

**THE ROLE OF SOCIAL MEDIA IN CRISIS COMMUNICATION IN
SECURITY FIRMS IN KENYA**

A CASE STUDY OF G4S KENYA LIMITED

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DECLARATION

This project is my original work and has not been presented for the award of a degree in this University or any other Institution of higher learning for examination.

Signature

Date

KOTE LAURA DOROTHY

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

Signature

Date

DAN OKOTH

SCHOOL OF JOURNALISM

UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI

DEDICATION

This project is dedicated to my family members: My Mum Beatrice Kote, husband Kenneth Nduati and Daughter Amy, Thank you for the support and encouragement.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I acknowledge God, for enabling me to complete my Masters in the right spirit. I also wish to acknowledge the support from my supervisor Dan Okoth, without whom I could not have gone this far with my work. To the University of Nairobi for offering me the opportunity to do this study and all my lecturers who contributed in one way or another in quenching my thirst for knowledge.

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ABSTRACT

Social media gives the ability to communicate quickly and effectively revolutionizing the manner in which people communicate and gather information about stories and topics that are of interest to them. With the right tools in place, social media can play an important role in crisis communication. Several organizations are advocating for the use of social media in crisis communication but often find this very challenging with the lack of confidentiality, circulation of non-verified information, number of channels and poor crafting of messages. The main objective of the study was to determine the role social media plays in crisis communication to assist in mitigating damage to its reputation and maintain the trust of its stakeholders. The study established that social media plays an important role in crisis communication; there is a rising number of people who rely on social media to access news. Particularly the use of Facebook and Twitter is increasing as more people in Kenya are able to acquire internet through their phones. However, security firms like G4S are yet to utilize social media as an effective tool in crisis communication. Security firms need to adopt and ensure that social medial websites are user friendly and constantly active with live updates and by providing all relevant information in good time during a crisis. The study recommends that security firms should prioritize the use of social media in efforts to enhance efficiency and effectiveness in crisis communication, ensure that they popularize their social media websites through constant updates and making them user friendly, establish a feedback mechanism which enables them to get in touch with people through social media and at the same time maintaining integrity and confidentiality of information provided, and encourage employees to fully utilize social media in communicating crises which affects the general public. The employees should be guided on how to treat confidential information that is not supposed to be in the public domain.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

1.1 Background of the study

An organization's reputation is one of its most valuable assets. A strong reputation can take years to develop and requires care and commitment to maintain, yet can easily be damaged or destroyed with a single crisis event. Traditionally, people have learned about organizational crises through the media: The media frames the crisis, and stakeholders will typically adopt that frame (Coombs, 2007). Today, however, the public often gets information about a crisis from online sources, and the people posting the information online are the ones framing the situation. How then can an organization best maintain control of its message during a crisis situation with the presence of not only the traditional mainstream media, but also of online and social media sources in which content is often user-generated?

1.1.1 G4S Kenya

G4S is an international company that operates in more than 125 countries and has more than 635,000 employees worldwide. G4S Kenya is the leading Security, Cash services and Courier solutions provider in Kenya. The company went through restructuring late 2007. All the operations were split into 4 autonomous divisions to ensure maximum focus on customer satisfaction namely courier, cash, manned security/guarding and security systems. According to the Kenya Security Industry Association (KSIA), which is a federation of private companies whose core business is the supply of security products and services, security firms are ranked as small, medium or large depending on a firm's monthly turnover/revenue. A security firm is ranked as large if the monthly turnover is 100 million and above, G4S Kenya, having a monthly turnover of 550 million and over 14,000 staff, falls in this category.

G4S Kenya has hit the headlines several times most of which have been negative. G4S Kenya being in the service industry has had to do a lot of damage control to "save face" from negative publicity such as the one below posted verbatim on a blog in 2010

Friday, October 1, 2010

Another G4S Heist?

News reports say that today at around 2:00PM, people posing as G4S staff members walked into Cooperative bank in Nairobi and walked out with 80 million Kenya shillings. G4S was very quick to say they are not to blame because the heist was carried out by thugs pretending to be G4S employees. Now many questions come to my mind about this particular heist:

- 1. How is it that banks and other companies continue to hire G4S? I wouldn't.*
- 2. It sounds like the money was handed to them by the bank since the news reports do not mention any scuffle. First let's go back to my first point, why are you giving G4S your money? OK, so let's assume you are a powerless employee who has tried to change your company's use of G4s and failed. Even then, when you are dealing with a company like G4S -- with the reputation it has built lately of losing money -- you should be especially careful. If I was the one handing over the money to the bank, I would ensure that G4S provides me with a list of the staff members who are coming to my premises along with their ID numbers, certificates of good conduct and recent pictures. When the G4S staff members show up on my premises then I would verify their identity.*
- 3. It is not quite clear how they were discovered to be phony G4S employees. Maybe the people at the bank were in on it too. The plan may have been to give the money to the thugs posing as G4S employees then call up authorities after a few minutes to report it stolen. Afterwards, they probably plan to meet up and share the loot.*

1.2 Statement of the Problem

With the widespread use of social media and cell phones, witnesses can often be the first to report a crisis. If this happens and there is not an immediate response from the organization, the organization will then be forced to manage the crisis within the frame the public has accepted (Coombs, 2007; Seeger, 2006). Huang (2008) determined that a timely response was a more important factor in stakeholder trust and relational commitment than the crisis communication strategy, and Hale, Dulek, & Hale (2005) found that crisis management

tends to be more successful when information is “disseminated quickly, accurately, directly, and candidly to critical stakeholders, including the media” (p. 116). Coombs (2006) advocated an initial response of ‘instructing information’ (p. 246), that is, the basic information about the crisis, how the stakeholder can protect himself/herself from harm, and the steps being taken to correct the situation and ensure that it won’t happen again. Organizations can use social media platforms as a method of rapid information dissemination as well as providing a way for the stakeholders and the public to ask questions and engage with the organization, thereby relieving some of the uncertainty the crisis can cause.

This research seeks to determine the role social media plays in crisis communication to assist in mitigating damage to its reputation and maintain the trust of its stakeholders.

1.3 Research Objectives

- 1 To establish the role of social media in crisis communication in G4S Kenya.
- 2 To establish how G4S Kenya incorporates social media in crisis communication.
- 3 To establish G4S staff attitudes towards social media use by the Organization during crises?
- 4 To establish the challenges G4S Kenya faces in using social media in crisis communication.

1.4 Research Questions

- 1 What is the role of social media in crisis communication in G4S Kenya?
- 2 How does G4S Kenya use social media in crisis communication?
- 3 What is the attitude of G4S staff towards the use of social media by the organization?
- 4 What are the challenges G4S Kenya faces in using social media in crisis communication?

1.5 Justification of the Study

A strong organizational reputation can take years to develop, yet can easily be damaged or destroyed with a single crisis event. The purpose of this research is to determine the role social media plays in crisis communication to prevent damage to an organizations reputation.

1.6 Scope of the Study

This study aims to compare how G4S staff views new media platforms as a source of information as opposed to traditional news outlets in obtaining relevant and timely crisis updates. This research may be useful to organizations in crisis planning situations to determine the best way to distribute their message to protect their reputations and sustain stakeholder trust during – and after – a crisis.

Because the data obtained from this study may be beneficial to crisis managers, it was important to determine perceptions and usage of social media platforms as tools to aid in managing a crisis. Therefore, interviews were conducted with communications department of G4S Kenya to explore their current usage of social media platforms, their perceptions of the role of social media use during a crisis, and their beliefs about public perception of social media use to disseminate information during a crisis.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

Hovland, a researcher at Yale University, was one of the pioneers of the study of the effects of communication. In 1951, Hovland and his associates found that test subjects were more likely to discount material they heard from what they considered to be “untrustworthy” sources and to place more value on statements attributed to “prestige” sources. Over time, however, they discovered that subjects remembered the message but forgot the source, thereby leading to an acceptance of the message regardless of the source.

In the event of a crisis, an organization should ideally be driving the message put forth to stakeholders to mitigate damage to the brand’s reputation and maintain the brand image. Mass media outlets (newspapers, radio, and television), however, tend to be the main source of information for stakeholders and the general public (Coombs, 2007; Jin & Liu, 2010).

The Agenda-Setting Function of Mass Media theory developed by Maxwell McCombs and Donald Shaw (1972) discussed the ability of the mass media to tell an audience not only what issues to think about in a political situation, but also how much importance to put on those issues. If the media reports a situation more quickly than does an organization involved in the crisis, the manager will be forced to manage the crisis in the frame set by the media (Coombs, 2007). Additionally, reports generated by witnesses on social media networks can disrupt the message the corporation is trying to disseminate. It is important for the organization to act quickly to set the agenda for how stakeholders and the public will perceive the crisis.

