Organisational crisis communication in Botswana: Investigating the crisis response strategies and the role of social media

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Submitted towards the fulfilment of a Degree of Doctoral of Philosophy in Media Studies

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September 2022

Abstract

Post-millennial crises in the digital age have become more challenging and difficult for unprepared organisations and public relations (PR) practitioners to manage. As such, organisations in Botswana, including global conglomerates with operations in Sub-Saharan Africa, have not been spared from these emergencies. With social media such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Youtube and Pinterest, to mention a few, spreading crisis information at lightning speed, organisational crises can become global and multicultural in nature, further threatening the organisation's reputation. To manage such complex exigencies, PR practitioners must understand the factors influencing the types of their crisis messages and how to use Facebook to persuade their audience.

Currently, the lack of crisis communication research in Botswana to guide practitioners on appropriate response strategies and how language is used on Facebook to persuade audiences has attracted academic interest. Botswana's crisis communication ecosystem is still new and there is need for adjustments for PR practitioners to scale up to international standards. As such, this study investigates crisis communication in Botswana using the case studies of the Botswana Development Corporation (BDC) Fengyue Glass Manufacturing Project crisis of 2011, and the Botswana Railways (BR) passenger train derailment crisis of 2019. This research conducted a detailed content analysis of Facebook posts and identified themes and categories of how these organisations and their audiences communicated during these emergencies. To complement this quantitative data, selected Facebook posts were subjected to critical discourse analysis to establish how PR practitioners used language to dominate and persuade their audiences. Further explanations on how and why practitioners respond the way they do on Facebook were developed from semi-structured interviews with senior PR practitioners in Botswana.

The study finds that crisis communication in Botswana is distinctive due to cultural factors. This thesis has developed a crisis information flow and relationship model (the Cross Cloverleaf Relationship Matrix) between Facebook and Botswana's cultural offline communication platform, the *kgotla* system. The model helps to facilitate Facebook in a non-western setting where it is culturally resisted for its liberalism and promotion of Western values. Additionally, this thesis confirms Coombs (2006)'s cluster of crisis response strategies as valid and robust for non-western contexts, provided the corrective strategy is introduced as a cluster to accompany them.

Declarations

I declare, to the best of my knowledge, that this work has not been accepted for any degree, neither is it presently being submitted for any degree at another university, other than this Doctoral Degree at Swansea University. I confirm that this thesis is the culmination of my own investigations, and every source has been acknowledged and included in the bibliography. Furthermore, I give express permission for this work to be photocopied for academic use and for any information, in its totality, to be made available to any organisation upon request.

Acknowledgements

As the dust settles, I look back with gratitude for the support I enjoyed from different individuals and organisations in my PhD journey. Firstly, I give glory to my Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ for the wisdom to complete this journey, and for guiding and protecting me during the perilous Covid-19 pandemic era. Surely, this was a difficult time for everyone, and without the hand of the Lord, I would not have completed this PhD within the set timelines.

Secondly, I am extremely grateful to the UK Government's PhD Commonwealth Scholarship programme for the financial support. Without this support, my dreams to enrol for a PhD would have remained a distant memory. Special thanks go to my supervisors Dr Sian Rees and Dr Richard Thomas for guiding me through the storms and making this journey bearable and exciting. Their counsel was always candid and invigorating. Above all, they supervised me well and exceeded my expectations. I weathered the storms, and I am very grateful. Ken and Alyson Thomas were an incredible support structure throughout this journey. I owe them a debt of gratitude for their love and friendship. They made Wales a home away from home, and through them, my family thoroughly enjoyed the Welsh experience! My mother-in-law Ms Angela Kabecha made this journey bearable. She visited for a couple of months to give me support and for that I am very grateful. I also want to express thanks to colleagues at the Department of Media and Communication at Swansea University, especially Bonny and Evelyn for doing my intercoder testing.

Lastly, what would I have done without my wife, best friend and prayer partner, Lorato Simon. Thanks for believing in this journey, and ensuring I focused through it all. It was not easy, but you sacrificed a lot and made me to believe in this possibility. If it were not for your support, I would not have completed this thesis on time. It will be remiss if I ended without thanking my quartet of lovely daughters- Ashley, Joanna, Daniella, and Eliana. You guys are the best! You believed in daddy and have never seized praying and cheering me on. You sacrificed a lot as you watched daddy fighting to the very end. I cannot thank you more. As you did for me, the Lord will see you through your own! This PhD is to you!

Terminologies and abbreviations

Batswana	A plural for citizens of the Republic of Botswana
BDC	Botswana Development Corporation (BDC) is a state-owned enterprise that was responsible for the funding of the Fengyue glass manufacturing project in Palapye, Botswana
Botswana	A landlocked country located in Southern Africa
CDA	Critical discourse analysis
Crisis response	A message disseminated by an organisation during a crisis
CSR	Corporate Social Responsibility
IRT	Image Repair Theory
JPPR	Journal of Public Relations Research
Kgosana	A Setswana word for a deputy chief of the *kgotla*
Kgosi	A Setswana word for a chief or the head of a kgotla
Kgotla	A place where communities gather to discuss issues of national interest. Every village in Botswana has a kgotla which is headed by a Kgosi (chief)
Motswana	A singular for a citizen of the Republic of Botswana
NCA	National Communication Association
Palapye	A growing town in Botswana, situated 270 km (approximately 168 miles) north of the capital, Gaborone
Parastatals	State-owned enterprises that are partly owned by government and are run and managed by a Board of Directors. The employees are not governed by the Civil Service Act
PPR	Public Relations Review journal
Publics	A group of people facing a similar problem; recognise that the problem exists, and organise to do something about the problem
SCCT	Situational crisis communication theory
SMCC	Social-mediated crisis communication model
Setswana	Botswana's national language
USA	United States of America
Western countries	Countries in Europe and North America
PR	Public Relations
SOE	State-owned enterprise

NRZ   National Railway of Zimbabwe

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CHAPTER 1: Crisis communication in Botswana

Crises have become a global phenomenon, and social media reports about organisations dealing with emergencies are now common. As negative events that may affect the viability of companies (Pearson & Clair, 1998; Carrington et al., 2019), organisational crises may be triggered by internal or external factors, among others, financial fraud, employee discrimination, product safety problems, natural disasters, among others (Coombs, 2010; Konig et al., 2020). These exigencies may threaten the organisations' reputational assets. Social media has created a complex crisis communication ecosystem through its borderless world which transcends diverse cultures. Information spreads faster and requires trained and well-equipped crisis managers to manage organisational emergencies. Not only that, but businesses also operating across borders deal with social-mediated crises in unfamiliar territories, on a regular basis.

While crisis communication is strategic for organisations, the field has progressed slowly in the last three decades because it was subsumed under crisis management, and largely Western authored (Coombs, 2010; Walaski, 2011). However, research has advanced into other contexts to contribute to global knowledge. When crisis communication scholarship emerged, scholars centred their research on what happens within the organisation. Coombs (2009) describes crisis communication as an iceberg because the bulk of it is not visible to those outside the organisation. This worldview has largely influenced the direction of the scholarship today, leading to scholars describing crisis communication as the process of collecting, processing information and actively sharing it with stakeholders to manage or mitigate harm (Coombs, 2010; Civelek et al., 2016; Ganga & Sriramesh, 2018).

As suggested by Frandsen & Johansen (2018), the organisation centric worldview of crisis communication ignores the many voices around crises especially in social media. For example, research by Coombs (2010); Coombs (2012); Benoit (2013); Sellnow & Seeger (2013) centred around what happens inside the organisation. Most of this research perceived organisations as senders of information and publics as passive receivers (Zheng et al., 2018), despite social media users possessing excess power to create and share information about the organisations in crisis among themselves. As such, crisis communication should be modelled around organisations and publics, alike, sending and receiving information with one goal – ending the

crisis. Yet crisis communication remains largely dialogic because it involves exchanges between the organisations and publics 'before, during and after the negative occurrence' (Fern-Banks, 2011:2). As Fern-Banks (2011) suggests, organisational dialogue is strategic and purposefully designed to bring a more positive image than it was before the crisis.

However, social media has increased the risk of vulnerability of the organisation during a crisis, especially when it lacks control over the content (Roshan et al., 2016). This means organisations should be vigilant in dealing with social media because crises can break out from a single post of a customer and be shared by millions of people in a few minutes. For instance, Rees (2020)'s example of the 'United breaks guitar' YouTube storm by a distraught Canadian singer David Carroll, which has so far been viewed over 18.7 million times, is a typical example of why organisations should be vigilant in dealing with social media crises emerging outside the organisation. These are some of the realities which make it difficult for crisis managers to communicate because audiences have 'an exaggerated role in their conversation with organisations in crisis' (Lin et al., 2016: 601).

Due to technological advancement and the growth of Facebook worldwide, public relations (PR) practitioners can no longer ignore its role in managing organisational crises. Social media has become popular among organisations during emergencies. For example, in the UK and Australia, Facebook has become a significant information source for publics demanding services from organisations (Pawsey et al., 2018). Facebook and Instagram gained popularity among organisations in the UK and Australia during the Covid-19 pandemic (Atkinson et al., 2021; Sengul, 2021). Additionally, journalists use it to generate news and this means the platform has an impact on the audiences during a crisis (Austin et al., 2012; Roshan et al., 2016), although trust for traditional media seems to be diminishing (Aharoni et al., 2022). Additionally, Austin et al (2012) suggest in their study that audiences seem to trust social media more than traditional media. Put differently, audiences trust for traditional media has diminished, but this does not mean social media replaces the role of televisions, radio, and newspapers. As such, social media complements traditional media, whose news also gets reported on social media networks, reaching larger audiences (Zhu et al., 2017; Sun et al., 2022).

