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Abstract

Purpose: Since tourism is highly susceptible to shocks, and effects of crises in the industry can lead to several direct and indirect repercussions, appropriate communication techniques and strategies are needed to proactively overcome or prevent crises. However, in Kenya, assessment of the same is glaringly insufficient, hence, the need for the current study. The study objective was guided by a research question; What are the during-crisis communication strategies used in crises preparedness in the tourism and hospitality industry in Naivasha Sub-county?

Methodology: The study was conducted among hotels in Naivasha Sub-County of Nakuru County of Kenya using a mixed research methodology. Using a sample of 362 employees through multi-stage and purposive sampling techniques, questionnaires were used to collect data among employees while 28 key informant interviews were used among the hotel managers. Descriptive and inferential statistics were used to analyze quantitative data.

Findings: The study concluded that during crisis communication strategies featured issuance of accurate and consistent messages, giving precautions, dissemination of information on how to cope physically as well as information on prioritizing self-protection. The communication strategies during the crisis influenced the preparedness in small and insignificant amounts (sig. = .968). The results showed that communicating on precautions during a crisis was a special way and strategy to contain the effect of the crisis. The study found that more than half of the hotel staff 175(59.5%) agreed that their organizations give accurate and consistent messages on crisis preparedness.

Unique Contribution to Theory, Practice and Policy: The study recommends that the Cabinet secretary in the Ministry of Tourism develop policies that spell and guide crisis management plans that acknowledge effective crisis communication strategies in hotels in the country. For individual hotel operators and managers in Naivasha subcounty, provision of regular information on crisis, and having a crisis communication plan in the precrisis stage will educate and sensitize the employees of the possible risks and how to handle them. This study findings will inform academia and be a base for scholars in mass communication in carrying out further studies in communicative strategies used in crises preparedness. The study findings inform development and roll out of policies that guide crisis management plans in tourism and hotel industry.

Keywords: *Communication Strategies, Crises Preparedness, Hospitality Industry, Crisis, Tourism*

INTRODUCTION

In recent years, the global tourism industry has experienced many serious crises and disasters including terrorist acts, political instability, economic recession, bio security threats and natural disasters (Maditinos & Vassiliadis, 2008). The tourism industry has been one of many businesses affected by numerous crises and disasters around the globe in recent years (Faulkner, 2001; Ritchie, 2004; Santana, 2004). Therefore, Ritchie (2004) advises tourism organizations and destinations need to be prepared to assist tourists during catastrophic events, and tourism destination managers should have crisis and disaster management competency.

In December 2004, earthquakes with a magnitude of up to 9.0 on the Richter scale hit several parts of Asian coast triggering a tsunami (Reddy, 2006). Tsunamis are one of the most destructive natural hazards that affect coastal areas, as their waves impact the coast with enormous energy capable of destroying objects on the coastal areas and can cause extensive damage and disruption to human lives, their livelihood, infrastructure and economic activities (Devi and Shenoi, 2012). The disaster had an immediate impact on the tourism industry and livelihood of tourism dependent community, due to a decline to tourist arrivals (Reddy, 2006).

Hurricane Katrina made a landfall in 2005 on the gulf coast of the United States, east of New Orleans city with a death toll of more than 1,200 (Dolfman, Wasser and Bergman, 2007). The hurricane also greatly affected the human, social, and psychological fabric of the city, with a notable effect on the city's economy, its labour market dynamics and its individual businesses. On tourism, 10.1 million visitors spent a total of $4.9 billion in New Orleans in 2004, but the number plummeted to 3.7 million visitors, who spent $2.8 billion the year after the storm (Elliot, 2005).

According to Ali, Arifin and Hasim (2012), what came to be known as the Arab Spring Revolutions was defined in the media, as a peaceful protest movement set off in the Arab countries during late 2010 and early 2011, influenced by the Revolution of Tunisia. With the success of the protests in Tunisia, a wave of unrest struck Algeria, Jordan, Egypt, and Yemen, then spread to other countries. The tourism industry in the countries of Arab spring faced uncertain fate, with the sharp decline in the number of tourists coming to these countries, because of the escalation of tension and the continuing insecurity, particularly in the eyes of the Europeans who were covering 80% of the tourism market (Ali, Arifin and Hasim 2012). Such events can cause insecurity and future uncertainty and can directly impact the number of tourists (Malhotra &Venkatesh, 2009).

