How Vietnamese Stakeholders View Current Social Media Use in Crisis Communication in Vietnam

By Tuong-Minh Ly-Le[*]

Little research has explored the use of social media in PR or crisis communication in a Vietnamese setting, and even fewer studies were dedicated to exploring the stakeholders' viewpoint. Nonetheless, social media for the Vietnamese people has gained growing importance, and in the past 5 years, Vietnam has seen many company- or brand-crises that started on social media, and some organizations have begun to use social media for crisis response. Therefore, this research examines the use of social media for crisis communication in Vietnamese organizations from a stakeholder's viewpoint. By using the networked crisis communication theory (NCCT) and through a survey with 370 people in Vietnam, this research aims to understand how Vietnamese stakeholders perceive the organizations' effort of using social media in crisis response and what the stakeholders think the organizations should have done with social media during crises.

Keywords: crisis communication, crisis response, social media, stakeholder communication, Vietnam.

Introduction

In Vietnam, social media has become one of the most popular communication platforms. It is noteworthy that Vietnam is one of the fasted digital-growth countries and the social media penetration rate in the country is more than 43 percent with more than 40 million social media active users (Kemp, 2016). In the past 5 years, Vietnam has witnessed many organizational or brand crises that started on social media platforms. In such instances, through extensive online sharing of a single stakeholder post about an organizational issue, social media users attracted enough attention to the issue to turn it into a full crisis.

To date, little research has explored this topic on the use of social media in public relations (PR) or crisis communication in a Vietnamese setting. To address this gap, this study aims to explore how Vietnamese stakeholders perceive the organizations' effort of using social media in crisis response and what they think the organizations should have done with social media during crises. The results of this study are expected to contribute to Vietnamese current PR practice, to help Vietnamese PR practitioners understand their stakeholders better, and to understand whether social media should be used in crisis responses.

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Literature Review

Defining a Crisis

According to Coombs (2014), a crisis is the perception of an abrupt incident that impacts stakeholders' perceived interest in an organization and requires immediate attention and reaction. Since it is perceptual, if a stakeholder thinks an event is a crisis, organizations should deal with it as if it is a crisis; if the event is left untreated, stakeholder expectancies will be breached. To help organizations recognize a crisis, assess the level of perceived responsibility and prepare accordingly, and to make the crisis communication effort easier, researchers have developed categorization systems of crisis types. Coombs (2014) has provided the most recent way to categorize a crisis, which is whether it primarily concerns "public safety and welfare," and thus can be managed using traditional PR practices, or whether it begins or grows in social media and therefore primarily involves reputation management (p. 22). He defined these two categories as traditional and social media crises. Traditional crises are typically concerned with the wellbeing and safety of the public as well as disturbances to organizational operations. The practice of crisis management developed around traditional crises (Coombs, 2014). In contrast, social media crises are crises that begin or grow larger through communication on social media. These crises are generally aimed at damaging an organization's reputation, although they may also concern the same issues as traditional crises. Conway, Ward, Lewis, and Bernhardt (2007) used the phrase "Internet crisis potential" to describe social media crises (p. 214). These researchers saw such crises as arising out of stakeholder concerns regarding ethics and corporate social responsibility along with features of the Internet that allow stakeholders to raise their voices.

Coombs (2014) further separated social media crises into three types. A social media crisis could be an *organizational misuse social media crisis* (when an organization breaks existing, acceptable communication on social media), a *dissatisfied customer social media crisis* (when a customer's complaint on social media is amplified), or a *challenge* (when an organization is perceived as irresponsible or inappropriate by its stakeholders). This research considers all types of social media crises but especially social media challenges when the responsibility is perceived to belong to an organization.

Social Media Crisis in Vietnam

In Vietnam, social media are popular communication channels in which people can discuss nearly anything, including issues with organizations that may turn into crises. Two examples of crises involved the Danlait company and Red Bear Noodles. In 2013, Danlait's crisis began when a mother's comment on a forum about her baby's reaction to Danlait's formula milk led to the fining and closure of the Danlait company. The Red Bear Noodles' crisis occurred in 2012 when a journalist's note on his personal Facebook page about

Red Bear's misleading TV commercials gathered enough attention to turn into a massive boycott of the product.