Sub-Saharan Africa has not been spared from emergencies which threaten corporate reputation. Strategic crisis communication for Western corporations operating in Sub-Saharan Africa seems an arduous undertaking because of variations in socio-economic, political, and cultural needs of audiences between these two contexts (Claeys & Schwarz, 2016; George & Kwansah-Aidoo, 2017). Even Western PR practitioners acknowledge that crisis communication has become 'international and multicultural in scope and they are not fully prepared, either individually or organisationally, for these changes' (Lehmberg & Hicks, 2018: 358). Therefore, any attempt by crisis managers in Sub-Saharan Africa and their global counterparts to effectively protect corporate reputations requires substantial research on crisis communication in affected contexts.

However, research on crisis communication in the African continent remains scant (George & Kwansah-Aidoo, 2017). As such, untrained and unprepared PR practitioners risk losing control of the social-mediated crisis and putting their organisations at greater risk because new technologies have dramatically reshaped crisis communication (Zhu et al., 2017; Zheng et al., 2018). More developed contexts like South Africa and Nigeria, where much of the scholarship emerge in strategic communication and public relations, experience a deficit in crisis research (George, 2016; Wasserman & Hyde-Clarke, 2016; George & Kwansah-Aidoo, 2017).

Similarly, contexts such as Botswana also lack research on crisis communication to guide PR practitioners. This underscores the importance of more cross-cultural research in organisational crisis communication from a non-western perspective. In other words, the way PR practitioners in Botswana respond to crises on Facebook has not undergone academic analysis, a critical blind spot this study redresses. In this way, the embryonic crisis communication terrain in Botswana and how PR practitioners communicate remains distinctive, providing a disparity in how Western and non-western organisations and PR practitioners communicate during crises. As such, there is a need for local practitioners to adjust their approach to match-up with international best practices.

This project asks if PR theories are applicable and relevant to Botswana's crisis communication practice, and if not why? As such, this thesis road tests Coombs and Holladay (1996)'s situational crisis communication theory (SCCT), Austin et al (2012)'s social-mediated crisis communication model (SMCC), and Grunig and Hunt (1984)'s two-way symmetrical model

to determine their relevance and validity in Botswana's context. The study also asks if Western-authored crisis response strategies can be easily transferred and used in non-Western contexts such as Botswana, whether they are effective or not, and if not, why? Additionally, it examines the characteristics of crisis messages on Facebook using two case studies of real crises that took place, and how PR practitioners use language to dominate and persuade their audience. Furthermore, the study investigates how Botswana's culture and corporate social responsibility (CSR) influence crisis communication outcomes.

One of the key academic contributions of this study is the development of a relationship model between Facebook and offline communication that this study refers to as the Cross Cloverleaf Relationship Matrix (CCRM). This model was developed within this research to help understand the interaction between Facebook and the *kgotla* system, an 18th century offline cultural communication platform where leaders meet the publics to discuss issues of national concern in a townhall style (Ngwenya & Kgathi, 2011; Otlogetswe, 2018). This thesis posits the idea that Facebook is the 21st-century version of the *kgotla* system because both these platforms enable people to gather and discuss issues of national importance.

Findings of this study demonstrate that there is resistance among organisational leaders to use Facebook during crises due to cultural factors, and the CCRM illustrates how Facebook might stay relevant and enjoy acceptance from a mutual relationship with this cultural offline platform (kgotla), and how this platform might also stay relevant if it shifts into virtual spaces such as Facebook. As such, the *kgotla* system validates and authenticates organisational crisis information and makes it more trustworthy by the time it reaches Facebook and the offline publics. In this way, this thesis proposes that the *kgotla* system should become virtual to facilitate reliable and trustworthy crisis information on Facebook. Perhaps this model presents an opportunity for scholars to explore comparative studies of how the CCRM might work in Western and other non-western contexts. The CCRM and its contribution to academic scholarship are further discussed in finer detail in chapters 9 and 10.

1.1. Social media in Botswana

To set the tone for this study, it is essential to contextualise crisis communication in Botswana within the social media space (especially Facebook). This platform can no longer be ignored

during crises because audiences use it for 'insider information' during situations and perceive it as 'more credible than traditional media' (Austin et al., 2012:191). Most people in Botswana use Facebook to access and share crisis information, making it more challenging for PR practitioners to manage emergencies.

Not only is Facebook useful for corporates and political movements in Botswana, the traditional media has opened pages on the platform to reach their audiences. They use the platform to produce and share news to liberate the audiences from the 'blackouts perpetuated by the state media' (Jotia, 2018: 265). The platform became popular in Botswana during the 2014 General Elections. Then, Facebook was used as a political communication and 'mobilising tool,' following its successful use in the 2008 United States Presidential elections and revolutions in the Arab region and Africa (Masilo & Seabo, 2015: 118). Before the elections, some organisations including the government used it albeit with less uptake to communicate with their stakeholders (Mosweu and Ngoepe, 2019). As such, it seems the publics in Botswana, mostly taxpayers, might have a legitimate expectation for the organisations to engage them on this platform and consistently share information about crises affecting them. Citizens deserve information to participate in any decision-making process, and Facebook has given them a platform to discuss the socio-economic and political climate of the country (Jotia, 2018; Mosweu & Ngoepe, 2019).
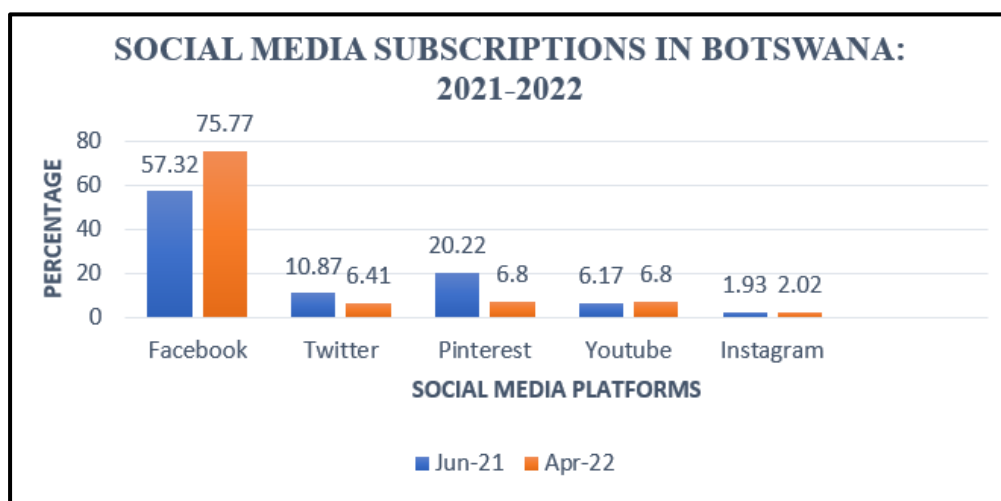
Figure 1.1: Social media indicators in Botswana (Source: Statcounter, 2022)

With Botswana's relatively small population of 2.37 million people (Kemp, 2021), Facebook subscription base in country reached 75% of the total population in 2022 (Statcounter, 2022).

Figure 1.1 indicates that between 2021 and 2022, Facebook emerged as the most popular social media platform in the country (Faria, 2022). Like other Sub-Saharan African countries, Botswana had access to the internet belatedly. For example, in 2000, there were 15,000 people with access to the internet, and fast forward to 2015, the country rolled out broadband and internet coverage to increase access, and Facebook subscriptions rose to 620,000 users (Steckman and Andrews, 2017). Then, it seems the costs of buying smartphones and data might have inhibited many people from accessing the internet. However, these numbers rose to 1.12 million people in 2021 (Kemp, 2021).

