THE USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA IN CRISIS COMMUNICATION IN AN ORGANIZATION: A CASE OF THE KENYA POWER COMPANY LIMITED

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DECLARATION

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Declaration by the student

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Dr . Jane Thuo : Signature........................ **Date**..22/11/2022..........................

DEDICATION.

I dedicate this research project to my family, my mother Jedidah Wanjiru,aunt Peris Wangui,brother Henry Theuri ,husband Cyrus Mburu and my daughter Stephanie Wanjiku for their prayers and encouragement that ensured that I completed this journey, despite the many hurdles encountered along my academic journey. May God bless all of you.

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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS.

CAK-Communication Authority of Kenya

CEO-Chief Executive Officer

ICT-Information Communication Technology

PR-Public relations

SMCC-Social-Mediated Crisis Communication Model

SCCT-Situational crisis communication theory

US-United States

KPLC –Kenya Power and Lighting Company.

ABSTRACT

Based on the premise that social media is used by organizations to manage crises, the study examined the use of social media during a crisis in Kenya Power Lighting Company. The lack of gatekeeping in social media often leads to the spread of false information. It was the goal of the study to discover the specific crisis response strategies that Kenya Power and Lighting Company used when communicating during a crisis, as well as the way messages were framed in the social media posts of KPLC during the crisis period and to evaluate the feedback it received from its customers. It is based on three principles of situational crisis communication, developed by Coombs in 2006, which is a theory that combines three core elements: crisis response strategies, crisis circumstances, and a system to match crisis circumstances with crisis response strategies. In times of crisis, social media is used to connect people to relevant issues, to search for and share information, and to vent or support emotions. Data was collected qualitatively by using content analysis and interviews with key informants. Five key informants were selected to participate in the study through a purposive sampling process, including the Chief Communication Officer as well as four other Communications Officers, each chosen for their distinct expertise. Due to its larger subscriber base than the rest of KPLC's social media sites, the researcher analyzed the content on its Facebook page to collect data. The study covered the period between 11th and 13th, January, 2022 when a 220kV Suswa-Embakasi power transmission line developed a fault resulting in power outage in some parts of Nairobi. Qualitative data was analyzed thematically and presented through narration. The researcher found out that KPLC used different crisis response strategies such as denial as well as offering apologies while communicating to its stakeholders. The researcher also found out that KPLC solely depended on press releases to officially communicate with their stakeholders and links to other social media sites such as twitter and the organizational website were included as part of the releases and this helped provide stakeholders with other sites where they could access more information relating to the crisis. The organization received both positive and negative feedback with some comments showing support while others depicting anger and dissatisfaction. The researcher recommends the adoption of other communication methods by KPLC to supplement social media sites for better engagement of stakeholders.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND.

1.1 Background.

All organizations desire to maintain a mutual relationship between themselves and their publics by painting a favorable image and sustaining a good reputation, thus, during crisis, organizations should be the first ones to address the situation through media and not the other way round. According to Massey & Larsen (2006), crises are unpredictable and can harm an organization and its stakeholders by ruining their reputation. Crises also alter normal operations and interfere with organizational existence (FernBanks 1997). An excellent reputation enables organizations to not only satisfy its goals and objectives, but also gain a greater competitive advantage (Saleh, 2016). A crisis causes an interruption to the organizational programme by affecting organizational image, reputation, brand equity, publicity, credibility, financial viability, and legitimacy (Smuddle, 2001).

1.1.1 Effects of social media in crisis management.

Advancement in technology, has seen social media utilized by majority of organizations in crisis scenarios to reach their publics due to its fast and interactive way of communicating (Veil, Buehner & Palenchar, 2011). Valentini & Romenti (2011) affirm that, different kinds of social media are used during difficult times by stakeholders in order to make sense of what is going on in an organization. Walaski (2013) indicates that current communication methods include social networking sites: Twitter, LinkedIn, YouTube, Instagram, Facebook and video conferencing, micro blogging, and blogs. According to Hysenlika (2012), Facebook had approximately one billion consumers globally, thereby allowing users to pass information speedily and efficiently during crisis moments.

Hughes & Chauhan (2015); Hughes et al. (2014) noted that social media was extensively utilized in emergencies to maintain communication with the public by disseminating crucial information as well as responding to any question that arose. It was also used as a means of understanding the available information around a crisis, by searching for information that could assist respond and correct false grapevine and misinformation (Andrews et al 2016; Denef et al.).

Social media influences how people counter and disseminate information about global disasters since 2001, whereby, in the previous 10 years, there had been 631 disasters on average per year, comprising 193,558 individuals afflicted, 83,934 deaths, and an approximate cost of $ 162,203 million each year (The World Disaster Report IFRC, 2015).Yates & Paquette (2011) indicate that Energex, an organization in Australia used Facebook as a medium of sharing information that affected the organization like energy saving tips, sponsorship opportunities, community initiatives, power interruptions as well as safety and storm information. This indicates that, besides social media being used to minimize the effects of a crisis, it can be used in knowledge sharing.

Social media is a coin with both sides, with one side indicating that social media information is proving difficult to differentiate between credible and fraudulent information (Kassam,2013). Social media lacks a professional gatekeeping aspect as it can be operated by anyone who has a smartphone, computer, laptop, or tablet. This character makes social media have uncontrolled information sources thus, an obstacle for reaching trustworthy information (Anouar, 2014). Fırat & Kurt (2015) indicate that, to get trustworthy and consistence information in the internet proved to be difficult due to too much information availability. Quick and proper communication during crisis minimizes negative information and intimidation to the company's credibility and image (Veil et al., 2011).

Pearson & Clair (1998) indicate that social media has high influence and low probability that can put organizations in danger, thus requires quick decision making and action. According to Modeus, Paulsson & Olsson, (2012), it is the mandate of the organization to respond to allegations that have caused a crisis within the organization’s interested parties. Horsley & Barker (2002) note that, public organizations should work as a team during crisis communication by ensuring that information provided on social media is similar with information provided on other media platforms like newspapers, magazines, television, radio and incase wrong information was circulated on social media, it should be refuted.

Studies conducted in France, United States (US), Mexico, China, and Germany indicated that 36% of crises are as a result of negative new media publicities and digital security failures (Burson-Marsteller & PSB, 2011). Bryson (2017) noted that companies have no control over negative comments they get on social media channels because, users who disagree with their content or who simply hate them, may join in on negative feedback campaigns which are very harmful to the overall image and reputation of a company.

Social media untrustworthiness was seen in various ways including during the Onur Media Crisis on October 25th 2011, where Onur announced that they would donate money to van earthquake victims through their Twitter and Facebook account. That post faced criticism from social media users who blamed Onur, forcing him to halt the campaign and apologized for the misunderstanding (Bat & Yurtsever, 2014). The second situation of dishonesty was seen at BP Mexico Gulf Crisis of April 20th, 2010 where 800 million liters of petrol flowed to the sea before its closure. The disaster was followed by a lot of social media reactions, which put the organization in an even more difficult position, as they commented on social media that "others pollute the environment worse than we do" and "we don't have the right equipment to deal with the problem." Some photo shops and captions made by social media users put the company in the limelight.

According to Cho, Jun & Park (2013), Japanese authorities used Twitter to organize fundraisers, plan lifesaving operations and to provide emotional assistance for the victims of earthquakes. In order to pass crucial emergency plans in case of another earthquake (Wendling et al., 2013), the Japanese government started a Twitter account in Japanese language on 13th March, 2011. On 16th March, 2011, a Twitter account in English was also formed to pass emergency plans in case of another earthquake (Wendling et al., 2013). According to Beaumont et al., in their report cited by Veil et al. (2011), Twitter was also successfully used to share the latest information in a variety of situations, including the 2010 Haiti earthquake, the 2011 Tunisian uprising, the California wildfires in 2007 and 2008, the 2008 Mumbai massacre, and the 2009 crash of a US Airways flight 1549, among others. The social media platform has also been used in the aftermath of the January 2011 floods in Brisbane and South East Queensland and the February 2011 earthquake in Christchurch (Flew et al., 2013) as well as other crises that may affect the organization. According to Aichner & Jacob (2015), social media can be either a success or a failure for an organization based on how it is used by its users, particularly individuals who will post content to it on a regular basis.

According to CAK data, in December 2018, Kenya had 45.7 million internet subscribers, indicating that the Information and Communications Technology (ICT) sector has grown rapidly since the launch of the Internet in the early 1990s (CAK, 2019).

1.1.2 Background of Kenya power and lighting company.

Founded in 1922 as East African Power and Lighting Company Limited, Kenya Power and Lighting Company (KPLC) serves Kenya, Uganda, and Tanzania. A new name was given to the company in 1983, which was Kenya Power and Lighting Company Limited. With 50.1 percent of the company, the government of Kenya owns part of the company, while 49.9 percent of the company is owned by private investors. The government used Kenya Power to manage all generating stations prior to a major reorganization in 1997. Electricity generation, transmission, and distribution capacity planning are the key responsibilities of Kenya Power, as is the construction and maintenance of the network and the retail sale of electricity. At the end of June 2020, it sold electricity to over 8 million people as part of its transmission and distribution system.

KPLC exists on four social media channels including twitter, Linked In, Facebook and Instagram As seen below. For purposes of this study, Facebook was chosen due to the majority of followers it has.

KPLC social media channels.		
Channel	**Followers**	**Identity**
Twitter	419,428	@KenyaPower
LinkedIn	21,291	Kenya Power
Instagram	9,780	Kenya Power
Facebook	756,401	Kenya Power Care

Table 1.1: KPLC Social Media Platforms

1.2 Problem Statement.

Social media changed how people communicate by eliminating the space and time constraints that existed with the traditional means of communication; it has therefore enabled the expression and sharing of ideas from all over the world by just a click of a button, enabling organizations to engage their customers in order to manage likely or unlikely crises faced. Advancement of technology has increased the usage of social media sites like Twitter and Facebook as a means of conveying information by organizations (Dunbar, Arnaboldi, Conti, & Passarella, 2015) due to their fast and interactive way of addressing customer concerns (Coombs & Holladay, 2010: 66; Carroll & Buchholtz, 2014).Despite social media being a fast and effective communication channel for organizations, it also had a tendency of spreading false/fake information (Wright & Hinson, 2008). According to (Lysenko & Desouza, 2012) note that social media is a type of media which lacks gatekeeping and control from any one, thus allowing users to post information before verifying the source of information.

Therefore, the problem of this study as highlighted by different scholars was that, social media has its setbacks including the posting of unverified messages hence, spreading false information if not monitored and this may ruin the image and reputation of an organization.