Despite the powerful effect of social media in conditioning a crisis, and the trend to integrate social media into crisis management strategies in many countries, research indicates that Vietnamese companies have often ignored or underutilized these channels. Through a preliminary analysis of the stories on crisis response of Vietnamese companies to the media from 2010-2015, the author noticed that all analyzed companies placed their crisis responses in traditional media (i.e., press releases or press conferences) and paid little to no attention to social media, even if a crisis had started on social media.

Not only have social media in Vietnamese crisis communication received little attention, but so has research in PR in the country in general. Scholars (i.e., Van, 2013; Mak, 2009) had studied to understand PR in Vietnam and how the economic development, political system and culture of Vietnam affect the PR industry. However, no study had dedicated to exploring the use of social media in PR or crisis communication in the country.

Current Use of Social Media in Crisis Communication

The business environment is increasingly competitive. Organizations thus should constantly communicate to reinforce trust and reputation among stakeholders. Several researchers have found that organizations are showing more effort to actively engage in dialogue with their stakeholders during crises now than in the past (Diers & Donohue, 2013; Kerkhof, Beugels, Utz, & Beukeboom, 2011). In the past, from the organization's side, traditional PR tactics, such as traditional press releases and press conferences, were the most prevalent choices for crisis management; however, research has shown that organizations are now adopting social media and 2-way communication. In this digital age, social media channels have dramatically changed the way people seek and share information, and have changed stakeholder communication practice in many ways. These changes also apply to Southeast Asian and Vietnamese PR practice. According to Domm (2015), in the ASEAN region, local technology use and communication practice is a major factor in decision-making about organizational PR strategies and tactics. When mentioning communication technology, Domm observed that Vietnamese PR practitioners think of social media first and consider these channels as a must-use in PR practice.

Social media, unlike traditional media, can bypass the journalistic gatekeeping process, and thus has the unique capability to disseminate information quickly and directly to individual audience members. This characteristic matches Coombs's (2014) notion of effective crisis communication, which is providing stakeholders with accurate, timely, consistent and relevant information (Coombs, 2014). Coombs further noted that if provided frequent information about a crisis, stakeholders can feel assured and less likely to have impractical expectations.

Besides speed, social media is also praised for its interactivity and participatory nature. Since social media content is collectively sought and created, many online news readers now consider it more relevant, interesting and credible

than traditional media (Siah, Bansal, & Pang, 2010; Sutton, Palen, & Shklovski, 2007). This content is now used as an additional news source. Further, social media channels have not only begun contributing to an organization's crisis communication effort but also to stakeholders' crisis information-seeking activities.

According to Siah et al. (2010), people have trusted and adapted to social media so well that when a hint of crisis sparks on social media, it can easily gain momentum and perpetuate a large audience in very little time. Several researchers (e.g., Austin, Liu & Jin, 2012; Procopio & Procopio, 2007) have found that during crises, stakeholders perceive social media channels to be news sources as credible as traditional mass media because social media provide up-to-date, unfiltered information and peer-support to crisis victims. Additionally, when a crisis is over, the information, discussions and comments on a crisis and an organization still linger online, even after the traditional media stop reporting about it. Hence, social media are not only channels that can be used for responding during crises but are also considered to be crucial elements in escalating and following up after crises (Siah et al., 2010). Social media have empowered stakeholders in both engaging in a crisis and replying to an organization's crisis communication processes.

Sherman (2010) expressed that the main uses of social media in crisis communication are to monitor social posts and conversations about a company to discover stakeholders' insights, anticipate possible threats, and communicate with stakeholders during the crisis. Social media could also help an organization during precrisis to determine who the key stakeholders are (Benoit, 1997) and prioritizing issues for proactive communication (Jaques, 2014). Since social media channels empower anyone to make a widespread and impactful crisis (Ly-Le, 2014), research on social media messages can help to determine who is shaping public opinion or drawing attention to topics.

