

**GHANA INSTITUTE OF JOURNALISM**

**An examination of the use of social media for crisis management; a case of Vodafone**

**Ghana**

**BY**

**ODYLIA VARSTY ABOTSITSE**

**(MAPR19047)**

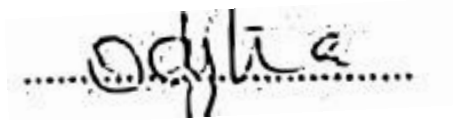
**NAME OF SUPERVISOR: DR. Mrs. MAVIS ESSANDOH**

**A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO THE SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND  
RESEARCH, GHANA INSTITUTE OF JOURNALISM IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF  
THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE AWARD OF A MASTER OF ART DEGREE IN  
PUBLIC RELATIONS (MAPR)**

**OCTOBER, 2020.**

## DECLARATION AND CERTIFICATION

I, Odylia Varsty Abotsitse hereby declare that this thesis is my own work and has not been presented for a degree in any other university, and all materials used in this thesis have been duly acknowledged.

A handwritten signature in black ink on a white background. The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned above a horizontal dotted line.

Odylia Varsty Abotsitse

29<sup>th</sup> Sept 2020

DATE

## **SUPERVISORS DECLARATION**

I hereby certify that this project work was done under my supervision. I thereby approve that the work is adequate in scope and quality for the partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of a Masters' of Arts in Public Relations (MAPR).

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mavis Essandoh', is written over a horizontal line.

29<sup>th</sup> Sept2020

Dr. Mrs. Mavis Essandoh

DATE

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

### ABSTRACT

### CHAPTER ONE

1. Introduction .....	8
1.2 Background of the study .....	8
1.3 Statement of the Problem .....	10
1.4 Rationale for the study.....	11
1.5 Objectives .....	11
1.6 Research Question .....	12
1.7 Scope of the study .....	12
1.8 Organization of the study .....	13
1.9 Significance of the study .....	13
1.10 Conclusion .....	14

### CHAPTER TWO

2.0 Introduction .....	15
2.1 Conceptual Framework .....	15
2.1.1 Crisis .....	15
2.1.2. Crisis Management .....	16
2.1.3 Crisis Communication .....	17
2.1.4 Social media and Crisis Communication .....	18
2.1.5 Vodafone Ghana .....	20
2.2 Organizations and social media use .....	21
2.2.1 Social media and its effect on crisis management .....	22
2.2.2 Theoretical Framework .....	23

2.3 Contextual Design .....	23
2.3.1 Contextual Design in Crisis Communication .....	23
2.3.2 Situational Theory .....	25
2.3.3 Conclusion .....	27

CHAPTER THREE

3.0 Introduction .....	28
3.1 Research Design .....	28
3.2 Importance of qualitative methodology.....	29
3.3 Population .....	30
3.4 Sampling size/ Sampling procedure .....	30
3.5 Data collection technique .....	30
3.6 Data analysis technique .....	31
3.7 Chapter Summary.....	31

CHAPTER FOUR

4.0 Introduction .....	33
4.1 Discussions of related studies .....	33
4.2 Social Media channels used by organizations to engage the public .....	33
4.3 How organizations use social media to engage the public .....	33
4.4 Effectiveness of social media in crisis management .....	34
4.5 Conclusion .....	35

CHAPTER FIVE

4.0 Introduction .....36

4.1 Summary of the study .....37

4.3 Limitation .....38

4.2 Recommendation .....38

4.3 Chapter summary .....39

BIBLIOGRAPHY.....40

## **ABSTRACT**

This study examined the use of social media in crisis management using Vodafone as a case study. The study sought to investigate some channels Vodafone Ghana uses when engaging the public, how they engage them with social media channels and their effectiveness during crises situations. The study reviewed literature on related studies and analyzed its findings in order based on the literature due to the COVID 19 pandemic. It was discovered that social media is very effective during crisis management. It was also discovered that social media networking sites such as *Facebook and Twitter* are very popular and widely used by companies and they mostly use these outlets to increase their engagement with the public, share information and also try to solve problems for their customers.

## CHAPTER ONE

### 1.0 Introduction

This is the introductory chapter of the study. This study will examine the use of social media in crises management; using Vodafone as a case study. This chapter consists of the background of the study, justification of the study, research objectives and questions and the significances of study. This chapter gives us a pictorial depiction of what the study is about and also provides us with some questions the study will seeks to answer in the subsequent chapters.

### 1.1 Background of the study

Social Networking sites such as *Facebook*, *Twitter*, *Instagram*, *LinkedIn* and others has given organizations the opportunity of engaging their stakeholders in real-time (Lovejoy, Waters and Saxton, 2012). Matthews (2010) noted that social media has also changed the dynamics of Public Relations (PR) practices and has also democratized information flow.

*Facebook* has given the opportunity for businesses to share important information to a large number of user subscribers simultaneously (Boateng 2014). Chua & Banerjee (2013) also posited that *Facebook* is a tool for managing customer knowledge of organizations. It is also used as a tool for shaping Public opinion of organizations (Chua & Banerjee, 2013). Lovejoy, Waters and Saxton (2012) also argued that social media is exploited by practitioners to foster relationships with the current and potential customers of a company. Andoh-Quaino & Anor-Antwi (2015) outlined some of the uses of social media by companies. They found that companies used social media to provide management information and customer updates.

Brachten et al (2018) observed that Social media has altered the way in which crises are perceived and communicated. Social media has also become a key instrument for information sharing that enhances communication among people (Mirbabaie et al., 2014 and Palen et al., 2010). Crises situations cause a lot of uncertainties and miscommunications through a lack of information (Dervin, 2003 and Weick, 1988). This lack of information creates room for rumors which eventually become public opinion (Dervin, 2003). Brachten et al (2018) posits that in times like this, social media can be used to fill the gaps in information flow. Mirbabaie & Zapatka (2017) noted that several research on the phenomenon have concluded that during crisis periods, social media platforms can be highly effective for all participants to make sense of the occurring events.

During crisis periods, the public is either informed about the crisis via social media outlets or through the traditional mediated outlets (Palen, Vieweg, Liu & Hughes, 2009). This makes social media usage very important during crisis situations. Users of social media end up giving accurate information especially if they are close to the action. The free flow of non-mediated information has decentralized communication and made information management very difficult (Palen, Vieweg, Liu & Hughes, 2009).

