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Abstract

Purpose: This study sought to evaluate the post-crisis communication strategies used in crises preparedness in the tourism and hospitality industry in Naivasha Sub-County in Nakuru County of Kenya.

Methodology: 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 the 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 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.

Findings: The study found that various post-crisis communication strategies were used in crises preparedness in tourism and hospitality industry on Naivasha subcounty. A communication strategy that emphasizes protection of the reputation of the organization was popular among a larger portion of the respondents 60% (n=177). The study also revealed that as a post-crisis communication strategy, the management in the hotels was keen to give information that focuses on coping psychologically with a crisis situation. The hotels also ensured that keeping the image of the hotels through communication strategies would enhance crises preparedness. The findings in post-crisis communication strategies included the messaging that focuses more on rebuilding of the organization's profitability. This was found to be strongly and positively associated with restoration of the hotel's image (r=.610).

Unique Contribution to Theory, Practice and Policy: The situational crisis communication theory guided the study. 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. 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 will also inform the hotel and hospitality management on the importance of allocating adequate resources on communicative strategies to be prepared for crises.

Keywords: *Post-Crisis, Communication Strategies, Crises Preparedness, Hospitality Industry*

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INTRODUCTION

According to Coombs and Holladay (2010), a crisis violates stakeholder expectations of how an organization should operate, thus calling its social legitimacy into question. The crisis could be viewed as wrongdoing on the part of the organization and create the need for the corporation to speak to defend itself. This is what Hearit (2006) calls 'corporate apologia' where organizations seek to engage in ritualistic forms of communication through which they enter a public confessional dominated by themes of guilt and restoration, in their attempt to restore their image and prove legitimate after harsh criticisms are leveled against them. Therefore, messages to the stakeholders should contain corporate apologia since from a communicative perspective, discourses can frame or shape the perceptions of a crisis by creating meaning and exerting influence on how a crisis is perceived and judged by various stakeholders (Hearit, 2006).

Corporate apologia is a rhetorical concept that explores the use of communication for self-defense (Coombs and Holladay, 2010). Crises situations could be viewed as wrongdoing and create the need for "corporate apologia" where the organization speaks to defend its reputation. When an individual's or organization's character is called into question or attacked and is accused of engaging in actions that involve wrongdoing, Coombs and Holladay advocate for communication strategies to be used to defend one's character. The strategies are denial (non-acceptance of any wrongdoing), bolstering (reminding people of good things the organization has done), differentiation (remove the action from its negative context), and transcendence (placing the action in a new, broader content that is more favourable). These strategies seek to either shift blame or reduce offensiveness.

As part of corporate apologia, Hearit (1995) integrated another rhetorical idea, dissociation, into a communicative strategy for crises response. According to Hearit, dissociation splits a single idea into two parts: one, dissociation is individual-group. This dissociation argues that a person or group within the organization is responsible for the crisis, not the entire organization; therefore, the organization is not bad, just a few people inside the organization acted inappropriately. This dissociation deflects blame and responsibility for the crisis away from the organization to these isolated individuals within the organization and is used by crisis managers in the hopes of reducing he threat a crisis poses to reputation (Coombs and Holladay, 2010).

Bradford and Garret (1995) conclude by saying that crisis managers must not only respond but also select an appropriate communicative response if they hope to protect their organization's image. Huang and Su (2008), consider this crisis response strategy as a continuum of defensiveness, with denial at the extreme end, followed by excuses, justifications in the middle and concessions at the other endpoint of the continuum. They add that a defensive response fights for an organization's interests and positions, but usually lacks compassion by denying the victim's needs.

Benoit (1995) developed a framework for image restoration. Known as the image restoration theory (IRT), it uses communication to defend reputations (Coombs and Holladay, 2010). IRT holds that corporate communication is goal-directed and a positive organizational reputation is one of the central goals of this communication (Benoit 1995). The framework draws from rhetorical and interpersonal communication and offers a list of potential image restoration strategies-denial, evasion of responsibility, reducing offensiveness of the event, corrective action and mortification.

Denial and evasion of responsibility address the first component of persuasive attack, rejecting or reducing the accused's responsibility for the act in question. Reducing offensiveness and corrective action, the third and fourth broad category of image restoration, concern the second component of persuasive attack: reducing offensiveness of the act attributed to the accused. The last general strategy, mortification, tries to restore an image by asking for forgiveness (Benoit, 1995).