As in many other developing countries, tourism is one of the key drivers of Kenya's socio-economic development (Valle &Yobesia, 2009). According to Gachenge (2012), the tourism sector is extremely important to Kenya's economy and is one of the three top foreign exchange-earners, along with the horticulture and tea sectors. The National Tourism Strategy (2013-2018) identified tourism as one of the top priority sectors for realizing the development blueprint- vision 2030. The Tourism Act (2011) vouched for the establishment for tourism regulatory, development and marketing bodies, underscoring the importance of tourism to our country. The World Travel & Tourism Council (2015) says that travel and tourism had a total contribution of KES 561.8bn. to Kenya, a 10.5% of the GDP in 2014, and this was set to rise to KES 586.2bn in 2015. Dieke (2003) in de Sausmarez (2013) explains that tourism in Kenya is a source of stable foreign exchange and a means of diversifying a narrow resource-based economy.

Gitonga (2014) states that Naivasha town is steadily becoming not only one of the safest and fastest growing towns in Nakuru County, but an exciting holiday destination. These days, he continues, Naivasha Sub-County is the most visited in Kenya, mainly during holidays, as it has become an alternative to Mombasa and the coastal region where there are concerns over insecurity. The Sub-County is home to the fresh-water Lake Naivasha, has many tourist attractions like the Hell's gate National Park, Crescent Island Game Park and the Crater Lake Game Sanctuary. There are also several camping sites around the lake and a haven for bird watching and other game around the lake. Naivasha also boasts of a good number of world-class hotels and lodges such as Enashpai Resort and Spa; The Great Rift Valley Lodge Golf Resort; among others. Gitonga (2014) says that the lakeside area, with its cool climate, has become a retreat for local and international tourists seeking peace, quietness and fun.

The tourism and hospitality industry are one of the most vulnerable to crisis and can be affected by internal and external hazards (AlBattat & Som 2013). Emergencies have become more frequent and complex than before, hence affecting the hospitality industry and related industries which have an impact on the economies of many nations, Kenya included. Many organizations in the world today are seeking for communicative interventions that may help in preparing for emergencies and catastrophes, since communication is an important aspect of effectively and efficiently dealing with crisis situations (Ritchie, et al 2004).

These interventions are crucial in Kenya because tourism and hospitality crises can imperil the industry. The industry is extremely important to the Kenyan economy as it among the top foreign exchange earners (Gachenge, 2012). The industry made a direct contribution to the GDP of KES 184.4bn (4.8% of total GDP) in 2013 and was forecast to rise by 2.9% in 2014, and to rise by 5.2% pa, from 2014-2024.Additionally, Travel and Tourism in Kenya supported 226,000 jobs directly (4.1% of total employment) and was set to rise by 2.3% pa to 2284,000 jobs in 2024, a 4.0% of total employment (UNWTO).

Kenya has on several occasions been affected by crises triggered by either terrorism, political, economic, or natural events. De Sausmarez (2013) gives examples of the bombing of the US embassy in Nairobi, which was followed by terrorist attacks on a hotel and an El Al flight near Mombasa in November 2002; political unrest following the disputed 2007 general elections; global economic recession that affected levels of discretionary spending in European and American tourism markets in 2007/2008, all which significantly led to lower tourist arrivals in our country. All these crises and others that had happened before and since, have had devastating effects and sometimes almost crippling the entire industry.

Since tourism is highly susceptible to shocks, and effects of crises in the industry can lead to several direct and indirect repercussions, Kovoor et al. (2000) recommends that appropriate communication techniques and strategies can help to proactively overcome or prevent crises. Regular evaluation of such techniques is necessary to ensure effectiveness. Santana (2004) states that, there are communication strategies in application for crises preparedness in the tourism and hospitality industry world over. However, in Kenya, assessment of the same is glaringly insufficient (De Sausmarez 2013) and hence, the need for the current study. The study was guided by a research question; What are the during-crisis communication strategies used in crises preparedness in the tourism and hospitality industry in Naivasha Sub-county?