According to Stefan et al (2018), we are in a place in time when anyone can change from a passive bystander to an active communicator especially during crisis. The digital evolution has changed the way PR practitioners and communicators in general perform their job functions. In a study of about 251 members of the PR Society of America (PRSA), Wigley and Weiwu (2011) reported that majority of respondents said they had incorporated social media into their Crisis management plans. They reported that practitioners who mostly used social media as a channel during their Crisis management process mostly generated positive results.

## **1.2 Statement of the problem**

The use of social media in crisis management is at their growing stage (Apuke and Tunca, 2018). There have been a significant number of studies on how companies and organization use social media in crisis management. Wigley and Weiwu (2011) studied how Public relations practitioners use social media in crisis planning and crisis communication using about 251 members of the Public Relations Society of America (PRSA). Pang, Abul Hassan and Yang (2014) examined how crises can occur online, how different social media tools escalate crises and how issues gain credibility when they transit to mainstream media. Apuke and Tunca (2018) in their study also decided to analyze the growing body of knowledge by researchers into social media and crisis management in Turkey. They found out that the growth of social media has redefined the mode of crisis communication. Sigala (2012) also investigated the use and impact of social media on crisis management in tourism. In analyzing literatures of other studies on the impact of social media on crisis management, it was discovered that social media is fast changing crisis communication in the tourism industry in Australia.

There have been numerous studies on how organizations have explored social media use during crisis management in Europe, America and Asia. However, there seems to be a paucity of literature on the use of social media as tool for crisis management by companies in Ghana. Also the few studies available focus on the use of social media on PR practices as whole. For instance, Djabanor (2019) in her Master's thesis focused on studying social media as a Public Relation tool at MTN-Ghana. Bosumtwi (2015) in her study also focus on analyzing the crisis communication preparedness of the Electricity Company of Ghana (E.C. G). In sync with these earlier studies, this study will focus on how a telecommunication company like Vodafone Ghana with a relatively

large customer base, uses social media for Crisis Management. This study aims to investigate the importance of social media to organizations especially during crisis situations.

### **1.3 Rationale for the study**

Social media has become one of the most effective tools an organization cannot overlook. Many companies have thrived because of their social media usage. Porter (2010) argues that *Facebook* pages have given the opportunity for organizations and companies to share news and information to social media account holders worldwide. Kent (2015) noted that generally, organizations and companies use social media to communicate with their stakeholders and publics. Waters et al (2009) confirmed that *Facebook* and other social media forms give organizations opportunity to build relationships and educate their customers and clients on organizational activities. Asamoah (2019) also found that social media is used to gather data by organizations for strategic communication purposes. This study is going to discuss the importance of social media in corporate communication and crisis communication. This is going to help us understand the significance of social media and online communication especially during crisis management.

The study will affirm the relevance of the situational theory and the theory of contextual design in understanding the effectiveness of social media in crisis management. The theory of contextual design will help us understand why companies use social media to gather data about customers and how that data is analyzed and used productively.

### **1.4 Objectives of the study**

The main objective of this study is to examine the use of social media in crisis management at Vodafone Ghana.

## Specific Objectives'

Specifically, the study seeks to find out:

1. The channels Vodafone Ghana uses to engage with its publics during crises.
2. How Vodafone Ghana uses social media to engage with its publics.
3. The effectiveness of social media in managing crisis at Vodafone Ghana.

## **1.5 Research Questions**

The study seeks to answer the following questions:

1. What are the channels Vodafone Ghana uses in engaging with its publics during crises situations?
2. How does Vodafone Ghana use social media to engage its publics?
3. How effective is social media in crisis management at Vodafone Ghana?

## **1.6 Scope of the study**

Vodafone Ghana is a very big telecommunication brand in Ghana with lots of offices all over the country. This research was going to focus on their headquarters located at the Airport residential area in Accra. This location was chosen strategically because of its prominence in the policy formulation and implementation of all the strategies used by Vodafone Ghana nationwide. The headquarters is where all the major decisions are taken and where you can find the heads of all the major departments within the organization as well as the communication department where all the major decisions are taken. This is one of the reason the study decided to use Vodafone Ghana as

the case study. In order to acquire the needed data for the study, interviews would be conducted with about five (5) staff members of Vodafone Ghana who have worked for at least 2 years.

### **1.7 Organization of the study**

This study will be divided into five (5) chapters. Chapter one is the introductory chapter of the study. It entails the background of the study, statement of the problem, research objectives and questions, significance of the study and scope of the study. Chapter two (2) reviews literature related to the topic and discusses the theoretical framework within which the study is being done. The conceptual review enables us define key concepts within our topic by reviewing how other researchers defined such concepts in their studies. I envisage that this will help me design a framework for the concepts in this study. The study will also examine the work of other scholars and findings made in their studies. The third part of the literature review is the theoretical framework. This will take a detailed look at the theoretical underpinnings of my study. Here, the study explores the conceptual design and the situational theory proposed by Grunig in 1966. Chapter three discusses the methodological processes of the study. This explains into detail the methods used for data collection and analysis. The study reviewed empirical findings of related studies and analyzed them thematically in relation to the research objectives. The fourth chapter is the data analysis and discussions chapter. This is where I try to make sense of the data gathered and discuss the results of my findings. The final chapter (Chapter 5) summarizes the study, discuss some results obtained from chapter 4 and makes recommendations for policy making and further studies.

## **1.8 Chapter Summary**

The study seeks to examine social media use by Vodafone Ghana during crisis management. The study examines the channels Vodafone Ghana uses in engaging its publics during crisis situations. It also seeks to find out how Vodafone Ghana uses social media to engage its publics, and how effective these channels are in managing crises in the organization.

The next chapter reviews literature for the study and discusses the theories underpinning the and how relevant they are to the topic under study.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **2.0 Introduction**

This chapter is going to review existing literature on the use of social media for crisis management; using Vodafone Ghana as the case study. The chapter will review some basic concepts of the topic which will help us understand and also assist in the conceptualization of key words within the study. The second part of the study will also discuss the theoretical underpinnings of the study. The theoretical framework is going to provide the foundation upon which the study stands and provides us with theoretical backings to most of the findings and interpretations of the study.

