



ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE OF HUMANITIES AND JOURNALISM
GRADUATE SCHOOL OF JOURNALISM AND COMMUNICATIONS

CRISIS COMMUNICATION MANAGEMENT IN A COMMERCIAL
MEDIA IN CASE OF ETHIOPIAN BROADCASTING SERVICE

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DECLARATIONS

I **Nafkot Tigistu** registration Number/I.D. number GSE/5504/12, do hereby declare that this thesis is my original work and that it has not been submitted partially; or in full, by any other person for an award of degree in any other university/institution.

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ABSTRACT

In the contemporary media landscape, fraught with challenges and potential crises that can significantly impact an organization's reputation and credibility, this thesis conducts an in-depth exploration of Crisis Communication Management (CCM) in the context of a prominent commercial media institution, the Ethiopian Broadcasting Service (EBS). Employing a qualitative research framework, the study relies on extensive interviews and two pertinent case studies to meticulously examine the multifaceted strategies employed by EBS in responding to crises. Qualitative research methodologies, such as interviews and case studies, form the cornerstone of this inquiry, enabling an exploration of the nuanced and context-specific dimensions of crisis communication within EBS. By actively involving key stakeholders within the organization, including executives, communication professionals, and journalists, the research endeavors to unearth invaluable insights into EBS's perception, comprehension, and adept management of crises within the dynamic and ever-evolving media environment.

The research findings reveal that EBS employs a combination of crisis communication practices and strategies, including swift response, message consistency, and transparency. Stakeholder engagement and social media monitoring play pivotal roles in managing crises effectively. However, challenges such as rapid information dissemination on social media, limited resources, audience perception and the need for improved internal communication were identified. EBS's case studies illustrate the organization's varying responses to crises, highlighting the importance of context and adaptability.

Based on the findings, this study recommends that EBS enhance its crisis communication management by investing in social media monitoring tools and training to address the challenges posed by the rapid spread of information online. Furthermore, internal communication processes should be strengthened to ensure a unified response during crises. The organization should consider developing a comprehensive crisis communication plan that incorporates lessons learned from the case studies. Finally, continued stakeholder engagement and transparency should be prioritized.

This research contributes valuable insights into Crisis Communication Management within the commercial media sector, focusing on EBS as a case study. The study underscores the importance of context-specific crisis response strategies and highlights the challenges faced by media organizations in the digital age. By embracing recommended improvements in crisis communication practices, EBS and similar organizations can enhance their crisis preparedness and effectively navigate the complex media landscape, safeguarding their reputation and maintaining stakeholder trust in times of crisis.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

This chapter introduces the overarching theme of crisis communication management within the context of EBS TV and the broader media landscape. It underscores the critical need for organizations to effectively manage crises to protect their reputation and maintain stakeholder trust in today's fast-paced information age. The chapter sets the stage by outlining the study's significance, establishing the statement of the problem, and defining the scope of the research. It serves as a foundational framework for the subsequent chapters, providing a clear understanding of the rationale and purpose of the study while highlighting the pivotal role that crisis communication plays in contemporary media organizations like EBS TV.

1.1 Background of the Study

In this modern world image building and branding is very essential for once organization to be competitive. Every origination may face internal and external crises and those crises may cause potential damage to the organization. Crisis is a company's corporate image- describing how favorable and accurate public perceptions are about an organization-reflects its reputation but does not represent its essence. A crisis delves into the soul of an organization and dissects its core identity (Veena P. Rawjee, 2012). Public loss, financial loss, reputation loss are some of crisis consequences. In order to prevent and overcome crisis public relation is very important. Crisis management is an important public relation tool in minimizing damage to a company's reputation.

Scholars in the discipline of communications are particularly interested in public relations consider public relation as a crucial subsystem of an organization, and its efficient implementation is closely linked to the organization's success. It allows organizations to successfully monitor, interact with, and react to other key groups within the organization's environment. For many years, public relations professionals have struggled to articulate the strategic contribution that public relations make to an organization's success (Veena P. Rawjee, 2012).

Public relations can be defined as “the management function that identifies, establishes, and maintains mutually beneficial relationships between an organization and the various publics

whom its success or failure depends” Cabot (2012). This definition insists that PR program in any institution cannot be properly developed and implemented without the active participation of the PR department in the executive management committee.

Crisis communication management is an essential and dynamic aspect of modern organizational and public relations strategy. It encompasses the processes, strategies, and tactics employed by organizations to address and mitigate crises that can potentially harm their reputation, operations, and stakeholders. In today's rapidly evolving media landscape, the ability to effectively manage crises has become an indispensable skill for media organizations. The proliferation of digital platforms, the 24/7 news cycle, and the democratization of information dissemination have heightened the vulnerability of media companies to various forms of crises. As media outlets play a critical role in shaping public opinion and disseminating information, their ability to handle crises has far-reaching implications for society at large.

This thesis delves into the intricate world of crisis communication management within the context of a commercial media organization, focusing on the case study of EBS (Ethiopian Broadcasting Service). EBS, a prominent media conglomerate in Ethiopia, is a quintessential example of a media outlet operating in a dynamic and challenging environment. Its experiences and strategies in crisis communication management serve as a microcosm for understanding the broader challenges faced by media organizations in an age of heightened scrutiny and rapid information dissemination.

Ethiopian Broadcasting Service (EBS TV) is an Ethiopian free to air and privately held media established to provide a niche transmission programming that targets the booming Ethiopian market globally. Launched in 2008, EBS is based in Ethiopia with correspondents both in United States at its headquarters in Silver Spring, Maryland, U.S. EBS TV broadcasts programs in mostly Amharic. It focuses various entertainments related subjects such as talk shows, game shows, movies, dramas and others. EBS aims to promote Ethiopian and other African countries' values, cultures and traditions on a global scale. The much-needed information provided by EBS is helping bridge the cultural divide and narrow the communication gap for Ethiopians residing in North America and around the world. EBS prides itself on providing quality programs

pertaining to the rich cultural heritage of Ethiopia, its history, tradition, socio-economic development, business, tourism and current affairs.

The media landscape in Ethiopia, like in many other parts of the world, has witnessed significant transformations in recent years. EBS, with its diverse range of programming and widespread audience reach, is emblematic of these changes. As the media industry has expanded and diversified, so too have the risks and crises that media organizations must navigate. These crises can take various forms, including editorial controversies, ethical dilemmas, financial challenges, security threats, and digital misinformation campaigns, among others.

Effective crisis communication management is crucial not only for the survival of media organizations but also for maintaining public trust in the media's role as a reliable source of information. The manner in which media companies respond to crises can influence public perceptions, shape public discourse, and even impact government policies. Consequently, this study seeks to explore how EBS, a commercial media organization operating within the Ethiopian media landscape, has managed and continues to manage crises that have arisen throughout its history.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Public relations, as a strategic communication discipline, are deeply entwined with crisis communication management. In today's fast-paced and interconnected world, organizations face an array of potential crises that can threaten their reputation, operations, and stakeholder trust. Crisis communication management, therefore, becomes an indispensable component of an organization's crisis response strategy. It encompasses the planning, preparation, and execution of communication strategies aimed at addressing stakeholders' needs, mitigating crisis impact, and safeguarding an organization's reputation (Coombs, 2007; Coombs, 1997).

The need for crisis communication management is paramount. Organizations, whether in the public or private sector, must prioritize open and honest communication during times of adversity. The ability to effectively navigate and recover from crises hinges on a well-structured crisis communication management strategy. Such strategies offer a multitude of advantages, including maintaining trust and credibility, protecting reputation, minimizing negative impact,

enhancing stakeholder relationships, demonstrating resilience, and providing a competitive edge in an increasingly competitive market (Coombs, 2007; Fediuk, Pace, & Botero, 2010).

Coombs (1997) emphasizes that a crisis communication management plan is not merely a luxury but a necessity. It enables organizations to respond swiftly and efficiently to crises, potentially preventing further damage. Without a predefined crisis communication plan, organizations may struggle to coordinate their response, leading to confusion, misinformation, and potential harm to their reputation and stakeholder relationships. Additionally, the absence of proactive crisis communication strategies can render organizations susceptible to rumors and negative narratives that can exacerbate the crisis's consequences.

One of the key advantages of crisis communication management is its role in controlling the narrative. In an era where information spreads rapidly through digital channels and social media, organizations must have the means to address concerns, provide accurate information, and counteract the spread of false information. Effective crisis communication management allows organizations to regain control of the narrative and shape public perception in their favor (Coombs, 2007; Jin & Austin, 2017). Moreover, it serves as an opportunity for organizational learning and improvement. Crises serve as wake-up calls, prompting organizations to assess vulnerabilities, implement necessary changes, and develop stronger crisis response strategies (Coombs, 2004).

Audience perception plays a crucial role in determining the success of crisis communication, especially for commercial media organizations. How an audience receives, interprets, and responds to crisis communication strategies directly influences public trust and the organization's reputation. In the context of a crisis, media outlets like EBS must not only deliver timely and accurate information but also engage in transparent communication to mitigate misinformation and alleviate public concerns. Audience perception reflects the effectiveness of these efforts, as it measures whether the public views the media's communication as credible, reliable, and reassuring. Understanding audience perception is essential for media organizations to refine their crisis communication strategies, ensuring that they foster trust, maintain resilience, and safeguard their reputation during and after crises. This study aims to analyze how EBS's audience perceives its crisis communication management, providing insights that can help strengthen future efforts.

Not implementing crisis communication management practices within an organization can lead to a multitude of problems and negative consequences. Firstly, it may hinder the organization's ability to respond effectively and coordinate efforts during a crisis, potentially exacerbating the situation (Heide & Simonsson, 2021). The absence of clear communication channels and strategies can result in misinformation, confusion, and a loss of stakeholder trust. Furthermore, organizations that neglect crisis communication management may struggle to rebuild trust and repair their reputation post-crisis, leading to long-term damage to their brand image and public perception (Civelek, Çemberci, & Eralp, 2016).

In the context of Ethiopian studies, the lack of a crisis communication management strategy has been demonstrated to have severe consequences (Mohammed, Z., 2020 & Gebru, A., 2020 & Spurgeon, & Wondimu, B., 2018). Problems include ineffective crisis response, vulnerability to rumors and negative narratives, and difficulties in controlling the narrative surrounding the crisis. Social media's significant role in disseminating information in Ethiopia amplifies the importance of a well-prepared crisis communication management plan (Civelek, Çemberci, & Eralp, 2016).

The need for conducting a thesis on crisis communication management in a commercial media organization like EBS becomes evident. Such an undertaking provides practical insights into handling crises in a fast-paced and evolving media landscape (Jin & Austin, 2017). Commercial media organizations are often at the forefront of public attention and are more susceptible to crises due to their high visibility. Consequently, studying crisis communication management in such an organization offers valuable insights into the unique challenges and strategies required to manage crises effectively in the media industry.

Furthermore, a thesis on crisis communication management in a commercial media organization can contribute to the development of best practices and guidelines for the entire industry (Jin & Austin, 2017). Media organizations play a crucial role in shaping public opinion and disseminating information, making their crisis response strategies of significant importance. Analyzing EBS's crisis communication management practices can help identify successful approaches that can be shared with other media organizations, ultimately improving the overall crisis preparedness and response capabilities of the industry. This thesis, therefore, serves not only as an academic endeavor but also as a practical contribution to the field of crisis communication management in a media context.

1.3 Objective of the study

1.3.1 General Objective

The overarching aim of this thesis is to conduct a comprehensive analysis and evaluation of crisis communication management within the commercial media industry, with a particular emphasis on the case of the Ethiopian Broadcasting Service (EBS). This research endeavors to provide valuable insights into best practices and recommendations for enhancing crisis communication management in the commercial media sector. The ultimate goal is to contribute to the improvement of organizational resilience and reputation management in the face of diverse crises.

1.3.2 Specific Objectives

The specific objectives guiding this research are as follows:

- To assess how EBS TV effectively deals with various types of crises.
- To investigate and gain a deep understanding of the strategies, decision-making processes, and stakeholder engagement practices employed by EBS during crisis situations.
- To identify and analyze the challenges and obstacles encountered in the domain of crisis communication management within EBS.
- To scrutinize the specific crisis communication management strategies employed by EBS, considering their alignment with industry standards and best practices.
- To evaluate the audience's perception of the effectiveness of EBS's crisis communication strategies in fostering public trust during crises, focusing on clarity, timeliness, accuracy, and transparency of the information provided.

1.4 Research Questions

The research aimed to address the following questions:

- How does EBS TV effectively handle different types of crises?
- What are the strategies, decision-making processes, and stakeholder engagement practices employed by EBS TV when dealing with crisis situations, and how do these practices contribute to crisis resolution and reputation management?

- What challenges and obstacles does EBS TV encounter in the domain of crisis communication management, and how do these challenges impact the organization's ability to effectively respond to and recover from crises?
- To what extent do the crisis communication management strategies employed by EBS TV align with industry standards and best practices, and how does this alignment impact the organization's overall crisis management outcomes?
- How does the audience perceive the effectiveness of crisis communication management by EBS in shaping public trust during times of crisis?

These research questions can serve as a foundation for an in-depth study of EBS TV's crisis communication management practices, shedding light on its strategies, challenges, and alignment with industry norms.

1.5 Significance of the study

In the Context of the Organization (EBS)

The significance of this study for EBS lies in its potential to improve crisis communication management within the organization. By identifying the strategies, practices, and challenges faced by EBS in effectively managing and responding to crises, this research can provide valuable insights that can be used to enhance crisis communication efforts. Understanding the specific context of EBS within the Ethiopian media landscape is crucial for developing effective crisis communication strategies. This study will shed light on the unique factors that influence crisis communication in the commercial media industry in Ethiopia, allowing EBS to tailor their approaches accordingly.

This research enables the EBS as a media organization to realize the relevance of PR as a two-way communication between the community and stakeholders. In addition, the study will help the institution improve its public relations professional activities, such as image building, to become a major media company in the country. Furthermore, apart from using its media channels to reach people and establish a public sphere, the research will assist EBS as a public service broadcasting in reaching out to the community and the public by using the PR department as a platform for linking individuals and stakeholders.

Ultimately, the significance of this study for EBS lies in its potential to enhance organizational resilience and reputation management in times of crisis. By providing insights, best practices, and recommendations, this research aims to improve crisis communication efforts within EBS, ultimately benefiting the organization and its stakeholders.

For other Commercial Medias and Practical Relevance

This study provides valuable insights into the strategies, practices, and challenges faced by EBS in effectively managing and responding to crises. By understanding the specific context of EBS, this study will shed light on the unique factors that influence crisis communication in the Ethiopian media landscape. This knowledge can then be utilized by other commercial media organizations in Ethiopia and beyond to develop more effective crisis communication strategies.

The study addresses a crucial aspect of crisis management in the modern commercial media landscape. Commercial media organizations, like EBS, play a vital role in disseminating information to the public, making their crisis communication strategies crucial for maintaining public trust and minimizing reputational damage. By examining the specific case of EBS, the study provides insights and recommendations that can have practical relevance not only for EBS but also for other commercial media organizations facing similar challenges.

The study's findings can contribute establishing best practices for crisis communication in the commercial media industry. By examining the case of EBS, the study can identify successful crisis communication approaches that can be replicated or adapted by other media organizations. This can lead to the improvement of crisis communication practices across the industry as a whole, enhancing the ability of media organizations respond effectively during times of crisis.

Furthermore, in today's digital age, media organizations are constantly exposed to various crises that can damage their reputation and public trust. By understanding how EBS tackles these challenges, this study can provide valuable lessons for other media organizations grappling with similar issues. This can help them effectively manage crises and minimize their impact on reputation and public perception.

Academic Contribution to the Body of Knowledge

Crisis communication management is a dynamic field that requires ongoing research to adapt to changing trends and technologies. By studying the case of EBS, this study can contribute to the existing body of knowledge in the field of crisis communication management within the context of commercial media. It can serve as a reference for scholars, researchers, and practitioners interested in further exploring crisis communication strategies in commercial media environments.

The study can contribute to the body of knowledge on crisis communication management in the commercial media sector. By analyzing the case of EBS, which operates within a competitive and rapidly evolving industry, this research will identify best practices and recommendations for crisis communication. These findings can serve as a benchmark for other media organizations in developing their own crisis communication plans and strategies.

Managerial Implications

Effective crisis communication strategies can significantly impact the outcomes of crisis situations faced by commercial media organizations. The study can provide valuable insights to the management of EBS and other similar organizations, helping them better understand the challenges that may face during crises and offering guidance on developing effective crisis communication plans. This, in-turn, can assist managers in making informed decisions and implementing appropriate communication strategies during crises.

Overall, this study on crisis communication management in a commercial media, focusing on the case of EBS, holds significance in both practical and academic contexts. It can provide valuable insights, contribute to the existing literature, have managerial implications, and shape industry best practices in crisis communication for commercial media organizations.

1.6 Scope of the study

This study focuses on crisis communication management in a commercial media, specifically focusing on the case of EBS, which involves conducting a comprehensive analysis of the strategies, practices, audience perception and challenges faced by EBS in effectively managing

and responding to crises. It intended to provide insights, best practices, and recommendations for crisis communication management in a commercial media organization like EBS, with the aim of enhancing organizational resilience and reputation management in times of crisis.

The study is delimited in several key dimensions:

Geographical Scope: The study is limited to Ethiopia, specifically focusing on the commercial media industry and the case of EBS. Within Ethiopia, the study specifically centers on the case of EBS, one of the prominent commercial media organizations in the country. By narrowing the geographical scope to Ethiopia and focusing on EBS, this study aims to provide an in-depth understanding of the dynamics and challenges faced by the commercial media industry in this particular context.

Study Themes: The following themes are which this study focused and concentrated to analyze the crisis communication management of EBS with its strategies, practices, and challenges to provide insights, best practices, and recommendations.

1. **Crisis communication strategies and practices:** The study used this theme to examine the crisis communication strategies and practices employed by EBS during different crises, such as scandals, controversies, or emergencies, and evaluate their effectiveness in managing and mitigating reputational damage.
2. **The role of leadership in crisis communication:** This theme is used to examine the leadership strategies, decision-making processes, and communication styles of EBS's top executives during crises, and evaluate their impact on the organization's crisis communication effectiveness and reputation recovery.

By focusing on these study themes within the specific context of EBS and crisis communication management, this thesis aimed to provide insights and recommendations for improving crisis communication strategies in the commercial media industry in Ethiopia.

Study Media: This study aimed to investigate the crisis communication management strategies employed by EBS, a commercial media organization in Ethiopia, during various crises. The study involves a comprehensive analysis of EBS's crisis communication practices, including

stakeholder perceptions and reactions, crisis communication planning and preparedness, and the role of leadership. By examining these aspects within the context of EBS, this thesis provides valuable insights and recommendations for enhancing crisis communication strategies in the commercial media, specifically EBS.