Statement of the Problem

The tourism and hospitality industry is one of the most vulnerable to crisis and can be affected by internal and external hazards (AlBattat & Som 2013). Emergencies have become more frequent and complex than before, hence affecting the hospitality industry and related industries which have an impact on the economies of many nations, Kenya included. Many organizations in the world today are seeking for communicative interventions that may help in preparing for emergencies and catastrophes, since communication is an important aspect of effectively and efficiently dealing with crisis situations (Ritchie, et al 2004).

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LITERATURE REVIEW

Coombs and Holladay (2010) assert that how and what an organization communicates during a crisis has a significant effect on the outcome of the crisis, including the number of injuries and the amount of reputational damage sustained by the organization. Ritchie et al (2004) states that crisis communication during a crisis should contain accurate information to be given to the key stakeholders quickly to reduce misinformation and help develop a consistent message. Information should contain messages about precautions stakeholders should take to prevent harm and what corrective action is being taken by the organization. The messages should also contain expressions of sympathy for the victims.

As Seeger (2006) explains, communication during a crisis calls for honesty, openness, and candour. Honesty is necessary to build credibility and trust during a crisis; openness entails information about risks shared openly to promote an environment of risk sharing, where the public and agencies mutually accept responsibility for managing risks. Candour refers to

communicating the entire truth as it is known even when the truth may reflect negatively on the organization (ibid). A candid assessment might include worse case scenarios and fear about how bad the crisis might become.

Coombs and Holladay (2010) postulate that messages communicated during a crisis should contain instructing and adjusting information. Instructing information is on how to cope physically with the crisis and adjusting information on how to cope psychologically with the crisis. Instructing information is the priority in a crisis, Coombs and Holladay (2010) add, since it can ensure public safety, as failure to protect safety of stakeholders can breed a second crisis and can intensify the damage a crisis inflicts on an organization. Adjusting information includes the need to express sympathy and to explain what the organization is doing to prevent a repeat of the crisis. Efforts to prevent a repeat of the crisis are also known as corrective action.

Communication during a crisis should acknowledge the event with empathy and help the public reduce crisis related uncertainty as much as possible (Reynolds, 2012). The information provided should be simple, credible, accurate, and consistent and delivered on time to reassure the public and reduce emotional turmoil. Communication should give information that is known, explain what is unknown and commit to providing what is unknown when it gets known for people want to know what happened, what is being done about it, and what they should do (Reynolds, 2012). People will question the immediate threat to them, the duration of the threat, and who is going to fix the problem and hence communicators should be prepared to answer these questions as quickly, accurately and as fully as possible while acknowledging the uncertainty of the situation.

During a crisis, communication should update the public and let them understand ongoing risks and let them know how to mitigate them (Reynolds, 2012). Communication should also provide background and supportive information to those who need it as well as get feedback from affected publics by listening, learning and assessing. It should support informed decision-making by the public based on their understanding of risks and benefits (Reynolds). The communication should also acknowledge fears and let people know it is normal to be afraid, that they have a right to fear the worst.

Reynolds (2012) suggests that people should be given some tasks to do as a form of self-efficacy since simple tasks will help people gain back a sense of control and help keep them motivated to stay tuned to what is happening. According to Seeger (2006), research has emphasized the importance of messages to provide specific information telling people what they can do to reduce harm. These messages of self-efficacy can help restore some sense of control over an uncertain and threatening situation and may ultimately help reduce the harm created by a risk factor.

The messages according to Seeger (2006) may in most cases be as simple as encouraging stakeholders to watch the media for additional developments, to specific harm-reducing actions to those affected by crisis which should be matched to specific situations. Messages of self-efficacy could also offer a range of listed activities that may not have specific and demonstrable benefit since they may be meaningful to the public. Seeger (2006) advises that unless specific actions serve to increase the harm, caution should be taken about discounting actions.

