

**CRISIS COMMUNICATION PREPAREDNESS IN KENYA'S
TELECOMMUNICATION INDUSTRY: A CASE OF JAMII
TELECOMMUNICATION LIMITED**

BY

NANCY JEPCHIRCHIR KOSGEY

**A RESEARCH THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF
THE REQUIREMENT FOR THE AWARD OF MASTER OF SCIENCE IN
COMMUNICATION STUDIES IN THE DEPARTMENT OF
PUBLISHING, JOURNALISM AND COMMUNICATION STUDIES
SCHOOL OF INFORMATION SCIENCES,
MOI UNIVERSITY**

2025

DECLARATION

DECLARATION BY THE STUDENT

I declare that this thesis is my work and has not been submitted for examination in any other institution of higher learning. No part of this thesis may be reproduced in any form without the author's or Moi University's permission.

Sign: 

Date: 07/05/2025

NANCY J. KOSGEY
SIS/PGC/002/2018

DECLARATION BY THE SUPERVISORS:

This Thesis has been submitted for examination with our approval as the University supervisors.

Signed: 

Date: 21/05/2025

Prof. Bernard Malakwen
Department of Publishing, Journalism and Communication Studies
School of Information Sciences
Moi University

Sign: 

Date: 16/06/2025

Dr. Victoria Kutto
Department of Publishing, Journalism and Communication Studies
School of Information Sciences
Moi University

DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to the almighty God for the gift of life and good health throughout the time I have been in school. To my mother Flora, my fiancé Paul, my sisters, and brothers, for investing in my education, their support and inspiration during the entire period of my study and to my dear sons Wandendeya and Wambi, you inspire me to be better; this is majorly for you.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

With utmost gratitude, I would like to thank my Supervisors, Dr Victoria Kutto and Professor Bernard Malakwen, for being my source of empowerment and for their constant dedication to guiding me in this research process since my undergraduate program to date. May God bless them abundantly.

I am also grateful to all the lecturers in the Department of Publishing, Journalism and Communication Studies for equipping me with all the invaluable skills that are very useful in the research process. I thank my fellow students and the research participants.

Much gratitude also goes to my family members for their constant financial and moral support. Lastly, I fully take responsibility for the final content of this thesis. None of the above is to take responsibility for the consequences of publishing this product.

ABSTRACT

The telecommunication industry plays an integral role in the socio-economic society, yet few studies have been conducted regarding the importance and need for crisis communication preparedness within the industry. The unpredictable nature of crises places a great demand on crisis communication preparedness for when the need arises. This study aims to investigate crisis communication preparedness in Kenya's telecommunication industry. The findings, as well as the recommendations given will add literature to the academic world as well as act as a point of reference for other firms. This study addresses three key questions: What policies and structural strategies have been put in place in preparedness to handle crisis communication? What are the factors that affect the implementation of effective preparedness for crisis communication? How does the organization plan to mitigate the factors that may affect preparedness to handle crisis communication? The study adopted a qualitative approach using a case study as a method of inquiry focusing on Jamii Telecommunication Limited and guided by the theory of attribution that draws from people's personal experiences of crisis and situational crisis communication theory that states that strategic crisis response should match the magnitude of the given crisis responsibility posed by a given crisis episode. The research used purposive sampling to select 10 participants drawn from 4 out of 12 departments at Jamii Telecommunication Limited's headquarters in Nairobi at the time. Data was collected using interviews and document analysis. Data was presented in a narrative and analysed thematically. The main study findings were that Jamii Telecommunications Limited has a solid crisis communication plan in place to handle the anticipated crises, there are set channels to use based on the nature of the crises, and spokespeople are occasionally trained and tested for various crises. It was revealed that crises outside the organization, like COVID-19 and pre- and post-election activities, hindered their preparedness, while constant testing of the crisis communication plan ensured that they are always prepared for crisis communication. The study recommends that potential crises, like a breakdown of services due to planned cable relocations and general power outages, should be identified and mitigation actions put in place early to avoid potential crises that might arise from internet downtime. Issues bigger than the organization, like elections, should be brought to the attention of the management by relevant external bodies to enable JTL to prepare in case of a crisis, since a date is always set for the activity, giving room for early communication and mitigation plans.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

DECLARATION	ii
DEDICATION	iii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	iv
ABSTRACT	v
TABLE OF CONTENTS	vi
LIST OF TABLES	x
LIST OF FIGURES	xi
ACRONYMS	xii
CHAPTER ONE.....	1
BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY	1
1.1 Introduction	1
1.1.1 Context of the Study	1
1.1.2 The level of preparedness of organizations to handle crisis communication.	7
1.1.3 Telecommunication Industry in Kenya.....	13
1.1.4 Jamii Telecommunications Limited, Kenya	16
1.2 Statement of the problem.....	18
1.3 Research Questions.....	23
1.4 Study Aim.....	23
1.5 Scope of the study	23
1.6 Limitations of the Study	24
1.7 Justification of the study.....	24
1.8 Significance of the study	25
1.9 Study Assumptions.....	26
1.10 Summary.....	26
CHAPTER TWO.....	27
LITERATURE REVIEW	27
2.0 Introduction	27
2.1 Definition of Key Terms	27
2.1.1 Communication.....	27
2.1.3 Organization.....	29
2.1.4 Preparedness	30
2.3 Review of Related Theories	31
2.3.1 Attribution Theory	32
2.3.2 Situational Crisis Communication Theory (SCCT).....	33
2.4 Crisis Communication Function.....	34
2.5 Review of Relevant Research.....	36

2.5.1 Structural strategies that have been put in place in preparedness to handle Crisis communication.....	38
2.5.2 Factors that affect the implementation of effective organizational preparedness for crisis communication.	43
2.5.3 Organizations plan to mitigate the factors that may affect organizational preparedness to handle crisis communication.	45
2.6 Rationale for the Study.....	50
2.7 Summary.....	51
2.8 Research Gaps	55
CHAPTER THREE.....	56
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY	56
3.0 Introduction	56
3.1 Study Site.....	56
3.2 Research Approach.....	57
3.3 Research Design	57
3.4 Population and Sampling.....	58
3.4.1 Target Population.....	58
Source: JTL Census Data 2022	59
3.5 Data Generation Techniques	59
3.6 Data Analysis.....	60
3.7 Ethical Considerations.....	61
3.8 Trustworthiness	61
CHAPTER FOUR: DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS, AND INTERPRETATION	62
4.1 Introduction	62
4.2 Response Rate	62
4.3 Demographic Information	63
4.3.1 Department of the Respondents.....	63
4.4 Analysis Based on Audio Interviews.	64
4.4.2 What are some of the potential Crises that JTL can face?.....	65
4.4.3 Who are the main members of the crisis communication team in JTL?.....	66
4.4.4 In relation to JTL’s preparedness for crisis communication, which measures helped to mitigate the effects of COVID-19?.....	66
4.4.5 Are there governance processes that help in identifying warning signals of a looming crisis? If so, what are some of them?	67
4.4.6 Do you have a specific spokesperson or communication channel specified for crisis communication?	69

4.4.7 Are there any plans for business continuity in the event of a crisis?	69
4.4.8 What are some of the feedback channels you have regarding handling crisis communication?.....	69
4.4.9 Do you think the management is doing enough regarding preparedness to handle crisis communication? If not, what are some of the factors that are hindering it from doing so?	70
4.4.10 Can you define JTL’s preparedness to handle crisis communication as effective? If yes, please let me know what makes it so; if not, what can be done to ensure optimum organizational preparedness?	71
4.4.11 How often is JTL’s preparedness for crisis communication tested?	72
4.5 Descriptive Analysis Based on the Crisis Communication Plan Document.	72
4.5.1 What qualifies to be a crisis?	72
4.5.2 Anticipated Crises within JTL	73
4.5.3 Key Publics & What is important to them.	73
CHAPTER FIVE	76
DISCUSSION, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION.....	76
5.1 Introduction	76
5.2 Summary of Findings	76
5.2.1 Structural Strategies in Preparedness for Crisis Communication	76
5.2.2 Factors Affecting the Implementation of Effective Organizational Preparedness for Crisis Communication	77
5.2.3 Mitigation of Factors Affecting Organizational Preparedness to Handle Crisis Communication	78
5.3 Conclusion.....	79
5.3.1 Conclusion on Structural Strategies in Preparedness for Crisis Communication	81
5.3.2 Conclusion on Factors Affecting the Implementation of Effective Organizational Preparedness for Crisis Communication	82
5.3.3 Conclusion on Mitigation of Factors Affecting Organizational Preparedness to Handle Crisis Communication	82
5.4 Recommendations	83
5.4.1 Structural strategies have been put in place in preparedness to handle Crisis communication.....	84
5.4.2 Factors that affect the implementation of effective organizational preparedness for crisis communication.	86

5.4.3 Organizations plan to mitigate the factors that may affect organizational preparedness to handle crisis communication.	87
5.4.4 Strengthening Crisis Communication Training	89
5.4.5 Investment in Technology	89
5.4.6 Regular Crisis Simulations and Risk Assessments.....	90
5.4.7 Collaboration with External Stakeholders	90
5.4.8 Clear Communication Protocols.....	90
5.5 Areas for Future Research	91
5.5.1 Impact of Social Media on Crisis Communication in Telecommunications	91
5.5.2 The Role of Leadership in Crisis Communication Preparedness	91
5.5.3 Crisis Communication Strategies in a Competitive Market	91
5.5.4 Evaluation of Crisis Communication Models for Telecommunications Companies	92
5.5.5 Cybersecurity and Crisis Communication in Telecommunications	92
REFERENCES	93
APPENDIX I: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS.....	101
APPENDIX II: RESEARCH PERMIT	103
APPENDIX III: ANTIPLAGIARISM CERTIFICATE.....	104

LIST OF TABLES

Table 3.1: Sample Size 59

Table 4.2: Response Rate 63

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 4.1: Departments of the respondents.....	64
Figure 4.2: Potential Crises that JTL can face.....	65
Figure 4.3: A model showing Warning signals of a looming crisis	68
Figure 4.4: Crisis communication channel.....	70

ACRONYMS

AI	Artificial Intelligence
CAK	Communication Authority of Kenya
CMP	Connectivity Management Platform
DWDM	Dense Wavelength Division Multiplexing
EASSY	East African Submarine Cable System
FC	Fiber cut
FTTB	Fiber to the Business
FTTH	Fiber to the Home
FTTX	Fiber to the x
GIS	Geographic Information System
GPON	Gigabit Passive Optical Network
GSMA	GSM Association
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
IEBC	Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission
IOT	Internet of Things
IP	Internet Protocol
IPL	Internet Protocol Link
ISP	Internet Service Provider
JTL	Jamii Telecommunication Limited
KENHA	Kenya National Highways Authority Kenya)
KPLC	Kenya Power and Lighting Company.
MNO	Mobile Network Operator
NOC	Network Operations Centre
OPGW	Optical Ground Wire.
QOS	Quality of Service
SAN	Storage Area Network
SCCT	Situational Crisis Communication Theory
SCCT	Submarine Cable Capacity Test
SLA	Service Level Agreement
SDH	Synchronous Digital Hierarchy.

SEACOM	Southeast African Communications
TDM	Time Division Multiplexing
TEAMS	The East Africa Marine System.
VSAT	Very Small Aperture Terminal.

CHAPTER ONE

BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

1.1 Introduction

This chapter discussed the academic, administrative and research context of this research study; it states the problem, looked at the research questions, and the study's scope, provided the limitations of the research and justified its significance.

1.1.1 Context of the Study

A crisis is defined by Coombs (2015) in *The Handbook of Crisis Communication* as the outlook of an episode that threatens the vital experiences of the publics and can have an impact on a company's performance. Therefore, a crisis is that which happens when a firm's reputation is threatened. A reputation is an assessment of an institute created by its public, who, on the other hand, are the affected populace or those who can affect an organization (Mitchell et al., 2017). Reputation is, consequently, an asset that is worth protecting.

A bad reputation may contribute towards the disappearance of valued customers, which can directly affect the company's livelihood, resulting in dire consequences that manifest in the bottom line (Coombs, 2015). Every organization, whether public or private, wishes to maintain a favourable public image. Unplanned events, however, often place in jeopardy an organization's public credibility and reputation. The catalytic situation may originate from within the organization or external outside the organization. A case becomes an immediate "crisis" communication problem when it draws extensive media

attention and requires a public response through the media. The stakes are high in crisis management, and the margin for error is low (Barton, 2016).

According to Coombs (2007), crisis management in the telecommunications sector is an essential executive job. The main goals of telecom crisis management are to assist customers while maintaining and bolstering the current capacity and state. In the recent past, crisis communication management plans, as well as strategies, have been adopted by both private and public sector organizations, as well as by telecommunication firms in Kenya. For the last two decades, crisis communication has grown as a field of study (Ulmer, Seeger & Sellnow, 2016). It has been addressed from different scientific domains, making it difficult to oversee the bulk of the research that has been conducted. Moreover, research on the effectiveness of organizational preparedness to restore reputations during and after crises is still in its infancy (Hobbs, 2018). This study sought to evaluate the public perception of best practices for crisis preparedness. It further interrogated what the laid down strategies are in place and how they were employed during crisis management episodes to mitigate crisis episodes. At the same time, it determined how firms, through their communication policy, have sought to present their stakeholders with well-timed, precise objectives and complete information during times of crises (Payne, 2014).

Several scholars have extensively written on this area, intending to offer solutions and best practices on crisis preparedness. According to Coombs (2017), communication is the essence of crisis management, and a crisis or threat of a crisis creates a need for information. The reality of crises, he adds, leads to the need for preparation and readiness to respond. The critical component in crisis communication is preparedness. Coombs says

that through communication, information is collected, processed into knowledge, and shared with others. Coombs (2017) posits that no organization can boost immunity to a crisis and that a crisis can spring from within its confines or outside the organization. Reynolds (2016) asserts that people's lives may be endangered once this happens, and the company's standing may be exposed. According to Heath (2018), to explain a crisis, you must first describe danger. Heath states that danger is an occurrence that can have both positive and harmful consequences of varying magnitudes, the prevalence and impact of which can be anticipated and contained on various occasions.

Effectively handling a crisis requires both tact and efficient communication. In the absence of these, the well-being and protection of the public and the image of an organization are at risk. According to Stephens and Malone (2016), how an organization distributes information can impact how it is perceived by the public during crisis response, as well as regular coordination and mitigation efforts. For example, when a crisis intensifies and becomes complex, transforming into multiple communication types, what kind of preparedness is required within an organization? Lesenciuc et al. (2018) document that this approach must consider the area of meaning for preparedness and the robust set of laws used in a crisis. Its approach generally does not limit, neither does it resolve, at an organizational level, a certain type of conduct in its workforce, but it, in turn, provides rules of application so that each member of staff knows his or her function within the organization and, as a result, knows which is his/her role, and thus the final course of action in preparation of crisis communication will deteriorate into a confused, uncoordinated action. Lastly, this strategy encompasses each role, such that each section of the whole organization will be covered.

Gone are the days when companies were only accountable to their shareholders. Apart from the Public becoming expansive, they too are curious and require being well-informed. Organizational preparedness for crisis is, therefore, a vital asset in this fast-changing world. No entity is immune to the crisis, but the level of preparedness to tackle the crisis should be tactful. Effective, fast communication will most definitely strengthen a company's image. The public views an organizations or organization by how a crisis is handled. When stakeholders' well-being is placed before that of a firm, the organization is often given a second lease of life. Preparedness action is key in dealing with a crisis (Anthonissen, 2017).

Barton (2016), Coombs (2017) & Fearn-Banks (2017) have noted how preparedness saves time during a crisis by pre-assigning some tasks, pre-collecting some information, and serving as a reference source. Pre-assigning tasks assumes there is a designated crisis team. The team members should know what duties and responsibilities they have during a crisis.

Barton (2016) states that the regular members of the crisis team include operations, finance, security, legal, and human resources. The mix will change, though, depending on the type of crisis. For example, if the computer system were involved in the crisis, information technology would be needed. Because the team has previously established who would handle the fundamental responsibilities needed in an emergency, time is saved. Plans and units have limited value if they are never tested, according to Augustine (2015). The management is unaware of the effectiveness of an unproven crisis management plan or the capacity of the crisis team to meet deadlines.

According to Harrington and Gia (2016), team members require training to practice making judgments during a crisis. Since every crisis is different, crisis teams must make choices. In his summary of the literature, Coombs (2017) demonstrates how training enhances a crisis team's capacity for making decisions and completing associated tasks.

According to Taylor and Kent's (2018) research, the best practice for using the internet during a crisis is to have a crisis website. The website ought to be created before the emergency. To do this, the crisis team must foresee the kinds of crises that a business may encounter as well as the kinds of data that the website will require.

Any company that manufactures consumer goods, for example, is liable to experience a product harm problem that calls for a recall. The need to have a crisis website that enables consumers to determine whether their product is included in a recall and how to handle it is highlighted by the Corporate Leadership Council (2018). During a crisis, stakeholders, including the news media, will consult the internet. Crisis managers run the danger of coming out as incompetent if they don't use some sort of web-based reaction. According to Taylor and Kent (2018) as well as the Corporate Leadership Council, an organization can also convey its narrative through its website. You run the risk of losing the narrative of the crisis if you don't use it.

Barton (2016) notes that if a crisis continues for more than a day, it is physically untenable to expect one person to speak for an organization. It can be necessary for the news media to speak with someone in operations or security because they want to ask experts questions. For this reason, Coombs (2017) highlights that rather than acting as

"the" crisis spokespersons, the public relations department more closely resembles a support role. Information must be shared by the crisis team so that many sources may deliver the same message. The identical details and the organization's salient news points must be shared with the spokespeople. The spokespersons' preparation ought to be greatly aided by the public relations division.

Before any crisis, possible spokespersons should ideally have training and practice in media relations. Managing the media should not take precedence over providing vital information during a crisis. Again, preparation ensures that the different spokespersons possess the necessary knowledge and expertise in media relations.

The ability of an organization to manage crisis communication establishes its direction or strategy and allocates its resources, people and money to pursue it. It serves as a tool for planning the present to forecast the ideal future. The practice of being prepared is one that originated in the corporate sector and has been used in a great number of businesses for at least 40 years (Fain, 2017). Though its use has only increased dramatically in the past ten years, most businesses currently have some sort of preparedness procedure in place. The need to address the following issues may be the reason for the unexpected increase in readiness among businesses, particularly in the corporate sector: heightened competition, globalization, rising operating costs, increased demand for technology, increased accountability, and a focus on high-quality corporate governance (Kaplan & Beinhocker, 2016).