The study's gap was filled by designing of interview schedule questions that were used to interview communication officers of KPLC and Facebook content analysis for the content posted. The findings were used to give relevant recommendations and conclusions.

1.3 Objectives of the study.

1.3.1 Summary of objectives.

To find out the use of social media during crisis communication in organizations: KPLC vs Social Media

1.3.2 Specific objectives.

1. To Find out how KPLC responds to crisis communication during a crisis.

2. To examine the way messages shared through KPLC Facebook account have been framed.

3. To analyze feedback received from KPLC Facebook account followers during crisis media coverage.

1.4 Research Questions.

1. What are the crisis response strategies employed by KPLC during crisis communication?
2. How are messages framed on KPLC Facebook account during crisis communication?
3. What kind of feedback was received from KPLC Facebook account during crisis communication?

1.5 Justification of the study.

Research on social media usage in crisis management is still in its infancy, according to Briones et al. (2011), and requires further investigation. Goldfine, (2011) too, indicates that inadequate research in acknowledging social media as a channel for communicating crisis, forced companies not to use this strategy. Though, nowadays social media is the most common medium used to communicate crisis knowledge unlike traditional media like newspaper, magazine, radio, television among others (Jin, Liu & Austin, 2014). However, this study was also conducted because the use of social media had some setbacks like the spread untruthful and unverified information.

1.6 Significance of the study.

This research will provide relevant knowledge to the following groups:

1.6. 1 policy makers.

Policy makers utilized this information by ensuring a proper guideline was placed on who should post information on social media, and who should respond to messages posted by the public and stakeholders.

1.6.2 Researchers.

In addition to improving our understanding of crisis management at KPLC, the findings of this study contributed to a growing body of knowledge. This study contributed to theoretical and methodological contributions of the topic under study, with the findings and recommendations from each variable was beneficial to KPLC as it helped them understand the dynamics of manipulating and staying ahead with social media.

1.6.3 Investors.

The findings were also beneficial to potential investors willing to invest in KPLC as they come up with strategies for improved performance of the organizations by being aware of how to manage crisis, in case one occurs.

1.7 Scope and limitation of the study.

This case study investigates social media's use during crisis communication in organizations: Kenya Power and Lighting Company. During the course of this study, it was conducted at the headquarters of the Kenya Power and Lighting Company in the Parklands area of Nairobi, Kenya. During the period between 11th and 13th of January, 2022 when the Kenya Power and Lighting Company had a 220kV Suswa-Embakasi power transmission line that evacuated power to Athi River, Embakasi and City Center bulk substations developed a fault, this study was limited to social media platforms of the company. Nairobi's central business district, Embakasi, Kilimani, Hurlingham, Syokimau, Athi River, Kitengela, Mlolongo and adjacent areas were affected by a power outage.

In addition to having limited time for respondents to engage with researchers, the study was also limited by the fact that it was conducted in a busy organization where staff may have too much on their hands to ensure efficient operations; as a result, respondents had limited time to participate in the study. By finding a flexible schedule for the interviews, the researcher was able to resolve this problem.

1.8 Operational definitions

Crisis- an event that had the potential to negatively impact on the growth, and general image of the organization among its publics.

Communication-passing of information from the organization to its publics/stakeholders.

Social media –is a digital instrument used by companies to quickly share news with the stakeholders like twitter and Facebook.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Empirical review.

2.1.1 Crisis response strategies.

Public opinion could cause damage in organizational reputation which is formed by the public and stakeholder’s view of the organization or its goods and services when they feel that the organization is doing nothing about a crisis (Holtzhausen, 2007). Coombs (2004) contends that stakeholders will hold companies accountable if they believe they can influence a crisis.

Coombs (2007) defined denial strategy as a scapegoat strategy which claims that no crisis exists and also tries to show that the company holds no responsibility for the crisis. According to Coombs (2012) Denial response option has three strategies: denial, organization rejects the existence of a crisis, attack the accuser which means that the organization confronts the people alleging it is is at fault and scapegoat where the organization tries to transfer its guilt or fault to another party.

According to Rickard (2014) people logically pursue clarifications for why things happen the way they have happened, Coombs (2004), notes that organizational crisis management teams could use crisis reaction schemes to shape attributions of the disaster and insights of the organization itself.

Diminish Response Strategy

According a the study done by Randiek (2019) the diminish response strategy is a strategy where a crisis is made to look not as wicked as people contemplate it to be, as the organization keeps giving one excuse over the other, the harmful effects of the crisis are reduced.

Coombs (2012)posits that, in the diminish strategy, the crisis manager or team was supposed to admit that the crisis occurred and promised to manage the crisis in order to cover the organizational reputation which might have been interfered with by the likely or unlikely crisis. Most of the times KPLC failed to convince the public that the situation was not as bad as it seemed or that it did not contribute to the problem. It was also suggested to use justification and apology strategy to calm down the stakeholders. (Randiek, 2019)

Rebuild response strategy

The main mandate of public relations in an organization is to ensure there is good will between the organization and the stakeholders with the goal of maintaining the organizational image and reputation, however the image faces several setbacks due to unavoidable occurrences which are looked at in relation to the attributed responsibilities endorsed to the organization or the crisis type. (Coombs, 2004, 2007). Coombs & Holladay (2008) claims that for an organization to gain its lost glory by restoring lost image and reputation, it has to employ rebuild crisis strategies which offer a reward or apology whenever a crisis occurs.

For an organization to have a positive response reputation, it must choose a crisis communication reaction which fits the responsibility acknowledgement (Coombs and Holladay, 1996). Nonetheless, Benoit (1997) recommended that a blend of tactics could improve the value of image repair, additionally, Coombs (2007) advises crisis management teams to consider the use of a mixture of response strategies from the same cluster. Research related to SCCT has demonstrated that denial strategies should suit victims' crises, diminish strategies should suit accidental crises, and rebuild strategies should suit preventable crises.

According to Coombs (2012) Strategies used in rebuild response options included: apology, regrets where by organization show that they feel bad about the crisis, compassion through offering gifts and money to the victims, ingratiation by commending stakeholders and reminding them of the past good work and managers offering concern to the victims.

In Coombs' (2014) proposal, SCCT recommended accommodative crisis response strategies on social media when groups were experiencing high attribution crises. In addition, Ki and Nekmat (2014) found that Fortune 500 companies most often use validation and apology on social media. An organization or company that apologizes shows that it accepts responsibility fully (Coombs, 2007).

2.1.2. Framing of messages on KPLC Facebook page.

Barnes (2010) echoed that studies conducted on 200 US Charities showed You Tube, Blogging, Facebook and Twitter were the common tools used in social marketing. Entman (1993) defined message framing as a means of choosing some features of seeming actual and making them more unforgettable, manifest and meaningful to an audience in a communication.

Helmig & Thaler (2010) established that Primary framing factors in social marketing in a complete model and pointed them out as tonality, horizon, content, focus, direction and time. The following scholars Guidry, Waters & Saxton (2014); Helmig & Thaler (2010); Lovejoy & Saxton (2012) indicated that content determinant was categorized as messages with messages focusing on prevention/ detection behavior, unknown/known facts, community building messages, single/ multiple message(s), qualitative/ quantitative messages, and informational/promotional.

Lovejoy & Saxton (2012) indicated that in the circumstance of informational messages, data regarding organizational news, facts, activities, reports and events were shared to the relevant shareholders. On the other hand, Guidry et al., (2014) claimed that informational messages are meant to educate the public about the issues pushed by the organization and passing of information regarding the goods and services being offered. Thaler & Helmig (2013) noted that promotional messages used in organizations are meant to mobilize stakeholders to participate in organizational activities by participating in future offline and online events, promotional messages as well as fundraising messages.

Facebook has been used to assist organizations to reach millions of users to avoid potential crises situations (Freberg,2012, Liu, and Jin, Austin (2013) Facebook and the entire social media has given various organizations ability to share their comments freely because there is no gatekeeping experience in the press media. Nonetheless, if not observed clearly, social media can escalate the crisis because everyone is a citizen journalist with a camera and a smartphone which they can use to write and post any activity for consumption by the general public even without having verified the information. (Freberg,2012)

Facebook users were likely to boomerang effect to the early crisis communication effort through coming up with their own version of the crisis by spreading incomplete or false information because, Facebook enabled it users to interact freely by forwarding and sharing information among stakeholders and large, heterogeneous, anonymous, scattered audiences. Thus high risk of destroying the organizational image and reputation Hyun& Dae (2014)

Coombs (2007) claimed that stakeholder's reactions would vary depending on the way the organization framed their messages and the attention given to the message decided how much obligation should be allocated to the crisis and the organization involved. Shareholders would automatically respond to the crisis which the organization is aware of and has been advised on the way forward or credible solutions. (Coombs,1997).

Information and Comparison frames used in a message are built upon values and facts of attributes that are emphasized and made relevant in the calamity management by the institute (Hyun and Dae (2014). According to Lee (2010) attributes as spell out in the agenda setting theory, are ‘features and traits that fill out the picture of the object’ and thus at this level, the attributes stressed over other basics that is believed could impact the reader’s opinion of the information presented. Thematic analysis on various stakeholders including clients, shareholders, media watchdog and victims’ relatives as conducted so as to evaluate how organizations frames crisis response messages on Facebook.

2.1.3. Analysis of feedback received

Duc Le (2018). Due to emergence of technology, social media is now one of the most prominent means of disseminating information as its users improve annually, the number of people using social media globally in 2017 was 3.196 billion, which increased by 13% annually in 2018 making it an important platform to help organizations market their products as well as pass any relevant information. According to Hoang Dung Quy, (2019) by 2019, there were 7.676 billion folks using digital technology, which included 3.256 billion of portable social media users. Luarn et al (2015) echoed that Facebook was listed among the most popular social media channels where brand fans and organizational brands interacted with each other by sharing brand posts, liking and commenting.

Sabate et al., (2014) indicated that the more clients intermingle on the brand pages, the more the colleagues, friends and families get triggered. According to Seoudi (2019), social media updates such as video, status, link and photos with different concepts depending on the purpose, such as educating, advertising or creating a survey or a mini-game on brand made a relationship between brand and customers more viable. Facebook permitted its followers to hit a like button and also emotion signs to express their feelings to the post including laughter, wow, anger, love and sad.

According to De Vries et al., (2012), there are four types of posts, they are text (status), photo/ album (image), video and link which are managed by Brand page admin and they determine which type of posts should be displayed. Van Der Heide et al., (2012); Wang et al., (2010) claims that a blend of text and photo formats can deliver more intense messages on a product or service as compared with text info only. Moreover, video posts attract more people since strong information is revealed in the video (Xu et al., 2009).

