company when buying its product, and it is the company's responsibly to make sure that e.g. car tires don't explode or capsules aren't poisoned with deadly toxins. Finally, it is important to distinguish between crises and incidents. An incident is "a minor, localized disruption". A crisis "disrupts the entire organization" (Coombs, 2004). In other words, the difference between the two has to do with how much damage they cause. A crisis will always have serious impact and should naturally be taken more seriously than an incident

Kathleen fearn-bank, in her book crisis communication defines a crisis as   a major occurrence with a potential negative   outcome affecting the organization, company, or industries well as publics, products service or good name in other words organization can constitute any number of situation.

2.7 Types of Crisis

According to Lin (2007), within crisis communication it is important to determine the cause of the crisis and more specifically the type of crisis. Several theories have been presented within

this field e.g. crisis clusters within the Situational Crisis Communication Theory (SCCT) framework grouping crises into victim, accidental and preventable clusters (Coombs, 2007). Coombs also put forth a crises classification scheme in 2000, which will serve as primary source in defining crisis types. The scheme distinguishes between four crisis types: faux pas, terrorism, accidents and transgressions. The different types fit into a matrix where they are further categorized by external/internal and unintentional/intentional dimensions.

A faux pas crisis occurs when an external agent transforms an unintentional action into a crisis. This implies that the company considers the action appropriate. The outcome of the crisis depends on which definition the stakeholders choose to believe. An accident is usually impossible to predict and can happen during an ordinary day within an organization. This type of crisis leads to minimal organizational responsibility due to its random nature. Among accident examples human induced incidents such as workplace injuries and product flaws can be mentioned, as well as force majeure incidents such as natural disasters and epidemics. According to Egelhoff& Sen (1992), Cho & Gower (2006), both types of crises can be equally unintentional however studies show that stakeholders have a tendency to attribute less blame to a crisis caused by nature than by human accidents.

Although the amount of blame can vary the organization cannot escape responsibility entirely. Stakeholders expect organizations to be able to cope with the crisis and therefore a level of accountability always exists (Coombs, 1995). The third crisis type, terrorism, refers to intentional actions designed to damage the reputation of an organization. External actors take the actions and therefore the blame also lies externally. Sabotage, product destruction and violence are examples of terrorism. They all bear traits of uncontrollability and hostility. In connection with this crisis type it is natural to also talk about the role of the organization as the

suffering victim. This is especially relevant for the external crises (faux pas and terrorism), seeing as the internal (and especially the intentional) crises always involve a moderate to high rate of responsibility (Cho & Gower, 2006, Coombs, 2000).

Victim age is an essential part of the reinforcing response strategies of the SCCT. The concept refers to a situation where the organization claims to be the victim of a crisis. Whether or not the claim is sincere is subordinate to the perception held by the stakeholders and media (Liu et al, 2011). If they believe in the claim of innocence it becomes easier for the organization to carry out a victim-based, mortification response strategy and equally harder if the public dismisses the victim claim (Coombs, 2005).

Finally, transgressions as a crisis type will be described. According to Fediuk et al, transgressions are "crises that are believed to be due to intentional organizational misconduct" (2010). What this means is that an organization knowingly commits a wrongdoing and therefore becomes the sole offender. Some examples of transgressions include safety breaches, withholding compromising information and lying about faulty products. Transgression-based crises are linked with negative perceptions held by stakeholders about an organization's actions and behavior. These perceptions are what eventually harm the reputation of an organization (Fediuk et al, 2010). Of the four crisis type's transgression, if the evidence of the wrongdoing is true, requires the highest level of atonement. There is no doubt that the organization is to blame and that the stakeholders have been upset or harmed in some way by the crisis. A distanced and callous response is therefore futile (Coombs, 1995).

	Unintentional	intentional
External	Faux pas	Terrorism
Internal	Accidents	Transgression

Table 1- crisis type matrix (coombs, 1995))**.**

2.8 Wrongdoing*s*

The prior paragraph distinguished between whether a crisis was intentional or unintentional, internal or external. Benoit operates with the term "perceived wrong-doings" (1995), which covers alleged misbehaviors performed by people. He distinguishes between four types of wrongdoing. The first type has to do with the scarce resources available in terms of e.g. time, money or equipment, and that some individuals will always have wanted a different distribution of the resources available with anger as a possible outcome. The second type has to do with the people, environment and events surrounding the accused, which can change circumstances and sometimes prevent people from fulfilling their responsibilities. The third type occurs simply because humans are imperfect and occasionally make mistakes. A mistake can happen for several reasons, both physical conditions such as sleep deprivation or alcohol poisoning and psychological conditions such as selfishness can cloud judgment and foster a mistake. The fourth and final type regards the fact that a population is made up of individuals, and everyone has different priorities. A clash of priorities can often cultivate a conflict (1995). These four types of misbehavior require some kind of response from the wrongdoer, also known as an image restoration strategy (Benoit, 1997).