### **2.1 Conceptual studies**

#### **2.1.1 Crisis**

The term crisis has attracted the attention of numerous scholars across disciplines who are all trying to conceptualize the theory (Milašinovic and Kešetovic, 2008). They believe that “crisis” is used to define all types of negative occurrences. The term crisis applies to situations that are “unwanted, unexpected, unpredictable and almost unthinkable which cause disbelief and uncertainty” (Milašinovic and Kešetovic, 2008, p. 170). Fear-Banks (1966) is cited by Milašinovic and Kešetovic (2008) to have defined crisis as a larger event with potentially negative consequences affecting an organization, company, or industry, as well as its target public, products, service or good name (Hamblin, 1958). Flint (1986) conceptualized crisis by adding that any event that can escalate in intensity, becomes the focus of attention of the media and the government, obstruct normal business operations and negatively affect a company’s image and profit. Barton (1993) also explained that crisis is an unpredictable event with potentially negative consequences that may affect the reputation of a company, its employee, products, service and financial state (p: 2).

Hermann (1963) also defined crisis by asserting that it should be an unpleasant event which has a surprise element taking everybody off guard, posing a serious threat and also necessitate a short response time.

### **2.1.2 Crisis Management**

Milašinovic and Kešetovic (2008) explained that the origin of crisis management can be traced in the history of United States (US) politics when president J.F Kennedy used the expression during the Cuban Missile Crisis of 1962 (p; 179). The term was used as a synonym for “managing of a serious, emergency situation (Milašinovic and Kešetovic, 2008, p; 179). Milašinovic and Kešetovic (2008) explained that crisis management is a form of applied management. It is a practice guided by theory. Gigliotti and Ronald (1991) defined crisis management as an organizations ability to act quickly, efficiently and effectively in possible operations aimed at reducing threats either to human health, security, damage to public or corporate property and negative influences on the continuation of normal business or other operations. This definition however is ineffective according to Milašinovic and Kešetovic, (2008, p.180) because it does not take into consideration many other important aspects of an integrated crisis management plan. The definition only sees crisis management as responding to unpredictable situations.

Crisis management can therefore be explained as a set of functions whose goal is to identify, examine and forecast possible crisis situations and establish special means that would enable an organization prevent crisis or deal with it with minimal or no consequences (Milašinovic & Kešetovic, 2008, p; 180). That is, it encapsulates all activities relating to the prevention, preparation, alleviation of activities that disrupts normalcy.

### **2.1.3 Crisis Communication**

Williams (1957) posit that the general function of communication in crisis is to provide the actors with information which will enable them understand and provide insight. The Swedish Emergency Management Agency (SEMA) defined Crisis communication in their 2008 book “Crisis Communication Handbook” as the information that is exchanged by and between public authorities, organizations, the media, affected individuals and groups before, during, and after a crisis situation (p; 10). The definition simply states that any form of communication before, during, and after crisis between stakeholders can be classified as crisis communication. Čavalić (2015) simplified this definition by asserting that it is “any communication under the state of crisis” (p;4).

The image of an organization is very important to the value and sustainability of every business. Crisis communication can be linked to the overall strategic communication process of an organization which is geared towards the preservation of the organization’s image especially during crisis/ uncertainties. Cohn (2007) argued that crisis management team should as much as possible try to answer some three questions during crisis communication; that is; what happened? What will the organization do about it? How will it affect the organization? Čavalić (2008) advised that since crises is inevitable to any organization; there is the need for every organization to prepare adequately for such moments.

### **2.1.4 Social media and Crisis Communication**

The internet has made crisis communication very difficult as managers and PR practitioners within organizations are always on alert to respond quickly to events that unfold. Brachten et al (2018) observed that Social media has altered the way in which crises are perceived and communicated. Social media has become a key instrument for information sharing that enhances communication

among people (Mirbabaie et al., 2014 and Palen et al., 2010). Crises situation results in a lot of uncertainties and miscommunications through the lack of information (Dervin, 2003 and Weick, 1988). This lack of information creates room for rumors which eventually becomes public opinion (Dervin, 2003). Brachten et al (2018) posit that in times like these, social media can be used to fill the gaps in information flow. Mirbabaie and Zapatka (2017) explained that several research efforts have concluded that in times of crisis, social media platforms can be highly effective for all participants to make sense of events. Users of social media end up giving accurate information especially when they are closer to the action.

Crisis could also be triggered by social media. Stieglitz et al (2017b) argued that while social media can be very effective in crisis communication, it can also aid in the spread of false information especially through social bots – accounts on social media platforms that mimic human behavior and spread vast amounts of messages believed to aim at influencing human user's opinions. These accounts have seen a rise in attention lately, oftentimes in the context of a possible interference in politics. Information shared on these accounts are mostly shared by people and that is how rumors are shared.

Wang (2015) observed that social media has been utilized for Public Relations practice since 2004 and has influenced both individuals and society (Khang, Ki and Ye, 2012). Stenger (2014) states that crisis has a way of spreading faster on social media because there are more dialogues which also allows for easy content sharing. Social media gives organizations the opportunity to scan the environment to analyze public opinion during crisis situations and also come up with strategies on how crisis situations can be diffused. Schultz et al (2011) as cited in Rush (2015) stated that social media makes it more easy for organizations to communicate and engage stakeholders during crisis situations. Schultz et al (2011) argued that blogs and twitter enables two-way communications and

also encourages dialogue which is much useful during crisis communication and crisis management.

### **2.1.5 Vodafone Ghana**

Vodafone Ghana is a Ghanaian Telecommunication company which came into existence after Vodafone world bought a 70% stake of government-owned telecommunication company called Ghana Telecom in 2008 ([www.vodafone.com.gh](http://www.vodafone.com.gh) , retrieved on 9<sup>th</sup> September, 2020). The company has since become one of the largest telecommunication companies in Ghana providing service to over 15.01 percent of the market shares as at 2014 according to the National Communication Authority (N.C.A). In 2018, the companies' market shares increased by 16% just behind MTN and AirtelTigo ([www.vodafone.com.gh](http://www.vodafone.com.gh) , retrieved on 9<sup>th</sup> September, 2020).

According to Asamoah (2019), Vodafone Ghana has adopted series of strategies to meet demands and also to create an exciting customer experience for its subscribers. Vodafone in order to solidify the relationship between the company and its customers has created an online presence by creating social media platforms for almost all the social media outlets. These platforms allow them to engage customers and also advertise their products to their publics. It also helps them scan their online environment and also helps them to engage in promotional activities.