The Networked Crisis Communication Theory

This research looks at this adoption from the Vietnamese stakeholders' point of view. To define, the stakeholders are organizations' customers, crisis victims or their associates, as well as general audiences who care about the crisis and its outcome. Using the lens of the networked crisis communication theory (NCCT) proposed by Schultz, Utz and Göritz (2011) and extended by Schultz, Utz and Glocka (2012), this study examines stakeholders' expectations of an organization's social media usage in the crisis information seeking and sharing process. The theory challenges the older sole focus on the message during crisis communication by showing the effects of media type on crisis communication and how the public responds to the same messages distributed on different media channels.

Comparing the influences of the communication medium and message on organizational reputation during crises, NCCT argues that in crisis communication, the choice of medium matters more than the message (Schultz et al., 2011). As social media allows organizations to communicate in real-time, the stakeholders are not left worried and stressed due to lack of information. Compared to communication via traditional media, crisis communication through social media

channels shows that an organization commits more to its stakeholders, wants to inform them more quickly and directly, and is willing to engage in dialogue with them, thus showing the organization to be more sincere and caring (Schultz et al., 2011; Schultz et al., 2012). Another advantage of social media is that organizations can communicate directly with their stakeholders, skipping the step of journalistic gatekeeping to deliver personalized messages (Schultz et al., 2012). Although traditional media channels might be more mainstream and credible, information delivered on social media can project a perceived human voice and communicate an organization's commitment better (Schultz et al., 2011). Social media thus offers the possibility of building trust and satisfaction among stakeholders better than its traditional counterparts. Additionally, Schultz et al. (2011) noted that positive post-crisis reputation is highest when multiple social media channels are used together. For example, in their study, Twitter and blogs were both employed. Schultz and colleagues argued that since the stakeholders were exposed to the message more frequently, they could process it more thoroughly. Altogether, NCCT demonstrates that crisis communication on social media can lead to a higher reputation of an organization than crisis communication via traditional media (Schultz et al., 2011; Utz, Schultz & Glocka, 2013).

The second aspect considered in NCCT is secondary crisis communication, which is the stakeholders' willingness to tell their friends about a crisis, share information about it and leave comments (Schultz et al., 2011). According to NCCT, the choice of media strongly influences secondary crisis communication. Contrary to the common belief that social media allows easy information sharing with only a mouse click, secondary crisis communication occurs more in the traditional media condition of NCCT studies (Schultz et al., 2011; Utz et al., 2013). Stakeholders tend to talk mainly about the information they received through traditional media. Moreover, even though the channels they use to pass information along may be social media (i.e., retweet a piece of news or hit "share" to an article), people are more likely to share with their acquaintances a traditional media article that is posted online than a post written purely for social media (Schultz et al., 2011). Utz et al. (2013) explained that this tendency is because of the higher credibility of traditional media; stakeholders thus depend more on traditional media for crisis news. On the other hand, the final factor of secondary crisis communication, leaving comments, is more likely to happen on social media (Schultz et al., 2012), as social media is not meant to create news, but is rather a platform for people to read news and share opinions.

The remaining aspect examined in NCCT is secondary crisis reactions, which are the acts of judging a crisis communication effort, talking badly about an organization, or boycotting an organization. The results from Schultz and colleagues' (2011) study showed that participants in the social media condition made fewer secondary crisis reactions than those in the traditional media condition. As mentioned previously in secondary crisis communication, people who receive crisis information from traditional media tend to share or speak about it more often. Moreover, these people are also more likely to talk badly or boycott an organization, compared to those who read information on social media channels (Schultz et al., 2011; Utz et al., 2013). This result indicates that sharing

information and acting on that information are two different things to consider (Schultz et al., 2011). Utz et al. (2013) explained that the conversational and transparent characteristics of social media fulfill stakeholders' demand for timely and accurate information; therefore, stakeholders will not engage in unfavorable behaviors toward an organization. NCCT concludes that crisis communication through social media upholds an organization's reputation and reduces negative secondary crisis reactions (Schultz et al., 2011). Therefore, crisis managers should pay more attention to the effects produced by the chosen medium.

