KnE Social Sciences

Knowledge E
enriching | engaging | empowering

Conference Paper

Simplified Social Mediated Crisis Communication Model during Crisis in Indonesia: A Case Study on How Customers of Indonesia Commuter Line Train Company Seek Information on a Train Delay Due to the Double Track Trial on April 12, 2019

Wasono Adi

Faculty of Social Sciences, Public Relations Studies Program, Universitas Negeri Jakarta, Jakarta, Indonesia

Abstract

This study explores how audiences seek information from internet and social media platforms, and considers what factors affect social media use during a crisis. The paper is based on research conducted via a survey involving 162 active followers selected from the 875,200 followers of the Indonesia Train Company: PT Kereta Api Commuter Line official Twitter account (Info Commuter Line @CommuterLine). The study proposes the Simplified Social Mediated Crisis Communication Model (SSMCC) as a variation on the original Social-Mediated Crisis Communication (SMCC) Model by Jin & Liu (2010). This variation is based on the argument that during a crisis, audiences located nearby typically rely on social media (usually accessed via a mobile phone) rather than a traditional media outlet when seeking information. This study concludes that some of the themes related to the use of social media to search for information during a crisis, and word of mouth (WOM) communication, are present in the Social-Mediated Crisis Communication (SMCC) communication model. This study also discusses the differences between the original SMCC model and the Simplified Social-Mediated Crisis Communication model proposed by the researcher. There was no evidence of an inactive social media user's influence on information retrieval during a crisis; in addition, there is no role of traditional media as a source of information retrieval during a crisis. This research contributes to develop scientific knowledge and practices in Indonesia.

Keywords: crisis communication, social media, information search, simplified social mediated crisis communication model, social media followers

Corresponding Author:
Wasono Adi
adwasono35@gmail.com

1. Introduction

Previous studies of communication during a crisis generally focus more on examining communication theories used by organizations in times of crisis, but there is still very

OPEN ACCESS

little research on communication during crises from the side of the audience affected by the crisis itself. Austin, Liu & Jin (2012), state that previous studies on crises generally identify crises at the level of severe crises and have a large impact [1]. However, research has never been done to examine crises that occur when crisis levels are still in a mild or moderate scale. In addition, research has not been conducted on communication during the crisis in public service company organizations, primarily in Indonesia.

Therefore, this study looks at how the audience utilizes social media on the Internet during a crisis and what factors influence the use of social media on the Internet during a crisis by taking a case study of the disruption of passenger services at the Bekasi line on April 12, 2019 due to the test try double track, which impacts the buildup of passengers.

2. Literature Review and Research Questions

Previous studies have identified several forms of communication models when a crisis occurs, such as image- repair strategies [2], Crisis-Response Strategies [3], the Corporate Communication Response Model [4]. Furthermore, researchers identify from previous research, how communication tactics are often used by organizations when a crisis occurs, such as denial/ denial [5], reduction of offensiveness [6], modification [7], and excuse [8].

The researcher identified several additional SMCC communication model researches during crises that examined them from the perspective of stakeholders or audiences or from both sides of the organization and stakeholder/ audience, such as enhancing and transferring [9], diverting attention and ingratiation [10], stakeholder-desired emotional and informational support strategies [11].

Previous studies have also identified the scale of crises that have generally occurred on a large scale or have a large impact on stakeholders. Such as crises as a result of managerial misconduct, crises as a result of natural disasters, crises as a result of public health problems/ infectious diseases, Terrorism, hoaxes and rumors, business and economic crises, and crises resulting from technological failures [12].

From the previous studies, a common thread can be drawn, which shows similarity when a crisis occurs, namely the response to the crisis, which generally consists of three traditional forms of response, namely: timely, consistent, and active response) [13]. The next similarity is the response of providing information to stakeholders at the time of the crisis is generally managed by utilizing well-organized media, such as:

corporate websites [14]. Furthermore, the last similarity identified by the researcher is the "interactivity" made possible by the use of social media on the Internet [15–17].