In the future, crisis communication preparedness in Kenya's telecommunication industry, particularly for companies like Jamii Telecommunications, will likely be shaped by

technological advancements and evolving consumer expectations. The increasing reliance on digital tools, such as social media monitoring, artificial intelligence, and predictive analytics, will enable companies to detect potential crises earlier and respond more effectively (Fain, 2017). As consumers demand faster, more transparent communication, Jamii Telecom may need to implement more proactive communication strategies, ensuring that real-time updates are provided through various digital platforms. The ability to engage with stakeholders in real time and address concerns promptly will be crucial to maintaining trust and credibility during a crisis (Fain, 2017).

Furthermore, regulatory changes and emerging threats will influence the future landscape of crisis communication preparedness. As Kenyan regulations surrounding data protection and corporate transparency become stricter, Jamii Telecom will need to adjust its crisis communication strategies to comply with new legal requirements. The increasing threat of cyberattacks, data breaches, and other digital risks will necessitate a more robust crisis management framework that focuses on online security. Additionally, a greater emphasis on internal crisis communication training and collaboration with government agencies and private partners may enhance the company's preparedness for large-scale disruptions, ensuring a coordinated and effective response (Drucker, 2016).

1.1.2 The level of preparedness of organizations to handle crisis communication.

The current uncertain environment brings with it opportunities for crises, magnified by traditional and new media proliferation. As a result, organizations have prioritized crisis communication (Coombs, 2017). Crisis communication is vital to successful crisis management and is more about managing the product, the cause, and the public's opinion of a crisis (Gray, 2015). Crisis communication is associated with utilizing information to

identify risk and spurring mitigating behaviours that can reduce the risk and coordinate support and recovery in cases where a crisis occurs (Ulmer et al., 2016). Examining the possibilities and formulating strategies that can help the company handle crisis communication. It can use its energies and resources more effectively and conduct its core business more successfully, despite changes in the environment (Drucker, 2016).

Plans for crisis management centre on the company's reaction and stakeholder communication during a crisis. During a crisis, a crisis communication plan helps ensure that information is released promptly and that the message is consistent across all organizational platforms. Being ready for emergencies in terms of communication is essential for all companies.

Regester & Larkin (2005) assert that no organization is impervious to crises, regardless of its level of financial success. Events that have the potential to seriously harm an organization are considered crises (Coombs, 1999). Beyond a corporate organization's current resources and adaptive mechanisms, crises pose a huge challenge (James & Gilliland, 2013). As a result, being ready for crisis communication is an essential skill for minimizing the negative effects of any crisis (Charles, 2012). It's crucial to comprehend the context of the telecommunications business to create crisis communication plans that work. Proactive readiness is the first phase in the industry's crisis communication process. Companies need to have a thorough crisis management strategy that fits their unique situation. For this reason, having a crisis management plan is essential in the ever-evolving world of the telecommunications sector.

In organizations, the glue that binds all the actions and operations, internally and externally, is no doubt communication. Therefore, preparedness is critical to the adequate performance of any firm (Payne, 2014). During an emergency, the need to communicate is instant. If the day-to-day operations are interfered with, the stakeholders will want to know their fate because of the crisis. Regulators and local government officials will need to be informed of what is happening in their environment. Employees and their families will be anxious and will demand to be informed of what is happening. People residing near the firm may need information, especially if the incident threatens their livelihoods. Ready communication and or answers will be demanded by all these audiences as the crisis management team prepares to communicate the crisis episode during the various stages (Drucker, 2016).

According to Irvine & Millar (2017), no organization welcomes negative press. Still, even firms occasionally find themselves confronting the public or specific special interest groups who may question the firm's policies and programs. While controversial public issues often originate outside of the organization, internal activities, such as criminal or unethical behaviours on the part of organizational personnel, can also attract incredible and extensive media attention. Accidents are another common type of crisis that can change public perceptions about the organization (Drucker, 2016). Coombs (2015) noted that the perception of human error on the part of the organization could produce stronger negative perceptions than crises brought about by natural disasters (Duke & Masland, 2016).

Kimani (2016) posits that crises and natural disasters jeopardize the telecommunication industry by the damage they inflict and their unpredictability. Rousaki and Alcott (2014) add that the degree of readiness, both in psychological terms and decision capabilities, is an essential determinant of the degree of stress resulting from surprise and an organization's ability to cope with a crisis. Therefore, as Pennington-Gray et al. (2015) observe, organizations and destinations need to be prepared to assist employees and customers during catastrophic events since the telecommunication industry has been one of many businesses affected by crises and disasters around the globe in recent years. Crisis communication strategies and techniques are called for to develop plans and programs, training and testing to ensure that when crises do occur, resources (personnel and equipment) can be mobilized and deployed to best effect to reduce the effects of the crisis and to facilitate the return of normal operations (Albattat & Som, 2019).

According to Barton (2001), the crisis team often consists of representatives from the fields of public relations, law, security, operations, finance, and human resources. However, the composition could be subject to alteration according to the type of crisis involved. Information technology, for instance, would be necessary if the crisis involved the computer network. The team has previously decided who will carry out the essential activities needed in an emergency, saving time. Plans and teams have limited value if they are never tested, according to Augustine (1995). The crisis team's performance and the effectiveness of an unproven crisis management plan are unknown to management. According to Mitroff, Harrington, and Gia (1996), training is essential so that team members can practice making judgments under pressure. A Crisis Management Plan is simply meant to provide a rough guide, as was already said. Each crisis is distinct,

necessitating the need for crisis teams to make choices. Coombs (2007a) summarizes the findings and demonstrates how practice enhances the decision-making and associated task performance of a crisis team. Consult Coombs (2006) and the Corporate Leadership Council's (2003) study on crisis management tactics for more details on the importance of teams and exercises. An organization may designate a piece of its present website for the crisis or develop a separate website just for the crisis. Having a crisis website is a recommended practice for using the Internet during a crisis, according to Taylor & Kent's (2007) research. Before the crisis, a website should be created.

Understanding the origin, extent, effects, and duration of the crisis, in addition to the requirements and expectations of your stakeholders, is essential for crisis management. To address the problem, you must also determine the dangers, opportunities, and resources at your disposal. You may prioritize your tasks, communicate effectively, and steer clear of rash or ignorant decisions by evaluating the circumstances.

This necessitates that the crisis team foresee the types of crises that a business may have, as well as the kinds of information that will be required on the website. Any company that manufactures consumer goods is likely to experience a product safety issue that necessitates a recall. The Corporate Leadership Council (2003) emphasizes the importance of a crisis website created to assist individuals in determining whether their product is included in the recall and how the recall will be handled. During a crisis, stakeholders, including the news media, will resort to the Internet. A web-based reaction should be used by crisis managers, or else they run the risk of looking ineffective. Of course, it may be wise to withhold certain information from the website. Harrell (2009) states that a company might not want to make the situation public by posting information

about it online. This is based on the supposition that the issue is small and that the affected parties will not learn about it from another source. That is an incorrect, if not dangerous, assumption given the milieu of traditional and online media in today's world. A website is another way for a company to tell its side of the story, and not using one increases the danger of losing the way the crisis story is portrayed, according to Taylor and Kent (2007) and the Corporate Leadership Council. During a crisis, an organization should be prepared using the intranet. Intranet sites need to be utilised.

Access to intranet sites is restricted, usually to employees only, however, some may also provide access to suppliers and consumers. So long as those stakeholders have access to the Intranet, intranet sites give them immediate access. The significance of American Airlines' usage of its Intranet system as an efficient means of communication with its employees in the wake of the 9/11 disaster is demonstrated by Dowling's (2003) research. Coombs (2007) points out that when utilized in conjunction with mass notification systems intended to reach employees and other important stakeholders, an intranet site's communication value is boosted. Contact information (phone numbers, e-mail addresses, etc.) is pre-programmed into a mass notification system before an emergency. Any group that might be impacted by the situation can be contacted, including workers, clients, and locals who live close to a facility. Crisis managers can input brief messages into the system and then instruct the mass notification system which messages should be delivered via which channel or channels and to whom. People have a way to respond to communications through the mass notification system (Fain, 2017).

1.1.3 Telecommunication Industry in Kenya

In Kenya, the telecommunications industry has developed rapidly in recent years developed rapidly. Like many other countries in the world (Daniel, 2018), the telecommunications industry in Kenya has, in the recent past been among the most competitive industries in the economy. Kenya's telecommunications industry has the potential to raise living standards among its constituents by generating job opportunities that will promote economic growth and alleviate poverty. Between 2010 and 2019, there was a remarkable surge in the number of internet service subscriptions within the sector. However, the industry has had to deal with issues brought on by the development of new technology, a lack of resources, globalization, and market liberalization. As a result, the industry may be vulnerable to inclusion in the worldwide database of telecommunications failures.

According to the PR Newswire (2017), since 2013, there has been continuous growth in the number of subscribers, with mobile penetration reaching 89.2%, internet penetration at 87.2% and broadband penetration at 18.6% in the first quarter of 2016. Communication Authority of Kenya (CAK) (2019) has it that the number of active mobile subscriptions (SIM1 Cards) in the country stood at 53.2 million as of September 30, 2019, up from 52.2 million subscriptions reported at the end of June 2019. This translated to a mobile (SIM) penetration level of 112%, increasing availability and access to mobile network signals and convenient mobile services. The rapid development of the internet and information technology has driven telecommunication organizations into a new competitive business environment (Chong, Chong & Wong, 2007).

Payne (2016) established that the telecommunication industry is a primary global economic sector and is increasingly contributing to national economies, particularly in developing countries. It generates employment, stimulates national development, and attracts foreign exchange. Faulkner (2015), Ritchie (2017), and Santana (2016) explain that the telecommunication industry has been one of many businesses affected by numerous crises and disasters around the globe in recent years. Blake and Sinclair (2018) argue that given the economic importance of the telecommunication industry, the effects of a crisis can have devastating and sustained long-term impacts on destinations and the nation's economy. Ritchie (2017) explains that telecommunication firms need to be prepared to assist their public during catastrophic events, and managers should have crisis communication management competency.

During the pandemic, Kenya's telecommunications sector connected people and facilitated online education, remote work, e-commerce, and financial services (Weiner, 2016). Telecommunications companies are building infrastructure all around the country in response to the spike in demand for mobile phones, data, and internet services. In March 2021, Kenya began conducting 5G testing, becoming the second nation in Africa to do so after South Africa. The largest supplier of mobile money services worldwide is Kenya. Operating limitations and supply chain disruptions related to the pandemic hindered the expansion of the telecommunications network infrastructure, but new projects, such as the expansion of rural towers, the installation of 4G towers, and the rollout of fibre infrastructure, have been started since 2021.

Ngechu (2004) posits that the telecoms sector keeps expanding coverage with an emphasis on closing the digital divide between urban and rural areas. The primary platform for voice and data connectivity is mobile phones. Despite the accessibility of priced cell phones, a sizable portion of the population still uses 2G handsets since they cannot afford 3 G or 4G devices. Access to internet services is expanding, and digital services and cashless payments for financial activities are in high demand. Voice-to-data conversion is occurring, and voice and data costs are decreasing. With a lion's share of the mobile subscription, mobile broadband, and mobile money markets, Safaricom continues to be the industry leader. There are profiles for 23 businesses, including the major players Telkom Kenya, Safaricom, and Airtel, as well as South African firms MTN and Vodacom operating in Kenya, firms providing data communications services like Jamii Telecommunications, and firms providing undersea cables like The East African Marine Systems (Mitchell, 2007).

Most people agree that quality plays a significant role in determining value and affecting consumer satisfaction. To offer customers high-quality services, Kenya's telecommunications sector must be strategically positioned. Telecommunications firms must investigate the level of client sensitivity, innovation, and expectations of service quality to offer higher-quality services. The ability to strategically target service quality goals and practices to meet the Kenyan market should be the strength of telecommunications companies. Kenya's telecommunications sector has seen increased competition. Many businesses in this industry must develop fresh, superior concepts for better services and goods. They use innovations to enhance both service quality and overall organizational performance (Green, 2017).

1.1.4 Jamii Telecommunications Limited, Kenya

Jamii Telecommunications Limited (JTL) is a Kenyan privately owned company incorporated on April 20, 2004, under Certificate of Incorporation No. C100623. The Communications Authority of Kenya (CAK) licenses JTL as a Telecommunications Operator under the new Unified Licensing Framework. JTL offers data communications services to telecommunications operators, corporates, homes and media houses and governments in East Africa using terrestrial fibre optic cable, satellite, and broadband wireless networks.

The primary stakeholders for JTL include its approximately 1,500 employees, the government, the media, over 100,000 subscribers, the SEACOM, TEAM, and EASSY communities, among other varied publics. Ad Group, a seasoned technology group with 17 years of experience in the ICT Industry, includes Jamii Telecommunications Ltd as one of its members. JTL operates primarily in Kenya and provides internet services to ISPs based in Tanzania and Uganda. Its range of offerings spans Data Carrier Services, Satellite Backbone Services, and Internet Backbone Services, including International Gateway Service, Broadband VSAT Services, Signal Distribution Services as well as Broadband Wireless Solutions. JTL has erected Next Generation Metro Fiber Networks on DWDM/SDH architecture across Nairobi, Mombasa, Nakuru, Kisumu, Eldoret, and Thika, along with other towns, boasting an impressive backbone capacity amounting to about 400Gbps.

The infrastructure is equipped with multi-service provisioning platforms for both legacy (TDM) and next-generation (IP) services. Moreover, Jamii Telecoms Limited constructed the National DWDM-Backbone, which interconnects major Kenyan cities bordering

countries such as Tanzania and Uganda. Further, the fibre-optic network was fully integrated into OPGW fibres woven onto KPLC's power lines, boosting security. Jammed-packed FTTH and FTTB solutions through GPON have already been deployed by JTL across different potential zones within the confines of Kenya. Additionally, it installed several base stations country-wide, compliant quality 4G mobile internet with voice calling and messaging facilities meant exclusively for its growing number of satisfied customers.

JTL boasts state-of-the-art Satellite Earth Stations located in Nairobi and Mombasa. These advanced facilities provide JTL with access to satellite capacity from major operators, equipped for both teleport and hub services. Additionally, JTL has achieved several groundbreaking feats: they were the first mobile network provider in Kenya to deploy a 700MHZ and 1800MHZ network; the first VOLTE mobile service provider; offered free on-net voice service for life, becoming the only Kenyan company doing so at zero cost; became pioneers of deploying fibre optic infrastructure entirely across Kenya's landscape while delivering superior high-speed internet (1000mbps) capacity available locally both commercially or residentially by launching FTTx services countrywide as well introducing affordable broadband internet rates costing under \$10 including one megabyte per second speed rate - which equated outstanding value proposition enabling competitive advantage against established incumbents within their sector throughout Africa. Moreover, being recognized further when awarded The Cisco Digital Partner triple award winner, recognizing excellence through innovation, customer experience enablement & agility, allowing for the forefront of emerging technology applications/solutions, leading them towards exponential growth.

JTL offers data communication services in East Africa via terrestrial fibre optic cable, satellite, and WiMAX broadband wireless networks to telecom providers, businesses, media outlets, and the government. The company has two NOCs staffed by highly qualified support engineers operating around the clock to administer all services. Through its carrier-of-carrier facilities on high-capacity infrastructure catering to mobile operators, ISPs, as well as cable TV service providers, JTL enables them to connect with their clients and backhaul network while delivering international connectivity through IPL. “To serve wholesale customers and achieve SLA requirements, we have redundant installations of our infrastructure” (Paul 2016).

JTL provides comprehensive Internet solutions catering to the voice, video, and data requirements of businesses, governmental agencies, and non-profit organizations. Depending on customer site needs and their locations, they offer a customized solution comprising fiber optics or wireless satellite connectivity or combine these modes for hybrid functionality. Their range of solutions includes Corporate Ethernet protocols alongside Storage Area Network (SAN) provisions that cover Disaster Recovery as well as Business Continuity demands seamlessly (Lando 2018).

1.2 Statement of the problem

A telecommunications crisis can cause an organization's operations, reputation, and customer satisfaction to suffer. Whether the crisis is a network failure, hacking, or PR disaster, effective crisis management tactics are required to minimize the damage and regain trust. Given the socio-economic role that the telecommunications industry plays in society, a great deal of research has been done on the value of effective communication

during times of crisis. However, not as much research has been done on the significance of organizational preparedness to handle crisis communication within the industry.

In addition, the telecommunications companies in Kenya have, up until this point, only made a limited amount of information about their preparedness for handling crisis communication public. Any institution that does not prepare will incur more harm since crises in the telecom industry can strike at any time. Every company needs to have a crisis communication plan in place. Although crisis communication can be a bit of a reactionary process, it helps to have a plan in place ahead of time to help your team navigate the process more smoothly. Using information to identify hazards, promote risk-reducing behaviours, and plan for aid and recovery in the event of a crisis is an effective approach to communicating during a crisis. Crisis preparedness, responsiveness, and efficient communication are critical in the telecommunications industry since the more damage done, the slower the response time.

In the telecom sector, crisis management is an essential executive function. The result of failure can cause grave harm to stakeholders, culminating in an organization or institution incurring extensive losses that can lead to its extinction. Jamii Telcom, being one of the most established telecommunications firms with a huge client base, occasionally deals with day-to-day crisis management, which calls for efficient methods of handling crisis communication. This is the problem the researcher wished to solve.

According to Bernstein (2017), no organization is immune to crises. The fundamental steps of successful crisis communication are not complicated but require adequate preparedness to lessen the damage. Paul (2016), in one of her journals, states that a crisis

is inevitable for any organization or individual, anywhere and at any time. This is asserted by Benson (2014), who posits that crises are unpredictable, and as such, it is therefore not a matter of if, but when, it will occur. Firms with a pre-existing Crisis Communication Plan are consequently in a better position to deal with a crisis and bounce back to normalcy in the shortest time possible. Thus, effective preparedness offers an organized approach for handling a crisis episode to have the least potential impact. Fearn-Banks (2017), on the other hand, states that crisis management provides the organization with a better chance to gain control of its situation since it gives a guide to managing crises.