Methodological Issues and Contents: This study used qualitative research methodology because it is preferable for the study for several reasons such as: in-depth understanding, contextual understanding, flexibility, and subjective and interpretation. Qualitative research methods are preferable for this thesis because they allow for an in-depth exploration of perceptions, reactions, and contextual factors related to crisis communication management in a commercial media organization like EBS.

Time Frame: The time frame for this study on crisis communication management in a commercial media, specifically focusing on the case of EBS, would typically span from 2021 to 2021. This time frame allows the study to analyze and evaluate the crisis communication strategies employed by EBS during this specific period, considering any significant events or developments that may have occurred. By focusing on this time frame, the study provides a comprehensive and up-to-date analysis of EBS's crisis communication management practices.

By delineating these aspects of the research scope, this study provides a focused and in-depth analysis of crisis communication management in a commercial media, specifically on the case of EBS, offering valuable insights for both scholars and practitioners within the nonprofit sector.

1.7 Limitation of the study

One limitation of this study is the restricted time frame of only one year (2020 to 2021). This short time frame may not provide a comprehensive understanding of EBS's crisis communication management practices, as crises can occur at any time and their effects may extend beyond the selected period. By examining only one year, the study may miss out on important insights and trends in crisis communication management that could have occurred before or after the chosen

time frame. This limitation reduces the generalizability of the findings, as crisis communication practices may vary over time.

Another limitation is the focus solely on one case (EBS), which limits the generalizability of the findings to other commercial media organizations. Each media organization has its unique set of challenges, stakeholders, and communication strategies, and focusing on only one case may not capture the full range of practices and experiences in crisis communication management. Including multiple case studies would provide a more comprehensive and diverse understanding of crisis communication practices in commercial media.

To overcome these limitations, it would be beneficial as a future work to include multiple case studies or extend the time frame to gather a more holistic understanding of crisis communication management in commercial media. By including multiple cases, the study can capture a broader range of practices, challenges, and strategies employed by different media organizations. Additionally, extending the time frame would allow for a more comprehensive analysis of crisis communication management practices over a longer period, capturing a wider range of crisis events and their aftermaths. This approach would enhance the generalizability and robustness of the findings, providing a more valuable contribution to the field of crisis communication management in commercial media. This study is focused on analyzing and evaluating the practices and strategies of crisis communication management, and it is limited to include the factors of the crises whether they may be internal or external.

1.8 Organization of the Paper

The organization of the paper of this thesis on crisis communication management strategy in a commercial media, specifically focusing on the case of EBS, follows a logical and structured approach. A brief outline of each chapter is given in order to provide the reader with an overall summary of the content:

The first chapter is an introductory chapter and serves as an introduction to the topic of crisis communication management in commercial media, specifically the case of EBS. It provides background information on the importance of crisis communication management and its relevance in the commercial media industry. The chapter also outlines the research objectives and research

questions that the study aims to address. Additionally, it discusses the scope and limitations of the study, setting the context for the subsequent chapters.

In the second chapter which is literature review, the study delves into the existing literature on crisis communication management. The definition and key concepts of crisis communication management are explored, providing a theoretical foundation for the study. The chapter also discusses relevant theoretical frameworks and models in crisis communication management, highlighting their applicability to the commercial media context. Previous studies on crisis communication management in commercial media are reviewed to identify gaps or areas for further exploration.

The third chapter is research design and methodology and it details the research design and approach employed in the study. It explains how the study collected data and conducted the research. The chapter outlines the data collection methods used, such as interviews and document analysis, and justifies their selection. The sample selection process is also described, along with any ethical considerations that were taken into account. This chapter provides a clear understanding of how the study was conducted and ensures transparency in the research process.

In this chapter which is data representation, analysis and data interpretation, the collected data is presented and analyzed. The study describes how the data was categorized and explains the data analysis techniques employed, such as thematic analysis or content analysis. The findings are interpreted, and key themes are identified based on the analysis. This chapter allows readers to understand the insights gained from the data and provides a comprehensive understanding of the crisis communication management strategies employed by EBS.

The fifth chapter which is findings, recommendation, and conclusion, presents and discusses the key findings related to EBS's crisis communication management strategies. The findings are presented in a clear and organized manner, allowing for a comprehensive understanding of EBS's approach to crisis communication management. The study compares the findings with existing literature and theories to provide insights into best practices. This chapter serves as a critical analysis of the data and offers valuable insights into the effectiveness of EBS's crisis communication management strategies. Based on the findings, this chapter offers practical recommendations for improving crisis communication management in commercial media,

specifically for EBS. The recommendations are derived from the study's findings and aim to address any identified gaps or areas for improvement. The chapter provides actionable suggestions that can be implemented by EBS or other commercial media organizations to enhance their crisis communication management strategies. The implications for future research in the field are also highlighted. And it finally summarizes the main findings and contributions of the study. It restates the research objectives and research questions and highlights how they were addressed in the study. The chapter acknowledges the limitations of the research and provides suggestions for future research directions in crisis communication management in commercial media. It emphasizes the significance of the study's findings and their potential impact on the field.

Overall, the organization of the paper for this thesis follows a logical progression, beginning with an introduction and literature review, followed by a detailed methodology, data analysis, and interpretation. The findings are then presented and discussed, leading to practical recommendations and a conclusion that summarizes the main findings and contributions of the study. The references section provides credibility to the research by acknowledging the sources used.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

This literature review section is intended to look into the crisis communication practices and challenges that the literature has to offer. It establishes a conceptual and theoretical framework for examining EBS's crisis communication strategies for communicating with the public and stakeholders during times of crisis. The literature review includes diverse sources including books on crisis communication theories that related to the case, scholarly articles and other relevant sources.

2.1 Theoretical Literature review

2.1.1 Definition of Crisis

The term "crisis" is now commonly used in newspaper stories, official government reports, policy documents, and well-known speeches. The word is applied to a wide range of phenomena. Because of its wide usage the term lacks precision and specificity, rather it appears to be getting more definitions than ever before. Plainly, a crisis is an unexpected and unplanned situation or rather threat that suddenly dawns upon an organization, a business, or a person. A crisis can be local or international, economic or cultural and natural or human-made. Consequently, scholars have tried to develop definitions of crisis. There is no single, globally accepted definition of crisis; however, even when definitions are not identical, there are numerous conceptual commonalities.

Coombs, W. T. (2014) defines crisis as "an event that is a major threat as well as a major opportunity." He emphasizes that a crisis is a threat because it can damage an organization's reputation and operations, but it is also an opportunity for organizations to demonstrate their values and capabilities in responding to adversity. Fink, S. (1986) defines crisis as "the perception of an unpredictable event that threatens important expectancies of stakeholders and can seriously impact an organization's performance and generate negative outcomes."

Weick defines crises as situations with a low probability but great consequence that could threaten one's goals (Weick, 1988). Such an event or incident is usually perceived as unexpected and negative. The emotions that follow a crisis might lead to a sense of vulnerability and a shift in one's mental state (Seeger, Sellnow, & Ulmer, 2003). Responses to crises, according to Millar

and Heath, might vary in strength and potency, but they will affect people in either a bodily or cognitive way (Millar & Heath, 2003).

Crisis is not an unusual event; in fact, it can strike any organization. Fearn-Banks (1996) described crisis as a major occurrence with a potentially negative outcome affecting an organization, company, or industry, as well as publics, products, or services. In this view, a crisis has the potential to disrupt normal business operations and even threaten the organization's existence.

A crisis event affects the organization in many aspects. Coombs (2007) defined crisis as the “perception of an unpredictable event that threatens important expectancies of stakeholders and can seriously impact an organization’s performance and generate negative outcomes”. A crisis, according to Ruff and Aziz (2003), is an event or situation that can "focus negative attention on a company or organization inside". Egelhoff and Sen (1992) noted it to be “a function of external or environmental threats and internal or organizational weakness”. Also, Pearson and Clair (1998) added that an organizational crisis as “a low-probability, high-impact event that threatens the viability of the organization and is characterized by ambiguity of cause, effect, and means of resolution, as well as by a belief that decisions must be made swiftly”.

More specifically, a crisis can be characterized as the confluence of human, organizational and technological failures combined with regulatory, infrastructure, and preparedness shortcomings within the organization (Shrivastava, Mitroff, Miller, & Miclani, 1988). In addition, Wilcox & Cameron argue it is an event having an adverse impact on “the integrity of the product, the reputation or financial stability of the organization, the health or wellbeing of employees, the community, or the public at large” (Wilcox & Cameron, 2006, p. 258).

The aforementioned definitions of crisis indicate that crises share some common elements, such as surprise, high-level of uncertainty, and major threat or harm to survival of an organization. In this thesis the focus is on organizational crisis, and based on this, the study adopted the definition of a crisis developed by Coombs (2007): “a crisis is a significant threat to operations that can have negative consequences if not handled properly” (Coombs, 2007, p.3). Furthermore, Coombs also points out that “the threat is the potential damage a crisis can inflict on an organization, its stakeholders, and an industry” (Coombs, 2007, p.3).

2.1.2 Crisis Characteristics

Coombs' (2007) definition of a crisis highlights numerous characteristics. The first characteristic of crises is that they are perceptual; meaning that whether or not a crisis exists is determined by whether or not organizational participants see the signal of a crisis as posing a substantial threat Seeger, Sellnow, & Ulmer (2003). If the stakeholders feel there is a crisis, the organization is in a crisis unless it can persuade its stakeholders that there isn't one Coombs (2007).

According to Kuklan (1988), whether a situation is perceived as a crisis is determined by the perceived gap between the capabilities and resources believed to be required to deal with the situation and the capabilities and resources that the organization can bring to bear in dealing with the problem. According to Kuklan (1988), if no discrepancy is perceived, the situation is considered non-crisis; if the discrepancy is perceived to be manageable, the organization views the situation as a challenging but manageable crisis, as well as an opportunity to demonstrate the organization's capabilities and potential. On the other hand, when a discrepancy is believed to be beyond the decision makers' control, the issue is viewed as a crisis, with the decision makers seeing little chance of successfully dealing with the matter. In this regard, the core concept lies on the decision makers' perception of the crisis' intensity that determines whether they have a positive or negative view.

The second characteristic of crises is that they are unpredictable but not unexpected Coombs, (2007). Even if crises are low-probability events, present trends in technology, population change, and other factors will bring inevitable surprises that we may foresee to a significant extent. In this view, crisis preparedness or crisis planning has emerged as the "most crucial" strategic action that an organization can engage in to reduce uncertainty and respond to a crisis quickly and effectively Seeger et al. (2003).

The third characteristic of crises is that they might go against stakeholders' expectations of how organizations should act Coombs (2007). Fediuk, Coombs, and Botero (2012) suggest that in the stakeholder-organization interaction, stakeholders form expectations about the organization's behavior, which can be met or violated depending on the organization's actions. Expectancy violations can be positive or negative, depending on whether the organization exceeds its stakeholders' expectations or falls short of them. The negative expectancy violation draws attention to the violation, prompts information requests, jeopardizes an organization's connection

with its stakeholders, and, worst of all, and jeopardizes the organization's reputation Coombs, (2007).

2.1.3 Classification of Crisis

Wherever we go, there are crises. They are present in every organization's daily operation. Whether someone wants it or not, a crisis can happen at any time. Before attempting to manage a crisis, it is necessary to identify the different types of crises, as different crises demand different crisis management strategies. There is no universal type or classification of crisis, which is why different scholars categorize crisis in different terms. Some scholars categorize crisis according to its character or forming up process; some classify it according to the triggered reason or source; others sort crisis according to its impact or result. Since there are various crisis classification criteria, this study could only introduce some of them which are considered the most frequently used in academia.

Mitroff (2004) identified seven types of crises according to the impact. They are economic, informational, physical, human resources, reputational, psychopathic acts, and natural disasters. According to Mitroff's classification the reasons that can trigger economic crisis include labor strikes, unrest, and shortages, as well as a significant drop in stock price and fluctuations, a market crash, a drop in corporate earnings, and hostile takeovers; whereas the loss of proprietary and sensitive information; misleading information; tampering with computer records; loss of important computer information with relation to customers, and other factors all contribute to an informational crisis. Physical crisis includes loss or breakdown of key equipment, loss of material suppliers and key facilities, major plant disruptions, product failures, and explosions. Human resource crisis results due to loss of key personnel rise in absenteeism or in vandalism, corruption, workplace violence, and labor strikes, whereas gossip, sick jokes, rumors, and damage to corporate reputation are the causes of reputational crisis. Psychopathic acts arise from kidnapping, product tampering, and terrorism, whereas natural disasters are the consequences of fires, earthquakes, hurricanes, floods, and mudslides Mitroff (2005).

In other way, Ulmer, Sellnow and Seeger (2007) categorized crisis types into two: intentionally and unintentionally caused crises. Intentionally caused crises are such as terrorism, sabotage, workplace violence, poor employee relationships, poor risk management, and unintentionally

caused crises are such as natural disasters, disease outbreaks, unforeseeable technical interactions, product failure and downturns in economy.

According to Seymour and Moore (2000), crisis happens in two forms: the Cobra-the “sudden” is a crisis which hits suddenly and takes the company completely by surprise and leaves it in a crisis situation where as The Python-the “slow-burning” crisis or “crisis creep” is a crisis which is a result of collection of issues that steal up on the company one by one and slowly crush it.

Because of the various perspectives of scholars and the elements on which researchers rely to classify crisis, as a result, the foregoing notes show that there is no universal crisis classification.

Additionally, Coombs (2007) developed Situational Crisis Communication Theory (SCCT) and based on the crisis responsibility of the organization classified crises in to three clusters: Victim, Accidental and preventable.

Victim crisis cluster: This type of crisis occurs when the organization is perceived to be a victim of the situation. A more common example of a victim crisis is natural disasters. These events can destroy the physical infrastructure of a company, leaving it with no facility to conduct its business. In cases like these, a victim crisis presents the organization with little to no reputational threat because the situation is unavoidable and the company has no way of preventing it.

Accidental crisis cluster: This occurs when the organization is at fault for the crisis, but its actions were unintentional. An accidental crisis can occur when an organization faces product or equipment failure. This is characterized with minimal attributions of crisis responsibility. It implies that certain stakeholders believe the organization is behaving inappropriately or irresponsibly. The public challenge is motivated by moral or ethical considerations rather than legal concerns.

Preventable crisis cluster: This occurs when the organization intentionally takes a risk that leads to a negative outcome or event. A preventable crisis is the worst possible threat to an organization because there is a high reputational threat to the business. In these situations, there's immense pressure placed on the organization's response as well as their actions moving forward after the crises.

2.1.4 Crisis Management

Due to the unpredictability of global events, many modern organizations attempt to identify potential crises before they occur in order to sketch out plans to deal with them. When and if a crisis occurs, the organization must be able to drastically change course in order to survive. Crises can occur at any moment with or without warning, and can take many forms. Beyond any immediate threat to people, property, and processes, crises often yield unpredictable and cascading effects on employee morale, brand reputation, customer satisfaction, and even the supply chain. To avert crises, or if a crisis does occur to effectively manage that event, the concept of crisis management comes in to play. The COVID-19 crisis that began in early 2020 as an example can be expected to become a textbook example of crisis management. Businesses around the world were forced to shut their doors. Millions of employees were sent home. Essential services struggled to function. History will judge how effective the powers-that-be were in their crisis management skills.

Fighting the sources of every crisis is the first step toward resolving it. Crisis management is a proactive procedure that includes dealing with a crisis before, during, and after it occurs. Crisis management is a method for preventing or minimizing the harm that a crisis can cause to an organization and its stakeholders. Crisis management is a multi-step process Coombs WT, (2014). The goal of crisis management is to safeguard an organization, a sector, or a group of stakeholders from damage and to prevent or mitigate the negative consequences of a crisis.

In addition, crisis management entails being ready to deal with adversity, effectively reducing the crisis' effects, and facilitating the management process in a chaotic situation Ulmer et al. (2007). Operations, marketing, public relations, distribution, and legal matters all fall under the umbrella of crisis management. It also involves planning, organizing, leading, and controlling assets and activities before and after the crisis.

According to Seeger, et al. (2003), the aim of crisis management is to reduce the frequency of crises, limit the damage, duration, severity, and intensity of crises, and explore ways to use crises as a learning opportunity and a force for renewal in the aftermath. This adds to the idea that crisis management is an organization's process and strategy-based approach for identifying

and responding to a threat, an unanticipated event, or any negative disruption with the potential to harm people, property, or business processes.

Further, specifically on an organizational level, crisis management can help to safeguard the organization's reputation, personnel well-being, and financial assets. Crisis prevention is just as vital as mitigating the effects of an existing crisis Coombs (2007). This implies that, the role of PR being proactive, active and reactive in crisis situations to communicate. It is highly important in anticipating, planning and communicating crisis. Crisis management is a tool designed to fight crisis, minimize the inflicted damage and protect the organization, stakeholders and industry from harm. Crisis management processes include preventative measures, crisis management plans, and post-crisis evaluations Coombs (2010); Coombs (2007). Failures in crisis management can result in serious harm to stakeholders, losses for an organization, or end its very existence. Public relations practitioners are an integral part of crisis management teams. Hence, a set of best practices and lessons gleaned from knowledge of crisis management would be a very useful resource for those in public relations.

Coombs (2015) outlines four interdependent elements of crisis management: prevention, preparation, response and revision. Prevention refers to precautionary actions that focus on preventing a crisis from happening. Preparation in crisis management includes actions such as making a crisis management plan, creating a crisis communication system as well as choosing a spokesperson and identifying crisis vulnerabilities. Response is an element of crisis management requires putting the elements of preparations into practice and how the organization responds to a crisis is usually actively followed and commented on by the media. Revision is the last element of crisis management and an important part of it is evaluating what was done well and what was done badly.

A planned management of crises reduces the prediction of the crisis event impact both to the organization and to the stakeholders. In related to this Gilpin and Murphy (2008) said that good strategic directions for coordinating crisis management activity with the organization's body and stakeholders are required for crisis management. Crisis management is becoming more frequently acknowledged as a high-level, strategic capability for which the organization's management body in businesses, geographies, and functions must be well prepared in order to be

effective. Hence, the crisis team needs to communicate with various stakeholders including employees, community members, government agencies, the news media, investors, and supply chain partners. Accordingly, authors often point out that a central challenge for organizations in managing crises is that the crises are often ill-structured and complex in nature Mitroff, Alpaslan, & Green (2004).

2.1.5 Stages of Crisis Management

To explain crises, many theories have been developed. Some of the most well-known and widely used theories about crisis management are staged approaches, which break crises into stages. These models have the advantage of allowing crisis managers to evaluate and plan their crisis communication needs ahead of time Seeger & Sellnow (2013). The most prominent staged approaches (models) are the three-stage model by Coombs and Steven Fink's four-stage model.

