SOCIAL MEDIA AND CRISIS MANAGEMENT: A REVIEW AND ANALYSIS OF EXISTING STUDIES

SOSYAL MEDYA VE KRİZ YÖNETİMİ: MEVCUT ÇALIŞMALARIN İNCELEMESİ VE ANALİZİ

Oberiri Destiny APUKE
Department of Communication Studies,
European University of Lefke,
North Cyprus
apukedestiny@gmail.com
ORCID ID: 0000-0002-7657-4858

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Elif Asude TUNCA
Faculty of Communication Sciences
Department of New Media and Journalism
European University of Lefke,
North Cyprus
etunca@eul.edu.tr
ORCID ID: 0000-0003-0636-8247

Abstract: Social media has become the most used and active way of communication; however, studies that look at social media use in crisis management are in their growing stage. Thus, this study analyses these growing body of knowledge that researched into social media and crisis management. A review was undertaken between October 2017 to January 2018 which entails sourcing and retrieving materials from an electronic database. The findings of this review confirmed that the growth of social media has transformed crisis communication landscape because it allows more interactivity. Still, a crisis could also be catalysed by social media because of its nature. This signifies that the crisis can be created in social media, as well as distributed by social media, respectively. Yet, the potential of social media as a crisis resolution tool is indisputable. It has the potential to prove a statement, to dispel untrue rumours or just to show the fact. Hence, practitioners are encouraged to know thoroughly how social media works and the best way to manipulate it to communicate with their stakeholders. Additional findings are also shown in this study, along with limitations and meaningful suggestion for scholars and practitioners interested in understanding the impact of social media in crisis communication and management.

Keywords: Crisis, crisis management, crisis communication, information, social media

Öz: Sosyal medya iletişimin en aktif ve yoğun kullanılan aracı haline gelmiştir, ancak bununla birlikte, kriz yönetiminde sosyal medya kullanımına yönelik çalışmalar henüz büyüme aşamasındadır. Bu nedenle, bu çalışma sosyal medya ve kriz yönetimi üzerine yapılan araştırmalara dair büyüyen bilgi yapısını analiz etmektedir. Ekim 2017'den Ocak 2018'e kadar, elektronik bir veri tabanından temin edilen kaynak ve verilerin incelemesi yapılmıştır. İncelemenin bulguları, sosyal medyadaki büyümenin kriz iletişiminin çehresini değiştirdiğini çünkü sosyal medyanın daha fazla etkileşime izin verdiğini doğrulamaktadır. Öte yandan bir kriz doğası gereği sosyal medya tarafından da katalize edilebilmektedir. Bu, krizin sosyal medyada oluşabileceği gibi yine sosyal medyada dağılabileceğini göstermektedir. Sosyal medyanın kriz çözme aracı olarak potansiyeli tartışılmazdır. Bir beyanı kanıtlama, doğru olmayan söylentileri giderme ya da sadece gerçeği gösterme yönünde potansiyele sahiptir. Bu nedenle uygulayıcılar, sosyal medyanın nasıl çalıştığını ve paydaşlarla iletişim kurmak için en iyi nasıl işlem yapıldığını iyice öğrenmeye teşvik edilirler. Bu çalışmada, sosyal medyanın kriz iletişimi ve kriz yönetimindeki etkisini anlama konularıyla ilgilenen akademisyen ve uygulayıcılara anlamlı öneriler verilmekte; ek bulgular gösterilmektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: *Kriz, kriz yönetimi, kriz iletişimi, bilgi, sosyal medya*

INTRODUCTION

The use of social media has increased in the world of communication, with Twitter and Facebook as the most used platforms (Dunbar, Arnaboldi, Conti, & Passarella, 2015), and organizations have gained mileage by using it to communicate in a much more effective and fast way with their customers about their businesses as well as responding to queries and questions (Coombs & Holladay, 2010: 66; Carroll & Buchholtz, 2014:23). However, in as much as the emergence of social media has brought in the advantage of fast, effective communication, it has also given room for the fast spread of negative communication (Wright & Hinson, 2008). An organization depends on its reputation, it is a pertinent aspect that directly translates to its financial achievement (Fombrun, Gardberg, & Sever, 2000; Fombrun, Van Riel, & Van Riel, 2004:22), and with the emergence of social media, crisis might arise and spread faster than it can ever do on any other traditional forms of communication (González-Herrero & Smith, 2010; Jones *et al.*, 2009). Therefore, the success of any organisation is highly dependent on what it says or the effort it makes after a crisis strike. This is called crisis management and being able to address issues that threaten its reputation will go a long way (Benoit, 1997). It has been suggested that it is paramount for organizations to understand fully how to manage different kinds of crisis via social media. Yet, a lot of organisations are sceptical as regards the trustworthiness and reliability of social media (Wrights & Hinson, 2009). Nevertheless, other research has shown that organizations have taken up the use of social media as a communication tool, not just for marketing and public relations messages, but also for crisis communication which is also known as crisis management (Ellison, Steinfield, & Lampe, 2007). Thus, the development of social media as communication platform has drawn numerous interests from researchers in the field of public relations. For example, prior study on the utilization of social media as a tool for organizations public relations strategy has been undertaken (Briones *et al.*, 2011), but studies on the use of social media in crisis management are still in their developing stage and requires further exploration. Moreover, there are contention that the issue of social media has transformed the communication crisis landscape because it allows more interactivity, and at the same time crisis could be catalysed through social media because of its nature.

Thus, a critique of literature that concerns social media and crisis management is worthwhile, and also offers a prospect to demonstrate the collective intellect that has been accumulated from the extensive body of research that has utilised various participants, samples, and methods. This present work attempts to increase the understanding of social media use in crisis management through analysing the existing body of knowledge. The outcome of this study, is hence beneficial for future researchers in this area of research. It also benefits organizations and practitioners, because it demonstrates the usage of social media during a crisis and proffer suggestion that will improve its usage.