1.2. Social media and the decline of newspaper circulation

The choice of Facebook for analysis in this study remains significant. Its dominance in Botswana has coincided with decline in newspaper circulation (see Figure 1.2), and it seems this makes Facebook the most viable crisis communication and analysis platform. However, this does not suggest that social media has replaced newspapers, it complements them, including other mass media channels (Ruiz-Soler et al., 2019). Newspapers play a strategic role in crisis communication because organisations and PR practitioners can frame situations to their advantage without audiences antagonising them. Unfortunately, as Zhu et al (2017:488) suggested, crisis information is no longer 'monopolised by mass media outlets.' Anyone with a smartphone can spread the news to reach a wider audience at the click of a button. It seems unprepared organisations are now, more than ever, at greater reputational risk.
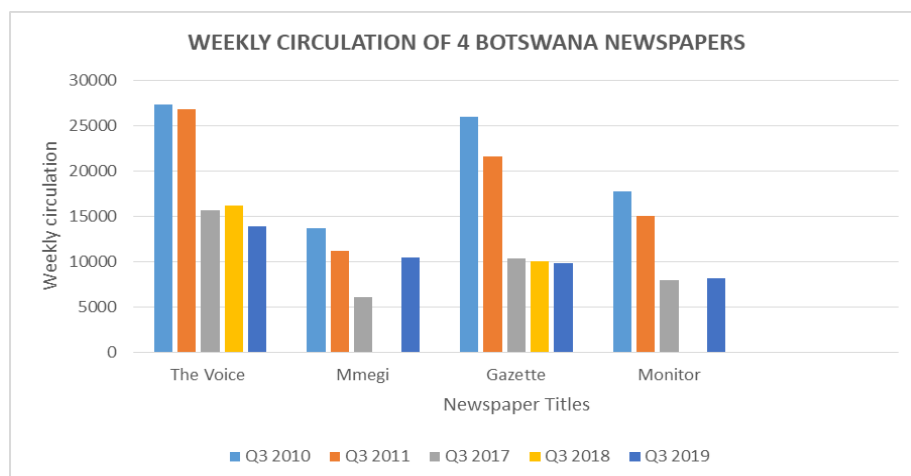
Figure 1.2: Decline in newspaper circulation in Botswana (Audit Bureau of Circulation, 2019)

As illustrated in Figure 1.2, the rise in social media use has coincided with declining newspaper circulation. The newspaper print has become increasingly insignificant for crisis communication unless media houses use their social media pages to keep up with the pace. While the decline of newspapers is not significant for this study, it demonstrates social media dominance in the news sector and the reasons for choosing Facebook for analysis to illuminate crisis communication in this setting. According to the Audit Bureau of Circulation (2019), newspaper printing started declining in 2010, a year before the BDC crisis. For example, *The Voice* newspaper, which published 27,336 copies per week in 2010, continued to drop to 8555 copies in 2022 (Breitenbach, 2022).

However, the proliferation of social media has not affected the government free daily newspaper called the *DailyNews*, which remains a significant source of crisis information. According to information on its Facebook page, the *DailyNews* is Botswana's biggest newspaper, with a weekly circulation of 80,000 copies, and a Facebook subscription base of 292,767 followers as of the 5th of July 2022. The government Facebook page, *BWgovernment*, currently reaches over 60% of the population active on social media or 814,973 followers (as of 5th May 2022). As Mosweu & Ngoepe (2019) asserts, the public sector in Botswana uses social media to communicate government policies and information to its audiences. Of academic interest in this study is how the organisations use Facebook to disseminate crisis information and whether they actively engage their publics. If not, this thesis provides the reasons for not doing so. It seems the stakeholders have a reason to expect the government and the organisations to become accountable through information sharing, even in unpleasant times. Roshan et al (2016) asserted that organisations should respond to stakeholders' questions and concerns on social media to understand their crisis needs and improve their organisational reputation.

1.3. Significance of the study

This study seeks to find out whether PR practitioners in Botswana are reliant on Western-authored crisis response strategies and, if not, what works for them and why? This is important because the findings of this study might equip PR practitioners (both local and international) with the most effective response strategies for emergencies in Botswana and similar contexts across the African continent.

This research explores crisis communication in Botswana using two case studies of state-owned enterprises: the 2011 Botswana Development Corporation (BDC) Fengyue Glass Manufacturing Project crisis; and the 2019 Botswana Railways crisis. Through the philosophical paradigm of critical realism, the study considers the language PR practitioners use to drive corporate narratives and ideologies on Facebook, and whether the Western strategies on this social media platform are still robust and valid for Botswana, despite diverse cultural variations. It decodes Facebook discourse during emergencies and explains its constructions through the interaction between language and the 'aspects of the independent world' (Scotland, 2012: 13). In other words, the socio-economic, political, and cultural factors shaping crisis communication in Botswana and 'ideologies inherent in political and economic structures' (Curtin, 2011:35) are of significant academic interest in this study. That language is an 'irreducible part of social life' (Fairclough, 2003:2) and the purpose of research is 'to emancipate' (Scotland, 2012:13) underscores the importance of language in this study. Therefore, leveraging the strengths of critical realism solidifies the worldview of this research because it accommodates research methodologies underpinned by 'epistemology and ontological nuances' (Dieronitou, 2014:2). In other words, this research might help crisis managers to understand the local environments and how they influence the choice of response strategies appropriate for certain crisis types.

Furthermore, this study responds to calls for researchers to extend an understanding of the situational crisis communication theory (SCCT) in other contexts and how 'crisis response strategies can be used most effectively to protect and repair corporate reputation' (Coombs, 2013: 275). It also answers requests for academics to apply quantitative methods to explore the use of social media in organisational crisis communication in different contexts (Roshan et al., 2016). As such, this research fills a gap in crisis communication by providing perspectives from Botswana. Sub-Saharan African countries such as South Africa, Kenya, Ghana, Nigeria, and Egypt have received academic attention (George & Pratt, 2012; George & Kwansah-Aidoo, 2017). However, some of these researchers only share the lessons learnt from these countries by evaluating the crises and marrying theory to practice without empirical research. To address this gap, this study explores real phenomena through empirical research to increase knowledge of crisis communication from a non-western context. [1]Additionally, this research

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[1] The researcher's experience spanning over 18 years in the media, public relations and communications, in both the private and public sectors, led to this interest in crisis communication. While working as a Private

is triangulated, to avoid subjectivity, using three different methods (Findahl et al., 2014) to illuminate crisis communication in Botswana from different perspectives.

The findings of this study provide valuable insights into both theory and practice. This thesis road tested the SCCT, the social-mediated crisis communication model (SMCC) and the two-way symmetrical model and confirms them as robust, applicable and suitable for non-western contexts such as Botswana, although they are not fully utilised. It also confirms Coombs (2006)'s cluster of crisis response strategies as valid, and suitable for non-western contexts such as Botswana, only if the corrective strategy becomes an additional cluster to reinforce them. However, this study does not suggest that these response strategies are applicable to all non-western contexts as research is required for each individual setting due to their unique cultural factors. As such, this study rides against the tide of commentaries by researchers suggesting that Western-authored strategies cannot be transplanted into non-western contexts due to cultural variations (George & Kwansah-Aidoo, 2017). In other words, the Coombs (2006) clusters remain valid and can fit into contexts such as Botswana as demonstrated by this thesis, provided the corrective strategy is used as a dominant approach to assure the public that the organisations are managing the crisis and working to prevent its future occurrence. Therefore, it seems reasonable to conclude that the corrective strategy works better in non-western multicultural contexts such as Botswana, while the diminish strategies might work best for Western contexts. On the other hand, the denial strategies might irritate Botswana audiences and potentially aggravate the crisis. Moreover, this thesis adds to a typology of audience information proposed by Roshan et al (2016) for use in a non-western context such as Botswana. These contributions will be discussed further in chapters 8, 9 and 10.

Regarding practice, this thesis advocates for change in how PR practitioners in Botswana communicate during crises. The findings in this study might help them to adjust their approach. They might appreciate the need to develop crisis communication plans that integrate social media. Moreover, crisis managers might become more systematic and strategic in their approaches, especially when selecting response strategies. This study also demonstrate that PR practitioners use intuition to select and match crisis response strategies to crisis types.

Secretary to the Minister in the Government of Botswana, the author was the administrator of the Minister's Facebook page and dealt with social-mediated crises on several occasions. Additionally, the author's experience provides a multi-disciplinary approach to this study, helping to negotiate a balance between journalism and public relations.

Additionally, it could help them to renew their concept of response time during crises before the audience resort to other sources of crisis information. Furthermore, data in this study indicate that the practitioners' cultural beliefs blind spot their appreciation of urgency during situations. As asserted by Lin et al (2016:603), speed 'affects cognitive processing and information-seeking,' and it also provides 'greater organisational credibility than slow response' (Huang & DiStaso, 2020: 2). As such, this study might help practitioners renew their sense of urgency in sharing information when responding to emergencies.

1.4. The context of the BDC and BR crises

To justify the significance to the case studies of the 2011 BDC crisis and the 2019 BR train accident, it is important to provide their context. This section provides information on what these two organisations represent, and a chronology of events leading to their emergencies. The section also serves as a precursor to the analysis but remains minimal to avoid the danger of 'pre-interpreting the data' (Jacobs, 1999: 12). First, it outlines the BDC situation and then shifts focus to the BR crisis. It is important to note that the information about these case studies is in the public domain (Facebook).

1.4.1. Situation at the BDC Fengyue Glass Manufacturing Project

First of all, the BDC is a state-owned enterprise (SOE) under the purview of the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development in Botswana, and was established by an Act of Parliament in 1970 (Botswana Development Corporation, 2013; Xu, 2018). The organisation plays a vital role in economic development (Motshegwa et al., 2017) and economic diversification (Xu, 2018). It remains devoted to the country's commercial and industrial development, and achieves this mandate by providing financial assistance to investors with commercially viable projects, monitoring the projects and administering of capital (Botswana Development Corporation, 2013; Xu, 2018).

The BDC had invested in many projects across Botswana's business sectors, including the Fengyue Glass Manufacturing Project (Xu, 2018). The total investment in this glass project was around £32,8 million (approximately P500 million). This capital consisted of equity and a

loan from the taxpayers, through the Government of Botswana, as the main source of funding (Xu, 2018).