According to Pforr and Hosie (2008), crisis management in tourism is growing driven by the frequency of negative effects on the tourism and hospitality industry in recent times, but the literature into crises management in tourism appears rather *ad hoc* and fragmented by

presenting various issues in different contexts. Carlsen and Liburd (2008) are in agreement and add that there is a need for a research agenda that will focus on crisis management and recovery and communication rather than prevention. They argue there is limited research on the topic and a paucity of research into the effectiveness of crisis management, with most of the literature prescriptive in nature, describing strategies and techniques for assessing and managing risk and preventing crises, or descriptive terms of the immediate, short-term effects on tourism destinations.

Communication assumes primacy in the crisis situation, so it is essential that the strategies, creativity and opportunities that emerge in these situations are well researched and recorded (Carlsen & Liburd, 2008). They therefore recommend that more work need be done on how risks affecting tourism are identified, assessed, reduced, avoided, or transferred. There is a need to communicate to the stakeholders on how risks are forecast, who identifies and assesses these risks, and the distinction between real and perceived risks for different stakeholders. They argue that the key question in the context of crisis communication research which remains unanswered is how all the elements of tourism risk, disaster and crises are communicated to tourism stakeholders.

Additionally, Carlsen and Liburd (2008) say that research indicates that although there appears to be some effective crisis communication strategies, mis-communication and non-communication are also characteristic of tourism risk, disaster and crisis. The problem, which needs to be addressed, is exacerbated when the extent of the stakeholders is realized, and political and social forces come into play to impede or prevent effective communication. There is also needed to establish what the relevant channels for internal and external communication are, and how successful and effective communication can be monitored (Carsen and Liburd). Hence the need for this study to analyze the content of the messages in crises preparedness in the tourism and hospitality industry in Naivasha Sub-County

Situational Crisis Communication Theory (SCCT)

The Situational Crisis Communication Theory (SCCT) was developed by Coombs (1995). According to Coombs (2007), SCCT explains how communication protects an organization during a crisis. He adds that it rests in its provision of a communication theory that anticipates how stakeholders will respond in terms of the reputation threat that is posed by the crisis. He further says that the theory explains how an organization can maximize the protection of its reputation.

An organization's reputation is cultivated by the information stakeholders receive through various media outlets (Coombs, 2007). According to Coombs (2007), the stakeholders take what they already know about various organizations and compare organizations to determine how a particular organization should behave. Reputations then emerge from stakeholders of an organization's ability to meet their expectations, he adds. Crises damage reputations when people have a reason to think badly of the organization based on expectations from comparative data (Coombs, 2007).

The theory says that crises are negative events, and stakeholders will make attributions about crisis responsibility, and those attributions will affect how stakeholders interact with the organization in crisis. According to Kyhn (2003), SCCT belief is that the effectiveness of communication strategies is dependent on characteristics of the crisis situation, and that by understanding the crisis situation, a manager can choose the most appropriate response.

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Coombs and Holladay (2010) explain that SCCT is audience oriented because it seeks to illuminate how people perceive crises, their reactions to crisis response strategies, and audience reactions to the organization in crisis, hence the nature of the crisis situation shapes audience perceptions and attributions in order to understand how people make attributions about crises and the effects of those attributions on their attitudes and behavioral intentions.

According to Coombs and Holladay (2010), the core of SCCT is crisis responsibility and attributions of crisis responsibility have a significant effect on how people perceive the reputation of an organization in crisis and their affective and behavioral responses to that organization following a crisis. They say that reputation matters because it is an important intangible resource for an organization. Organizations with negative prior reputations are attributed greater crisis responsibility for the same crisis than an organization that is unknown or has a positive prior reputation (Coombs & Holladay). SCCT says affect and behavioural intentions are other crisis outcomes- they may generate sympathy, anger and *schadenfreude* (taking joy in the pain of others) and may lead to negative word of mouth including reduced purchase decisions. Anger is the motivator that moves people to action, and in the case of the negative communication dynamic, that action is relaying negative messages to others about the organization in crisis (Coombs & Holladay, 2010).

According to Coombs (2007), SCCT employs attributions theory to predict the reputational threat presented by the crisis situation and then prescribes a response strategy intended to protect reputational assets. Crises response strategies are what the organization says and does after the crisis has occurred, and they are used to repair the reputation and reduce negative effects and behaviour towards the organization.