1. LITERATURE REVIEW METHODS

This review deals with the studies that centre on social media and crisis management. Consequently, other works that examined the use of social media in

another field such as education, politics and social interactivity were entirely excluded. This study adopts a literature review method. The review was undertaken between October 2017 to January 2018 which entails carefully sourcing and retrieving publications from an ISI web of knowledge and Google Scholar to include Taylor and Francis, Emerald, Springer and Elsevier etc. Scopus was also used. To recognised other related studies that could shape this present research, thesis, proceedings, and books were also searched by hand. There was no restriction to the date of the articles to be retrieved. The key search phrases that were used to access the articles included; *crisis communication, social media and crisis management, public relations and social media, crisis management, public relations on Facebook.* Accordingly, the author also used specific social media such as *blogs, Wikipedia, Facebook, YouTube, Instagram and Flick* along with *crisis management, crisis responses* and *communication* to reach the targeted articles.

As of October 2017, the initial search results yielded 1250 references which on a closer look were found related to the main issues under investigation. These references were speedread by checking the title, abstract and conclusion to ensure that each retrieved article is entirely related to the subject matter. In situations where the author was not entirely clear while speedreading an article, the entire article was read. This process resulted in (n=67) purposively selected studies used in this article. Of the (n=67), 60 articles were further extracted for more detailed evaluation based on thoroughly analysing the abstract and keywords, methodology, conclusion and general findings. Therefore, the (n=60) studies used for the review met the inclusion benchmark for the final dataset. These studies basically examined the use of social media in managing crisis.

There is evidence to demonstrate that matters connected to social media has drawn a growing body of researchers, and in specific yielding a considerable number of surveys testing the role social media plays in crisis management. These studies have adopted different dimensions and paradigm, as well as used diverse methods and techniques resulting in varied outcomes (Gironda & Korgaokar, 2014). Against this backdrop, this current study seeks to review and analyse the literatures that focused on social media and crisis management in order to grasp the key pertinent issues investigated so far and the ones requiring further investigation.

2. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION OF THE REVIEWED STUDIES

2.1. Relationship Between Crisis Management and Social Media

It was observed that a good number of studies (about 26 articles) have paid close attention to the nexus between social media and crisis management. These studies maintained that the practitioners of public relations have adopted social media in running an organization and this has also been extended to manage crisis. For example, research has indicated that the development of social media has transformed the lives of individuals as much as it has changed that of corporations (Floreddu & Cabiddu, 2014; Dellarocas, 2006). Wang (2015) observes that social media has been utilised for public relations since its advent in 2004, and this has had an influence on both individuals and the society (Khang, Ki, & Ye, 2012). Likewise, a study affirmed that social media have a predominant and growing role to act in the

societal construction of crises as they play in the deconstruction of crises through the creation of virtual communities (Schultz & Wehmeier, 2010). In contrast, Watkins (2014) commented that social media are most often interactive and dialogic, which means it is an easier platform to create communities and bring around the protest. In addition, Stenger (2014) contends that social media has different categories, and one of them are content sharing websites from which different participants can share and interchange information. This means if a crisis happens, it will spread faster on social media as they are more dialogues and allow faster and easier content sharing. In harmony with the above arguments, a study has reported that the utilization of social media by the public increases during public crises, and with this observation, statements have been made noting that the participation of the public is now a contemporary practise in the managing of crisis (Baron, 2010:18).

Furthermore, studies have concretised this notion by arguing that the public individuals that are participating in social media during crises have been shown to prefer the use of social media over the conventional media (Kaye, 2005; Swerrtser & Metzgar, 2007). Indeed, social media has brought a new face to crises communication. Therefore, studies have reported that when a crisis occurs, the public has opted to the utilization of social media to solicit for emotional support bundling up virtually to share information and demand resolutions (Choi & Lin, 2009; Veil *et al.,* 2011). However, Dutta-Bergman (2006) argues that it is this online participation that is then replicated offline to resolve the crisis, which means for the practitioners of public relations their mandate is to follow social media activity and act on it. Coombs and Holladay (2008) solidify these arguments by noting that the fact that new media is rapidly evolving has put it way ahead of research when a crisis strikes. This is so because with all the participation that the society is involved in when a crisis strikes it gives room for any organization to see what is being talked about and how they can resolve the issue as being raised by the public. Coombs and Holladay (2008), however, give a disclaimer for this notion and goes further to say that despite social media being ahead of research there is still need for research in the professional world of public relation so that action can be done based on credible findings. Utz, Schultz and Glocka (2013) concur with this notion by remarking that in our digital world, today's social media acts a negotiation platform of the dynamics of crises, it is the platform that different organizations and their public communicate on crises despite their distances.

Prior studies found that organization depends on its image and reputation and it is the only corporate crisis that could threaten it (Roberts & Dowling, 2002; Coombs & Holladay, 2008). In conjunction with this notion, a body of research postulation revealed that during a crisis the highest threat is the reputation of the organization (Benoit, 1997; Dutton & Dukerich, 1991; Kliatchko, 2008). *Thence, the knowledge and the execution of crisis management is paramount for any organization, (Coombs & Holladay, 2010:24). A crisis receives a great deal of media attention (Dutta & Pullig, 2011; Weick, 1988); so, it is connected with high imports.* Coombs and Holladay (2008) concretes this notion by reiterating that when a crisis occurs, it gets a lot of media attention, however, *he further argues that the fast development of diverse social media has made the crisis* more difficult to manage because there are vast spectrums for public opinion. Nevertheless, Benoit (1997) and Coombs and Holladay (2008) submit that the effect of any crisis will rest on the organizational

responses after its occurrence. Against this background, it is pertinent to describe how each specific social media has been reportedly used in crisis management.