### **2.1.6 Organizations and social media use.**

Kent (2015) argued that organizations use social media as a strategic way of connecting with stakeholders and the general public. Men & Tsai (2012) discussed three ways corporations engage their publics, these are; Openness, Information dissemination and interactivity. Openness refers to the willingness of companies to allow the public into their company through information (pictures and videos) posted online. Information dissemination refers to the ability of companies to address

the interests and concerns of stakeholders. Interactivity refers to the way companies allow interaction and direct contact with stakeholders. Interactivity leads to dialogue and engagement (Gomez & Borges, n.d). Apart from publishing information and generating dialogues, Argenti (2006) added that social media can be used by organizations to measure the effectiveness of communication.

Kent & Taylor (2014) argued that social media is seen as a tool in public relations and advertising as a tool for building relationships, sales tool, linking people to brands, people to people, people to organizations and organizations to organizations (p;6). Social media extends beyond traditional media relations and offers organizations the potential to share information, engage publics and build relationships.

### **2.1.7 Social media and its effect on crisis management**

Kent & Taylor (2014) argued that social media builds social capital and relationships. According to them, social capital refers to the benefits that emerge out of the interaction and shared ideology of individual citizens and organizations acting together to deal with collective goals (Kent & Taylor, 2014, p.8). Social media is used strategically to raise awareness on issues during crisis. With the help of social media, institutions can send information across to the general public during crisis situation. For example, in recent times in Ghana, the Minister for Information, Kojo Opong Nkrumah in a *Facebook* post and a tweet from *Twitter* announced that the President would be going on a two week self-isolation as some people within his inner circle had tested positive for the COVID-19 disease. This goes to prove that social media help in delivering information very fast and easily to the public especially in times of crisis.

Social media is changing the way mainstream media operates and is very instrumental in setting the Agenda for individuals, organizations and countries as a whole (Dowd, 2013). For instance, Iran's protest was reported to the world through social media (Twitter) when the government barred news outlets from reporting on the protest (Valentini & Kruckerberg, 2011). In the recent *#BlackLivesMatters* protest in the US, most of the activities were reported through social media. The dialogic nature of social media allows people to communicate, interact and share multimedia freely and publicly. This shared information can be viewed by social media users across the world (Pang et. al, 2014).

To effectively negotiate crisis on social media and respond with appropriate strategies, communication practitioners need to understand, how crisis are triggered online, how crises are escalated and how crisis gain credibility offline when reported in mainstream media (Pang et al, 2014). The news-gathering process has also shifted from a linear to a networked process whereby there is constant communication and interaction with sources and reactors (Pang et al, 2014, p.6).

Čavalić (2015) argued that in crisis, it is primarily to use the internet site as the central platform for crisis communications. Websites and official social media outlets of organizations are mostly the first source where users seek information in times of crisis. This allows organizations create and disseminate relevant and verifiable sources of information (Čavalić, 2015).

## **2.2 Theoretical framework**

### **2.2.1 Contextual Design**

Contextual design is a powerful approach to obtaining and analyzing behavioural data (Beyer & Holblatt, 1998). It focuses on understanding users through field research (Grudin, 2006). It has been used to design business systems, websites, mobile devices, mobile apps, medical devices,

cloud based solutions, and others (Asamoah, 2019). Contextual design is a framework used to analyze and present user data, drive ideation from data, design specific product solutions and repeat those solutions with customers (Holtblah & Beyer (2015). Asamoah (2019) noted that in recent times, companies gather data on social media through which they make informed decisions.

### **2.2.2 Contextual design in crisis communication**

The contextual design framework will help us understand how companies use information obtained from social media to design a comprehensive communication strategy for crisis communication and crisis management.

The Internet has provided individuals the opportunity to interact with people without the need for physical meetings (Gruzd et al. 2011). Social media offer different values to firms, such as enhanced brand popularity (de Vries, Gensler &c Leeflang 2012), facilitating word-of-mouth communication (Chen et al. 2011b), increasing sales (Agnihotri et al. 2012), sharing information in a business context (Lu & Hsiao 2010) and generating social support from consumers (Ali 2011; Ballantine & Stephenson 2011).

Companies now use information on social media to gather data about their company from consumers. This information help the companies identify how customers think about them and their products (Asamoah, 2019). This information also informs the communication strategy that speaks to the needs of the customers and also their target audience (Asamoah, 2015).

Čavalić (2015) cited Bulajić (2010, p. 87) discussed the seven steps which needs to be taken into accounts when planning for crises situations. They are; establishment of crisis staff, establishment of internal communication in crisis situations, identification and training spokespersons to speak on crisis situations, development of scenarios and simulations of crisis and finding the appropriate

ways to handle them, determination of the different target groups of the public, crafting the key messages for the target audience and determining the most effective method of communicating. Contextual design helps organizations profile their publics and also help determine how to communicate with them effectively.

In crisis communication, social media has given Public relations practitioners an avenue to scan their environment in order to understand what issues are being raised and how people are reacting to them. This helps organizations come up with the appropriate strategies to engage the public and encourage dialogue and interaction which in a long run can establish and strengthen already good relationships (Gomez, Chalmeta & Sosa-Verela, 2012).

Asamoah (2019) in a recent study found that Vodafone Ghana employs the use of social media to gather data on their customers on how they (customers) perceive their services and also to determine the performance of their promotional activities. This data also helps Vodafone Ghana to determine crisis situations in order to devise solutions that best serve the customers and the company (Asamoah, 2019).

Contextual design as stated earlier helps gather data about customers. This data is analyzed and then used productively for the good of the organization and the public. In crisis communication, it is important for communicators to gather data (information) about the crisis (situation) and devise appropriate response to tackle issues. Contextual design helps organizations develop the model for data collections and also proffers solution.

### **2.2.3 Situational theory**

James E. Grunig in 1968 began to develop the situational theory of publics (Grunig, 2005). The situational theory of publics explains when and why individuals become active in communication

behaviours such as information seeking (Grunig, 2003). The theory according to Grunig (1989) was designed to distinguish between stakeholders and publics and used the two concepts to segment the general population into categories that help professionals identify strategic publics and to plan and evaluate Public Relations programs. Grunig (2016) argued that public arises depending on some decisions of the organization. Grunig reserved the term *stakeholder* for general categories of people who are affected by the actual or potential consequences of strategic or important organizational decisions (Grunig, 2016, p. 2).