2.9 Benoit's Image Restoration Strategy

William L. Benoit talks about the concept Image Restoration Strategies. According to him "human beings engage in recurrent patterns of communicative behavior designed to reduce, redress, or avoid damage to their reputation" (1995). Being able to rectify a wrongdoing is crucial for private persons as well as companies. The ability to repair a reputation is important not only for the sake of ourselves, but also the people surrounding us, seeing as most people care about whether others think positively about them and recognize a reputation as a valuable asset (Coombs, 2007). A bad reputation can

interfere with our interaction with others. Image restoration saturates our everyday life, and it is therefore important to explore the concept (1995).

After having defined the different types of offense that can start a crisis, it is now natural to talk about response. When people feel the risk of losing face or having their image tarnished, the trigger response is to offer some sort of response to save reputation. The response can take many forms. Benoit recognizes several types, three of which are: accounts, apologies and excuses (1995). An account can both admit and evade guilt according to how it is constructed. The account in itself is merely a description of the events. Depending on how much weight is given to making the wrongdoing look more or less severe the audience can decide how to interpret the account. This strategy may evoke misinterpretations, and is therefore dangerous to use. The second type of response, the apology, is often used and may at first glance look like the most harmless strategy given its air of benevolence. Benoit states "it is possible for those who commit wrongful acts to attempt to repair their reputation with a sincere apology" (1995). A number of studies applied to e.g. the Exxon Valdez and Bhopal crises suggest evidence that this strategy has potential (Benoit, 1997; Mitchell, 2007). However, the strategy does have drawbacks. Giving an apology is not necessarily the same as taking responsibility. Sometimes an organization apologizes as an act to show stakeholders sympathy but not to take the blame (Pace, Fediuk & Botero, 2010). Determining whether the apology attributes responsibility or not is often seen in the use of active (responsible) or passive (sympathetic) voice (2010). Some even claim that a direct expression of taking responsibility must be visible in an apology for it not to be counted as partial (Lazare, 2004 as seen in Pace et al, 2010). Another potential drawback by admitting fault is the invitation of lawsuits from victims, which can cause a major economical setback if the wrongdoing is connected to a company (Benoit, 1997). In connection with the apology, Benoit's strategy "corrective action" should be mentioned. This strategy is connected to

apologizing, seeing as the accused in this instance also admits the wrongdoing. The difference is that the accused through this strategy attempts to reduce the offense by taking action to correct the wrongdoing. This can be done by e.g. reimbursing victims financially or compensating whichever goods are in question. Another possibility, which companies often choose, is to attempt to restore the state of affairs before the offense occurred.

Finally, there is the response in the form of an excuse. The excuse can take form as e.g. defeasibility, where the accused claims to have had a lack of information about or control over important elements of the situation. Another possibility is to try and convince the audience that the wrongdoing was a result of good intentions and not inflicted intentionally. What the excuses all have in common is that they are an expression of evasion of responsibility. This strategy should naturally only be employed, if in fact the excuse is truthful and the accused was not directly at fault (Benoit, 1997). Nevertheless, it is not a favorable strategy in general. Stephens et al call it "the distance strategy", which seeks to sever linkages between the accused and the crisis (2005). It is difficult to form an excuse that follows the advice Benoit found to be effective in image restoration discourse: "avoid making false claims; provide adequate support for claims, develop themes throughout a campaign; avoid arguments that may backfire." (Benoit, 1997). Especially the advice regarding adequate support and avoiding arguments that may backfire can prove to be difficult to fulfill, for companies particularly, as it would require the accused to have a complete view of prior conflict history and be aware of every pitfall that could occur in connection with the accusation.