Communication strategies should also contain messages of what Coombs and Holladay (2010) "call rhetoric of renewal" whose emphasis is on a positive view of the organization's future rather than dwelling on the present and discussions of responsibility. The idea is that an organization finds a new direction and purpose – it grows – from a crisis (Ulmer, Seeger, & Sellnow 2007). The crisis communication strategies emphasize the future and how things will be better for the organization and its stakeholders. The rhetoric of renewal emphasizes the value and nature of a positive crisis communication – an emphasis on the future and recovery (Coombs and Holladay 2010).

As Coombs and Holladay (2010) explain, researchers have established four criteria necessary for the use of renewal: the first is that the organization has a strong pre-crisis ethical standard; the second is that the constituency-organization pre-crisis relationships are strong and favorable; the third that the organization can focus on life beyond the crisis rather than seeking to escape blame; and the last that the organization desires to engage in effective crisis communication. The rhetoric of renewal emphasizes the value and nature of positive crisis communication – an emphasis on the future and recovery.

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).

These interventions are crucial in Kenya because tourism and hospitality crises can imperil the industry that is extremely important to the Kenyan economy and is one of 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 the example 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 lacking (de Sausmarez 2013) and hence, the need for the current study..

LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical Review

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. 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 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 post crisis communication strategies used in crises preparedness in the tourism and hospitality industry in Naivasha Sub-County.

METHODOLOGY

This study adopted a mixed research methodology design. The study was carried out in Naivasha Sub-County, Nakuru County of Kenya. The sampling frame for respondents were records of employees from the Human Resource (HR) department of each of the sampled starred hotel in Naivasha Sub-County. Such records show the ranks and job titles or descriptions of the workers in the various hotels. 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.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

Post Crisis Communication Strategies Used In Crises Preparedness in the Tourism and Hospitality Industry in Naivasha Sub-County

The third objective of the study was to analyze the post crisis communication strategies used in crisis preparedness in the tourism and hospitality industry in Naivasha Sub-County. The study used questionnaires that were distributed to the hotel staff. The respondents were required to rate their level of agreement with the statements that relate to Post crisis communication strategies used in crises preparedness. The items were rated a 5-point Likert scale 1- strongly agree to 5-strongly disagree. The results are presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics on Post-crisis Communication Strategies used in Crises Preparedness

#	Statements		Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Total
1	The organization can escape blame following a crisis due to the communication strategies it has	f	74	123	52	43	2	294
		%	25.2	41.8	17.7	14.6	0.7	100
2	The reputation of the organization can be adequately protected by its communication strategies	f	80	150	50	14	0	294
		%	27.2	51	17	4.8	0	100
3	The image of the organization will suffer due to the crisis communication strategies it has	f	40	131	67	45	11	294
		%	13.6	44.6	22.8	15.3	3.7	100
4	It will be easy to rebuild the organizations profitability due to the communication strategies	f	86	127	49	28	4	294
		%	29.3	43.2	16.7	9.5	1.4	100
5	The image of the organization can be easily restored due to the crisis communication strategies it has	f	77	136	69	6	6	294
		%	26.2	46.3	23.5	2	2	100
6	It will be easy for the organizations to grow after a crisis due to the communication strategies	f	82	153	48	9	2	294
		%	27.9	52	16.3	3.1	0.7	100
7	Crisis communication strategies are crucial for the organization's renewal after a crisis	f	119	148	21	6	0	294
		%	40.5	50.3	7.1	2	0	100

Table 1 shows that all the statements were rated agree by the largest portions of the respondents. The first statement, the organization can escape blame following a crisis due to the communication strategies it has, was rated agree by 123(41.8%). Over half of the respondents 150(51%) agreed with the statement, The reputation of the organization can be adequately protected by its communication strategies. About 45% of the respondents agreed that the image of the organization will suffer due to the crisis communication strategies it has. A similar rating is seen with the statement, The image of the organization will suffer due to the crisis communication strategies it has, and the image of the organization can be easily restored due to the crisis communication strategies it has. Through the interview findings, the study revealed that some hotel managers emphasized keeping the image of the hotels through the communication strategies. One of the CEOs noted;

> *As an organization, we are keen on maintaining our reputation and even growing it rather than destroying it. We do this through communication channels that are aligned to our goals and objectives. It is important that even as we take care of any crisis that may arise, we observe how we communicate this. After a crisis, It becomes known across the public that we have a "weakness" including putting the lives of our customers at risk. So, we ensure proper communication on how each staff should respond to issues emerging from the crisis* [KI 03].