Lando (2018) asserts that organizational preparedness enhances service delivery and firms' ability to attain their goal. Effective preparedness, therefore, must bear in mind these problematic tasks and respond to them appropriately. Thus, telecommunication firms are compelled to design a new strategic path driven by a joint vision while considering the importance of their global positioning. This is the critical component that propels a telecommunication firm's crisis preparedness. Thus, the organization aims to put together its strengths around accredited opportunities to address its weak links, thus reducing the threat to its growth, transitioning and role in its national agenda and society.

Kinyanjui and Juma (2016) assert that the handling of corporate communication the world over has transitioned. For an organization to stay alive, it must communicate with its stakeholders effectively. Hence, when a telecommunication firm finds itself in a crisis, it is charged with one goal, shielding the organization's image by communicating the right message promptly to the targeted audience. To control commun in the organization and turn it to its advantage, the organization must employ speed, tact, and precision. Local organizations are finally getting it about crisis preparedness, be it communication or

awareness or response. Indeed, though stakeholder demand for pre-preparation and anticipation has increased over the past few years, there is a minor change in what has been said previously. As a result, many organizations remain unprepared or are significantly underprepared for crises.

Telecommunication firms' preparedness plans presume that change is necessary and as such a legitimate worry to all stakeholders and that the affected parties need to look at appropriate channels that can be explored, as well as the organization providing an enabling environment for staff to work as a team for the common good of the firm (Kinyanjui and Juma, 2016). This is what must be considered while preparing the firm's management plan. The question is, is this the case on the ground? This study investigated organizational preparedness to handle crisis communication in the telecommunication industry since preparedness plays an integral part in communication, response, and resolution.

A crisis in the telecommunications sector can result in severe consequences for both the operations and reputation of an organization, leading to decreased customer satisfaction, loss of trust, and significant financial damage. Given the critical role that telecommunications play in modern society, connecting individuals, businesses, and governments, these companies cannot afford to be unprepared for crises, whether they are caused by network failures, cyberattacks, or public relations disasters.

In Kenya, however, the telecommunications industry has seen limited public disclosure regarding its preparedness for handling crisis communication. The lack of transparency and detailed communication strategies increases the risk of organizations being caught off

guard when a crisis strikes, leading to poor response times and exacerbated damage. This gap in preparedness highlights the need for a more structured, transparent, and well-communicated approach to crisis management within the industry (Kinyanjui and Juma, 2016). Jamii Telecom, one of Kenya's leading telecommunication providers, is no exception, and it must recognize that an ad-hoc or reactive approach to crisis communication is no longer sufficient in an era where information spreads rapidly and customer loyalty can be lost within moments.

The absence of a robust crisis communication plan not only jeopardizes the immediate operational response but also places an organization's long-term viability at risk. According to crisis communication experts like Bernstein (2017), crises are inevitable, and those organizations that fail to prepare in advance are more likely to face severe consequences when a crisis occurs. Research by Paul (2016) and Benson (2014) further reinforces this notion, stressing that the unpredictability of crises means that organizations cannot afford to wait until disaster strikes to create a response strategy.

Without a proactive crisis communication framework, Jamii Telecom, like other companies in the Kenyan telecom industry, risks significant reputation damage, a loss of customer confidence, and financial instability during a crisis (Kinyanjui and Juma, 2016). Therefore, this research seeks to explore the crisis communication preparedness of Jamii Telecom, with a focus on identifying potential gaps in its crisis management strategies, offering insights on how to enhance its resilience, and ensuring that the company is better equipped to handle crises in the future.

1.3 Research Questions

- I. What structural strategies have been put in place in preparedness to handle Crisis communication?
- II. What factors affect the implementation of effective organizational preparedness for crisis communication?
- III. How do organizations plan to mitigate the factors that may affect organizational preparedness to handle crisis communication?

1.4 Study Aim

The study aimed to investigate the organizational preparedness to handle crisis communication in the telecommunication industry in Kenya.

1.5 Scope of the study

The scope of the study was to establish organizational preparedness to handle crisis communication in the telecommunication industry, with specific reference to Jamii Telecommunication Limited and how to produce remedies to manage them. The study was conducted in Jamii Telecommunication Limited's Headquarters in Nairobi County, on Hospital Road, Jamii Towers. Jamii Telecommunication Limited has branches in Mombasa, Kisumu, Nakuru, Eldoret and Nyeri, the study was restricted to the Nairobi Branch, which is the headquarters and hosts the Corporate Communication department.

On content scope, the study focused on organizational preparedness to handle crisis communication, specifically its stages and implementation. This is because we can anticipate and prepare communication in case of a crisis, or if they happen, they should cause minimal disruption thanks to preparedness and methodological scope. The study

applied a qualitative approach. The nature of the information generated was better achieved through interviews and document analysis, thus choosing the qualitative approach. The method of inquiry was the case study.

1.6 Limitations of the Study

- I. Due to Jamii Telecommunication Limited's size, with approximately 6 branches, the researcher faced limitations in time and resources that made it impractical to do the research in all the branches.
- II. The researcher would have loved to get answers to as many questions as possible about preparedness; however, due to the telecommunication businesses' closed nature, the researcher had to avoid either asking or publishing parts of the information.
- III. Management may face difficulty in sharing sensitive information with the public, and due to their inadequate communication policy, which is another challenge that could arise during this study. To tackle the issue, the researcher incorporated data from past studies on similar firms within the country. Additionally, respondents were guaranteed complete confidentiality of any information provided as part of this research thesis.
- IV. This study was done in JTL only, so the findings might not represent the findings in other telecommunication firms in Kenya.

1.7 Justification of the study

Parsons (2014) explains that Murphy's Law posits that anything that can go wrong will, or worse yet, be bound to happen at the most unexpected and inopportune moment. The analysis of ethical codes and socialization sheds light on the ways communication

functions in disseminating and accessing information, as well as decision-making processes. Brown (2014) argues that investigations into less formal communication practices have not adequately considered how organizational readiness affects crisis communications. Consequently, critical inquiries arise regarding how practical challenges surrounding crisis management within the telecommunications industry are addressed, alongside the significance of preparedness when addressing such concerns.

This study aimed to assess the impact of organizational preparedness on an organization's reputation and performance during and after crises. Additionally, it explored how staff members were affected by existing crisis communication plans and whether stakeholders were aware of their existence or not. If there was a plan in place, the study sought to determine its effectiveness so far; if no such procedures existed, researchers aimed to outline the steps necessary for creating one. The investigation also delved into obstacles that hindered effective crisis response within organizations, while identifying different kinds of problems experienced before examining why communications played crucial roles when handling those situations.

1.8 Significance of the study

Jamii Telcom, being one of the most established telecommunications firms in Kenya with a huge client base, occasionally deals with day-to-day crisis communication which calls for efficient methods of handling crisis communication. Therefore, this study will help the firm understand the role preparedness plays in communication, how, who and when to mitigate a situation, by informing its public, it will sensitize the need to understand what would be expected of each of them during a crisis. Other firms can also benefit from this

study by ensuring that they have a policy or a policy that they can use to counter a crisis episode if it occurs, and the optimal strategies to implement when it happens.

1.9 Study Assumptions

The assumptions of the study are that the respondents participated in the study positively by giving reliable responses. The researcher also hoped for the responses to be done on time to allow data analysis.

1.10 Summary

This chapter focused on the academic, administrative, and research context of this research study; it stated the problem, looked at the research questions, the study's scope, provided a limitation of the study, and justified the study's significance.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

This chapter examined literature from previously conducted studies relevant to this research. At the same time, the chapter highlighted the research problem to better understand the issues discussed.

2.1 Definition of Key Terms

2.1.1 Communication

In situations where a crisis arises, communication is linked to using information to recognize danger, encouraging risk-reducing behaviours, and coordinating support and recovery (Ulmer et al., 2016). According to Ulmer et al. (2016), communication also refers to the transfer of data between computers or other devices. Therefore, any gadget that facilitates the transmission of data qualifies as a communications device. Before communication technology, more time and effort went into communicating the most basic communications than can be expressed in 140 characters or fewer. Now, things have changed a little. Information sharing is now simpler than ever because of the integration of technology into many forms of communication. It is uncommon for the modern communicator to be an expert in every tool, piece of software, or gadget related to communication technology, despite the vast array of options available.

2.1.2 Crisis Communication

Crisis communication is the response to an incident that jeopardizes the public's essential experiences and has the potential to impact a company's performance (Coombs, 2015). Information that should be easily accessible in the event of a catastrophe is guided by preparedness forms (Anthonissen, 2018). Issues and crisis communication planning are becoming more and more popular across all kinds of industries and enterprises. The Business Continuity Institute estimates that 84% of firms have a plan in place for emergency communication. Three or more emergency communication procedures are used by 55% of respondents.

And yet, two-thirds say they are not confident about their preparedness for a crisis event. Despite organizations acknowledging the significance of managing issues and crises through substantial investments in related processes, they still feel unprepared. Crises can significantly impact a brand's image and reputation; hence, Crisis Communication experts are hired to mitigate various challenges that pose threats. An organization's greatest asset is its brand identity, which must be safeguarded at all costs. The main purpose of the Crisis Communication team is to protect the brand identity and maintain the organization's firm standing within the industry (Coombs, 2015). The tools, procedures, and protocols that enable an organization to communicate successfully when there is a serious threat to its reputation or company are referred to as crisis communication.

A wide range of potential crises, such as severe weather, criminality, cyberattacks, product recalls, corporate misconduct, reputation crises, and PR mishaps, must be anticipated by organizations. By preparing in advance for a crisis, the organization can quickly correct a situation, safeguard customers, employees, and assets, and maintain

business continuity by ensuring that relevant personnel can communicate with one another during times of threat.

To safeguard the reputation of the business and lessen negative effects, crisis communication, which is the management of communication during a crisis or emergency, is a crucial component of risk management for any firm. And by their very nature, most crises are unknowable (Benson, 2014). No matter how big or small they are, a crisis communications team must be prepared to handle the typical difficulties that most businesses confront during a crisis. Any business may face a challenging task when it comes to crisis communication, which takes place both during and after a catastrophe. When responding to a crisis, especially when it is a matter of life or death, communication is crucial. According to professionals in crisis communication, some of the most typical issues that businesses encounter includes limited information, lack of quality information and disruption of communication channels (Brown, 2014).

2.1.3 Organization

An organization is a group of people or things that work together to achieve the goals of an institution. The term organization can be employed to denote a collective or enterprise, as well as the process of creating or setting up something. ICT organization includes all digital technology that assists individuals, businesses, and organizations in using information. The scope includes all digital information handled by electronic devices. Therefore, ICT is concerned with digital data storage, retrieval, and transmission (Cruz & Rao, 2013).

2.1.4 Preparedness

Littlejohn & Foss (2011) define preparedness as a research-based set of actions that are taken as precautionary measures in the face of potential disasters in ICT. Having a preparedness mindset is crucial in attaining objectives as well as averting unfavourable consequences. Utilizing Information and Communication Technology (ICT) may serve an essential function in preventing or alleviating calamities through proper management. State-of-the-art technologies like drones, robotics, and GIS, along with upcoming ones such as Artificial Intelligence (AI), Big Data computing systems and IoT, continue to revolutionize the intricate procedure of anticipating disasters while responding efficiently throughout all phases from preparation up until recuperation stages thus providing better chances of survival during difficult times.

The digital economy's lifeblood and engine are information technology and telecommunications. Businesses that fail incur significant losses every minute that goes by. At the same time, as they become more prevalent and serious, threats to networks and systems are always growing. A growing number of targeted cyberattacks using viruses, Trojan horses, or denial-of-service assaults are being launched in addition to standard dangers like fire, water damage, or natural disasters. These days, the most important factors in crisis management are speed and autonomy. It is critical to promptly notify or mobilize administrators, crisis teams, and customers during a crisis, particularly if the attack has hampered or destroyed your own IT/telecommunications infrastructure.

2.2 Situating the study in Communication Studies

The study is about organizations' preparedness to handle crisis communication and emanates from Public Relations. The research topic is primarily concerned with the first step in the recommended process of handling a crisis: "Have an updated plan". This step is significant since it helps the organization have a unified message if a crisis occurs. It adds that to have clarity and conciseness, and a proactive crisis communication plan, there is a need to adhere to specific guidelines. The approach taken in preparing to manage crises within an organization must be strategic, which emphasizes the importance of updating your level of readiness. This involves developing a clear message tailored to suit unique audiences or stakeholders, selecting a suitable spokesperson, and timely release of information. To achieve this goal, the crisis management team must determine effective modes of communication both internally and externally as well as ensure that all stakeholders have appropriate authority to act and understanding regarding their respective roles in response efforts.

The study will investigate the preparedness of organizations to handle crisis communication, the role of communication during a crisis, and factors that affect effective preparedness for crisis communication; it will give recommendations, which, together with identified gaps in the study given will add to the existing knowledge in the field of crisis communication.

2.3 Review of Related Theories

As communicators, it is essential to understand why people behave the way they do; thus, the research gap theory asserts that the ways we deduce others' behavioural traits are related to how the perception of things by the audience will be. Coombs (2007) argues

that the Situational Communication theory (SCCT) offers a guide for understanding this dynamic. SCCT provides a structure that can anticipate and interpret stakeholders' reactions to a crisis in reputational risk during an episode.

The reason for using these theories is to try and compare past research work to understand the relationship between the study and previous work. Henry (2018) states that since the beginning of time, communication has been a fundamental aspect of the human species. Telecommunication, which began with the telegraph, telephone, radio, television, satellites, and the internet, is the science of sending information across great distances using electrical and electromagnetic waves. Today, mobile communication is also a common form of telecommunication. It can also be used to describe any method or set of methods that permits the transmission of data, audio, or video over great distances using electromagnetic or electrical impulses (Lando, 2018).

2.3.1 Attribution Theory

This study draws from Heider, the founder of the attribution theory, who posits that people tend to infer causes in terms of how they perceive a situation and how the factors related to the event they are faced with impact the individual being. (Littlejohn & Foss, 2011). The attribution theory is relevant to this study because the experiences that the organization encounters during a crisis determine what course of action is necessary to take. The plan of action and implementation steps during crisis resolution will be based on individual dispositions experienced during situations.

Attribution theory, for communication during a crisis, is more in line with the traditional scholarly approach. How people judge the causes of a crisis based upon the attributes,

locus, stability, and controllability is theoretical and a convenient set of principles that an organization can use to determine the type of strategy to communicate the crisis. During a crisis, numerous response strategies have emerged. Attribution theory provides a valuable framework for the conceptualization of crisis communications management (Wilson, Cruz, & Rao, 2013). The research is grounded in this theory, which establishes a theoretical foundation for the capacity of a company to progress and widen its reach during internationalization. This advancement stems from the assessment and control by managers over past factors that contributed to the firm's development.

2.3.2 Situational Crisis Communication Theory (SCCT)

This theory has it that the level of response preparedness should match the magnitude of the crisis. Coombs (2007) states that SCCT projects people's reactions to the response strategy rolled out to manage the crisis. Situational Crisis Communication Theory (SCCT) in its centre is built upon the attribution theory, according to which people search for the cause and effects of an event. They deduce their role in an event and face feelings of anxiety, sadness or even joy depending on the crisis's outcome. Whilst communicating with the public, it is essential to read their body language. Whatever the reaction, it will inform the researcher how effective they are in communication and form the basis through which the public will react during a crisis to counter the effects.

Since this study will explore the role organizational preparedness plays during crisis communication, it will seek to establish how important it is during a crisis. Even if there exists an effective communication plan in the organization, it must be rolled out, and the public must be aware of its existence and informed as a result, they need to know what strategies, channels or platforms are in place and how they can be used in the event of a

crisis. This theory anchors the research by identifying the various threats that might occur and projecting reactions, hence producing response strategies that organizations can use to handle a crisis. It is based on both who was accountable for the crisis and the extent to which it poses a risk to the company's image.

2.4 Crisis Communication Function

By facilitating the distribution of alerts and aiding in the coordination of rescue and relief efforts, telecommunications services can play a pivotal role in times of emergency or disaster. Telecom emergencies, on the other hand, can also affect the sector and impede attempts to rescue and assist victims since telecom infrastructure is vulnerable to catastrophes and emergencies. Any emergency response effort still relies heavily on the telecom sector, which is also in charge of ensuring constant communication between people, businesses, and nations. By investing in robust networks and creative solutions, the mobile industry collaborates closely with partners, governments, and the humanitarian sector to better prepare for and respond to disasters. With over 160 mobile network operators (MNOs) signatories operating in 112 countries, the Global System for Mobile Communications Association (GSMA) Humanitarian Connectivity Charter outlines the telecom industry's commitment to disaster management with an emphasis on coordination, scale, and partnerships.

According to Coombs and Holladay (2006), the purpose of crisis management is to mitigate the adverse effects that a crisis can have on an organization and its stakeholders during the crisis phase. There are several steps in the crisis management process, and each one is vital to reducing a crisis. The pre-crisis, crisis reaction, and post-crisis response

phases are these. These three phases of crisis response are crucial because the choices taken at each level will dictate whether the crisis will be contained or how long it will take for the institution and its constituents to return to normal. It entails planning, public mobilization, raising awareness, responding to emergencies, and crisis management.

Successful crisis management addresses the dangers one after the other. Coombs (2014). It is crucial to consider who will make up the crisis team in advance of a crisis. It is also essential to include every member of the crisis team's personal information. This is important information because it includes each person's name, title, phone number, home address, and other relevant contact information. The team oversees making choices, putting the communication plan into action, and then mitigating the problem during the crisis (Freeo, 2007).

The designated spokesperson in a crisis should try to speak with the media ahead of the issue's development. Finding the institution's trained spokesperson with an extensive understanding of crisis mitigation strategies would be necessary for this. Spokesman roles will vary throughout crisis episodes. Any organization should also try to train a few spokespersons in crisis mitigation so that the team is made up of professionals in the field. There are frameworks in place at several institutions that explicitly outline the administrative hierarchy in the event of a crisis.

They specify who will be involved in the several procedures set up to lessen a catastrophe. An efficient team is one that has established policies and processes well in advance. This is because crisis response requires the team to act quickly to preserve the reputation of the organization. Because time is of the essence, the institution will do much

better for its reputation if it has a ready plan that can be implemented quickly. For most organizations, crisis management is nothing new.