In addition to these three strategies, there is the strategy of denial. This strategy has been isolated due to the fact that, although it is a probable response, it is not an attempt at explanation or justification. Denying a wrongdoing entirely leaves the blame to be placed elsewhere. This strategy, if used profoundly, can eradicate the risk of the accused's reputation being damaged. Nevertheless, if used

dishonestly, the consequences can be very grave, seeing as the accused will then be deemed both guilty of the wrongdoing and lying about it. "Denial can be supplemented with explanations of apparently damaging facts and scapegoating." says Benoit, and is usually an easy strategy to spot because of e.g. omitted actions or blame placing (1995). A response type that can be viewed as an active alternative to denial is the attack. Sometimes the accused chooses to point towards a new target to place blame on, in other examples the attack directs itself to the accusation in itself and attempts to undermine its validity. The attack often employs negative commentary and adjectives in order to damage credibility and induce doubt (1995).

There exists no one correct response to all crises. The response is entirely dependable on the earlier mentioned crisis types and how key facets of the situation influence attributions and reputations perceived by stakeholders. In turn, understanding the situation type can inform the post-crisis communication. The aforementioned SCCT provides a framework for this (Coombs, 2007).

2.10 Crisis history

Coombs (2010) states that, a widespread belief within crisis communication is that crises are specific incidents. This is not always the case. People sometimes overlook the continuous mistakes a company can make, their so-called crisis history. Therefore, a "crisis can be an isolated event or part of a larger pattern of organizational performance". This distinction is important to make when analyzing how a company chooses to navigate in times of crisis, as well as when assessing the consequences of a crisis. The greater the reputational threat becomes, the more accommodative the response strategy should become (2012).
Coombs argues that the history and prior reputation of a company is essential when assessing the reputational threat of a crisis, and later which image restoration strategy the company chooses to employ. This idea is known as "the Velcro effect" (Coombs, 2004). The idea plays

on the metaphor of Velcro attracting lint; in the same way organizations with a history of crises attract additional reputational harm. Coombs goes on to say that the effect also exists in terms of reputation. A negative prior reputation will increase the risk of tarnishing the present reputation. The Velcro effect therefore has a serious impact on how crisis management is tackled (Coombs, 2004; Coombs & Holladay, 2006).

Finally, prior relational reputation can be seen as an extension of this idea. The concept covers "how well or poorly an organization has or is perceived to have treated stakeholders in other contexts" (Coombs, 2007). Depending whether the organization's prior relational reputation is viewed as positive or negative it can have an either favorable or unfavorable effect on a crisis. The concept can reveal how considerate an organization is towards its stakeholders both in a crisis situation and in other areas (Coombs, 2000). These three factors, together with the crisis type, make up the main issues to consider when choosing a response strategy as well as designing a specific rhetorical communication effort after a crisis.

2.11 Crisis communication

Effective communication is essential to the success of every organization. Hence, it should be no surprise that identifying and carrying out a series of communication strategies is essential for effective crisis management (CM). Coombs (2005), claims that crisis communication is the lifeblood of the entire CM effort and plays a vital role in all stages of CM. Crisis communication strategies represent the actual responses the organization uses to address the crisis and have both verbal and nonverbal aspects.

Different crises can necessitate the use of different communication strategies as well as an emphasis on different stakeholders (Coombs 2000). Coombs divides crisis response research into two categories that reflect different emphasizes: form and content. Form is how the

response should be presented. Content is what is said (2006). The form of a crisis response is mentioned more frequently in the CM writings than any other topic. According to Coombs, this represents the most basic and primitive line of research concerning crisis response, usually resulting in lists of what to do and what not to do.

The form recommendations for crisis communications are to be quick, consistent and open(Coombs). Regester and Larkin explain that in crisis situations, it is imperative to tell your own story, to tell it all and to tell it fast (2005).Coombs suggests (2006) that content research is a more recent development in CM and has proven to be more thorough than the form research. What is actually said during a crisis has serious ramifications for the success of the CM effort.

Key goals in the CM process are to prevent or minimize damage, maintain the organization's operations, and repair reputational damage. Clear communication is essential for each of these three goals (Coombs 2007). Coombs divides crisis communication content into three sequential categories**:**

1) Instructing information, which is information that tells people affected by the crisis how they should physically react to the crisis.

2) Adjusting information, which is information that helps people psychologically cope with the magnitude of the crisis situation.

3) Internalizing information, which is information that people will use to formulate an image about the organization.