The theory can be used to identify the various types of publics by studying how they are actively involved in a particular situation. Stakeholders who are actively involved in organizational activities can be classified as active publics. These people are constantly scrutinizing organizations activities. This publics can make issues out of organizational activities which may lead to crisis. The theory uses the principle of *active* and *passive* behaviours to distinguish or segment the general population into various publics. The situational theory holds that, problems come and go and these problems are only relevant to the people who are mostly affected by them. As a result, publics arises and disappears depending on the problems and who they affect (Grunig, 2016).

According to Grunig (2016) the theory helps to explain the nature of public opinion because it incorporates the assumptions of John Dewey (1927) and Herbert Blumer (1966). The theory allows organizations to really appreciate the importance of publics and how they can affect the organization if they are not managed properly. Dewey (1927) and Blumer (1966) explained that publics are critical to democratic processes. Publics are able to recognize problems that affect them and organize to get them resolved by the appropriate authorities (Kim & Grunig, 2011). This according to Grunig (2003) has become very important to the understanding of opinions of publics and the social processes created by their behaviour.

The theory has three variables that explain and predict communication behaviour (that is; problem recognition, level of involvement, and constraint recognition) and two dependent variables that describes active and passive communication behaviours in acquiring information that is; information seeking and attending (Kim and Grunig, 2011). The theory suggest that information consumption becomes systematic when people find that the information matches their subjective life problems (Grunig, 1997, Kim and Grunig, 2011).

The individual's ability to seek information is what makes him/her an active public (Grunig, 1997; Aldoory, 2001 & Aldoory, Kim & Tindall, 2009). Information processing members do discover or recognize a message through the media but may not necessarily act upon it. The theory divides publics into four (4) based on their recognition and involvement about an organization or issue. They are Nonpublic, Latent public, Aware public, Active public. These four (4) publics are identified based on their level of problem recognition, level of constraint and level of involvement.

Nonpublic are people with low problem recognition and low level of constraint whose level of involvement is also low. These people do not care about the information and normally have no connection with the situation. With these types of publics, communication is not necessarily needed. The Latent publics also have low problem recognition and high/low constraint level. These people do not really get involved in issues even though it might affect them a little. Aware publics are also people who have high problem recognition and high constraint recognition. They are also very well aware of the problem and situation. Active publics have very high problem recognition, low constraint level and high level of involvement. These people are actively seeking information and asking questions. They are publics who are most likely to a trigger a crisis situation. Practitioners need to always find more creative ways of providing them information and establishing mutual relations with them.

### **2.3 Chapter Summary**

This chapter reviewed literature in relation to the topic under study. The chapter discussed the conceptual and theoretical framework. The chapter defined concepts such as crisis, crisis management, and crisis communication and also discussed the social media channels organizations use for corporate communication and crisis communication. The study also discussed how organizations use social media during crisis communication and its effectiveness in being used for the purpose. The chapter also discussed two theories which are the conceptual design theory which explains how organizations design communication strategies based on research and constant monitoring of customers activities online and how they react to situations. The situational theory also helps to us understand how publics arise and how organizations deal with them separately depending on their involvement in the issues at stake.

The next Chapter discusses the methodology of the study, techniques used in data collection, samples and how the data is going to be interpreted.

## CHAPTER THREE

### RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

#### 3.0 Introduction

This study examines the use of social media in crisis management. This chapter will discuss the proposed mode of research, provides an overview of the methodology and techniques used to conduct the research. The study will demonstrate the relevance of the methodology to the study and also highlight the potential limitation of the study.

#### 3.1 Research Design

Many researchers have studied the concept of social media and crisis communication using different methodologies and techniques. Andrew, Morgoch & Boatwright (2019) employed the use of content analyses to study social media activities of some organizations during crisis situation. Wigley & Zhang (2011) also used quantitative methods and techniques in studying practitioners' use of social media in crisis planning. This study however, would have employed qualitative methodology in studying the effectiveness of social media in crisis communication in Vodafone Ghana.

Gunter (2000) argues that qualitative methodology can be very subjective since the researcher is most likely to tell us their experience and also try to translate the experience of their respondents. This means that most of the interpretation might be from the researcher's point of view and might not represent reality. Qualitative research can be very subjective but a careful methodology driven by an accurate data collection technique from the researcher can give some credibility to the study. In this instance, the researcher is going to record the interview of every respondent with a recorder

and transcribe everything vividly before analyzing the information obtained. This is to make sure that the researcher captures all the information provided by the interviewee without any misrepresentation or misplacement of information.

### **3.2 Population**

The targeted population of this study was going to be staff members of the Communication and Marketing department of Vodafone Ghana. The main aim of the study is to examine how Vodafone Ghana employs the use of social media during crisis communication. This means that the employees working within the Communications and Marketing department will be in a better position to provide me with information on their social media use and crisis communication strategies.

### **3.3 Sample Size and Sampling Procedure**

The study would have adopted the use of purposive sampling technique. The study was going to engage Five (5) staff members of the Communication and Marketing department of Vodafone Ghana. The researcher was going to write to the HR department of Vodafone Ghana informing the company about the study and also to seek permission to interview some members of the communication and Marketing department. After the request has been granted, the researcher would have then schedule a meeting to each of the five members and interview them. This sampling method changed in the course of the study due to the threats posed by the COVID-19. The researcher and the research department of the Ghana Institute of Journalism thought it wise to consider analyzing secondary data instead of going out to the field to gather data and exposing one's self to the virus.

### **3.4 Data collection technique**

Data collection would have enabled us understand in detail how Vodafone Ghana uses social media for social engagement and other activities. In collecting data, the study would have interviewed about five (5) staff of the Communication and Marketing departments who had considerable knowledge about the company and their social engagement policies. These respondents will answer questions relating to how the organization uses social media in their communication and also its effectiveness during crisis situations. But due to the ramification of the COVID-19, the researcher decided to review works of other scholars who have worked on the influence of social media in crisis communication and management.

### **3.5 Data Analysis Technique**

The study would have employed the use of thematic observation in the analysis of data. Braun & Clarke (2012) argued that thematic analysis (observation) is a method for “systematically identifying, organizing, and offering insight into patterns of meaning across dataset” (p. 1). Thematic observation gives the researcher the opportunity to go into details in order to understand the phenomenon under study. According to Braun & Clarke (2012), there are two main reasons for using thematic analysis which are accessible and flexible. It is also very easy to understand how to use it and makes us aware of how we can make sense of situations using themes. This study however analyzed the secondary data obtained from the findings of other researchers. These findings were analyzed thematically according to the specific objectives of the study.