The business of providing voice and data communications in the telecommunications sector involves anticipating the unexpected, planning for contingencies, planning for major outages, and being ready to reorganize priorities to satisfy a client's needs. The telecommunications providers in New York are skilled in handling significant disruptions in service brought on by inclement weather, broken water mains, fires, and accidents. Every incident call for a quick response, a well-thought-out strategy, a committed workforce, and efficient administration. In the event of an emergency, even clients have discovered the benefits of diversifying their communications networks. The events of February 26, 1993, would put some of the main telecommunications providers to the lower Manhattan business community of New York City to the test.

2.5 Review of Relevant Research

Telecommunication firms are central to the social fabric of society and economically vibrant, and at the same time, impact the cultural development of a country. According to Henry (2018), telecommunications objective is to enable companies to communicate effectively with customers and deliver high customer service standards. Telecommunication is also a key element in teamwork, allowing employees to collaborate easily from wherever they are located (Coombs, 2015). Crises at telecommunication firms may affect the well-being of its stakeholders, security, financial stability and as well as its reputation. Here, a crisis is defined as a serious threat to operations that, if not addressed correctly, could have detrimental effects. The danger in crisis management is the potential harm that a crisis could do to a company, its stakeholders, and an industry (Bernstein,

2017). The three associated dangers of public safety, financial loss, and reputational damage can all arise during a crisis.

Some crises, including workplace mishaps and product defects, can cause harm and even fatalities. Financial loss can result from crises when they disrupt business operations, reduce market share or purchasing intentions, or give rise to litigation that is related to the crisis. Crisis management that works addresses the dangers one at a time. In a crisis, the public's safety must be the top priority. The harm caused by a crisis is amplified by a failure to address the public's safety. After public safety issues are resolved, reputation and financial issues are considered.

In the end, crisis management aims to defend a company's stakeholders against dangers and/or lessen the impact of those risks (Benson, 2014). In times of crisis, swift choices on many important matters are required. Every managerial procedure must be followed, and any managerial issues must be resolved quickly when people's lives could be in danger (Turnet and Pedgeon, 1997). Previous research indicates that a crisis could have detrimental effects on stakeholders and pose a substantial threat to the company's ability to survive (Roux, 1999). Furthermore, because the corporation has little control over its surroundings, crises are hard to manage (Burnet, 1998). Since crises are difficult to forecast or manage, businesses need to be equipped to handle crises and their aftermath.

In the modern corporate context, effective crisis management may be seen as a benefit. According to Fink (1986), crisis management is the skill of extending risk and uncertainty.

Stocker (1997) emphasizes that crisis management is a collection of techniques and approaches that might stop or change the unfavourable result of fundamental occurrences within the business or organization.

Services have not been the subject of many prior research investigations. Most of the studies on crisis management in services have focused on communication companies. Research on crises in the telecommunications industry is lacking. Considering how prone and vulnerable the telecommunications business is to crises, surprisingly, there isn't more research on this topic.

Coombs (1999) asserts that crises can range in severity from minor problems to terrorism, earthquakes, and floods. According to Skoglund (2002), crises fall into two main categories: external (such as terrorism, kidnapping, or a decline in the value of the national currency) and internal (such as IT malfunctions, product failures, and fires). According to Augustine (1994), crises can be classified into two categories: those that "can be managed" and those that "cannot be managed."

2.5.1 Structural strategies that have been put in place in preparedness to handle Crisis communication.

Organizations need to operate with the assumption that a crisis may occur. By acknowledging this, they can take proactive measures and put in place plans and strategies beforehand, which would be beneficial when an inevitable crisis strikes (Dougherty, 2017). The public's perception of a crisis varies based on three attributes - locus, stability, and controllability. If these are found internally within an organization during times of crisis, then it creates the impression that the organization holds

responsibility; whereas if these factors are external or uncontrollable, or unstable situations arise, making them emerge as less responsible for such circumstances (Wilson et al., 2013).

The greater the organization's responsibility attributed to a crisis, the more harm it can cause. To mitigate damage, crisis-response strategies aim to alter public perception of attribution dimensions and emotions associated with them (Dougherty, 2017). Communication during crises is accomplished through response strategies that attempt to rebuild the organizational reputation via messages. Numerous scholars have developed lists of these tactics throughout time, Payne (2014) and Coombs (2015) being among the most prominent ones in existence today.

Coombs' creation of this information-gathering activity back then resulted from compiling a comprehensive list of both his work and Powell's crisis communication techniques. This list includes multiple approaches aimed at successfully resolving such situations despite all the odds surrounding them. As a result, any firm or company involved in those potentially dangerous situations needs guidance on how best-suited solutions may be idealised later, too, depending upon the prevailing factors surrounding each scenario in question. Similarly, when things happen unexpectedly, they ultimately impact businesses' performance by making necessary decisions quickly and without hesitation, as well as assimilating feedback received if necessary.

The main objective of preparedness is to ensure that the organization establishes a positive relationship with the public. However, before initiating this process, it's important to verify if the crisis has ended entirely. Although the physical damage caused by an event may be resolved and service restored (as in a train wreck), there could still be

unresolved media interest or a negative impact on organizational image (Dougherty, 2017). Organizational leaders tend to focus only on resolving issues associated directly with crises, such as cleaning up after accidents, but might overlook secondary stakeholders' interests; thus, PR representatives should remind them about getting communication messages across all relevant parties (Dougherty, 2017).

It is vital to follow up with the media even if they are not actively seeking information about the crisis. Providing them with additional details and updates can help build trust between organizations and reporters during post-crisis communications (Dougherty, 2017). Additionally, regular communication should be maintained with primary stakeholders, such as employees, by keeping them informed of any actions being taken in response to the crisis that may affect their well-being (Dougherty, 2017).

To effectively combat and prevent crises in telecommunication companies, management must establish a crisis management plan that enables them to communicate effectively during any such episodes. Moreover, given the growing reliance on modern technology as a source of news, both traditional and new forms of communication should be employed. As part of this process, developing an overarching communication policy becomes necessary. Typically focusing on informing stakeholders about key details like the crisis's meaning and impact while providing ample information concerning damage caused or harm inflicted upon one's reputation (Ahmed 2016). To avoid crises, it is essential to decrease identified risks. This constitutes an integral part of a company's risk management approach (Benson, 2014). Additionally, companies should draft and implement crisis management tactics and identify and educate their crisis response teams while periodically testing their plans in simulations.

According to Barton (2001), Coombs (2007a), and Fearn-Banks (2001), a crisis management plan is not a construction manual but rather serves as a guide. It provides important contact information, forms for recording the response during an emergency, and suggestions on what needs to be done. However, it does not provide step-by-step instructions on how to manage crises. Having pre-designated some activities, assembling data in advance while acting as a resource can save time should an individual experience any unexpected situations or emergencies at hand. If there are already designated crisis team members present before any incident occurs, they are assigned tasks ahead of time so that when there is indeed such need, their roles and obligations within this context are understood clearly by everyone involved, says Benson (2014).

During moments of crisis, a team specifically trained for this purpose is established. Barton (2001) notes that the individuals on such a team usually represent public relations, law, and security personnel as well as those from operations management and finance departments; however, their composition may change based on the nature and extent of the situation at hand - implying that if there were an issue with computer systems or networks then IT staff would be required to join the group. This specialized unit pre-determines who will handle each critical activity to save time. Although plans are made by teams designated for mishaps like these, they have limited value unless tested, says Augustine (1995). Therefore, training activities must occur regularly so members can practice decision-making under extreme pressure, according to Fink 1986's research findings regarding effective performance during crises, which he recommends should become commonplace, especially since every predicament is unique, requiring different approaches.

In summary, Coombs(2007a), explains how regular exercises help improve upon not only task performance but overall judgment capacity while also demonstrating ways leadership plays into success after looking over several case studies including his own experience within corporations worldwide across various industries where similar tactics proved successful when repeated consistently alongside feedback loops allowing incremental improvements through repetition. For more insights, corporate leaders could look towards both Coomb's earlier work published in Roll Backwards Press (2010), along with the Corporate Leadership Council study done around the importance of having adequate resources available whenever something goes wrong regardless of scale needed to address the problem most effectively through swift implementation plan already created beforehand.

Crucial to crisis management is training spokespersons for the organization's teams, who must be prepared to engage with the media during times of crisis. Media relations are a critical area of focus before and during crises, as emphasized by Lerbinger (1997), Fearn-Banks (2001), and Coombs (2007a). Providing media training in advance, along with creating communication channels including dedicated websites for a potential crisis, can bolster an organization's response, according to research from Taylor and Kent (2007). This requires careful planning from the company, such that they anticipate crisis types, likely, for example, consumer product safety-related issues may necessitate recalls, or required information such as recall procedures highlighted through the Corporate Leadership Council's analysis. A web-based reaction should supplement traditional methods, especially since most stakeholders automatically reach out via online resources following Tango Bell's E. coli journey (Fink,1986). Thereby, crisis managers play a

pivotal role in developing messages promptly, particularly within the first hour of responding to requirements, while keeping organizational policies upfront. Planning & deploying pre-formulated templates is recommended.

2.5.2 Factors that affect the implementation of effective organizational preparedness for crisis communication.

A well-developed and consistently updated crisis communication plan ensures that your organization has the infrastructure in place to respond as needed to a range of natural or human-caused crises (Radtke, 2013). From floods and pandemics to the theft of data and lawsuits, crises come in all shapes and sizes. Although it may not be feasible to anticipate all scenarios, a proficient crisis communication strategy can safeguard your organization's brand image, standing and trustworthiness. Preparedness is paramount. We have seen it repeatedly when a crisis tests the performance of the chosen leader. If the leader can multitask, has excellent delegation skills, cool under pressure, among other factors is important to consider. Speed of response to an emergency in communication is important, for example, if the cable breaks, the response rate is very key in the current world where people use technology/internet every minute. Any delay or break can cause delays and losses; therefore, speed is a major consideration in crisis communication.

After a crisis or before a crisis, a robust plan should be a factor to put in mind. It is for this reason that you should develop robust, workable plans before the crisis. Having adequate resources is yet another factor to consider. When facing a significant crisis, you will need extensive assistance across various domains. Keep in mind that emergencies can arise at any moment and interfere with your normal running. The organization should also have enough funding set aside for this purpose (Kelley, 2014).

Ulmer (2017) argues that leadership is key. The most crucial need is crisis management leadership. We have repeatedly witnessed situations where a crisis puts the chosen leader's abilities to the test. This involves their quick response to an urgent crisis and how to handle the employees now. This includes excellent delegation skills, the capacity to remain calm under pressure, the capacity for empathy, and the capacity for rapid and decisive decision-making. Listens but is at ease making tough decisions, self-awareness, communication abilities, the capacity to set priorities, time management and the authority to use business finances (Kinyanjui, 2016).

Quickness of response is also key. A critically injured person's chances of survival improve if they receive treatment at a centre of excellence within an hour. The same holds for crisis management. Your risks of suffering reputational harm lessen if your crisis response gets off to a quick start. This can only happen if you have a solid strategy in place (Henry, 2018).

Resource availability ensures the crisis is handled effectively. A significant crisis will call for a lot of assistance. These are just a few of the many areas of support you might need; keep in mind that crises can and frequently do happen at the worst possible times that is quick access to money in cash, the capability of handling many phone calls, the capability of carrying on as normal, quick arrival at the accident scene and legal advice. The ability to control the media, access to your insurance advisors, incident investigators, emotional assistance, an adequately equipped command centre, and the capability to handle other communication difficulties (Kinyanjui, 2016).

Funds must be available to allow a smooth process. Being penny-wise and pound-foolish during a crisis is not a good idea. Only a small portion of these locations may be protected by your company's insurance policies or the travel insurance of your customers or clients. A sympathetic and caring response is necessary at this moment of crisis. Though frequently ignored, we believe it is crucial.

Fain (2017) states that no matter how well you manage everything else, if you are not making every effort to care for your employees and customers, we promise that your crisis response will quickly disintegrate. Things to think about are that teams possess the essential human skills, clearly communicate with those that are affected, attend to the client's emotional needs while providing them with food and other necessities of life, take your staff's emotional needs into account and be willing to pay money. Communication should be perfect. The management should pass clear information to the response team and the company to listen to the customer in case of a crisis (Fain, 2016).

2.5.3 Organizations plan to mitigate the factors that may affect organizational preparedness to handle crisis communication.

Crisis communication helps stakeholders make some sense of the crisis. Stephens et al (2016) noted, the focus of communication during a crisis is to “influence public perception of the organization and to maintain a positive image or restore damaged image among stakeholders”. That is, organizations can use communication to provide explanations about a crisis to influence stakeholders' perceptions of the organization and the crisis. Communicating before, during and after a crisis may engender sympathy for the organization and further enable stakeholders to support the organization through the crisis Fearn-Banks (2018) adds that the type of communication during a crisis is usually

"verbal, visual and written interaction between the organization and its stakeholders (often through the media) before, during and after a negative occurrence.

Crisis communication scholars have agreed that no organization is immune to the occurrence of a crisis. Organizational reputations are at risk and susceptible to harm during times of crisis. Stakeholders are also likely to increase the stricken organization's pressure through various media (Meer et al. 2017). Stephens et al. (2015), therefore, reiterate that communication during a crisis serves to influence the public perception of the organization's image or restore a damaged appearance as well as use the opportunity to spread awareness among the public regarding their mission, values and functioning.

In a study conducted by Coombs and Holladay (2018), findings revealed that communication strategies such as "compensation" and "sympathy" were as effective as an "apology" in shaping stakeholders' perceptions of the organization taking responsibility for the crisis. Also, a study by Radtke (2013) found crisis communication strategies to be effective in shaping the perceptions of various stakeholder groups following a crisis involving Google during its introduction of Street View in Germany findings from the study revealed that Google employed the "deny" strategy, thereby absolving itself from the crisis, which led respondents to have a positive attitude towards Google and the new Street View service.

Kelley (2014) conducted a study on the response strategy to a university crisis and discovered varying reputational perceptions. Staff viewed the communication strategy positively, leading to favourable views of their university. However, students saw it less favourably, resulting in decreased support potential behaviour towards the institution. Xu and Li (2013) investigated the employee suicide crisis at Foxconn. Findings revealed that

because Foxconn employed “no comment” and “denial” strategies after the first and ninth suicide cases, stakeholders lost trust in them. Their messages were also found to be inconsistent, and their strategies were reactive rather than proactive. Thus, stakeholders perceived the strategies as weak, leading to a loss of trust in the organization and further negative reputation.

Public Relations professionals understand the saying that misinformation becomes news when there is a lack of information. Therefore, they must gather and distribute precise details about any crisis to the media while considering the five W's (what happened, who was involved, when it occurred, where it happened and why) along with how. Failure to offer prompt and accurate communication during difficult situations can lead to false impressions being formed, which can harm an organization's brand image, resulting in employee anxiety and leading them to quit, as well as significant financial losses for the company (Anthonissen 2018).

Preparedness creates a roadmap for the necessary information that must be at hand in times of crisis. This aids in curbing the impact of any given situation as quickly and efficiently as possible, while also allowing communication teams to promptly relay important messages to stakeholders. Experts Bernstein (2017), Barton (2013), and Fearn-Banks (2016) have extensively researched various techniques related to managing crises through effective communication planning. They suggest that such strategies enable firms to share relevant information on time, which helps guide appropriate actions aimed at minimizing losses incurred by an organization during trying times.

Anthonissen's research supports this notion further by highlighting how companies often overlook communication protocols, resulting from prioritizing immediate response

measures when facing critical events rather than utilizing efficient systems designed for the successful handling of adverse situations head-on, effectively. Many organizations tend not to always 'get it right' regarding matters about corporate communications departments with some employing them interchangeably as Public Relations and Media relations specialists tasked primarily with awareness creation & management and disseminating crucial company news mainly via print media platforms like newspapers etcetera: ultimately creating lasting impressions amongst all target groups involved.

In times of crisis, being prepared is crucial as it equips individuals with knowledge about the spokesperson in charge and highlights actions that must be taken. Additionally, it identifies key contacts while providing mechanisms for documenting responses to the situation at hand. According to experts such as Anthonissen (2018), Coombs (2015), and Low et al. (2012), a solid readiness strategy saves time by outlining specific roles and responsibilities during an episode of turmoil, assuming there's already a pre-existing plan set up for crisis management teams.

In the past, crisis plans and strategies were the focus of both researchers and practitioners. However, Anthonissen (2018) argues that effective crisis communication is a crucial component of overall organizational management - it helps establish strong relationships with employees while navigating tough times. To be prepared for crises, organizations should develop guidelines and procedures for communicating with stakeholders before any incidents occur; by implementing these protocols successfully during an actual crisis or in its aftermath, organizations can demonstrate transparency and accountability to stakeholders through clear messaging.

Preparedness is essential for firms to smoothly handle crises by providing a roadmap that effectively implements solutions and rapidly mitigates the impact of any emergency (Davis, 2014). Vital to this process is the creation of awareness through effective communication plans. During each crisis stage, companies must respond promptly with accuracy and swiftness; otherwise, poor decisions could seriously damage their reputation (Davis, 2014). Crucially important are communication channels such as email correspondence or memos, which ensure vital information reaches those who need it most (Coombs, 2015).

During a crisis, the crisis management team needs to be aware of its intended audiences. These divergent groups will have varying needs and expectations when seeking information. The team must identify each specific audience and establish their unique requirements. The most suitable member of the expert team must then disseminate this critical data with coherence and consistency. To avoid confusion or mistrust among employees, supervisors must provide consistent messages on essential matters during crises (Coombs, 2015). However, even if clear guidance has been given by experts within the organization, there can still arise challenges like ensuring the timely communication flow reaches its desired destination when required (Davis,2014)

The challenge of crisis communication management is common in both private and public firms, resulting in negative publicity that damages organizations' reputations. The telecommunications industry faces a significant hurdle due to the ineffective crisis communication's critical role (Barton, 2013). Additionally, bureaucracy and red tape pose an added obstacle for government-run entities. For this reason, any organization's crisis

communication team must understand the flow of information during crises (Fearn-Banks, 2016).

2.6 Rationale for the Study

As in any relationship, communication is crucial, according to Kinyanjui & Juma (2016). Therefore, the need to keep communication channels open and accessible to the organization's public and business partners cannot be overemphasized. A relationship can only stay alive if the parties involved maintain an available line of communication. There is a need, therefore, for telecommunication firms to embrace effective handling of crisis management. Issues and crisis communication planning are being embraced by industries and businesses of all shapes and sizes.