Coombs explains that people are the first priority in any crisis, so instructing information must come first. Adjusting information help stakeholders cope with stress created by the uncertainty and potential harm of a crisis. Stakeholders are reassured when they know what happened and

what is being done to protect them from future crisis. Further he explains (Coombs 2007) that internalizing information is about reputation management. The idea is that crisis response strategies (CRS) affect how stakeholders perceive the crisis and the organization in crisis

2.12 Theoretical framework

Situational crisis communication theory (SCCT) is one of the most dominant and recognized theories within the field of crisis management. The theory "provides an evidence-based framework for understanding how to maximize the reputational protection afforded by post crisis communication" (Coombs, 2007). It evolves around the examination of a crisis situation and how certain factors determine the level of reputational threat existing in an organizational crisis. There are three factors that shape the level of threat: initial crisis responsibility, crisis history and prior relational reputation. Initial crisis responsibility is one of the central concepts within crisis communication research. The theory posits that stakeholders attribute responsibility for the crisis and thereby how it is framed. This idea is closely connected to crisis origin, which refers to whether a crisis commenced from an internal organizational issue or an external source. The different types of crisis origin affect the attribution of responsibility and, thus, the available crisis communication strategies (Jin et al, 2011). The level of responsibility attributed to the organization is especially important, as it will determine the role it has in a crisis. Another variable is the actor in the crisis. Depending on whether the central actor is human or nature, internal or external, individual or grouped the crisis can be predicted to develop in certain ways and communication strategies can be designed accordingly (Jin et al,

25

2011; Coombs et al, 2010; Cho & Gower, 2006). Research also shows that the more

responsibility and organization is attributed during a crisis, the higher the reputational threat

will be (Cho & Gower 2006; Coombs 2007).

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This chapter focuses on describing the methodology adopted to achieve the objectives of the study. It shows how information was collected from respondents and analyzed. It covers research design; target population, sample design and procedure, data collection instruments and procedures, and data processing and analysis

3.1 Research design
Research design is a plan, structure and strategy of investigation so conceived as to obtain answers to research questions or problems (Kumar (2005). It is also a logical strategy for planning a research producer and producing evidence for the development of knowledge. The research design that will be used is survey. The survey method was used for several reasons. Survey research is specific and limited. It's relatively easy to administer. It was also possible to collect a large amount of data from the population thus capable of wide coverage and application of the objectives of the study. It's also cost effective and flexible that is it can be administered in many modes. Hence it was useful in the study.

3.2 Target population

According to Mugenda&Mugenda (1999), a target population is a complete set of individuals, cases or objects with some common characteristics to which the researcher wants to generate the study from. The research targeted the student of Maasai Mara University as they are firsthand recipients of the daily activities running in the institute and also they get to encounter

the crisis face to face. The target population included 60 Maasai Mara university undergraduate students were in session in the time of the study.

3.3 Sampling Design and Procedure

In consideration that the target population was heterogeneous, the research used stratified random sampling where the population was divided into similar groups. A sample of 60 was obtained from the total population. This is the logic and power of purposive sampling techniques in selecting rich enough for in depth study (mugenda&mugenda 1999).

3.4 Data collection Instruments and Procedures

Data was collected through administration of questionnaires The questionnaire instrument mainly utilized Likert scales for the collect data collection exercise. The reason for using this method was to obtain valid and reliable information in a fast and user friendly way and to ensure that majority of the research questions were answered. A questionnaire involves written questions that are given to respondents through mail, internet or in person (Winsock, 2004). Quantitative data in research mainly originates from the questionnaires that are administered to the respondents representing the target population. Descriptive analyses using ordinal measurement scales are used for such data (Nyambuga, 2011). To support use of questionnaires, Kothari(2004), states that a questionnaire is cheap to administer since it does not require a trained researcher to distribute and collect the questionnaire. Secondly, it eliminated interaction between the interviewer and the respondents which reduces bias and subjectivity. The questionnaire however may have certain limitations. In Kothari, (2004), the person filling the questionnaire is anonymous and therefore may be unwilling to give information especially over sensitive issues, the researcher cannot probe for further

information, the researcher cannot control who fills the questionnaire and in some instances due to several reasons, the response rates may be low.

  The questionnaires consisted of open-ended and closed questions set to address the specific adjectives.

3.4.1 Validity

Mugenda and Mugenda, (2003) describes validity as the degree of accuracy and meaningfulness of inferences, which are based on the research results. It determines how accurately the data obtained in the study represents the variables of the study. To determine validity, the researcher will first do pre-testing of the research instruments. If the study yields consistent results after eliminating systematic errors in the data, the validity will be improved. It should be noted that validity will never be 100% and that there shall be a degree of error.