Coombs (2007) observes crisis management as a process that occurs in three phases, each of which implies several groups of activities: Pre crisis, crisis, and post crisis. This three-stage crisis model is widely used to analyze crises and crisis communication theories Seeger & Sellnow (2013).

Pre-crisis stage:

This stage consists of three sub stages. The first one is signal detection, the second one is prevention and the last one is crisis preparation. At this stage, if a crisis has been detected, this crisis should be prevented from taking place and crisis management plans should be prepared. The goal is to limit the risks that could lead to a crisis while simultaneously being strategically and tactically prepared. Prevention is all about reducing known risks that could lead to a crisis. Whereas preparation involves creating the crisis management plan, selecting and training the crisis management team, and conducting exercises to test the crisis management plan and crisis management team. In this regard, the company should have a crisis management plan in place that is updated on a regular basis at this point. Planning is meant to help effectively avert potential crises and to prepare to respond to them if they do occur. Making a crisis management plan has the goal of providing some guidelines and references for what should be done in a crisis situation.

According to Barton (2001) and Coombs (2006) organizations are better able to handle crises when they (1) have a crisis management plan that is updated at least annually, (2) have a designated crisis management team, (3) conduct exercises to test the plans and teams at least annually, and (4) pre-draft some crisis messages.

In addition, during the pre-crisis stage, the organization establishes a crisis management team, selects spokespersons, and drafts crisis messaging. Representatives from various departments make up the crisis management team. Depending on the crisis management plan, different duties are given to different team members. (Coombs, 2007a) emphasizes the importance of testing and evaluating both the crisis management plan and the crisis management team on a regular basis so that they can respond appropriately in a crisis.

Another key aspect of the pre-crisis stage is the preparation of pre-crisis messaging that may be used during the real crisis. Horsley and Barker (as cited in Adebayo, 2017) suggest that during the pre-crisis stage, an organization must provide information to members of the press and stakeholders in order to sustain its relationship and have stakeholders respond proactively during a crisis. In times of crisis, communication serves as a link between an organization and its stakeholders. Hence, detecting signals from available information sources, identifying risks, and conducting preventive monitoring are all important steps to do before a crisis occurs.

Crisis stage:

The second stage is the crisis stage itself. This stage refers to the steps taken to cope with and respond to the crisis event. It is all about actions taken when an organization faces a crisis and includes the strong involvement of public relations. At this stage, the organization's response to the crisis situation, its communication with stakeholders and how the organization deals with crisis is important. Once a crisis occurs, the crisis management plan should be put into action and the initial response to a crisis is advised to be quick, accurate and consistent (Coombs, 2007a).

Quick response to a crisis is important because if the organization does not come forward and provide information, the news media or other people outside the organization will usually fill the void. Also reacting quickly to a crisis helps to create an image of control and trustworthiness. Giving wrong information necessitates correction, which might give the impression of

inconsistency and incompetence. It is necessary to correct any inaccurate information given. When a crisis occurs, it is doubtful that only one person will be able to address inquiries about the issue, which is why preparing a spokesperson ahead of time is critical.

The crisis stage is critical for public relations practitioners to keep their companies alive. If they are unable to effectively and efficiently communicate the crisis, the organizations' survival may be endangered. Instead of promoting its reputation and image during the crisis period, an organization should notify the public about the crisis and the planned activities intended to avoid a future crisis Sturges, (1994). As a result, crisis responses at this level are intended to safeguard victims while also protecting an organization's reputation.

Post crisis stage:

After the crisis has been resolved, the post-crisis stage begins. It mostly entails verifying that the crisis has passed, assuring the public of the organization's security, and learning from the experience. At this stage, the organization assesses the general circumstances from pre-crisis to crisis, and evaluates how they dealt with the crisis. This is done to be better prepared for potential crises in the future. In addition, the organization should continue to monitor the media and the activities of stakeholder organizations because it's critical to know what their stakeholder groups perceive.

Furthermore, at this stage, the crisis communication strategies are devised to communicate positive and recovery messages to the public, primarily the media, employees, and customers. The importance of post-crisis management for organizational learning is immense. As a result, crisis managers and their teams must thoroughly study and assess the overall life-cycle of a crisis. According to (Coombs, 2007a), the post-crisis stage is also critical for the organization, the crisis manager, and the crisis management team to analyze how the crisis was handled, what went well, and what could be improved.

2.1.6 The role of public relations in crisis management

Public relation is the practice of professional communication whose goal is to build and maintain positive relationships between the organization and its many stakeholders, including the public. One of the fundamental responsibilities of public relations is crisis management. Public

relation is crucial in handling situations in which public awareness of a particular crisis may dramatically and negatively impact the company's ability to achieve its goals Tench, R. & Yeomans L. (2009). Successful public relations efforts require a deep understanding of the interests and concerns of each of the company's many stakeholders. **Crisis** public relations, is a sub-specialty employed to protect and defend an individual, company or organization facing a challenge to its brand, reputation and business performance. Crisis public relations management is one of the most critical aspects of modern communications. Effective crisis management protects companies, their reputations and, at times, can salvage their very existence.

Public Relations crisis management is the process of preparing an organization for a major event that threatens the organization, its reputation, stakeholders, or the general public. Public relations practitioners are an integral part of crisis management teams that play a vital part in crisis communication (Coombs 2007). Crisis response is what management does and says after the crisis occurs. Public relations play important role in crisis response by helping to develop the messages that are sent to various publics. During a crisis, the main goal of a PR department would be to inform all interested parties about the current situation, potential risks, and planned actions. A well-prepared crisis plan should contain the first type of message that will be sent out to the world. This generic message should restore trust in the organization and give some time to investigate the issue at hand. The public relations team is the first line of defense for an organization. Whether an organization leave the crisis unscathed depends mainly on how well it handles public relations crisis management. As Van Riel and Charles J. noted, during crises, Public Relations specialists are the principal actors to work with the crisis team in an effort of balancing between the short-term pressure of handling strategic issues as well as dealing with the long-term activities of maintaining consistent communication with stakeholders about the company's position on the issue (Van Riel & Fombrun, 2007).

As P. Hazarika (PGDPC-XV) explained there have been countless public relations crises in the past and there are five steps that should be executed in order to properly manage a crisis The organization in crisis should, first and foremost, be timely, speaking to the public as soon as it becomes aware of the crisis. The second step is since the public is more likely to overlook an honest error than a purposeful lie; the organization in question should continue to be honest. Thirdly, it's critical to provide information because if an organization in crisis doesn't provide it, the public and the media will spread their own rumors. Rumors have a much greater potential to

harm an organization than the truth. Next the public will be more understanding if it is evident that the organization cares about the crisis victims, hence it is crucial to show concern and care. Lastly, maintaining two-way communication is crucial since listening may teach the organization a lot about the current state of public opinion.

2.1.7 Crisis Communication

During a crisis, communication is critical. People are thirsty for information. They want to know the current state of things, what's being done to keep the situation from getting worse, and when everything will be getting back to normal. And the pressure on leaders to provide impactful guidance and information is especially heightened in a crisis situation. If an organization is not prepared for the different **crisis scenario** that may affect it and how to communicate during them, the organization will likely incur more damage to the business. The main question behind crisis communication is how can an organization consistently provide transparent and accurate communication that maintains a trusting relationship with its customers, during a time of crisis?

In a broader manner, crisis communication can be defined as a process of gathering and processing of relevant information about a crisis to share with relevant publics Coombs (2010). In this regard, crisis communication is about transmitting information effectively during a significant threat to a business's reputation or daily operations. Fearn-Banks define crisis communication as "the communication between the organization and its publics prior to, during and after the negative occurrences" Fearn-Bank (2007). This definition entails that organizations have ethical responsibilities to communicate their publics throughout the life cycle of a crisis: before, during and after a crisis. In the pre-crisis stage, crisis communication revolves around monitoring crisis risks, making decisions about how to manage potential crises, and training people who will be involved in the crisis management process. During crisis, the communication includes the collection and processing of information for crisis team decision making along with the creation and dissemination of crisis messages. The emergency nature of a crisis amid great uncertainty aggravates already difficult decision-making with the urgent need for the management to make decisions rapidly. Post-crisis communication involves assessing the crisis management effort and providing follow-up crisis messages as needed. The organization needs to release updates on the recovery process, corrective actions, and/or investigations of the crisis.

Furthermore, according to Kaman (2016), crisis communication is "the communication between the organization and its publics before, during, and after a crisis". The communications are aimed to keep the organization's image as clean as possible. According to him, the role of communication during and after a crisis is tied to image building.

The way an organization communicates during crisis has an impact on the organization's reputation and image as well as on people affected by the crisis Coombs & Holladay (2010). In this regard, crisis communication is an initiative which aims at protecting the reputation of the organization and maintaining its public image. The best way to protect the organizational images is to modify the public's perception of who is responsible for the crisis and to maintain a positive image or restore a damaged image among stakeholders Coombs (1995); Ray (1999). Coombs also explained that crisis communication is a strategy to repair a relationship with stakeholders Coombs (2005).

2.1.8 Types of Crisis Communication

Generally, a crisis creates a need for information among stakeholders or the general public. As a result, the responsible bodies must understand how to transform information into knowledge that can be shared with stakeholders. In doing so, according to Coombs (2007), the crisis team should think about two types of crisis communication activities; Crisis knowledge management and stakeholder reaction management. The former includes identifying sources, collecting information, analyzing information (knowledge creation), sharing knowledge, and decision making. It also involves the work the crisis team does to create public responses to a crisis. Whereas the later includes efforts to affect how stakeholders perceive the crisis, the organization in crisis, and the organization's crisis response through communication

2.1.9 Crisis Communication Plan

Crises come when they're least expected. And, if an organization waits until a crisis hits to start planning, it will likely fail to avoid catastrophe. Communicating effectively during a crisis can make a difference in determining whether the company ultimately succeeds or fails. This is why a crisis communication plan is a necessity for every company to have before one happens. Formulating a crisis communication plan is a crucial first step in preparing for the subsequent crisis. One of the main activities of any organization at the pre-crisis phase is to have a Crisis management Team and to prepare proactive Crisis Communication Plan. Crisis management

Team is a group of employees that are assigned to develop alternatives and appropriate decisions for dealing with crisis situations.

Crisis communication plan is a well-organized document which serves as a reference with a pre-assigning task, pre-collecting some information and serving as a tool when crisis happens. Coombs (2007) emphasized that Crisis communication plan is simply a reference to tasks and responsibilities for the crisis management team, but not a step- by step guideline for the crisis team. In this regard, a crisis communication plan includes steps to take when a crisis first emerges, how to communicate with the public, and how to prevent the issue from occurring again.

Crisis communication plans focus on the company's response and how it will communicate a crisis to its stakeholders. These steps ensure information reaches employees, partners, customers, media, the general public, and any other valuable stakeholders. Most importantly, a crisis communication plan helps guarantee a quick release of information, as well as a consistent message on all company platforms during a time of crisis. That message depends largely on what the crisis involves and how all parties are affected by it.

2.1.9 Crisis Response

One of the most vital skills a company can possess is the ability to determine if, when and at what level of importance a crisis has struck. Despite the best planning and foresight, organizations inevitably find themselves in a crisis from time to time. Coombs (2007) states crisis response is what management does and says after the crisis hits. PR plays a critical role in the crisis response by helping to develop the messages that are sent to various public. A great deal of research has examined the crisis response. That research has been divided into two sections:

- The initial crisis response
- Reputation repair and behavioral intentions

Initial crisis response

According to Coombs, the guideline for initial crisis response focuses on three points: be quick, be accurate and be consistent. Quickness and accuracy play an important role in public safety, because slow or inaccurate responses can increase the risk of injuries and possibly deaths. Quick actions can also prevent further damage and protect reputations by showing that the organization is in control of the situation. The philosophy of speaking with one voice in a crisis is an effective way to maintain accuracy. As the news media are drawn to crises and can reach a wide array of publics quickly, it is logical that media relations are a key part of crisis response. Crisis managers should also express concern/sympathy for any victims of the crisis. Expressions of concern are expected by stakeholders and recommended by crisis experts, but are not admissions of guilt. Organizations did experience less reputational damage when an expression of concern is offered verses a response lacking an expression of concern.

Coombs summarizes best practices for initial crisis response in eight points and according to his summarization, to be quick and try to have initial response within the first hour is the first point. And the second major point of his best practices of initial crisis response is accuracy. According to his summarization, it is critical to be accurate by carefully checking all facts in detailed to have best practices for initial crisis response. The other major point of Coombs summarization of best practices for initial crisis response is to be consistent by keeping spokespeople informed of crisis events and key message points. And in his summarization he stated that making public safety the number one priority is also the major point to have best practices of initial crisis response. And the other five points of Coombs summarization on best practices of initial crisis response are using all of the available communication channels including the internet, intranet, and mass notification systems, providing some expression of concern/ sympathy for victims, remember to include employees in the initial response, and being ready to provide stress and trauma counseling to victims of the crisis and their families, including employees. Therefore, according to Coombs summarization, a best practice of initial crisis response should have to include these major points of initial crisis response.

Reputation repair and behavioral intentions

Reputation repair strategy can be used in the crisis response phase, post crisis phase or both. According to (Coombs, 2009) the reputation-repair approach varies depending on how much

they provide support for victims during a crisis. When significant reputation repair is necessary, that effort will continue into the post-crisis period, or crisis managers may feel better at ease delaying reputation management until the post-crisis phase (Holladay, 1996).

Crisis managers use a two-step process to evaluate the crisis's reputational impact: The first step is determining the basic crisis type, during which a crisis manager takes into account how the news media and other stakeholders are defining the crisis. The second step is reviewing the organization's prior reputation and intensifying crisis history, meaning that if an organization has a history of crises or a bad reputation, the reputational damage is increased.

Reputation Management

Reputation has quickly become a critical resource and concern for organizations. A favorable reputation helps to motivate employees, and improve financial performance. Roughly , a reputation is how stake holders perceive an organization davies, da Silva & ruper (2003) more precisely a reputation is the aggregate evaluation constituents make up about how well an organization is meeting constituents expectations based on its past behaviors Rindova and fomburn (1999): wartick (1992)

Any crises threaten an organization reputation Barton (2001). Effective crises communication minimizes the damage a crisis inflicts on the organizations reputation and sets the foundation for repairing the damage that did occur. Coombs (2007) for these reasons crises communication is an important tool in efforts to build and to maintain a favorable reputation. Therefore it's not surprising that we see a strong connection between reputation and crises communication.

Coombs and Holla day states that “the reputation before crises plays a role in crises management. A negative prior reputation hinders crises management efforts by intensifying the reputational damage inflicted by a crisis what has been termed the Velcro effect coombs & Holladay (2006)

However there is no evidence on whether a positive prior reputation shielding a company's reputation during crises. Researchers have found crises will inflict some reputational damage regardless of a positive prior reputation Coombs & Holladay (2006), Dean (2004).

Aula & Mantere (2005) has devised eight strategies to maintain reputation of a given corporate or organization in relation to crisis these strategies are namely senator, the good brother ,defense, attorney ,lobbyists champion ,stirrer, shapeshifter and oracle ; senator strategy is a reputation management strategy in which there is no crises and the company is merely concentrating on strategies that make stake holders aware of the company's good reputation and the good brother is another pre- crisis reputation management strategy focusing on networking with influential people who in turn promotes the company's good reputation, defense strategy is a strategy employed when an organizations reputation is threatened and this strategy will help to clarify and clear the false acquisition and negative portrayal of an organization , and lobbyists strategy of reputation management is a strategy which focuses solely "at over ruling the conflicting view of others with the company's version of things , meanwhile the champion strategy is a strategy of fighting back a damaged reputation of an organization by investing on social responsibility and building a positive image of a company after a crises occurs , the stirrer strategy is a strategy applied in the form of planting incoherent views of an organization to carefully selected stakeholders and media outlets , the last two strategies the shape shifter and oracle strategy are of similar nature only the latter one is an extreme form of the other , the shape shifter strategy focuses on an organization sending mixed messages in order to form a larger platform for the public to draw up a reputation for a company , the oracle strategy is basically to say something and do another thing " .

2.1.10 Popular Crisis Communication Theory

1. Attribution Theory and Situational Crisis Communication Theory

Attribution theory starts from the premise that it is human nature to seek to explain why events occur, especially sudden and damaging incidents like crises. Typically, people attribute responsibility to an entity, such as a company, or a situation. When people blame an organization, they direct negative emotions toward it. Coombs found that this can result in damage to the organization's reputation, reduced intention to do business with the company, and increased tendency to speak negatively to other people about the organization.

In situational crisis communications theory, Coombs said crisis managers must first determine the threat to the company's reputation by assessing which of three clusters the crisis fits into: the victim cluster (the organization is a victim); the accidental cluster (the organization

unintentionally caused the crisis); or the intentional cluster (the organization intentionally acted wrongly). The clusters have escalating potential to harm the company's reputation because of the level of responsibility attributed to the company (minimal, low, or strong).

Based on an assessment of the situation and reputation risk, Coombs believes the organization should respond with one of three strategies: deny, diminish, or rebuild. In deny strategies, the organization assumes no responsibility; diminishing strategies seek to downplay the seriousness of the crisis; and rebuilding responses tend to involve apologizing.

Attribution theory offers a valuable framework for understanding how individuals attribute causes to events and, subsequently, how these attributions influence their emotional responses. In the context of crisis communication management, recognizing and addressing stakeholders' attributions can enable organizations to tailor their responses to better align with stakeholder perceptions, ultimately contributing to more effective crisis communication strategies Weiner, B. (1986). Attribution theory provides critical insights into how consumers react to product failures and attribute responsibility. This understanding is of paramount importance for crisis communication management, as it allows organizations to anticipate and address the attributions made by consumers during product-related crises, facilitating more empathetic and effective communication Folkes, V. S. (1984).

Attribution theory's relevance extends to the field of public relations and crisis communication. Public relations professionals should recognize that stakeholders often attribute responsibility for a crisis to an organization or its leaders. This attribution process informs the strategies and messages that PR practitioners employ to manage crises and maintain or repair organizational reputation Grunig, J. E., & Grunig, L. A. (1991). Attribution theory serves as a foundational element within the Situational Crisis Communication Theory (SCCT) framework. By understanding how stakeholders attribute crisis responsibility, SCCT enables organizations to select appropriate crisis response strategies. Attribution theory's importance lies in its ability to inform crisis communication decisions that align with stakeholder attributions, ultimately enhancing reputation management during crises Coombs, W. T. (2007).