The Business Continuity Institute estimates that 84 per cent of firms have an emergency communication plan in place (Green, 2017). Three or more emergency communication processes are used by 50% of people. And yet, almost two-thirds claim they lack confidence in their capacity to respond to a crisis. Organizations feel just as unprepared as ever despite realizing the value of issues and crisis communication and making significant investments in related processes (Green, 2017). Let us look more closely at the fundamentals of issues and crisis communication to better understand the disconnect.

A wide range of potential crises, such as severe weather, criminality, cyberattacks, product recalls, corporate misconduct, reputation crises, and PR mishaps, must be anticipated by organizations. By preparing in advance for a crisis, the organization can quickly correct a situation, safeguard customers, employees, and assets, and maintain

business continuity by ensuring that relevant personnel can communicate with one another during times of threat (Paul, 2016).

According to this study, to safeguard the reputation of the business and lessen negative effects, crisis communication, which is the management of communication during a crisis or emergency, is a crucial component of risk management for any firm. And by their very nature, most crises are unknowable. No matter how big or small they may be, a crisis communications team must be prepared to handle the typical difficulties that most businesses confront during a crisis. Today, we will look at the difficulties of crisis communications, tips for making the most of your crisis management efforts, and what you need to know to be prepared for any crisis that can arise (Benson, 2014).

Any business may face a challenging task when it comes to crisis communication, which takes place both during and after a catastrophe. When responding to a crisis, especially when it is a matter of life or death, communication is crucial. According to professionals in crisis communication, some of the most typical issues that businesses encounter can be salvaged by good crisis management and effective crisis communication preparedness and response. It necessitates thorough preparation, transparent communication, and modifying and responding as circumstances change. You and your crisis management team will be more equipped to carry out your crisis communications plan when the subsequent crisis or unanticipated occurrence occurs (Lando, 2018).

2.7 Summary

One problem noted in the literature is that communication practitioners often incorrectly equate crisis communication with preparedness. Scherer and Baker (2016) have it that

preparedness “is a process of transmitting information to the organizations about risk assessment findings and risk management decisions” In preparedness, the organization is provided information about potential hazards to make informed choices about accepting or avoiding a particular risk situation.

Crisis communication is much different in that it involves incidents that suddenly and unpredictably threaten the organization's stability crisis might come about based on a false negative perception about the organization or its programs, or, for that matter, a legitimate claim or allegation (Scherer & Baker, 2016). Others, such as Coombs (2015), describe crises as having the potential to disrupt an organization’s operations to the point that the organization may not function properly. In such cases, clients may change their organization's perceptions, threatening its reputation and, quietly, its survival because they draw media attention and public scrutiny, crises demand effective intervention and response (Anthonissen, 2018).

While crises can differ dramatically across companies and industries, the consensus in the literature is that organizations can and should formulate a crisis communication plan to mitigate potentially negative consequences and reduce uncertainties in the event of a crisis (Ulmer, 2017; Littlejohn & Foss, 2011). Much literature has focused on the characteristics of crisis communication plans and tips for creating effective strategies. Most programs provide information on the organization's policies and goals and provide a checklist or guide to follow in the event of a crisis (Fearn-Banks, 2015). Plans also typically identify the organization’s most essential and valued public and provide information on how and by whom they will be contacted at the outset of the crisis (Caponigro, 2017).

The roles played by organizations' preparedness to handle crisis communication and their relationship to administrative management also have received attention in the literature because they influence an organization's ability to manage crises (Grunig, 2015). This work focuses on the roles played by individual communication practitioners, particularly the extent to which they are involved in the organization's top management. Coombs (2017) states that organizations which include communication heads in management decision-making are more inclined to possess proficient public relations programs, as compared to those where these individuals are merely assigned technical responsibilities. The latter organizations are less likely to engage in recommended communication practices and are less likely to recover quickly from or avoid damages associated with crises (Paul, 2016).

The above studies show that many scholars agree on the importance of handling crisis communication however, they do not look at the critical role of preparedness in handling crisis communication and execution. It involves the message type, timing of the message, clarity, precision, and understanding of each other. The message communicated during a crisis episode should be clearly understood to take the correct course of action. Therefore, it is vital to underscore preparedness as a reference tool for the effective implementation of crisis communication. This study will examine the critical role preparedness plays during handling crisis communication and the pivotal role of different spokespersons in telecommunication firms. It will also examine how effective preparedness guides the rolling out of a crisis strategy and the success of the same in the shortest time possible.

In a crisis, communication is important (Henry, 2018). Without planning for such crises and how to communicate during them, there will be more harm to the company. When both internal and exterior communications are insufficient operational reaction will falter, stakeholders won't understand what's going on and will subsequently become confused, irate, and react badly, the company will be seen as incompetent and possibly guilty of criminal negligence, the amount of time needed to fully resolve the issue will increase and the effects on the bottom line in terms of money and reputation will be more severe (Benson, 2014).

According to this chapter, one of the first tasks in creating a crisis communications plan is identifying the audiences that a company must contact during a crisis. Each audience that might be interested in information during and after an incident has different information demands. A list of prospective stakeholders with whom you might need to get in touch in a crisis is provided below. This list will change based on the sector you work in. Once your groups are listed, you should determine who the owners of each relationship are. Create a central communications office with your team to manage the information flow as you map these out. The central communications office addresses inquiries from customers, suppliers, news media and others. The contact centre needs to have the right tools and employees who are prepared to respond to information requests (Ulmer, 2017).

This chapter summarizes that an organization may designate a piece of its present website for the crisis or make a separate website just for the crisis. Different websites should be created in advance of the crisis, necessitating that the crisis team foresee the type of crisis and the data that will be required for the website. Along with social media and other channels, a website is another tool that an organization may use to tell its side of the

story; thus, failing to use it increases the chance that the crisis narrative will be lost (Ngechu, 2004).

2.8 Research Gaps

According to Wamae (2011), communication is essential in any relationship. It is therefore impossible to overstate how important it is to have open lines of communication with both corporate partners and institutional publics. A relationship can only endure if there is constant communication between individuals. Telecommunication firms must adopt crisis management communication strategies in preparedness. Many academics concur that having a crisis communication plan and strategy is crucial, but they often overlook the crucial role that effective communication, which includes message type, timing, clarity, precision, and mutual understanding, plays in crisis management and execution.

To ensure that the appropriate course of action is followed during a crisis, the message must be conveyed throughout the event and must be comprehended correctly. Thus, it is essential to emphasize the necessity of a communication policy as a guide for carrying out a crisis communication plan in an efficient manner. A communication plan's optimal execution during a crisis is guided by communication policy. As a result, this study looked at the crucial role that various telecommunication spokespeople play in crisis management, the importance of communication during that process, and how successful crisis management strategies are implemented as quickly as possible with the help of effective crisis communication preparedness.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This chapter focused on the research approach, methodology, study area, target population, sampling design and procedure, sampling techniques and sample size, administration of data instruments, data analysis, validity and reliability of the study and ethical considerations. According to Remenyi, et. Al. (1998), research methodology provides the procedural framework in which the research is systematically carried out to solve the research problem. The methodology may be further understood as a science of studying how research is done scientifically. We learn the various steps or research methods that may be understood as the techniques the researchers use in performing research operations. Adejimi, Oyediran, Ogunsanmi, (2010).

3.1 Study Site

The study was conducted in Jamii Telecommunication Limited. Jamii Telecommunication Limited is a privately owned Kenyan Telecommunication Service Provider offering broadband and mobile services under the "FAIBA" brand. It is in Nairobi County, on Hospital Road, Jamii Towers.

The reason why researcher chose the company over other telecommunication companies is due to two main reasons, the first one being that, before the researcher settled on the organizations to base the study, she sought permission from Safaricom, Zuku, Airtel Kenya, Jamii Telecom and Liquid Telecom of the five companies only Jamii telecom were comfortable with research on the topic being done in their company, hence, if the

researcher decided to continue with the rest, obtaining data would be hard. The second reason is that Jamii Telecom is a major player in the telecommunications industry in Kenya, in that it supplies broadband to most of the major players in the industry, which makes it one of the giants in the industry.

3.2 Research Approach

This study employed a qualitative approach. According to Phillips (2005), qualitative research is a well-established tradition that incorporates research. He further argues that qualitative research is appropriate for a firm's cycle preparedness and response phases. Qualitative research involves concurrent data collection, usually interviews, observations, documents, and visual records, with data analysis, described as the process of searching for themes in data (Yin 2014). While the quantitative approach determines the researcher's choice and action, the qualitative research approach does not usually provide the researcher with a fixed recipe to follow. It allows the researcher to apply a research strategy best suited to the research. This approach was used because it enables the researcher to collect rich data about the study topic.

3.3 Research Design

A case study method was used. According to Yin (2009), a case study is an investigation that explores a present-day occurrence extensively and in its authentic surroundings, particularly when distinguishing between the phenomenon and environment is unclear. Yin (2014) states that data collection and analysis in case study research typically include multiple data collected from various sources. Markus (1989), the case study method, investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context.

Flick (2014) states that the use of multiple data collection techniques and sources strengthens the credibility of outcomes and enables different interpretations and meanings to be included in data analysis through a process known as triangulation. The case study method was used since it gave rich information on the study topic and gave credible data, as it enables triangulation.

3.4 Population and Sampling

3.4.1 Target Population

In this study, the researcher identified the target population, which was Jamii Telecommunication Limited respondents. Jamii Telecommunication Limited was comprised of staff who had worked there for at least 2 years. Jamii Telecommunication Limited is home to approximately 1500 employees. The study focused on Jamii Telecommunication Limited's headquarters, which consists of 12 different departments, to get a representative sample. To draw information from knowledgeable key informants, the researcher used purposive sampling.

3.4.2 Research Sample

Chandran (2004) defines sampling as the method of selecting an adequate number of elements from the study population so that a study of the chosen sample represents the population adequately.

Purposive sampling was used to choose participants, with the main interest being the main players in crisis communication response and management. The purposive sampling method, also referred to as judgmental, selective or subjective sampling, involves the researcher relying on their judgement when choosing which units (such as people,

organizations/cases/events/data) were included in the study, Sharma (2017). The reason the researcher opted for this sampling method is that the researcher is interested in getting in-depth information on the study topic, information which was best derived from a specialized group within the study organization. The researcher had a sample size of 10 respondents.

Table 3.1: Sample Size

Population	Frequency
Corporate affairs	2
Communication and Marketing	5
Network Operations Center	2
Maintenance	1
	10

Source: JTL Census Data 2022

3.5 Data Generation Techniques

Both primary and secondary data sources were utilized in the study. Data was acquired through interviews, while existing communication plan documents from the company comprised the basis of secondary research. Secondary means "next after the first" or "derived"(Kinoti, 1998). Hart (2005) defines secondary data as data previously assembled for some project other than the one at hand. The study relied on both primary and secondary data, which were collected through interviews and from the Crisis Communication Plan Document. The various interviews were recorded on audio.

A semi-structured interview consisting of the key questions was used. Harrell & Bradley (2009) posit that this technique is commonly used in policy research and applies to many research questions. It was used because it enabled the interviewer to probe more if the answer was vague, also, more themes that may not have been covered in the questions might be identified in the process.

Yin (1994) says that document analysis is particularly suited for qualitative case studies that offer in-depth descriptions of a single phenomenon, event, organization, or program. The precision, extensive coverage, and consistency of documents over time make this approach highly advantageous. Furthermore, this technique was employed to facilitate triangulation, thereby enhancing the study's credibility.

3.6 Data Analysis

Hitchcock and Hughes (1995) describe two main strategies for analysing interview data. The first strategy is to become familiar with the data; the second strategy is to create meaning using analytical categories. Thematic analysis was used. After data collection the researcher keenly listened to the recorded data and transcribed the interview, the second step was to read the transcriptions to familiarize herself with what was being said, the next step was to identify the various themes and assign codes, the next step was to write a summary of the coded data and finally, write an unbiased interpretation of the findings considering the various themes that were apparent. The various research questions were transformed into the various themes that the researcher wished to identify.

The company's Crisis communication plan was analysed through thematic analysis as well. Here, the relevant data was first identified; thereafter, the various themes were

identified from the relevant data obtained earlier. The data was presented in a narrative, taking into consideration the participants' voices. According to Mabuzza, Govender, Ogunbanjo & Mash (2014), Quotations also help to connect the reader to the phenomenon that you are describing and to bring it alive. They further insist that the quotations should not be in breach of confidentiality.

3.7 Ethical Considerations

In any social research, considerations such as confidentiality and avoidance of deception are essential. Best practice always demands avoiding a breach of confidentiality. In this study's case, the researcher did not intend to do anything, nor was it expected to be misconstrued as a breach of confidentiality. Respect for privacy was highly considered, and the confidential information on Jamii Telecom, together with that of the sources, was respected.

3.8 Trustworthiness

The researcher used two data collection methods, which ensured that the data collected was credible and confirmed to be true based on data and not the researcher's preference. The researcher intends to achieve transferability by ensuring that the findings and recommendations are rich enough that other telecommunication firms can gain from them.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS, AND INTERPRETATION

4.1 Introduction

This section presents data analysis and its interpretation from the descriptive and inferential forms. In this chapter, strategies used by the researcher to get familiar with the data, and the strategy of creating meaning using analytical categories are highlighted and explained.

Thematic analysis was used, and after data collection, the researcher keenly listened to the recorded data and transcribed the interview before reading the transcriptions to get familiarized with what was said. In this chapter, the researcher identified the various themes and assigned codes, wrote a summary of the coded data, and finally wrote an unbiased interpretation of the findings, considering the various themes that were apparent.

The study relied on both primary data and secondary data, which were collected through interviews recorded in audio and the JTL's crisis communication plan document. In vivo coding was used by relying on respondents' language since audio was coded and used to get results.

4.2 Response Rate

Response rate is used to describe responses received from those who were not received.

The response rate is discussed below.

Table 4.2: Response Rate

Response	Frequency	Per cent
Response	8	80%
No Response	2	20%
Sample Size	10	100%

Source: Author 2023

Out of the 10 expected respondents, 8 were available to take part in the study. The last two did not participate because the researcher reached saturation. This gave the study (80%) feedback confirming that the results were reliable since responses were from more than half of the sample size. To ensure 100% feedback was achieved, enough time and resources were allocated for the study, and respondents were taken through what was required of them.

4.3 Demographic Information

The work department of the respondents is discussed in this section.

4.3.1 Department of the Respondents

The researcher needed to find out the department relevant to give out data or respond to the interview questions. The results are shown and discussed below.

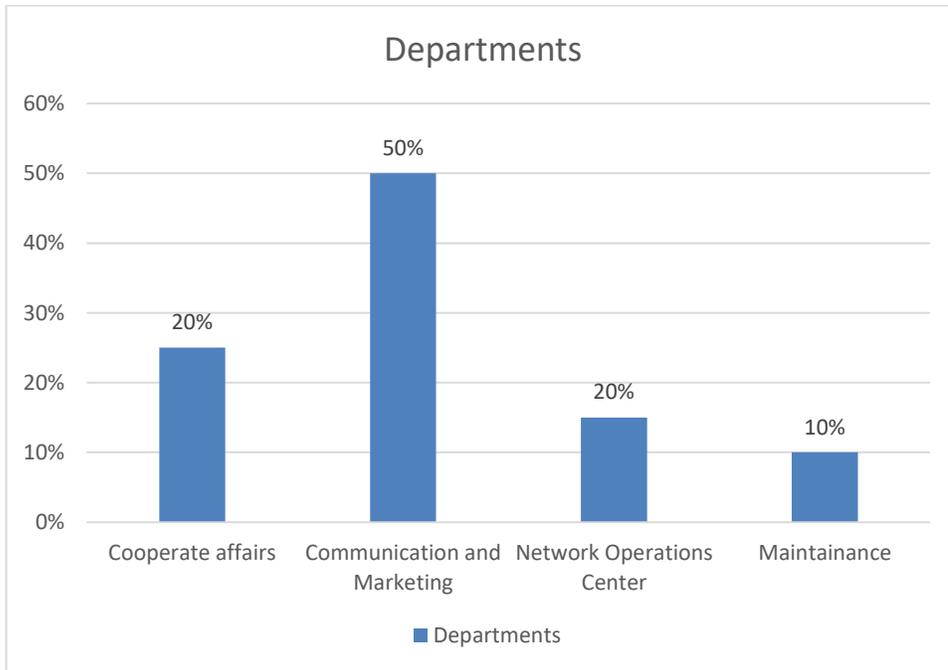


Figure 4.1 Department of the respondents

Source: Author 2023

Out of the 4 departments involved in the study, 50% included communication and marketing, 20% for corporate affairs, 20% for network operations and 10% from the maintenance department. Most of the respondents were from the communication department (Head of the Communication Department) but were guided by the corporate affairs office. The reason is that the communication department has many JTL customers and staff.

4.4 Analysis Based on Audio Interviews.

Descriptive analysis presents the descriptive characteristics of each of the variables. Here, the data is analysed.

4.4.2 What are some of the potential Crises that JTL can face?

According to the respondents, a Crisis is anything negatively affecting their client/customer.

“As a very customer-centric organization, for us, a crisis is anything that negatively impacts our clients, regardless of whether or not it is a national or global crisis, and sometimes might seem very small scale globally but might have a large-scale impact on our stakeholders”, Respondent X.

The interviews showed that JTL is vulnerable to crises bigger than the organization and issues outside the organization. Some of the crises cannot be controlled internally, like the COVID-19 Pandemic, which made all the activities stop, and in case of breakdown, no work or activity was conducted.

A model showing potential Crises that JTL can face.