Crises always involve uncertainty, which can arise from stakeholder and public perception of the crisis, the response of the organization, and the perceived cause of the crisis (Stephens & Malone, 2009). The Uncertainty Reduction Theory posited by Charles Berger and Richard Calabrese (1975) offers clues to how an organization can both develop strong relationships with stakeholders before a crisis as well as how to minimize uncertainty during the crisis. The theory proposes that in communication situations, both parties will actively seek to eliminate uncertainty and predict the other's behaviors to determine if the relationship is worth continuing. The more similarities the parties perceive between themselves, the more predictable the interaction, which allows for future communication and a reduction in uncertainty. The same is true of organizations and their stakeholders: An organization can reach out to interact with customers and stakeholders through websites, blogs, Facebook, Twitter, and other social media networks, thereby developing relationships and trust.

Recent research has found that organizations fare better during a crisis if they have built "reputational capital" and are trusted by their stakeholders (Coombs, 2006; Coombs, 2007; Coombs & Holladay, 1996; Gilpin, 2010; Greyser, 2007; Huang, 2008; Lyon & Cameron, 2004; Veil, Buehner, & Palenchar, 2011). The use of social media platforms allows an organization in crisis to provide timely, accurate information to stakeholders, which can relieve uncertainty and maintain the relationships until the crisis has passed. As a result, the organization can better preserve its image and reputation, leading to continuing success in the future.

2.1 Protecting Reputations During Crisis Situations

Reputation is a combination of the way an organization presents itself (its image), the way it is presented by the media, advertising, and word of mouth, and the perceptions stakeholders and the public have of the organization (Coombs, 2007; Gilpin, 2010; Lyon & Cameron, 2004). Reputation is important because it can determine favorable outcomes for organizations, including generating customers, sales and investments, recruiting talent, and creating a competitive advantage based on the unique characteristics of the brand (Chis &

Talpos, 2011; Coombs, 2007; Coombs, 2006). The organization's reputation is what is being protected during a crisis.

A crisis is a sudden, unexpected threat to the organization and its distinctive brand qualities that can potentially do financial and reputational damage (Coombs, 2007; Coombs & Holladay, 1996; Greyser, 2009). The way an organization responds to a crisis situation can determine whether it can recover and succeed once the crisis has passed.

Because a crisis is an unforeseen event, an organization must prepare for a crisis situation, plan an appropriate response, and choose the proper channels of information dissemination to protect its stakeholders and its reputation. Research (Gainey, 2010; Gonzalez-Herrero & Smith, 2008; Greyser, 2007; Huang, 2008; Stephens & Malone, 2008) advocates for the integration of social media tools before a crisis to build relationships, during a crisis to disseminate information and after a crisis to monitor public opinion of the organization.

The first stage of any crisis communication plan is prevention: Preventing a crisis is the most desirable option for any organization (Gainey, 2010; Gonzalez-Herrero & Smith 2008; Hale, Dulek & Hale, 2005; Smaiziene & Orzekauskas, 2009; Veil, Buehner & Palenchar, 2011). While it is impossible to prevent all crises, an organization can put in place a system of monitoring emerging issues as they happen in order to be proactive about a situation rather than wait until the crisis hits (Gainey, 2010; Smaiziene & Orzekauskas, 2009; Veil, Buehner & Palenchar, 2011).

Recent literature suggests that social media websites and blogs are well suited for organizations to track what is being said about them in real time (Khang, Ki, & Ye, 2012; Seeger, 2006; Veil, Buehner & Palenchar, 2011). Additionally, research has shown that organizations that have "reputational capital"

(Coombs, 2007, p. 165) tend to do better during a crisis and will emerge with less damage than an organization with a poor pre-crisis reputation.

The internet has provided many platforms for organizations to engage with customers, stakeholders, and even the media to develop interactive relationships, build trust, and enhance reputation (Gonzalez-

Herrero & Smith, 2008). Internet users seem to prefer communication from organizations that is “customer pull” (Gorry & Westbrook, 2009, p. 196) rather than company-driven, and companies who are embracing new media technologies appear to be better situated to manage their own messages and maintain their reputations in the event of a crisis.

2.2 Choosing a Response Strategy in a Crisis Situation

If prevention fails and a crisis occurs, there can be several ways for an organization to respond. The response, however, will define the way stakeholders perceive the crisis and the organization involved (Coombs & Holladay, 1996). An organization’s first priority in a crisis situation is to protect its stakeholders, physically or psychologically (Coombs, 2007; Seeger, 2006). Once the safety of the stakeholders is assured, then the organization must work to protect its reputation and ensure the crisis does not occur again.

In the past, organizations had a time frame of 45 minutes to up to 12 hours to issue a statement after a crisis (Gainey, 2010). With the widespread use of social media and cell phones, witnesses can often be the first to report the crisis. If this happens and there is not an immediate response from the organization, the organization will then be forced to manage the crisis within the frame the public has accepted (Coombs, 2007; Seeger, 2006). Huang (2008) determined that a timely response was a more important factor in stakeholder trust and relational commitment than the crisis communication strategy, and Hale, Dulek, & Hale (2005) found that crisis management tends to be more successful when information is “disseminated quickly, accurately, directly and candidly to critical stakeholders, including the media” (p. 116). Coombs (2006) advocated an initial response of “instructing information” (p. 246): the basic information about the crisis, how the stakeholder can protect himself/herself from harm, and the steps being taken to correct the situation and ensure that it won’t happen again. Stephens and Malone (2008) found that blogs can change the public’s perception of the crisis and that, as communication from the organization increased, the crisis was perceived to be less serious. Organizations can use social media platforms as a method of rapid information dissemination as well as providing a way for the stakeholders and the public to ask questions and engage with the organization, thereby relieving some of the uncertainty the crisis can cause (Veil, Buehner & Palenchar, 2011).

Because crises are fluid, time-sensitive situations, there is no one-size-fits-all solution to a crisis. Coombs (2007) suggested that people will react emotionally and assign responsibility for a crisis, and the way an organization manages the crisis should correlate to the attribution of crisis responsibility. His Situational Crisis Communication Theory (SCCT) (2007) identifies three crisis responsibility types: victim, accident, and intentional. By identifying the responsibility type the public will attach to the crisis, a crisis manager can then choose from a pre-determined list of response strategies, which include denial, diminish, and rebuild. Denial is used when an organization is not responsible for the crisis and has evidence to prove it. Diminish strategies can be used in situations of low attribution, i.e. a victim or accident crisis. Rebuild strategies should be used in instances of strong attribution when the organization must take responsibility and reconstruct trust among stakeholders. Rebuild can also be used in the case of an accidental crisis when the organization's reputation has been damaged and needs to be bolstered (Coombs, 2007).

Hale, Dulek & Hale (2005) argued that, instead of being a linear model as suggested by Coombs, crisis response is actually a spiral model whereby crisis managers need to observe, interpret, choose, and disseminate, repeating the process throughout the crisis. This enhances the understanding of the crisis in progress and allows for dissemination of timely, updated information. Recent evidence supports using social media to honestly and openly distribute information during a crisis because the organization will be directly feeding information into stakeholders who are interested and actively seeking updated information (Veil, Buehner & Palenchar, 2011). The traits of communication, participation, and connectedness inherent in social media platforms make it a very useful tool in an effective crisis communication plan by allowing users to be participants in the crisis management efforts.

2.3 Stakeholder Perceptions of Response Strategies

In order to best protect its reputation during a crisis, an organization's crisis response strategy must accept greater responsibility and provide more assistance to victims as stakeholders and the public place more blame on the company. An apologetic response can reinforce an organization's image as a "good corporate citizen" (Lyon & Cameron, 2004, p. 231) and bring the company back into a more favorable light with stakeholders. Coombs

(2007) found that organizations with reputational capital fare better during a crisis, and Huang (2008) associated trust to relational commitment, or the intent of the customer to repurchase after the crisis based on the highly valued relationship the two had before the crisis. He noted that organizations can minimize the potential reputational damage with timely, consistent, and active dissemination of information, ultimately resulting in greater trust by stakeholders and the public.

2.4 The Inevitability of Social Media

Because of the importance of rapid crisis response, it is essential to disseminate information through as many avenues as possible. Social media, then, can be a useful tool in addition to traditional media sources in crisis communication and can actually help an organization maintain control of its message. Social media platforms allow an organization to open an authentic, honest dialogue with interested stakeholders and the public and online users tend to prefer the more human, connected, and interactive communication these platforms provide (Gonzalez-Herrero & Smith, 2008; Veil, Buehner & Palenchar, 2011).