As Ritchie (2004) explains, there is need for immediate, reactive, and strategic communication to provide a steady flow of correct and consistent information to the publics; information designed with customized messages to different publics identified in advance. The Situational Crisis Communication Theory provides the selection of the appropriate crisis response strategies, what Coombs (1995) calls 'choosing the right words. Coombs and Holladay say SCCT translated attribution theory into the language of crisis communication by giving crisis response strategies on what crisis managers should say and do after a crisis occurs, since communication is the essence of crisis management.

According to Coombs and Holladay (2010), the outcome of SCCT research was the creation of crises response strategies that crisis managers might use. The list of ten crises response strategies emphasizes protecting the victims in the crisis and the organization's perceived acceptance of responsibility for the crisis. The first response is denial, where the management claims there is no crisis; then scapegoat, where the management blames some outside entity for the crisis; attack the accuser, where the management confronts the group or person claiming that something is wrong; excuse, where the management attempts to minimize crisis responsibility by claiming lack of control over the event or lack of intent to do harm and justification, where the management attempts to minimize the perceived damage caused by the crisis.

Further, Coombs and Holladay (2010) say SCCT gives other five crisis response strategies as ingratiation, where the management praises other stakeholders and/or reminds people of past good works by the organization; concern, where the management expresses concern for victims; compassion, where the management offers money or other gifts to victims; regret,

where management indicates they feel badly about the crisis and apology where management accepts full responsibility for the crisis and asks stakeholders for forgiveness.

Coombs and Holladay (2010) explain that crisis response should begin with instructing and adjusting information. Instructing information tells stakeholders how to protect themselves during an ongoing crisis like evacuation or protective measures to take and adjusting information which helps stakeholders cope psychologically with a crisis. It gives basic information on a crisis event and corrective action to prevent a repeat of crisis.

Coombs (2007) examines three clusters based on attribution of crisis responsibility with regard to the reputation threat: victim cluster; accidental cluster and preventable or intentional cluster. Crisis managers select the reputation repair crisis strategies based upon the threat presented by the crisis. For the victim cluster, there is low crisis responsibility and threat for the organization, and therefore it should be managed using instructing and adjusting information. The organization is also a victim in the crisis and therefore there is weak attributions of crisis responsibility which equals to a mild reputation threat (Coombs, 2007; Coombs and Hollady, 2010).

For the accidental cluster, the organizations actions were unintentional and therefore there is minimal attributions of crisis responsibility which equals to moderate reputational threat (Coombs, 2007). In this case, justification and/or excuse crisis response strategies should be added to instructing and adjusting information (Coombs & Holladay, 2010). In preventable or intentional cluster, the organization knowingly placed people at risk and therefore there is strong attribution of crisis responsibility which equals severe reputational threat (Coombs, 2007). This cluster may warrant apology and/or compensation added to instructing and adjusting information (Coombs and Holladay, 2010). These three clusters help determine the crisis response strategy.

Additionally, Coombs and Holladay (2010) argue that there are intensifying factors that alter attributions of crisis responsibility and intensify the threat from the crisis. These are crisis history and prior reputation. In crisis history is whether an organization has had a similar threat in the past. They say that past crises help to establish a pattern of "bad behavior" by an organization and those stakeholders attribute greater responsibility when past crises exist. Prior reputation relates to how well or poorly the organization has treated its stakeholders in the past or the general relationship with the stakeholders; and organizations with negative prior reputation are attributed greater crisis responsibility (Coombs & Holladay).

This theory was used to explain how to communicate in the aftermath of a crisis in order to avert a negative backlash on the organization's reputation. This is because as Coombs and Holladay (2010) argue, crisis communication is a very applied concept and managers will take the advice offered to help them cope with crisis.