All of these studies generally are the SMCC model from the perspective of the organization or company and occur in the United States and China, occurring within the scope of the organization of private companies or public/ State areas. There is little research on organizational communication carried out during a crisis, especially those that examine from the side of the stakeholder/ audience affected by the crisis. More specifics about how stakeholders seek information related to crises caused by organizations in the territory of the State of Indonesia. So this study answers the research gap.

2.1. Simplified Social-Mediated Crisis Communication Model

In this study, the researcher proposed a model called the Simplified Social-Mediated Crisis Communication Model (SSMCC), based on the Social-Mediated Crisis Communication Model as shown in Figure 1 [18]. The researcher has research hypotheses based on facts that arose in the field when the train service disruption occurred on April 12, 2019. The first research hypothesis was: when the crisis occurred, the dependence on interactive social media based on mobile Internet phones became very high. The second research hypothesis is: As a result of the crisis, the affected audience cannot access information from traditional media (e.g: TV, Radio, and Newspapers) which causes the role of traditional media as a source of information to a minimum.

This is appropriate, that during crises, audiences' social media use increases [19, 20]. In some situations, audiences perceive social media to be more credible than traditional mass media [19]. Furthermore, audiences seek out social media during crises because they provide an unfiltered, up-to-date line of communication [19], and provide unique crisis information that audiences cannot get elsewhere [21, 22]. Audiences also use social media for emotional support and recovery from crises [11, 23]. Sites such as Flickr and YouTube have been used to collect crisis images and information for larger groups of individuals [24].

The third research hypothesis is: Social media inactive in a crisis on April 12, 2019 is a stakeholder component whose role does not directly influence information retrieval during a crisis and low levels of interactivity with an audience of active users of social media; so their role can be ignored. In addition, the requirements in computer-mediated communication require the connection between the user and the media and with other

users, and their communication is transactional, quick response and not face to face [25, 26], so if there are inactive users, this process cannot be found.

Therefore, in this study, the comparison between the original Social-Mediated Crisis Communication Model when compared to the simplified model, proposed by the researcher, is: this study only includes the Organizational component, the Public as a Social Media Follower, Public as Influential, Social Media Creators, Social Media itself as a medium of organizational interaction with the public audience. This is appropriate with the opinion, that Social media are digital tools and applications that facilitate interactive communication and content exchange among and between audiences and organizations [27].
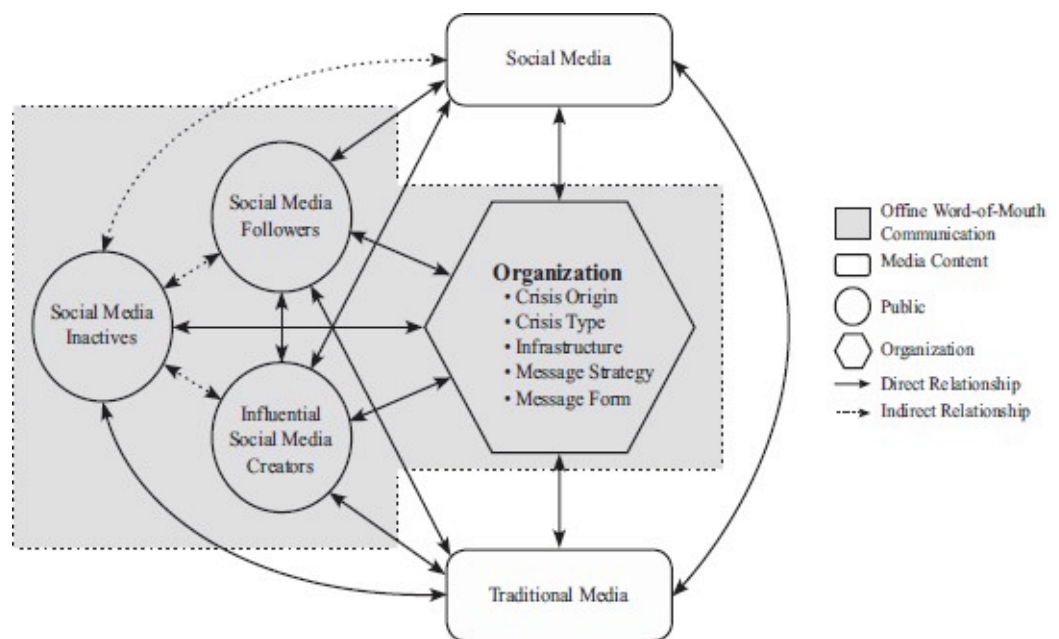