A chronology of events leading to the crisis has been well documented (Piet, 2016; Motshegwa, et al., 2017). Plans to start the glass project started as early as 2004. At the time, the BDC board of directors intended to build the glass project in neighbouring South Africa because of the market opportunities presented by its high population (Piet, 2016). In 2006, the then President of the Republic of Botswana, Dr Festus Gontebanye Mogae attended a summit in Beijing, China, and invited the BDC board of directors to discuss plans to build the glass factory, as well as to offer them support. At the end of the summit, President Mogae travelled with them to Shanghai to discuss a joint venture between the BDC and the Shanghai Fengyue Glass Company (Motshegwa et al., 2017).

In 2007, the concept of a glass project was finalised between the BDC and its parent ministry. The two parties (BDC and Shanghai Fengyue Glass Company Limited) then signed a shareholder agreement (Piet, 2016; Motshegwa et al., 2017; Xu, 2018). In 2008, the formal Engineering, Procurement and Construction (EPC) agreement was signed, leading to the government availing land for the project in Palapye in 2009.

Figure 1.3: The then newly appointed BDC Managing Director Mr Bashi Gaetsaloe (right) (Source: BWgovernment Facebook page)

The Government of Botswana and the BDC availed funding for the construction of the project in 2010 (Piet, 2016). As suggested by Xu (2018), the glass factory could have been completed by the end of 2011, and it was expected to create over 400 jobs. Towards its completion, construction was suspended due to allegations of shortage of funds and lack of building materials and services such as electricity and water. The suspension, according to Xu (2018: 43) 'brought great repurcussions in Botswana and rumours were afloat.' According to Parliament of Botswana (2012), on the 2nd of December 2011, a Member of Parliament for the South-East constituency, Odirile Motlhale tabled an urgent motion seeking parliament to urgently appoint a committee to investigate the allegations of financial embezzlement at the corporation. Following this motion, the crisis broke, and the media was awash with reports of allegations of corruption and a corporation mired in crisis and mismanagement (Parliament of Botswana, 2012). Some newspaper reports alleged that the BDC senior executives embezzled the funds, while other reports blamed the chinese contractors (Motshegwa, et al., 2017; Xu, 2018). On the 23rd of November 2011, the BDC and the Government of Botswana posted their first situation press release on Facebook titled 'Press release: Situation at Botswana Development Corporation' (Appendix 5a).

The parliamentary report shows that the committee was appointed to investigate the matter, and found among others, that: the crisis could have been prevented, but there was a poor culture of corporate governance at the BDC; failure to execute proper due diligence on investment partners; management usurped the Board decisions; the managing director was not qualified for the position; and there was ministerial interference in the affairs of the BDC (Parliament of Botswana, 2012). The parliamentary special selects committee report also recommended that the Chinese contractor should be investigated, the BDC should establish a risk management committee and that the senior executives who were directly involved in the project should face disciplinary proceedings. At the end, the Fengyue glass project, including the land and all the developments were sold for P10 million (£652,000.00), leaving the government and the taxpayers as the biggest losers (Bodilenyane & Mooketsane, 2016; Motshegwa et al., 2017). In the end, the top executive management involved in the crisis was dismissed from work, and new management led by Mr Bashi Gaetsaloe (Figure 1.3) appointed to stabilise the BDC and return it to stakeholders' expectations.

1.4.2. The BR passenger train accident

Established in 1987 after a takeover from the National Railway of Zimbabwe (NRZ), the BR is one of the state-owned enterprises under the authority of the Ministry of Transport and Communication (Motshegwa et al., 2017). It is fully funded by the Government of Botswana and managed by a board of directors (Ide-Jetro, 2021). At inception, a board of directors was appointed to oversee it, but the human resource required to operate it was not adequate because of a lack of trained personnel (Motshegwa et al., 2017). The BR dovetails its objectives around transport and logistics, and has now diversified to industrial, commercial and residential development. Through this strategy, the organisation's subsidiary companies such as the BR Properties and Gabcon traded in industrial, commercial and residential development and dry port logistics, respectively (Ide-Jetro, 2021). The BR has since developed an upmarket shopping mall in the capital Gaborone called Rail Park (Mooketsi, 2011) and the company is developing another mall in the second city of Francistown (Mosikare, 2019).

Since the early 1990s, the BR has been marred by allegations of poor governance, and underinvestment in rail networks leading to safety concerns (Motshegwa et al., 2017). Since 1999, the BR has been experiencing operating losses (Ide-Jetro, 2021). As a result of these losses, the Government decided to suspend the passenger trains in 2009 and allowed the BR to continue operating the cargo and logistics services (Ide-Jetro, 2021). The passenger train was reintroduced in March 2016 (Botswana Railways, 2016; Mouwane, 2016). Due to poor infrastructure, workmanship and governance, several train derailments in both passenger and goods services have occurred (Ide-Jetro, 2021). Among the accidents that occurred costing the BR huge losses are passenger train derailments in 2016 and 2019 (Midweek Sun, 2016; Gaofise, 2019).

To document a chronology of events about the BR crisis of 2019 (Figure 1.4), reports showed that the passenger train accident happened near Palla-Road village in the Central District on the 10th of December 2019 (Dlamini, 2019; Gaofise, 2019; Seitshiro, 2021). The train was from the capital Gaborone to the northeastern city of Francistown. On the same day of the accident, Botswana Railways shared information on Facebook and other media channels announcing the accident and casualties. The statement was re-posted and shared across Facebook pages. It also announced the suspension of all trains (passenger and goods) because the accident had

destroyed the only railway track connecting the south to the northeastern part of the country. The then Minister of Transport and Communication, Thulaganyo Segoko, and his officials visited the accident scene (Patriot, 2020).

Figure 1.4: The 2019 Botswana Railways derailed passenger train (Source: BWgovernment Facebook page)

While the economic costs of the train accident have not been made public, two workers lost their lives and several passengers injured (Gaofise, 2019; Xinhua, 2019). On the 16th of December 2019, the Transport Minister instituted an investigation into the accident, and appealed to members of the public to assist with the investigations (Patriot, 2020). On the 20th of December 2019, social media was awash with reports that the Minister presented a preliminary report of the accident investigations to the Parliament of Botswana (Kgosiesele, 2019). The reports also showed that the train services resumed on the 24th of December 2019 after rail tracks were repaired. However, on the 10th of January 2020, the BR suspended all train services again, due to heavy rainfalls. Public inquiries into the December 2019 accident commenced on the 14th of January 2020, with the Inquiry Board visiting the accident scene on the 4th of February 2020 (Patriot, 2020). Lastly, on the 20th of May 2020, the Ministry announced it had received the inquiry report from investigators (Patriot, 2020). The report found that the accident could have been prevented, but there was failure in decision making by the senior management and that the BR management had a culture of bullying, manipulation

and lies to cover up flaws and safety failures which led to the accident (Seitshiro, 2021). It also found poor governance on the part of the corporation's senior executives and recommended the dismissal of the entire BR management (Pheage, 2020). The organisation took heed to the recommendations and dismissed the executives, including the chief executive officer.

As such, this study uses the case study of the BDC crisis of 2011, and the 2019 BR crisis to examine crisis communication in Botswana. These case studies were selected for analysis in this research because they represent national real-life events that negatively affected nationally recognized and well-established state-owned organisations. These events were reported in the local media and social networking platforms such as Facebook. In other words, these case studies represent emergencies affecting most organisations in Botswana, across the private and public sectors. They provide proximity to context and purpose of research (Punch, 2005). The BDC crisis is a transgression and situated in what Coombs & Holladay (1996) calls the preventable cluster, while the BR situation is in the accidental cluster. There is also evidence of the organisations' crisis communication on Facebook, providing useful insights for analysis in this study. Additionally, the information about these crises is in the public domain and easily available.

1.5. Research questions

This thesis investigates a disparity between Western and non-western crisis communication due to socio-economic, political, and cultural variations. These factors significantly influence the way organisations and PR practitioners structure their crisis messages and how the public perceives them. In other words, audiences in various contexts perceive messages differently due to cultural variations. This project aimed to determine how organisations in Botswana communicate during crises, the types of crisis response strategies and the language they use on Facebook and the reasons for doing so. Lastly, it aimed to marry crisis communication theories with practice in Botswana using empirical research. Therefore, the research questions in this study provide a further understanding of crisis communication from a non-western context to expand global scholarship. The thesis seeks to answer the following research questions:

RQ1: To what extent do the established PR theories such the situational crisis communication theory, social mediated crisis communication model and the two-way symmetrical model apply to crisis communication practice in Botswana?

RQ2: What are the characteristics of crisis messages on Facebook among publics and organisations in Botswana?

RQ3: How do organisations use Facebook to disseminate crisis messages in Botswana?

RQ4: What is the role of language in crisis messages shared by PR practitioners on Facebook?

RQ5: How are power relations exercised and negotiated in Facebook posts about the Botswana Development Fengyue glass project and the Botswana Railways crisis?

RQ6: To what extent does culture influence crisis communication on Facebook in Botswana?

1.6. Overview of the study

A narrative developed through each chapter answers these research questions. Chapter 1 sets the tone for this research and explains the motivation for this study. It also provides the context and reasons for analysing the BDC and the BR crises as case studies in this research. The BDC occurred in 2011 when organisations were just starting to use Facebook in their communication with publics, while the BR crisis happened in 2019 when organisations had advanced their knowledge of communicating with publics on Facebook. The chapter also shows that both organisations are well known and within the public sector. Additionally, it describes the socio-economic circumstances surrounding these organisations, which influenced how they shaped their Facebook discourse and corporate narratives. The chapter also describes the events leading to the crises and how each organisation reacted. In the case of the BDC crisis, the chapter establishes that allegations of mismanagement of funds and corruption by the BDC executives led to the failure of the state-of-the-art BDC Fengyue glass manufacturing factory, plunging the corporation into an unimaginable crisis and a blame game. For the BR crisis, the chapter establishes that mismanagement, infrastructure failure and poor governance led to an avoidable costly train accident that claimed two lives and caused several injuries to passengers.