Research Gaps

According to Pforr and Hosie (2008), crisis management in tourism is growing driven by the frequency of negative effects on the tourism and hospitality industry in recent times, but the literature into crises management in tourism appears rather *ad hoc* and fragmented by presenting various issues in different contexts. Carlsen and Liburd (2008) are in agreement and add that there is a need for a research agenda that will focus on crisis management and recovery and communication rather than prevention. They argue there is limited research on the topic

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Additionally, Carlsen and Liburd (2008) say that research indicates that although there appears to be some effective crisis communication strategies, mis-communication and non-communication are also characteristic of tourism risk, disaster and crisis. The problem, which needs to be addressed, is exacerbated when the extent of the stakeholders is realized, and political and social forces come into play to impede or prevent effective communication. There is also needed to establish what the relevant channels for internal and external communication are, and how successful and effective communication can be monitored (Carsen and Liburd). Hence the need for this study to analyze the content of the messages in crises preparedness in the tourism and hospitality industry in Naivasha Sub-County

METHODOLOGY

The study was carried out in Naivasha Sub-County of Nakuru County of Kenya. The chaos theory and the situational crisis communication theory guided the study as the key theories with other subordinate theories such as the theory of reasoned action and planned behaviour and situational theory of publics. Mixed research methodology was used in the study, particularly the dominant-less dominant parallel/simultaneous (QUAL + quan) design. A quantitative sample of 362 and a qualitative sample of 28 key informants was drawn from a population of 1092 employees using the multi-stage and purposive sampling techniques, respectively. The instruments of data collection were questionnaires for survey of the 362 respondents and interview guides for the 28 key informant interviews. Descriptive and inferential statistics were used to analyze quantitative data and were subjected to regression analysis using SPSS software whereas qualitative data was analyzed thematically.

RESULTS

The study findings were guided by the research question;

What communication strategies are used during a crisis in the tourism and hospitality industry in Naivasha Sub-County?

To answer this question, the study used a list of items in a nested table through questionnaires to hotel staff. The question required the staff to rate the level of agreement with each of the statements in a 5-point Likert scale of 1- strongly agree to 5- strongly disagree. The collected data was analyzed using descriptive statistics in frequencies and percentage, and the results presented using Table 1 below.

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Table 1: Descriptive Statistics on Communication Strategies used during a Crisis

#	Statements		Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total
1	The organization gives accurate and consistent messages on crisis preparedness	f	71	175	35	13	0	294
		%	24.1	59.5	11.9	4.4	0	100
2	The messages give precautions on how to prevent harm in case of a crisis	f	60	177	47	10	0	294
		%	20.4	60.2	16.0	3.4	0	100.0
3	The messages give information on how to cope physically with a crisis	f	43	172	50	29	0	294
		%	14.6	58.5	17	9.9	0	100
4	The messages give information on how to cope psychologically with a crisis situation	f	35	116	109	28	6	294
		%	11.9	39.5	37.1	9.5	2	100
5	The messages given have little content on how to protect oneself in case of a crisis	f	43	75	88	73	15	294
		%	14.6	25.5	29.9	24.8	5.1	100
6	Messages from the organization explain how to use communication to resolve a crisis	f	62	147	63	22	0	294
		%	21.1	50	21.4	7.5	0	100
7	Communication strategies are necessary during a crisis	f	152	108	29	5	0	294
		%	51.7	36.7	9.9	1.7	0	100
8	There is a lot that needs to be done in communication during a crisis	F	130	95	54	15	0	294
		%	44.2	32.3	18.4	5.1	0	100

Table 1 above shows that more than half of the hotel staff 175(59.5%) agreed that their organizations give accurate and consistent messages on crisis preparedness. Notably, about a quarter of the respondents 71(24.1%) strongly agreed with the statement. The table also shows that over 60% (n=177) agreed that the messages give precautions on how to prevent harm in case of a crisis. About 20.4% (n=60) of the respondents strongly agreed with the statement. In tandem with the qualitative findings through the interviews, one hotel manager posited,

> *We understand that people respond to information given. We thus give precautions on where to move during a crisis. Similarly, we have a bell that rings during a crisis which is a very effective communication tool in our hotel. Once the staff comes out, we inform them what to do and what to avoid. At the same time, all staff are given instructions during the crisis. If it is a fire, for example, the magnitude is assessed and when found manageable, some trained staff join to fight the fire. We are keen and warn those who have never been trained on the same to avoid joining the firefighting team* [KI 02].