According to Liu and Fraustino (2014), a limitation of NCCT is that it only passively reports the impact of social media use. The theory lacks suggestions or observations about how organizations could use social media to strengthen crisis communication and mitigate negative outcomes.

This study applies NCCT to explore the use of social media in crisis communication from the stakeholders' viewpoint. The study seeks to understand whether Vietnamese stakeholders prefer organizations to utilize social media in their crisis response efforts, if social media has an influence on the stakeholders' perception of the crisis information and their reactions to the organizations' responses, and if there is any other influence on stakeholders' perception besides the use of social media platforms.

Methodology

The survey examined two dimensions, which were stakeholders' current preferred communication channel during crises and stakeholders' expectations of an organization's social media usage in crisis communication. Accordingly, the survey contains the following measures: preference of timeliness and responsiveness in organizations' crisis response, and perception of organizations' crisis response on social media and reactions to organizations' crisis response on social media. There are two mandatory sections that ask for respondents' demographic information and preference and evaluation of an organization's social media usage in crisis communication. Additionally, respondents can freely express their expectations of an organization's crisis communication in Vietnam in the final open-ended section. The measuring items were randomly mixed together. The items employed in the survey for group 2's participants are described in Table 1.

The survey was administered to the Vietnamese stakeholder group. It employed a quantitative approach to quantify the respondents' opinions on the research topics. Using a three-point Likert scale ("always," "occasionally," and "never") and a five-point Likert scale ("strongly disagree," "disagree," neither disagree nor agree," "agree," and "strongly agree"), the survey was designed to capture the various degrees of agreement with the provided statements. The survey was distributed online. The main purpose of the surveys was not to increase the generalizability of the results but to test the variables with a large sample, to confirm the findings from the in-depth interviews with statistical results.

The target participants for this survey are members of the general public

who care about social issues and corporate ethics. Since this target group is the majority of the Vietnamese internet population, which is 47.3 million people (Kemp, 2016), the researcher based the sample size on the required size for large populations at 5 percent confidence interval, which is 384 (Krejcie & Morgan, 1970).

Table 1. Measures for Survey

Role	Item
Preference of timeliness and responsiveness in organizations' crisis response	1. You believe traditional media is a credible channel for organizations to share crisis information. 2. You believe traditional media is a quick channel for organizations to share crisis information. 3. You believe traditional media is a convenient channel for organizations to share crisis information. 4. You believe social media is a credible channel for organizations to share crisis information. 5. You believe social media is a quick channel for organizations to share crisis information. 6. You believe social media is a convenient channel for organizations to share crisis information.
Dimension of stakeholders' expectations of an organization's social media usage in crisis communication (from NCCT)	
Role	Item
Perception of organizations' crisis response on social media	1. If an organization responds quickly and directly through social media, you'd think the organization is sincere. 2. If an organization responds quickly and directly through social media, you'd think the organization is caring about its stakeholders. 3. If an organization responds quickly and directly through social media, you'd think the organization is willing to have a dialogue with the stakeholders.
Reactions to organizations' crisis response on social media	1. If an organization responds quickly and directly through social media, you would be more likely to stop sharing bad news or talking badly about the organization. 2. If an organization responds quickly and directly through social media, you would be more likely to support the organization after the crisis.

The survey for this group used the snowball sampling technique to get as close as possible to that number. Since Ho Chi Minh and Ha Noi represent the southern and northern parts of the country, respectively, and the researcher wanted to ensure the diversity of the participants demographically, initial participants were from both cities. The initial participants were members of the general public who expressed care about social issues and corporate ethics, who took an active part in a recent social media crisis in Vietnam. The initial participants were asked to forward the survey to whomever they considered qualified. Additionally, the link to the survey was posted on the author's

Facebook page to target the professional network as well as the social media-savvy groups on Facebook.