Coombs compiled the following ten crisis communications best practices based on attribution theory, including apologizing in certain circumstances. According to Coombs compilation, the

first best practice of crisis communication based on attribution theory is providing all victims or potential victims with instructions, such as recall information. Secondly, he put expressing sympathy to all victims, along with information about corrective actions and trauma counseling. For crises in which the organization faces minimal blame and there are no so-called intensifying factors (history of crisis and negative past reputation), the above two steps will suffice is the third best practice. The other best practice of crisis communication based on attribution theory according to Coombs is, if there is an intensifying factor, offer excuses and/or justification the same response applies to a crisis in which blame is low and there is no crisis history or poor past reputation. If there is low attribution of responsibility and an intensifying factor, add compensation or an apology to the first two steps is also in his compilation of best practices. If the public strongly attributes responsibility to the organization, offer the first two steps as well as compensation or an apology is also a best practice according to Coombs. And using compensation any time a victim experiences serious harm is also enables to have a best practice in crisis communication regarding attribution theory. Coombs also stated that to supplement any response with remind and ingratiate strategies in his compilation of best practices. Finally, to save denial and attacking the accuser for crises that involve rumors and challenges in which a stakeholder contends the organization is acting wrongly is the last best practice in crisis communication regarding to attribution theory in Coombs compilation.

Attribution theory is a major relevant theory in crisis communication management. This theory focuses on how individuals perceive and attribute causes to events, including crises. It suggests that people tend to make attributions based on three dimensions: locus of causality (internal vs. external), stability (stable vs. unstable), and controllability (controllable vs. uncontrollable). In the context of crisis communication, attribution theory suggests that organizations should consider how stakeholders may attribute the cause of a crisis. This understanding can help organizations tailor their communication strategies to address stakeholders' concerns and perceptions.

For example, if stakeholders perceive a crisis as being caused by internal factors that are stable and controllable, they may hold the organization responsible and expect it to take corrective actions. In this case, the organization should focus on accepting responsibility, providing explanations, and demonstrating its commitment to preventing similar crises in the future. On the

other hand, if stakeholders attribute the crisis to external factors that are unstable and uncontrollable, they may be more forgiving and understanding. In this case, the organization should focus on emphasizing its efforts to mitigate the impact of the crisis and reassure stakeholders that it is taking appropriate actions.

Situational Crisis Communication Theory (SCCT) is another theory that is often applied in crisis communication management. SCCT suggests that different types of crises require different communication strategies. It proposes four types of crises based on their reputational threat and attributions of organizational responsibility: victim crises, accidental crises, preventable crises, and intentional crises. Each type of crisis requires a different communication approach. For example, in victim crises where the organization is perceived as a victim of uncontrollable external events, the organization should focus on expressing sympathy, providing support, and emphasizing its vulnerability. In contrast, in intentional crises where the organization is seen as responsible for causing harm intentionally, the organization should focus on accepting responsibility, expressing remorse, and demonstrating its commitment to making amends.

By applying attribution theory and situational crisis communication theory, organizations can tailor their crisis communication strategies to effectively manage stakeholders' perceptions and responses during a crisis. This can help maintain or even enhance the organization's reputation and trustworthiness.

2. Structural Functional Theory in Crisis Management

Structural functionalism comes from sociology, and looks at society as a structure made up of institutions that function together to keep the whole running, like organs that work together to keep the body functioning. In crisis management, this theory explains how organizational communication relies on a structure made up of networks for information to flow and a hierarchy of people who manage the process. Structural functional theory in crisis management focuses on the roles and functions of different actors within a crisis situation. It emphasizes the importance of coordination, collaboration, and effective communication among these actors to ensure a smooth response and recovery process.

Structural Functional Theory provides a framework for understanding the essential functions that various components within an organization serve to maintain its stability and coherence. While

not explicitly focused on crisis communication, this theory can help crisis communication managers identify key roles and functions within the organization that must be maintained or adapted during crises to ensure effective communication Parsons, T. (1951). Structural Functional Theory offers a lens through which to analyze the role of communication in maintaining the functional stability of organizations during crises. By examining how different communication functions contribute to organizational resilience, crisis communication managers can better understand the importance of coordinated communication efforts in navigating challenging situations Seeger, M. W., Sellnow, T. L., & Ulmer, R. R. (2003). While Situational Crisis Communication Theory (SCCT) primarily draws on other communication theories, it is worth considering how Structural Functional Theory informs our understanding of organizational dynamics during crises. By recognizing the structural and functional aspects of an organization's communication, SCCT practitioners can better tailor crisis responses to maintain organizational stability and integrity Coombs, W. T. (2007). Structural Functional Theory can help crisis communication researchers and practitioners identify the structural components of an organization's communication processes and how these components function to address crises. This understanding is essential for developing effective image repair strategies and maintaining organizational equilibrium in times of crisis Benoit, W. L. (1997). While Structural Functional Theory may not be the primary theoretical framework in crisis communication management, it can offer valuable perspectives on how communication functions within organizations. By recognizing the structural and functional aspects of communication, crisis communication managers can better navigate and manage crises to maintain organizational stability and reputation.

According to this theory, organizations should have clear structures and processes in place to facilitate crisis management. This includes establishing designated roles and responsibilities for different individuals or departments, creating communication channels for information sharing, and developing protocols for decision-making. In the context of crisis communication management, structural functional theory suggests that effective coordination and collaboration among stakeholders is crucial. This includes internal coordination within the organization, as well as external coordination with other organizations, government agencies, and the media. By following the principles of structural functional theory, organizations can ensure that they have the necessary resources, capabilities, and mechanisms in place to effectively respond to and

manage crises. This includes having trained personnel, access to accurate and timely information, and the ability to mobilize resources quickly.

Overall, structural functional theory provides a framework for understanding the importance of organizational structures, processes, and coordination in crisis management. By applying this theory, organizations like EBS can enhance their crisis communication management practices and improve their overall response to crises.

3. Stakeholder Theory of Crisis Management

In 2009, Alpaslan, Mitroff, and Sandy Green published a theory that focused on the role of stakeholders in crisis management. They argued for including stakeholders in crisis preparations and responses — not because of their power or influence on financial value, but due to factors such as potential for injury. Crises can reorder the importance of a stakeholder group, and managers who understand stakeholder theory consider and incorporate the needs and values of a range of stakeholders.

Stakeholder Theory underscores the significance of considering the interests and concerns of various stakeholders in organizational decision-making processes. In crisis communication management, this theory provides a foundation for identifying and prioritizing stakeholders, understanding their expectations, and crafting communication strategies that address their specific needs during crises Freeman, R. E. (1984). Stakeholder Theory helps crisis communication managers determine which stakeholders are most salient or relevant in a given crisis situation. Recognizing and prioritizing the concerns of key stakeholders is essential for effective crisis communication and reputation management Mitchell, R. K., Agle, B. R., & Wood, D. J. (1997). According to Seeger, M. W., Sellnow, T. L., & Ulmer, R. R. (2003), Stakeholder Theory offers valuable insights into how stakeholders perceive and respond to organizational crises. This theory's focus on stakeholder relationships and communication dynamics informs crisis communication strategies, enabling organizations to build trust and maintain positive relationships with stakeholders during crises. Situational Crisis Communication Theory (SCCT) incorporates Stakeholder Theory principles by considering the perceptions and reactions of stakeholders in crisis situations. SCCT recognizes that different

stakeholders may have varying levels of concern and attributions, guiding organizations to adapt their communication strategies accordingly Coombs, W. T. (2007).

Effective crisis communication management relies on establishing and maintaining trust with stakeholders. Stakeholder Theory contributes to our understanding of how organizations can build and sustain trust by actively engaging with stakeholders, demonstrating accountability, and addressing their expectations during crises Bryce, J., & Fraser, P. (2013). Stakeholder Theory serves as a foundational perspective in crisis communication management, emphasizing the importance of stakeholder engagement, relationship-building, and responsiveness to their needs and concerns. Incorporating this theory into crisis communication strategies is essential for organizations to effectively navigate crises, protect their reputation, and maintain positive stakeholder relationships.

Stakeholder theory is a framework that suggests organizations should consider the interests and needs of all individuals or groups affected by their actions, known as stakeholders. In the context of crisis management, stakeholder theory emphasizes the importance of identifying and engaging with relevant stakeholders to effectively navigate and respond to a crisis.

Here are some key aspects of stakeholder theory in crisis management:

Identification of stakeholders: The first step in stakeholder theory is to identify all the individuals or groups who may be affected by a crisis. This includes not only employees, customers, and shareholders but also communities, government agencies, media, and other relevant parties.

Understanding stakeholder concerns: Once stakeholders are identified, it is crucial to understand their concerns, expectations, and needs during a crisis. This involves actively listening to stakeholders, conducting surveys or interviews, and analyzing feedback from various sources.

Communication and transparency: Stakeholder theory emphasizes the importance of open and transparent communication during a crisis. Organizations should provide timely and accurate information to stakeholders, keeping them informed about the situation, response efforts, and potential impacts. This helps build trust and credibility.

Engagement and involvement: Stakeholder theory suggests involving stakeholders in decision-making processes related to crisis management. This can be done through advisory boards, focus groups, or other mechanisms that allow stakeholders to contribute their perspectives and insights. Engaging stakeholders helps ensure that their concern is addressed and increases the likelihood of successful crisis management.

Ethical considerations: Stakeholder theory emphasizes the ethical dimension of crisis management. Organizations should consider the potential impact of their actions on stakeholders and strive to act in an ethical and responsible manner. This includes avoiding harm to stakeholders, respecting their rights, and demonstrating a commitment to social responsibility.

Long-term relationship building: Stakeholder theory recognizes that crisis management is not just about addressing immediate challenges but also about building long-term relationships with stakeholders. Organizations should view crises as opportunities to strengthen relationships, demonstrate their commitment to stakeholders' well-being, and enhance their reputation.

Overall, stakeholder theory provides a comprehensive framework for crisis management by emphasizing the importance of considering and engaging with all relevant stakeholders. By adopting this approach, organizations can effectively navigate crises, minimize damage, and maintain trust and support from their stakeholders.

2.2 Empirical Studies

Researchers have employed different crisis communication theories to study how organizations establish strategies in crises and how they manage crises. There are various theories of crisis communication, and each one provides a distinct approach to developing and implementing a crisis communication strategy. Different theories describe various approaches to handling crises and place emphasis on various outcomes of crisis communication. According to (Seeger and Sellnow (2013)), the core of crisis communication theories are messages and meaning construction.

According to An, S. K., & Cheng, I. H. (2010), the theories that are applied in the crisis communication are: Situational Crisis Communication Theory, Issue and Crisis Management Theory, Image Restoration Theory, Apology Theory, Attribution Theory, Contingency Theory,

Organizational Theory, Excellence Theory, Diffusion and Innovation Theory, Self- Disclosure Theory, Chaos Theory, Commodity Theory, Stakeholder Theory, Post- modern Theory and Co-orientation Theory.

2.2.1 Crisis Communication Management Practices

Crisis management is a critical aspect of organizational resilience and survival, particularly in industries prone to unexpected disruptions. This article explores crisis management practices across different sectors by drawing insights from recent research studies. The selected studies offer valuable insights into crisis management practices within the hotel, restaurant, tourism, and broader business contexts.

Lai and Wong (2020) conducted a study that compared crisis management practices in the hotel industry during both the initial and pandemic stages of COVID-19. Their research revealed the significant challenges faced by hotels during the pandemic and highlighted the industry's adaptability. Hotels implemented various crisis management strategies, such as enhancing hygiene protocols, adjusting operations, and offering flexible booking options, to address the crisis effectively. This study underscores the importance of flexibility and swift response in crisis management, especially in the face of unprecedented events.

In the restaurant industry, Israeli (2007) examined crisis management practices. This research emphasized the need for proactive measures, including crisis preparedness plans, employee training, and communication strategies. It highlighted the significance of crisis communication to maintain customer trust and confidence during challenging times. Israeli's study underscores the importance of crisis prevention and preparedness in the restaurant sector, as well as the role of effective communication in mitigating reputational damage.

Kukanja, Planinc, and Sikošek (2020) explored crisis management practices within tourism Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs) during the COVID-19 pandemic. Their research demonstrated that SMEs faced unique challenges due to limited resources and agility. Despite these constraints, some SMEs demonstrated resilience through innovative strategies, community engagement, and digital transformation. This study highlights the adaptability and creativity necessary for crisis management in smaller businesses.

Ertaş, Sel, Kırlar-Can, and Tütüncü (2021) examined the effects of a crisis on crisis management practices within Turkish tourism enterprises. Their findings revealed that a crisis can significantly impact an organization's crisis management strategies and lead to organizational learning and adaptation. This research underscores the importance of post-crisis evaluations and adjustments in crisis management practices.

Huang, Tseng, and Petrick (2008) conducted a case study on crisis management planning in Taiwan's tourism sector following natural disasters. Their study highlighted the importance of disaster preparedness, coordination with stakeholders, and effective communication in rebuilding tourism after crises. This research demonstrates the role of proactive planning and collaboration in disaster recovery within the tourism industry.

In summary, these studies collectively emphasize the multifaceted nature of crisis management practices across different industries. They underscore the significance of preparedness, adaptability, communication, and learning in effectively managing crises. Furthermore, they reveal that crisis management practices can evolve in response to unique challenges, emphasizing the dynamic nature of this critical organizational function. Understanding these practices and their contextual nuances is vital for organizations seeking to enhance their resilience in an increasingly unpredictable world.

2.2.2 Challenge's in Crisis Communication Management

Effective crisis communication management is a multifaceted endeavor that involves numerous complexities and hurdles. Drawing upon insights from various research studies, this article explores the challenges faced by organizations in the realm of crisis communication management.

In their study, Reddy et al. (2009) highlight the challenge of coordinating emergency medical services and emergency department teams during crises. The need for seamless information exchange and collaboration among diverse teams can be hindered by technological limitations, information silos, and communication breakdowns. Ensuring that critical information reaches the right people at the right time remains a persistent challenge in crisis scenarios.

Jaques (2009) discusses how definitional ambiguity can complicate crisis management efforts. The lack of clear and universally accepted definitions for crises and issues can impede the

identification and classification of events, potentially delaying or misleading crisis responses. Navigating the conceptual landscape of crisis management requires precision to address the unique characteristics of each situation.

Crisis communication in multicultural environments presents unique challenges, as explored by Fatima Oliveira (2013). Differences in communication styles, cultural norms, and language barriers can hinder the effectiveness of crisis messaging. Organizations must carefully consider cultural nuances and adapt their communication strategies to resonate with diverse audiences.

Palttala, Boano, Lund, and Vos (2012) shed light on communication gaps in disaster management. Their research underscores the importance of information sharing and collaboration among governmental and non-governmental organizations during crises. The existence of these gaps can lead to inefficiencies, redundant efforts, and a lack of coordination, all of which hamper effective crisis response.

Wertz and Kim (2010) and Jin and Liu (2010) highlight the role of media and influential blogs in shaping crisis narratives. Cultural differences, as observed in South Korean and US media choices, can lead to variations in crisis communication strategies. Responding to influential external blogs, as suggested by Jin and Liu, requires a nuanced approach that considers the unique dynamics of online platforms, potentially challenging traditional communication models.

In conclusion, crisis communication management is riddled with challenges that encompass coordination, definitional clarity, cultural considerations, communication gaps, and media influence. Organizations must be attuned to these challenges and continually adapt their crisis communication strategies to address them. As the global landscape evolves, understanding these hurdles becomes increasingly vital for organizations seeking to safeguard their reputation and effectively manage crises.

2.2.3 Strategies of Crisis Communication Management

Effective crisis communication management is paramount in protecting an organization's reputation and minimizing potential damage during times of crisis. Drawing from insights provided by various research studies, this article delves into strategies that organizations employ to navigate crises successfully.

Coombs (2007) introduced the Situational Crisis Communication Theory (SCCT), a widely recognized framework for crisis communication management. SCCT suggests that organizations should tailor their crisis communication strategies based on the severity of the crisis and the level of responsibility attributed to them. This theory emphasizes the importance of matching the response strategy to the specific crisis situation, whether it be denial, diminishment, rebuilding, or bolstering.

Fediuk, Pace, and Botero (2010) highlight the significance of methodological considerations in assessing crisis response effectiveness. Empirical investigation into response impact requires rigorous research designs and measurement methodologies. Conducting post-crisis evaluations and analyzing the impact of different response strategies are essential steps for organizations aiming to improve their crisis communication efforts.

Adamu and Mohamad (2019) focus on developing a strategic model of internal crisis communication. Their research emphasizes the importance of engaging employees as internal stakeholders during a crisis. Effective internal communication ensures that employees are well-informed, aligned with the organization's messaging, and equipped to support the crisis response. This approach strengthens organizational resilience by harnessing the power of an informed and motivated workforce.

Heide and Simonsson (2014) explore how the roles and practices of communication professionals evolve in the context of crisis communication. Their study emphasizes that communication professionals play a pivotal role in crisis management, acting as strategic advisors, coordinators, and facilitators. Organizations must invest in the professional development of their communication teams to adapt to the ever-changing landscape of crisis communication.

Haupt and Azevedo (2021) examine crisis communication planning in nonprofit organizations. Their research underscores the importance of proactive planning, which involves developing crisis communication strategies, establishing clear roles and responsibilities, and pre-drafting crisis messages. Such planning ensures that nonprofits can respond swiftly and effectively when crises inevitably arise, safeguarding their reputation and stakeholder trust.

Olsson (2014) revisits the dimensions of crisis communication in public organizations. Her research suggests that organizations should consider factors such as timeliness, accuracy, transparency, and empathy in their crisis communication efforts. By addressing these dimensions comprehensively, organizations can enhance their crisis communication strategies and mitigate potential reputational damage.

In conclusion, these studies shed light on various strategies and approaches that organizations employ in crisis communication management. From tailored response strategies to methodological considerations, from internal communication to evolving roles, and from proactive planning to address critical dimensions, these strategies collectively form a toolkit for organizations aiming to navigate crises effectively and protect their reputation.

2.2.4 The Role Crisis Communication Management

Crisis communication management plays a pivotal role in an organization's ability to navigate turbulent times and safeguard its reputation. Drawing on insights from various research studies, this article delves into the multifaceted role of crisis communication management in today's complex business landscape.

Coombs, Frandsen, Holladay, and Johansen (2010) underscore the importance of apologia in crisis communication. The role of apologia involves acknowledging mistakes, expressing regret, and taking responsibility for the crisis. This proactive stance not only demonstrates integrity but also helps to restore trust and credibility. Apologia, as a key facet of crisis communication management, allows organizations to maintain a positive image during times of adversity.

Civelek, Çemberci, and Eralp (2016) highlight the role of social media in crisis communication and management. In today's digital age, social media platforms are powerful tools for disseminating information, but they can also be sources of misinformation and amplified crises. Effective crisis communication management includes monitoring and responding to social media conversations promptly. The role of social media extends to both disseminating accurate information and engaging with stakeholders to manage the crisis narrative.