Chapter 2 evaluates and reviews extant research in crisis communication. This chapter has two parts: a global perspective of crisis communication, and debates from non-western perspectives (Sub-Saharan Africa and Botswana). The first part reviews the scholarly definitions of key concepts such as crisis, crisis management and crisis communication. It also discusses the

overview and history of crisis communication and social-mediated crisis communication. The second part reviews scholarship on PR in Africa and Botswana, as well as PR and the *kgotla* system. Chapter 3 describes the theoretical frameworks underpinning this study. It sets the tone to test-drive the situational crisis communication theory (SCCT), the social-mediated crisis communication model (SMCC) and the two-way symmetrical model to understand their relevance in Botswana. In other words, this chapter is also a precursor for the discussions in chapters 8 and 9, which marries theory to practice.

Chapter 4 conceptualises the research design for this thesis. It describes the ontological and epistemological assumptions, including the paradigmatic approach underpinning this study. It also outlines sampling and the reasons for using a mixed methods approach to investigate crises in Botswana. The chapter describes how quantitative methods inform the qualitative approaches; critical discourse analysis (CDA), followed by the semi-structured interviews. The quantitative content analysis considers variables and categories that provide a more nuanced understanding of Facebook discourse during the two organisational crises. These variables represent the characteristics of the BDC and BR crisis messages on the social media platform and the types of crisis response strategies. The content analysis findings are clearly outlined in chapter 5. The chapter shall demonstrate that audiences do not respond to audience comments on Facebook, despite best practices advocating this, immediately revealing a disparity between their approach which is different from how some Western PR practitioners use the same platform during emergencies.

The narrative develops further in chapter 6, demonstrating how qualitative data complements quantitative findings from chapter 5. Using CDA, the chapter explores how PR practitioners deliver their messages using language. This chapter shall indicate that crisis managers used language rich with linguistic features in Facebook posts to inhibit their audiences from challenging their organisations during the two crises. The chapter also demonstrates that despite the audiences having an opportunity to post whatever they wanted about the situations, the organisations used an ideology that was difficult to challenge, leading to fewer comments from the audiences. This shall demonstrate that while the audiences possess the power of what to post and when to do so, the organisations can still control the narrative through language to protect their corporate reputations. The chapter shall also indicate that the effective use of language is central to negotiating these power relations. It concludes with a recommendation

for more research to focus on how PR practitioners in other contexts use language to deliver crisis messages on Facebook during emergencies.

Since this research is premised on critical realism, chapter 7 then explains the descriptive data. It outlines these explanations through the insights of senior PR practitioners in Botswana and how and why they respond the way they do on Facebook. Evidence in this study indicates that the lack of online dialogue with the audience was as a result of PR practitioners preferring offline communication platforms. The findings from chapters 5-7 are then discussed in finer detail in chapters 8 and 9, leading to the conception of a relationship matrix between Facebook and Botswana's offline cultural communication platform, the *kgotla* system. The discussions crystalise a narrative of a disparity in crisis communication in Western and non-western contexts due to cultural factors, and the need for PR practitioners in Botswana to change their approach.

Lastly, chapter 10 summarises the thesis and reiterates the key academic contributions, implications for practice and theory, and opportunities for future research. The chapter also confirms the western-authored crisis response strategies as robust and valid for non-western contexts such as Botswana, provided the corrective strategy is added as an independent cluster to Coombs (2006)'s set of crisis response strategies. It concludes by suggesting that while Botswana's crisis communication landscape is still embryonic, the disparity between the western and non-western approaches signals the need for change in how PR practitioners in Botswana communicate during crises, and more research from other non-western contexts to grow the field.

CHAPTER 2:
Part 1- Global perspectives of crisis communication

This chapter critically discusses academic scholarship on emerging themes in crisis communication research, which shall help to develop methodologies to answer the research questions. To successfully do this, the chapter is divided into two parts (1 and 2). As shown in Figure 2.1, Part 1 critically evaluates the literature on crisis communication from a global perspective. More specifically, this section discusses the inextricable relationship between crises, crisis management and crisis communication; overview and history of crisis communication; corporate reputation, crisis response strategies, social media; public sphere; corporate social responsibility; and how culture influences crisis communication, among others. Part 2 considers the literature on public relations (PR) and crisis communication in Africa and Botswana. It also evaluates the relationship between public relations, the *kgotla* system, dialogue, and conflict resolution. Furthermore, it makes a comparison between PR in Botswana and Canada based on similarities around the culture of compromise, consultation and tolerance.
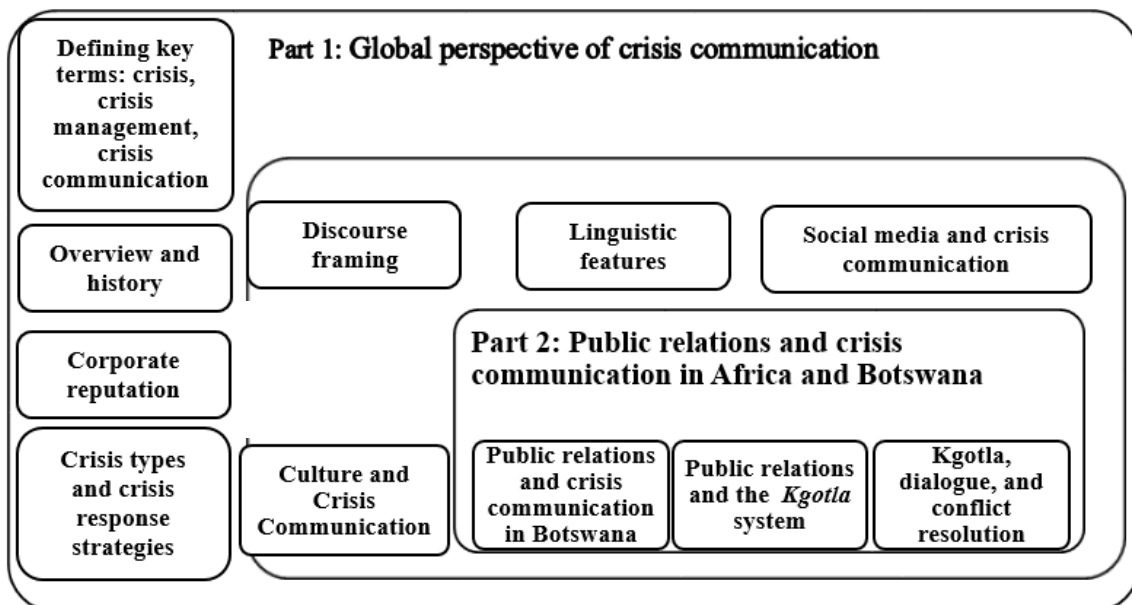
Figure 2.1: Outline of the Literature Review

Throughout this chapter, words such as publics, audiences and stakeholders have been used to refer to people with interest in the organisation and its messages. However, since it seems difficult to differentiate between these groups of people, especially in this era of social media,

it is important to provide definitions to put their usage in this study into perspective. As suggested by Wakefield & Knighton (2019), audiences are recipients of an organisational message and usually reacts to it; publics connects to an issue and specifically organise to bring about change; while stakeholders connect to an organisation and help to sustain or keep it flourishing. Put differently, audiences in this study refers to Facebook users who receive organisational messages and react to it, either through Facebook reactions, shares or messages. Publics refers to audiences who after receiving the messages, organise to take action against the organisation; while stakeholders are the sympathetic audiences and publics with connections to the organisation. As such, these words are not used synonymously in this study as their usage demonstrate a continuum from receiving organisational message and reacting (audiences), then organising to act (publics) and being sympathetic to the plight of the organisation because of an established connection (stakeholders). All these can directly engage with the organisation in a dialogue on social media.

Having differentiated these groups of people with interest to the organisation, it now important to provide a better understanding of crisis communication research by outlining the key concepts; crisis, crisis management and crisis communication which are intertwined and arranged in a continuum (Coombs, 2010). The critical component in 'crisis management is crisis communication' (Coombs, 2010: 17). In other words, these two concepts, though interwoven in a tapestry relationship, do not mean the same thing and should not be used interchangeably. Therefore, these two concepts must be understood through their functions in the crisis process.

2.1. What is a crisis?

Perhaps the starting point to underpin this concept is to acknowledge that every organisation will in its lifetime face a crisis (Strandberg & Vigso, 2016), and that organisations should consider crises as an opportunity for growth (Coombs, 2010). This is to say during crises, organisations should improve the way they communicate with their audiences and should use the crises as an opportunity to forge stronger relationships with their audiences post the crisis.

The term crisis is understood differently across scholarship. Among all the many definitions, there is a universal understanding of what constitutes a crisis. An event becomes a crisis when

it is unusual and may negatively affect an organisation, requiring 'efficient organisational communication to reduce the damage related to the events' (Zaremba, 2015:17). However, this definition seems vague and insufficient because it views any adverse event affecting an organisation as a crisis. For instance, an intense rainstorm cannot be categorised as a crisis unless it causes severe damage to public property and threatens public safety (Austin et al., 2012). As such, not all events are a crisis.