Adam (2008) notes that immediate and effective feedback is essential in communication because it motivates both the sender and the receiver to keep up the conversation whereby when people share emotional content on Facebook, followers would respond with more supportive and emotional comments (Burke and Develin,2016).

2.1.4 Communicating to stakeholders during crisis

Likely or unlikely crisis is part and parcel of the challenges faced by organizations, thus the organization need to have crisis management teams who employ various tactics in order to manage the crisis. Situational Crisis Communication theory by Timothy Coombs expounds further on the plans the organization should use to ensure they are in full control of the crisis. Whenever there is a crisis, shareholders should be the first ones to be protected before thinking about the organizational status, as they are the main contributors of reputation management. It was therefore vital to analyze appropriate response strategies that were adopted by KPLC during the crisis. It was upon the organization to advise and guide the stakeholders accordingly so as to ensure reputation growth. Hence, before appropriate response tactics are accepted, a proper scrutiny of character threats to reputation in the organization are utmost (Coombs, 2015).

According to Sturges (1994) stakeholders are be told what to do in caser of a crisis by the organization in order to prevent them from further damages as well as to prevent them from becoming victims of calamity by sending them messages such as warning messages to take safe haven, evacuate or refrain from buying some products. Ayoko, Ang, & Parry, 2017; Jin& Pang, 2010; Coombs and Holladay (2015) purported that effective and timely crisis communication saved stakeholders from anxiety and anger that came with a crisis by taking the initiative to explain various measures that the organization adopted to prevent re-occurrence of the crisis.

Sellnow et al., (2015) noted that there was a need to manage the psychological effects of the crisis which caused uncertainty that triggered the need for suitable and satisfactory information. Lahti (2015) added that effective and timely communication helped in maintaining the organization image and reputation. The following two strategies were suggested by Lahti to ensure crisis was well managed including managing meaning and managing information. Where Managing information involved assembling, producing, and circulating emergency related data while managing meaning involved efforts to guide how stakeholders construe and viewed the organization involved in the crisis. These are achieved by bearing in mind the sound effects on stakeholders' understanding of the crisis. Coombs (2015) added that crisis reaction strategies were further categorized to three groups: instructing, adjusting and reputation repairing information.

Crisis response strategies have three key functions: shape stakeholder perception of the organization, construct crisis attributions and minimize negative effect triggered by the crisis. It was the mandate of the crisis manager to critically analyze the crisis situation in order to choose appropriate and effective tactics to be used in a crisis response strategies depending on the following concept: crisis history, relational reputation and crisis type (Coombs & Holladay, 2013)

A study by Ki and Brown (2013) exposed that crisis response strategy didn't do much to lower stakeholders complains on an organization when crisis looms -to mean that whenever a crisis occurs in an organization, its tend to be a disruption of the bond between an organization and its publics despite the technique used to manage the strategy.

2.1.5 Types of social media used during crisis communication

Aside from blogs, social networking sites, collaborative tags, virtual communities, according to Xiang and Gretzel (2010), social media platforms include multimedia file hosting services such as Flickr and YouTube. In order to facilitate sharing, connection, and cooperation, social media was designed to help people (White, King & Tsang, 2011). Furthermore, Walaski (2013) mentioned blogs, microblogging, LinkedIn, Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, and Twitter as social media platforms and methods.

As a result of their sensitivity to change and use of communication, organizations that were aware of the crisis disseminated the news using social networking tools (Pang, Hassan & Chong, 2014). Blogs can be used to rebuild the image and reputation of an organization while preventing a boycott, according to Schultz, Utz and Goritz (2011). To monitor the blogosphere and provide appropriate answers to influential bloggers during a crisis, Jin and Liu (2010) suggested using a blog-mediated crisis communication model. As a result, the model was designed to prevent bad news from spreading from bloggers, damaging the reputation and influence of an organization.

The author notes that crisis information is sought immediately and in detail when the nation is in crisis. A study by Stephens & Malone (2009) found that stakeholders instead search for information from corporate websites or blogs, but rather rely on word of mouth through social media. As cited by Valentini & Romenti (2011), Boulus et al claim that blogs tend to encourage reflection, knowledge sharing, and the exchange of views, which increase stakeholder engagement after a crisis (Boulus et al). Nor Emmy Shuhada Derani and Prashalini Naidu / Procedia Economics and Finance 35 (2016) 650 – 658 653

As It was noted by White (2012) that social media platforms were helpful in communicating effectively with organizations in times of crisis. A social media platform provides instant and efficient networking to a wide audience through the use of digital and computerized technologies. It is imperative that social media is used as a means of communication during times of crisis, according to Schreder et al. (2013), as it alters the way people behave, reason, believe, and respond to information during crises as well as daily occurrences during crises (Paul, as quoted by Schreder & Pennington-Gray, 2014).

In addition, Wendling et al. (2013) reported that social media had a positive impact on enhancing transparency of decisions, enhancing disaster preparedness and response, and decreasing costs associated with disasters. According to Cho & Park (2013), social media has been proven to be a useful disaster communication tool.

According to Axel (2014), social networks are an effective tool to ensure effective crisis communication through the distribution of the right information at the right time to the right people through the right types of social media channels (Lecenciuc & Nagy, 2008). In fact, Twitter was first used as a public communication platform during the 2010 Haiti earthquake as well as during other situations where communication is critical, such as during an emergency

(Auer, 2011). In April, 2012, when tornadoes struck in the Dallas-Fort Worth area and caused damage to buildings and structures, the Dallas–Fort Worth International Airport (DFW) made use of Twitter to provide information about flight status updates and safety tips for passengers (Schroeder & Pennington-Gray, 2014).

2.1.6 Communicating during crises with social media

Increasingly, public relations practitioners are relying on blogs as a way to accomplish their duties (PRSA 2007), which has altered the way they perform their duties. In a study conducted by Wright & Hinson in 2009, 73% of PR practitioners who were surveying their clients said that blogs and other social media outlets had already changed the way they communicate with them (Wright & Hinson, 2009). It has been shown that social media can help set and build PR professionals' agendas, thus calling for their inclusion in their practices of social media use (Lariscy, et al. 2009). Since social media emerged in 2005, it has become a popular form of communication for many people due to its ability to create media for many people.

According to Wright and Hinson (2009), it allowed the creation of information on the web with the intent of helping in communication. Social media allowed PR proffessionals to strengthen organizational relationships with stakeholders through interactions (Eyrich, Padman & Sweester 2008). It could help practitioners to tailor their messages in order to reach their targeted populations. (Marken 2007). "Social media was divided into different types: Internet forums, podcasts, social blogs, wikis, weblogs, video and pictures," (Wright & Hinson, 2009, 11)

According to Heath (1998), the internet allowed organizations to scan and detect issues that could evolve into larger issues like tarnishing organizational image and reputation. Many PR practitioners used the internet for management purposes as it could reach different people (Porter & Sallot 2003). Thus, practitioners a times bypass traditional media and monitor what publics said through the social media platforms, since they give immediate feedback (Porter & Sallot 2003). The authors of Baron and Philbin (2009, 12) claim that social media affects crisis response in two ways: the conversation during an event that might influence how your organization is perceived, whether you are a participant or not; and the possibility of engaging stakeholders and the media through social media channels.

Martin (2008) noted that one could learn from its mistake when it was engaging with its stakeholders. Social media influenced what information was reported, in what format it was reported, how it was reported, and who reported it, social media could also influence the speed with which a disaster was reported and managed (Thelwall & Stuart 2007). Crisis spread fast and without any limits (Bucher 2002). With social media, it might be difficult to filter information contributing to negative publicity from the internet, despite the crisis having been corrected (Gonzalez-Herrero & Smith 2008). Dinardo (2001) states that social media and the internet might also exacerbate crises due to their ability to escalate them. Communication during disasters was carried out using the internet and social media.

By using the internet and social media, Taylor & Perry (2005) could seek opinions and inform publics in a strategic way. During the pre-crisis phase, crisis communication plans should incorporate social media communication and monitoring. In order to understand how people are discussing products, companies may need to monitor social media and blogs (Fern-Banks 2007; Blackshaw & Iyer 2003). It is possible for an issue to create a larger crisis if they fail to respond immediately to an issue that is discovered on the internet (Christ 2005). As Stewart (2007) pointed out, twitter is one of the best ways to monitor and respond to social media issues in advance.

The internet and social media used during crisis management gave the perception that organizations were trying to supply timely information to multiple publics, boosting the image of the organization pre and post the crisis (Sweester & Metzgar 2007). Perry, Taylor and Doerfel (2003) indicated that social media use in times of a crisis could give organizations access to many people, improve comprehension and alter perceptions of the stakeholders.

Watkins (2014) noted that social media was dialogic and interactive, meaning that it was a platform that allowed the creation of virtual communities and convert a crisis into a positive image. Stenger (2014) noted that social media had various categories, among them was content sharing websites from which diverse participants exchange information. In case of a crisis, social media helped information spread faster because of its dialogue nature hence, engagement of stakeholders was a contemporary practice during disaster management (Baron, 2010:18).

Media users preferred using social media to conventional media (Kaye, 2005; Swerrtser & Metzgar, 2007). Thus, when a crisis occurred, the public decided to utilize social media to lobby for emotional support by sharing information and requesting solutions (Choi & Lin, 2009; Veil et al., 2011). Organizations that value their image and reputation always ensure that they preserve it, plus in case of any negativity, the organization faced crisis that might impact it negatively (Roberts & Dowling, 2002; Coombs & Holladay, 2008). Additionally, Benoit (1997); Dutton and Dukerich, (1991); Kliatchko, (2008) discovered that when a crisis occurs, the biggest threat was how the organization was viewed and proper implementation of disaster control was important for organizational survival (Coombs & Holladay, 2010).

Coombs and Holladay (2008) noted that during a crisis, there was a lot of media attention, availability of different platforms of social media resulted to varieties of public opinion, thereby making the crisis difficult to control as it was a media which lacked gate keeping therefore, any one could say anything even without verification.

The definition of social networks in Boyson and Ellison (2007) was that these are web-based services that offer users the option of creating private or semi-public profiles within a defined system, listing other users with whom they are connected, and viewing and navigating their connections and those of others within the system. In terms of popularity, Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp, Instagram, and YouTube were the most popular social networking sites. Communications have been transformed greatly by the internet. Information and news are disseminated more quickly thanks to it.