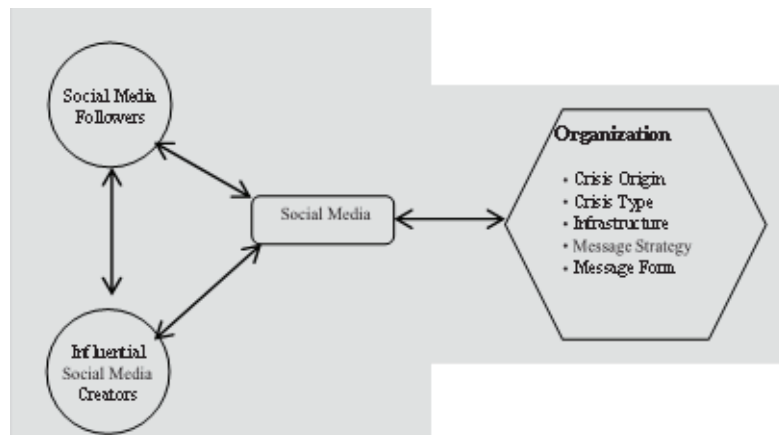**Figure** 1: Social-mediated crisis communication model (Source: Jin&Liu 2010)

The model proposed by the researcher is still considering the offline component of Word of Mouth Communication, the same as used in the original model proposed by Jin & Liu [18], because according to the researcher in the incident on April 12, 2019, that form of WOM communication offline or without mediated social media this cannot be avoided. As shown in Figure 2:

Therefore, based on the model of communication flow at the time of the crisis, this study aims to provide an understanding of the following research questions:

RQ1: Why do audiences seek out social media for crisis information?

RQ2: What factors affect audiences seek out social media for crisis information?

RQ3: How does, the source and forms of crisis information, that audiences are exposed to, affect their information seeking behavior?

Figure 2: Simplified Social-Mediated Crisis Communication Model

3. Research Methodology

This research is qualitative research which aims to determine and search, to collect, to process and to analyze research data. Furthermore, qualitative research is a research effort carried out by working with data, organizing data, sorting it out into units that can be managed, synthesizing them, looking for and finding patterns, discovering what is important and what is learned, and decide what can be told to others [28].

The researcher, using the questionnaire instrument as in quantitative research, yet, in the questionnaire contained open-ended questions to explore insights on 162 participant followers of @CommuterLine official accounts who experienced first hand the events of 12 April 2019. The questionnaire was submitted online, due to the number of participants quite a lot and spread in several areas in the greater Jakarta area, so it is very difficult to conduct interviews in person. The questions in this questionnaire are built based on important points in the Simplified Social-Mediated Crisis Communication Model proposed by researchers.

4. Findings and Discussion

Although this research is qualitative, numbers and percentages are used in presenting the results of this study to show the most significant themes or findings. The findings in this study are as follows:

4.1. Media use before crisis

Relating to the use of social media, in this study found the same themes as the SSMC research [18], namely: entertainment, relationship maintenance, networking, and education. The most dominant theme percentage is using social media for entertainment purposes while waiting and on the go (65%), followed by relationship maintenance (19%), networking (12%), and the smallest percentage is for educational purposes (4%). As shown in the following Figure 3:
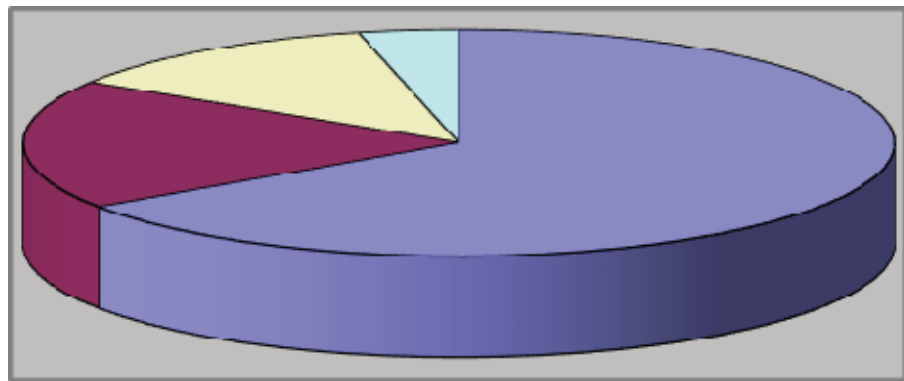
Figure 3: Media use before crisis