### **3.6 Chapter Summary**

This chapter discussed the research methodology employed by the study, techniques for data collection and analysis and also the importance of using such methodology. In the main, the study would have employed the use of qualitative design. Five (5) staff members of the Communication and Marketing Departments of Vodafone Ghana would be interviewed and data will be gathered and analyzed using thematic observation but the study decided to use data obtained from other scholars in its data analysis because of the impact of the global pandemic;’ COVID 19.

The next chapter would be discussing findings of related studies, relevance of the study and also some challenges of the study.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### 4.0 Introduction

The chapter gives an overview of some possible outcomes of the study. Due to the COVID 19 disease experienced by the country and all over the world, I could not collect data from my research participants as proposed earlier; but was compelled to extrapolate the findings of earlier researchers and analyse the common themes and findings made by such studies. Thus, the study will review findings of related studies and how such findings may affect this study and add to knowledge on the phenomenon. The study will discuss the findings based on the specific objectives provided in chapter one.

### 4.1 Discussions of related studies

#### 4.1.1 Social Media channels used by organizations to engage the public

Andoh-Quaino & Annor-Antwi (2015) in studying how some financial companies use social media came to the conclusion that most of the firms use *Facebook* as a PR tool. Their study revealed that 92.31% of the total *Facebook* post were targeted at customers as well as the general public.

Gomez, Chalmeta & Sosa-Verela (2012) also argued that most companies have had to change their communication strategies and approach to attract customers. After their analysis of the *Facebook* and *Twitter* profiles of 50 companies in the U.S.A, Gomez et al (2012) established that 74% had a link of their *Facebook and Twitter* account on their websites (p. 2). The study also revealed that 43 out of 50 of the companies studied had twitter accounts while 39 organizations were on *Facebook*.

Raj, Joseph & Rousseau (2015) argued that companies use social media channels like blogs, Facebook (95.24%), Twitter (80.95%), LinkedIn (71.43%), and YouTube (61.90%) for corporate communications purposes and activities. According to them, *Facebook* and *Twitter* were intensively used for corporate communication and engagement by professionals across Bengaluru city. Kent and Taylor (2014) corroborated this assertion by stating that in the US, the “big” (Most used) social media platforms are *Facebook* and *Twitter* (p.6). Other channels such as, *LinkedIn*, *Pinterest* and *Instagram* were also used by citizens, and organizations in their communication efforts (Raj, Joseph & Rousseau, 2015).

#### **4.1.2 How organizations use social media to engage the public**

Gomez, Chalmeta & Sosa-Verela (2012) found from their studies in the U.S that companies posted more on information on *twitter* than on *Facebook*. Their study revealed that most companies (32 firms) used social media to report on their Corporate Social Responsibility CSR activities. Waters et al (2009) argued that companies employ the use of social networking sites to establish and maintain relationships and also to interact with stakeholders. Social media fosters trust and dialogue by enabling stronger relations with key stakeholders (Sweetser, 2010, McCorkindale, 2010 as cited by Gomez & Borges n.d, p; 4).

In a study conducted by Wigley & Zhang (2011), they found that only 97% of respondents of the Public Relations Society of America (PRSA) used social media with majority, 82% of the respondents saying that their organizations used social media for organizational purposes. The study also found that organizations used social media to scan the environment in order to hear what people were saying about their organizations, the industry they operate in, and competition in their industry of operation (p.6).

Andoh-Quaino & Annor- Antwi (2015) in Ghana found that most organizations (92.31%) used social media to engage the public. Their study also revealed that most of the social media posts were meant for their customers as well as the general public. They argued that social media has provided organizations the opportunity to create awareness and also to reach out to the public.

From the studies above we can argue that most organizations use social media to engage with their publics, send messages across and also create awareness for their organizations. That being said, one can also argue that social media is mostly good for public engagement.

#### **4.1.3 Effectiveness of social media in crisis management**

Gomez, Chalmeta & Sosa-Verela (2012) argued that social media is an excellent tool for companies to generate stakeholder dialogue and engagement. Raj, Joseph & Rousseau (2015) argued that social media has empowered the consumer by giving them powers to express their views about products or services freely to their networks. Companies build their image, reputations and brands on social media now (Raj, Joseph & Rousseau, 2015).

In analyzing social media as an effective tool for risk communication, Kelly (2014) found that social media is mostly beneficial when used for real time information (19.67%), crisis management (18.03%), risk management (16.39%), public relations (14.75%) and unfiltered direct communication (9.84%). Farha (2015) also confirmed that social media is very important during crisis situation.

In a qualitative study by Asamoah (2019) on the effectiveness of social media on corporate communications on Vodafone, respondents argued that at Vodafone, social media is very important to engaging stakeholders during crisis situation. They noted that social media helps get

information to the public very fast as compared to the other channels available and also argued that social media compared to other channels is relatively cheap and cost effective.

Studies by Kelly (2014), Raj, Joseph & Rousseau, (2015), and Asamoah (2019) all found that during crisis management, social media is an effective way of communicating to the public. Farha (2015) however argued that communication on social media during crisis situation needs to be carefully crafted and strategically placed in order not to create more confusion which is going to escalate the crisis.

## **4.2 Chapter Summary**

This chapter discussed the findings of other researches in relation to the objectives of this study. The study focused on studies from Andoh-Quaino & Annor-Antwi (2015), Gomez, Chalmeta & Sosa-Verela (2012), Gomez et al (2012), Kelly (2014), Kent & Taylor (2014), Wigley & Zhang (2011), Farha (2015), and Asamoah. In the analysis, it was found that most organizations use *Facebook and Twitter* more than the other social media channels. It was also found that organizations use social media for public engagements, promotions and generally for crisis management. Finally, the analysis also posits that social media has become a very effective channel for communication during crisis situation.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **SUMMARY, LIMITATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATION**

#### **5.0 Introduction**

This chapter will discuss the relevance of our study and some challenges throughout the conduction of the study. It also proposes recommendations for policy making and further studies on the phenomenon under study. The chapter also summarizes some of the findings made by earlier studies and identifies the common threads found in these studies. It also enumerates some of the limitations of the study due to the COVID 19 pandemic experienced in Ghana and the world at large.