Jones et al., (2009) noted that the universal use of social media channels resulted to threats and opportunities that companies had to consider while handling disasters. The viral nature of the internet, enabled the sharing of both positive and negative information about a company to huge masses spread throughout the world in seconds. With a click of a button, people took pictures, recorded audio and post information online during disasters and crisis situations. Coombs (2006) noted that the public learned about any crisis through mainstream media and social media and these two highly impact people's perception when a crisis occurs**.** The emergence of social media provided organizations with the ability to engage their audiences by creating suitable content for them, and enabling them give immediate feedback through commenting, sharing or even reacting the content.

Heino and Anttiroiko (2015) noted that the need to communicate openly with the public was promoted by digitization of society that enabled the production, dissemination and sharing of information continuously by almost everyone. Organizations no longer controlled information being posted about them on social media, unlike previously when communication was one-way where organizations only shared filtered information to their publics through their information officers via traditional media outlets such as television, radio and newspapers. Traditional media promotes one way communication with social media providing a platform interactions with feedback between organizations and their publics. Qualman (2009) noted that social media enabled its users to generate information, distribute as well as share it with other users globally.

The real time flow of information and 24-hour accessibility of social media made it impossible for organizations all over the world to remain silent about crisis that rocked them, until verified it in order to respond. This was so because lack of information from the affected organization during this time led their publics to seek for information from other sources which might not be accurate. Marken, (2007) posited that, through social media, individuals might access information from different sources, as well as to be in a position to share their experiences and perspectives with fellow users. It therefore becomes important for any organization concerned with maintaining a positive image to have a 24-hour presence on social media in order to offer immediate response, in a bid to sort truth from rumors especially due to the rise of fake news being spread through social media platforms.

Huang (2008) noted that organizations offering prompt responses to a disaster was among the key factors in earning and maintaining stakeholders trust and relational commitment. The global nature of social media communication resulted from the elimination of geographical and time barriers and raised the need for organizations to be online at all times, to be in a positon to address the concerns that may be raised at any one time by their stakeholders from anywhere in the globe, especially because the production and dissemination of news on these platforms is a 24 hours' affair. Simon et al. (2014) noted that social media and especially twitter emerged as an important channel of disseminating important information to different stakeholders when a crisis occurs.

Social media sites became important in handling crisis because they offered real-time information through giving timely and regular updated information especially during times when the public and other stakeholders who were affected by a crisis were looking for information. According to Coombs (2009) organizations should be vigilant of what was said online about them if they were to engage in effective crisis management. Hale (2005) indicated that a crisis was properly accomplished if information was truthfully and speedily circulated to the most critical stakeholders of the organization. Social media provided unfiltered information as compared to traditional media where information must pass through editors before being released for public consumption.

The provision of raw information for public consumption was promoted by the rose of citizen journalism where everyone was now able to record local happenings, and post them online for consumption by other people who were on similar social platforms. Content on the internet did not follow the traditional gatekeeping process thereby allowing a lot of unfiltered information to be passed to people for consumption. This made it very easy for faked news to spread, as such, it was important for organizations to have a 24-hour online presence in order to be aware of what was being said about them, as this enabled them to always be prepared to respond to these issues accordingly.

2.1.7 Crisis response strategy in Kenya

A crisis is a significant threat that if not handled quickly, might lead to negative consequences because it puts at risk an organization’s image and good will (Dilenschneider, 2000). Therefore, the strategy had to be put in place to curb various crises faced by KPLC as an apologetic response could strengthen an organization’s image as a “good corporate citizen” (Lyon & Cameron, 2004, p. 231). Huang (2008) noted that organizations with consistent, timely, and active dissemination of information, build trust through the attribution of responsibilities during the crisis, leading to minimal reputational damage. Many companies in Kenya are not keen on crisis communication, despite having internal crisis communication contingency plans they, oftenly when faced with an issue, respond in an ad hoc and defensive way, and this at times worsens the situation. The top management ignores advice from their own PR people or corporate communications department or from their PR agencies and release generic and colorless statements that end up complicating the situation (The Standard, January 28th,2019)

In Kenya, crisis communication has been practiced by Kenya Airways. For example, when their plane crashed after taking off in Doula, Cameroon, in May 2007, killing 114 passengers on board. Working together with their PR Agency, Kenya Airways was in a position to control the situation through a well written crisis communication plan by creating a single information control center, where media were informed of what was happening throughout the crisis. Despite the media not receiving information all at once, as a result of the sensitive nature of the rescue operations, the company’s regular updates ensured there was no information vacuum. (The Standard, January 28th,2019)

2.2 Theoretical Framework

2.2.1 Situational crisis communication theory (SCCT)

According to Coombs (2006), the theory consists of three fundamental elements: crisis response strategies, crisis situations, and a system of matching crisis situations with crisis response strategies. Located throughout the crisis situation, there is a cluster of crises, including those caused by incidents, those caused by victims, and those that could be prevented (Cooley & Cooley, 2011). In order to address a crisis, we use crisis response strategies that include both verbal and nonverbal responses to the crisis (Coombs, 2007).

According to Coombs (1998), three different crisis response strategies were identified as strategies to deal with a crisis: attacking the accuser, denial, excuse, justification, ingratiating, corrective action, and full apology and mortification (Coombs, 1998).

There was a focus on apology as a crisis response strategy since people believe that apologizing can be used to protect an organization's reputation which is under threat as a result of a crisis. It has also been demonstrated that people are also able to use statements to justify their inappropriate behavior (Coombs, 2007, p.138-139). As a result of Coombs' (1998) work, a continuum of defensive - accommodative crisis response strategies has been developed for classifying the various kinds of crisis response strategies. When a defensive strategy is employed, the organization's image will be protected and its reputation will be protected as well. In an attempt to deny responsibility for the crisis, some organizations claimed that the crisis did not exist or denied any issue existed. There are a variety of ways in which organizations can accommodate the complaints of victims and stakeholders; these include compensating them, apologizing, or showing sympathy, and where they accept responsibility, take corrective action, or both.

In order to prevent negative behavioral intentions and to reduce adverse effects, an organization's strategies were crucial to its reputation (Cooley & Cooley, 2011, p.206). This research was suitable for this theory since it focuses on how organizations maintain their image and reputation during crises. Thus, the first objective was strengthened by examining how KPLC handles crisis communication during a crisis.

2.2.2 Social-Mediated Crisis Communication (SMCC) Model

In this study, traditional media, social media, and word-of-mouth were examined to determine the outcomes of information distribution in a crisis (Liu et al., 2011). It became evident in the model that people were more likely to believe a company's defensive responses when they heard about them from the company via traditional media than if they heard them via word-of-mouth or when they heard about them via social media (Liu et al., 2011).

According to the model, stakeholders nowadays utilize social media during crises to solve three different purposes: they seek information about the issue, share information they already know, and vent and/or reach out for emotional support and/or venting (Liu et al., 2011). It is becoming increasingly common for people to search online for news since using the internet has the advantage of transferring information quickly, enabling interactive conversations and providing unique information (Liu et al., 2011).

It is the purpose of this model to help communicators provide their followers with a better understanding of how disaster information is derived, consumed and disseminated via social media as well as online.

Since there is a wide variety of social media platforms have been developing rapidly, issues that emerge online are often more unpredictable than those that arise offline. (Jin et al., 2014, p. 76) Consequently, crisis managers face new challenges in monitoring issues that are created and disseminated through these platforms. In cases where organizations are perceived as having low responsibility for the crisis, they should defend themselves (Jin et al., 2014).

The model was relevant to this study because it highlighted that, years back people embraced traditional media, but nowadays people have incorporated social media and internet to share and receive message about various organization. It also underlined that social media had its setbacks…exactly what the problem statement of this study highlighted. The theory was also relevant to objective two and three respectively: "to examine the way messages shared through KPLC Facebook account were framed and to analyze feedback received by KPLC on their Facebook account during crisis communication."

2.3 Conceptual Framework

This involved coming up with ideas about the links between variables and showed these relationships diagrammatically (Mugenda & Mugenda 2003). The aim of this research was to analyze the use of social media during crisis communication at KPLC (assessment of KPLC Facebook page posts, and feedback received and interview). The framework drew its communication strategies which was divided into three variable:

Denial strategy: According to Coombs (2012) Denial response option had three strategies including to attack the accuser for example organizations confronted the people claiming that they were at fault, organization can deny crisis through scapegoating whereby crisis managers fault the supplier for the disaster.

Diminish strategies:This method is more prevalent in accidents and had a relatively low degree of impact on both stakeholders and victims involved in the accident (Coombs 2006).

Rebuild strategies: It involves providing victims of a crisis with real or symbolic help, asking for forgiveness, and changing perceptions of the organization. These strategies attempted to divert the focus off the crisis by taking positive action.

How messages shared through KPLC Facebook account has been framed.

The researcher analyzed the way KPLC framed messages in its Facebook account during a crisis communication, by inclusion or exclusion of the messages through examining the meaning of the language used in terms of the wording as either defensive, official communication or social responsibility and whether the message was presented through press release or texts. A message to be analyzed whether in form of a word or words; a sentence or sentences; the researcher also looked at the time in which the message was shared: Be it in prior, immediately the incident occurred or later on after the incident occurred. And also look at whether the message was precise, detailed or bolded and if there were other links attached to Facebook account posts. The researcher analyzed messages in terms of themes used by looking at what the message was generally talking about and its underlining meaning through interpreting the way 5WH (who? why? what? when? how?) was used in the Facebook post. Also the researcher looked at the theme in terms of the ways it was intended to communicate with the reader on both an intellectual or emotional level. Message can also be in the form of the text (status), photo/ album (image), video and link

Feedback received in from KPLC Facebook account followers during crisis communication

Feedback, can be expressed via lightweight one-click communication or more. Feedback can also be received when customers discuss, comment, vote, like and share these posts. Facebook permitted its followers to hit a like button and also emotion signs to express their feelings to the post including laughter, wow, angry, love and sad.