4.2. Media use during crisis

This study also found themes related to the use of social media during a crisis, namely: Fastest access to information sources (69%), Difficulties in accessing traditional media (19%), Giving a warning (9%), Knowing the presence of family or friends (3 %). This finding answers the 1st research question (RQ1) of: "Why do audiences seek out social media for crisis information?" As shown in the following Figure 4:
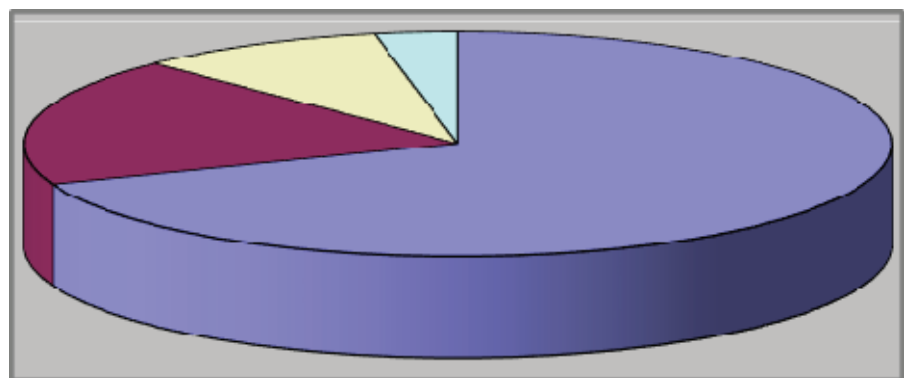
Figure 4: Media use during crisis

4.3. What factors affect social media use?

This study found themes related to what things influenced the participants in using social media as a source of information during the crisis, namely: Convenience (62%), credibility of information sources (31%), involvement in crisis (6%), situation and conditions (1%), and influence of others (1%). This finding answers the 2nd research (RQ2) question of: "What factors affect audiences seek out social media for crisis information?" As shown in the following Figure 5:
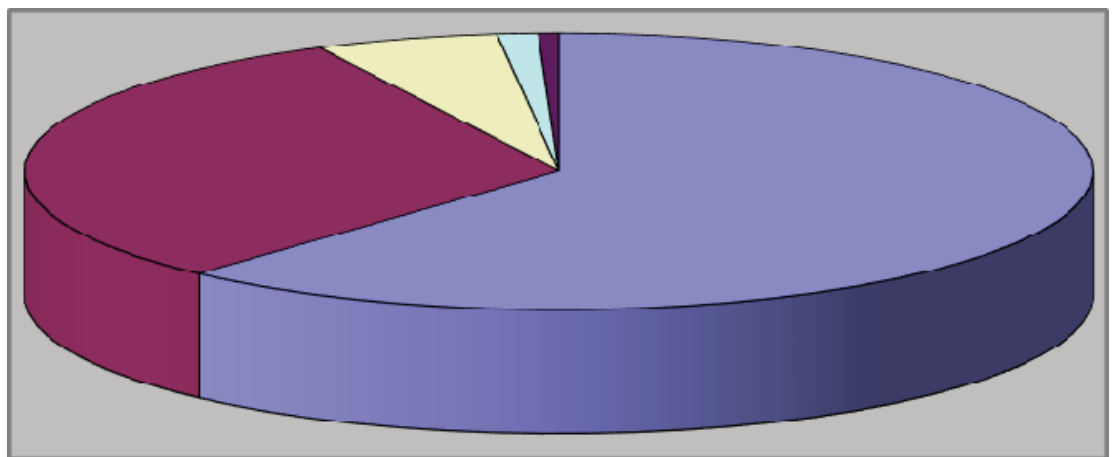