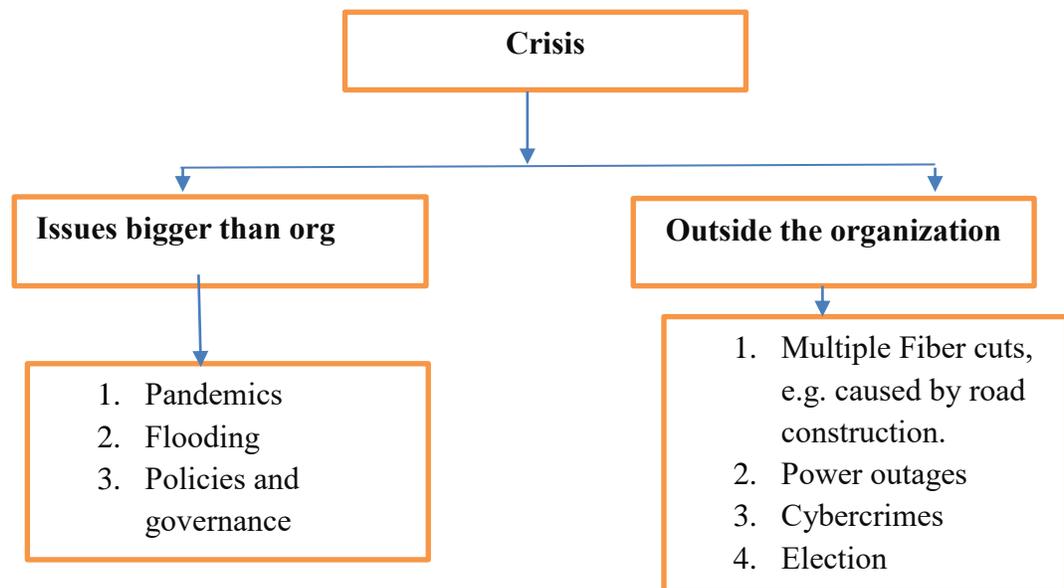


Figure 4.2 Potential Crises that JTL can face

Source: Author 2023

4.4.3 Who are the main members of the crisis communication team in JTL?

According to the respondents, members of crisis communication are those directly involved in responding to crisis management in cases when it arises. It was revealed that the chair, CEO, GM (General Manager), team members, team leaders and head of departments complete the chain of those involved in responses to crisis at JTL. The respondent also identified team members to be the main members of crisis communication.

4.4.4 In relation to JTL's preparedness for crisis communication, which measures helped to mitigate the effects of COVID-19?

According to the interview results, Crisis communication includes the measures taken to pass information on a crisis to ensure that first responses are made to control or solve it. Measures are set by JTL to help in such cases. The measures mentioned and emphasized by all the respondents were; isolation of teams, separation of teams, avoiding contact, reducing contact, restriction on lift, sanitation, fumigation of office, separation of work tools, no sharing, vaccination drive, safety gear to teams on fieldwork, how to engage with clients/train on Covid 19 management, safety Check, communicate, protocol to use to protect customers, sensitization, conversation going of people to get vaccine, for work continuity and being safe. Most of the measures were mentioned severally times, revealing how strongly the measures were followed at JTL.

4.4.5 Are there governance processes that help in identifying warning signals of a looming crisis? If so, what are some of them?

The governance process, according to the respondents, was activities in the country which involved the government leading to interruption or delay in JTL service delivery. The governance process is the general election, which was due to happen in the country, and to ensure JTL was prepared, all communication was to be set ready and alternative ways found in case of breakdown, since information through communication methods provided by JTL was being relied on. Any breakdown could result in a crisis since the election result streaming is transmitted through communication media.

In this case, the looming crisis mentioned by all the respondents is COVID-19. To control the warning signals and ensure continuity of work and services, the following precautions were undertaken, adapting to emerging trends, a lot of concerns, vaccines, communicating only when necessary, safety gear, knowledge, and awareness, when necessary, Covid-19 variation, adaptation of vaccine and prevailing factor.

A model showing Warning signals of a looming crisis.

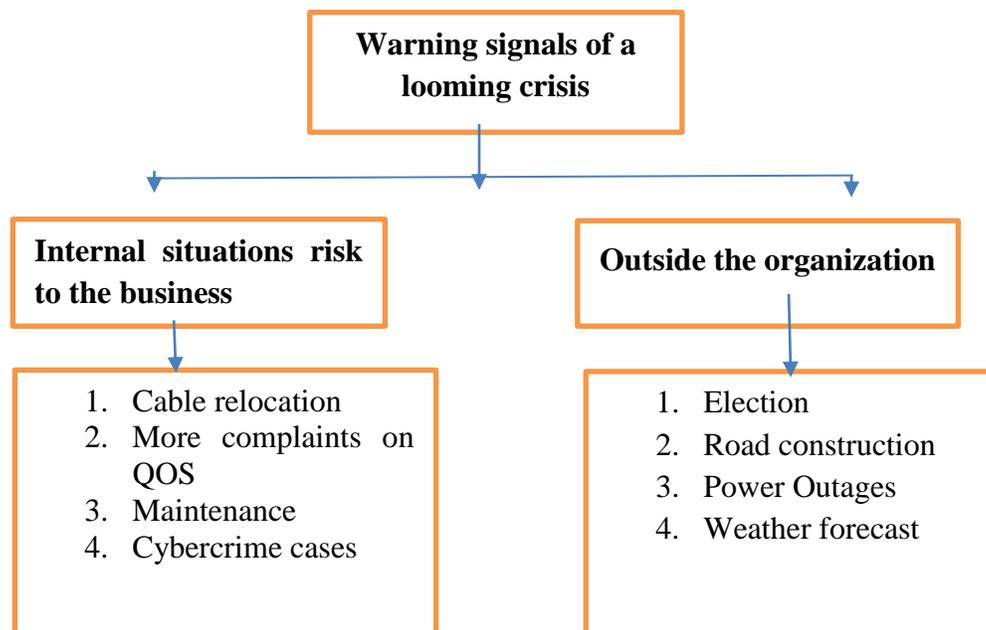


Figure 4.3A model showing Warning signals of a looming crisis.

Source: Author 2023

The model above shows a response according to the Warning signals of a looming crisis. The results were grouped in terms of internal situations risk to the business and external situations risk to the business. An internal situation risk could occur if the response team does not respond swiftly to cable relocation, if the service is not good or if required maintenance. This makes JTL responsible for the crisis, and it will not be good for its image and consistency in service delivery.

A looming crisis outside the organization could also occur, but very unfortunate for JTL since some are not planned in case of road construction, the issue is raised, and the team is sent in the presence of KENHA for the work to be finished. In case of an election, a memo is provided showing the date of the election to give time for the process to be undertaken to avoid a crisis that might occur.

4.4.6 Do you have a specific spokesperson or communication channel specified for crisis communication?

According to the respondents, a spokesperson is any person in charge of the communication response in the organization. The communication channel, however, is the procedure followed by the spokesperson while passing information. JTL has spokespersons depending on the department they serve under the Corporate Affairs office or corporate communication, based on the nature of the crisis. These offices respond swiftly to pending issues to be acted upon by the response team and to avoid a crisis.

4.4.7 Are there any plans for business continuity in the event of a crisis?

According to the results, respondents emphasized that JTL has aligned measures to be followed to ensure continuity of services. All the respondents mentioned the measures more than once. For example, the plans include separating teams to avoid COVID-19, no working in teams, no Sharing, and restrictions on Lift. Capacity in the lift, isolation of teams, avoiding Contact like greeting, reducing contact, sanitation, fumigation of office, separation of work tools, vaccination drive, safety gear to teams on fieldwork, how to engage with clients, train on COVID-19 management, safety Check, communicate, protocol to use to protect customers, sensitization, conversation going of people to get vaccine and for work continuity.

4.4.8 What are some of the feedback channels you have regarding handling crisis communication?

According to the respondents, feedback channels are the avenues used by the JTL management to convey information to customers and staff concerning questions asked or

clarifications needed by the customers. According to the results, feedback is given on attachments received, and the feedback varies depending on its nature. All feedback is done to avoid or correct a crisis.

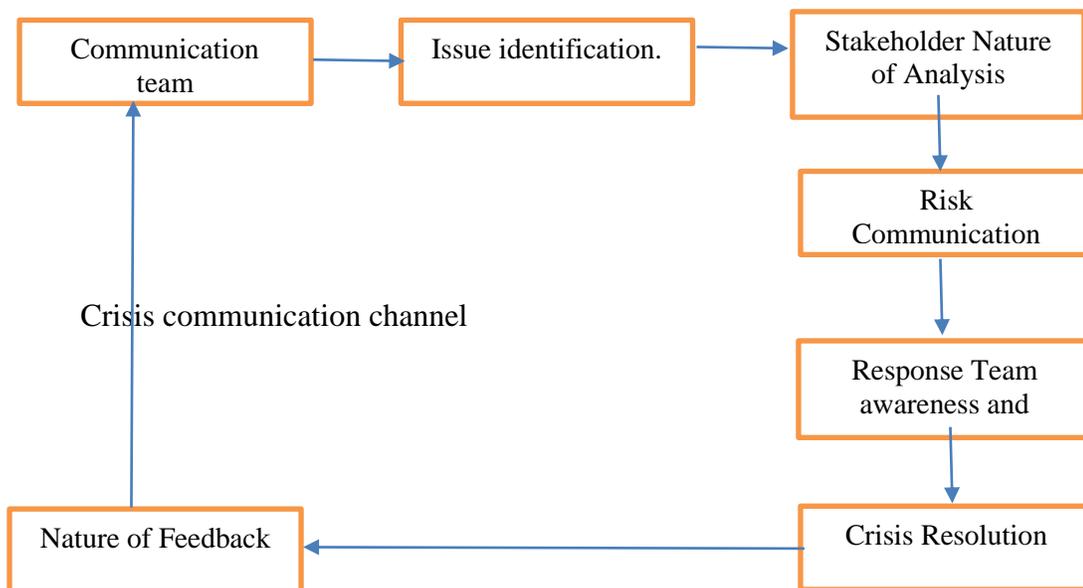


Figure 4.4 **Crisis communication channel**

4.4.9 Do you think the management is doing enough regarding preparedness to handle crisis communication? If not, what are some of the factors that are hindering it from doing so?

In trying to know if the management is doing enough regarding preparedness to handle crisis communication, the results were that the management was up to the task and was always prepared in case of a crisis. In ensuring preparedness for handling crisis communication, the management has set aside a crisis management team and uses various engagement strategies to meet its target of crisis communication.

“There have been various engagements around crisis communication preparedness by the management, and this is often documented and reviewed to match emerging trends”, Respondent Y.

4.4.10 Can you define JTL’s preparedness to handle crisis communication as effective? If yes, please let me know what makes it so; if not, what can be done to ensure optimum organizational preparedness?

According to the results, it was revealed that JTL is highly effective in handling crisis communication. This is possible because of the different interventions used. JTL’s preparedness to handle crisis communication is effective evidently through its well-prepared investment on time, maintain a contact database for clients to access when needed, regulation on project engagement is set to protect the work ethics, scope of work is organized and planned, stakeholder’s agreement before work is initiated, customer’s convenience met by determining if it is productive and risky. Customer needs are put first, customer go ahead are supported by policies, no major work is taken if no ample time was given to communicate to their clients, no work order over the weekend unless it is urgent, no major work safety of staff working late at night unless otherwise and if otherwise security provided.

“I can say our preparedness is very apt and effective, we have had several crises and threats of crises, for example in 2016 heavy rains caused rampant and numerous outages, very fast, we had to put a workforce who defined a strategy to deal with outage as matters affecting the business and staff, we had to look at the welfare and security of the staff but at the same time ensuring that the clients enjoy 100% uptime. We have had numerous emergency cable relocations brought about by road construction and other human activities. Immediately, the relevant crisis response teams produced the scope of work,

and expected time of restoration, sought relevant permits, and communicated the same to the stakeholders through mass communication. Former US president Obama's visit to Kenya tampered with our normal operations as most roads were closed posing a challenge, especially with access to these roads, also, the company's reputation and that of our country were in our hands since Obama was using our internet, so we had teams on standby 24/7 to ensure 100% uptime during his visit to Kenya. Pre- and post-election activities, especially in 2013, were a crisis for us because we were among the top Internet service providers for IEBC, and we had to ensure 100% uptime. Besides that, the safety and security of staff had to be guaranteed. Finally, during the COVID-19 Pandemic, our staff were given Specialised training on personal safety and the safety of the client, they were trained on how to communicate with the clients, they were given safety gear and clients communicated to request them to prepare for the arrival of the technicians and requested to observe the relevant safety measures," Respondent Z.

4.4.11 How often is JTL's preparedness for crisis communication tested?

According to the respondents, JTL is always prepared in case of a crisis and often reviewed, whereby is a statutory requirement by the governing body. "We do this voluntarily as a business, and as a compliance with statutory requirements by our governing bodies", Respondent X

4.5 Descriptive Analysis Based on the Crisis Communication Plan Document.

4.5.1 What qualifies to be a crisis?

The researcher needed to find out what qualified to be a crisis according to the crisis communication strategy highlighted by the plan document. Several negative factors were highlighted, ranging from harming people and/or property, seriously interrupting

business, significantly damaging reputation, or negatively impacting the bottom line. About and comparison with the results received from the interview audio results, it was concluded that all those factors led to a crisis being brought to the attention of JTL, with seriously interrupted business being the major point. Any organization serving the interests of its people and customers must identify what qualifies to be its a crisis to have a plan to solve it in case it happens (Kinyanjui, 2016).

4.5.2 Anticipated Crises within JTL

The crisis communication plan document further explained what qualifies to be a crisis to JTL in detail. The researcher therefore went forward to find out which of these anticipated crises were. It was determined that these were direct impacts on JTL that might hinder its functioning and service delivery. Supported by the audio interview results, crisis communication of JTL is mainly based on issues involving new regulations set by the government that could impact the business, products or business model, multiple fibre cuts due to natural factors like road construction or wear and tear, bad weather that could cause flooding hence weakening of signal thus poor communication, political unrest in a certain region that might cause to riots leading to fibre cuts or lack of access to the area due to security and cyber-crimes involving JTL communication channel being used by its competitor to ruin its name or used for criminal activity within JTL network. A crisis is anything that might cause harm to the operations of an organization (Bonk, 2016).

4.5.3 Key Publics & What is important to them.

The researcher needed to find out if the key publics of JTL's interest are always met in terms of safety and job delivery, according to the communication strategy of the plan document. It was revealed that customers received uninterrupted services since it has been

JTL's mandate to ensure service delivery is at their level best. Employees' health, safety and well-being are always met in terms of safety at work, duration of work, and amount of work given to employees. This makes the employees satisfied with their work. Regulations have been set aside by JTL to protect its delivery of service to customers and staff. These regulations are agreed upon before a service is given to customers or a member of staff is employed. Public interests are well taken of in that JTL services are not used to harm the interests of others protected by the set rules and regulations. Key publics and importance should be emphasized and looked upon to inform all stakeholders/parties involved with the organization (Barton, 2016).

JTL classifies its publics as below.

Key publics - This public's importance & themes to emphasize when talking to them.

1. Customers- That they receive uninterrupted services.
2. Employees-Health, safety, and well-being
3. Regulator (CA)-Abide by the law
4. Media- Public interest is well taken of
5. Community- Peaceful co-existence

4.5.4 Crisis level and action plan

According to the crisis plan document, after a crisis occurs, the crisis level is determined to evaluate its level to determine the action to take. First, the crisis communication team communicates through the set channel by identifying and training a spokesperson, the right skills to reassure the affected public, develop a statement for use immediately after a crisis, and identify an appropriate channel of communication e.g. SMS, social media, develop a message: maximum 3 independent items, prepare for Q & A.

Later, a post-crisis analysis is done to find out how the process was undertaken. A post-analysis determines what was done right/wrong and where to improve next time (Low, 2012). Below is a summary of the criteria used for crisis-level analysis and action plan.

1. Highly intense

- The media have an urgent and immediate need for information about the crisis.
- The CEO / Chair may need to provide an opening statement.
- One or more groups or individuals express anger/outrage.

To do: Broadcast and print media appear on-site for live coverage.

2. Intense

- Crisis causes growing attention from local media.
- The media contacts the non-crisis communication team for information about the crisis.
- Media, stakeholders, and partners are present at the site.
- Affected and potentially affected partners threaten to talk to the media

3. Moderately intense

- Crisis may or may not have occurred, and the situation is attracting media attention slowly but steadily.
- The public is aware of the situation, but it attracts little attention

4. Minimally intense

- Crisis attracts little or no attention.
- Pre-event information requests are received.
- The public/media are unaware of the crisis

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

5.1 Introduction

This chapter summarized the findings from chapter four by making conclusions and recommendations based on the findings.

5.2 Summary of Findings

Out of the 4 departments involved in the study, 50% included communication and marketing, 20% for corporate affairs, 20% for network operations and 10% for the maintenance department. Most of the respondents were from the communication department and corporate affairs because they had many staff directly involved in crisis management and communication.

A crisis is anything negatively affecting their client/customer. The interviews showed that JTL is vulnerable to crises bigger than the organization and issues outside the organization. Some of the crises cannot be controlled internally, like the COVID-19 Pandemic, which made all the activities stop in case of breakdown.

Members of crisis communication are those directly involved in responding to crisis management. It was revealed that Stakeholders, team members, team leaders and heads of departments complete the chain of those involved in responses to crisis at JTL.

5.2.1 Structural Strategies in Preparedness for Crisis Communication

The structural strategies in place at JTL for crisis communication preparedness are well documented and structured. The crisis communication team is composed of key

individuals, such as the CEO, General Manager, team members, and department heads, who form a clear chain of command for crisis management. A critical structural element includes the separation of teams, reduced contact between staff, and strict protocols for safety and hygiene (e.g., sanitation, fumigation, vaccination drive).

The company also maintains an organized system of communication channels, with specific spokespersons for various crises depending on the department involved (Corporate Affairs or Corporate Communication). Additionally, communication procedures, such as feedback channels and stakeholder engagement strategies, have been established to ensure a swift response. These strategies are aligned with the government's regulations, especially during national events like elections, where plans are preemptively created to avoid service disruptions. These structural strategies ensure that the organization is well-prepared to respond to any crisis. By establishing clear roles and responsibilities and implementing safety and communication protocols, JTL has set up a comprehensive structure to handle crises effectively.

5.2.2 Factors Affecting the Implementation of Effective Organizational Preparedness for Crisis Communication

Several factors influence JTL's ability to effectively implement crisis communication preparedness. Internal factors include the company's focus on customer centricity, which makes the communication department particularly involved in crisis management, and the organization's ability to mobilize response teams swiftly. External factors include global and national crises, such as the COVID-19 pandemic and the government's activities (e.g., elections), which could delay or disrupt

services. Another key factor is the availability and readiness of resources, including staff training, communication infrastructure, and safety gear for fieldworkers. Government-led processes, such as elections, also contribute to potential service delivery interruptions, which must be addressed through robust communication systems.

The implementation of crisis communication preparedness at JTL is influenced by both internal and external factors. Internal factors include the structure of the crisis communication team and staff training, while external factors, like national events and pandemics, play a significant role in shaping the company's approach to crisis management.