#### **5.1 Summary of the Study**

The study examined the use of social media for crisis management. To be able to achieve this objective, the study sort to investigate the channels Vodafone Ghana use to engage publics during crises periods, its effectiveness, and how Vodafone Ghana uses social media to engage its publics. The study employed the use of qualitative research design in the gathering of data. The research was supposed to interview five (5) members of the Communication and Marketing department of Vodafone Ghana but because of the impact of the COVID-19 researchers were advised against gathering data through interviews. For this reason, the researcher decided to review findings of other studies and contextualize it within the framework of this study.

The study affirms the relevance of the situational theory and the theory of contextual design in understanding the effectiveness of social media in crisis management. The theory of contextual design helps us understand why companies use social media to gather data about customers and

how that data is analyzed and used productively. The study also helps us understand that how practitioners scan the internet to enable them identify possible threats through data collection and how communication strategies are adopted to help neutralize possible crisis situations.

The situational theory also gives us an insight into how publics are formed and how practitioners can group the various publics into categories. The theory also helps practitioners analyze the various publics during crisis situations and also how to develop a communication strategy to meet the demands of each category.

The study also helped practitioners into understanding how social media can be used during crisis situation. By reviewing and analyzing the works of some scholars like Asamoah (2019), Gruzd et al. (2011), de Vries, Gensler & Leeflang (2012), Čavalić (2015), Pang et al, 2014, p; 6), Dwod (2013), we have been able to analyze the importance of social media in crisis communication. This is going to help practitioners learn and understand the concept of social media and also adopt social media in their communication strategy since it can be a very effective means of communication.

This study is going to add-up to the works of Gomez, Chalmeta & Sosa-Verela (2012), Raj, Joseph & Rousseau (2015), and Breakenridge, (2012) who have all tackled social media and crisis communication in previous publications. This is going to add up to existing literature which is also going to help students and researchers who wish to study the phenomenon relating to social media and crisis management.

The study also gives us the opportunity to understand the use of social media for corporate communication by practitioners and companies in Ghana. The study gives us an idea of the type of social media used, how organizations adopt the use of social media and its effectiveness to corporate communications and crisis management.

## **5.2 Limitation of the Study**

One major limitation of the study was COVID-19. The global pandemic forced the research to change course. The proposed methodology of the study was qualitative research design. The qualitative design would have helped us understand social media use and crisis communication from the practitioner's point of view but the researcher was constrained by the global Pandemic(COVID 19) to review its methodology and analyzed findings of other related studies in relation to the specific objectives of the study. This method however effective cannot help us understand the true reflection of events on the grounds. The study wanted to use Vodafone Ghana as a case study but this type of methodology cannot help us achieve that aim. This has become a challenge to the study since the results which would be obtained cannot be conclusive.

## **5.3 Recommendation of the Study**

The researcher recommends that future research should adopt the mixed method approach in their study. This will give the study some strength as it will give the researcher the opportunity to explore and investigate into details and also to capture the number of practitioners affected by the phenomenon. A mixed method can give us a broader view of the number of practitioners who agrees with the submissions and also provide us with reasons and depth.

The researcher recommends that practitioners take online communication seriously. Online communications and social media engagements have become a very important asset to organizations especially in a competitive market. It has therefore become important that, practitioners understand the technical knowhow to effectively communicate online. Practitioners can take up courses on Social media engagements and digital marketing in order to learn and understand how online communication works.

## **5.4 Chapter Summary**

The chapter discussed the summary of the study, limitations and also proposed some recommendations for future studies. One major limitation of the study was the change in methodology due to the impact of the COVID 19. The study also recommended that future studies use mixed methodology in gathering data. This is because mix methodology would potentially give us a broader perspective of how influential social media is during crisis situations.

## REFERENCE

- Aldoory, L. (2001) Making health communications meaningful for women: Factors that Influence involvement, *Journal of Public Relations Research* 13(2) 163-185
- Andoh-Quainoo & Annor- Antwi, (2015). The use of social Media in Public Relations: a case of Facebook in the Ghanaian Financial Service Industry. *New Media and Mass Communication*, 41(2224-327), pp. 37-47.
- Agnihotri, R., Dingus, R., Hu, M. Y. & Krush , M. T., (2013) Social Media: Influencing Customer satisfaction in B2B sales. *Industrial Marketing Management*
- Ali, H. (2011) Exchanging value within individuals' networks: social support implications for health marketers. *Journal of Marketing Management*, 27, 3/4, pp. 316-335.
- Argenti, P. (2006). How Technology has influenced the field of corporate communication. *Journal of Business and Technical Communication*, 20, (3), 357-370. doi: 10.1177/1050651906287260
- Apuke, O. & Tunca, A. (2018) Social media and crisis management: A review and analysis of existing studies, *LAÜ Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi (IX-II)*: 199-215
- Ballantine, P. W. & Stephenson, R. J., (2011), Help me, I'm fat! Social Support in Online Weight loss networks, *Journal of consumer Behaviour*, Volume 6, pp. 332-337
- Barton, L. (1993). *Crisis in Organizations: Managing and Communicating in the Heat of Chaos*. South-Western Publishing Co. ISBN 0-538- 81818. p.256
- Beyer, K. H. & Holblatt. R., (2014). *Contextual Design: Evolved. Synthesis Lectures on Human Centered informatics*, Volume 4, pp. 1-91.

Brachten, F., Stieglitz, S., Hofeditz, L., Kloppenborg, K., Reimann, A., 2017. Strategies and Influence of Social Bots in a 2017 German state election, in: Proceedings of the Australasian Conference on Information Systems. pp. 1–12.

Brachten, F. Mirbabaie, M., Stieglitz, S., Berger, O., Bludau, S., Schrickei, K., (2018) Threat or Opportunity? - Examining Social Bots in Social Media Crisis Communication, Australasian Conference on Information Systems, Sydney.

Bulajić M., (2010), Krizno komuniciranje, MEDIX, Vol.16 No.87/88, Zagreb

Čavalić, A. (2015) Crisis communication and the Internet, Conference: Conference: 4th International Scientific Conference “Economy of Integration”- ICEI 2015

Chen, Y., Fay, S. & Wang, Q. (2011) The role of marketing in social media: how online consumer reviews evolve. *Journal of Interactive Marketing*, 25, 2, pp. 85-94.