Figure 5: Factors affect social media use

4.4. The role of social media Influencers

In this study also found that there are individuals and groups acting as influencers, which influence how participants find information during a crisis through social media accounts. In this case, the influence individual /group has their own social media account outside the company's official social media account. The researcher identified 162 participants who in addition to following the official Info Commuter Line @commuterline account, also followed the informal accounts created by the influencer, such as the @kommuterline, @infoKRL, Roker KRLmania @ krlmania.

According to the participants, the role of influencers was more or less influenced them in the process of finding information during a crisis. As a result of influencers, participants prefer to seek information from official sources of corporate social media accounts. This research also found a significant statement that the speed of conveying information during a crisis through these unofficial accounts is sometimes faster than the official account, because the account admin is likely to be involved or in a crisis

location (56%). As shown in Figure 6. This finding answers the 3rd research question (RQ3).
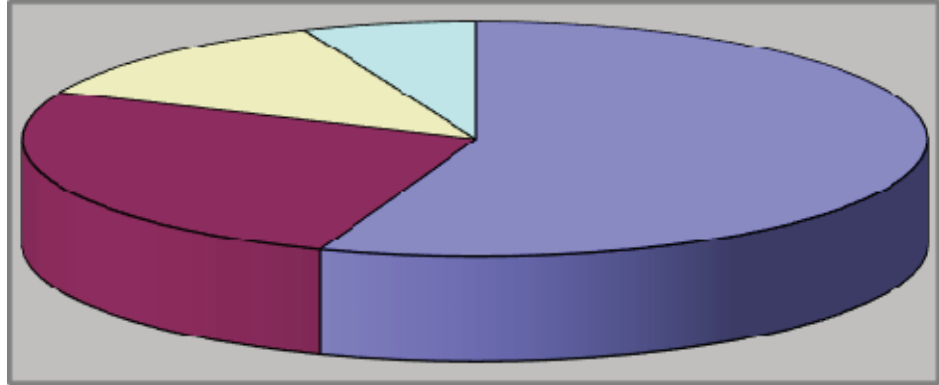

Figure 6: The role of Influencers

4.5. Word of Mouth communication during crisis

Furthermore, this study also found that during the crisis, there were also forms of information seeking through Word of Mouth communication; however, participants stated that this form of information retrieval was only addressed to the authorities (93%). The following Figure 7 shows the forms of communication of Word of Mouth during the crisis aimed at finding information related to the crisis.
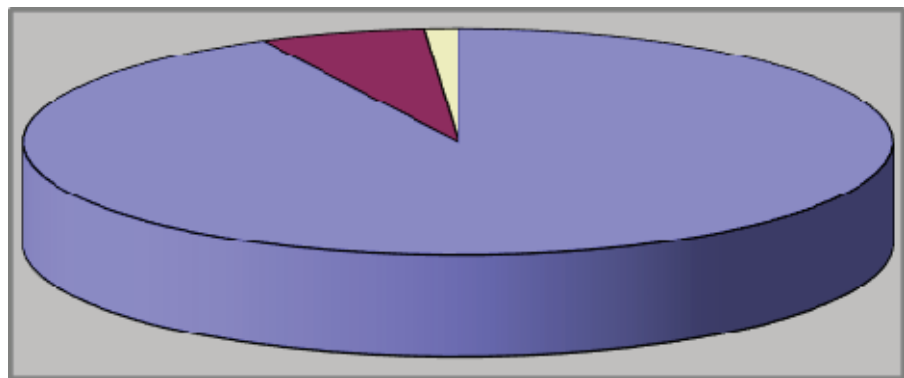

Figure 7: WOM Communication during crisis

4.6. Inactive Social Media User during Crisis

Although the SSMCC model used in this study did not include the Inactive Social Media User component as an influential audience in the process of finding information during the crisis as previously thought. However, the researcher still asked participants about the role of the active social media user during the crisis in the process of finding

information related to the crisis. The results show that the majority of participants (162) stated that inactive social media users had no influence on information seeking during a crisis.