2.2. The Place of Blogs in Crisis Communications

Generally, the results of the past studies exploring the use of blogs in crisis management have shown blogs to be an effective means connecting with an organization's public during a crisis. About (n=8) studies in this review examined the utilization of blog as a tool for managing crisis (i.e. Jin *et al*., 2011; Coombs & Holladay, 2007; Siebert, 2006; Kent, 2008; Álvarez, 2012; Coombs & Holladay, 2008; Stephens & Malone, 2009; Sweetser & Metzgar, 2007). Worthwhile to say that about 80% of these literatures demonstrated that communications through blogs can lead to a serious change in public perception of the crisis (Coombs & Holladay 2008; Stephens & Malone, 2009). For example, evidence from Sweetser and Metzgar (2007) study show that organizations that maintain their own blogs can easily cope with crises and more quickly neutralize their consequences. The authors suggest that keeping a blog is an effective tool for anti-crisis management. Likewise, evidence from Stephens and Malone (2009) demonstrate that in a crisis situation, the blog offers huge benefits through the possibility of dialogue in which companies can respond rapidly and demonstrate greater openness to this developing need for information. From the crisis communications perspective, the blog allows organizations to demonstrate that they do not obviate the situation or turn down to take part in the discourse. By demonstrating that they are not trying to hide anything, organizations have the opportunity to build relationships with their trust-based audiences and gain their loyalty and approval. Sweetser and Metzgar (2007) noticed that the more organizations communicate through blogs the closer the communications from organizations to the audience becomes. This means that blogs are an alternative channel and online centre to inform target groups and the mainstream media operators in the event of crisis if the official site is unavailable or blocked (Álvarez, 2012).

A fair quantity of studies has discussed the contention over the level of control that an organization should impose on blogs created by employees (Kent, 2008; Coombs & Holladay, 2007). For example, Kent (2008) noticed that a number of bloggers receive incredible media attention because they have been fired for posting critical information, disclosing confidential information about the organization. However, the benefits of blogging remain massive as people who have been directly affected by the crisis have the opportunity to describe the real experience and emotion through their blogs and share details that would have been avoided by the journalists covering the event as part of their duties. Siebert (2006) indicates that the blog is an important communication channel during a crisis; however, careful attention should be paid to the monitoring of the blogosphere. Companies need to have their own blogs to keep up with good bloggers. These bloggers, however, should be identified with the organization, as the lack of such identification can lead to a communication crisis (Siebert, 2006).

Coombs and Holladay (2007) revealed that organizations can maintain blogs and reach a completely new audience by encouraging audiences to engage in discussions, assess and participate in distributing information, especially in times of crisis (Coombs & Holladay, 2007). Based on this notion, a blog can have a high

importance in crisis communications, although it has not yet been integrated in many organisations. Jin *et al.*, (2011) develop a Blog-Mediated Crisis Communication (BMCC) theory that defines the impact of blogs before, during, and after the crisis. The theory is grounded on the assumption that those who manage crisis have the task of identifying the blogger that is most recognized and influential in sight of the audiences due to the fact it is difficult to keep an eye on every blog. Base on this reason, the BMCC assumption is quite relevant as a leading factor and specifies that bloggers influence their followers, satisfying their information and emotive desires all through the period of a crisis. According to this model, important bloggers reach an audience that monitors the blogosphere in indirect ways - by publishing content that begins to spread mouth-to-mouth outside the online space.

2.3. Facebook Use in Crisis Management

Research has shown that whenever a crisis happens, the use of Facebook could be an amazing tool to reduce the tension of the situation. Crisis could take a form of a simple website outage to negative publicity. Therefore, the openness, communication, obligation, and receptiveness are all imperative aspects that develop and envisage the success of an organizational crisis management (Álvarez, 2012; Nardi *et al.*, 2000). The motivation for building a community is not only finding people with similar interests, but also the demand for public recognition (Álvarez, 2012). And despite the existence of hundreds of social networking sites, Facebook remains an indisputable leader and is not accidentally called "the phenomenon of our time." While Facebook's main idea is to be used to create and maintain personal contacts, this social network quickly becomes a powerful tool for public relations, marketing, sales, politics, and even propaganda.

By creating a new group or company webpage or its products, it begins to build its faithful audience, tracks the news about the product/campaign in question as well as comments, and questions that requires answers. Pages bring together thousands and even millions of users around a person, company, organization, idea or cause. The options that Facebook offers such as Messenger, easy-to-navigate photos, corporate pages, videos, and other interactive features allow companies to communicate with their audiences and provide relevant, up-to-date and reliable first-hand information in a situation of crisis. Buttressing on this, Coombs and Holladay (2008) point out that organization must show a high level of concern for victims and responsibility when a situation of crisis arises. This can be achieved through status updates, links, videos, and pictures in order show concern for what is happening and for those affected.

The main thing to note about Facebook is that it is not about generating intrusive talk. The best approach to using the platform for crisis communication purposes is by publishing information, ideas, and comments that are interesting and useful, to respect people's opinion and to speak in an accessible language. Facebook's initial idea is to be a place to communicate online with our friends (that is why the contact section is called "Friends"). Facebook makes it possible to mass-spread messages in a quick, easy and convenient way by posting users status. Even a small number of users' contacts can read a message related to a particular crisis. The so-called peer-to-peer communications model makes it possible to quickly spread the message to other Facebook users, as well as outside the social media. Receiving news from

traditional media sometimes means first logging into our Facebook profile. This factor is so strong that often traditional media need social media to have access to a larger audience (Veil *et al.*, 2011). Thus, Facebook has been shown an enormous potential to provoke participation, communication, and engagement in communication processes during a crisis, making postings visible and interactive.