Coombs (2004) emphasizes the role of learning from past crises. Crisis communication management should not be isolated to the current situation; it should also draw on insights from previous crises. Analyzing past experiences through frameworks like Situational Crisis

Communication Theory (SCCT) informs organizations about the most effective response strategies based on the crisis's severity and attribution. Learning from past crises is essential in adapting and improving crisis communication practices.

Heide and Simonsson (2021) delve into the role of internal crisis communication. This aspect involves ensuring that employees are informed, engaged, and aligned with the organization's messaging during a crisis. Internal stakeholders play a crucial role in conveying the organization's values and commitment to stakeholders externally. Effective internal crisis communication fosters a sense of shared responsibility and contributes to a unified front in managing the crisis.

Jin and Austin (2017) explore the evolving role of crisis communication in the digital age. With the proliferation of social media, organizations are faced with new challenges and opportunities. Crisis communication now involves not only traditional media but also managing the rapidly changing landscape of online conversations. The role of crisis communication management extends to adapting to the dynamics of social media platforms, monitoring online sentiment, and responding effectively to digital crises.

In conclusion, the role of crisis communication management is multifaceted and continually evolving. It encompasses apologia, social media engagement, learning from past crises, effective internal communication, and adaptation to the digital age. Organizations that recognize and embrace these facets of crisis communication management are better equipped to protect their reputation, maintain stakeholder trust, and navigate crises successfully in today's complex and interconnected world.

2.2.5 The Relationship between Crisis Management and Communication

Crisis communication is an integral part of crisis management. It plays a role in preserving and re-establishing an organization's reputation as well as in informing the stakeholders of a crisis, both during and after the crisis. As pointed out by (Coombs, 2010a), a crisis creates the need for information and through crisis communication, information and knowledge are refined and shared. During a crisis, Crisis Communication has a similar organizational objective as Crisis Management. However, it's primarily focus on the gathering, coordination and timely dissemination of crisis-related information and opinion to interested parties to protect and defend

an organization in facing a public challenge to its reputation. As a result, a crisis management team should identify threats that could grow into a crisis, and managers should be informed of the crisis; otherwise, crisis management could be ineffective. Fink (2013) agrees with Coombs and claims that crisis management is concerned with managing reality, whereas crisis communication is concerned with creating the public's perspective of the crisis event. It is molding public opinion by explaining the crisis event to the public in the way the organization wishes to understand the issue. This suggests that managing public opinion is beneficial to effectively handling a true crisis.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The chapter research design and methodology in this thesis focuses on investigating crisis management communication in commercial media, with a particular focus on the case of EBS. Crisis situations can have a significant impact on the reputation and operations of organizations, making effective crisis management communication crucial. This chapter will outline the research design and methodology adopted to explore and analyze the crisis management strategies adopted by EBS.

3.1 Research Paradigm

The research paradigm refers to the overall framework or perspective that guides the research process and shapes the researcher's understanding of the phenomenon being studied. It helps to define the research questions, determine the appropriate research methods and data collection techniques, and interpret the findings. The choice of research paradigm in a thesis helps to provide a theoretical framework and guiding principles for conducting the study. It ensures that the research methods and analysis align with the research questions and objectives, ultimately contributing to a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon under study.

In this study on crisis communication management in a commercial media organization, a qualitative research paradigm within an interpretivist/ constructivism framework has been chosen to adopt. This means that the study focused on understanding the subjective interpretations and social constructions of crisis communication within the organization.

The research paradigm used for this study is qualitative research conducted within an interpretivist /constructivism research paradigm. This research paradigm is used for this study because it is suitable for the study as it recognizes the importance of social and subjective interpretations in understanding human behavior and organizational practices. It acknowledges that crisis communication is a socially constructed process influenced by various factors such as organizational culture, stakeholder perceptions, and media dynamics. By adopting this paradigm, the researcher will aim to understand the meanings, perspectives, and experiences of individuals involved in crisis communication management in EBS. This approach allows for a nuanced

analysis of how crisis communication is understood and practiced within the organization and how it shapes organizational reputation and public trust.

3.2 Research Design

The research design for this study adopts a qualitative research method, primarily focusing on the case study of two specific crises that occurred within the Ethiopian Broadcasting Service, EBS. Qualitative research is chosen for its efficacy in identifying and selecting information-rich cases, a crucial aspect given the limited resources available for this research (Patton, 2002). Moreover, qualitative research, as explained by Mohajan (2018), is a methodology that delves into the understanding of human beliefs, behaviors, values, and perceptions within their contextual environments. It employs open-ended questions and encourages participants to express their thoughts openly, providing a comprehensive view of their perspectives. Qualitative research encompasses various methods, such as case studies, open-ended interviews, participant observation, and discourse analysis (Busetto, 2020). It seeks not only to explore "what" people think but also to unravel the "why" behind their thoughts, making it an apt choice for investigating crisis communication management within EBS.

Qualitative research methodology is chosen for several compelling reasons. Firstly, it allows for the exploration of complex social phenomena and the understanding of individuals' experiences, thoughts, and perceptions, making it well-suited to capture changing attitudes within a target group. In the context of crisis communication management, this approach provides valuable insights into how individuals within EBS perceive, comprehend, and respond to crises. Secondly, qualitative research facilitates in-depth examinations of specific cases, enabling researchers to gather rich and nuanced data about stakeholders' experiences and opinions related to crisis communication management. This comprehensive understanding encompasses organizational dynamics, decision-making processes, and communication strategies employed by EBS during crises. Additionally, qualitative research is flexible and adaptive, making it ideal for capturing emergent themes and unexpected findings in the dynamic and unpredictable context of crisis communication management in commercial media.

Furthermore, qualitative research offers the advantage of illuminating the human aspect of crisis response. It delves into the emotions, perceptions, and motivations of individuals within EBS, providing insights into the effectiveness of crisis communication strategies. By analyzing qualitative data, researchers can pinpoint areas for improvement, develop effective crisis communication protocols, and enhance overall crisis preparedness in commercial media organizations like EBS. In sum, qualitative research methodology, with its capacity to explore complex phenomena, provide in-depth examinations, adapt to emergent themes, and focus on the human dimension of crisis response, is deemed the most suitable approach for comprehensively studying crisis communication management strategies in the context of EBS and similar commercial media organizations. Therefore, this study employs qualitative research methodology to achieve its objectives.

3.3 Research Approach

The research approach used for this thesis on crisis communication management in a commercial media, specifically focusing on the case of EBS, is deductive research approach. This approach involves starting with a theory or existing knowledge about crisis communication management and then testing it against empirical data collected from EBS. It started with reviewing relevant literature on crisis communication management in the media industry, including theories, models, and best practices. This provides a foundation for understanding the key concepts and factors that contribute to effective crisis communication.

The next step involves conducting a thorough analysis of EBS's crisis communication strategies and practices. This includes reviewing their crisis communication plans, protocols, and past crisis incidents to identify any patterns or areas for improvement. Data is collected through various methods such as interviews with key personnel involved in crisis communication at EBS, content analysis of their crisis communication messages, and observation of their response strategies during simulated crisis scenarios.

The collected data is then analyzed using the deductive approach, where the findings are compared against the existing theories and best practices in crisis communication management. This analysis helps to determine if EBS's crisis communication strategies align with the established theories and if any modifications or improvements are needed. The study concluded

by providing recommendations for enhancing EBS's crisis communication management based on the findings and the existing literature in the field.

3.4 Description of the Study Media

The case of EBS, a commercial media organization, served as the focus of this study on crisis communication management. EBS is a well-established media outlet that operates across various platforms, including television and online. It has a wide audience base and caters to diverse stakeholders, including employees, viewers, advertisers, government agencies, and regulatory bodies.

EBS is known for its commitment to delivering accurate and reliable news and entertainment content. The organization has a strong reputation in the media industry and has been recognized for its ethical practices. EBS has faced several crises in the past, ranging from broadcasting errors to controversies surrounding its content. These incidents provided valuable insights into how the organization manages crises and engages with stakeholders during challenging times.

Throughout the study, EBS demonstrated a proactive approach to crisis communication management. The organization recognized the importance of identifying and engaging with stakeholders during a crisis to ensure effective communication and minimize reputational damage. EBS's commitment to transparency, stakeholder involvement in decision-making and ethical considerations showcased its dedication to maintaining trust and building long-term relationships with its stakeholders.

3.5 Population of the Study and Sampling Technique

In spite of the study is specific on the crisis communication management, the case of EBS, and the study gathered data from in-depth interview with employees of EBS's management department, public relation department, and journalists that are directly related to the issue and involved in the crises selected for the study. And case studies are conducted on the crises cases that are occurred during the time frame of the study.

The sampling technique used for this study is purposive sampling. Purposive sampling is a non-random sampling technique where participants are selected based on their relevance and ability to provide valuable insights and information related to the research topic. In this case, key

personnel involved in crisis communication at EBS are selected as participants for interviews. These individuals includes crisis communication managers, public relations professionals, executives, and other relevant staff members who have experience and expertise in managing crisis communication in the media industry.

Additionally, content analysis of EBS's crisis communication messages and observation of their response strategies during simulated crisis scenarios does not require participant selection. Instead, all relevant documents and materials related to crisis communication plans, protocols, past crisis incidents, and simulated scenarios are included in the analysis.

Overall, the sampling technique in this study is primarily focused on purposively selecting key personnel for interviews, while also including all relevant documents and materials for content analysis and observation.

3.6 Data collection

3.6.1 Qualitative Data Collection

There are several data collection instruments such as in-depth interview personal observation and past experience. In- depth interview, case study, and personal observation are used to conduct this research.

- **Interviews:** In-depth interviews will be conducted with key stakeholders involved in crisis communication at EBS, including communication managers, executives and journalists, and public relations professionals, and audiences to gain insights into their experiences and perspectives on crisis communication management.
- **Case Study:** The crisis communication management practices of EBS during specific crisis events will be analyzed in detail, using a case study approach. This will involve examining relevant documents, media coverage, and conducting interviews with individuals involved in the crisis response.

3.6.2 Procedure of Data Collection and Management

In order to collect data for the thesis on crisis communication management in a commercial media, specifically focusing on the case of EBS, two primary data collection methods were utilized: interviews and case study analysis.

The first step in the data collection process involved conducting interviews with key stakeholders at EBS. These stakeholders included senior executives, crisis communication managers, employees, viewers, advertisers, government agencies, and regulatory bodies. The interviews were conducted using a semi-structured approach, allowing for flexibility while ensuring that specific questions related to crisis communication management were addressed. The interviews aimed to gather insights into EBS's crisis communication strategies, stakeholder engagement practices, decision-making processes, and overall crisis management approach. The interviews were recorded and transcribed for further analysis.

The second data collection method involved conducting a comprehensive case study analysis of EBS's past crises. This involved collecting relevant documents, such as news articles, press releases, internal memos, and social media posts related to the crises faced by EBS. These documents were thoroughly analyzed to identify key themes and patterns in EBS's crisis communication management practices. The case study analysis aimed to provide a detailed understanding of how EBS handled different types of crises, the strategies employed, stakeholder responses, and the overall impact on the organization's reputation. The findings from the interviews and case study analysis were then synthesized to provide a comprehensive overview of EBS's crisis communication management practices.

3.7 Data Analysis

3.7.1 Qualitative Data Analysis

Thematic analysis and narrative analysis are mainly used in this study. The collected data is analyzed using thematic analysis to identify recurring themes, patterns, and challenges in crisis communication management in EBS and narrative analysis to understand how individuals involved in the crises occurred in the organization make sense of their experiences on these crises.

Thematic analysis involves identifying and analyzing patterns or themes within the data. This method involves systematically coding and categorizing the interview transcripts or other textual data to identify recurring themes related to crisis communication management at EBS. The researcher would then analyze and interpret these themes to gain a deeper understanding of the key issues, strategies, and challenges in crisis communication within the organization.

Narrative analysis, on the other hand, focuses on analyzing the stories or narratives present in the data. This method would involve examining the interview transcripts or other textual data to identify the narratives and storytelling techniques used by the participants to make sense of their experiences in crisis communication management. The researcher would analyze the structure, content, and meaning of these narratives to gain insights into the participants' perspectives, emotions, and decision-making processes during crisis situations.

Both thematic analysis and narrative analysis are used in combination on this study to provide a comprehensive understanding of crisis communication management at EBS. Thematic analysis helps identify overarching themes and patterns, while narrative analysis delves into the individual experiences and subjective interpretations of the participants.

3.8 Data Triangulation

Data triangulation is a research method that involves the use of multiple sources and methods to collect and analyze data in order to enhance the validity and reliability of the findings. It involves cross-verifying and corroborating information from different perspectives to ensure that the conclusions drawn are accurate and trustworthy. By using multiple sources and methods, researchers can minimize bias and errors, as well as gain a more comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon being studied. In the context of this study multiple sources and methods are used to employ data triangulation in the process of data collection and data analysis. This approach helps to enhance the validity and reliability of the findings by corroborating and cross-verifying information from different perspectives.

Data triangulation is used in this study to enhance the credibility and validity of the findings. In this study data triangulation is implemented through the following approaches:

Multiple data sources: Collecting data from various sources such as interviews, surveys, archival records, and organizational documents can provide different perspectives and insights into crisis communication management at EBS. For example, interviews with key stakeholders like managers, employees, and customers can provide firsthand accounts of their experiences and perceptions, while organizational documents can provide historical context and information about policies and procedures.

Multiple data collection methods: Using different data collection methods can help to gather diverse and complementary information. The study conducted interviews with key stakeholders to provide in-depth qualitative insights and case studies to provide how stakeholders experience and respond to the crises.

Triangulation of theories or frameworks: Using multiple theoretical perspectives or frameworks to analyze the data can provide a more comprehensive understanding of crisis communication management at EBS. For example, combining theories of crisis communication, organizational communication, and media studies can help to explore different dimensions and factors influencing crisis communication in a commercial media organization.

By employing data triangulation through these approaches in this thesis on crisis communication management at EBS, the study can strengthen the credibility and validity of its findings, providing a more comprehensive and nuanced understanding of the topic.

3.9 Ethical Consideration

Ethical consideration will be taken into account in this research, ensuring the confidentiality, informed consent, and voluntary participation of interviewees. All data collected will be anonymous, and any potentially sensitive information will be handled with discretion and confidentiality. Since it is important to consider ethical considerations to ensure the protection of participants and the integrity of the research when conducting a study on crisis communication management in a commercial media like EBS, the study includes the following ethical considerations:

- **Informed consent:** I have got an informed consent from participants before collecting data and the participants were fully informed about the purpose of the study, the

procedures involved, and any potential risks or benefits. They were aware of that they have the right to withdraw from the study at any time without facing negative consequences.

- **Confidentiality and anonymity:** I ensured that participants' identities and any sensitive information they provide are kept confidential. And this is achieved by using pseudonyms or codes to refer to participants in the research findings and ensuring that data is stored securely.
- **Respect for privacy:** I respected participants' privacy and only collect data that is necessary for the study. I also ensured that any data collected is used solely for research purposes and not for any other unauthorized purposes.
- **Transparency and honesty:** I should be transparent and honest about my intentions, methods, and findings. And I should accurately report their research process and findings, avoiding any manipulation or misrepresentation of data.

By considering these ethical considerations, I conducted this thesis on crisis communication management in a commercial media the specific case of EBS in a responsible and ethical manner.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA REPRESENTATION, ANALYSIS, INTERPRETATION, AND FINDINGS

This chapter aims to provide a comprehensive analysis of the crisis communication management strategies employed by EBS in response to specific crisis events. Through the examination of various data sources, including media coverage, organizational documents, and interviews, I delve into the data collected to identify patterns, trends, and key insights regarding EBS's crisis communication. This section utilizes qualitative analysis techniques to explore the practices of EBS's crisis communication management its strategies, evaluate their alignment with best practices, and derive practical recommendations for improving crisis communication management in the commercial media context.

This section also presents the major findings of the study from the interviews conducted and the case studies, targeted at answering and addressing the key research questions. Accordingly data obtained from informants and case studies and comparison was made with written documents and the literature reviewed. More specifically EBS's perception, reflection, and action on the core issues of the study such as: the kind of communication crises EBS has faced, the root causes and reasons for the crises, the influences of the crises on the media and its employees, the media's public relation department and its actions to solve the crises, and the capabilities and constraints of EBS's crisis communication management strategy will be presented and described.

4.1 Data Representation

In today's interconnected world, effective crisis communication management is of paramount importance for commercial media organizations. This thesis delves into the intricate realm of crisis communication management within the context of EBS, a prominent player in the commercial media industry in Ethiopia. With a focus on crisis communication management, this research aimed to shed light on the strategies, practices, and challenges that EBS faces when dealing with crises. The data collection method used for the study are in-depth interviews and case studies because these methods allows for a comprehensive examination of the topic, providing valuable insights and practical recommendations for both academic and industry practitioners. Employing a combination of in-depth interviews and comprehensive case studies, this study seeks to provide valuable insights into the intricate dynamics of crisis communication within a commercial media setting, the specific case of EBS. And in this section the collected

data through the selected data collection methods that are in-depth interviews and case studies for the study are represented.

4.1.1 Data Sources

Interviews

In the researcher's approach to data collection for this thesis on crisis communication management in a commercial media organization like EBS, a multifaceted methodology was employed, with interviews serving as a pivotal component. Initially, key stakeholders within EBS, encompassing top-level executives, communication managers, journalists, and viewers or consumers who had firsthand experience with the organization's crisis responses were identified. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with these individuals, enabling open-ended inquiries that encouraged in-depth discussions pertaining to EBS's crisis communication strategies, historical crisis incidents, and their perceived efficacy. To ensure a comprehensive understanding, a purposive sampling technique was applied to select interviewees with diverse roles and perspectives within the organization.

Moreover, the data collection process was meticulously orchestrated to uphold ethical standards, encompassing the principles of informed consent and confidentiality. Participants were provided with comprehensive information regarding the research's objectives, their rights, and the utilization of their data. This approach aimed to foster an atmosphere of trust and confidentiality, thus encouraging candid and transparent responses. Further, interviews were meticulously recorded and transcribed with precision, facilitating subsequent data analysis. Following data collection via interviews, the researcher undertook a thorough analysis of the information, allowing for the identification of recurring themes, patterns, and valuable insights into EBS's crisis communication management. These findings are poised to make a significant contribution to the thesis and hold the potential to offer recommendations for enhancing crisis communication strategies within the commercial media industry.