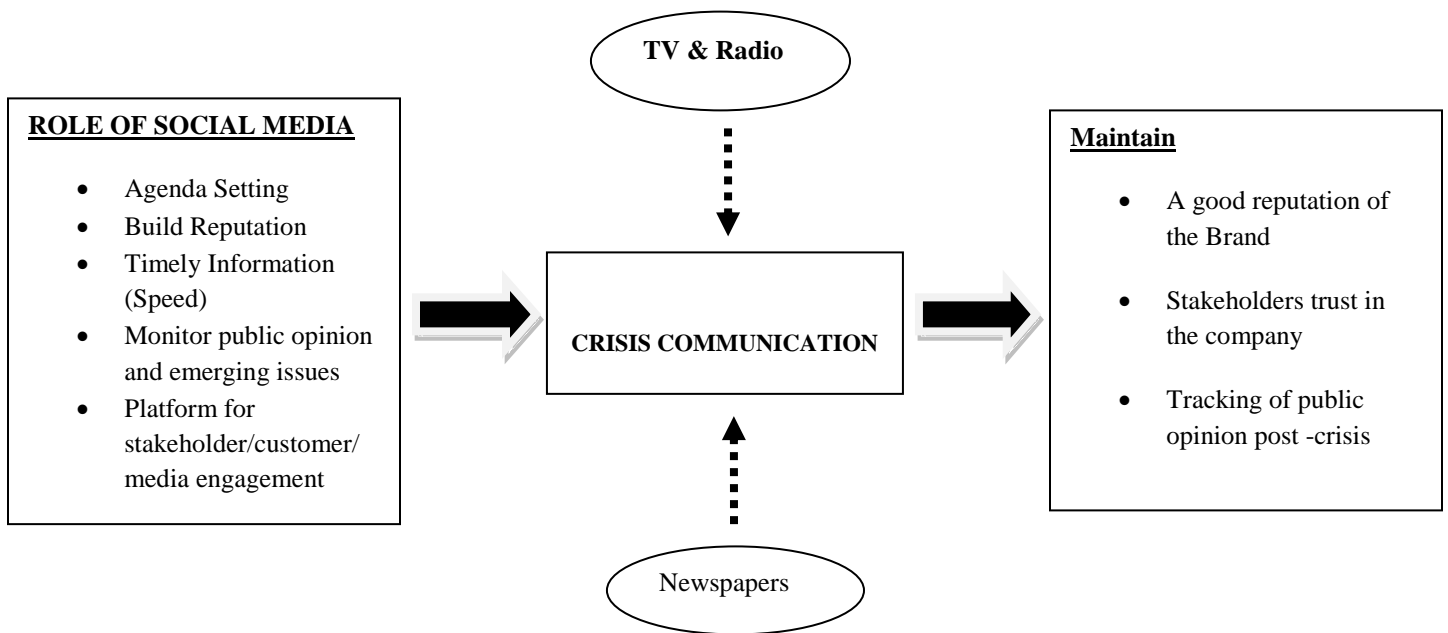
With the good, however, comes the bad, and there are still some disadvantages that come with organizational use of social media. There are security issues such as phishing or cyber attacks, and an organization opens itself up to public criticism and disgruntled customers for the entire online world to see (Gonzalez-Herrero & Smith, 2008; Chis & Talpos, 2011). Overall, though, social media provides convenient and effective methods to build relationships with stakeholders, the public, and media, to follow public perception and mitigate problems before they become crises, to disseminate information during a crisis, and to track public opinion post-crisis. It is, for better or for worse, part of our culture, and crisis managers must embrace it and use it to their advantage.

It is essential that an organization disseminate information as broadly as possible during a crisis, incorporating traditional and new media sources to reach the consumers of both.

G4S Kenya mainly uses their staff forum (email) to communicate on security alerts, incidences/crises and any other information. The accessibility of the internal emails is limited because of connectivity, however social media is more accessible and can therefore be utilized to pass information via the company website. Frequent updating and use of the

G4S website will also encourage staff and shareholders alike to access it for any required information.

2.5 Theoretical Framework



CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

Research design is the process of meticulous selection of methods to be used to answer the research questions and solve the research problem (Zikmund, 1991). This study used a random sample of G4S Kenya staff members from the Communications, manned security, HR, finance and courier departments to gather both quantitative and qualitative data for analysis. Case study of G4S Kenya was used for this research to find out if social media plays a role in their crisis communication and the challenges, if any; they face in incorporating Social media in crisis communication.

Researcher Robert K. Yin defines a case study as an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context; when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident; and in which multiple sources of evidence are used (Yin, 1984, p. 23).

The findings of this study were used to recommend the use of social media as an invaluable crisis communication tool for G4S Kenya.

3.2 Sampling Procedures and Sample Size

Sampling is concerned with the selection of a subset of individuals from within a statistical population to estimate characteristics of the whole population.

Probability sampling is one in which every unit in the population has a chance (greater than zero) of being selected in the sample, and this probability can be accurately determined. The combination of these traits makes it possible to produce unbiased estimates of population totals, by weighting sampled units according to their probability of selection.

Probabilistic sampling techniques, specifically random sampling was used where from the members of the target population; a few participants will be selected from different departments, as a representative sample for the study.

The sample size was calculated based on Yamane's formula (Yamane 1967). Using this formula with an error of 8% and with a confidence coefficient of 92% the sample size was

130 from a target population of 800 who are directly or indirectly involved in crises communication of G4S Kenya .

3.3 Research Instruments

The tools of data collection were questionnaires and interviews. A questionnaire is a research instrument consisting of a series of questions and other prompts for the purpose of gathering information from respondents. The use of closed questions for this study was most appropriate because they result in simple factual information, give a high level of control to the questioner, involve minimum effort on the part of the respondent, they provide uniform questions and answers making it easier to evaluate obtained information and they save time because it takes the respondents less time to complete questionnaires. Some closed questions had ranked answers or a scale with a series of alternatives. These types of questions were used to evaluate respondents' attitudes and opinions.

Interviews as a method for conducting qualitative research, is a technique used to understand the experiences of others. Interviewing differs from other methods of data collection because it is often more exploratory in nature, and allows for more flexibility. Interviewing stems from the desire to know more about and to better understand the topic or subject of research

The table below summarizes the Population size and instruments to be used:

Strata	No. of respondents randomly selected	Instrument used to collect data
Communication Department	5	Interviews
Manned Security Department	40	Questionnaires
Human Resource Department	15	Questionnaires
Courier Department	30	Questionnaires
Finance Department	40	Questionnaires
Total Sample size	130	
Total Target Population	800	

3.4 Data Collection

Questionnaires were handed out to G4S Kenya staff with a detailed cover letter explaining the purpose of the questionnaire and assuring respondents of the confidentiality of the information they give. Interviews were conducted for the Communications and IT departments.

3.5 Data Analysis methods

Data analysis is a process of gathering, modeling and transforming data with the aim of highlighting useful information, suggesting conclusions and supporting decision making (Ader, 2008). The raw data to be collected was organized and coded for processing so as to generate the required information expected from the study. The data was analyzed and presented using scale of frequencies, tables, pie charts and graphs that helped draw conclusions and make recommendations.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the analysis of data. The main objective of the study was to determine the role social media plays in crisis communication to assist in mitigating damage to its reputation and maintain the trust of its stakeholders. The specific research objectives were to establish the role of social media in crisis communication in G4S Kenya, to establish how G4S Kenya incorporates social media in crisis communication, to establish G4S staff attitudes towards social media use by the Organization during crises and to establish the challenges G4S Kenya faces in using social media in crisis communication.

The study collected data from 100 respondents out of a target population of 130 resulting in a response rate of 76.9%.

4.2 Demographic Information of the Respondents

The study sought to establish the demographic information of the respondents. The study findings are presented in the following subsections.

4.2.1 Gender of the Respondents

The respondents were asked to indicate their gender. Figure 1 shows the findings of the study.