These findings conform to the recommendations of other existing authors who spell on the importance of communication strategies that address crisis preparedness in a post-crisis scenario. Ketter (2022) found that use of communication strategies aligned to crisis management practices in the hospitality industry was key. Considering the resilience theory that emphasizes reorienting tactics ensures that a post-crisis scenario for an organization is restored and gains a new growth path. An effective hotel may initiate responses around infrastructure, revitalizing structures as well as marketing inputs. The author concludes that resilience for hospitality industry is key after a crisis hits out.

The table also shows that the largest portion of the respondents 147(43.2%) agreed with the statement "It will be easy to rebuild the organizations profitability due to the communication strategies". The largest portions that are above half of the respondents agreed with "It will be easy for the organizations to grow after a crisis due to the communication strategies" 153(52%) and "Crisis communication strategies are crucial for the organization's renewal after a crisis" 148(50.3%). The findings reflected the postulations of the interview respondents who argued that like any other organization, hotels need a crisis communication strategy. One of the respondents noted;

> *A crisis communication strategy is important to us. It is through such organs that we contain the situation using our own staff. Our staff are inducted into crisis management especially through meetings and conferences in cases of a crisis. Employees will always follow what we have put in place as an organization. It is in line with our policy and organizational culture that after a crisis, we conduct evaluations to consider what can prevent future incidences while emphasizing on how communications should be handled for effectiveness in the identified channels* [KI 01].

These revelations are consistent with other experts in the hospitality industry and communication fields position as essential means to restore trust in the public. Through categorizing the crisis management into three; re-crisis planning, mid-crisis management, and post-crisis recovery, Leta and Chan (2021) argue that every stage is important to keep the hospitality industry on course. These are from the perspectives of both employees and other stakeholders. The major stakeholder is the customer who gets away with what is spoken about the hotel in the public. The researchers recommend approach to crisis management from research, theories as well as stakeholders' perspectives. In different study, Ņikadimovs and Rodčenkova (2021) found that various approaches to crisis management are employed in hospitality industry. One of the key strategies was communication plans and implementation. The context is set in the COVID-19 pandemic where the issues of safety of not only customers but also employees are discussed.

The study used factor analysis to examine the strength of association between the listed items, and the results are presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Factor Analysis Correlation Matrix on Post-crisis Communication Strategies used in Crises Preparedness

	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. The reputation of the organization can be adequately protected by its communication strategies	1.000					
2. The image of the organization will suffer due to the crisis communication strategies it has	.280	1.000				
3. It will be easy to rebuild the organizations profitability due to the communication strategies	.556	.140	1.000			
4. The image of the organization can be easily restored due to the crisis communication strategies it has	.265	.045	.610	1.000		
5. It will be easy for the organizations to grow after a crisis due to the communication strategies	.307	.188	.579	.530	1.000	
6. Crisis communication strategies are crucial for the organization's renewal after a crisis	.027	.212	.271	.394	.361	1.000

a. Only cases for which the organization can escape blame following a crisis due to the communication strategies it has = strongly agree are used in the analysis phase.

Table 2 shows positive correlation between the items with strongest correlation between "It will be easy to rebuild the organizations profitability due to the communication strategies" and "The image of the organization can be easily restored due to the crisis communication strategies it has" (r=.610). The statistics show that the items were related and thus measuring the Post-crisis Communication Strategies used in Crises Preparedness consistently.

The study involved regression analysis to model the relationship between Post-crisis Communication Strategies and Crises Preparedness in hotels in Naivasha. The regression model summary is presented in Table 3.

Table 3: Regression Analysis Model Summary between Post-crisis Communication Strategies and Crises Preparedness

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.011[a]	.000	.004	1.29895

a. Predictors: (Constant), Post Crisis scores

Table 3 shows an adjusted r-square = .004 which implies that only about .4% of the variations in crises preparedness in hotels in Naivasha were attributed to post-crisis communication strategies. This would be at a standard error of 1.29895.