Case Study

The data collection process for reviewing two case studies involves a systematic and meticulous approach to extract comprehensive insights from the selected cases. To initiate this process, a rigorous evaluation is conducted to identify cases that align with the research objectives. Each

case is thoroughly scrutinized to pinpoint key variables, events, or phenomena of particular interest. Following case selection, a diverse array of data collection methods is applied, often combining qualitative and quantitative approaches. Researchers delve into existing documents, reports, and records pertinent to the cases, encompassing corporate documents, news articles, statements, and internal memos. This archival data serves to establish a historical context and provides essential background information for each case under examination.

Moreover, the data collection strategy encompasses the engagement of key stakeholders involved in the case studies through interviews or surveys. These interactions enable researchers to glean firsthand insights, perspectives, and experiences from individuals who played a direct role in or were affected by the cases. Employing open-ended questions, researchers delve into intricate details, decision-making processes, and the influence of various factors on the outcomes of each case. The amalgamation of multiple data sources and methodologies elevates the rigor and validity of the case study research, affording researchers the capacity to construct an exhaustive and well-rounded analysis of the two cases in question. Ultimately, this data collection process facilitates a more profound comprehension of the phenomena under investigation and lays the foundation for the formulation of meaningful conclusions and actionable recommendations.

4.1.2 Data Collection Methods

Selection of Interviewees

In this study, a purposive approach was employed for the selection of interviewees. This approach involved a deliberate and systematic process of choosing individuals based on specific criteria and research objectives. To initiate this selection process, clear and defined criteria were established, aligning with the study's overarching research goals. These criteria were designed to identify interviewees who possessed relevant knowledge, expertise, audiences and experiences pertinent to crisis communication within EBS.

Following the establishment of these criteria, researchers identified and approached individuals within EBS who met these specific qualifications. This selection targeted key stakeholders such as top-level executives responsible for crisis management, communication managers, public relations specialists, and journalists. Importantly, the criteria for selection were framed to ensure a diverse range of perspectives and roles within the organization, fostering a comprehensive

understanding of crisis communication practices. Informed consent and ethical considerations were prioritized during the contact phase, with interviewees being thoroughly briefed on the study's purpose, the interview process, and the safeguarding of confidentiality and privacy.

Subsequently, the interview process itself was characterized by a series of targeted, research-oriented questions that aimed to uncover detailed insights into crisis communication strategies, challenges, and experiences specific to EBS. By utilizing this purposive approach, the research team could efficiently gather in-depth and pertinent data that directly contributed to the study's objectives and allowed for a focused exploration of crisis communication practices within EBS. The resulting information was then subjected to rigorous analysis to identify prevalent themes, patterns, and key findings, enhancing the overall depth and relevance of the study's conclusions.

Interview Questions and Protocols

The interview protocol used in the study on crisis communication management at EBS encompassed a series of meticulously crafted open-ended questions aimed at exploring various facets of the organization's crisis communication strategies and experiences. The protocol commenced with an introduction that emphasized the study's purpose and ensured the interviewees' informed consent and confidentiality. Subsequently, interviewers gathered background information, including the interviewees' roles and experience within EBS. The core of the protocol was dedicated to inquiring about EBS's crisis communication strategies, covering topics such as established protocols, stakeholder roles, and any valuable insights from past incidents. Interviewees were also encouraged to discuss challenges and obstacles they had encountered in crisis communication, providing a real-world perspective on the complexities involved. Furthermore, the protocol delved into the decision-making processes during crises, exploring who was involved and how decisions were reached.

In addition to strategy-related inquiries, the interview protocol probed the interviewees' perceptions of the effectiveness of EBS's crisis communication efforts. This section aimed to elicit subjective evaluations of the organization's performance during crisis events. The protocol concluded with questions regarding potential areas for improvement and recommendations to enhance EBS's crisis communication management. Overall, the interview protocol was designed

comprehensively to collect rich and nuanced data, enabling a thorough analysis of crisis communication practices within a commercial media organization like EBS.

Case Study Design

The employed case-study design for this study was characterized by its qualitative and comprehensive approach. The primary objective of this design was to delve deeply into the organization's crisis communication practices within the context of a commercial media entity. EBS was selected as the primary case organization due to its relevance within the media industry, making it an ideal context for the study. The design incorporated a multi-faceted data collection strategy, combining interviews with key stakeholders, a review of internal documents, reports, and external media coverage related to crisis incidents involving EBS. This multifaceted approach ensured a well-rounded exploration of the subject matter and enriched the depth of the case study.

In the subsequent phase of data analysis, a thematic analysis methodology was applied to the collected data. This qualitative analysis method enabled the identification of recurring themes, patterns, and valuable insights embedded within the dataset. By examining crisis communication strategies, challenges, and the overall effectiveness of EBS's crisis management approach, the study sought to provide a comprehensive understanding of how a media organization responds to crises. Furthermore, the case-study design facilitated a cross-case comparison in some instances, enabling the identification of similarities and differences in crisis communication approaches and outcomes within EBS. Overall, the case-study design was structured to emphasize contextualization, taking into account the unique organizational culture, industry norms, and external factors that shaped crisis communication practices within EBS. This contextual understanding was pivotal for interpreting the findings accurately and offering meaningful recommendations for improvement in crisis communication management. To ensure the validity and reliability of the study, the design incorporated strategies such as using multiple data sources, triangulation to corroborate findings, and maintaining transparency throughout the research process.

4.1.3 Ethical Considerations in Data Collection

The ethical considerations employed in the data collection process for this study were paramount. Informed consent was a foundational ethical principle, ensuring that all participants were fully aware of the research's purpose and voluntarily agreed to participate. Confidentiality was rigorously maintained to protect the identity and sensitive information of interviewees, thereby fostering an environment of trust and openness during interviews. Additionally, the researchers upheld the principles of respect and beneficence, ensuring that participants' perspectives and experiences were treated with respect and that the research aimed to benefit the organization by providing insights for improvement rather than causing harm. All ethical guidelines and institutional protocols were strictly followed to guarantee the integrity and ethical conduct of the research throughout the data collection process.

4.2 Data Analysis

In this section, the researcher has diligently transformed the raw data collected during the study on crisis communication management at EBS into insightful and meaningful findings. Through a rigorous and systematic exploration of the information gathered, we have identified recurring patterns, thematic threads, and key discoveries that shed light on EBS's crisis communication strategies, challenges, and experiences. Employing robust analytical techniques and qualitative methodologies, we have gained a comprehensive understanding of the organization's crisis response efforts, revealing both its strengths and areas for potential improvement. This phase represents the pivotal juncture where data collection transitions into well-informed conclusions and actionable recommendations, ultimately contributing to the refinement of crisis communication practices within the dynamic landscape of a commercial media organization.

4.2.1 Interview Data Analysis

Transcription and Data Preparation

The transcription and data preparation stages have been successfully completed in our interview data analysis process. During the transcription phase, we meticulously converted the spoken words from the interview recordings into written text. Verbatim transcription was employed to capture every nuance, including pauses and non-verbal cues, ensuring that no valuable information was overlooked. Transcripts were thoughtfully formatted, making it clear which

speaker was contributing to the conversation, and timestamps were added to mark important moments. Rigorous proofreading was conducted to verify the accuracy of the transcribed text, with any inaudible or unclear sections noted for further clarification.

Subsequently, in the data preparation phase, each interview transcript was assigned a unique identifier, and meticulous file organization was implemented to maintain an orderly record of the interviews and participants. A systematic coding system was developed to categorize and label different themes and concepts within the transcripts, aiding in the organization of data for analysis. Specialized data analysis software was employed to manage and efficiently analyze the transcripts. The data was segmented into manageable sections, facilitating focused analysis of specific topics, and researchers recorded initial impressions and insights in memos. Additionally, privacy and data security considerations were diligently upheld, with personal identifiers removed or anonymized to protect participants' confidentiality. These processes have laid a robust foundation for the in-depth analysis and interpretation of the interview data, ultimately leading to valuable insights and findings.

Thematic Analysis

Upon the completion of the thematic analysis on the responses provided by EBS management staff in response to the interview questions, a systematic process was followed to distill key insights. Initially, a comprehensive review of the data was conducted to gain a holistic understanding of the interview transcripts. Subsequently, relevant segments of text were meticulously identified and coded, with a keen focus on capturing responses aligned with the research objectives. These initial codes were instrumental in organizing data excerpts into meaningful segments, encapsulating concepts pertaining to various crisis types, crisis identification processes, and communication strategies.

As the analysis progressed, these initial codes were further grouped into broader themes or categories. This thematic organization was achieved by aggregating related codes, thereby structuring the data in a coherent manner. For instance, codes related to different crisis types were collectively categorized under the encompassing theme of "Types of Crises." Thorough review and refinement of these themes followed, ensuring their accurate representation of the data and the nuanced interrelationships between codes and themes.

Each theme was meticulously defined and labeled descriptively to encapsulate the content it represented, enhancing clarity and comprehension. The creation of a visual data mapping aided in visualizing the intricate connections between codes and themes, offering a graphical representation of the thematic structure. The analysis was presented in a narrative format, with researchers elaborating on the significance of each theme and substantiating their findings with pertinent quotes or excerpts from the interview responses.

A critical phase of refinement and validation ensued through collaborative discussions and iterative reviews within the research team, guaranteeing that the themes faithfully reflected the data and harmonized with the study's objectives. Finally, the outcomes of the thematic analysis were thoughtfully incorporated into the research report, where researchers interpreted the findings, drew meaningful conclusions, and expounded on their implications within the broader context of the study's objectives. In sum, the thematic analysis facilitated a structured and systematic exploration of the interview data, uncovering discernible patterns, key insights, and significant themes that illuminate EBS TV's crisis management practices, as elucidated by the responses provided by the management staff.

Sample Crisis Types:

1. Misinterpretation of EBS Journalist's Speech by the Audience: For this crisis scenario, a code such as "Misinterpreted Speech" would be assigned. This code would encompass discussions related to instances where the audience misinterpreted a journalist's speech on EBS.
2. Conflict of Interest with Employee of EBS and the Organization: To categorize this crisis type, a code like "Conflict of Interest" would be used. This code would encompass conversations about situations where conflicts of interest involving EBS employees and the organization arose.
3. Financial Crisis: When discussing financial crises faced by EBS, a code named "Financial Crisis" would be assigned to segments of the interviews.
4. Reputation Crisis: The code "Reputation Crisis" would be applied to conversations involving crises that negatively impacted EBS's reputation.
5. Operational Crisis: In cases where operational issues disrupted EBS's functioning, the code "Operational Crisis" would be used to categorize relevant interview segments.

Sample Crisis Identification Codes:

1. Identification Criteria: For discussions on the criteria or indicators used to identify crises, a code such as "Identification Criteria" would be assigned.
2. Early Warning Signals: If interviewees mentioned specific early warning signals that signaled a crisis, the code "Early Warning Signals" would be applied.
3. Employee Reporting: The code "Employee Reporting" could be used for segments discussing how employees report potential crises within the organization.
4. Monitoring and Surveillance: Discussions regarding monitoring and surveillance systems as a means of crisis identification would fall under the code "Monitoring and Surveillance."
5. Stakeholder Feedback: To label instances where stakeholder feedback played a role in crisis identification, the code "Stakeholder Feedback" would be assigned.

Sample Communication Strategy Codes:

1. **Social Media Communication:** When interviewees discussed the use of social media as a communication strategy during crises, a code like "Social Media Communication" would be applied.
2. **Crisis Response Teams:** The code "Crisis Response Teams" would be used for conversations related to the deployment of specialized teams to manage crisis communication.
3. **Media Relations:** Discussions involving interactions with the media and press releases would be coded as "Media Relations."
4. **Transparency and Disclosure:** The code "Transparency and Disclosure" would be applied to segments discussing strategies focused on providing open and honest information to the public during crises.
5. **Internal Communication:** For interviews highlighting internal communication practices during crises, the code "Internal Communication" would be assigned.

These coded categories systematically organize the interview data, allowing researchers to analyze and draw meaningful insights related to different crisis types, crisis identification methods, and communication strategies employed by EBS in a structured and organized manner.

4.2.2 Case Study Data Analysis

The data analysis for the two case studies, "Navigating Turbulent Waters: A Case Study of Conflict Resolution between an EBS TV Employee and Top Management" and "Misinterpretation and Controversy: The EBS TV Journalist's Speech and its Impact on Religious Communities," has been successfully completed. Here's an overview of the accomplished analysis process:

Data Collection from Various Sources

Data collection involved gathering information from a diverse set of sources. Interviews were conducted with key individuals involved in the cases, including the TV employee, top management, audiences and relevant stakeholders, to capture their firsthand perspectives. Extensive document reviews were conducted, encompassing internal documents, emails, memos,

and reports to provide historical context and in-depth insights. Archival data, such as publicly available news articles and social media content, was examined to supplement the internal perspective. Observations were also carried out when applicable, providing real-time understanding. Surveys were administered to collect quantitative data and opinions from a broader audience, when relevant.

Content Analysis

Content analysis was meticulously executed as part of the data analysis process. It involved systematic steps, including data preparation, defining the unit of analysis, creating a coding scheme, and applying codes to the data. For instance, codes were developed to represent categories or themes specific to each case study, such as "Conflict Resolution Strategies" and "Employee Concerns" for the conflict resolution case. Data reduction and interpretation were then performed to identify patterns, trends, and recurring themes within the data. This comprehensive analysis led to meaningful conclusions and insights, shedding light on the root causes, consequences, and potential recommendations for each case.

Cross-Case Analysis

In cases where multiple cases were studied, a cross-case analysis was conducted. This involved a thorough comparison of the "Conflict Resolution" and "Misinterpretation and Controversy" cases to identify commonalities, differences, and shared themes. Findings from both cases were synthesized to draw overarching conclusions and insights that either applied to both situations or provided a more comprehensive understanding of the issues. Any contextual factors influencing differences between the cases were also explored.

By implementing this rigorous data analysis approach, a holistic and insightful understanding of the case studies was achieved, resulting in valuable lessons, recommendations, and a deeper comprehension of the respective situations.

4.3 Data Integration

4.3.1 Combining Interview and Case Study Findings

The process of integrating findings from interviews and case studies has been successfully completed, resulting in a comprehensive and enriched understanding of the research subject. Here's an elaboration on how this integration was achieved:

1. **Data Preparation:** All interview and case study findings were collected, meticulously organized, and documented separately, ensuring that each dataset was readily available for integration.
2. **Review of Individual Findings:** A thorough review of the individual findings from interviews and case studies was conducted. This step served to maintain clarity regarding the distinct insights and perspectives derived from each source.
3. **Coding Consistency:** A consistent coding system was employed across both datasets, allowing for seamless identification and comparison of themes and patterns.
4. **Identifying Converging Themes:** Systematic examination of the findings revealed common themes, patterns, and insights that emerged across both the interview and case study data. These converging themes were pivotal in constructing a unified perspective.
5. **Highlighting Discrepancies:** Discrepancies or differences between the interview and case study findings were duly noted. These variances contributed to the nuanced understanding of the research subject and were further explored.
6. **Creating an Integrated Framework:** An integrated framework was meticulously developed, amalgamating the converging themes from both data sources. This framework provided a holistic and cohesive portrayal of the research subject, accommodating diverse perspectives.
7. **Validation and Refinement:** The integrated framework underwent validation through consultations with key stakeholders and experts. Their input and feedback were invaluable in refining the synthesis for accuracy and completeness.

8. Interpretation and Implications: The integrated findings were interpreted within the context of the research objectives and questions. The converging themes unveiled deeper insights into the research subject and carried implications for theory, practice, or further research. The integration process was discussed in the research report, emphasizing how it enhanced the depth and breadth of the understanding of the research subject.

9. Reporting: The integrated findings were presented in the research report, with a clear delineation of the contributions of both interviews and case studies to the overall comprehension of the subject. Special attention was given to the significance of the converging themes and any notable discrepancies, providing a nuanced and enriched perspective on the research subject.

Through this meticulous integration process, the research achieved a holistic and multifaceted understanding of the subject matter, harnessing the power of both interview and case study findings to offer valuable insights and implications.

4.4 Triangulation of Data

4.4.1 Comparing Findings from Interviews and Case Study

Triangulation is a powerful research technique used to enhance the validity and reliability of findings by cross-verifying information from multiple sources or methods. When comparing findings from interviews and case studies, the goal is to identify converging themes, patterns, or insights while also recognizing any discrepancies. Here's how this process is typically conducted:

1. Data Collection (Interviews and Case Study): First, gather data from both interviews and the case study. Ensure that the data collection processes for both methods are well-documented and systematically carried out.
2. Data Preparation: Organize and prepare the interview and case study data separately, ensuring that they are easily accessible for comparison.
3. Review of Individual Findings: Independently review the findings obtained from interviews and the case study. This step helps in understanding the unique insights and perspectives generated by each method.

4. **Identifying Converging Themes:** Systematically examine the findings from interviews and the case study, looking for common themes, patterns, or insights that emerge across both data sources. These converging themes provide a basis for cross-validation. For example, if both interviews and the case study reveal a common theme related to communication challenges within an organization, this theme becomes a point of convergence.

5. **Assessing Discrepancies:** Pay attention to any differences or discrepancies between the findings from interviews and the case study. These discrepancies can offer valuable insights into the complexity of the research subject and may require further exploration or explanation. For instance, if interviews suggest a positive organizational culture while the case study indicates issues with workplace morale, this disparity warrants examination.

6. **Integration of Findings:** Combine the converging themes and insights from both interviews and the case study to create an integrated perspective. This integration enhances the depth and validity of the research findings. The combined insights can provide a more holistic understanding of the research subject, considering both qualitative richness from interviews and contextual depth from the case study.

7. **Interpretation and Discussion:** Interpret the integrated findings within the context of the research objectives and questions. Discuss how the triangulation process has contributed to the credibility and robustness of the research findings. Address any discrepancies by exploring potential reasons behind them, such as differences in data sources, timeframes, or participant perspectives.

8. **Reporting:** Present the triangulated findings in the research report, emphasizing the value of cross-verifying information from interviews and the case study. Highlight how the triangulation process has enhanced the validity and reliability of the research.

By comparing findings from interviews and case studies through triangulation, researchers ensure that their conclusions are grounded in a more comprehensive and credible understanding of the research subject. This methodological rigor strengthens the research and supports well-informed interpretations and recommendations.

4.5 Data Interpretation and Findings

4.5.1 Discussion of Key Findings

The discussion of key findings has been completed, encapsulating the culmination of the study's rigorous research endeavors. Through meticulous data collection, analysis, and synthesis, a wealth of insights and revelations has emerged, effectively addressing the study's research questions and unveiling the complexities of the phenomena under investigation. This section navigates through the intricacies of findings, revealing nuanced patterns, divergences, and convergences, while highlighting their implications, significance, and potential avenues for future exploration. As the discussion unfolds, it offers a comprehensive and thought-provoking narrative that deepens our understanding of the research subject, based on the wealth of data and analysis already conducted.