Table 1 results show that the largest portion of the hotel staff 172(58.5%) agreed with the statement "The messages give information on how to cope physically with a crisis". This is an indication that communication during crisis and specifically on the scope of the message enables handling of a crisis. Moreover, the results show that the largest portion of the respondents 116(39.5%) agreed with the statement. "The messages give information on how to cope psychologically with a crisis situation". This denotes messages on preparation during crisis as covering the psychological concerns of the staff. However, the largest portion of the respondents 88(29.9%) were neutral with the statement "The messages given have little content on how to protect oneself in case of a crisis". Self-protection was found to be leading among the interviewees as the sample managers pointed out the principle of self-safety first. One manager stated,

> *Self-protection is a priority in our premises. We urge the staff to take self-protection against all crises, especially during an incident. We work on the principle that only those who are safe can manage a crisis. The information is passed through formal channels in meetings as well as memos. The management works around the crisis management plan to inform the staff members* [KI 05].

The table also shows that largest portions of the questionnaire respondents agreed and strongly agreed with the statement "Messages from the organization explain how to use communication to resolve a crisis" 147(50%); "Communication strategies are necessary during a crisis" 152(51.7%); and "There is a lot that needs to be done in communication during a crisis" at 130(44.2%). This implies that there were concerns for explicit communication and packaging of the messages regarding crises preparedness during an incident in the tourism and hospitality industry in Naivasha Sub-County.

The study used factor analysis to examine the strength of relationship among the listed questionnaire items addressing crisis preparedness during a crisis in the hotel industry. The analysis was aimed at pointing out the strength of specific items that were most important in the crisis preparedness during a crisis in the hotel industry. The statistical outputs of the analysis are presented using Table 2 below.

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Table 2: Factor Analysis Correlation Matrix on Crisis Preparedness during a Crisis

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. The messages give precautions on how to prevent harm in case of a crisis	1.000						
2. The messages give information on how to cope physically with a crisis	.600	1.000					
3. The messages give information on how to cope psychologically with a crisis situation	.339	.349	1.000				
4. The messages given have little content on how to protect oneself in case of a crisis	.185	.262	.211	1.000			
5. Messages from the organization explain how to use communication to resolve a crisis	.391	.410	.159	.107	1.000		
6. Communication strategies are necessary during a crisis	.107	-.021	.024	.036	.299	1.000	
7. There is a lot that needs to be done in the area of communication during a crisis	-.223	-.035	-.283	.169	-.233	-.205	1.000

a. Only cases for which the organization gives accurate and consistent messages on crisis preparedness = strongly agree are used in the analysis phase.

Table 2 above shows that there is correlation between messages on precaution and information on how to cope physically had a moderate positive correlation (r=.600); with coping psychologically weak positive correlation (r=.339); with little content on self-protection as weak positive correlation (r=.185); with how to use communication as weak positive (r=.391); with communication strategies as weak positive at r=.107; and with needs to be done as weak negative correction at r=-.223. This implies that precautionary messages played a critical role in communicating the need for physical alertness in crisis preparedness especially during an incident. Similarly, despite a weak correlation between messages on precaution and information and coping with a crisis psychologically, the positive association implies the influence of the messages packaging on psychological preparedness. The findings also reflect the qualitative findings through the interviews with one of the hotel managers who posited,

> *It is in a relationship direction for various communication strategies within our operations. A single memo to communicate on precautionary measures during a crisis targets to address a number of issues ranging from alertness to self-safety, psychological and emotional effects that may arise from a crisis, and how to handle the crisis at personal level [KI 04].*

The table also shows weak positive correlation among many of the statements except for the statement "There is a lot that needs to be done in the area of communication during a crisis" which has majority weak negative correlation with the rest of the statements.

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The study entailed regression analysis on the communication strategies that inform crisis preparedness in Hotels in Naivasha. The collected data was analyzed using regression between the during scores and the level of crisis preparedness. The regression model summary is as presented in table 3.

Table 3: Regression Analysis Model Summary between the during Crisis Scores and the Level of Crisis Preparedness

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.002[a]	.000	.003	1.29004

Table 3 shows an adjusted r-square of .003 which implies that only 0.3% of the variations in level of crisis preparedness was attributed to the communication strategies during crisis scores. This would be at standard error of 1.29.

The regression analysis resulting coefficients are presented in Table 4.