3.4.2 Reliability

Reliability is a measure of the degree to which a research instrument yields consistent results or data after repeated trials. It is normally influenced by random error. This is the deviation from a true measurement due to factors that have not been addressed such as inaccurate coding and ambiguous instructions to the subjects Mugenda and Mugenda, (2003). In this study, reliability was determined through pre-testing of instruments.

3.4.3 Administration Procedures.

Before data collection, the researcher seek permission from the administration of Maasai Mara University and then wrote a letter of introduction seeking permission to avoid any mistrust and withdrawal of information. The researcher therefore paid visitation to various students to

personally administer. The area of study was geographically small enabling the questionnaires to be issued personally to the target population

3.5 Data Analysis

Data analysis is the process of using various statistical procedures with a view to interpret data. Before the actual data analysis, the information gathered was validated, edited and manually coded and tabulated. In validation process, the collected data questionnaires were checked in terms of used instruments by use of computers. Data analysis may either be qualitative or quantitative. Qualitative analysis of data refers to non-empirical data; it involves a study that does not require quantifiable data. Quantitative analysis of data involves the use of descriptive statistics. The purpose of descriptive statistics is to enable the researcher to meaningfully describe a description of scores or measurements using statistics Mugenda and Mugenda, (2003).

The study therefore used the various types of descriptive statistics such as measures of central tendency, frequency table, proportions, percentages, charts and variability to analyze data.

4.0 DATA ANALYSIS AND PRESENTATION

The study to investigate the effectiveness of Facebook as a social media I managing communication

crisis was conducted in Maasai Mara University with a sample size of 60 participants. Firstly, the

study sought to understand in a scale of 1-10 (where 1 represents less effective while 10 more

effective) the effectiveness of Facebook in managing communication crisis. Of the population

sampled the following feedback was realized:

Scores	Frequency	% Population
1	2	4
2	1	2
3	0	0
4	5	10
5	5	10
6	6	12
7	2	4
8	12	24
9	7	14
10	10	20
Fx	50	

Fig 1. Frequency of respondents against the scores

The feedback was grouped for effectiveness where the 1-3 represented not effective, 4- 6 effective

while 7-10 represented very effective. The data is as shown in the chart below:

Effectiveness of Facebook

Not effective
6%

Effective
32%
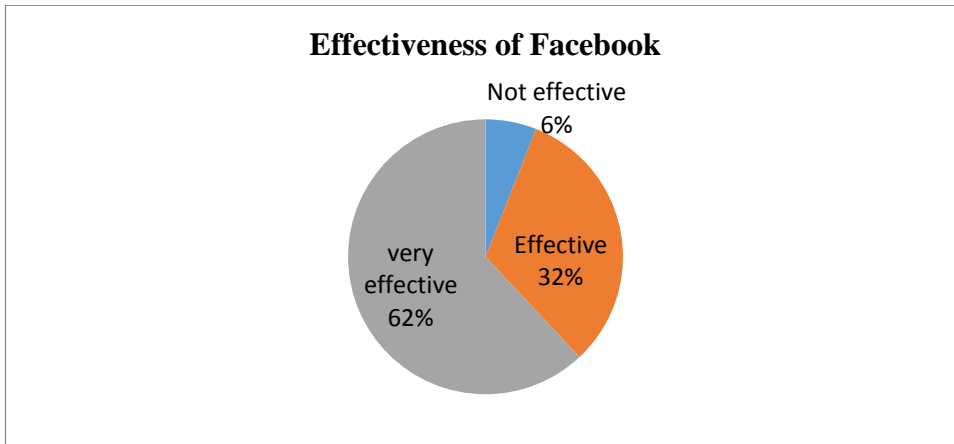
very effective
62%

Fig.2. effectiveness of Facebook by population percentage scores

Additionally, a reason why Facebook was found an effective medium for managing crisis communication was investigated on the sampled population. The responses were grouped into five categories and were as follows:

1   Enables monitoring of feedback

2   outreach of information can be monitored on the dashboard giving results

3   Enables quick responses

4   enables a conversation

5   Enable awareness creation

Fig. 3. Reasons why Facebook is effective

The results above were rank ordered to analyze the reasons in their level of importance. The following outcome was found:

Why Facecebook is Effective
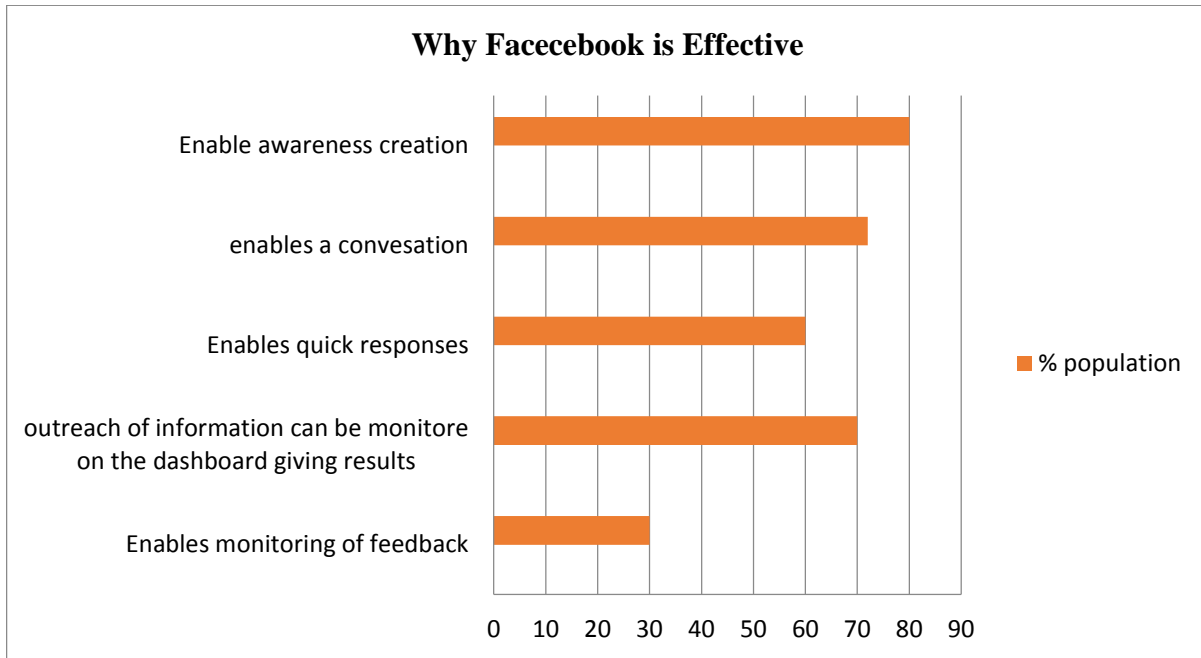
Fig. 4. Reasons why Facebook was found effective

The study also sought to investigate the challenges facing the use of Facebook as a way of managing communication crisis. The participants' feedback was analyzed and the data was as below:

1 Inadequacy in Facebook Proficiency

2 Internet Failure

3 Misinterpretation of information

4 quick Viral spread of information

Fig. 5. Challenges of using Facebook

The data above was also ranked in order of seriousness of a given challenge. The outcome was as shown below:
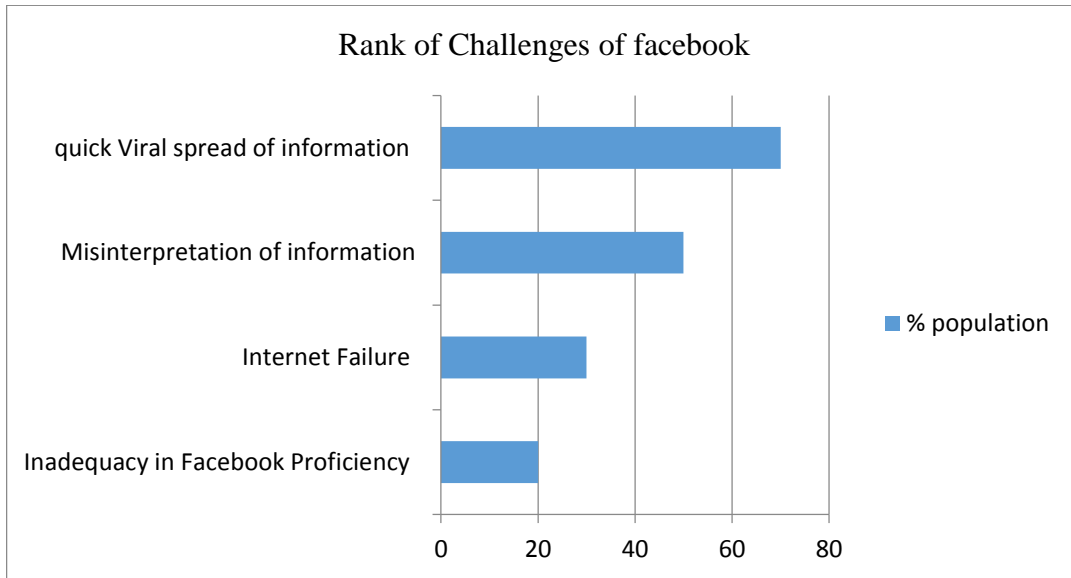
Fig. 6. Rank of challenges facing use of Facebook