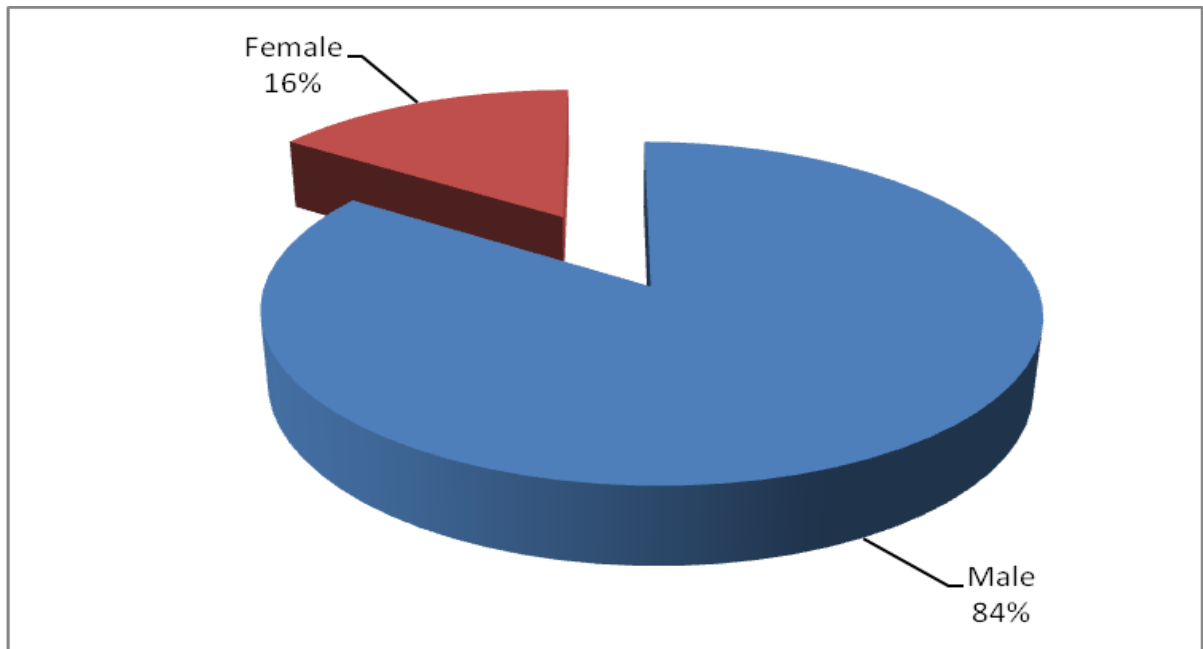


Figure 1: Gender of the Respondents

The study findings in Figure 1 shows that majority (84%) of the respondents were male while female were 16%.

4.2.2 Age of the Respondents

The respondents were asked to indicate their age. Figure 2 shows the findings of the study.

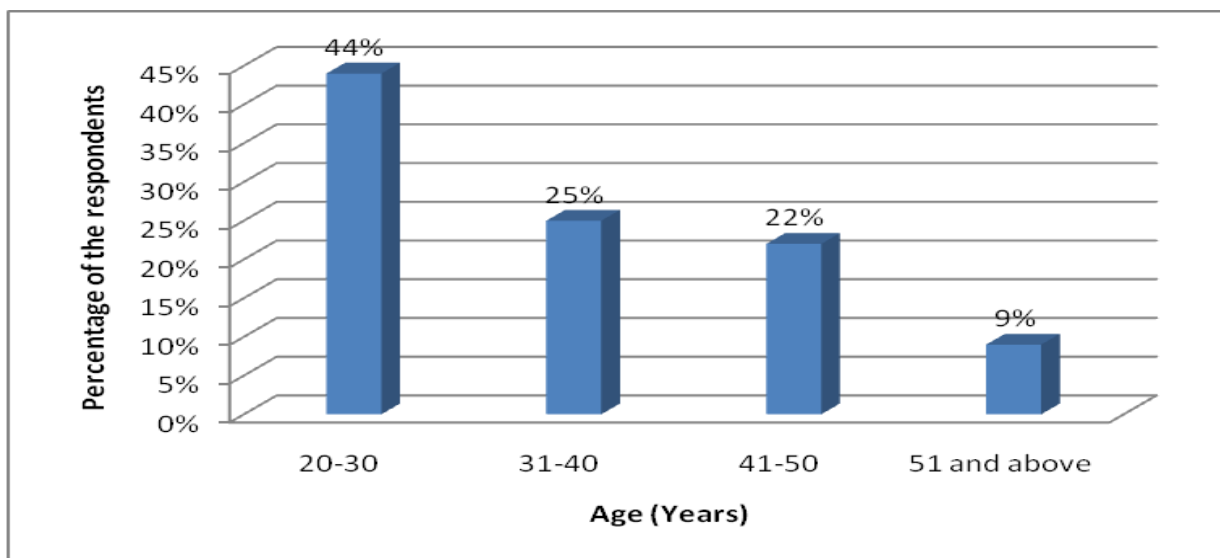


Figure 2: Age of the Respondents

From the study findings in figure 2, majority (44%) of the respondents were aged between 20 and 30 years followed by 25% of the respondents aged between 31 and 40 years, 22% aged between 41 and 50 years and 9% aged above 50 years.

4.2.3 Level of Education

The respondents were asked to indicate their level of education. Figure 3 shows the findings of the study.

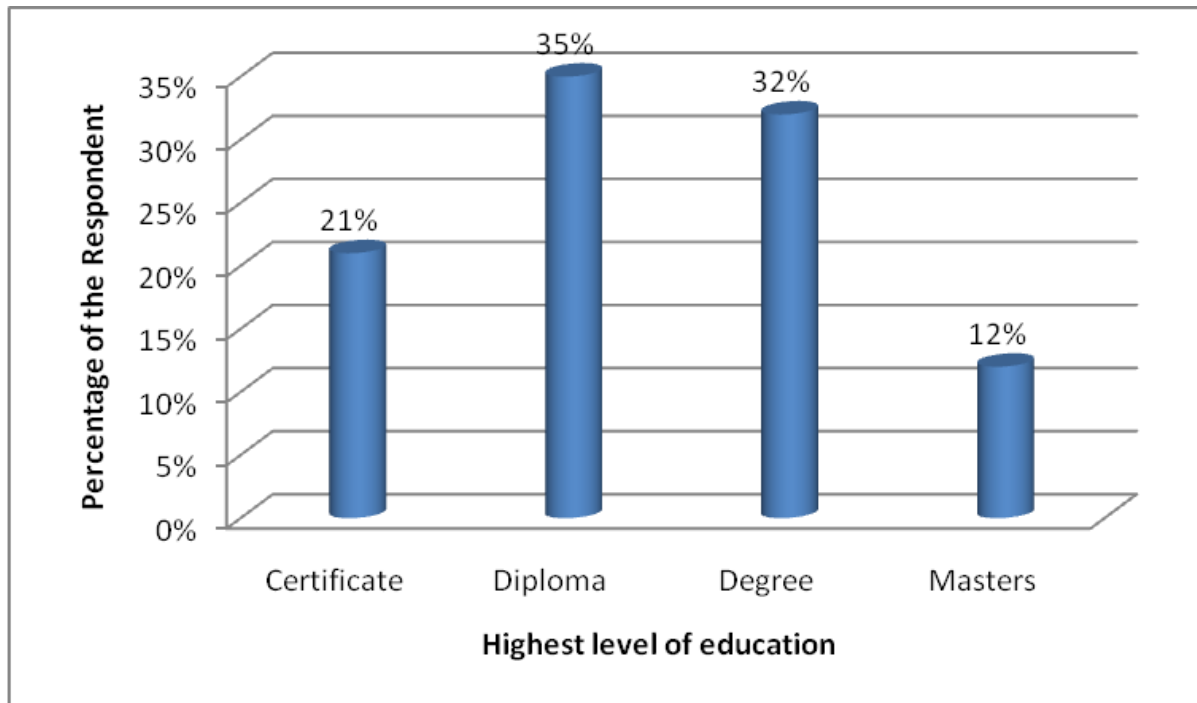


Figure 3: Level of Education

Majority of the respondents (35%) were Diploma holders followed by 32% of the respondents who had degrees, 21% with Certificate and 12% with Masters.

4.2.4 Department where respondents work

The study established the departments where respondents work as shown in Figure 4 below.