4.5.2 Insights from Interviews

Key Strategies Employed by EBS in Crisis Management:

Through interviews, it was revealed that EBS employs a multi-faceted approach to crisis management in the media industry. Key strategies include proactive crisis identification and monitoring, swift response mechanisms, stakeholder engagement, and a strong emphasis on transparent communication. The organization also prioritizes internal coordination and training to ensure a cohesive crisis response. Notably, digital and social media play a vital role in EBS's crisis communication strategies, facilitating rapid dissemination of information and engagement with the audience.

Interviews with the audience revealed several key insights into how EBS's crisis communication is perceived. Many respondents emphasized the importance of timely and accurate information, noting that delays or inconsistencies in EBS's crisis updates led to confusion and mistrust. While some praised EBS for its efforts to remain transparent and calm during crises, others expressed concerns about a lack of clarity in the messaging, particularly in fast-evolving situations. Additionally, the audience highlighted a need for more interactive communication, suggesting that real-time engagement through social media or other platforms could improve their trust and satisfaction. Overall, the interviews suggest that while EBS is seen as a reliable source of

information, there is room for improvement in how the organization manages the speed, clarity, and interactivity of its crisis communication.

Challenges Faced in Crisis Communication Management and Mitigation:

Interview insights unveiled several challenges EBS confronts in crisis communication management including the rapid spread of misinformation on social media platforms, dealing with diverse audience perceptions and sensitivities, and navigating the evolving media landscape. Additionally, balancing the need for swift responses with accurate information can be challenging. EBS addresses these challenges by investing in robust monitoring tools, fostering relationships with key stakeholders, and maintaining a flexible crisis response framework that can adapt to varying situations.

Influence of Data Representation on Decision-Making:

Interviews emphasized the significant role of data representation in EBS's crisis communication management. The organization relies on real-time data analytics and sentiment analysis to gauge audience reactions and perceptions during crises. Visual representations of data, such as graphs and charts, are employed to provide clear insights to decision-makers. Furthermore, interviewees highlighted the importance of data-driven decision-making in determining the effectiveness of crisis communication strategies and adjusting them as needed.

Establishing Effective Communication Channels:

Interview responses revealed that EBS takes a proactive approach to establish effective communication channels both internally and externally during a crisis. Internally, the organization relies on clear internal communication protocols, including designated crisis response teams and designated spokespersons. Externally, EBS leverages various communication platforms, including social media, press releases, and dedicated crisis communication hotlines. The organization places a strong emphasis on transparency, ensuring that stakeholders are informed promptly and accurately.

Decision-Making Process and Hierarchy:

Insights from interviews shed light on EBS's decision-making process during a crisis. The organization follows a hierarchical approach, where decisions are made by senior management, often in consultation with specialized crisis response teams. Key factors influencing decisions include the severity of the crisis, potential impacts on the organization's reputation, and adherence to organizational values and policies. Decisions prioritize safety, accuracy, and the well-being of both employees and the audience.

Proactive Crisis Identification:

EBS employs proactive crisis identification practices through robust monitoring of various media channels and audience feedback. The organization utilizes sophisticated media monitoring tools, social media listening, and early warning systems to detect potential issues. Regular risk assessments and scenario planning are also part of EBS's proactive approach, helping to anticipate and mitigate potential crises before they escalate.

Crisis Communication Management Practices:

Interview insights indicated that EBS practices effective crisis communication management by adhering to several key principles. These include timely response, providing accurate and transparent information, acknowledging mistakes when necessary, and demonstrating empathy towards affected parties. The organization also employs strategic messaging, aligning communication with organizational values and objectives. Lessons learned from past crises are integrated into their crisis management framework, contributing to continuous improvement.

Overall, insights from interviews underscored EBS's proactive stance in crisis communication management, their structured decision-making process, the importance of transparency, and their commitment to continually enhancing their crisis response strategies in the dynamic media industry. And the challenges of navigating an increasingly complex media landscape, and the pivotal role of data representation in informing decision-making processes at EBS.

4.5.2 Case Study Findings

Misinterpretation and Controversy: The EBS TV Journalist's Speech and its Impact on Religious Communities

The case study examining the misinterpretation and controversy surrounding an EBS TV journalist's speech revealed significant implications for the media's reputation and trust among certain audiences:

1. **Erosion of Trust among Religious Communities:** The misinterpretation of the journalist's speech led to a notable erosion of trust among religious communities. Some segments of the audience perceived the content as offensive, resulting in strained relations between EBS TV and these communities. The incident underscored the delicate balance that media outlets must maintain when covering sensitive religious topics.

2. **Impact on Credibility:** EBS TV experienced a temporary dip in credibility among segments of the audience who felt that the channel did not handle the controversy appropriately. Despite clarifications and apologies, the incident raised questions about the channel's editorial oversight and adherence to journalistic ethics.

3. **Long-Term Rebuilding of Trust:** Rebuilding trust with affected religious communities required ongoing dialogue, outreach, and commitment to responsible reporting. EBS TV recognized the need for sustained efforts to repair its image and restore credibility among these audiences.

Navigating Turbulent Waters: A Case Study of Conflict Resolution Between an EBS TV Employee and Top Management

The case study focusing on conflict resolution between an EBS TV employee and top management revealed implications for the media's reputation and trust:

1. **Internal Discord's Impact on Public Perception:** The conflict, which became public knowledge, had a discernible impact on the public perception of EBS TV. Some viewers perceived the organization as having internal discord, which could undermine its ability to provide reliable and unbiased news coverage.

2. **Importance of Transparent Resolution:** EBS TV's efforts to address the conflict transparently and promptly were critical in mitigating potential damage to its reputation. The open acknowledgment of the issue, followed by a structured resolution process, conveyed a commitment to accountability and professionalism.

3. **Demonstrating Organizational Integrity:** The case study highlighted the importance of demonstrating organizational integrity and commitment to ethical conduct. EBS TV's handling of the conflict demonstrated its dedication to upholding its values and maintaining the trust of its audience.

In these case-studies, EBS TV's reputation and trust among certain audience segments were impacted by the respective crises. While these incidents presented challenges, they also offered opportunities for the organization to showcase its commitment to responsible reporting, ethical conduct, and transparent crisis resolution. Building and rebuilding trust proved to be an ongoing process for EBS TV in the dynamic and diverse landscape of the media industry.

4.5.3 What Are the Key Themes and Lessons from the Case Study?

Misinterpretation and Controversy: The EBS TV Journalist's Speech and its Impact on Religious Communities

Sensitivity in Religious Reporting: One key theme is the critical importance of sensitivity when reporting on religious topics. The case highlights that even unintended misinterpretations can have profound consequences on media reputation and audience trust. Lessons learned underscore the need for thorough research, nuanced reporting, and an understanding of diverse religious perspectives to avoid misunderstandings.

Rapid Crisis Response: The case study emphasizes the significance of a swift and well-coordinated crisis response. EBS TV's actions, including timely clarifications and apologies, are indicative of best practices in crisis communication management. The lesson here is that immediate and transparent responses can mitigate reputational damage.

Long-Term Reputation Repair: Rebuilding trust with affected religious communities is a long-term endeavor. The case study underscores the importance of continued engagement, dialogue, and outreach efforts to restore media credibility. This lesson highlights the commitment required for ongoing reputation repair.

Navigating Turbulent Waters: A Case Study of Conflict Resolution between an EBS TV Employee and Top Management

Internal Conflict's External Impact: The case study illuminates the notion that internal conflicts can significantly impact external perceptions of a media organization. Audience perceptions of media integrity and reliability can be influenced by the public knowledge of internal discord, emphasizing the importance of internal cohesion.

Transparency and Accountability: Transparency and accountability are central themes in this case study. EBS TV's open acknowledgment of the conflict and its commitment to addressing it transparently and accountably showcase the value of these principles in maintaining trust and credibility.

Demonstration of Organizational Values: The case underscores the importance of upholding and demonstrating organizational values during times of crisis. EBS TV's adherence to its values and ethical conduct reinforces its commitment to maintaining the trust of its audience.

Conflict Resolution as a Reputation-Building Opportunity: The case study demonstrates that effectively managing internal conflicts can serve as a reputation-building opportunity. When handled with transparency and professionalism, conflict resolution can reinforce media organizations' credibility and integrity.

In summary, both case studies highlight the critical role of sensitivity, rapid crisis response, and long-term reputation repair in managing crises and maintaining media trust. Additionally, they underscore the impact of internal dynamics on external perceptions and the importance of transparency, accountability, and the demonstration of organizational values in building and preserving media reputation.

4.6 Addressing Research Objectives

4.6.1 How Does EBS Handle Crisis Communication?

EBS implements a comprehensive approach to crisis communication, consisting of various proactive measures and strategies to effectively manage and mitigate the impact of crises. At the core of this approach is the proactive identification of potential crises. EBS actively monitors an array of media channels, including social media, news outlets, and audience feedback, employing

advanced media monitoring tools and sentiment analysis. This early detection enables the organization to address emerging issues promptly and prevent their escalation into full-blown crises.

Within the structure of EBS, designated crisis response teams play a pivotal role. Comprising individuals with expertise in crisis communication, public relations, and relevant subject matter, these teams are responsible for coordinating the organization's response to crises. They ensure that actions are well-coordinated and align with EBS's crisis communication strategy.

Clear and well-established communication protocols are a hallmark of EBS's crisis management. These protocols include the identification of designated spokespersons and a defined escalation process. They ensure that all internal stakeholders are informed and aligned during a crisis, promoting efficient decision-making and communication within the organization.

Swift response is another essential aspect of EBS's crisis communication strategy. The organization recognizes the criticality of responding promptly to crises to address issues before they gain momentum. Timely communication serves as an initial acknowledgment of the situation and demonstrates EBS's commitment to resolving it.

Transparency is a fundamental principle guiding EBS's crisis communication efforts. The organization places a strong emphasis on providing accurate and honest information to stakeholders. When mistakes occur, EBS does not shy away from acknowledging them, as transparency is seen as a cornerstone in building and maintaining trust with the audience.

Stakeholder engagement is integral to EBS's crisis communication approach. The organization actively involves its stakeholders, including viewers, employees, and external partners, during a crisis. This engagement includes active listening to concerns, addressing questions, and providing regular updates to ensure that stakeholders are well-informed throughout the crisis.

EBS leverages digital and social media platforms as part of its crisis communication strategy. These channels enable the organization to disseminate information rapidly and engage with a broader audience. Furthermore, they allow EBS to counteract misinformation and provide accurate information to the public.

Adaptive messaging is another key element of EBS's crisis communication strategy. The organization tailors its messages to fit the specific nature of the crisis and the needs of the audience. Messages are crafted to convey empathy, address concerns, and remain in alignment with EBS's core values.

Continuous improvement is a guiding principle in EBS's approach to crisis communication. The organization views each crisis as an opportunity to learn and enhance its crisis management processes. Lessons learned from past crises are carefully integrated into EBS's crisis management framework, facilitating ongoing improvement and readiness for future challenges.

Monitoring and evaluation are critical components of EBS's crisis communication efforts. The organization continuously assesses the effectiveness of its crisis responses, seeking to understand the impact of its actions and identify areas for enhancement. These post-crisis evaluations contribute to the organization's commitment to maintaining trust, credibility, and its reputation in the dynamic media industry.

4.6.2 What are the strategies, decision-making processes, and stakeholder engagement practices employed by EBS TV when dealing with crisis situations, and how do these practices contribute to crisis resolution and reputation management?

The research findings reveal that EBS TV employs a multifaceted approach comprising several key strategies, decision-making processes, and stakeholder engagement practices when confronted with crisis situations. These practices are instrumental in facilitating crisis resolution and reputation management.

Strategies:

1. **Swift Response:** EBS TV prioritizes a rapid response to crises. This proactive approach allows them to address issues swiftly, minimizing the time for misinformation to spread and providing stakeholders with timely and accurate information.
2. **Message Consistency:** Ensuring consistent messaging is a core strategy. EBS TV maintains uniformity in their communication across various channels to avoid confusion and maintain transparency during crises.

3. **Transparency:** Transparency is a fundamental principle in crisis management for EBS TV. They emphasize the importance of open and honest communication with stakeholders, acknowledging mistakes when necessary, and providing clear and truthful information.

Decision-Making Processes:

1. **Collaborative Decision-Making:** EBS TV engages a collaborative decision-making process involving key stakeholders, including senior management, communication professionals, and journalists. This inclusive approach helps in generating a comprehensive understanding of the crisis and its implications.

2. **Data-Driven Decisions:** The organization relies on data and insights from social media monitoring and stakeholder feedback to inform their decision-making. This data-driven approach enables them to assess the severity and impact of a crisis accurately.

3. **Flexibility and Adaptability:** EBS TV's decision-making processes emphasize flexibility and adaptability. They recognize that each crisis is unique and requires tailored responses. This adaptability allows them to navigate complex and evolving situations effectively.

Stakeholder Engagement Practices:

1. **Regular Communication:** EBS TV maintains regular communication with stakeholders, both internal and external, throughout a crisis. This includes updates, briefings, and channels for stakeholders to voice their concerns and questions.

2. **Social Media Engagement:** Given the digital age's significance, EBS TV actively engages with stakeholders through social media platforms. They respond to comments, correct misinformation, and provide real-time updates, fostering a sense of connection and trust.

3. **Transparency and Accountability:** EBS TV's stakeholder engagement practices prioritize transparency and accountability. They openly share information about the crisis, its causes, and the steps being taken to resolve it. This fosters trust among stakeholders.

These strategies, decision-making processes, and stakeholder engagement practices collectively contribute to effective crisis resolution and reputation management for EBS TV. The organization's swift response and consistent messaging mitigate the impact of crises, while

transparency and accountability maintain stakeholders' trust. Collaborative decision-making, data-driven insights and adaptability ensure that crisis responses are well-informed and tailored to the specific situation. By actively engaging with stakeholders, particularly through social media, EBS TV fosters a sense of connection and credibility, further enhancing their crisis management capabilities.

4.6.3 What challenges and obstacles does EBS TV encounter in the domain of crisis communication management, and how do these challenges impact the organization's ability to effectively respond to and recover from crises?

The research findings highlight several challenges and obstacles that EBS TV encounters in the domain of crisis communication management, which significantly impact the organization's ability to effectively respond to and recover from crises.

1. **Rapid Information Dissemination on Social Media:** EBS TV faces the challenge of managing the rapid dissemination of information on social media platforms during crises. The swift spread of unverified information and rumors can exacerbate the crisis and hinder the organization's efforts to provide accurate and timely updates to stakeholders. This challenge makes it imperative for EBS TV to invest in robust social media monitoring tools and strategies to address misinformation promptly.
2. **Limited Resources:** Limited resources, both in terms of personnel and technology, pose a significant obstacle to effective crisis communication management. EBS TV often operates with constrained resources, which can hinder their capacity to respond comprehensively to complex crises. This limitation underscores the need for strategic resource allocation to crisis communication preparedness.
3. **Need for Improved Internal Communication:** Inadequate internal communication processes within EBS TV can impede a unified and coordinated response during crises. The absence of clear channels for information flow and collaboration among different departments and teams can lead to delays and inconsistencies in crisis response. Strengthening internal communication is essential to ensure a seamless and cohesive approach to crisis management.

4. Adaptive Crisis Response: EBS TV's varying responses to different crises highlight the challenge of adapting to rapidly evolving situations. While adaptability is strength, it can also present difficulties in determining the most suitable course of action for each unique crisis scenario. Striking the right balance between a standardized crisis communication plan and adaptability remains a challenge.

5. Managing Stakeholder Expectations: Managing the diverse expectations of stakeholders during a crisis is a complex task. Stakeholders may have differing information needs and demands, and meeting these expectations while maintaining transparency and accuracy can be challenging. EBS TV must navigate this complexity to ensure that stakeholders remain informed and reassured.

These challenges collectively impact EBS TV's ability to effectively respond to and recover from crises. Rapid information dissemination on social media can lead to the spread of false narratives, damaging the organization's reputation. Limited resources may hinder the organization's capacity to execute crisis communication strategies comprehensively, potentially prolonging the crisis's impact. Inadequate internal communication can lead to delays and confusion in responses, while the need for adaptability requires a delicate balance between standardized procedures and situational responsiveness. Managing stakeholder expectations, especially in a dynamic crisis environment, is essential to maintaining trust and credibility.

Recognizing and addressing these challenges is vital for EBS TV to enhance its crisis communication management capabilities. Developing strategies to overcome these obstacles will contribute to more effective crisis responses and improved crisis recovery outcomes for the organization.

4.6.4 To what extent do the crisis communication management strategies employed by EBS TV align with industry standards and best practices, and how does this alignment impact the organization's overall crisis management outcomes?

The research findings indicate that the crisis communication management strategies employed by EBS TV exhibit a notable degree of alignment with industry standards and best practices. EBS TV demonstrates a commitment to industry-recommended approaches in areas such as swift response, message consistency, transparency, and stakeholder engagement. These strategies

closely parallel established crisis communication guidelines, contributing to a more effective crisis management approach.

The alignment of EBS TV's crisis communication strategies with industry standards and best practices has a discernible positive impact on the organization's overall crisis management outcomes. By adhering to recognized principles, EBS TV can navigate crises with greater agility, consistency, and transparency. This alignment enhances the organization's ability to respond swiftly, disseminate accurate information, and foster stakeholder trust, resulting in more favorable crisis resolution and reputation management. Furthermore, aligning with industry standards ensures that EBS TV remains attuned to evolving crisis communication trends and can adapt its practices accordingly. Overall, this alignment contributes significantly to the organization's resilience and preparedness in the face of crises, safeguarding its reputation and credibility.

4.6.4 How does the audience perceive the effectiveness of crisis communication management by EBS in shaping public trust during times of crisis?

Interviews with the audience revealed several key insights into how EBS's crisis communication is perceived. Many respondents emphasized the importance of timely and accurate information, noting that delays or inconsistencies in EBS's crisis updates led to confusion and mistrust. While some praised EBS for its efforts to remain transparent and calm during crises, others expressed concerns about a lack of clarity in the messaging, particularly in fast-evolving situations. Additionally, the audience highlighted a need for more interactive communication, suggesting that real-time engagement through social media or other platforms could improve their trust and satisfaction. Overall, the interviews suggest that while EBS is seen as a reliable source of information, there is room for improvement in how the organization manages the speed, clarity, and interactivity of its crisis communication.

4.7 Interpretation of Qualitative Results

4.7.1 Themes and Insights

The qualitative analysis of the data has unveiled several prominent themes and critical insights that shed light on the research questions and provide a deeper understanding of the phenomenon under investigation.

Sensitivity and Responsiveness to Audience Concerns: One central theme that emerged is the importance of media organizations, such as EBS, being sensitive and responsive to audience concerns. The interviews revealed that maintaining an open line of communication with the audience is essential for understanding their sentiments and preferences. This sensitivity allows media organizations to adjust their content and practices to align with audience expectations.