The data above illustrates the challenges associated with Facebook use to manage communication crisis. Of the challenges, 70% of the population attributes their challenge to quick viral spread of misleading, inappropriate or damaging information. This often sometimes might lead to issues getting out of hand. 50% of the population attribute their challenges to misinterpretation of information. This refers to the cases where a post could be understood differently from the intended meaning. 30% of the population is faced with the challenge of internet failure. This is due to data costs or network problems that sometimes affect the use of Facebook. Finally, a 20% response attributed their challenge to inadequacy of Facebook proficiency. Despite an individual being computer literate, the use of this social site too requires a technological knowhow for which some people simply do not have.

Further, the study through its objective 3 was seeking to find out ways that Facebook could be used better to manage communication crisis. The study found out the following results:

1	Improve one's fan base
2	Frequent access of Facebook to turn around negative comments
3	including private contact address for students to access the organization
4	giving positive referrals

Fig. 7. Options for improving Facebook use.

The better options for improving the effectiveness of using Facebook for managing communication practice were as indicated above. The study found out that improving ones' fun base on Facebook enables a wider outreach and thus can not only just lead to faster way of informing but also a wider target audience. Frequent access of Facebook enables one to find out the existing negative comments and turn them around. In addition, it enables one to respond and engage with those who give the negative comments to quell the crisis. Further, a need to include private contact address on Facebook is equally important. This enables displeasured/ disaffected / dissatisfied individuals to contact the organization privately without causing much attention which is detrimental to the image of the organization. Finally, giving positive referrals as well as feedback gives an impression of a caring organization. These give a good image of the organization to the public and are thus able to gain their trust. As such the moral standing of the organization can be believed by the public enabling them the ability to manage with ease a communication crisis. This improvement will enable students to communicate efficiently during crisis since they can access the feedback and also they can be able to communicate to the organization directly during a crisis.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Introduction

The chapter focuses on the summary according to research objectives, conclusion according to each objective given, recommendations based on the findings and suggestion for further research.

5.1 Summary

The primary purpose of this research was to examine the role of Facebook as a social media on students' crisis communication. Consistent with prior research within the field of social media and crisis communication, the results of the case study indicate that immediacy, participation and interactivity have had an effect on how crises are handled. Stakeholders expect immediate response and a higher degree of participation and interactivity from a company involved in a crisis being communicated online. The findings illustrate that Facebook is an effective medium for manage ng crisis communication since it enables monitoring of feedback, quick responses and interactivity. Although there are challenges associated with the use of Facebook during crisis communication such as misinformation, there are better ways Facebook can be used to ensure a successful crisis response. Maasai Mara University has not yet fully incorporated Facebook in its crisis response strategy and this has seen it suffer reputational damage. The administration does not interact with its stakeholders especially the students online neither does it refute rumors, respond to queries or participate in conversations in Facebook. Its Facebook page is dormant. Although most student are familiar with face book there are a few who are still not familiar with the school face book pages and are not even aware they exist.

5.2 Conclusion

Social media have become a vital tool in crisis communication. Interestingly, this has still not motivated many organizations to avail them of these new conduits. And many of those that have, fail to use them in a way that ends up contributing to a successful crisis strategy. From the findings discussed in chapter four above, it's evident that Facebook plays an integral role in crisis communication. Nowadays people are migrating into the social media world. Organizations need to adapt to these new changes.

Maasai Mara University still lags behind when it comes to using social media communication. Its administration especially the PR department is inactive in Facebook. It does not respond to any queries raised by students and if it gets to respond, it does so when it's late. Therefore, allowing room for misinformation. During a crisis the student are left to rely on rumors. The admin does not engage them online and get to clarify on the situation at hand. Lack of participation and interactivity on Facebook during a crisis has led to wrong information circulating therefore causing harm on its reputation and image.