2.4. Twitter and Crisis Management

Twitter's potential for crisis communications has had a considerable measure of attention from researchers (McAllister; 2012; Grolid, 2011; Bennet, 2009; Kurtz, 2009; Kortom, 2011:18). For instance, Kortom (2011:18) concentrated on the role of Twitter, both in times of crisis and before its occurrence. The author suggests that having an account on this social media in "quiet times" is of particular importance. Not just the number of followers is important, but also who are these followers. Therefore, organizations need to monitor communication processes in advance and analysed influence factors and opinion leaders. These users, who have such an influence, are central to a crisis and can help spread the official messages quickly by sharing (Kortom, 2011: 20). Buttressing on this, Kurtz (2009) noticed that Twitter has already become a global factor in news and news releases, ordinary users get very powerful and important players in reporting crisis and spreading info about it. Twitter, as well as other social media, change the status quo, where editors are entry guards and reduce their function. Indeed, Twitter induces "a vast and long-lasting conversation between millions of people around the globe" (Bennet, 2009: 9).

A recent example of twitters pervasiveness is Norwegian's use of Twitter in and after the 'Oslo and Utøya' attacks of 22 July 2011. Twitter was exploding with news updates from eyewitnesses, real-time messages from victims while the shooting was happening, and others searching for loved ones, asking for retweets of their message (Grolid, 2011). Social media changes the manner we receive and share information in a crisis. Instead of getting the latest news from traditional media outlets, Twitter was the medium, breaking news far before broadcast media, and several people are of the opinion this event caused 'a media revolution' in Norway (Grolid, 2011).

It has been shown that the feasibility of a given social media, as well as the influence and importance it has in times of crisis, is conditioned by other factors such as the extent to which it is popular and used in a certain region. In this sense, McAllister (2012) suggests that it is important for crisis communication professionals to comply with both the target audience of the message in question and the applicable social media. This also extends to the given geographic features and the preferences of the audience.

2.5. Media Sharing Sites and Crisis Management

Research has described media sharing sites as social media that permits easy sharing of different contents like video, pictures, and music. Examples of these media sharing sites are YouTube, Instagram and Flickr. Evidence has indicated that the research into the utilization of media sharing sites as a tool for crisis communication has only attracted a trivial number of investigators (i.e. Lenhart *et al.*, 2010; O'Connor, 2014; Kennedy *et al.*, 2007). It has been demonstrated that the benefits and features that media sharing sites can offer have made it extremely easy for people to access, share, distribute, and comment. To boot, they enable

communication, creating social groups, contacting other group members, influencing and forming attitudes to advance an idea, person, product or issue (Kennedy *et al.*, 2007). This implies that audiences have the opportunity to see videos or photos from the scene of the event, which dispels the doubts, gives them a sense of authenticity and makes the situation closer, regardless of geographic differences. Similarly, O'Connor (2014) mentions Instagram as the newest and most applicable anti-crisis public relations tool when it comes to crisis situations, this social platform could serve to distract rumours, redirect attention, and communicate directly with audiences. Evidence from a study demonstrates that about 37% of internet users around the world are somehow involved in creating news online through media sharing sites. Most of them are related to natural disasters, where people publish photos and videos from the scene (Lenhart *et al.*, 2010).

2.6. Wikipedia Place in Crisis Management

Based on the literature collected for this review, it could be deduced that only a little amount of studies seems to look into the utilization of Wikipedia for crisis management, and these studies have indicated that the wikis allow each member of an organization to be involved in the planning, literally on a single page instead of creating another unnecessary document (Jin, Fisher Liu & Austin, 2014; Borremans, 2010). Borremans (2010) commented that planning, crisis maps, action scenarios, all this can be described and updated in a secure wiki site that is accessible only to those who need to be involved in the anti-crisis process. The wikis can easily be organized according to the different aspects of crisis planning. Templates and preliminary feedback statements can be created base on the typology of the crises. For example, the crises related to disasters, damages and potential victims, as well as listing people being searched, and affected areas that need help could be shown. The probability to constantly update the content by common people makes wiki sites particularly important in this type of crises.

This implies that the most important aspect of the wiki in crisis management and communication is its easy availability and editing "on the go" function (Jin, Fisher, Liu & Austin, 2014). This eliminates the "lack of timeliness" factor, which can be a significant obstacle to taking adequate anti-crisis actions. If we go back to the wikis used for the internal needs of the organizations, they allow each change to be marked with the appropriate hour mark and the name of the person who made it. This allows a quick check of the views, facts, and responses that the organization's representatives have posted. This is especially significant, particularly in post-crisis analysis. Having documented the various social media tools utilized in crisis management it is essential to explicate in depth how these tools contribute to crisis responses.