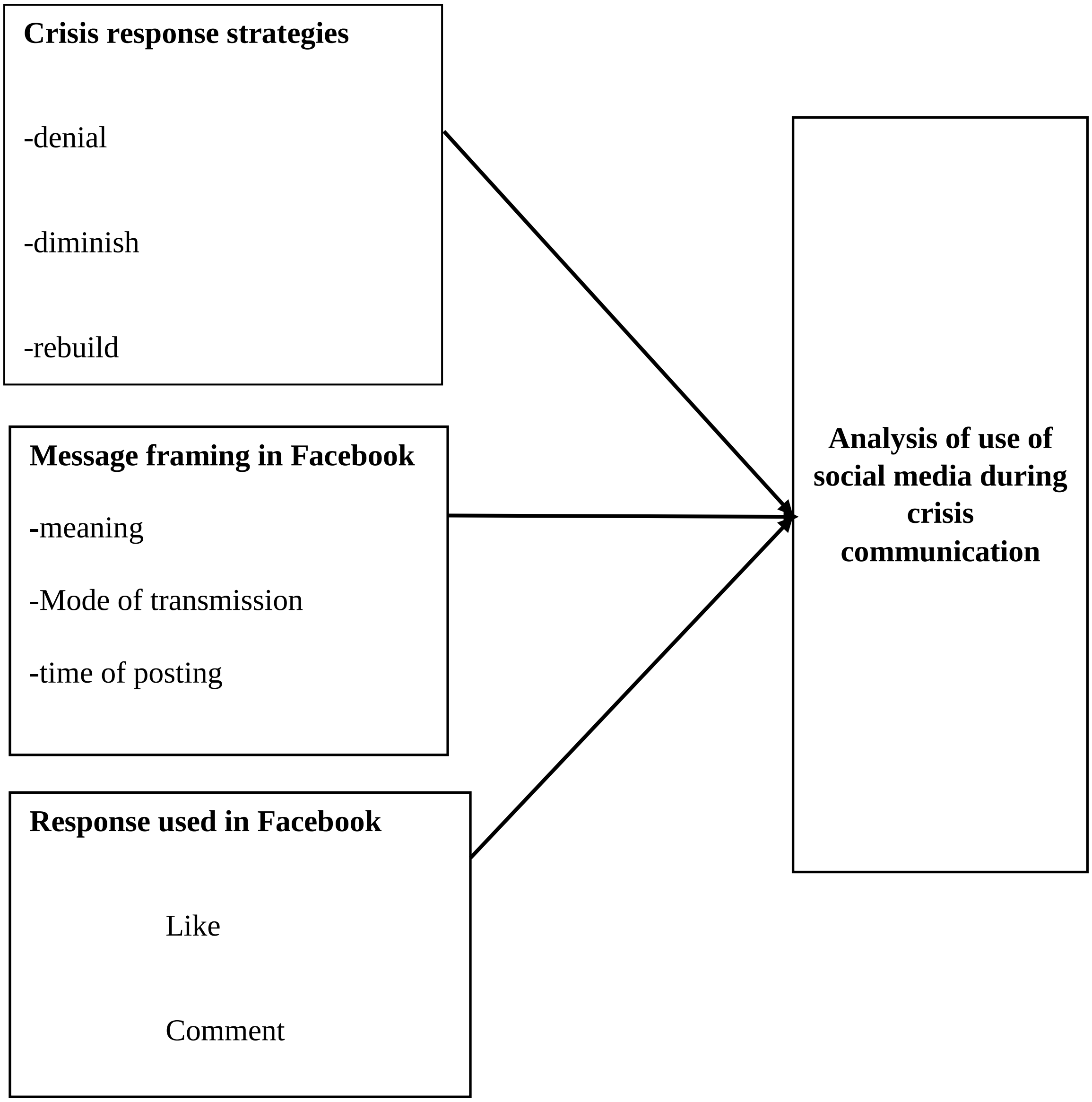

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

CHAPTER THREE

RESERCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Philosophical paradigm

This study used the interpretative paradigm. The interpretative paradigm main ly uses the qualitative approach (Silverman, 2000; McQueen, 2002; Thomas, 2003; Willis, 2007; Nind & Todd, 2011). This paradigm was relevant to this research because, the researcher interviewed employees of KPLC who had lived experiences on the utilization of social media during disaster management.

3.2 Research design

Using a descriptive design, the researcher was able to collect data from respondents during a particular period of time, which allowed her to analyze the data, as well as produce information that could be used as a basis for demonstrating how variables such as feedback and framing of messages, as well as crisis response strategies, are interrelated. By analyzing current practices systematically, Nachimias (2007) identifies descriptive design as a method of generating data. Descriptive research involves the analysis of specific behaviors, as defined by Greener (2008).

3.3 Study Site

The research was carried out at Kenya Power and Lighting Company which is located at Stima plaza, Kolobot Road in Parkland and KPLC Facebook platform messages and feedback posted between 11th January to 13th January, 2022 because during this period, Kenya Power experienced a power outage crisis in parts of Nairobi as a result of a fault at their Suswa-Embakasi power transmission line.

3.4 Research Approach

The qualitative approach was employed by the researcher. The study used qualitative approach to interview employees of Kenya Power and Lighting Company and content analysis to retrieve the posts and feedback posted by the organization as well as the publics on Facebook. The interpretative paradigm is a valuable tool in qualitative research and provides a framework for guiding the study of the research problems, as well as defining meaning that can be connected to social and human issues. Creswell (2013) noted that qualitative research is based on the interpretative paradigm. McQueen (2002) defined qualitative research as methods that enable the researcher to know deep relationships of people to their environment. By using a qualitative approach, this study enhanced not only the ability to describe events, but also to better understand why different researchers interpret the "same" events in a different way, sometimes even in conflict (Sofaer, 1999). Qualitative approach in this study was achieved through Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) and content analysis from Facebook posts from both KPLC and the publics.

3.5 Research method

The researcher employed case study method. KPLC employees were the focus of this study, making this method pertinent. Case studies are defined in an article by Thomas (2011), as a method of analyzing individual situations, events, decisions, occasions, or periods, as well as projects, policies, institutions, or other systems, which are to be studied through one or more methods. The method, which originated in the field of social science as a technique to know how various problems in the social context,are based on methods that provided insight into one or more cases in detail (Eisenhardt, 1989)

3.6 Data needs, types and sources

The research incorporated secondary and primary data. To collect primary data, a schedule of interviews was created from the objectives, whereas secondary data was gathered using books, journals, internet, and websites. Secondary data is defined as, data that had already been collected by another researcher and can be used to support another study (Greener, 2008).

3.7 Population, sampling procedure and data collection

3.7.1 Population

The research targeted a total population of about 7,000 respondents in Kenya Power and Lighting Company who are highly motivated professional staff and 723,836 Facebook followers (KPLC, 2022). It is defined by Abbas (2014) that a population is a collective, or collection, of objects, subjects, or members whose qualities conform to a set of specifications that can be aggregated or gathered. A study's population is defined by Blumberg et al. (2014) as every element that meets the essential criteria for inclusion in that study.

3.7.2 Sampling procedure

After writing a letter to KPLC communications department, the researcher called to follow up on the request for key informant interviews. Interviews were then scheduled. In order to attain the objectives and questions of the research, respondents were specifically chosen (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2003). As defined by Sim & Wright (2000), judgmental/purposeful sampling is sampling that is based on how the researcher judges the relevant units based on his/her study objectives. Furthermore, the judgmental sampling sample was likely to have characteristics such as: previous research experience, knowledge of the study area, and participation in the research process. To qualify for a study, a sub-group is selected from a population using a sampling procedure, according to Ogula (2005).

The study purposively used five Informants from KPLC Communication Department,among them the head of corporate and communication and four Communication Officers. For the content analysis, the researcher purposively chose relevant messages and feedback on KPLC's Facebook account between 11th January to 13th January, 2022 period, during which Kenya Power experienced a power outage crisis in parts of Nairobi as a result of a fault at their Suswa – Embakasi power line.

A "saturation" tool is used by Weller et al. (2019) to assess the most prevalent ideas related to the research topic, but a larger sample size can be used if the research aims to study a broader range of topics. Using saturation as a guide, Sim et al (2018) recommended that the size of the study sample should be sufficient, and that decision can be made before or after saturation. In According to the study, five respondents were intended to be used in addition to Facebook content analysis in order to evaluate the quality of the information. However, only four respondents were used because a saturation point had been reached where all respondents were repeating the same information.

3.7.3 Data collection method and tool

Open-ended key informant interview (KII) schedule and content analysis which was carried out on the messages and feedback posted on KPLC’s Facebook page. An interview tool involved procedures like choosing interviewees who could best answer the questions, deciding on whether to adopt telephone or one-on-one interviews and deciding whether to record or not.

As a primary data collection instrument, recoding and reviewing KPLC Facebook posts of 11-13 January was conducted using data coding sheets. KPLC messages shared to the public, stakeholders, feedback mechanisms, and Facebook information were coded against these themes. A coding sheet was used to group and analyze text data regarding the study themes. According to Patton (1990), the interview schedule provided access to the participant's opinion and allows the researcher to understand things that cannot be observed, such as feelings, thoughts, intentions, perspectives, experiences, and meanings.

In his study, Babbie (2007) argues that the use of interviews during data collection allowed meanings to be elaborated in depth so the researcher and informants could reach consensus about the study's objectives, which enhanced its validity. In addition, the open-ended interview offered participants the opportunity to provide additional qualitative information and details on the question. Due to the fact that interviewees were allowed to respond, the answers were less one-directional and less biased (Covington, 2008). The technique allowed them to express their ideas freely. It was possible to respond to the questions honestly and more comfortably through the use of techniques and tools (Ferrante, 2012).

3.8 Data analysis

KII Interviews were analyzed thematically. In order to summarize what was said, short words or phrases were used in the transcription. As a result, a summary was drafted using the words and phrases collected from the interview.

This is a qualitative research technique described by Kondracki and Wellman (2002) that uses the naturalistic paradigm to interpret meaning from text data using three different approaches: conventional, directed, and summative approaches. It is a qualitative research technique that combines three approaches: conventional, directed, and summative approaches. A major difference between the approaches is the coding scheme, the origins of the codes and the threats to the trustworthiness of the code.

In It has been conventionally believed that coding categories are derived directly from the text data in conventional content analysis. It is important to note that the analysis of a directed approach begins with a theory or significant research finding that guides the initial coding. In a summative content analysis, keywords and content were counted and compared, then the context was interpreted, after both the keywords and content were analyzed and the context was interpreted. A summative content analysis has been employed in this study, and in order to collect views, a purposive data collection method was used for KPLC's Facebook platform, which was based on crisis management communication, the views collected were then coded and tied back to the topic under study. A data analysis, according to Johnson & Christensen (2004), is defined as the interpretation of raw data from a source such as a survey or a Facebook account and then applying this interpretation to analyze the data. There is a systematic and systematic process for collecting, modeling and transforming data that enables one to identify important information, suggest conclusions, and support the development of decisions (Ader, 2008).

3.9 Data presentation

Primary data was presented in the form of narration and tables. Key informant comments were analyzed for relevant direct quotes from the interviews. The researcher reviewed and analyzed all the collected information thematically.