After distribution, respondents in this survey were 370 individuals who have lived and worked in Vietnam in the last two years. The ages ranged from 18 to 63 (mean: 29, standard deviation: 9.2). The respondents were 64.3 percent female and 35.7 percent male. The paired Wilcoxon test was used to test for differences in overall scoring between the perceptions of using traditional media and social media in crisis communication.

Results

During Crises, Vietnamese Stakeholders Expect More Timely and Responsive Actions from Organizations on Social Media Channels

In the first set of questions, the respondents were asked for crisis response, if they "expect organizations to make the initial crisis response official and carefully-crafted, even if it takes more time" (characteristics that are usually displayed in traditional media responses) or "expect organizations to make the initial crisis response quick and direct, even if the information may not be official or verified" (characteristics that are usually associated with social media responses). The assessment was on a scale of 1-5 (1: strongly disagree, 5: strongly agree).

Figure 1 shows the overall preference of crisis information across all age groups. 82.4 percent of the respondents at least agreed that they prefer official and carefully-crafted crisis information, and only 35.4 percent agreed that they prefer quick and direct information. Further, a remarkably high 51.6 percent of the respondents indicated disagreement in quick and direct crisis information. It was found that the respondents significantly preferred an organization to share official and carefully-crafted information during crises ($p<0.001$) to quick information.

Figure 1. Levels of Agreement to the Stakeholders' Preference of Crisis Information
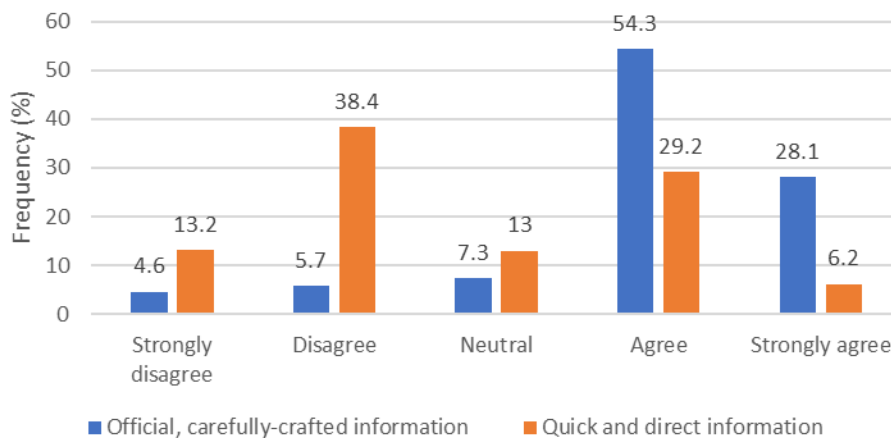
The survey also included an open-ended section to discover whether the respondents had any other opinions about crisis communication in Vietnam that they had not shared in other questions. Providing more details to the previous question on stakeholders' preference for crisis information, most respondents expressed that they do not ask for quick crisis response.

> "*Being responsive during a crisis is important, but it is more important to provide accurate information and evidence that an organization is investigating the issue and will take responsibility for a crisis.*" – A 22-year-old female respondent.

> "*I'd like both speed and accuracy in crisis response, but more on the accuracy side. When a response appears across channels, information on traditional media and social media should all be accurate and consistent. It makes me more confused if I receive a quick response on social media that does not agree with information provided later on other channels.*" – A 27-year-old female respondent.