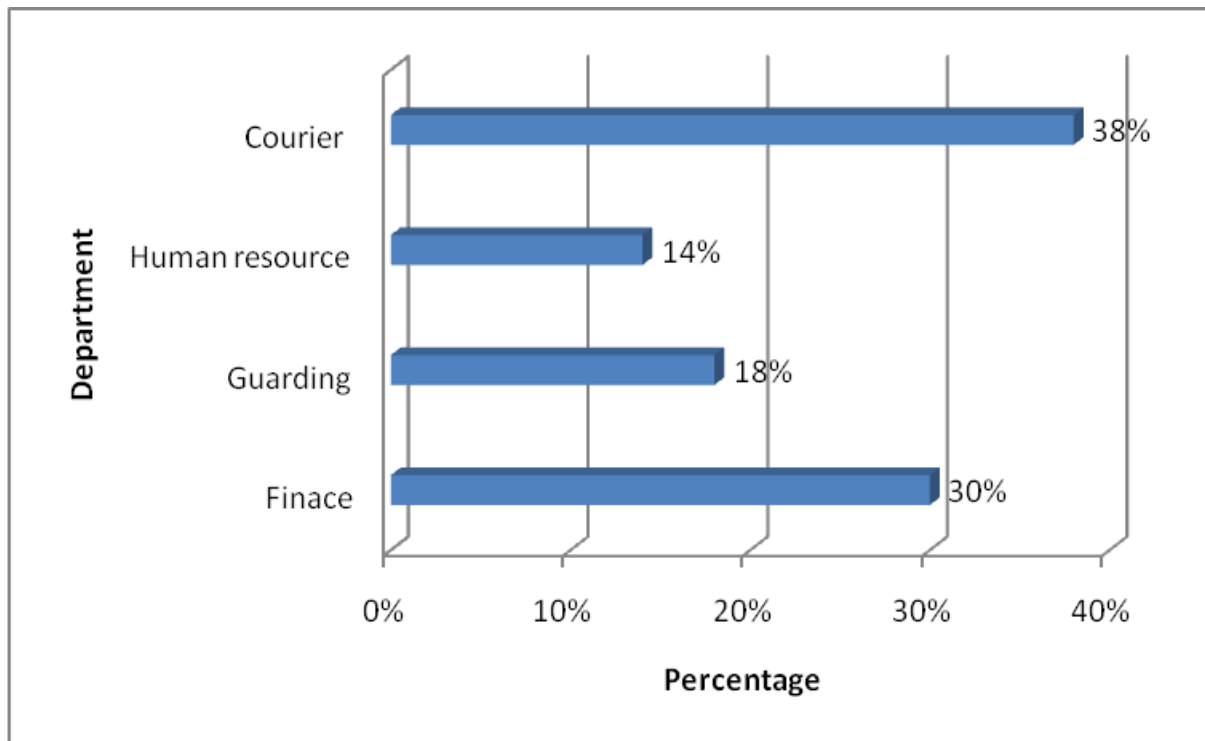


Figure 4: Department where respondents work

From the study findings in figure 4, majority (38%) of the respondents worked in courier department followed by finance (30%), guarding (18%) and human resource (14%).

4.2.5 Working Experience

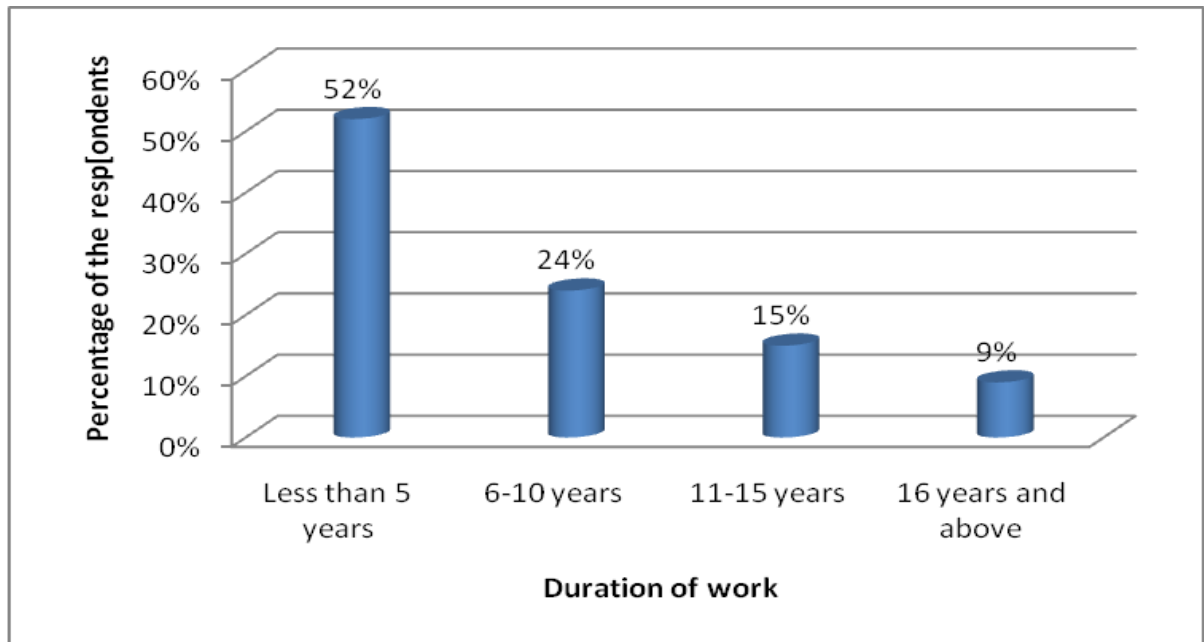


Figure 5: Working Experience

Majority of the respondents (52%) had worked at G4S for a period less than 5 years while 24% had worked for 6 to 10 years, 15% for 11 to 15 years and 9% over 16 years.

4.3 Role of social media in crisis communication

The study investigated role of social media in crisis communication by establishing

4.3.1 Ownership of an account in any social website

The respondents were asked whether they have an account in any social website. Figure 6 shows the findings of the study.

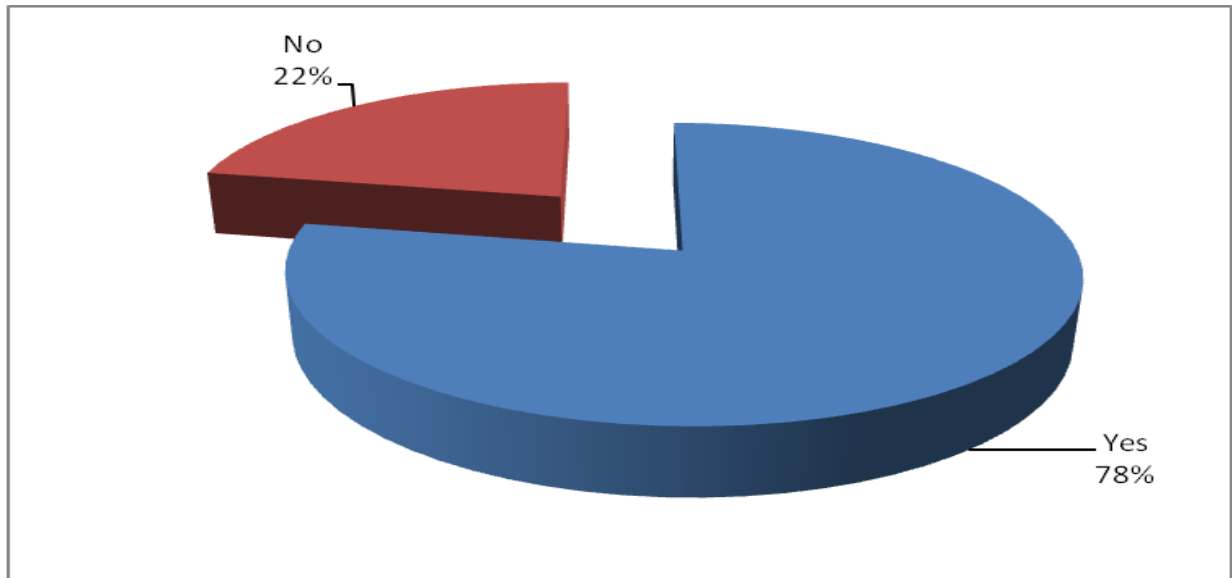


Figure 6: Ownership of an account in any social website

From the study findings in figure 1; majority (78%) of the respondents said that they have a social media account while 22% do not have an account.

The respondents were further asked to indicate the social website where they have accounts. Figure 7 shows the findings of the study.