The definition which suffices for this research characterises a crisis as an unpredictable and adverse event that can threaten the expectations of stakeholders and thus damage the organisation's reputation and its performance (Coombs, 2010; Roshan et al., 2016; Zhu et al., 2017; Kim et al., 2019, Schoofs & Claeys, 2021). This definition is widely used in crisis communication research, and it is informed by the discussions of the 'National Communication Association (NCA) Pre-Conference on integrating research and outreach in crisis and risk communication' (Coombs, 2010:19). As far as crisis research is concerned, the definition is adequate because the adverse outcomes in this context relate to corporate reputation and loss of revenue. On the other hand, the notion of crisis adversely affecting public interaction with the organisation relates to the expectations of stakeholders (Coomb, 2010). Ultimately, a crisis is seen as a perception because even if the organisation does not believe it exists, public perception determines its shape and form (Shamsan & Otieno, 2015). Organisations must, therefore, be prepared to tackle crises that they do not believe exist, to manage public perceptions and expectations about the organisation.

2.2. Defining crisis management

As the second most important concept in the continuum, there is a need to define crisis management. This field informs crisis communication, and their inseparable relationship suggests that the process of communicating messages (crisis communication) during a crisis can only start when the organisation has prepared and asserted their readiness to respond to a situation (crisis management).

Research shows that crisis management emerged from Steven Fink's seminal work in 1986, and scholars have defined 'it as a set of factors designed to combat crises and to lessen the actual damage inflicted' (Coombs, 2010: 20). This definition presupposes the preparedness of

organisations as a factor to lessen the harm that crises can inflict on organisations. The factors referred to in this definition include the type of preparations and processes that organisations undertake at three distinct stages of the crisis (Figure 2.2): pre-crisis, crisis and post-crisis (Coombs, 2010).
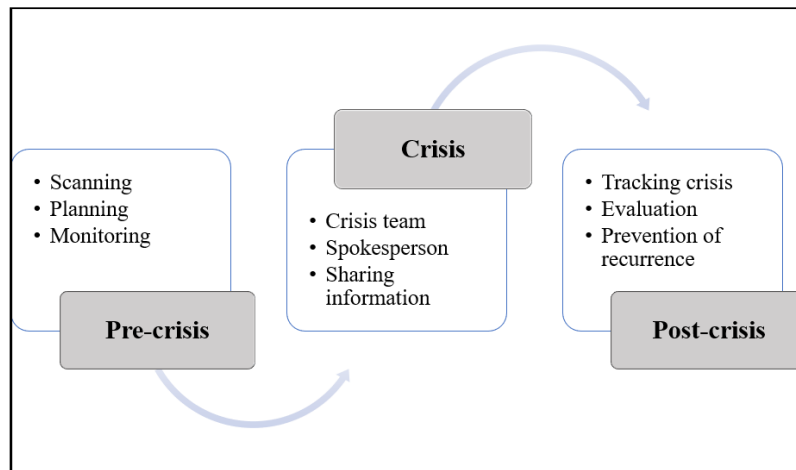
Figure 2.2: The three stages in crisis management as suggested by Coombs (2010:20)

In this context, crisis management is an important management function that prepares organisations for the actual crisis. According to Christensen and Lægreid (2020: 713), crisis management has two main dimensions which they term 'governance legitimacy and governance capacity.' They describe governance legitimacy as how the media and publics experience and evaluate government efforts during a crises; while governance capacity deals with the organisational structures and resources available to deal with a crisis. As such, these concepts seem useful in crises studies because they help understand how organisations use resources and structures to manage emergencies, as well as how publics and the media evaluate organisational crisis communication efforts. They are useful in government crisis communication because they 'separately and dynamically influence how political and administrative actors mitigate, define, handle and learn from crises' (Christensen & Lægreid, 2020: 713).

As suggested by Coombs (2010), best practices in crisis management dictate that during the pre-crisis stage, organisations should engage in active preparation and prevention of crises. During the crisis stage, organisations should select the teams and spokesperson and share information; while post-crisis is an evaluative stage where the organisation attempts to learn

from the crisis and take corrective measures. At pre-crisis stage, organisations start communicating with stakeholders to sensitise them about the anticipated crises. As the organisation continues monitoring the situation, stakeholders, including the employees, must be kept informed. The communication process continues during the crisis stage to prevent stakeholders from resorting to other sources of information (Hartley, 2019). However, when the crisis is presumed to have ended, crisis managers evaluate the crisis management efforts and inform stakeholders about the steps that the organisation is taking to prevent the recurrence of the crisis. This helps stakeholders to have confidence in the organisation and to build relationships (Fern-Banks, 2011; Hartley, 2019).

2.3. Crisis communication defined

Although crisis communication is considered a subset of crisis management, the literature on this field abounds. Most of the scholarship on this field is Western authored (Walaski, 2011), but research is advancing to build a more global body of knowledge. It is important to note that, at the moment, there is no crisis communication research on Botswana. It only emerges through coverage of crisis events in traditional media and social media commentaries which are in abundance. As such, public relations scholarship remains scant in Botswana. However, crisis communication scholarship is also negligible across the African continent, excluding more developed contexts like South Africa and Nigeria where most of it emerges in strategic communication and public relations (George, 2016; Wasserman & Hyde-Clarke, 2016; George & Kwansah-Aidoo, 2017).

As discussed above, an understanding of crisis communication emerges after discussing crisis management. Scholars define crisis communication as the process of collecting, processing information and actively sharing it with stakeholders to manage or mitigate harm (Coombs, 2010; Civelek et al., 2016; Ganga & Sriramesh, 2018). Although this definition suffices for this research, it is organisation centric because it perceives organisations as senders of information and stakeholders as receivers. It deliberately ignores the context where organisations can become receivers of information that is sent by stakeholders through social media and other platforms. The intention of stakeholders sending information is not to manage the crisis, but to demand more information about the crises (Lachlan et al., 2016). Therefore, crisis communication is modelled around sending and receiving information to manage the

crisis. Simply put, other scholars define crisis communication as a 'dialogue between the organisation and its publics before, during and after the negative occurrence' (Fern-Banks, 2011:2). This dialogue is strategic and designed to bring the organisation a more positive image than it was before the crisis (Fern-Banks, 2011).

Further analysis of definitions of crisis communication link it to a communication process to strategically manage and frame public perceptions of an event to lessen organisational harm (Reynolds & Seeger, 2005; Coombs, 2012; Sellnow & Seeger, 2013). Yet, others say it is a response strategy-based proactive communication process between an organisation and its stakeholders to mitigate reputational harm (Strandberg & Vigso, 2016; Frandsen & Johansen, 2018). The term proactive communication attempts to highlight the function of sending and receiving information and engaging stakeholders to manage their perceptions to reduce reputational damage.

Two types of crisis communication have been identified: crisis knowledge management and stakeholder reaction management (Coombs, 2010). Crisis knowledge management is behind the scenes and involves identifying sources, collecting information, analysing, sharing information, making decisions and creating a public response to a crisis, while stakeholder reaction management influences how publics 'perceive the crisis and the organisation's crisis response' (Coombs, 2010:25).

Just like crisis management, scholars categorise the crisis communication process into three stages: pre-crisis, crisis and post-crisis (Coombs, 2010; Johansen et al., 2012). In a bid to distinguish these stages from crisis management stages, there has been suggestions that these stages should be referred to as proactive, reactive and post-evaluation (Wasserman & Hyde-Clarke, 2016). Perhaps these scholars do not refer to a model with an evaluation stage but choose to refer to it as the post-evaluative. This might be misleading because it suggests that the post-evaluation stage is a follow up of the evaluation stage. As shown in Figure 2.3, the proactive stage is the pre-crisis stage; the reactive stage is the crisis stage, while the post-evaluative is the post-crisis stage.
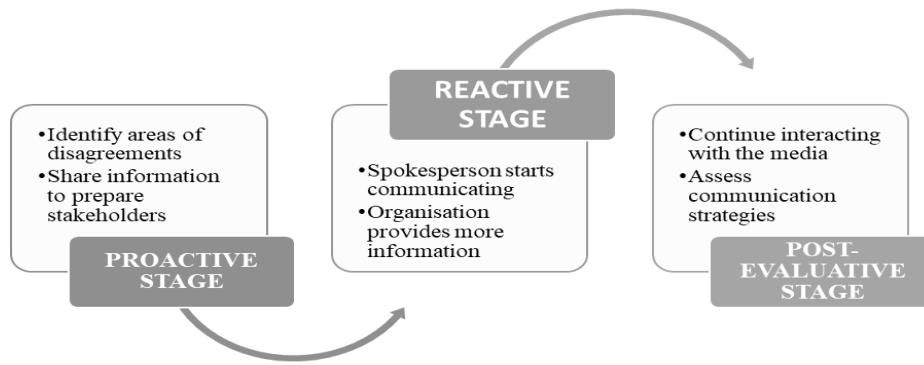
Figure 2.3: Best practices as suggested by Wasserman & Hyde-Clarke (2016:351)

In crisis communication, best practice theory suggests that during the pre-crisis (proactive) stage, practitioners should be prompted to share information with the public immediately after the discovery of the crisis (Shamsan & Otieno, 2015). The first hour is very critical because organisations have the best opportunity to address the crisis before negative media coverage (Wasserman & Hyde-Clarke, 2016). However, promptly sharing information within the first hour might be impractical because more time is needed to properly study the crisis and to develop relevant and impactful messages. Developing strategic, simple and comprehensive messages to manage the crisis is a well-thought process that takes time. It is not a process that is carried out impulsively or with excitement to be the first to break the news. Social media users have nothing to lose and can share the unresearched information without thinking, but organisations need to strategically respond, research and draft appropriate messages. Responding to crises hastily might be disastrous and detrimental to the reputation of the organisation. Despite this, there is persistence among scholars that organisations should always steal the thunder (Hartley, 2019; Wheeler, 2019), meaning that they should seize the opportunity to manage the crisis before it blows into a social media storm.