In brief, the results showed that while a timely response is expected during crises, Vietnamese stakeholders prefer organizations to make an official and carefully-crafted crisis response. The participants would rather wait for the unofficial, credible and acceptable response from the responsible organization.
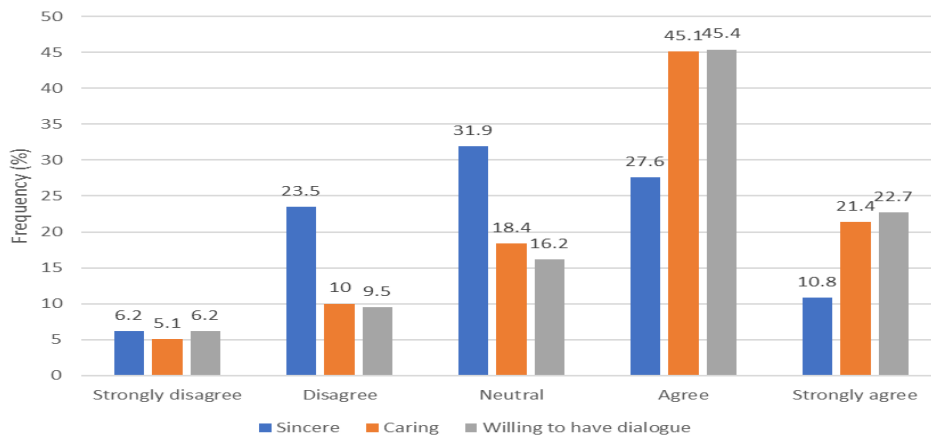
In Vietnam, Crisis Response on Social Media Leads to Better Evaluation and Perception of an Organization

The respondents were then asked how they would perceive an organization's effort if it responded to a crisis on social media. Suggested perceptions were that the organization would be sincere, caring, and willing to have a dialogue, and the answers are presented in Figure 2. On a Likert scale from 1 to 5 (strongly disagree to strongly agree), the respondents expressed the agreement to the choices of perception.

Assessing the overall results, respondents were generally positive toward organizations that used social media for crisis response. About two third (66.5 percent) of the respondents at least agreed that they would perceive the organization caring and 68.1 percent at least agreed that they would perceive the organization as willing to have a dialogue. On the other hand, the "being sincere" perception did not receive much agreement. Only 37.4 percent of the respondents at least agreed that they would perceive the organization as sincere. Nonetheless, the results overall indicated that respondents favored organizations using social media and welcomed organizations' efforts to solve issues. Details on each perception are presented in the following figure.

The survey showed that Vietnamese stakeholders hold better evaluation and p erception towards organizations that use social media for crisis response. Most res pondents expressed that organizations responding on social media are caring and willing to talk with stakeholders.

Figure 2. Levels of Agreement across Age Groups that Stakeholders would perceive an Organization to be Sincere, Caring, or Willing to have a Dialogue if it used Social Media for Crisis Response


In Vietnam, Crisis Response on Social Media does Not Lead to Fewer Secondary Crisis Reactions than Crisis Response on Traditional Media or No Crisis Response

In the next questions, respondents were asked how they would react to organizations that use social media for crisis response. The assessment is on a 5-point Likert scale from strongly disagree to strongly agree.

Figure 3 presents overall reactions to an organization that uses social media for crisis response. For the "stop sharing bad news or talking badly" dimension, only 35.1 percent of the respondents at least agreed, while 41.1 percent were neutral and 23.8 percent at least disagreed. Similarly, for the "support the organization after the crisis" dimension, only 35.7 percent of the respondents at least agreed, while 44.3 percent were neutral to the statement, and 19.0 percent at least disagreed. Details of the answers to each reaction are presented in Figure 3.

Figure 3. Levels of Agreement regarding Stakeholder Secondary Crisis Reactions if an Organization used Social Media for Crisis Response
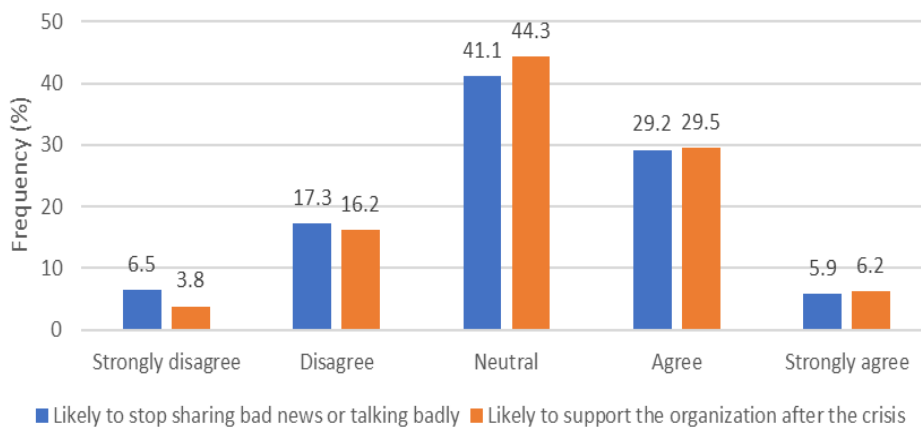
The survey showed that most respondents would not expect stakeholders to provide any supportive reactions towards organizations that use social media for crisis communication. Compared to organizations that respond on traditional media or provide no response, they also would not expect a reduction in secondary crisis reactions.