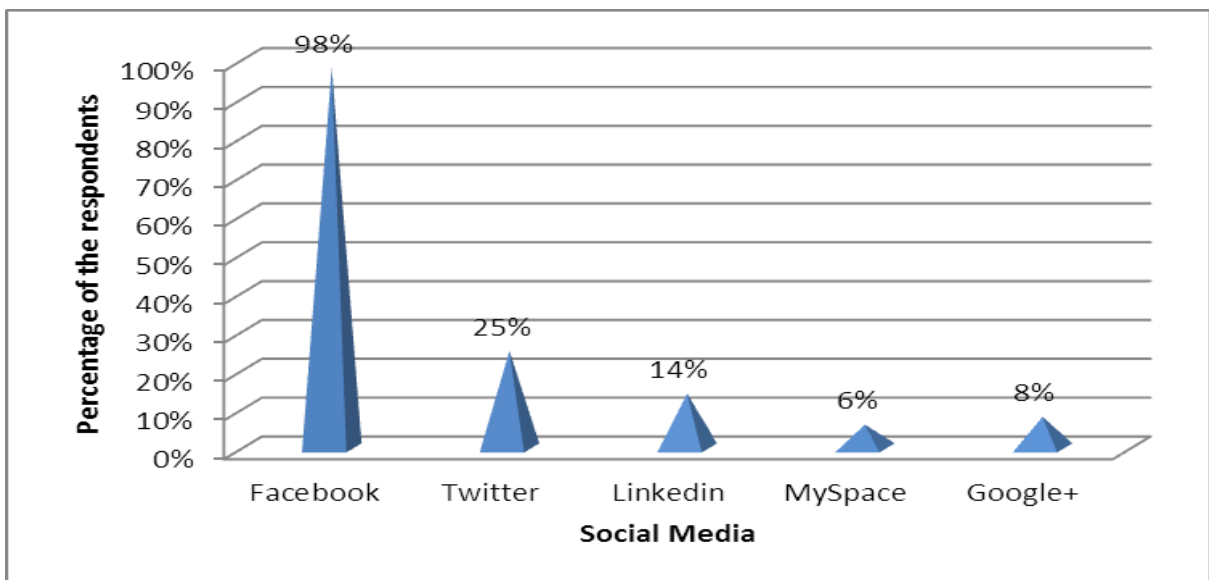


Figure 7: Social Media Website

The study established that majority of the respondents (98%) have a Facebook account followed by Twitter (25%), LinkedIn (14%), Google+ (8%) and MySpace (6%).

4.3.2 Means of access to social media

The respondents were asked how they access their social media website. Figure 8 shows the findings of the study.

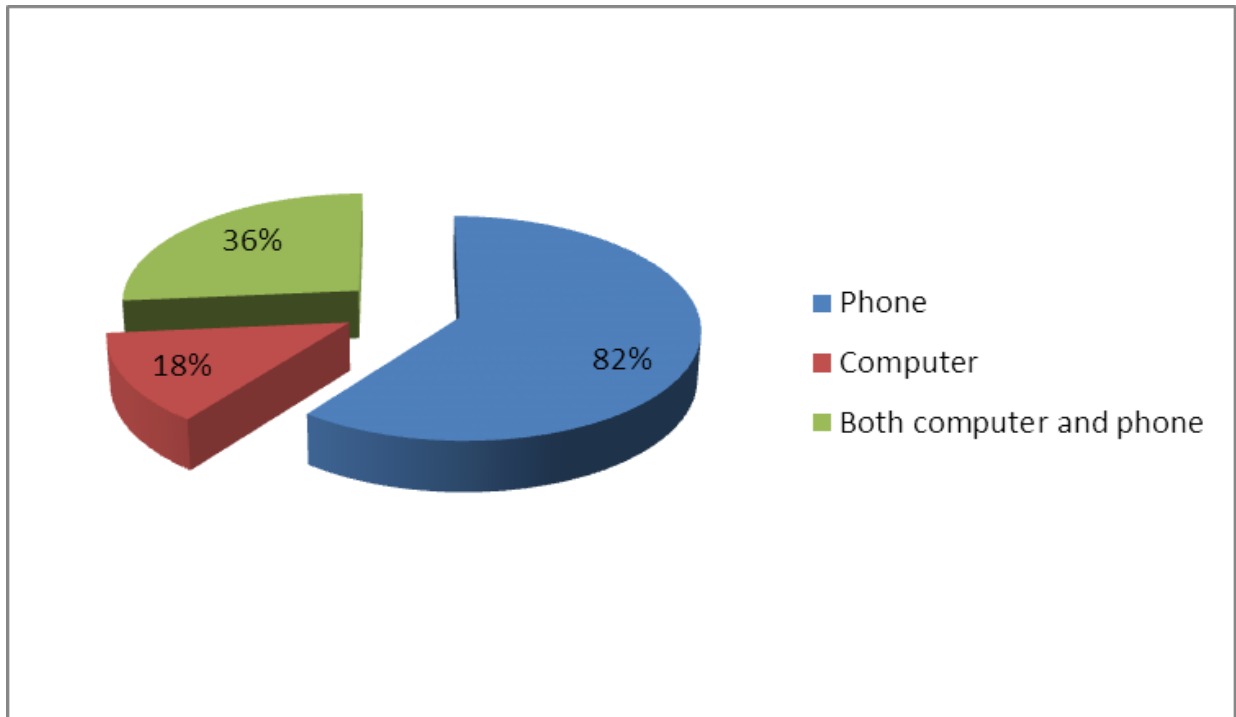


Figure 8: Means of access to social media

Majority of the respondents (82%) access social media via phone while 18% access social media via computer and 36% use both phone and computer

4.3.3 The use of social media at G4S Kenya

The respondents were asked to indicate the G4S social website they have visited or used. Figure 9 shows the findings of the study.

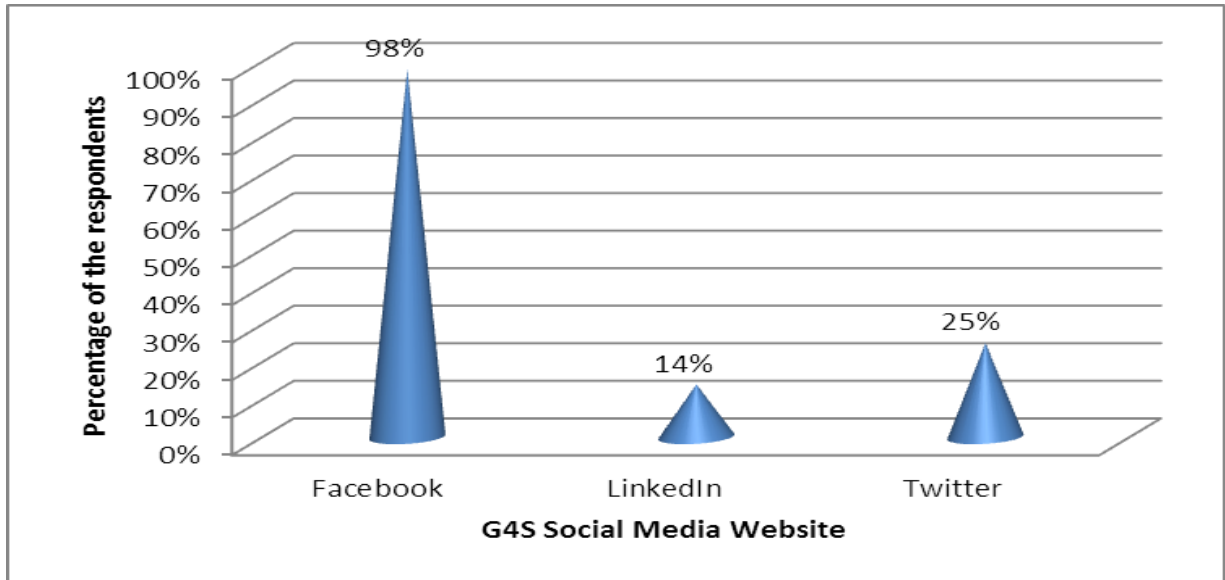


Figure 9: The use of social media at G4S Kenya

The study established that majority of the respondents (98%) had visited G4S Facebook account while 25% had visited G4S Twitter account and 14% accessed G4S LinkedIn account.

4.3.4 The respondents' perception of G4S websites

The study sought to establish the opinion of the respondents on the G4S social website (s) they had visited. The respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement with the statements in table 1. The response was rated on a five point scale whereby 1= Strongly Disagree, 2=Disagree, 3= Neutral, 4= Agree, and 5= Strongly Agree. Mean and Standard Deviations were generated from Statistical Software for Social Sciences (SPSS). Table 1 shows the findings of the study.

Table 1: The respondents' perception of G4S websites

	Mean (x)	Standard Deviations
It has updated and useful information	2.402	0.2357
It is user friendly	3.132	0.1895
I often access the website	2.458	0.2561
I rarely access the website	4.215	0.1501
I have never accessed the website	1.176	13.455
It does not provide relevant and up-to-date information	4.162	0.1154

The response with a mean rounded off to 1 denotes strongly disagree, 2-disagree, 3-neutral, 4- agree, and 5-strongly agree. From the study findings in Table 1, majority of the respondents agreed that G4S websites do not provide relevant and up-to-date information ($x=4.162$) and they rarely access the website ($x=4.215$). The respondents indicated that G4S websites is moderately user friendly ($x=3.132$). On the other hand, the respondents disagreed to the statements that G4S websites has updated and useful information ($x=2.402$), they often access the website ($x=2.458$), and statement that they have never accessed the website ($x=1.176$).