5.2.3 Mitigation of Factors Affecting Organizational Preparedness to Handle Crisis Communication

JTL employs various strategies to mitigate factors that may negatively affect its preparedness for crisis communication. For example, to address the challenge of external disruptions like the COVID-19 pandemic, the company implemented strict safety measures such as isolating teams, reducing contact, and ensuring staff are equipped with safety gear. The company also maintains a contact database for quick access to clients and stakeholders, ensuring timely communication in crises. JTL adapts its approach to emerging trends and continuously reviews its preparedness strategies.

Furthermore, the company has established feedback channels and regular training programs to ensure the staff is always ready for any crisis. In addition to pre-emptive planning for national disruptions, such as elections, JTL also ensures that stakeholders are well-informed about potential impacts on services.

To mitigate potential barriers to effective crisis communication, JTL has put in place several precautionary and adaptive measures. These include team separation during crises, proper staff training, clear communication protocols, and a robust feedback mechanism to ensure continuity of service and preparedness for any emerging crisis.

5.3 Conclusion

This study has described a process of thematic analysis as a method of analysing qualitative data generated by interviews and the crisis communication plan document. The method described here offers a method of generating categories under which similar themes or categories can be collated. From the results of the study, it is concluded that JTL has been prepared in its activities, which vary from the detection of Network faults/anomalies and dispatch to maintenance teams to resolve in the form of trouble tickets within set timelines, being effective. Corporate communications have become a significant asset, hence worth researching. Although the scope of this research is limited to communication strategies, it also offers an interdisciplinary inquiry covering legal issues, fundamentals of investment, and historical backgrounds of JTL and other Telecommunications companies' transformations in post-election Kenya (2007-2008).

The team is involved in crisis management, follow-through network failures' resolution, while making necessary escalations to ensure fault resolution within set SLAs (Service Level Agreements).

JTL has kept stakeholders and other business units informed during system/Network outages by sending out SMS and email notifications with the commissioning/admitting of new network elements to the network as per the provided guidelines. Field teams of JTL offer technical support to field teams through phone communication to help them isolate or fault network faults and request access to JTL partners' colocation rooms and clients' premises for faulting purposes. All these efforts by JTL are to keep its main public, the customer's interested first and to avoid crises that might affect its normal operations.

The study found JTL to be adequately prepared for crisis communication, which is based on the findings from the interview and the crisis communication plan document. Most of the policies, structural strategies comply with what Attribution theory and Situation Crisis communication theory purport. I.e., the public's segregation, knowing what is important and ensuring the message has what is important to each public, depending on the crisis.

In as much as JTL has put in measures, policies, and strategies in preparation for crisis communication, it is still vulnerable to potential crises outside its organization, like COVID-19.

Members of the crisis communication team are those directly involved in response to crisis management, leaving out most of the staff who ideally should be involved as they form the most important public in the crisis communication chain.

JTL's preparedness conforms to what most scholars in the field recommend, for example, (Barton, 2016) said that Key public and importance should be emphasized and looked upon to favour all stakeholders/parties involved with the organization, JTL's crisis communication goes by this, as well as (Kinyanjui 2016), sentiments that any organization serving the interests of its people and customers must identify what qualifies to be its crisis to have a plan to solve it in case it happens

5.3.1 Conclusion on Structural Strategies in Preparedness for Crisis Communication

In conclusion, JTL has established a comprehensive structural framework to ensure effective crisis communication preparedness. The organization's well-defined crisis communication team, including key personnel such as the CEO, General Manager, and department heads, ensures that there is a clear and structured approach to managing crises. The implementation of strict protocols such as team isolation, separation of work tools, and safety measures like sanitation and vaccination drives indicates that JTL has built a resilient system to address crises swiftly and efficiently. Additionally, the company's use of designated spokespersons and communication channels tailored to specific crisis scenarios highlights the organization's attention to detail in its preparedness. These structural strategies allow JTL to respond effectively to both internal and external crises, ensuring the continuity of services and protection of stakeholder interests.

5.3.2 Conclusion on Factors Affecting the Implementation of Effective Organizational Preparedness for Crisis Communication

The implementation of effective crisis communication preparedness at JTL is influenced by a combination of internal and external factors. Internally, the company's customer-centric approach and the active involvement of key departments, particularly the communication and corporate affairs teams, play a critical role in ensuring quick and organized responses to crises. External factors, such as national events (e.g., elections) and global crises like the COVID-19 pandemic, significantly affect the company's ability to deliver uninterrupted services. JTL's ability to adapt to these challenges is crucial for mitigating the impact of such disruptions. The preparedness is also affected by the readiness of resources, including staff training, communication infrastructure, and safety measures. The combination of these factors demonstrates that JTL's ability to manage crisis communication is shaped by a dynamic interplay of internal capabilities and external challenges.

5.3.3 Conclusion on Mitigation of Factors Affecting Organizational Preparedness to Handle Crisis Communication

JTL employs a range of strategies to mitigate the factors that may affect its crisis communication preparedness, ensuring that the organization remains resilient in the face of adversity. The company's proactive approach to managing external disruptions, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, through isolation of teams, safety protocols, and consistent staff training, highlights its commitment to maintaining

service continuity during a crisis. Additionally, JTL's emphasis on maintaining a robust contact database, clear communication channels, and feedback mechanisms ensures that the company can respond swiftly to customer and stakeholder inquiries. The organization also demonstrates adaptability by continuously reviewing its crisis management strategies to match emerging trends and challenges. By incorporating these mitigation strategies, JTL strengthens its crisis communication capabilities and reduces the impact of potential crises on its operations, clients, and stakeholders.

5.4 Recommendations

The study recommended that management should put the interest of JTL's customers first since they are the main public, and in case of a crisis, customers are the top stakeholders affected. This can be a failed service delivery through weak signals or service breakdown. According to the study, to ensure that the firms' intended benefits are realized, telecommunications companies in Kenya should provide their staff with the necessary training in planning and organization, as well as appropriate recovery plans that integrate collaboratively developed learning and simulation techniques.

Multiple stakeholders should be included in the development of plans and policy guidelines that improve the management of foreseen and unexpected disruptions to stimulate sectoral growth by regulators like the Communication Authority of Kenya. The policy should mandate the telecom companies to create plans and strategies for disaster management, promote information exchange about the interruptions they have experienced, and share lessons learned with other telecom companies via the regulator.

To develop more responsive policy guidelines that would engineer a robust operating environment capable of anticipating and enduring unexpected shocks, the government, through its various policy-making organs such as the Ministry of Information, Communications, and Technology and the Vision 2030 Secretariat, should continuously benchmark the current policy frameworks concerning business continuity management and risk management.

5.4.1 Structural strategies have been put in place in preparedness to handle Crisis communication.

The main members of the crisis communication team should be included to get opinions and ideas before an action is undertaken to avoid a crisis from happening. Governance processes should help in identifying warning signals of a looming crisis. This will help in early crisis identification and intervention. Activities should be distributed among departments to allow easy workflow and accountability. This helps in the easy identification of who does what.

In discussing the structural strategies put in place to handle crisis communication preparedness, it is important to examine the organizational framework and communication strategies that telecommunication companies like Jamii Telecom have developed. According to Fearn-Banks (2017), the effectiveness of crisis communication hinges on having a well-established structure in place before a crisis occurs. This structural preparedness involves having designated crisis communication teams, clear communication channels, and predefined roles for employees to ensure a swift, coordinated response when a crisis arises.

Theoretical underpinnings like Situational Crisis Communication Theory (SCCT) by Coombs (2007) emphasize the importance of tailoring crisis response strategies based on the nature of the crisis, the stakeholders involved, and the company's prior reputation. Jamii Telecom, for instance, can benefit from structural strategies that involve developing clear internal communication protocols, creating a crisis response team, and establishing relationships with key stakeholders, including the government and media, to ensure effective communication during a crisis.

Moreover, effective preparedness involves not only structural strategies but also an organisational culture that emphasizes proactivity and continuous risk assessment. Research by Lando (2018) suggests that organizations with a culture of crisis preparedness are more likely to achieve resilience and minimize the impact of crises. This includes regularly conducting crisis simulation exercises, risk assessments, and ensuring employees are well-trained in crisis communication techniques.

For Jamii Telecom, embedding crisis preparedness into the organizational culture means ensuring that all levels of staff are familiar with crisis management protocols, which enhances the company's capacity to respond quickly and effectively when crises occur. Additionally, it aligns with theories like the Contingency Theory, which advocates flexibility and adaptation of crisis management strategies based on specific organizational needs and external environmental factors. By integrating these structural strategies and theoretical frameworks, Jamii Telecom can build a more resilient crisis communication plan, one that is adaptable, responsive, and well-structured to handle crises effectively.

5.4.2 Factors that affect the implementation of effective organizational preparedness for crisis communication.

According to the research, telecommunication companies should guarantee that components of control operations are improved to ensure that objectives are met. It is recommended that the potential factors that hinder the implementation of crisis preparedness, like breakdown of services and power outages, should be addressed early enough to prevent them from happening. The proper channel should be followed to allow smooth follow-up of a crisis whenever it happens.

The implementation of effective organizational preparedness for crisis communication is influenced by several key factors, both internal and external to the organization. One of the primary factors is organizational culture. According to Lando (2018), organizations with a strong culture of crisis preparedness are more likely to implement effective crisis communication strategies. In the context of Jamii Telecom, a culture that prioritizes proactive risk management and open communication can lead to a more effective response during a crisis. However, a lack of such a culture can hinder the implementation of preparedness measures, leading to delayed responses, miscommunication, and loss of public trust. Organizational buy-in from top leadership is also critical, as it determines the resources allocated to crisis communication planning, training, and simulation exercises. Without strong leadership commitment, even the best-laid crisis communication plans can fall short during real-world crises.

Another significant factor that affects the implementation of crisis communication preparedness is the availability of resources, particularly technology and human capital. Effective crisis communication requires access to modern tools such as social media

monitoring platforms, crisis management software, and communication infrastructure that can facilitate rapid information dissemination. Additionally, organizations need to ensure that their crisis communication teams are adequately trained and have the necessary expertise to handle different types of crises.

According to Fearn-Banks (2017), well-equipped teams are better able to manage crises with minimal damage. In the case of Jamii Telecom, the lack of investment in technology or the insufficient training of staff could impede the company's ability to effectively implement crisis communication strategies. Furthermore, external factors such as regulatory constraints or market competition can also influence preparedness. For example, changes in government regulations regarding communication during emergencies may require Jamii Telecom to adjust its strategies, affecting the overall effectiveness of its preparedness plans.

5.4.3 Organizations plan to mitigate the factors that may affect organizational preparedness to handle crisis communication.

Potential crises like breakdowns of services and power outages should be looked at and communicated early enough to avoid them from happening, affecting telecommunication firms' service delivery. Issues bigger than the organization like elections should be brought to the attention of the management to prepare for in case a crisis occurs, since a date is always set for the activity, giving room for accountability and early mitigation actions.

The government of Kenya needs to formulate laws that will allow private institutions like JTL to intervene during crises, like when a network cable fails, and the roads are closed.

Telecommunication firms should be allowed to continue with their day-to-day activities to avoid the escalation of issues. In addition, the study suggested that telecommunication firms constantly communicate their crisis mitigation plans to their stakeholders; this will give the stakeholders confidence in the brand and the sector.

To mitigate the factors that may affect organizational preparedness in handling crisis communication, organizations must first address the root causes of these challenges, particularly by fostering a proactive organizational culture. As Lando (2018) suggests, organizations that prioritize crisis preparedness at every level of operation are more likely to overcome the barriers that could hinder effective crisis communication. Jamii Telecom, for instance, can implement a culture that emphasizes the importance of crisis management through regular training, internal communication campaigns, and the integration of crisis preparedness into the company's core values. This approach encourages employees to actively participate in the crisis planning process and ensures that crisis communication becomes a part of everyday operations, not just an afterthought during an actual crisis. Furthermore, leadership commitment is key in mitigating the risk of a reactive crisis response. By allocating resources, establishing clear crisis communication protocols, and setting up crisis communication teams, top management can reduce the chances of miscommunication or delayed response during a crisis.

In addition to strengthening organizational culture, investing in modern technology and ensuring adequate resource allocation are vital steps in mitigating factors that may impede effective crisis communication preparedness. As Fearn-Banks (2017) notes, technological tools like social media monitoring systems, communication platforms, and real-time crisis management software can greatly enhance an organization's ability to respond quickly

and effectively. Jamii Telecom can address this by ensuring its crisis communication team is well-equipped with the latest technological tools that allow for quick data collection, risk assessment, and message dissemination to the public. Moreover, ongoing training and simulations tailored to different crisis scenarios can help employees at all levels develop the necessary skills to act efficiently. By regularly reviewing and updating its crisis communication plans, considering new technologies and emerging threats, Jamii Telecom can build a more resilient framework for managing future crises, ultimately minimizing any adverse impact on the organization's operations and reputation.

5.4.4 Strengthening Crisis Communication Training

Jamii Telecom must establish a continuous, comprehensive crisis communication training program for all levels of staff. Regular drills, workshops, and role-playing scenarios will help employees understand their specific roles during a crisis, ensuring quicker and more efficient responses. This will also create a culture of preparedness and help reduce confusion when a crisis arises.

5.4.5 Investment in Technology

To effectively manage crises, Jamii Telecom should invest in cutting-edge technology, such as social media monitoring tools, automated crisis communication systems, and real-time analytics platforms. These technologies can provide timely alerts, help track public sentiment and enable the organization to engage with stakeholders in real time. Having a crisis management platform can streamline communication and improve response times, allowing the company to handle crises more effectively.

5.4.6 Regular Crisis Simulations and Risk Assessments

Conducting regular crisis simulations and risk assessments is essential for identifying potential vulnerabilities in the organization's crisis communication plan. By testing various crisis scenarios, Jamii Telecom can refine its communication strategies, improve its internal response mechanisms, and ensure that all team members are prepared for unexpected events. It is also vital for the company to stay updated on emerging risks, including cybersecurity threats, regulatory changes, and market disruptions.

5.4.7 Collaboration with External Stakeholders

Jamii Telecom should strengthen its partnerships with external stakeholders, including government agencies, regulators, and other telecommunications firms. Collaboration ensures a more coordinated response to large-scale crises, such as natural disasters or nationwide network outages, and helps build a network of support that can share resources and information quickly. Establishing clear lines of communication with these stakeholders will enhance preparedness and improve the overall crisis management process.

5.4.8 Clear Communication Protocols

Jamii Telecom should develop and regularly update clear communication protocols that define how information will be disseminated during a crisis. These protocols should outline the roles of spokespersons, ensure consistent messaging across all channels, and define the target audiences (e.g., customers, regulatory bodies, and media). By streamlining communication during a crisis, the company can prevent misinformation and ensure that the public receives accurate and timely updates.

5.5 Areas for Future Research

5.5.1 Impact of Social Media on Crisis Communication in Telecommunications

Future research could focus on examining how social media platforms influence crisis communication strategies in the telecommunications industry. This research could explore how companies like Jamii Telecom can leverage social media for real-time crisis management, stakeholder engagement, and damage control. Understanding how social media shapes public perception during a crisis will provide insights into effective online communication strategies.

5.5.2 The Role of Leadership in Crisis Communication Preparedness

Another area for future research could investigate the role of organizational leadership in preparing for and responding to crises. Research could explore how leadership styles, decision-making processes, and organizational structures affect the effectiveness of crisis communication plans in the telecommunications sector. Understanding how leadership influences crisis preparedness could lead to improved management strategies for crises.

5.5.3 Crisis Communication Strategies in a Competitive Market

Research could also explore how telecommunications companies operating in competitive markets, like Kenya, can differentiate their crisis communication strategies to retain customer trust and loyalty. Investigating how organizations can use crisis communication as an opportunity to showcase their commitment to customer service and corporate responsibility would provide valuable insights for maintaining a strong market position during a crisis.

5.5.4 Evaluation of Crisis Communication Models for Telecommunications Companies

Future studies could evaluate existing crisis communication models and frameworks, specifically in the telecommunications industry. Researchers could assess the effectiveness of different models, such as the Situational Crisis Communication Theory (SCCT), in guiding the crisis communication strategies of telecom companies. Identifying best practices and tailored strategies for crisis preparedness in this sector would help organizations refine their crisis response approaches.

5.5.5 Cybersecurity and Crisis Communication in Telecommunications

With the increasing risk of cyberattacks in the telecommunications sector, future research could focus on how organizations like Jamii Telecom can incorporate cybersecurity measures into their crisis communication plans. Research in this area could examine how telecom companies can prepare for data breaches, network vulnerabilities, and other cybersecurity threats, ensuring that they can respond efficiently while maintaining customer trust.

REFERENCES

- Adejimi, A., Oyediran, O. S., & Ogunsanmi, E. B. (2010). Employing a qualitatively enriched semi-structured questionnaire in evaluating ICT impact on Nigerian' construction chain integration'. *The Built & Human Environment Review*, 3(1), 49-62.
- Ahmed, M. (2016). *The principles and practice of crisis management*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan
- Albattat, A., & Som, A. (2019). Crisis communication and management strategies in telecommunication companies: A global comparison. *Crisis Communication Studies*, 17(1), 61-75.
- Al-Syaidh, M. (2016). Crisis communication strategies in the telecommunications industry: Lessons from global and local contexts. *Telecommunication Crisis Management Journal*, 8(2), 102-115.
- Anthonissen, F. (2017). *Crisis Communication: Practical PR Strategies for Reputation Management and Company Survival*. Babbie, E. (2001). *The Practice of Social Research*. 9th ed. Belmont: Wadsworth
- Arpan, L.M., & Roskos-Ewoldsen, D.R. (2015). Stealing thunder: An analysis of the effects of proactive disclosure of crisis information. *Public Relations Review* 31(3), 425-433
- Augustine, D. M. (2015). The organizational roles of communications and public relations practitioners. In JE Grunig (Ed.), *Excellence in Public Relations and Communication Management*, pp. 327-355. Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates
- Augustine, N. R. (1994). *Telecommunication strategies for the next decade*. *Global Telecommunications Review*, 13(4), 200-215.
- Augustine, N. R. (1995). *Managing telecommunications networks in the modern age*. *Telecommunications Management Review*, 19(2), 45-60.
- Barton, L. (2016). *Crisis in organizations II* (2nd ed.). Cincinnati, OH: College Divisions South-Western.
- Benson, J.A. (2014). *Crisis revisited: An analysis of strategies used by Tylenol in the second*
- Berkovich, I. (2016). Crisis communication in emerging markets: A case study of Kenya's telecommunications industry. *International Journal of Business Communication*, 19(3), 78-92.
- Bernstein, J. (2017). *The 10 Steps of Crisis Communications*. Copyright © 2013. All rights reserved.