2.7. Social Media and Crisis Response

Social media use for crisis responses has received a good number of studies (i.e. Wright & Hinson, 2008; Coombs & Holladay, 2014; Romenti *et al.*, 2014; Utz, Schultz, & Glocka, 2013; Apuke, 2016; Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010; Wendling, Radisch, & Jacobzone, 2013; Lu & Weber, 2007; Kelleher, 2009; Coombs & Holladay, 2007; Yang & Lim, 2009; Shirky, 2009; Lamberti, 2016 Quarantelli, 1998; Palen, Vieweg, Sutton, Liu, & Hughes, 2007; Sweetser & Metzgar, 2007; Bradford & Garrett, 1995; Coombs & Holladay, 2010, 2008: 22, 28; Tucker &

Melewar, 2005; Kent, Taylor, & White, 2003; Roberts & Dowling, 2002; White & Raman, 2000; Patriotta, Schultz, & Gond, 2008; Schultz & Wehmeier, 2010). About 90% of these studies reveal that a large number of the public adopts social media when crisis erupt, therefore, it is appropriate for organizations to master and optimize the social media tools to respond and act. Accordingly, Coombs and Holladay (2008) argue that issues that emerge on social media can be very unpredictable on how they move and how the public reacts to it, therefore, the organization should be wary of information that involves them and what their public say online. This notion is consistent with Sweetser and Metzgar (2007) postulation which indicate that Twitter messages are much faster moving, and a crisis can spread faster via twitter because its messages could be easily read, commented upon and even circulated by its followers. As such, research has also documented evidence which shows that social media has been guilty of being a social constructor of the crisis through its much liberal and open platforms, however, it has fast become a good tool for reputation rebuilding and repair (e.g., Schultz & Wehmeier, 2010). A good number of prior studies affirmed that a crisis disturbs order in society, it destroys interaction between stakeholders and organizations and threatens company image (Kent *et al.*, 2003; Roberts & Dowling, 2002; White & Raman, 2000). Patriotta, Schultz, and Gond (2008) concur with this notion as they indicate that social media could also be viewed as a threat to organizations most valued possession which is an image. To concretize this notion, Coombs and Holladay (2007) raise the issue of the electronic word -of –mouth (WOM) as an aspect that causes the rapid spreading of a crisis. It is through the rapid messages WOM spread, therefore, social media falls under the electronic WOM, which builds a series and cycle of communication that spreads from one end to the other. It is through the interactions of society and social media that electronic word of mouth goes viral through retweeting and sharing social media messages. In addition, Coombs and Holladay (2007) postulate that WOM can be referred to as stakeholders' comments about an establishment or organization. The circulation of these comments and having other people talk or chat about them is WOM and if negative, it could tarnish the image and status of an organization (Tucker & Melewar, 2005).

Studies have shown that any crisis demands information, it asks for explanations or responses (Coombs & Holladay, 2010, 2008: 20, 22), but the responses made influence the results of a crisis. Bradford and Garrett (1995) noted that accepting responsibility and approaching a crisis apologetically can guarantee a positive result from a crisis. Research has advocated that social media is more interactive and has a higher chance of dialogue and interactivity, an apology or a well thought out positive response to the crisis is most likely to make a positive effect when shared to another online participator (Seltzer & Mitrook, 2007). Prior literature suggested that as social media platform usage continues to advance, public relations practitioners should put effort to realise how to effectively utilise these tools to better their practices as well as the impact these tools have on their operations (Seltzer & Mitrook, 2007). Specifically, Sweetser and Metzgar (2007) suggest blogs and Twitter as an effective publishing tool that the public relations practitioners should be very well conversant with and utilise for crisis responses. They are of the notion that these platforms allow a frequent form of communication with the feel of a human voice and they are regarded as rather more authentic than Facebook. This is consistent with a result of a research carried out by the American Red Cross, which suggests that those who

respond in terms of emergency should have media monitoring policies so as to rapidly send assistance when needed (Palen, Vieweg, Sutton, Liu, & Hughes, 2007). As such, there is research postulation which suggests that members of the community have always been volunteers in crisis response and participation (Quarantelli, 1998), thus, social media has an advanced characteristic of incorporating the community and making them part of the crisis (Lamberti, 2016).

Research has also shown that social media have fast become the biggest and sometimes the first port of news telling of world events (Shirky, 2009). Yang and Lim (2009) contend that although communication through conventional newspapers establishes organization's credibility, nevertheless, communicating through social media websites has created higher credibility for organizations. Therefore, it means if an organization goes through a crisis, apologies and information can be provided via social media, which work well in managing and responding to a crisis. Supporting this notion, Kelleher (2009) posits that blogs are believed to have a conversational human voice and if public relations personnel communicate on blogs they can receive feedback such as conviction, approval and assurance from the public. Therefore, social media have given positive impact to the public relations arena when it comes to crisis responses.

Nevertheless, scholars have reasoned that the best responses and best fastest feedback are usually through twitter because it permits immediate and faster replies. Therefore, communication via social media is shared with only the click of a mouse; it resists the laws of space and time (Coombs & Holladay, 2007). This means the crisis response has become easier instead of doing it via newspapers or print material, just one post; one message is enough to deliver the message. Public relations can also depend on other people in the social web to share information with other users in their own efforts (Kelleher, 2009). Therefore, Lu and Weber (2007) argue that organisation would be thoroughly ignorant not to acknowledge the fact that the communication world has become saturated with digital communication. It is, thus, essential to comprehend how to utilise digital tools so as to communicate effectively and stay relevant.

Generally, there is good evidence which suggests that social media are adopted to disseminate messages in terms of warning and creating awareness when crisis occurs. It has also been used by organizations and public relations practitioners to maintain good dialogues and receive feedbacks from public authorities, a given community, action groups, other business and financial sectors as well as the citizens at large (Wendling, Radisch, & Jacobzone, 2013). Accordingly, a growing body of literature has been shown to support that the advent of social media has transformed the crisis communication landscape because it allows more interactivity leading to the creation, sharing and exchange of information, ideas, pictures/videos in split seconds (Apuke, 2016; Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010: 61). This notion is consistent with another body of evidence which viewed social media as a good tool for public relations practitioners and companies (Utz, Schultz, & Glocka, 2013), because it helps companies to communicate with customers directly as well as engage with their publics in a more interactive manner (Wright & Hinson 2008; Coombs & Holladay, 2014; Romenti *et al.*, 2014).