3.10 Validity and reliability

3.10.1 Validity

Based on the research results, Mugenda and Mugenda (1999) defined validity as the likelihood that inferences are accurate and meaningful to the extent that they are based on the research results. As mentioned earlier, validity is a method for finding out if interview schedules actually measure what they were designed to measure (Bryman & Bell, 2015). Adding to the definition of validity, Frankfort-Nachmias and Nachmias (2007) went on to describe validity as the degree to which an explanation of a phenomenon mimics and is compatible with the reality of the phenomenon. There was a combination of both content validity and construct validity used in this study. An interview schedule was tested by the researcher with a colleague for content validity as well. Using this information, the researcher was able to determine how much time each participant would require. During the research process, the researcher was able to verify the validity of the interview questions and the recording device, and to prepare for the actual interview. During the interview process, the schedule was divided into different sections in order to ensure that each section of the interview schedule assesses information according to specific objectives, and also to ensure that each section is concerned with a corresponding concept in the study's conceptual framework. As a final step to ensure credibility, every effort has been made to collect accurate data to ensure the results are reliable.

3.10.2 Reliability

According to Rattray & Jones (2007), reliability refers to the consistency of responses under the same temperature and environment. According to Yin (2003), reliability has to do with demonstrating that if the same procedures are used in a repeat study, the results will be the same. Research biasness, researcher fatigue, ambiguous instructions to the subjects, and inaccurate coding might cause errors in data collection (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2003). Researchers and respondents were not fatigued by having fewer questions and clear instructions to minimize random error.

3.11 Ethical consideration

A study's ethical considerations guide its development, completion, and publication, ESRC (2005). There was no doubt in the mind of the researcher that the information collected from KPLC would be used exclusively for the purposes of this study and that no other third parties would be permitted to access the information without the consent of the respondents. A mobile phone recording device was used by the researcher to record the interview before it began. Citations and references were used to cite and reference information from other scholars and sources. Additionally, the researcher made sure the proposal was defended. Her final project was evaluated by the Department of Journalism and Mass Communication for Originality and Corrections after she obtained a Certificate of Field work, personally collected the data, defended, and obtained the certificates.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA ANALYSIS, INTERPRETATION AND PRESENTATION

4.1 Overview

The chapter discusses data analysis, interpretation and presentation. Data collection was done through key informant interviews of five communication officers where data was recorded and transcribed then later analyzed for interpretation and presentation. Content analysis of messages and feedback posted on KPLC's Facebook page between 11th January to 13th January, 2022 when the crisis took place was analyzed and presented in narrative form and with tables. The findings were presented in an excel sheet for reference. The analysis was done through coding relationships to the study objectives, grouping them into different categories and later coming up with the themes of the research.

The main aim of the research was to find out the use of social media during crisis communication in an organization: A case of Kenya Power and Lighting Company.

The following specific objectives guided the study:

1. To find out the crisis response strategies used by KPLC during crisis communication.

2. To examine the way messages shared through KPLC Facebook account were framed.

3. To analyze feedback received from KPLC Facebook account followers during crisis communication.

4.2 Findings, Analysis and Interpretation

Using the data gathered from key informant interviews as the basis for analysis, Byrne (2001) suggests coding the data to identify patterns and themes. A thematic analysis is theoretically defined as a technique for analyzing qualitative data, in accordance with Braun and Clarke (2006), which involves analyzing recordings, interpreting codes, and creating themes in order to identify patterns that recur in recordings. As a method of analyzing the data collected from the respondents, Braun and Clarke (2006) developed a six-phase guide that was adopted in this study for a systematic and systematic technique:

Step 1: Familiarization of the collected data	It entailed going throw the transcribed data
Step 2:Generation of initial codes	Involved organizing data in a systematic manner.
Step 3: Search for themes.	Identification of important themes in the data
Step 4: Review themes.	Re-examination of the identified themes and whether they are viable.
Step 5: Define themes.	Capturing the relation of the different themes of the study and the sub-themes, where they exist.
Step 6: Write-up.	Reporting based on the objectives.

Table 4.2 : Braun & Clarkes six steps for thematic analysis guide.

4.2.1 Crisis response strategies used by KPLC during crisis communication.

KPLC frequently used Twitter and Facebook to share crisis information which was mainly in form of press releases. Facebook has more followers and was thereby concentrated on in this study. Followers on Facebook engaged the organization through liking, commenting as well as sharing the press releases. The reactions used on Facebook as a form of non-verbal feedback communication used by online users to show their feelings on posts

- 👍 Like — Thumbs Up.

- ❤ Love — Beating Heart.
- 😆 Haha — Laughing Face.
- ☺ Yay — Smiling Face (discontinued)
- 😮 Wow — Surprised Face.
- 😢 Sad — Crying Face, showing an animated tear.
- 😡 Angry — Red / Angry / Pouting Face.

Source: https://emojipedia.org/facebook.

In the press release that was shared on their social media pages on 11th January titled "**POWER OUTAGE IN PARTS OF NAIROBI**", the organization used the rebuilding strategy of regret to show stakeholders that the organization felt bad that the crisis had occurred and were doing everything within their power to rectify the situation.

Please accept our sincere apologies.

Together with our counterparts at KETRACO, Kenya Power is working on locating the fault, rectifying it, and restoring supply as soon as possible".

In the second press released titled, **UPDATE 2: POWER OUTAGE IN PARTS OF NAIROBI**, justify the occurrence through trying to reduce the perceived harm resulting from the disaster whereby they referred to the cause of the power outage as caused through tripping and not as earlier indicated that the Suswa-Embakasi power line had developed a fault.

Kenya Power also applied the denial crisis strategy by informing stakeholders that KETRACCO engineers were on site and trying to repair the fault thereby trying to show that they had no responsibility for the said crisis so as to eliminate the reputational threat the said crisis posed and transferring the same to KETRACO.

Yesterday evening, electricity was cut off to parts of Nairobi because of a technical fault on the high voltage transmission line between Suswa and Embakasi.

It is expected that the power supply will be restored by 5pm this evening as engineers from Kenya Electricity Transmission Company (KETRACO) are on site repairing the line. (Kenya Power, 2022).

The third press release was titled: UPDATE **2: POWER OUTAGE IN PARTS OF NAIROBI**. The company uses the excuse strategy where they try to show the stakeholders that the continued blackout beyond the 5p.m timeline they had indicated in their previous release was a s a result of KETRACO experiencing a delay in the restoration of the tripped power line. This was aimed at reducing the attribution of the crisis to them by the public.

"KETRACO is experiencing a delay in restoration of the Suswa-Embakasi power line."

The press release concludes by offering an apology for inconvenience caused. (Tyler, 1997) categorized this crisis response strategy as a costly response financially for any company as it can be used as evidence in court to win lawsuits against them.

"We apologize for the inconvenience caused".

The final press release *"***POWER RESTORED IN NAIROBI AND ENVIRONS**: The company applies bolstering which is a secondary crisis response strategy, by praising the stakeholders of their dedication and loyalty. This strategy was used together with the primary one of offering a full apology to the victims of the crisis.

"We thank the affected customers for their patience and apologize for the inconvenience caused".

The findings of this study show that the use of these crisis response strategies ensured the protection of the image of KPLC among its stakeholders during the crisis and was contrary to a study by Ki and Brown (2013) who reported that crisis response strategies did not do much to lower stakeholders complains during crisis.

The first reaction was a lot of noise and accusations,

then the more we communicated the better it became because

some stakeholders understood the issue,

and showed appreciation. This shows that the feedback

was valid." Respondent one.

This finding was supported by Ayoko, Ang, & Parry, 2017; Jin& Pang, 2010; Coombs and Holladay (2015) who noted that effective and timely crisis communication saved stakeholders from anxiety and anger by taking the initiative to explain various measures that the organization would use to prevent a re-occurrence of such a crisis. Sellnow et al., (2015) note that there is a need to manage the psychological effects of the crisis which caused uncertainty that triggered the need for suitable and satisfactory information. Lahti (2015) adds that effective and timely communication helps in maintaining the organization image and reputation and provides timely information to stakeholders.

The crisis response strategies adopted by KPLC prioritized victim concerns over organizational apprehensions and showed remorse for them and this improved the organizational reputation as noted by the communication officers during the key informant interviews.

4.2.2 Framing of messages on KPLC Facebook account.

In regard to messages posted by KPLC on their social media Facebook account, the researcher carried out analysis on how they were framed as follows:

Message Framing

Theme	Description
1. Time for posts	-prior -immediate -later
2. Nature of the message	- short text -press release - Pictures.

	-video
3. Links for additional information	-twitter - website -You-Tube -Whatsapp

Table 4.2.2: Message Framing

4.2.2.1 Time of the posts

KPLC posted information to counter the crisis through press releases almost immediately after the crisis took place informing the stakeholders on what had caused the power blackout. Other press releases followed subsequently with updates on the progress of power restoration.

4.2.2.2 Nature of the message

Messages shared can either be videos, pictures, short texts as well as press releases. KPLC's communication team chose to use press releases only **(See Appendix 2,3,4,5)** which are official statements sent to the media and other stakeholders with the aim of giving information, generating an official statement or making an announcement for public release.

4.2.2.3 Links

Links of other platforms like the KPLC website and twitter were shared at the end of each press release directing stakeholders on where they would access more information on the crisis.

4.2.3 Feedback received from KPLC Facebook account followers during crisis communication.

The researcher employed the use of content analysis of the comments posted by customers on the KPLC Facebook page as response to the press releases they posted during the period of the crisis.

4.2.3.1 Feedback on the press release on Power outage in parts of Nairobi.

KPLC on (Tuesday, 11th January 2022) posted a press release on their Facebook page notifying their customers in Nairobi of power outage in some parts as a result of a fault in the 220KV Suswa –Embakasi power transmission line.

Likes.	**Comments.**	**Shares.**
793	**870**	**27**

Table 3.2.3.1: Power outage in parts of Nairobi.

a) Humour.

One person responded to this communication by informing KPLC that what had been suggested was a drop in the price of electricity and not a power outage as was being experienced.

"*We said the price of electricity should drop, and not a power outage, don't you know the difference?"*

Another one equipped *"we are moving" while attaching a video of a lady explaining how she wanted to shift to solar as a result of the often power failure"*

Another comment suggested a new name for KPLC *"Kenyans Please Light Candles (KPLC*), indicating that he was tired with the blackout which he blamed on the organization.

b) Anger.