- Blake, M., & Sinclair, H. (2018). Crisis management in the telecommunications sector: The role of leadership and communication. *Journal of Business Communication*, 20(2), 155-170.
- Bonk, K., Griggs, H., and Tynes, E. (2016). *The Jossey-Bass Guide to Strategic Communications for Nonprofits*
- Brewer, John & Hunter, Albert (2014). *Foundations of Multimethod Research. Synthesizing styles*. Sage Publications, Inc.
- Brown, Lew, G. (2014) "Convenience in Services Marketing", *Journal of Services Marketing*, Vol. 4 Issue: 1, pp. 53–59.
- Burnet, M. (1998). *Leadership in crisis: A study of communication strategies in telecommunication firms*. Routledge.
- Burns, J. M. (1978). *Leadership in crisis: The role of communication in managing telecommunication companies*. Public Affairs Publishing.
- Caponigro, J. R. (2000). *The crisis counsellor: A step-by-step guide to managing a business crisis*. Chicago: Contemporary Books.
- Chandran, E. (2004). *Research Methods: a quantitative approach with illustrations for Christian Ministries*. Nairobi: Daystar University.
- Charles, M. (2012). *Crisis communication preparedness in the Kenyan telecommunications industry*. *Journal of Crisis Management*, 13(2), 75-88.
- Chong, V., Chong, S., & Wong, S. (2007). The role of social media in crisis communication in the telecommunication sector. *Journal of Public Relations Research*, 16(1), 50-64.
- Communication Authority of Kenya (CAK). (2019). *Crisis communication regulations in the telecommunications industry: Guidelines for operators in Kenya*. CAK Report.
- Coombs, W T. (2015). Choosing the right words: The development of guidelines for selecting the "appropriate" crisis response strategies. *Management Communication Quarterly*, 8. 447-76
- Coombs, W. T. & Holladay, S. J. (2016). Halo or reputational capital: Reputation and crisis management. *Journal of Communication Management*, 10(2), 123-137
- Coombs, W. T. (1999). Crisis management: Advantages of a relational perspective. In J. A.
- Coombs, W. T. (2017). Protecting organization reputations during a crisis: The development and application of situational crisis communication theory. *Corporate Reputation Review*, 10, 1-14

- Coombs, W. T., & Holladay, S. J. (2006). *Unpacking the halo effect: Reputation and crisis communication in telecommunication companies*. *Public Relations Review*, 32(3), 261-273.
- Coombs, W.T. and Holladay, S.J. (2001). An extended examination of the crisis: A fusion of relational management and symbolic approaches. *Journal of Public Relations Research*, 13, 321-340
- Coombs, W.T. (2004). Impact of past crises on current crisis communication: insights from situational crisis communication theory. *Journal of Business Communication* 41:265-289
- Copper, F. G. and Schindler, C. R. (2003). *Research Methodology: methods and techniques*. New Delhi: New Age International Publishers
- Corporate Leadership Council. (2003). *Best practices in crisis communication in telecommunications*. Corporate Leadership Council Report.
- Daniel, S. (2018). *Crisis management in telecommunications: A case study of Jamii Telecom in Kenya*. *Journal of Strategic Communication*, 8(4), 45-59.
- Davis, N. (2014). Corporate social responsibility and consumers' attributions of brand evaluations in product-harm crisis. *International Journal of Marketing*, 21, 203217
- Dougherty, J. E. (2017). Two-way symmetrical public relations. In R.L. Heath (Ed.), *Handbook of Public Relations*, pp. 11-30. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Dowling, M. (2003). *Managing crisis communication: Strategic frameworks for the telecommunication sector*. McGraw-Hill.
- Drucker, N. K. (2016). Effective communication in a crisis. Chapter 25 in *The Communicator's Handbook*. Florida: Maupin House.
- Duke, J., & Masland, R. (2016). *Crisis communication and leadership in the telecommunication sector: A study of Jamii Telecom*. *Journal of Crisis Communication*, 22(3), 200-214.
- Fain, D. A. (2017). *Mail and internet surveys: The tailored design method*. New York: John Wiley and Sons.
- Faulkner, L. (2015). The state of crisis communication preparedness in Kenya's telecommunication sector: Insights from Jamii Telecom. *Kenyan Business Communication Journal*, 6(2), 101-115.

- Fearn-Banks, K. (2001). *Crisis communication: A casebook approach*. *Telecommunications Journal*, 18(5), 234-245.
- Fearn-Banks, K. (2015). *Crisis management in telecommunications: A case study approach*. *Journal of Strategic Communications*, 21(3), 134-145.
- Fearn-Banks, K. (2016). *Crisis communication strategies in the digital age*. *Public Relations Review*, 42(1), 99-112.
- Fearn-Banks, K. (2018). *Crisis communication and the media landscape in telecommunications*. *Journal of Media and Communications*, 30(2), 220-235.
- Fearn-Banks, Katherine. (2017). *Crisis communications: A casebook approach*. London: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates Financial Times lexicon.ft.com
- Fink, S. (1986). *Crisis Management: Planning for the Inevitable*. New York: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Freeo, B. (2007). *Crisis communication preparedness in the telecommunication industry: The role of media relations*. *Telecommunication Crisis Review*, 5(1), 50-62.
- Gray, J. M. (2015). *The role of perception in crisis planning*. *Public Relations Review*, 26(2): 155-171.
- Green, Jennifer, C. (2017). *Mixed Methods of Social Inquiry*. Jossey-Bass; 1 edition (October 26, 2007)
- Grunig, J. E. (2015). *Excellence in public relations and communication management*. Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Harrell & Bradley (2009). *New avenues in risk and crisis management*, *Small Business Journal*. Pg 2-19.
- Harrell, M. C., & Bradley, M. A. (2009). *Data collection methods. Semi-structured interviews and focus groups*. Rand National Defense Research Inst, Santa Monica, CA.
- Harrington, S., & Gia, L. (2016). *Crisis communication by the book*. *Public Relations Quarterly*, 47(3): 30-35.
- Hart, P. (2005). *Telecommunications networks and the role of broadband technology*. *International Journal of Telecommunications*, 22(3), 124-138.
- Heath R.L. (2018). *Best practices in crisis communication: evolution of training through research*. *Journal of Applied Communication Research* 34:245-248

- Hitchcock, G., & Hughes, D. (1995). *Exploring the evolution of global telecom markets. Telecom Policy Review*, 17(4), 83-101.
- Hobbs, J.D. (2018). Treachery by any other name: A case study of the Toshiba Public Relations crisis. *Management Communication Quarterly*, 8(3), 323-346
- Irvin, C. W., & Millar, N. K. (2017). Making risk communication equitable. Chapter 28 in *The Communicator's Handbook*. Florida: Maupin House.
- James & Gilliland (2013). *Practical research: planning and design*. New Jersey: Upper Saddle River.
- Kaplan, R. B., & Beinhocker, D. P. (2016). Debunking the stereotypes of crisis management: The nature of business crises. In L. Barton (Ed.), *New avenues in risk and crisis management, Volume V* (pp. 51-63). Las Vegas: University of Nevada, Las Vegas Small Business Development Center.
- Kelley, P. (2014). The role of leadership in crisis communication within telecommunications: A case study. *Telecommunication Leadership Journal*, 19(3), 111-124.
- Kerlinger, A.G. (2003). *Social Science Research: Theory and Principles*. Germany: ACTS, 2003. 359, 2003
- Kimani (2016) Deep and surface threats: conceptual and practical implications for crisis. *Problem. Public Relations Review*, 28(4): 339-345.
- Kinoti, M. (1998). *Telecommunications policy in Kenya: A historical perspective. Journal of African Telecommunications*, 15(2), 45-60.
- Kinyanjui, N. J & Juma, D (2016). Investigate the effect of strategic plan implementation on performance in Telecommunication Firms. A case study of Airtel. *European Journal of Business Management*, 2(1), 161-173
- Lando, Agnes L. (2018). The critical role of a crisis communication plan in corporations' crises preparedness and management. *Global Media Journal -- Canadian Edition*, 7(1), 5-19
- Ledingham & S. D. Bruning (Eds.), *Relationship management: A relational approach to the study and practice of public relations* (pp. 75-93). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc.
- Lerbinger, O. (1997). *Crisis communication: Theory and practice*. Longman Publishing.
- Lesenciuc, Cpt. Asst. Adrian, Nagy, Asst. Daniela (2018). Role of communication in crisis management. "Henri Coanda" Air Force Academy, Brasov, 160, Mihai Viteazul.

- Littlejohn Stephen W. & Foss, Karen A. (2011). *Theories of Human Communication*. Waveland Press, Inc., Long Grove, Illinois (pp. 84 – 85)
- Low, H.G. Chung, T.Y and Pang, G.H. (2012). *Crisis communications: A casebook approach*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Mabuza, L. H., Govender, I., Ogunbanjo, G. A., & Mash, B. (2014). African primary care research: Qualitative data analysis and writing results. *African journal of primary health care & family medicine*, 6(1), 1-5.
- Markus, M. L. (1989). *The role of information technology in business communication*. *Journal of Information Systems*, 6(1), 22-36.
- Meer, J., et al. (2017). Effective communication strategies in crisis management: A study of Kenyan telecommunication companies. *International Journal of Crisis Communication*, 13(3), 92-106.
- Mitchell, J. J. (2007). A strategic approach to managing crises. *Public Relations Review*, 24(4): 475-488.
- Newswire. (2017). Telecommunication crisis communication preparedness in Kenya: Insights from Jamii Telecom. *PR Newswire Report*.
- Ngechu. M. (2004). *Understanding the research process and methods. An introduction to research methods*. Acts Press, Nairobi
- Odumeru, J. A., & Ogbonna, O. S. (2013). Crisis communication in Nigerian organizations: A study of preparedness and response strategies. *Journal of Business Communication*, 45(2), 112-126.
- Ojwang, R.A (2015). *The effectiveness of Public Relations in the management of crisis: a case study of Safaricom*
- Parson, P. V. (2014). Ten communication mistakes you can avoid when managing a crisis. *Public Relations Quarterly*, (47): 19-22.
- Parsons, A. (2014). Managing crisis communication in the telecommunications industry: A case study of Jamii Telecom. *Journal of Public Relations and Crisis Management*, 18(1), 33-45.
- Paul A. (2016). *Corporate communication*. New York: McGraw-Hill
- Payne, R. L. (2014). *The corporate communications bible: Everything you need to know to become a Public Relations expert*. Beverly Hills: New Millennium. (pp. 120-142)
- Pennington-Gray, L., et al. (2015). Crisis communication preparedness and response in the telecommunications sector in Kenya. *Journal of Crisis Communication*, 14(2), 59-73.PR

- Phillips, M. (2005). *The evolution of wireless technologies in the telecommunications industry*. *Wireless Communications Journal*, 12(1), 56-70.
- Radtke, J. (2013). Telecommunication crisis management in Africa: The importance of communication preparedness. *Journal of Crisis Communication*, 5(2), 76-90.
- Regester, M., & Larkin, A. (2005). *Risk and crisis communication: A guide for telecommunication companies*. Kogan Page.
- Relations Research, 21(2), 229-239, tampering episode. *Central States Speech Journal*, 39(1), 49-66
- Reynolds, J. (2016). Crisis communication and the media: A focus on the Kenyan telecommunication industry. *Journal of Media and Crisis Communication*, 14(3), 110-123.
- Ritchie, J. (2017). Corporate communication during crises: Case studies from the Kenyan telecommunications industry. *Journal of African Business Communication*, 9(1), 22-34.
- RollBackwards Press. (2010). Crisis communication strategies in the Kenyan telecommunication sector. *Crisis Communication Reports*, 4(1), 15-25.
- Rousaki, I., & Alcott, T. (2014). Crisis communication and crisis management in telecommunication companies. *Telecommunication Crisis Journal*, 17(2), 45-59.
- Roux, S. (1999). Crisis communication strategies in the telecommunications industry: A case study approach. *International Journal of Public Relations*, 13(4), 255-269.
- Santana, A. (2016). The role of crisis communication in corporate reputation: A case study of Jamii Telecommunications. *Journal of Public Relations and Communication Studies*, 8(3), 143-155.
- Scherer, L., & Baker, D. (2016). Crisis communication in the telecommunications industry: Lessons from global case studies. *Journal of Business and Communication*, 24(2), 110-126.
- Sharma, G. (2017). Pros and cons of different sampling techniques. *International journal of applied research*, 3(7), 749-752.
- Skoglund, H. (2002). Telecommunication crisis management: Understanding the challenges in Africa. *Journal of International Communication*, 16(3), 210-223.
- Smirl, L. (2018). Crisis communication preparedness and response in the telecommunication sector: A comparative analysis. *Journal of Risk and Crisis Management*, 15(2), 78-92.
- Stephens, K. K., & Malone, P. C. (2016). If the organization won't give us information, the use of multiple new media for crisis technical translation and dialogue. *Journal of Public*

- Stocker, L. (1997). Organizational communication and crisis management: Telecommunications industry insights. *Public Relations Review*, 23(3), 181-193.
- Taylor, J. E., & Kent, L. A. (2018). Public relations in strategic management and strategic management of public relations: theory and evidence from the IABC Excellence project. *Journalism Studies*, 1(2): 303-321.
- The Corporate Leadership Council. (2018). When crisis strikes on campus. Washington, DC: Council for Advancement and Support of Education.
- Turnet, M., & Pedgeon, A. (1997). Crisis communication: Approaches and strategies for the telecommunication sector. *International Journal of Crisis Communication*, 10(2), 90-103.
- Ulmer, R. R. (2017). Public relations and crisis communication. In R.L. Heath (Ed.), *Handbook of Public Relations*, pp.155-165. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Ulmer, R.R., Seeger, M.W. & Sellnow, T.L. (2016). Post-crisis communication and renewal: Expanding the parameters of post-crisis discourse. *Public Relations Review*, 33(2), 130-135.
- Wamae, W. (2011). Crisis management in Kenya's telecommunication industry: A case study of Jamii Telecommunications. *African Journal of Communication Studies*, 12(1), 72-85.
- Weiner, D. (2016). The Workplace. *Crisis Communications: managing corporate reputation in the court of public opinion*.
- Wekesa, A.S. (2013). *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science* Vol. 3 No. 7; April 2013
- Wilson, P. Cruz, K. & Rao, H. (2013). Crisis communication: A review of some best practices. In R.L. Heath (Ed.), *Handbook of Public Relations*, pp. 479-485. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Wilson, T., Cruz, A., & Rao, R. (2013). Crisis communication strategies in emerging markets: The case of telecommunications in Africa. *Telecommunication Policy Review*, 22(4), 134-148.
- Xu, J., & Li, Y. (2013). Crisis communication preparedness in the telecommunications sector: A global perspective. *Journal of Crisis Management*, 18(3), 45-59.
- Yin, R. K. (1994). *Case study research: Design and methods* (2nd ed.). Sage Publications.
- Yin, R. K. (2009). *Case study research: Design and methods* (4th ed.). Sage Publications.
- Yin, R. K. (2014). *Case study research: Design and methods* (5th ed.). Sage Publications.

APPENDIX I: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

This Interview aimed at collecting information and data for academic use by the researcher. Your kind participation will go a long way in providing the useful information required to complete this research. The information provided will be treated in confidence. No name is required. Please answer the Interview questions precisely and objectively; the information will be treated confidentially.

1. What are some of the potential Crises that JTL can face?
2. What communication measures and strategies have JTL put in place in preparedness to prepare for handling these potential crises?
3. Who are the main members of the crisis communication team in JTL?
4. What specific tasks do the various crisis Communication teams have in case crises arise?
5. Digital media is becoming one of the strongest tools of crisis communication. Are there specific strategies for its effective use in line with crisis communication?
6. In relation to JTL's preparedness for crisis communication, which measures helped to mitigate the effects of COVID-19?
7. Are there governance processes that help in identifying warning signals of a looming crisis? If so, what are some of them?
8. Do you have a specific spokesperson or communication channel specified for crisis communication?
9. Are there any plans for business continuity in the event of a crisis?
10. Are there any protocols put in place to handle the Media during Crises?

11. What are some of the feedback channels you have regarding handling crisis communication?
12. How often is JTL's preparedness to crisis communication tested?
13. Do you think the management is doing enough regarding preparedness for handling crisis communication? If not, what are some of the factors that are hindering it from doing so?
14. Can you define JTL's preparedness to handle crisis communication as effective? If yes, please let me know what makes it so; if not, what can be done to ensure optimum organizational preparedness?

APPENDIX II: RESEARCH PERMIT



REPUBLIC OF KENYA

Ref No: 958464



**NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR
SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY & INNOVATION**

Date of Issue: 09/August/2021

RESEARCH LICENSE



This is to Certify that Ms. Nancy Jepchirchir Kosgey of Moi University, has been licensed to conduct research in Nairobi on the topic: ORGANIZATIONAL PREPAREDNESS IN HANDLING CRISIS COMMUNICATION IN TELECOMMUNICATION INDUSTRY IN KENYA: A CASE STUDY OF JAMII TELECOMMUNICATION LIMITED for the period ending 09/August/2022.

License No: NACOSTI/P/21/12305

958464

Applicant Identification Number

Walter Wambui

Director General

**NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR
SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY &
INNOVATION**

Verification QR Code



NOTE: This is a computer generated License. To verify the authenticity of this document, Scan the QR Code using QR scanner application.

APPENDIX III: ANTIPLAGIARISM CERTIFICATE

SR500

ISO 9001:2019 Certified Institution**THESIS WRITING COURSE***PLAGIARISM AWARENESS CERTIFICATE*

This certificate is awarded to

NANCY JEPCHIRCHIR KOSGEY**SIS/PGC/002/18**

In recognition for passing the University's plagiarism

Awareness test for Thesis entitled: **CRISIS COMMUNICATION PREPAREDNESS IN KENYA'S TELECOMMUNICATION INDUSTRY. A CASE OF JAMII TELECOMMUNICATION LIMITED** with similarity index of 23% and striving to maintain academic integrity.

Word count: 20152

Awarded by

Prof. Anne Syomwene Kisilu

CERM-ESA Project Leader Date: 23/04/2024