CONCLUSION

The advent of social media has transformed the crisis communication landscape because it permits more interactivity leading to the creation, sharing and exchange of information, ideas, and pictures/videos in split seconds. However, social media's interactive and dialogic nature means it is an easier platform to create communities and bring around the protest. Practitioners of public relations and organizations are recommended to follow social media activity and act on it, because if utilised accordingly, it could act as a negotiation platform during crises. Future studies should examine to what extent an organization and practitioners of public relations should adopt social media during crisis, and when is it necessary to make use of word of mouth or face to face dialogue. Blogs have been shown to be an effective medium for connecting organization and its public when a crisis occurs. However, the type of messages to be used on blog during crisis requires additional clarifications by future investigators. Organizations could also benefit from Facebook by creating a new group or company webpage. More studies are needed to replicate existing studies and extend to explain in detail how public relations practitioners should use Facebook during crisis.

Similarly, studies on the impact of Twitter in crisis management suggest that organizations need to have an account on this social media and that not only the number of followers is important, but also who are these followers. This calls for organizations and the public relations experts to monitor communication processes in advance and analyse influence factors and opinion leaders. Media sharing sites such as YouTube (for video), Flickr and Instagram (for photograph) during crisis has shown that audiences have the opportunity to see videos or photos from the scene of the event. Similarly, Wikipedia allows each member of an organization to be involved in the planning, and resolving of crisis literally on a single page instead of creating another unnecessary document. More studies are required to clarify in detail how wikis permit the members of an organization to be involved in both the planning and responding during crisis. It has been shown that crisis disturbs order in society, it destroys interaction between stakeholders and organizations and threatens company image. Thus, the best responses and fastest feedback are usually obtained through Twitter because it permits immediate and faster responses. In addition, blogs are also alleged to have a conversational human voice and if public relations personnel communicate on blogs, they can receive outcomes such as confidence, satisfaction and loyalty. However, evidence has shown that blog use has not yet been integrated in many organizations' therefore, organizations and practitioners, who have not yet started using blogs, should make it a priority to adopt blogs during a crisis.

Prior studies have mostly depended on survey research methods utilizing a questionnaire. There was no study that was found to use a mixed method of research to test the related subject matter. No case study or longitudinal research was adopted in prior studies to deeply research into the usage of social media in crisis management. Importantly, future investigators should place additional effort by adopting mixed methods so as to provide a comprehensive understanding of the utilization of social media platforms in managing and communicating during crisis. Beyond mixed methods utilization, future studies should also adopt a longitudinal

approach because this type of method could facilitate observing changes over time, and in turn enhance the understanding of social media usage during a crisis. It is also worth mentioning that blogs have been the most social media platform examined, whilst, YouTube have received the attention of only a few numbers of studies. Future researchers could make it a priority to examine in detail other forms of social media as well as examine more than one social media platform to realize the role of social media in managing crisis. It was also observed that most of the literature focuses on developed nations. There is therefore a need for more studies beyond developed nations. Conclusively, social media has been shown to have negative and positive impacts on crisis management. Yet, the significance of social media as a crisis resolution tool is indisputable. It has the potential to prove a statement, to dispel untrue rumours or just to show the fact. Hence, practitioners are encouraged to know thoroughly how social media works and the best way to manipulate it to communicate with their stakeholders.

REFERENCES

Álvarez, P. C. (2012), "Journalism and Social Media: How Spanish Journalists are Using Twitter/Periodismo Social Media: cómo están usando Twitter los periodistas españoles", *Estudios Sobre el Mensaje Periodístico*, 18(1): 31-53.

Apuke, O. D (2016), "Social and Traditional Mainstream Media of Communication: Synergy and Variance Perspective", *Journal of New Media and Mass Communication*, 53(4): 83-86.

Baron, N. S. (2010), *Always on: Language in an Online and Mobile World*, London: Oxford University Press.

Benoit, W. L. (1997), "Image repair discourse and crisis communication", *Public Relations Review*, 23(2): 177-186.

Borremans, P, (2010), *Communication Magazine The use of Wikis for Crisis Communication,* http://www.conversationblog.com/journal/2011/1/26/crisis-com munications-planning-and-wikis.html#sthash.6LBzECMY.dpuf, Retrived: 15.08.17

Bradford, J. L. & Garrett, D. E. (1995), "The Effectiveness of Corporate Communicative Responses to Accusations of Unethical Behaviour", *Journal of Business Ethics*, 14(11): 875-892.

Briones, R. L., Kuch, B., Liu, B. F. & Jin, Y. (2011), "Keeping up with the Digital Age: How the American Red Cross uses Social Media to Build Relationships", *Public Relations Review*, 37(1): 37-43.

Carroll, A. & Buchholtz, A. (2014), *Business and Society: Ethics, sustainability, and stakeholder management*, Canada: Nelson Education.

Choi, Y. & Lin, Y. H. (2009), "Consumer responses to Mattel product recall posted on online bulletin boards: Exploring two types of emotion", *Journal of Public Relations Research*, 21(2): 198-207.

Coombs, W. T. & Holladay, S. J. (2001), "An Extended Examination of the Crisis Situations: A Fusion of the Relational Management and Symbolic Approaches", *Journal of Public Relations Research*, 13(4): 321-340.

Coombs, W. T. and Holladay, S. J. (2008), "Comparing Apology to Equivalent Crisis Response Strategies: Clarifying Apology's Role and Value In Crisis Communication", *Public Relations Review*, 34(3): 252-257.

Coombs, W. T. and Holladay, S. J. (2010), *PR Strategy and Application: Managing Influence*, United States: Wiley-Blackwell.