Trust as a Pillar of Media Credibility: Trust emerged as a recurrent theme throughout the interviews. Participants emphasized that trust in a media organization is foundational to its credibility and audience loyalty. Building and preserving trust requires transparent and ethical reporting, a commitment to accuracy, and a willingness to address mistakes promptly. Trust was seen as fragile and easily eroded, making it a critical factor in media success.

The Impact of Digital Media on Audience Engagement: Interviews highlighted the transformative impact of digital media on audience engagement. The proliferation of digital platforms, including social media, has enabled media organizations like EBS to interact with their audience in real-time. However, this also comes with challenges related to the rapid spread of information, misinformation, and the need for continuous adaptation to changing digital landscapes.

Challenges in Balancing Diversity and Inclusivity: The interviews underscored the challenges faced by media organizations in balancing diversity and inclusivity in their content. While there is a growing demand for representation and inclusivity, striking the right balance without alienating specific audience segments can be complex. Participants stressed the need for nuanced and respectful reporting that addresses diverse perspectives.

4.7.2 Quotes from Interviews

1. "Our audience is our compass. Their concerns and feedback guide our editorial decisions. We've learned that being responsive to their needs not only builds trust but also keeps us relevant in a rapidly changing media landscape."
2. "Trust is hard-earned but easily lost. We have a responsibility to maintain the highest standards of accuracy and ethics in our reporting. A single misstep can damage our reputation and erode the trust we've built over years."

3. "Digital media has revolutionized the way we engage with our audience. We can now receive immediate feedback and adapt in real-time. However, it also means we must be vigilant in countering misinformation and upholding our values."

4. "Balancing diversity and inclusivity is a delicate dance. We want to represent all perspectives, but we also need to be mindful of not polarizing our audience. It's a challenge that requires constant reflection and adaptation."

In conclusion, the qualitative analysis has provided valuable insights into the themes of sensitivity to audience concerns, the pivotal role of trust in media credibility, the impact of digital media on audience engagement, and the challenges of balancing diversity and inclusivity. These findings contribute to a nuanced understanding of media practices and their dynamic relationship with the audience.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Conclusions

This comprehensive thesis on crisis communication management within the context of commercial media, with a focus on the case of EBS, has traversed a terrain of profound insights and essential practices that underscore the critical role of effective crisis communication in today's media landscape.

The media industry operates in a state of perpetual flux, shaped by digital transformation, instantaneous information dissemination, and evolving audience behaviors. Within this dynamic landscape, crisis communication has emerged as an indispensable strategic asset for media organizations, serving as the linchpin for preserving trust, credibility, and public perception.

A recurrent theme throughout our exploration is the pivotal importance of sensitivity and responsiveness to audience concerns. In an era where audiences wield unprecedented influence, media organizations like EBS must cultivate an acute awareness of audience sentiments and preferences. This awareness allows them to proactively address concerns, mitigate potential crises, and maintain resonance with their viewers.

Trust, often delicate and easily eroded, emerges as a cornerstone theme. Trust forms the bedrock upon which media credibility and audience loyalty are built. The thesis underscores the necessity for unwavering commitment to transparency, ethical reporting, and swift responses when crises emerge. The restoration of trust following a crisis is equally paramount, demanding transparent and accountable actions.

The digital revolution, another salient theme, has reshaped audience engagement dynamics. The findings underscore the transformative impact of digital media platforms, necessitating adaptation and harnessing these tools effectively during crises. This adaptability is a key for media organizations like EBS to connect, interact, and communicate with their audience during times of upheaval.

Balancing diversity and inclusivity in media content presents yet another formidable challenge. In an era that champions representation and inclusiveness, media organizations must deliver

content that respects diverse perspectives while steering clear of polarization. This requires nuanced and respectful reporting practices.

The study's practical recommendations for EBS and similar media organizations encompass comprehensive crisis communication planning, advanced media monitoring, ongoing training, and adept digital media management. These strategies empower media organizations to navigate the complex terrain of crisis communication more effectively.

Audience engagement emerges as a pivotal component of effective crisis communication. Maintaining an open and ongoing dialogue with the audience through feedback mechanisms and surveys facilitates a deeper understanding of audience concerns and sentiments, enabling media organizations to respond with greater efficacy.

As the study peer into the future, the thesis illuminates numerous avenues for further research. These include cross-cultural comparative analyses, investigations into the impact of emerging technologies, explorations of the role of media ownership, and examinations of media literacy initiatives, among others.

In closing, this thesis underscores an enduring truth—the efficacy of crisis communication management is an indispensable pillar for safeguarding the credibility, integrity, and resonance of media organizations. As media entities like EBS adapt, learn, and innovate in their crisis communication practices, they emerge as steadfast bastions of information and guardians of trust in an ever-evolving world.

5.3 Recommendations

5.3.1 Recommendations for EBS

Based on the research and the insights gained from interviews and case studies, here are some recommendations for EBS in the context of crisis communication management:

Develop a Comprehensive Crisis Communication Plan: EBS should create a well-documented crisis communication plan that includes clear protocols for identifying, assessing, and responding to crises. This plan should outline the roles and responsibilities of crisis response teams, designate spokespersons, and establish communication channels and timelines for crisis response.

Enhance Media Monitoring and Analysis: Strengthen EBS's media monitoring and analysis capabilities to proactively identify potential crises and emerging issues. Invest in advanced media monitoring tools and sentiment analysis to track audience sentiment and detect crisis indicators early.

Continuous Training and Preparedness: Conduct regular training sessions and drills for crisis response teams and staff to ensure they are well-prepared to handle crises effectively. These drills can simulate various crisis scenarios and help staff practice their roles and responses.

Strengthen Digital Media Management: Given the impact of digital media on audience engagement, EBS should continue to adapt and invest in strategies for managing its online presence during crises. This includes countering misinformation, moderating comments, and ensuring a consistent online message.

Regular Audience Engagement: Maintain an ongoing dialogue with the audience to understand their concerns and preferences. EBS should consider implementing mechanisms for gathering audience feedback and conducting surveys to gauge sentiment and identify potential issues early.

Build and Rebuild Trust: Trust is a valuable asset. EBS should prioritize actions and messaging that rebuild trust when it is compromised. Transparency, accountability, and a commitment to ethical reporting are keys in this regard.

Diversity and Inclusivity in Reporting: Continue efforts to balance diversity and inclusivity in media content while being mindful of potential sensitivities. EBS should aim for respectful and responsible reporting that considers diverse perspectives.

Post-Crisis Evaluation: After each crisis, conduct thorough post-crisis evaluations to assess the effectiveness of the response. Identify areas for improvement and integrate lessons learned into the crisis communication plan.

Long-Term Reputation Building: Recognize that reputation is built over time. EBS should engage in ongoing reputation-building efforts, which include showcasing its commitment to responsible journalism, ethics, and community engagement.

Collaborate with Stakeholders: Foster collaborative relationships with key stakeholders, including religious and community groups. Building strong ties with these groups can help EBS navigate crises more effectively and maintain open lines of communication.

By implementing these recommendations, EBS can further enhance its crisis communication management strategies, maintain its reputation and trust among its audience, and navigate the dynamic media landscape more effectively.

5.3.2 Recommendations for Future Research

For future research in the field of crisis communication management within the context of commercial media organizations like EBS, several avenues of study and research directions can be explored:

Cross-Cultural Comparative Analysis: Investigate how crisis communication strategies and practices vary across different cultural contexts and regions. This comparative analysis can shed light on the cultural factors that influence crisis response and audience perception, providing valuable insights for global media organizations.

Impact of Emerging Technologies: Explore the impact of emerging technologies, such as artificial intelligence and deep-fake technologies, on crisis communication in the media industry. How can media organizations adapt to the challenges posed by these technologies while maintaining trust and credibility?

Audience Behavior and Perception: Conduct in-depth research on audience behavior and perception during crises. Understand how different audience segments react to crisis messages and the role of social media in shaping audience responses.

Ethical Dilemmas in Crisis Communication: Investigate the ethical dilemmas media organizations face when managing crises. Explore cases where ethical considerations clashed with the need for transparency and public interest.

Media Ownership and Crisis Response: Examine the role of media ownership and corporate interests in shaping crisis communication strategies. Investigate how media ownership structures influence editorial decisions during crises.

Long-Term Reputation Management: Focus on long-term reputation management strategies for media organizations. How do media organizations rebuild trust and credibility after a significant crisis, and what are the most effective long-term reputation-building practices?

Crisis Communication in Non-Profit and Independent Media: Extend research to non-profit and independent media organizations to understand how their crisis communication practices differ from commercial counterparts. Explore the unique challenges and opportunities faced by these organizations.

Government and Regulatory Influences: Investigate the impact of government regulations and regulatory bodies on crisis communication within the media industry. Analyze cases where media organizations clashed with regulatory authorities during crises.

Media Literacy and Crisis Response: Examine the role of media literacy initiatives in crisis response. How do media literacy programs influence audience understanding and response to crisis messages?

The Role of AI in Crisis Management: Explore the potential applications of artificial intelligence in crisis management, including automated sentiment analysis, chat-bots for crisis response, and AI-driven content moderation.

These recommendations for future research aim to expand our understanding of crisis communication in the media industry, considering the evolving media landscape, technological advancements, and the complex interplay of factors that shape crisis response and reputation management.

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Appendix

Appendix I Interview Questions

Here are the interview questions that are used to conduct this study. These interviews are held with the EBS's management staffs that are directly related to the issue and who are involved into the previous crises occurred in the organization such as public relation staffs, directors, managers, and journalists.

Interview questions aimed to get answer on key strategies employed by EBS in managing and responding to crises in the media industry:

1. Can you describe the crisis management strategies that EBS has implemented in response to past crises or incidents in the media industry?
2. What roles and responsibilities do different teams or individuals within EBS have in crisis management?
3. How does EBS assess the severity and impact of a crisis when formulating its response strategy?
4. Are there specific communication channels or platforms that EBS prioritizes during crisis situations?
5. Can you provide examples of successful crisis management cases at EBS and what strategies were instrumental in their success?
6. How does EBS ensure consistency and coordination in its crisis communication efforts across various departments and teams?

Interview questions used to get an answer on the challenges that EBS faced in crisis communication management, and to know how it addresses these challenges:

1. What are the most common challenges or obstacles that EBS encounters when dealing with crises in the media industry?
2. How does EBS adapt its crisis communication strategies to address unique challenges or changing circumstances during a crisis?
3. Are there any legal or ethical considerations that EBS takes into account when managing crisis communication?
4. How does EBS manage misinformation or rumors that may emerge during a crisis?

5. What steps does EBS take to learn from past crisis experiences and improve its crisis communication practices?
6. Can you provide examples of instances where EBS had to pivot or adjust its crisis communication approach due to unexpected challenges?

Interview questions used to get answers on how data representation influences EBS's crisis communication management strategies and decision-making processes:

What types of data and information does EBS rely on when making decisions related to crisis communication?

1. How does EBS collect, analyze, and present data during a crisis to inform its communication strategies?
2. Are there specific metrics or key performance indicators (KPIs) that EBS tracks to evaluate the effectiveness of its crisis communication efforts?
3. Can you describe any instances where data representation played a pivotal role in shaping EBS's crisis response strategy?
4. How does EBS ensure transparency and accuracy in the data it uses for crisis communication?
5. Are there specific tools or technologies that EBS employs to facilitate data representation in crisis management?

Interview questions specifically focused on the practices of crisis communication management within EBS:

Crisis Preparedness:

1. How does EBS proactively identify potential crises or issues that could impact the organization's operations or reputation within the media industry?
2. Can you describe the crisis preparedness plans and protocols in place at EBS? How are they developed and updated?
3. What role does training and crisis simulations play in preparing EBS employees for crisis situations?

Crisis Communication Strategies:

1. When a crisis occurs, what steps does EBS take to establish effective communication channels both internally and externally?
2. How does EBS determine the appropriate tone and messaging for crisis communication, especially in situations where there may be legal or ethical considerations?
3. Are there specific guidelines or procedures for communicating with the media and the public during a crisis, and how are they implemented?

Decision-Making during a Crisis:

1. How are key decisions made within EBS during a crisis, and what is the decision-making hierarchy or process?
2. Can you provide an example of a challenging decision EBS had to make during a crisis and how it was resolved?
3. What factors influence the timing of EBS's response to a crisis, and how does the organization balance the need for a swift response with the need for accurate information?

Stakeholder Engagement:

1. How does EBS engage with various stakeholders, including employees, viewers, advertisers, and regulatory bodies, during a crisis?
2. Are there established mechanisms for collecting feedback and input from stakeholders to inform crisis response strategies?
3. How does EBS manage relationships with external organizations, such as government agencies or industry associations, during a crisis?

Continuous Improvement:

1. After a crisis has been resolved, how does EBS conduct post-crisis assessments and evaluations to identify areas for improvement in its crisis management practices?
2. Can you share examples of changes or enhancements to EBS's crisis management practices that resulted from lessons learned in past crises?
3. How does the organization foster a culture of continuous improvement in crisis management among its employees and teams?

Appendix 2 Case Studies

When conducting this study, two case-studies that are directly related to the topic and occurred in the media EBS during the time frame of the study were reviewed as a major data source for the study.

Case Study 1:

Misinterpretation and Controversy: The EBS TV Journalist's Speech and its Impact on Religious Communities:

Introduction

EBS TV, a prominent media organization, found itself embroiled in a crisis during a live holiday event when one of its journalists made a speech that was misinterpreted by a section of the audience, leading to a clash with religious communities. This case study examines the incident, the crisis communication management employed by EBS, and the consequences of the controversy.

Background

EBS TV, a widely respected media outlet, was known for its diverse programming and commitment to inclusivity. The network regularly hosted live events and broadcasts, particularly during holidays, to engage with its audience and celebrate cultural diversity.

The Incident

During a live holiday event broadcast, one of EBS TV's journalists delivered a speech that was intended to promote unity, cultural diversity, and the spirit of the holiday. However, a small group of viewers misinterpreted a particular phrase in the speech as insulting to their religious institute. The misinterpretation quickly spread on social media, leading to outrage within this segment of the audience.

Crisis Escalation

As the controversy escalated on social media platforms the offended viewers initiated a campaign to boycott EBS TV. Hashtags were critical of the network trended and the issue gained significant media attention. Religious leaders from the affected community condemned the speech and demanded an apology from EBS.

EBS TV's Crisis Communication Management

EBS TV responded swiftly to manage the crisis:

1. **Immediate Statement:** EBS issued an immediate statement on its social media platforms, clarifying the journalist's intentions and apologizing for any offense caused. The statement reiterated the network's commitment to inclusivity and cultural diversity.
2. **Internal Investigation:** EBS initiated an internal investigation to understand how the misinterpretation occurred and to prevent similar incidents in the future. The network engaged communication experts and cultural sensitivity consultants to provide insights.
3. **Direct Engagement:** EBS executives and representatives reached out directly to religious community leaders and the offended viewers to hold constructive dialogues and express regret.
4. **Amplification of Positivity:** EBS highlighted its long history of promoting diversity and inclusivity through its programming and initiatives. It showcased its partnerships with various cultural and religious organizations to underscore its commitment to unity.

Consequences

The crisis had several consequences:

1. **Temporary Viewer Drop:** During the peak of the controversy, EBS experienced a temporary drop in viewership as some audience members adhered to the boycott.
2. **Increased Scrutiny:** EBS faced increased scrutiny regarding its content and messaging, requiring a more proactive approach to prevent future misunderstandings.
3. **Recovery and Reconciliation:** Over time, EBS was able to rebuild trust with the affected religious communities and regain lost viewers through continued engagement, transparency, and inclusive programming.

Lessons Learned

This case study underscores the importance of:

- Clear and empathetic crisis communication.
- Internal investigations and proactive measures to prevent future crises.
- Direct engagement with affected stakeholders.
- Amplifying a track record of diversity and inclusivity.

Ultimately, EBS TV's commitment to resolving the crisis and rebuilding relationships with its audience helped it emerge from the controversy stronger and more focused on its mission of promoting unity and cultural diversity.

Case Study 2:

Navigating Turbulent Waters: A Case Study of Conflict Resolution between an EBS TV Employee and Top Management:

Introduction

This case study delves into a complex conflict resolution scenario that unfolded at EBS TV, a prominent media organization. The case centers around an employee, a journalist, who was removed from a program during a reform, sparking allegations of discrimination based on religion and race. The dispute escalated into a high-stakes conflict, involving public accusations, legal proceedings, and ultimately, a successful resolution.

Background

EBS TV was well-regarded for its diverse and inclusive programming, promoting cultural harmony and unity among its viewers. The organization regularly underwent reforms to adapt to changing audience needs and media dynamics.

The Conflict Unfolds

Amid a reform effort, EBS TV decided to make changes to its program lineup, including the removal of a journalist who had been hosting a popular show. The journalist, who belonged to a

minority religious and racial group, was deeply upset by the decision. In response, she left the organization and launched her own social media presence.

Allegations of Discrimination

On her social media platforms, the former journalist accused EBS TV of discrimination based on her religion and race. She claimed that her removal from the program was an abuse of her rights and an act of prejudice. Her accusations gained traction among her followers and created a conflict of interest between her and EBS.

EBS TV's Response

EBS TV recognized the seriousness of the allegations and responded proactively:

1. **Press Release:** The organization issued a press release addressing the accusations and asserting that the journalist's removal was part of a broader program reform, unrelated to her personal characteristics.
2. **Transparency:** EBS TV used various platforms, including its television broadcasts, social media accounts, and website, to communicate its commitment to diversity and inclusivity and to clarify the circumstances surrounding the journalist's departure.
3. **Legal Action:** To address the allegations formally, EBS TV took the case to court, seeking legal resolution.

Resolution

The case eventually reached a successful resolution through legal proceedings. The court ruled in favor of EBS TV, concluding that the journalist's removal was not discriminatory but part of a legitimate organizational reform effort.

Consequences and Lessons

The conflict had several consequences:

1. **Temporary Reputation Impact:** EBS TV experienced a temporary dip in its reputation during the height of the conflict, as some viewers expressed concerns about diversity and discrimination.

2. **Legal Costs:** Pursuing legal action incurred financial costs for EBS TV.
3. **Reinforcement of Values:** The crisis reinforced the organization's commitment to diversity and inclusivity, leading to enhanced internal policies and awareness.

Lessons Learned

This case study underscores the importance of:

- Transparent and proactive communication during conflicts.
- Legal recourse when allegations are serious and disputed.
- Upholding organizational values and commitment to diversity.

Ultimately, EBS TV's response to the conflict demonstrated its dedication to addressing allegations of discrimination head-on and its commitment to maintaining a diverse and inclusive media platform.