4.3.5 The respondents' perception of social media

The study sought to establish the respondents' perception of social media. The respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement with the statements in table 2. The response was rated on a five point scale whereby 1= Strongly Disagree, 2=Disagree, 3= Neutral, 4= Agree, and 5= Strongly Agree. Mean and Standard Deviations were calculated and Table 2 shows the findings of the study.

Table 2: The respondents' perception of social media

	Mean (x)	Standard Deviations
Social media websites are mainly for fun	4.404	0.0112
Social media websites are informative	4.327	0.0521
Social media websites are credible	3.405	0.1043
Social Media websites are growing in popularity	4.352	0.1195
Social Media websites are a waste of time	3.172	0.0894

Majority of the respondents agreed that Social media websites are mainly for fun ($x=4.404$), Social media websites are informative ($x=4.327$), and Social Media websites are growing in popularity ($x=4.352$). The respondents expressed moderate opinion on the statements that Social media websites are credible ($x=3.405$) and Social Media websites are a waste of time ($x=3.172$).

4.3.6 First Source of information on crises

The respondents were asked to indicate the first source of information on the recent crises that affected G4S. Figure 10 shows the study findings.

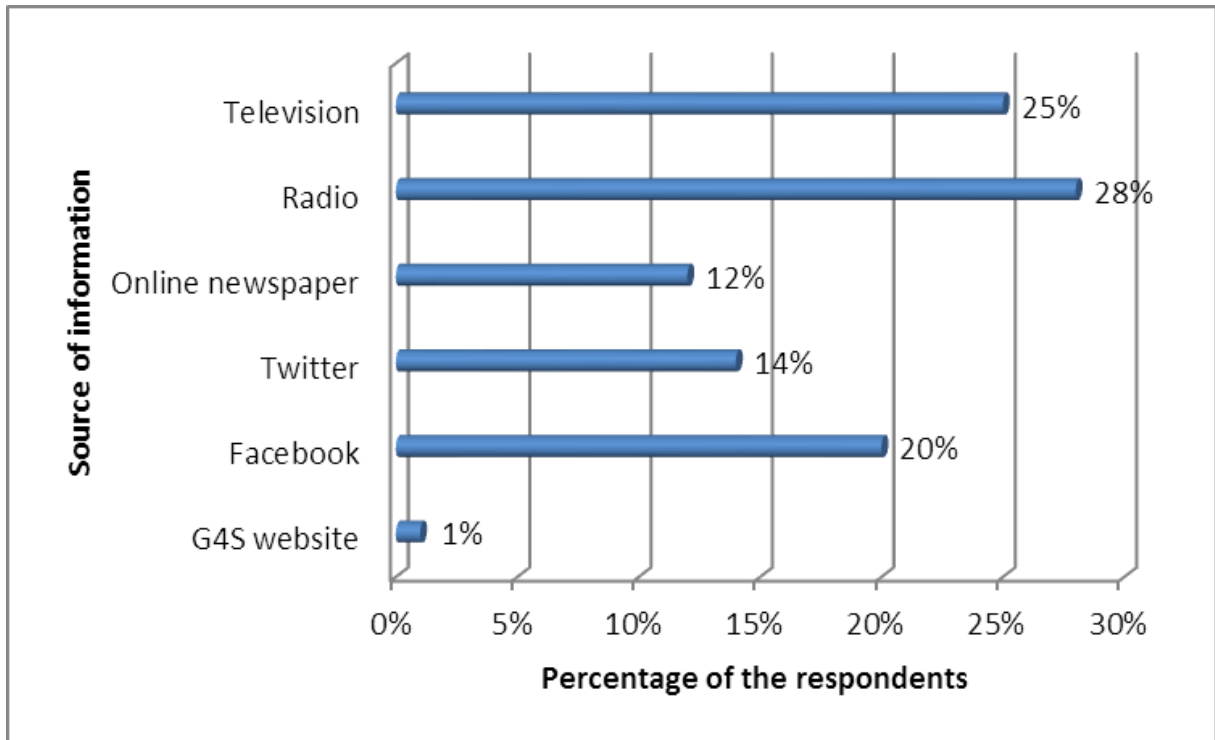


Figure 10: First Source of information on crises

Majority of the respondents first accessed information on the recent crises that affected G4S from radio (28%) followed by Television (25%), Facebook (20%), Twitter (14%) online newspaper (12%) and G4S website (1%).

4.3.7 Whether G4S provides all relevant Information in good time during a crisis

The respondents were asked whether the company provides all relevant information in good time during a crisis. Figure 11 shows the findings of the study.

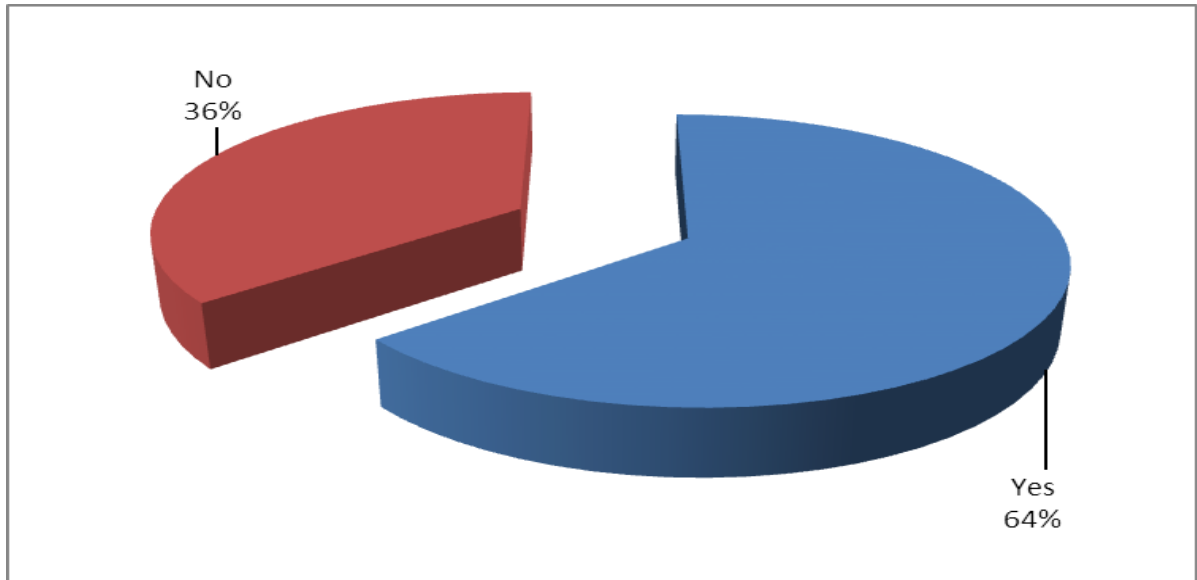


Figure 11: Whether G4S provides all relevant Information in good time during a crisis

From the study findings in figure 11, majority of the respondents (64%) agreed that G4S provides all relevant Information in good time during a crisis while 36% disagreed.

4.3.8 Perceived accuracy of information on different media

The respondents were asked to indicate the media which provides accurate information. Table below shows findings of the study.

Table 3: Perceived accuracy of information on different media

Media	Frequency	Percent
Social Media	65	65%
Newspaper	100	100%
Television	100	100%
Radio	100	100%

Majority of the respondents (100%) believed that newspaper, television and radio provides accurate information while 65% believe that social media provides accurate information.