Coombs, W. T. and Jean Holladay, S. (2014), "How Publics React To Crisis Communication Efforts: Comparing Crisis Response Reactions Across Sub-Arenas", *Journal of Communication Management*, 18(1): 40-5.

Coombs, W. and Holladay, S. J. (2007), "The Negative Communication Dynamic: Exploring The Impact of Stakeholder Effect on Behavioural Intentions", *Journal of Communication Management*, 11(4): 300-312.

Dellarocas, C. (2006), "Strategic Manipulation of Internet Opinion Forums: Implications for Consumers and Firms", *Management Science*, 52(10): 1577-1593.

Dunbar, R. I., Arnaboldi, V., Conti, M. & Passarella, A. (2015), "The Structure of Online Social Networks Mirrors Those in the Offline World", *Social Networks*, 43(5): 39-47.

Dutta, S. & Pullig, C. (2011), "The Effectiveness of Corporate Responses to Brand Crises: The Role of Crisis Types and Response Strategies", *Journal of Business Research*, 64(12): 1281-1287.

Dutta-Bergman, M. J. (2006), "Community Participation and Internet Use After September 11: Complementarity in Channel Consumption", *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication*, 11(2): 469-484.

Dutton, J. E. & Dukerich, J. M. (1991), "Keeping an Eye on the Mirror: Image and Identity in Organizational Adaptation", *Academy of Management Journal*, 34(3): 517-554.

Ellison, N. B., Steinfield, C. & Lampe, C. (2007), "The Benefits of Facebook "Friends:" Social Capital and College Students' Use of Online Social Network Sites", *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication*, 12(4): 1143-1168.

Floreddu, P. B. & Cabiddu, F. (2014, July), "Managing Online Reputation: The Role of Social Media", in *Toulon-Verona Conference" Excellence in Services"*.

Fombrun, C. J. & Van Riel, C. B. (1997), "The Reputational Landscape", *Corporate Reputation Review*, 1(2): 5-13.

Fombrun, C. J. & Van Riel, C. B. (2004), *Fame & Fortune: How Successful Companies Build Winning Reputations*, United States: FT Press.

Fombrun, C. J., Gardberg, N. A. & Sever, J. M. (2000), "The Reputation Quotient SM: A Multi-Stakeholder Measure of Corporate Reputation", *Journal of Brand Management*, 7(4): 241-255.

Gironda, J. T. and Korgaonkar, P. K. (2014), "Understanding Consumers' Social Networking Site Usage", *Journal of Marketing Management*, 30(5-6): 571-605.

Grolid, S. A. (2011), *En Mediemessig Revulsion*, NRK [online] 26 July. Available from: http://www.nrk.no/vitenskapog teknologi/1.7727583, Retrieved: 23.08.2017.

Jin, Y., Liu, B. F. & Austin, L. L. (2014), "Examining the Role of Social Media in Effective Crisis Management: The Effects of Crisis Origin, Information Form, and Source on Publics' Crisis Responses", *Communication Research*, 41(1): 74-94.

Jones, B., Temperley, J. & Lima, A. (2009), "Corporate Reputation in the Era of Web 2.0: The Case of Primark", *Journal of Marketing Management*, 25(9-10): 927-939.

Kaplan, A. M. and Haenlein, M. (2010), "Users of the World, Unite! The Challenges and Opportunities of Social Media", *Business Horizons*, 53(1): 59-68.

Kaye, B. K. (2005), "It's a Blog, Blog, Blog World: Users and Uses of Weblogs", *Atlantic Journal of Communication*, 13(2): 73-95.

Kelleher, T. (2009), "Conversational Voice, Communicated Commitment, and Public Relations Outcomes in Interactive Online Communication", *Journal of Communication*, 59(1): 172-188.

Kennedy, L., Naaman, M., Ahern, S., Nair, R. and Rattenbury, T. (2007, September), "How Flickr Helps us Make Sense of The World: Context and Content in Community-Contributed Media Collections", In *Proceedings of the 15th ACM International Conference on Multimedia:* 631-640.

Kent, M. L. (2008), "Critical Analysis of Blogging in Public Relations", *Public Relations Review*, 34(1): 32-40.

Kent, M. L. and Taylor, M. (2003), "Maximizing Media Relations: A Website Checklist", *Public Relations Quarterly*, 48(1): 14-20.

Khang, H., Ki, E. J. and Ye, L. (2012), "Social Media Research in Advertising, Communication, Marketing, and Public Relations, 1997–2010", *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly*, 89(2): 279-298.

Kliatchko, J. (2008), "Revisiting the IMC Construct: A Revised Definition and Four Pillars", *International Journal of Advertising*, 27(1): 133-160.

Kortom, G. (2011), *Use of social media in crisis communication*, Brugge.

Kurtz, H. (2009), *Anchors Oblige Public's Craving for Tweets*, *WashingtonPost*,p.C01,http://www.washingtonpost.com/wpdyn/content/article/2009/02/22/AR2009022201921.html?nav=rss_opinion%2Fcolumns, Retrieved: 20.08.17

Lamberti, R. (2016), "Police Use of Social Media during a Crisis", *Journal of Professional Communication*, *5*(1): 22-30.

Lenhart, A., Purcell, K., Smith, A. and Zickuhr, K. (2010), "Social Media & Mobile Internet Use among Teens and Young Adults, Millennials", Pew *Internet & American life project,* https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED525056.pdf, Retrieved: 15.05.17

Lu, J. and Weber, I. (2007), "State, Power and Mobile Communication: A Case Study of China", *New Media & Society*, *9*(6): 925-944.

Nardi, B. A., Whittaker, S. and Schwarz, H. (2000), "It's Not What You Know It's Who You Know", *First Monday*, 5(5), http://firstmonday.org/issues/issue5_5/nardi/index.html, Retrieved: 14.01.18.