Some users reacted with anger citing the power outage as a way of sabotage by KPLC due to the reason that the president had earlier on asked them to ensure electricity charges drop.

"This looks like sabotage! You were told to drop electricity prices and not electricity posts. I have never seen such. There are some people working online who exclusively depend on your power supply. Do the right thing. I wish kdf could be given the go ahead to run KPLC.

Another posed *"Can KPLC be given to the KDF. You are OVERWHELMED.*

Another Facebook user noted that the fact that the company was a monopoly was affecting its service delivery and performance.

"This is more than serious ,parts of Nairobi East have experience blackout for the last 24 hours……This is not normal……Monopoly is a dangerous practice that can dim the hopes of every Nation….Power supply should not be single sourced in this Nation or else we will wake up to darkness in this country".

c) **Dissatisfaction**.

One commenter portrayed dissatisfaction with the organization noting that it offered poor services coupled with very high prices.

"KPLC is the most useless parastatal in Kenya, very high electricity charges, very poor services. Nkt.

With another comment urging KPLC to keep the updates to themselves as they had not carried out any corrective action and people were losing a lot of food in their fridges.

"Nonsense we need lights what are you even talking about? We are losing a lot of food.Keep the updates to yourselves.

"Are we witnessing sabotage of a kind in power distribution? This is a critical service and it cannot be a coincidence that a pylon crashed and now a faulty line along Suswa line.

d) Suggestions on corrective action.

One user gave KPLC suggestions of what can be done for corrective action.

"*This country needs a smart grid that does load shedding during emergencies to avoid this system wide failures. This is as a result of proper planning and infrastructure to enable UNBUNDLING of transmission system. Call us Energy experts to consult for free. It is a service to the motherland."*

e) Support.

Some of the feedback received from the organization were of support and encouragement assisting in propelling the organization towards finding a solution for the power outage.

"We hope this is corrected soonest…..all the best Kenya Power team.

"Kenya Power are doing the best they can, technical team really working.

"We have trust in Kenya Power technical team".

4.2.3.2 Feedback on the press release "UPDATE 1 ON POWER OUTAGE IN PARTS OF NAIROBI.

The press release was posted twice on their Facebook page.

Likes	Comments	Shares
544	308	20
512	449	9

Table 4.2.3.2: Update 1 on Power outage in parts of Nairobi.

Customers' feedback from the two posts comprised of:

a) Condemning.

One person expressed a need for change at what he termed as Kenya Weakness and Darkness Company (KPLC) with others condemning the organization for the losses people were going through both in their businesses and homes more so in the month of January when people were undergoing hardships.

"Radical change is needed at the Kenya Weakness and Darkness Company. I mean Kenya Power and Lighting Company, are there no inspectors who are supposed to inspect the line? Wake up, follow the example of the Chinese, they are all over their projects, in fact, they live in their working stations irrespective of their ranks."

"Nkt, the little we were trying to save for this January gone to waste, nkt.

"Only 2 minutes to that 5pm you try giving us another excuse…Business are at a standstill since yesterday 10:45a.m….How long does it take.

"*Kenya Power Care, this is pure sabotage. How can an outage last for more than 24 hours? The most interesting part is that it's happening when you were asked to reduce the tariffs. We long for the day your monopoly will come to an end".*

b) Interrogative.

Some of the comments raised questions with regards to the information that KPLC had shared on when they would restore power as people were dissatisfied with the fact that nothing much had been done to cure the situation.

"6pm now. Still no power 2nd day. Can you be candid and tell us the truth instead of saying by 5pm?

"Do you think whatever loss you have brought to us can be paid by your apologies?"

c) Supportive.

The press release also attracted a comment from one user who urged the organization to put more effort towards ensuring the crisis was resolved citing the fact that many businesses were suffering.

"All the best. Hurry up please, businesses are suffering."

d) Sarcastic.

"*How do you expect someone who has a double Samsung fridge fully equipped and a slim 4k 65" LG TV bought with a hard earned December salary to feel. It's totally unfair.*

Kenya Paraffin and Lightening Candles (KPLC) doing what they do best"

e) Demanding.

"*No power in Mlolongo since yesterday. I see most areas power is back. Give us a timeline on when we should expect it to be back. Kenya Power Care."*

"For the sake of the people working from home, how about you give out power interruption notices in good time for planning purposes? Also, adhere to the timelines set out. Its past 5pm now.

4.2.3.3 Feedback received on press release UPDATE 2 ON POWER OUTAGE IN PARTS OF NAIROBI.

Comments	***Shares***	***Likes***	***Anger***	***Laughter***	***Surprise***
377	***7***	***338***	***31***	***5***	***1***
332	***6***	***297***	***43***	***8***	***2***

Table 4.2.3.3: Update 2 on power outage in parts of Nairobi.

a) Condemning.

Some of the comments expressed dissatisfaction at the long period they had stayed with no power and felt like KPLC needed a new management with one comment condemning them of giving alerts regularly with no new information.

"You are now too much"

"This organization should be managed by Kenya Prison. This is nonsense"

"These alerts are now sounding more boring and irritating. You only issue an alert when there is a new development/findings.

b) Support.

Two comments were of support to the staff who were working towards the restoration of power with another one asking KETRACO to come out and apologize as the person felt that KPLC was being blamed for their mistake.

"Without power transmission knowledge, you'll not understand this. Transmission lines are not ordinary distribution lines which are erected easily. There must be a lot of mathematics behind finding the root cause of the failure so as to avoid future occurrence. Big thanks to the men who are working day and night for restoration and normalization."

"Its high time KETRACO comes out to apologize. KPLC, you are shouldering the blame for nothing".

c) Humorous.

One comment made fun of the situation by indicating that the people in his area would start being attacked by lions as the area is known of having these animals citing that this would be caused by the laziness of KPLC.

"It is second day in Rongai. There is no electricity and you know the lions will start taking advantage due to your laziness Kenya Power Care."

d) Sarcastic.

"You need to apologize for being employees of KPLC, not the inconvenience. The former will eliminate the latter."

"The only monopoly I have heard making losses".

4.2.3.4 Feedback on the press release on "POWER RESTORED IN NAIROBI AND ENVIRONS"

Comments	Likes	Shares
653	**835**	**10**

Table 4.2.3.4: Power restored in Nairobi and environs.

a) Anger

There were expressions of anger from some users who felt KPLC Communication Department was issuing communication to clients without first confirming if all areas had power restored.

"You have the audacity to write such a press release without confirming if all areas have electricity !Who runs the PR/Communications Department? Have you done your due diligence and confirmed electricity has been restored everywhere? Day 3 now and Rimpa area has no electricity!"

"Which power have you restored when Athi River is submerged in total darkness?"

b) Sarcastic.

"When are you people handing us over to kdf….can't wait anymore".

"Whatever you touched solving this issue, untouch it because it is affecting us in Donholm phase 8 no power since yesterday".

"What are you pleased about, sort your mess".

c) Interrogative.

"Is Kenya Power collapsing? Have never experienced such blackouts….corruption detection."

"Take notice, power outages or blackouts in this country have specific time when it happens and when it is restored. Will happen around 7pm and be restored at 9pm if not, then midnight. Think between the lines. Should overtime be abolished at KPLC? Someone is doing business with your pain.

d) Demanding.

"*Kenya Power should be disbanded."*

"KPLC should be handed over to Kenya Defense Forces as it awaits privatization".

"We want to be compensated".

e) Condemning.

"*You are sabotaging the effort of the government in reducing electricity cost which is very high for the common mwananchi".*

"The audacity. Even Safaricom compensates us for poor network coverage. But KPLC would care less if their customers are in the dark for months".

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMENDATION

5.1 Summary of key findings.

Among the key findings was that KPLC employed primary and secondary response strategies. The primary strategies included that of denial as well as excuse where in their communication they attribute the power outage to failure of KETRACO's power line and site the delayed power restoration beyond the 5p.m deadline to KETRACO experiencing a delay in their restoration thereby trying to reduce the impact of the crises on their image. An apology was also offered to stakeholders due to the inconvenience resulting from the power outage and assured them that the situation would soon be corrected. The organization applied the secondary crisis response strategy of bolstering by praising the stakeholders of their dedication and loyalty.

Crisis management messages on KPLC Facebook page were shared in form of press releases with the first one disseminated immediately after the crisis occurred and subsequent ones being posted to provide stakeholders with information on the progress of the crisis situation. The press releases were detailed with explanations of what was happening and how far the process of power restoration was. Each press release also contained information of links to the organization's website and twitter pages where more information on the crisis could be accessed.

On the kind of feedback received, the researcher found that from the comments on the press releases posted during the crisis, KPLC received both positive and negative comments. The negative comments included those that were demanding for explanations on the blackout, others were sarcastic, of anger as well as dissatisfaction, with stakeholders expressing a need for an overall haul of the institution in order to improve its services. Some stakeholders however sent positive comments of suggestions on corrective action of what Kenya Power can do in order to avoid a reoccurrence of the crisis with others being supportive of the institution for the steps it was taking towards ensuring the restoration of electricity in the area.

5.2 Conclusion.

The findings of the research show the importance of employing social media for crisis communication by organizations .Sites such as Facebook and twitter have become influential platforms for utilization during crisis communication as they give organizations a direct voice of reaching out to its stakeholders. The interactive nature of these media sites ensure mutual interaction of the all parties thereby eliminating the spread of false information as there is immediate feedback of any issues raised during the communication process. Timely communication by KPLC enabled it to have a fair amount of control over what news and facts were being shared on thereby avoided the potentially catastrophic problem of public opinion.

5.3 Recommendations

As per the findings of the study, the researcher recommended the following;

1) KPLC should develop a crisis communication plan to ensure that staff are well prepared at all times to deal with a crisis. The plan will guide the Organization on how to well to handle a crisis at hand for positive results.
2) More platforms for communicating with stakeholders during a crisis should be availed. While social media sites are fast ways of communicating, KPLC should adopt other methods such as short messages as this will help complement the already existing methods of communicating for better results.
3) KPLC should strive to have a 24-hour presence in order to monitor what is being said about them. Through this constant monitoring of social media, the organization will be in a position to be well informed at all times and able to intercept any negative information being shared before it causes any damage online.

5.4 Suggestions for Further Studies

The researcher suggested areas for further studies which were informed by the findings of this research. The research was restricted to KPLC which is a government Organization comparable studies could be carried out in private organizations as a way of looking at how these type of organizations communicate during crisis situations.

A study can also be conducted on how mainstream media (print and broadcast) can be used by organizations during crisis with the aim of improving their image.

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APPENDICES.

Appendix 1: Introduction letter and interview schedule.