4.3.9 Respondents approval of use of social media in crisis communication

The respondents were asked whether social media should be used in crisis communication in G4S. Figure 12 shows the findings of the study

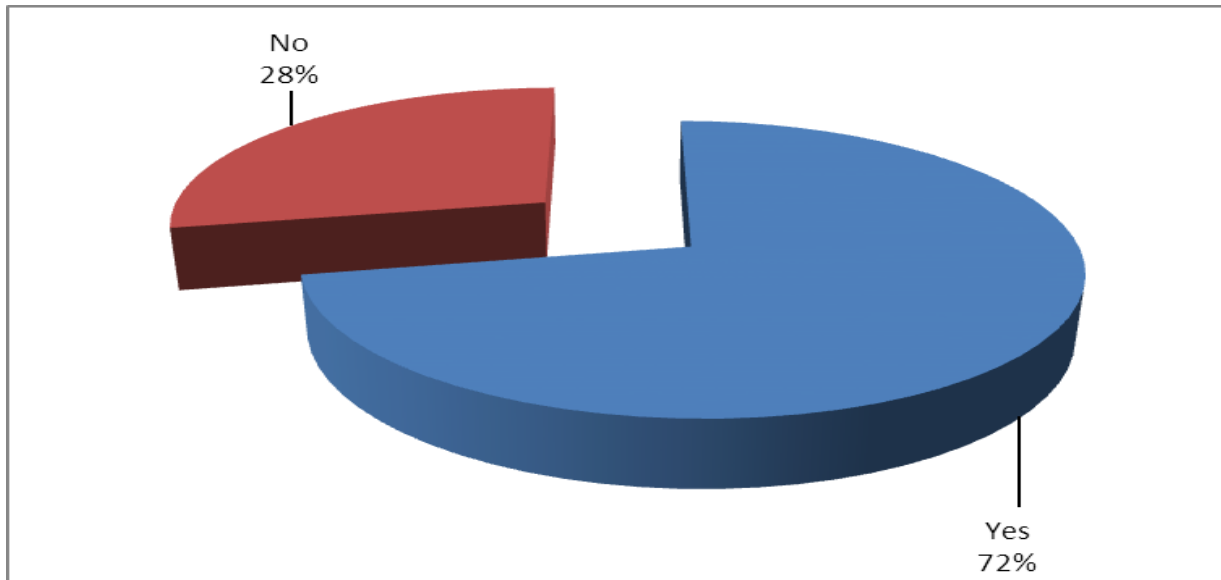


Figure 12: Whether social media should be used in crisis communication

From the study findings in figure 12, majority of the respondents (72%) said that social media should be used in crisis communication in G4S while 28% said that social media should not be used in crisis communication in G4S.

When asked whether social media plays an important role in crisis communication, the respondents said that social media plays a great role in the modern times because it has caused the world to become almost one single global community with various medium of communication that comprise the social media.

4.4 Summary of the study findings

The data gathered from the questionnaires as illustrated shows majority of the respondents who have social media accounts (facebook, twitter and LinkedIn) and actively utilize them are between the age of 20-30 years and the least level of education attained is Diploma level hence the respondents understood the concept of social media and the questions being asked in relation to the study.

Majority of the respondents access social media through their mobile phones and are therefore able to access and post information anytime anywhere. The general perception of social media it is that it's for fun but provides information and is growing in popularity.

The respondents have at one time or another accessed the G4S Kenya Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn accounts and perceive them as not having relevant and up-to-date information, moderately user friendly and hence rarely access them instead they look at other sources of information such as traditional media (TV, Radio and Newspapers) and other social media sites for information pertaining to G4S Kenya.

The respondents of the study agree that G4S Kenya provide Information in good time through Radio and TV in times of Crises but suggest the use of social media by the company in crisis communication.

Interviews were carried out with the communication department who feel that social media plays a great role in any communication and in this case crisis communication because of its ability to reach a large number of people at any one particular time, its growing popularity and though it has been thought about, the use of social media has not been well executed in G4S Kenya in a manner that would benefit its target customers, the public nor itself as a business.

Before social media was prevalent, the organization's process for crisis communication was limited to the manual and semi technology methods of paper communication, tele-call contacts and person to person communication. Social media has however affected crisis communication in G4S by virtue that G4S is not actively utilizing this space and the rest of the world is, G4S had itself be a discussion point without the benefit of appropriate avenue of response to its interested parties on critical matters. It has also lost the critical opportunities; to benefit commercially as a business, position itself as industry leader, experts and drive relevant Security related and centered issues, engage its target and public on relevant issues that play into their product development & innovation.

G4S Kenya has a crisis communication plan in place however how applicable and relevant it is would need to be interrogated. There have been plans to incorporate social media as part of the G4S Kenya crisis communication plan

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the conclusion and recommendations of the study. The main objective of the study was to determine the role social media plays in crisis communication to assist in mitigating damage to its reputation and maintain the trust of its stakeholders.

5.2 Conclusion

The study was aimed at determining the role that social media plays in crisis communication to assist in mitigating damage to the reputation of G4S Kenya and maintain the trust of its stakeholders.

The findings showed that respondents actively access social media via their mobile phones and encourage the use of social media by G4S Kenya in crisis communication since it is growing in popularity as the ideal mode for communicating information fast and to a large number of people encouraging interaction between the public and different organizations. Social media has however not been implemented in the G4S Kenya Communication strategy more specifically in crises communication.

The study concluded that social media plays an important role in crisis communication and there is a rising number of people who rely on social media to access news. However, G4S Kenya is yet to utilize social media as an effective tool in crisis communication. Security firms need to adopt and ensure that social media is effectively used in crisis communication by ensuring that their websites are user friendly, constantly active with live updates and by providing all relevant information in good time during a crisis.

5.3 Recommendations

The study recommends that G4S Kenya prioritize the use of social media in efforts to enhance efficiency and effectiveness in crisis communication.

G4S Kenya should ensure that they popularize their social media websites through constant updates and making them user friendly.

The study recommends that G4S Kenya establish a feedback mechanism which enables the company to get in touch with people through social media and at the same time maintaining integrity and confidentiality of information provided.

Crisis communication in G4S Kenya can be enhanced by encouraging employees to fully utilize social media in communicating crises which affects the general public. The employees should be guided on how to treat confidential information that is not supposed to be in public domain.

5.4 Recommendation for further study

Further study can be carried out to determine the components of G4S Kenya's Communication strategy and the challenges being faced in integrating the use of social media in their communication strategy.

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APPENDIX I: QUESTIONNAIRE

The following survey is designed to provide information to understand the role of social media in crisis communication. It is completely anonymous and should take less than 10 minutes to complete. All information provided is confidential and will be used to gather data on this research.

Please tick (✓) the appropriate option:

Section 1: Personal Profile

1. Gender
 - a) Male ()
 - b) Female ()
2. Age
 - a) 20-30 ()
 - b) 31-40 ()
 - c) 41-50 ()
 - d) 51 and above ()
3. Highest level of education
 - a) Secondary ()
 - b) Certificate ()
 - c) Diploma ()
 - d) Degree ()
 - e) Masters ()
 - f) Doctorate ()
4. In what department do you work?

5. Working experience
 - a) Less than 5 years ()
 - b) 6-10 years ()
 - c) 11-15 years ()
 - d) 16 years and above ()

Section 2: Role of social media in crisis communication

SA- Strongly Agree

D-Disagree

A-Agree

SD-Strongly Disagree

N-Neutral/No opinion

6. Please indicate how you feel about social media websites

	SA	A	N	D	SD
Social media websites are mainly for fun					
Social media websites are informative					
Social media websites are credible					
Social Media websites are growing in popularity					
Social Media websites are a waste of time					

7. Do you have an account in any social website?

a) Yes ()

b) No ()

8. If yes, please indicate

a) Facebook ()

b) Twitter ()

c) LinkedIn ()

d) MySpace ()

e) Google+ ()

f) Others ()

9. How do you access your social media website? Via

a) Phone ()

b) Computer ()

10. Of the below options, which do you believe provides accurate information?

a) Social Media ()

b) Newspaper ()

c) Television ()

d) Radio ()

e) Others ()

11. Do you think social media should be used in crisis communication in G4S ?

a) Yes ()

b) No ()

Please explain why

Section 3: G4S Kenya and social media

12. Of the below options, which G4S social website have you visited or used?

a) Facebook ()

b) LinkedIn ()

c) Twitter ()

d) Others ()

13. What is your opinion of the G4S social website (s) you have visited or used as indicated above?

	SA	A	N	D	SD
It has updated and useful information					
It is user friendly					
I often access the website					
I rarely access the website					
I have never accessed the website					

It does not provide relevant and up-to-date information					
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14. For the past and recent crises that have affected G4S, where did you first get the information from?

- a) G4S website ()
- b) Facebook ()
- c) Twitter ()
- d) Online newspaper ()
- e) Radio ()
- f) Television ()
- g) Other ()

15. Do you believe the company provides all relevant information in good time during a crisis?

- a) Yes ()
- b) No ()

If not, please explain

APPENDIX II: INTERVIEW GUIDE

1. Do you feel that social media plays an important role in crisis communication and why?
2. In your opinion, do you think G4S Kenya utilizes social media?
3. Before social media was prevalent, what was the organization's process for crisis communication?
4. How has social media affected crisis communication in G4S?
5. Does G4S Kenya have a crisis communication plan in place at the moment?
6. Is social media part of the G4S Kenya crisis communication plan?
7. If a crisis was to happen today, how would you handle communication of the information?
8. What are some of the challenges you face (as the communications department) in using social media for crisis communication?