Using the context of COVID-19, many researchers have explored the problem of communication strategies in ensuring safety and stability in the hospitality and tourism

industry. Susilo and Prayudi (2022) explored how the pandemic impacted the hotels' operations focusing on the effect of government restriction on movement. Using five start hotels from Yogyakarta, the study determined how public relations and their communications impacted crisis management during the COVID-19 pandemic. As an inclusive approach, the study used local hotels as other foreign hotels to examine the pre-crisis, during crisis and post-crisis strategies used. Qualitative approach through interviews with employees, hotel management and customers. The study showed regardless of the stage of a crisis, working closely with the crisis management team, experts and consultants was key in communicating the crisis management plan. The study revealed that over time the hotels overcame the crises, but notably on different time scales. Some of the strategies put in ending the crises included formation of crisis management teams, involving experts, drafting and adopting management plans working with the government organs to align to policies and well as revamping marketing through public relations.

In follow up with the regression analysis results, the coefficients are presented in Table 4.

Table 4: Regression Analysis between Post-crisis Communication Strategies and Crises 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)	6.296	.325		19.397	.000	5.657	6.935
	Post Crisis scores	-.004	.021	-.011	-.168	.867	-.046	.039

a. Dependent Variable: Level of crisis preparedness

Table 4 shows statistics that were used to model the relationship between Post-crisis Communication Strategies and Crises Preparedness in hotels in Naivasha. The following model was developed from the statistics.

$Y = 6.296 – 0.011X + 0.325$

Where;

Y – the level of crisis preparedness

X is the post-crisis communication strategies

The model implies that without the scores in post-crisis commutation, the level of crises preparedness would be 6.296 + 0.325 = 6.621. Inclusion of one unit of the strategies on post-crisis communication in the model would lead to reduction of the preparedness by .0011 making it to 6.6199. However, the change would be insignificant as the significance level = .87 is greater than the critical p-value of .05. Moreover, the change would be at 95% confidence interval between -.046 and .039.

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

The study found that various post-crisis communication strategies were used in crises preparedness in tourism and hospitality industry on Naivasha subcounty. A communication strategy that emphasizes protection of the reputation of the organization was popular among a

larger portion of the respondents 60% (n=177). The hotels alos used delivering messages that communicated precautions on how to prevent harm in case of a crisis.

The study revealed that as a post-crisis communication strategy, the management in the hotels was keen to give information that focuses on coping psychologically with a crisis situation. The hotels also ensured that keeping the image of the hotels through communication strategies would enhance crises preparedness. The findings in post-crisis communication strategies included the messaging that focuses more on rebuilding of the organization's profitability. This was found to be strongly and positively associated with restoration of the hotel's image (r=.610).

The study found that about 0.4% of the variations in crises preparedness in hotels in Naivasha were attributed to post-crisis communication strategies. These were insignificant and thus key in crisis preparedness in the tourism and hospitality industry in Naivasha Sub-County. The study reported that inclusion of one unit of the strategies on post-crisis communication in the model would lead to reduction of the preparedness by .0011 making it to 6.6199. However, the change would be insignificant (sign. = .87).

Conclusion

The study concluded with the post-crisis communication strategies being protection of the reputation of the organization, issuing precautions on how to prevent harm, how to cope psychologically and messaging that focus more on rebuilding of the organization's profitability. The study reported about 0.4% of the variations in crises preparedness in hotels in Naivasha being attributed to post-crisis communication strategies.

Recommendations arising from the Study

Guided by the current study findings, the following recommendations are made.

Recommendations for Policy

The study findings inform development and roll out of polices that guide crisis management plans in tourism and hotel industry.

i. To the Cabinet secretary in the Ministry of Tourism, there is need to develop policies that spell and guide crisis management plans that acknowledge effective crisis communication strategies in hotels in the country.
ii. The Ministry of ICT may develop guidelines of better dissemination of information within a working environment for effective sharing among the staff in tourism and hotel industry These would be aligned to safeguarding the mental wellness of the hotel employees during a crisis.

Recommendations for Practice

The study findings form a basis of debates around the crisis preparedness for tourism and hotel industry investors and managers. More specifically the following stakeholders may undertake the following;

i. Individual hotel operators and managers in Naivasha subcounty to provide regular information on crisis, and having a crisis communication plan in the precrisis stage This will educate and sensitize the employees of the possible risks and how to handle them.
ii. The hotel caucuses in Naivasha may collaborate to form communication strategies that guard that reputation especially in a crisis aftermath. The groups may also invest more in evaluations of a crisis that should form a basis of further precautions.

iii. The hotel investors and related stakeholders may take keen interest in the operations within a hotel in terms of crisis preparedness as only the type of hotel ownership was significant to crisis preparedness.

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