Of the several themes found above, several themes indeed reinforce the SMCC Model.As in the theme: the use of media before the crisis, the use of media during the crisis, the factors that influence the use of social media, the role of social media influencers, the form of communication of Word of Mouth (WOM) during the crisis, can be found in this study.

Through the simplified SMCC model, proposed by the researcher, it also strengthens the research hypotheses, that in a crisis situation the use of traditional media is very minimized or even non-existent, and also managed to find inactive social media as having no influence in the process of finding information during the crisis. This contrasts with the SMCC model which states the role of traditional media and inactive social media users in influencing information search for the audience, in times of crisis [18].

5. Conclusion and Recommendation

From this study it can be concluded that when a crisis occurs the audience will look for crisis-related information by using mobile social media platforms, which are connected to the Internet to credible sources. In this case it is sourced from an organization/ company social media account. Search for information related to crises through social media on a mobile platform, is high during a crisis, due to the speed, convenience, ease of access, compared to traditional media.

In addition, among other users of mobile social media platforms there is also a form of communication during a crisis, which is based on the motive to inform family/ friends, notify the situation, give warnings, and also due to the influence of other social media users, which is in the SMCC model are called social media influencers [18], all of which cannot be done using traditional media, because of their interactivity and being able to reach many publics.

The form of communication Word of Mouth (WOM), communication that is not mediated by social media [18], also occurs during crises, but its nature is only limited directed from the audience to credible sources at the location. It is rare for this WOM communication to occur intensively among the audience at the crisis location.

However, this study also found differences related to the use of traditional media, which was very low as a source of information on the location of the crisis compared to

the model proposed by Jin & Liu (2010). Inactive social media were also found to have no role in influencing the audience's information retrieval process during a crisis.

For further research it is advisable to also examine from the perspective of organizational or corporate communication through social media when a crisis occurs, to bridge the existing gap of this research which only examines from the stakeholder or audience only, both in the form of qualitative research and quantitative research.

Funding

Acknowledgement

Conflict of Interest

The author has no conflict of interest to declare.

References

[1] Austin, L., Liu, B. F. and Jin, Y. (2012). How Audiences Seek Out Crisis Information: Exploring the Social- Mediated Crisis Communication Model. *Journal of Applied Communication Research,* vol. 40, issue 2, pp. 207-188.

[2] Benoit, W. L. (2004). Image Restoration Discourse and Crisis Communication. In D. P. Millar and R. L. Heath (Eds.), *Responding to Crisis: A Rhetorical Approach to Crisis Communication*. Mahwah: NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum, pp. 263-280.

[3] Coombs, T. W. (2006). The Protective Powers of Crisis Response Strategies: Managing Reputational Assets During a Crisis. *Journal of Promotion Management,* vol. 12, issue 4-3, pp. 260-241.

[4] Bradford, J. L. and Garrett, D. E. (1995). The Effectiveness of Corporate Communicative Responses to Accusations of Unethical Behavior. *Journal of Business Ethics,* vol. 14, issue 11, pp. 892-875.

[5] Veil, S. R., Sellnow, T. L. and Petrun, E. L. (2012). Hoaxes and the Paradoxical Restoring Legitimacy: Dominos Response to Its YouTube Crisis. *Management Communication Quarterly,* vol. 26, issue 2, pp. 345-322.

[6] Schwarz, A. (2012). How Publics use Social Media to Respond to Blame Games in Crisis Communication: The Love Parade tragedy in Duisburg 2010. *Public Relations Review,* vol. 38, issue 3, pp. 437-430.

[7] Cho, S. and Cameron, G. T. (2006). Public Nudity on Cell Phones: Managing Conflict in Crisis Situation. *Public Relations Review,* vol. 32, issue 2, pp. 199-201.

[8] Moody, M. (2011). Jon and Kate Plus 8: A Case Study of Social Media and Image Repair Tactics. *Public Relations Review,* vol. 37, issue 4, pp. 405-414.