Organizations Usually Solve Crises with Silence or Hide the Truth

In the open-ended section, some respondents said that they prefer organizations to offer an apology and a solution, rather than trying to buy time or to temporarily calm stakeholders. At the same time, they also indicated that most organizations are not willing to solve their crises. Specifically, some respondents indicated that organizations try to hide their crises and make stakeholders think that the crisis has gone away.

> "*I think organizations always solve crises with silence, no matter how big or serious a crisis is. There usually is no one from a company to admit responsibility or extend an official apology. Vietnamese people tend to be forgetful, as we are exposed to too much information in any day. Thus over time, we can forget about a crisis, and that's what the company is waiting for.*" – A 32-year-old male respondent.

> "*If an organization is found responsible for a crisis, it usually hides the truth and only provides minimal information, just enough to make the impression that they responded.*" – A 27-year-old female respondent.

In conclusion, 6 of 17 respondents of the open-ended section showed their discontent of current crisis communication practice in Vietnam, mentioning that most organizations are unwilling to solve a crisis properly.

While Traditional Media is regarded as More Credible than Social Media, Stakeholders Still Lack Trust Regarding Traditional Media News

Figure 4 presents the answers to the questions whether respondents "believe traditional media is a credible channel for organizations to share crisis information" and whether they "believe social media is a credible channel for organizations to share crisis information." More than half (54.6 percent) of the respondents at least agreed that traditional media is a credible channel for communicating crises, while only 31.8 percent agreed that social media is credible. Moreover, the respondents' perception of social media's credibility was not neutral, as 42.7 percent thought it is not credible. To conclude, the respondents significantly regard traditional media as a more credible channel for sharing crisis information than social media ($p<0.001$).

Figure 4. Levels of Agreement to the Credibility of Traditional Media and Social Media in Sharing Crisis Information
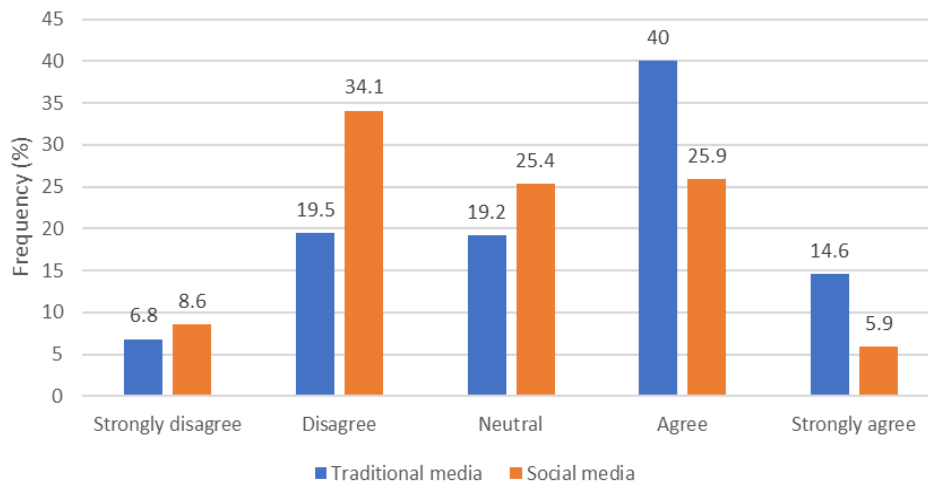
In the open-ended section, another theme emerged regarding the credibility of communication platforms. Three respondents elaborated upon this unreliability in the open-ended section.