During the crisis (reactive) stage, the sharing of information with stakeholders becomes an ongoing process (Wasserman & Hyde-Clarke, 2016). It is important to note that reactive, in this case, means actively responding to the crisis. During the crisis, organisations should be sincere, informative, show concern and maintain a dialogue with their publics (Shamsan & Otieno, 2015). Sharing information honestly and consistently may earn organisations empathy from their publics. If organisations withhold information, publics are likely to look for their information and give rise to misinformation and fake news about the crisis (Fern-Banks, 2011;

Shamsan & Otieno, 2015; Hartley, 2019; Wheeler, 2019). The post-crisis (post-evaluative stage) allows organisations to assess the effectiveness of their communication.

Research shows that there is a need for organisations to become more proactive and not passive during a crisis. Crisis managers are expected to craft the best messages and deliver them to publics through effective channels (Fern-Banks, 2011). Social media allows many people to make posts, comment and share information at higher speed, and this can cause irreparable harm to a passive or inactive organisation (Austin et al., 2012; Zheng et al., 2018). In this connection, companies need to engage in proactive communication. While social media is famous for its speed in sharing information, there is a higher risk of neglecting key stakeholders who do not have access to the internet and social media sites. For instance, in Botswana, some of the elderly people are not techno-savvy and the poor in remotest areas do not have access to the internet. As such, there is a risk of excluding them in the race to share information on social media.

Although crisis communication research has progressed in the last three decades, it has limitations. Notable scholars have written extensively on the development of theory and crisis response strategies (Coombs & Holladay, 2010; Coombs, 2012; Benoit, 2013; Sellnow & Seeger, 2013). For example, Benoit (1995)'s Image Repair Theory (IRT) and Coombs and Holladay (1996)'s Situational Crisis Communication theory (SCCT) only account for what happens inside the organisation and not the external crisis environment. The many voices that can start a crisis are excluded (Frandsen & Johansen, 2018). Additionally, research does not explore how audiences organise themselves after the crisis (Xu, 2018). For instance, the crisis response strategies in crisis research, are assumed as globally applicable, notwithstanding the different cultures inherent in world contexts (George & Kwansah-Aidoo, 2017). Non-western cultural contexts, such as Botswana, might be different from the West, and could hinder the application of some of the strategies because people in different cultures perceive and respond to messages differently.

From strides in the development of theoretical frameworks (Coombs, 2004; Benoit, 2013) to the use of social media during crises (Austin et al., 2012; Lin et al., 2016; Roshan et al, 2016; du Plessis, 2018), scholarship continues to grow. Social media has become a domineering feature in modern crisis communication (Zheng et al., 2018). Through social media, crisis information is shared faster than ever and can cause more harm to organisations which remain

passive. However, there is limited empirical evidence from various global contexts on the efficacy of social media during crises, and this presents an opportunity for further research.

In addition to these strides, crisis studies continue to grow in non-western contexts (Macliam & Baker, 2009; George & Kwansah-Aidoo, 2017). Audience studies reflecting global contexts are essential today because trade has become transboundary, and there are many transnational organisations which must understand the contexts in which they operate. As such, crises have also become transboundary (Christensen & Lægreid, 2020). Understanding these contexts might help crisis managers to select and use appropriate response strategies to mitigate reputational harm. In recent years, crisis communication research has experienced exponential growth in other contexts such as the USA, Europe and Asia, giving it an international scope (Lehmberg & Hicks, 2018). In contexts such as Africa, crisis communication scholarship emerges from strategic communication research, and it remains scant despite many crisis events (Wasserman & Hyde-Clarke, 2016; George & Kwansah-Aidoo, 2017). As such, this study responds to calls by scholars who advocate for the internationalisation of crisis communication research by leveraging on new non-western perspectives from under-researched contexts.

2.4. Overview and history of crisis communication

Unlike other fields of study, crisis communication research has not yet matured. Scholars suggest that the field emerged some three decades ago from non-academic journals and seminal work in public relations (Coombs, 2010; Walaski, 2011; Sellnow & Seeger, 2013; Lehmberg & Hicks, 2018, inter alia). Its research later graced academic journals when academics started analysing war stories and embracing the need to solve crisis communication problems (Coombs, 2010).

When crisis communication scholarship emerged, scholars centred their research on what happens within the organisation during the crisis, which is why, as a key figure in the field, Coombs (2009), describes this communication process as an iceberg because the bulk of it is not visible to those outside the organisation. This posture on crisis communication has mostly influenced the direction of the scholarship today. Limited work has been done on the external crisis environment because crisis communication 'occurs through the crisis management

process' (Heath & O'Hair, 2009: 99). As a result, the field has been pigeon-holed as a subset of crisis management, causing it to receive less attention. The first academic work in crisis management, which is rooted in emergency and disaster management appeared in the International Journal of Emergencies and Disasters (Coombs, 2010).

Tracing all the work about the history of crisis communication is a 'monumental task' (Coombs, 2010:21). However, researchers have conducted a meta-analysis of crisis communication research to provide an in-depth understanding of this field. An & Cheng (2010)'s research on crisis communication between 1975 and 2006 in two major public relations journals: Journal of Public Relations Research (JPPR) and Public Relations Review (PRR) shows trends in crisis communication research. A total of 74 articles were published in the two journals in that period. The results show that there was no published article related to crisis communication before 1987. Less than half were published between 1998 and 1999, and more than half were published between 2001 and 2006 (An & Cheng, 2010). The results further show that theoretical studies decreased by 50% in 1990 to about 4.5% in the early 2000s. Qualitative research (51.4%) was dominant with mixed methods frequently used, and case studies (51.4%) most prevalent. Their research shows that there has been growth in crisis communication research between 1998 and 2006, when most articles were published. However, the study does not account for other journals which published crisis communication research such as the *Journal of Business Communication* (established in 1963); the *Computers in Human behaviour* (established in 1985); and the *Corporate Communication: An internal Journal* (publishing since 1996), among others. Furthermore, the study does not account for research published between 1987 and 1998, despite stating that no article was published before 1987 in the PRR and JPPR. This calls for scholars to examine all academic journals across different fields as well as in books that are not online. The temptation here is to generalise the findings to literature that is found in online resources and not offline resources. Having provided an overview of crisis communication, it is essential to discuss scholarship on corporate reputation, which is one of the themes in this chapter.

2.5. Corporate reputation and crisis communication

Early research on corporate reputation has been credited to Fombrun & Shanley (1990). According to Carroll (2013), the first development of corporate reputation focused on the

multiple dimensions of corporate reputation as opposed to the single dimension of corporate social responsibility. Scholarship on corporate reputation evolved after Charles Fombrun and Cees Van Riel launched an international conference leading to the publication of the *Corporate Reputation Review* journal (Carroll, 2013). Following this conference, the concept attracted the attention of fields in management, marketing, accounting, economics and sociology (Abratt & Kleyn, 2012; Ji et al., 2017).

While there seems to be no universal understanding of corporate reputation, interdisciplinary literature on aspects of the organisation converged to crystalise this concept. In various disciplines, the concept means different things from different organisational points of view. According to Fombrun & van Riel (1998), economists understand this concept as what people think of the firm. These scholars observed that strategists see it as assets and mobility carriers, while the marketers understand reputation as a mental image of the firm in the heads of stakeholders. The employees in the firm understand it as a sense-making experience while the sociologists understand the concept as how each individual assesses or evaluates the firm.

Lastly, academic accountants consider corporate reputation as an intangible asset not recognised in financial statements, a point that Coombs & Holladay, (2002) later afffirmed. For example, increased sales serve as an enhanced reputation and advocate for action when profits drop (Baumgartner et al., 2022). All these different points of view, according to Carroll (2013), come to an understanding of corporate reputation as representing three key areas: organisational awareness (where stakeholders have awareness but do not make a judgement), assessment (where it serves as a judgment or evaluation of an organisation) and asset (where it becomes an intangible resource for the organisation). The question of whose judgment matters the most has always been central to studies on corporate reputation.

While corporate reputation is often mistaken for corporate identity and image, these concepts are different. In essence, most scholars acknowledge that corporate reputation is a product of organisational identity and image, where identity describes perceptions of internal stakeholders and corporate image focuses on the perceptions of external stakeholders (Abratt & Kleyn, 2012; Remke, 2013; Carroll, 2013; Baumgartner et al., 2022). In fact, Remke (2013: 35) observes that corporate identity describes 'the way in which the internal stakeholders perceive the organisation with the corporate image used to describe the perception held by external

stakeholders.' In other words, corporate reputation is a product of corporate identity and image. Some scholars in PR argue that corporate reputation is a byproduct of the relationships between the organisation and its publics (Ji et al., 2017). Other scholars have described reputation as the 'sum of images of others, and it comes from performance plus behaviour plus communication' (Langham, 2019: 2). As such, corporate reputation has become central to organisational communication, with scholars interested in discourse-based fields focusing on the way in which corporate reputation is 'constructed and become meaningful to individual organisational members' (Remke, 2013:35).