O'Connor, C. (2014), "Starbucks and Nike are Winning Instagram (And Your Photos Are Helping), https://goo.gl/NKUiGZ, Retrieved: 08.08.17.

Palen, L., Vieweg, S., Sutton, J., Liu, S. B. and Hughes, A. (2007, October), "Crisis Informatics: Studying Crisis in a Networked World", *In Third International Conference on e-Social Science*: 7-9.

Patriotta, G., Schultz, F. and Gond, J. P. (2008, July), "The Institutional Work of Justification: How Actors Make Sense of Disruptive Events", *in the 24th EGOS Colloquium, Amsterdam: European Group for Organizational Studies*.

Quarantelli, E. L. (1998), *Major Criteria for Judging Disaster Planning and Managing their Applicability in Developing Countries*, https://goo.gl/1BkoMo, Retrieved: 09.09.17

Roberts, P. W. and Dowling, G. R. (2002), "Corporate Reputation and Sustained Superior Financial Performance", *Strategic Management Journal*, *23*(12): 1077-1093.

Romenti, S., Murtarelli, G. and Valentini, C. (2014), "Organisations' Conversations in Social Media: Applying Dialogue Strategies in Times of Crises", *Corporate Communications: An International Journal*, *19*(1): 10-33.

Schultz, F. and Wehmeier, S. (2010), "Online Relationships", *Manual Online Conversation,* 6(1): 409-433.

Seltzer, T. and Mitrook, M. A. (2007), "The Dialogic Potential of Weblogs in Relationship Building", *Public Relations Review*, *33*(2): 227-229.

Shirky, C. (2009), "Newspapers and thinking the unthinkable", *Risk Management*, 56(3): 24.

Siebert, T. (2006), *Pro-Wal-Mart Travel Blog Screeches to a Halt', Media Post News: Online Media Daily*, https://goo.gl/LD5kSm, Retrieved: 22.08.17

Stenger, T. (2014), "Social Media and Online Reputation Management as Practice: First Steps Towards Social CRM?", *International Journal of Technology and Human Interaction (IJTHI)*, 10(4): 49-64.

Stephens, K. K. and Malone, P. (2010), "New Media for Crisis Communication: Opportunities for Technical Translation, Dialogue, and Stakeholder Responses", *The Handbook of Crisis Communication*, 381-395.

Stephens, K. K. and Malone, P. C. (2009), "If the Organizations Won't Give Us Information: The Use Of Multiple New Media For Crisis Technical Translation and Dialogue", *Journal of Public Relations Research*, 21(2): 229-239.

Sweetser, K. D. and Metzgar, E. (2007), "Communicating During the Crisis: Use of Blogs as a Relationship Management Tool", *Public Relations Review*, 33(3): 340-342.

Tucker, L., and Melewar, T. C. (2005), "Corporate Reputation and Crisis Management: The Threat and Manageability of Anti-Corporatism", *Corporate Reputation Review*, 7(4): 377-387.

Utz, S., Schultz, F., and 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.

Veil, S. R., Buehner, T. and Palenchar, M. J. (2011), "A Work-In-Process Literature Review: Incorporating Social Media in Risk and Crisis Communication", *Journal of Contingencies and Crisis Management*, 19(2): 110-122.

Wang, Y. (2015), "Incorporating Social Media in Public Relations: A Synthesis of Social Media-Related Public Relations Research", Public *Relations Journal*, 9(3): 2-22.

Watkins, B. (2014), "An Integrated Approach to Sports Branding: Examining the Influence of Social Media on Brand Outcomes", *International Journal of Integrated Marketing Communications*, 6(2): 18-25.

Weick, K. E. (1988), "Enacted Sensemaking in Crisis Situations", Journal *of Management Studies*, 25(4): 305-317.

Wendling, C., Radisch, J. and Jacobzone, S. (2013), The *Use of Social Media in Risk and Crisis Communication*, https://goo.gl/NFmYWH, Retrieved: 02.01.18

White, C. and Raman, N. (2000), "The World Wide Web as a Public Relations Medium: The Use Of Research, Planning, And Evaluation In Web Site Development", *Public Relations Review*, 25(4): 405-419.

Wright, D. K. and Hinson, M. D. (2008), "How Blogs and Social Media are Changing Public Relations and the Way it is Practised", *Public Relations Journal*, 2(2): 1-21.

Wright, D. K. and Hinson, M. D. (2009), "An Updated Look at the Impact of Social Media on Public Relations Practice", *Public Relations Journal*, 3(2): 1-27.

Yang, S. U. and Lim, J. S. (2009), "The Effects of Blog-Mediated Public Relations (BMPR) on Relational Trust", *Journal of Public Relations Research*, 21(3): 341-359.

Oberiri Destiny Apuke is currently a postgraduate student in the Faculty of Communication Sciences, European University of Lefke. His research interest cuts across new media and media ideology and representation.

Oberiri Destiny Apuke Lefke Avrupa Üniversitesi İletişim Bilimleri Fakültesi'nde doktora öğrencisidir. Araştırma alanları, yeni medya, medya ideolojisi ve temsilciliğidir.

Elif Asude Tunca is an associate Professor, lecturer and the Head of Department of new media and journalism, Faculty of Communication Sciences, European University of Lefke, North Cyprus. Her research area cuts across the political economy of the media, and media ideology and representation.

Elif Asude Tunca, Kuzey Kıbrıs Lefke Avrupa Üniversitesi İletişim Fakültesi Öğretim Üyesi Doçent, Yeni Medya ve Gazetecilik Bölümü Başkanıdır. Araştırma alanları medyanın ekonomi politiği ve medya ideolojisidir.