"*Crises on social media usually start with someone claiming him- or herself as an industry insider and wanting to whistle-blow. The information then is shared here and there, and accumulatively added by who-knows-who, making the whole issue somewhat of a mess. I think this uncontrolled news flow makes the news receivers more superficial and passive, as they cannot trust what they see or hear.*" – A 21-year-old female respondent.

Similarly, while traditional media is regarded as more credible than social media, 10 of 62 respondents who replied to the open-ended question expressed disappointment in the ethics and current practice of traditional media agencies.

"*Crisis information in Vietnam is biased. Those with money can somehow manipulate [traditional] media. Even if a crisis is disclosed by the media, the company can use its money to stop the story.*" – A 24-year-old male respondent.

"*[Traditional] media nowadays focuses on scandalous news. News like that is aired too frequently, too fast, and sometimes the information is misleading or unverified. The news receivers can't recognize which piece of news is truthful and which piece is fabricated. Some people think that media is in a setback and reading news is nothing more than a daily routine.*" – A 21-year-old female respondent.

"*[Traditional media] is government-owned and heavily censored and directed. Thus, information on traditional media only reflects part of the story.*" – A 37-year-old male respondent.

In general, most respondents expressed their general unease about crisis communication ethics and news channels in Vietnam, and expressed that there

should be a drastic change in Vietnam's communication practice during crises. Respondents did not offer a preference regarding news channels.

Conclusion

This study concluded that while a timely response is expected during crises, Vietnamese stakeholders prefer organizations to make an initial crisis response official and carefully-crafted. Previous studies (e.g., Schultz et al., 2012; Coombs, 2014) indicated that crisis communication needs to be quick, swift and immediate to avoid speculations and lead to a caring, positive organizational image during a crisis. However, this study found that an official and carefully-crafted crisis response is more expected and preferred. A possible explanation is that in sensitive times like during crises, stakeholders want to know how the organization responsible will react and resolve the situation. While timeliness is appreciated, officialness makes a crisis response more credible, accountable, offsets any rumors and assures stakeholders.

This study also confirmed that in Vietnam, crisis response on social media leads to better evaluation and perception of an organization. This result agrees with previous studies on crisis communication via social media (e.g., Schultz et al., 2011; 2012), which stated that crisis responses on social media can persuade stakeholders to be in favor of an organization and strengthen organizational reputation among stakeholders.

Lastly, the current study concludes that Vietnamese stakeholders do have any supportive reactions to the organizations using social media for crisis communication, and social media does not lead to fewer secondary crisis reactions than crisis response on traditional media or no crisis response. This finding is inconsistent with Schultz and colleagues' (2011) assessment, which stated that using social media for crisis communication can lead to more support and fewer secondary reactions from stakeholders. A possible explanation for this is that stakeholders do not consider only the communication platform in crisis response but also the message content. This indicates that the choice of medium is not the only factor that matters in crisis communication as Schultz et al. claimed.

This study has an inherent limitation due to its nonprobability (snowball) sampling approach. The sampling techniques suggest the shortcoming of representativeness and generalizability. Further, the results do not indicate causation; they simply state the correlations of the variables from the respondents' perspectives. Future research should consider probability sampling techniques to overcome the limitations of this study and create broader generalizations of the results.

Nonetheless, despite the limitations, this study shed lights on how organizations should communicate a crisis in this social media age. In brief, although Vietnamese stakeholders use social media to communicate and find information during crises, this platform is not as highly regarded by stakeholders as organizations expect. Stakeholders appreciate social media for its quickness and convenience, and organizations responding on this platform can gather more

positive evaluation. However, stakeholders think the information on social media is not trustworthy and organizations responding on this platform do not automatically receive more supportive reactions or fewer secondary crisis reactions. As crisis will not disappear from organizational settings, and social media will become even more important, exploring the connections between crisis communication and social media is and will be an imperative focus of public relations field, not only in the academia or in Vietnam, but also in business practice.

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