[9] Kim, S. and Liu, B. F. (2012). Are All Crises Opportunities? A Comparison of How Corporate and Government Organizations Responded to the 2009 Flu Pandemic. *Journal of Public Relations Research,* vol. 24, issue 1, pp. 69-85.

[10] Brown, N. A. and Billings, A. C. (2013). Sports Fans as Crisis Communicators on Social Media Websites. *Public Relations Review,* vol 39, issue 1, pp. 74-81.

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

[12] Austin, L. and Jin, Y. (2018). *Social Media and Crisis Communication.* New York: Routledge.

[13] Huang, Y. H. and Su, S. H. (2009). Determinants of Consistent, Timely, and Active Responses in Corporate Crises. *Public Relations Review,* vol. 35, issue 1, pp. 7-17.

[14] Greer, C. F. and Moreland, K. D. (2003). United Airlines and American Airlines online Crisis Communication following the September 11 Terrorist Attacks. *Public Relations Review,* vol. 29, issue 4, pp. 427-441.

[15] Gilpin, D. (2010). Organizational Image Construction in a Fragmented Online Media Environment. *Journal of Public Relations Research,* vol. 22, issue 3, pp. 265-287.

[16] Macias, W., Hilyard, K. and Freimuth, V. (2009). Blog Functions as Risk and Crisis Communication During Hurricane Katrina. *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication,* vol. 15, issue 1, pp. 15-31.

[17] Yang, S. U., Kang, M. and Johnson, P. (2010). Effects of Narratives, Openness to Dialogic Communication, and Credibility on Engagement in Crisis Communication Through Organizational Blogs. *Communication Research,* vol. 37, issue 4, pp. 473-497.

[18] Jin, Y. and Liu, B. F. (2010). The Blog-Mediated Crisis Communication Model: Recommendations for Responding to Influential External Blogs. *Journal of Public Relations Research,* vol. 22, issue 4, pp. 429-455.

[19] Procopio, C. H. and Procopio, S. T. (2007). Do You Know What it Means to Miss New Orleans? Internet Communication, Geographic Community, and Social. *Journal of Applied Communication Research*, vol. 35, issue 1, pp. 67-87.

[20] Pew, I. A. (2006). *Blogger Callback Survey*. Retrieved from http://www.pewinternet. org.

[21] Bucher, H. J. (2002). Crisis Communication and the Internet: Risk and Trust in a Global Media. *First Monday*, vol. 7, issue 4.

[22] Sutton, J., Palen, L. and Shklovski, I. (2008). Backchannels on the Front Lines: Emergent Uses of Social Media in the 2007 Southern California Wildfires. In F. Fiedrich and B. Van de Walle (Eds.), *Proceedings of the 5th International ISCRAM Conference. Washington, DC*.

[23] Choi, Y. and Lin, Y. H. (2009). Consumer Responses to Mattel Product Recalls Posted on Online Bulletin Boards: Exploring Two Types of Emotion. *Journal of Public Relations Research,* vol. 21, issue 2, pp. 198-207.

[24] Palen, L. (2008). Online Social Media in Crisis Events. *Education Quarterly,* vol. 3, pp. 76-78.

[25] Chi, H.-H. (2011). Interactive Digital Advertising vs. Virtual Brand Community Exploratory Study of User Motivation and Social Media Marketing Responses in Taiwan. *Journal of Interactive Advertising*, vol. 12, issue 1, pp. 44-61.

[26] Liu, Y. and Shrum, L. J. (2002). What is Interactivity and is it Always Such a Good Thing? Implications of Definition, Person, and Situation for the Influence of Interactivity on Advertising Effectiveness. *Journal of Advertising,* vol. 31, issue 4, pp. 53-64.

[27] Wright, D. K. and Hinson, M. D. (2009). An Updated Look at the Impact of Social Media on Public Relations Practice. *Public Relations Journal*, vol. 3, issue 2.

[28] Creswell, J. W. (1994). *Research Design Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches.* California: SAGE Publications.