In relation to the findings, the administration has not incorporated Facebook or any other social media tool in its crisis response strategy. It still relies on the traditional ways of communication forgetting that times are changing. The social media however do not need to be the only medium of information, but it can be a good addition to the traditional media. When doing this, the administration needs to know it is important to be uniform in the information which are being disseminated through the different media types in order to avoid confusion or ambiguity.

5.3 Recommendation

The findings show that Facebook can be a powerful instrument but only when used efficiently. Maasai Mara University should combine ideas from the SCCT framework, crisis communication theory and response strategies with the advantageous traits of social media. Especially the factor of immediacy needs to be taken more seriously. It is no longer sufficient for an organization to follow up on a crisis several hours after the outbreak. Online communication should be monitored closely and when a problem occurs stakeholders ought to be provided with a message instantly. This does not mean that weight no longer should be put on content of crisis communication, merely that the progress of the communication effort could be designed differently.

Future research should continue to examine the traits of social media and how they might be beneficial in a crisis communication context. The tools provided with this new technology are still relatively unexplored. With a better understanding of the technology crisis strategies could be tailored to be more efficient and precise. It could also be relevant to explore further how companies draw more advantage of two-way communication. Whether communication could be made more proficient and individually directed. Finally, theory on how organizations navigate online ought still to be extended.

APPENDIX A

<p align="center">TIME SCHEDULE</p>

Activity	January	February	March	April	May
Concept Formation, Writing & Literature Review	██	██			
Research proposal		██	██		
Data Collection				██	
Data analysis, interpretation and Report writing summation and presentation					██

APPENDIX B

PROJECT WRITING BUDGET

ITEMS	Literature review	Stationery	Questionnaire preparation.	Travel expenses	Data analysis	Report writing	Grand total
Estimates in Ksh.	500	1,000	1,200	2, 000	1,500	3, 500	11, 500

APPENDIX C

LETTER OF INTRODUCTION

JOAN MAINA

P O Box 861-20500

Narok.

3rd March 2015

The Chairman,

School of Arts and Social Sciences,

Department of Media, Film and communication,

Dear Madam,

RE: <u>PERMISSION TO COLLECT DATA WITHIN THE INSTITUTION</u>

I am an undergraduate student at the sub-section of communication and journalism of

Maasai Mara University. Am currently carrying out a research on the role of Facebook on

students'' as a social media on crisis communication in Maasai Mara University.

I am requesting for permission through you, to collect data within the institution. All the

information given will be treated with utmost confidentiality.

Thank you in advance.

Yours faithfully,

 Joan Maina

APPENDIX D

<div align="center">

QUESTIONNAIRE

</div>

INTRODUCTION

I am a student at Maasai Mara University currently pursuing a Degree in communication and journalism. I am carrying out a research on effects of Facebook as a social media on crisis communication: study area Maasai Mara University, Narok County, Kenya. I have identified you as one of my respondents and I hope that you feel free to discuss with me. Your contribution to this study will be highly appreciated.

For ethical considerations, I solemnly promise that your response and views will be held strictly confidential and used for academic purposes only.

Thank you for your cooperation.

1. What is your;

Please tick one

a) Gender   Male ( )   Female ( )

b) Age bracket

18-25   ( )

25-35   ( )

35 and above   ( )

2. In which year are you?

i   First ( )   ii. Second ( )   iii. Third ( )   iv. Fourth ( )

a) Do you know about face book?

i.   Yes ( )   ii.   No ( )

a) If yes do you have a Facebook account?

     i. Yes ( )   ii. No (   )

b)Do you use Facebook to communicate during a crisis?

   i. Yes (   )   ii.   No (   )

c) If yes, what forms of social media are included in your crisis plan?

_____

3. How often do you use these social media forms?

     Please tick one .

Daily   ( )

Weekly   ( )

Monthly   ( )

4. Do you use social media to monitor conversations online about the services your offer and issues raised by students?

Yes ( )   No ( )

6. What was the last crisis in the school and your social media use?

_____

7. a) Did social media help you during its most recent crisis?

Yes ( ) No ( )

b) If yes, how did it help?

8. Did you use social media to stay in contact with management after a crisis?

9.   Yes ( ) No ( )

10. Would you use social media in your next crisis?

Yes ( ) No ( )

11. Does social media allow your department to inform students quickly about a crisis?

   Yes ( ) No ( )

12. Do you think social media encourage two-way communication with students?

Yes ( ) No ( )

13. How has the use of social media helped you improve perception of the department

   during a crisis?

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