Table 0: Regression Analysis between the during Crisis Scores and the Level of Crisis Preparedness Coefficients

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	95.0% Confidence Interval for B	
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Lower Bound	Upper Bound
1	(Constant)	6.178	.409		15.096	.000	5.372	6.983
	During crisis scores	.001	.023	.002	.040	.968	-.045	.047

a. Dependent variable: Level of crisis preparedness

Table 4 presents the coefficients from the regression analysis between the level of crisis preparedness and the communication strategies during crisis scores. Using the statistics in the table, the following models are deduced.

$Y = 6.178 + 0.002X + 0.409$

Where;

Y – the level of crisis preparedness

X is the During-crisis communication strategies

The model shows that using communication strategies during a crisis would influence the level of crisis preparedness in Hotels in Naivasha. Without the communication strategies during a crisis, the level of preparedness would be 6.178+0.409 = 6.587 units. With the presence of one unit of communication strategies during a crisis, the level of preparedness would be 6.178+0.002 +0.409 = 6.589. This shows that it has an influence, although small. Using the significance level (sig. = .968) from the table, the increase would be insignificant since the significance is greater than the critical p-value of 0.05. The tables also show that the change would be at a 95% confidence thus ranging between -.045 and .047.

Discussions

The results showed that communicating on precautions during a crisis was a special way and strategy to contain the effect of the crisis. The findings conform to various authors who emphasize the need for strategic communication during a crisis especially by giving accurate

and consistent messages regarding response to a given crisis. The findings reflect the postulation of Özgür and Sait (2022) who assessed the precautionary measures considered by hotels during the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020. Using 1418 articles in online sources through content analysis, the study found that the hotels had precautionary measures through communication during the pandemic. The messaging was mostly themed around hygiene, taking measurements in temperature while others were on putting on masks and keeping social distance.

The study found that more than half of the hotel staff 175(59.5%) agreed that their organizations give accurate and consistent messages on crisis preparedness. The hotel staff 172(58.5%) agreed with the statement "The messages give information on how to cope physically with a crisis". This is an indication that communication during crisis and specifically on the scope of the message helps in averting a crisis. Self-protection was found to be leading precautionary measures among the interviewees. The findings are in tandem with the posting of Tsai, Linliu, Chang and Mak (2020) who assessed the effectiveness of disaster prevention literacy in hotels among staff. Using an experimental design, the researchers found that taking the hotel staff through crises prevention literacy at all times significantly influences their levels of disaster preparedness.

In a survey to find out the effect of psychological contract (PC) between hotel employees and their employer on crisis management, Wu, Lin and Wan (2021) found that safety assurance for the staff was key. The study was conducted in the perspective of the ravaging COVID-19 pandemic and the findings associated the safety assurance among staff as a personal protection gear which is a mandate of the employer to develop.

The correlation shows that most of the statements were related and that they were considerably observed in uniform across the communication strategies during crisis in hotels in Naivasha. These conforms to the positing of Hu, Yan, Casey and Wu (2021) who argue for inclusion of safe operational measures for hospitality services providers especially during crises like COVID-19 pandemic. These are managed through engaging the employees and sensitizing them to the need to comply to any safety measures put in the company. The author further elaborates on the four stages that are critical for safe measures compliance including awareness knowing the value of compliance, adopting the measures through behavioral adjustments and then integrating the measures into work life. In order to achieve high compliance, it is recommended that a good safety management practice be in place as well as strategies that address job security.
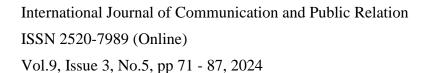
CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusion

The study concluded that crisis communication strategies featured issuance of accurate and consistent messages, giving precautions, dissemination of information on how to cope physically as well as information on prioritizing self-protection. The communication strategies during the crisis influenced the preparedness in small and insignificant amounts (sig. = .968).

Recommendations

The study findings inform development and roll out of policies that guide crisis management plans in tourism and hotel industry. The tourism and hotel caucuses in Naivasha subcounty may need to develop plans and frameworks that address crises preparedness during a crisis

including chief marshals that lead the communication. For practice, the hotel owners need investment in issuance of accurate and consistent messages, giving precautions and dissemination of information on how to cope psychologically during a crisis.

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