Loise Wanjiru,

The University of Nairobi,

P O Box 13433-00800,

Nairobi.

July, 2022

Dear Sir/Madam,

RE: REQUEST TO CONDUCT ACADEMIC INTERVIEW ON THE USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA DURING CRISIS COMMUNICATION IN ORGANIZATION: A CASE OF KPLC

My name is Loise Wanjiru. A student of University of Nairobi pursuing Masters of Arts (MA) in Communication Studies at the Department of Journalism. I am doing a research on 'the use of social media during crisis communication in organization: a case of KPLC

I have purposively selected you to be my key informant in this study. This is based on my research objectives that require only key respondents with specific knowledge and understanding of the subject I am investigating. I am kindly requesting for an appointment to interview you for about 15 minutes during your convenient time and place based on the above topic. Any information given will be used specifically for this research, and participation in this research is voluntary.

I will appreciate if you schedule an interview with me by replying via 0700394800 as soon as possible to enable early finalization of the study.

Yours faithfully,

Loise Wanjiru

Interview Schedule

1. What position do you hold at KPLC?

2. How long have you been working here?

3. Does your organization use social media? If yes which type of social media?

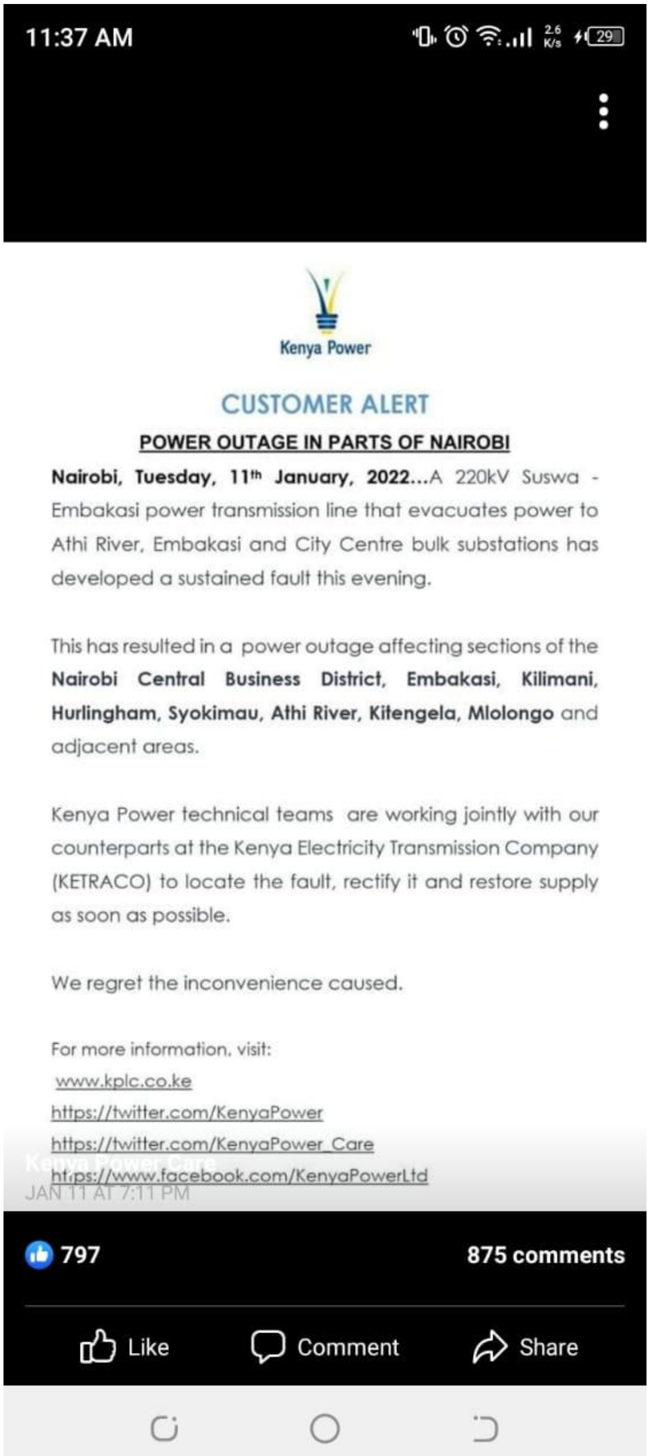
4. In the above listed media, which social media do you use frequently and why?

5. List crises which the organization has faced currently? And explain how social media has been used to manage the crisis?

6. Which communication strategies does KPLC use during communication crisis?

7. How effective is the strategy in crisis management?

Appendix 2: Press release on power outage in parts of Nairobi.



Kenya Power

CUSTOMER ALERT

POWER OUTAGE IN PARTS OF NAIROBI

Nairobi, Tuesday, 11th January, 2022...A 220kV Suswa - Embakasi power transmission line that evacuates power to Athi River, Embakasi and City Centre bulk substations has developed a sustained fault this evening.

This has resulted in a power outage affecting sections of the **Nairobi Central Business District, Embakasi, Kilimani, Hurlingham, Syokimau, Athi River, Kitengela, Mlolongo** and adjacent areas.

Kenya Power technical teams are working jointly with our counterparts at the Kenya Electricity Transmission Company (KETRACO) to locate the fault, rectify it and restore supply as soon as possible.

We regret the inconvenience caused.

For more information, visit:
www.kplc.co.ke
https://twitter.com/KenyaPower
https://twitter.com/KenyaPower_Care
https://www.facebook.com/KenyaPowerLtd

Appendix 3: Press release on update on power outage in parts of Nairobi

11:38 AM

Kenya Power

CUSTOMER ALERT

UPDATE ON POWER OUTAGE IN PARTS OF NAIROBI

Nairobi, Wednesday, 12th January, 2022 (12:50pm) ...We have identified the technical fault on the Suswa - Embakasi high voltage transmission power line that tripped electricity, cutting supply to parts of Nairobi yesterday evening.

Engineers from the Kenya Electricity Transmission Company (KETRACO) are on site to repair the line and pave way for restoration of normal power supply by 5 pm this evening.

Areas affected by the outage include parts of **Embakasi**, **Kitengela**, **Athi River**, **Industrial Area**, parts of **Langata**, **Jamhuri**, **Kilimani** and **Kileleshwa**, the **Nairobi Central Business District**, **Hurlingham**, **Syokimau** and **Westlands**.

We will give an update on progress of the repair works and when normalcy returns.

For more information, visit:
www.kplc.co.ke
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https://twitter.com/KenyaPower_Care
https://www.facebook.com/KenyaPowerLtd

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514 | 449 comments

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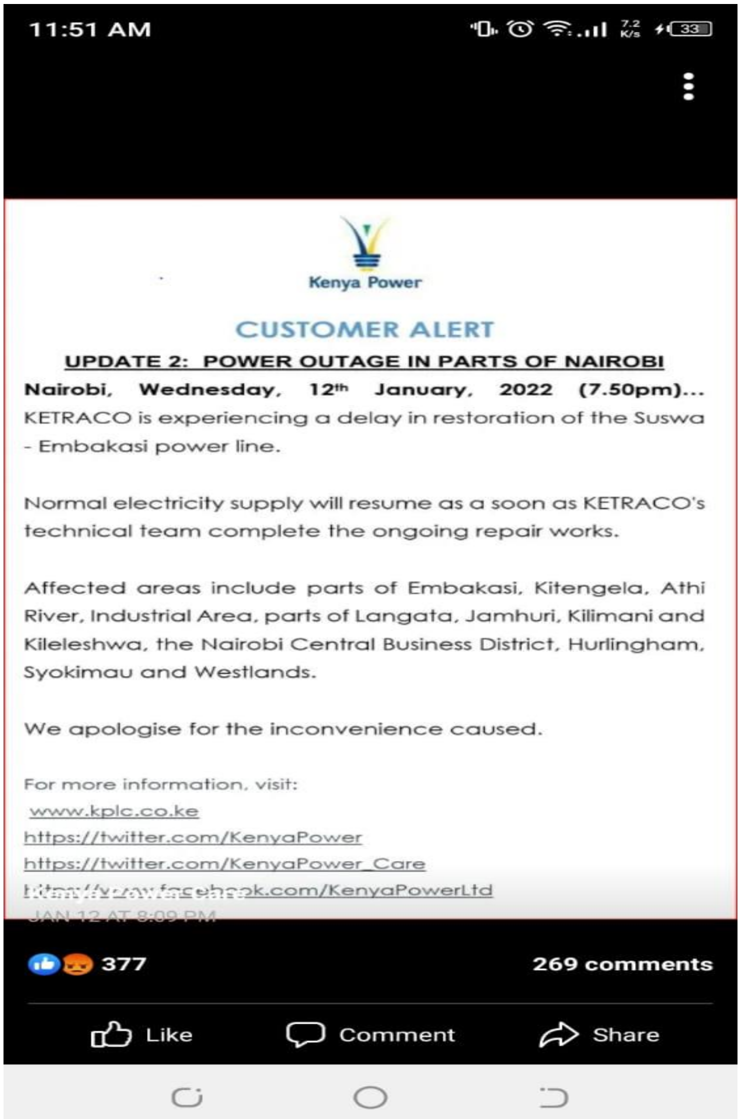
Appendix 4: Press release on update 2 power outage in parts of Nairobi.



Kenya Power

CUSTOMER ALERT

UPDATE 2: POWER OUTAGE IN PARTS OF NAIROBI

Nairobi, Wednesday, 12th January, 2022 (7.50pm)... KETRACO is experiencing a delay in restoration of the Suswa - Embakasi power line.

Normal electricity supply will resume as a soon as KETRACO's technical team complete the ongoing repair works.

Affected areas include parts of Embakasi, Kitengela, Athi River, Industrial Area, parts of Langata, Jamhuri, Kilimani and Kileleshwa, the Nairobi Central Business District, Hurlingham, Syokimau and Westlands.

We apologise for the inconvenience caused.

For more information, visit:
www.kplc.co.ke
https://twitter.com/KenyaPower
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Appendix 5: Press release on power restored in Nairobi and Environs.

11:51 AM

Kenya Power

CUSTOMER ALERT

POWER RESTORED IN NAIROBI AND ENVIRONS

Nairobi, Wednesday, 12th January, 2022 (2300hrs) ... We are pleased inform our esteemed customers that power supply has been restored in all areas following the completion of repair works on KETRACO's 220kV Suswa - Embakasi transmission power line.

We thank the affected customers for their patience and apologise for the inconvenience caused.

For more information, visit:

www.kplc.co.ke

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JAN 13 AT 3:00 AM

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