Cohn R., (2007), The PR Crisis Bible, Robin Cohn, New York

Chua, A. & Banerjee, S. (2013) Customer Knowledge management via social media: The case of Starbucks, *Journal of Knowledge Management*, 17(2): 237-249.

de Vries, L., Gensler, S. & Leeflang, ES.H. (2012) Popularity of brand posts on brand fan pages: an investigation of the effects of social media marketing. *Journal of Interactive Marketing*, 26, 2, pp. 83-91.

Dervin, B., 2003. Sense-making Methodology Reader: Selected Writings of Brenda Dervin, Sensemaking Methodology Reader Selected Writings of Brenda Dervin.

Derani, N., & Naidu, P, (2016) The Impact of Utilizing Social Media as a Communication Platform during a Crisis within the Oil industry. *Procedia Economics and Finance*. P. 650-658, DOI: 10.1016/S2212-5671(16)00080-0

Dowd, M., 2013. Lost In The ‘Total Noise’ Of Information. *New York Times*, P. A28.

Gruzd, A., Wellman, B. Sc Takhteyev, Y. (2011) Imagining Twitter as an imagined community, *American Behavioral Scientist*, 55, 10, pp. 1294-1318.

Grunig, J & Grunig, L. (1989) Toward a theory of the public relations behaviour of organizations: Review of a Program of Research, *Public Relations Research Annual* 1(1):27-63

Grunig, J. (2003) Constructing public relations theory and practice, *Communication, A Different Kind of Horse Race: Essays Honoring Richard F. Carter*, pp.85-115, Publisher: Hampton Press.

Grunig, J. (2016) Legend of PR, Murray State’s Digital Commons

Gunter (2000) *Media Research Methods: Measuring Audiences, Reactions and impact*. SAGE Publications, 076195659X, 9780761956594

Fearn-Banks, K., 2011. Crisis communication: A case book approach. <http://www.ebib.com>

Hermann, C. (1963), Some consequences of crisis which limit the viability of organizations, *Administrative science quarterly*, p. 61-82

Kent, M. L., & Taylor, M. (2002). Toward a dialogic theory of public relations. *Public Relations Review*, 28(1), 21–37. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0363-8111\(02\)00108-X](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0363-8111(02)00108-X)

Kent, M. (2015) The Power of Storytelling in Public Relations: Understanding the 20 Master Plots, *Public Relations Review* 41(4):480–489.

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.

Kim, J & Grunig, J. (2011) Problem Solving and communicative Action: A Situational Theory of Problem Solving, *Journal of Communication* 61(1) <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1460-2466.2010.01529.x>

Lovejoy, K., Waters, R. D., & Saxton, G. D. (2012), Engaging stakeholders through twitter: How nonprofit organizations are getting more out of 140 characters or less. *Public Relations Review*, Volume 2, pp. 313-318.

Lu, H.-P & Hsiao, K.-L. (2010) The influence of extro/introversion on the intention to pay for social networking sites. *Information & Management*, 47, 3, pp. 150-157.

Matthews, L., (2010) Social media and the evolution of corporate communications. *The Elon journal of Undergraduate Research in Communication*, Volume 1, pp. 17-23

McCorkindale, T. (2010) Can you see the writing on my wall? A content analysis of the fortune 50's Facebook social networking sites, *Public Relations Journal* 4 (3).

Mirbabaie, M., Ehnis, C., Stieglitz, S., & Bunker, D. (2014) Communication Roles in Public Events- A Case Study on Twitter Communication, International Federation for Information Processing. P 207-218

Mirbabaie, M., Zapatka, E. (2017). Sensemaking in Social Media Crisis Communication - A Case Study on the Brussels Bombings in 2016. Proceedings of the Twenty-Fifth European Conference on Information Systems (ECIS), Guimarães, Portugal

Milašinović, S. & Kešetović, Z. (2008) Crisis and crisis management : a contribution to a conceptual & terminological delimitation, *Megatrend review : the international review of applied economics*. ISSN 1820-3159, ZDB-ID 2209782X. - Vol. 5(1) p. 167-186

Pang, A., Hassan, N. B. B. A., Chong, A. C. Y., 2014. Negotiating Crisis in the Social Media Environment: Evolution of Crises Online, Gaining Credibility Offline. *Corporate Communications: An International Journal*, 19(1), p. 1-7.

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*.

Palen, L., Anderson, K.M., Mark, G., Martin, J., Sicker, D., Palmer, M., Grunwald, D., 2010. A vision for technology-mediated support for public participation & assistance in mass emergencies & disasters. *Proc. 2010 ACMBCS Visions Comput. Sci. Conf.* 1–12.

Raj, M., Joseph, K & Rousseau, J (2015) Corporate communication & social media: A study of its usage pattern, *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science Invention*, 4 (8) p 59-66

Schultz, F., Utz, S., Goritz, A., 2011. Is The Medium The Message? Perceptions Of and Reactions to Crisis Communication via Twitter, Blogs and Traditional Media. *Public Relations Review*, 37(1), 20-27.

Sigala, M. (2011) Social Media and Crisis Management in Tourism: Applications and Implications for Research, *Information Technology & Tourism* 13(4) DOI: 10.3727/109830512X13364362859812

Stieglitz, S., Bunker, D., Mirbabaie, M. and Ehnis, C. (2017), "Sense-Making in Social Media During Extreme Events." *Journal of Contingencies and Crisis Management* 26 (1), 4-15.

Stieglitz, S., Mirbabaie, M., Schwenner, L., Marx, J., Lehr, J. and Brünker, F. (2017b). "Sensemaking and Communication Roles in Social Media Crisis Communication." In: Proceedings of the International Conference on Wirtschaftsinformatik. St. Gallen: Switzerland, p. 1333-1347.

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.

Sweetser, K. (2010), A Losing Strategy: The Impact of Nondisclosure in Social Media on Relationships, *Journal of Public Relations Research*, 22(3), p. 288-312

Tsai, W & Men, L (2014) Consumer engagement with brand on social network sites: A cross-cultural comparison of China and the USA, *Journal of Marketing Communication*, DOI: 10.1080/13527266.2014.942678

Valentini, C & Kruckeberg, D. (2016) The Future Role of Social media in International Crisis Communication, *The Handbook of International Crisis Communication Research*, p. 478-488

Waters, R., Burnett, E., Lamm, A., & Lucas, J. (2009) Engaging stakeholders through social networking: How nonprofit organizations are using Facebook, *Public Relations Review* 35(2):102-106

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.

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