Furthermore, studies have linked a strong reputation to the maintenance of relationships between the customers and the organisation, which might protect the firm against potential harm during crises (Carroll, 2013). Abratt & Kleyn (2012: 1056) have suggested that a good reputation helps firms to obtain positive media coverage, thus maintaining 'competitive advantage' and building 'customer retentions and satisfaction.' It also needs to take into account the reactions of affected publics and the media (Christensen & Lægreid, 2020:716). Put differently, organisations with positive reputations remain competitive and have higher stakeholder engagement than companies with a bad reputation. Additionally, a favourable prior reputation might benefit the organisations during a crisis because it is the 'balance of reputational capital the organisation has in its account' (Coombs & Holladay, 2002: 124). As such, corporate reputation has become increasingly recognised for its 'influence on stakeholder support and engagement for companies' (Fombrun et al., 2015: 3).

2.6. Persuasion through linguistic features

Extant literature describes persuasion as an 'intentional and non-coercive' communication strategy used to elicit favourable and compliant behaviour from audiences to change their attitudes, perceptions, and beliefs (Agyekum, 2003: 373). There is consensus among scholars that persuasion is intentional and aims to influence 'another's state of mind' while giving the audience freedom to comply (Fawkes, 2017: 231). PR practitioners and organisations often achieve this strategy using linguistic devices in a discourse.

To understand how persuasion is achieved through organisational discourse, critical discourse analysis studies (CDA) have carried out the linguistic analysis, using a technique known as

lexical analysis to examine 'what kind of words there are in a text', what they mean, and the reasons for using them (Machin & Mayr, 2012: 30). Some of the linguistic tools used in this study include lexical choices, abstraction, functional honorifics and nomination (Machin & Mayr, 2012).

Research describes lexical choices as the choice of words, and that it 'can signify different discourses' which in turn highlight certain 'activities which are not necessarily made explicit' (Machin and Mayr, 2012: 30). Lexical choices are often useful for ideological manipulation in texts (Naghmeh-Abbaspour et al., 2019) especially when used to convey power over the audiences. For example, scientists used lexical choices in their expert knowledge during the Covid-19 pandemic to influence people to behave in a certain way. Their texts often contained jargon and official terminologies to convey that level of power and authority.

Another useful tool that researchers often use in their texts to persuade audiences is abstraction, which Machin & Mayr (2012:219) describes as a linguistic tool which reduces concrete details in a text and replace it with 'generalisations or broader concepts.' The levels of abstraction determine the degree of detail or precision, where the less detail there is, the greater the levels of abstraction and the more abstracted the concept (Yee, 2019: 1258). While abstraction is described as a tool for persuasion, Menegatti & Rubini (2013: 603) argue that research has not examined how politicians tailor their messages to the levels of audience characteristics to obtain their agreement. Research has shown that abstraction conceals specific facts, and it has been used to persuade audiences through the use of different kinds of rhetorical tropes which are aligned with political language (Machin & Mayr, 2012). While there is general agreement that communication transforms ideas into political action by influencing or persuading the audience, Menegatti & Rubini (2013: 605) have concluded that 'abstraction is a subtle means used by politicians to achieve that goal.'

Extant literature indicates that persuasion often becomes effective through honorifics, that is, when social actors are addressed using the titles of what they do, often as a way of showing 'aspects of social identity' (Agyekum, 2003: 369). Among the types of honorifics, are the power-based honorifics where power is determined by social class, age, gender, and profession, with these levels of superiority and inferiority established through honorary titles to create psychological distance between the interlocutors (Agyekum, 2003: 274-275). As

such, people can be represented in organisational discourse through functional honorifics, to suggest a 'degree of seniority or a role that requires a degree of respect' (Machin & Mayr, 2012: 82) as a persuasive strategy. Put differently, functional honorifics can help to ascribe some ideological accounts in a text or demonstrate levels of authority of the actors. Agyekum (2003: 373) describes honorifics as 'face-saving mechanisms' which enable social actors to express their relationship to the audiences in a 'highly coded, respectful, and polite manner.' As such, social actors can persuade their audiences by demonstrating their dominant social standing in a respectful way. Additionally, research shows that when functional honorifics are removed from the text, it might potentially diminish an actor's 'level of authority' (Machin & Mayr, 2012: 82). In addition to functional honorifics, social actors can be nominated in terms of who they are and this can 'sound more personal' (Machin & Mayr, 2012: 81).

2.7. Discourse and framing

Discourse analysis stresses the difference between discourse (what is said and how) and social actors (who says what), a distinction facilitated by strategies of rhetoric and framing (van Dijk, 1993). Rhetoric focuses on the persuasive use of discourses to push audiences to do something in the name of the supreme good, while framing ensures some aspects of reality receive greater emphasis and become a unifying factor between discourses and rhetoric (Manuti, 2005; Ardevol-Abreu, 2015; Thomas & Turnbull, 2017). Taking this further, van Dijk (1993) has suggested that discourse functions as a linguistic resource that concentrates power and dominance or their absence in the hands of a few actors. Put differently, these actors' lack of control in any communication manifests through discourse. It seems discourse influences the minds of audiences for specific agendas, a process that van Dijk (2001) calls mind management, although the latter does not appear obvious. Corporate culture adopts the political power derived from discourse to reach and persuade audiences and potential audiences to buy into their narrative, values and ideologies, which, as Fairclough (2003) points out, becomes particularly important and decisive in periods of crisis.

On the other hand, framing focuses on the way organisations craft their messages to portray specific meanings and allow for interpretation by their audiences. These meanings and interpretations are possible through linguistic features, which can be a powerful tool for organisations (Ravazzani & Maier, 2017). In traditional crisis communication research, power

was concentrated in organisations, but social media has given the audiences more ability to send and receive information (Zheng et al., 2018). Audiences who were previously silent now have a voice and can express themselves in ways that can put the organisation's reputation at greater risk (Etter & Vestergaard, 2015). In this way, framing revolves around how organisations and audiences create messages that support their viewpoint, whether right or wrong. These messages may be interpreted as audiences undermining the organisations and putting their reputation at risk or the organisations striving to establish authority over their audiences to attract sympathy. As such, organisations need to develop discourses whose 'ideology appears as common sense and difficult to question' (Jones & Wareing, 1999:34). In this way, the audiences join forces with the organisation to expose and fight the injustices and help preserve the organisation's reputation (Coombs & Holladay, 1996). Additionally, framing can occur in social media, especially Facebook, to 'promote strategic discourse' (Ravazzani & Maier, 2017: 509).

2.8. Crisis types and crisis response strategies

Crisis research indicates that crisis communication is crucial to the protection and repair of corporate reputations (Coombs, 2013). One of the areas of interest for researchers in corporate reputation management is the crisis frames or types, which tell stakeholders how to 'interpret crisis' (Coombs & Holladay, 2002: 127), and the crisis response strategies, which are what the organisations 'say or do after the crisis' (Coombs, 2013: 263). In other words, crisis response strategies can be described as 'messages disseminated by an organisation during a crisis' (Roshan et al., 2016: 350). Therefore, any information that organisations send out to the publics during a crisis is a crisis response. As such, the process of planning the crisis message, considering the types of crises and all socio-cultural and political factors, and the impending benefits for the organisation and publics, constitutes a crisis response strategy.

According to Coombs (2013: 265), research shows that crisis response strategies are a major variable in the situational crisis communication theory (SCCT). As such, crisis response strategies cannot be divorced from theory, and they are the most researched in crisis communication research (Coombs, 2010; Coombs, 2013). However, the SCCT and other theories underpinning this study, shall be discussed in greater detail in chapter 3. It is essential to note that crisis response strategies are an outcome of a challenge by James Benson in 1988

that crisis communication researchers should examine communication by discovering the range of crisis response strategies that organisations use during a crisis and finding strategies that suit certain crisis types (Benson, 1988; Coombs & Holladay, 1996; Coombs 2013). Coombs & Holladay (1996) and Benoit (1995) took up the challenges and developed a set of categories for crisis response strategies. On the one hand, is a category of crisis response strategies which are an outcome of formal research by Coombs & Holladay (1996)'s SCCT. On the other is a category of the crisis response strategies which emerged from informal research on the image repair theory (IRT) developed by (Benoit, 1995). This theory assumes that image is important to the organisation and that when it is threatened the IRT becomes a 'recourse to repairing that image' (Benoit, 2013: 216).

The SCCT and the IRT enjoy an interdependent relationship because they emerged from the same research challenge that led to the development of crisis response strategies that inform practice and theory. The formal research examined how receivers (audiences) react to messages and the crisis response strategies, while the informal research examined 'the messages the crisis managers create and seek to infer effects on the audience' (Coombs, 2010: 35). In this study, both the formal and informal research are useful because the formal research helps to examine how social media users react to organisational messages, while the informal research considers a view of the types of crisis response strategies that crisis managers in Botswana might use during crises.

Empirical evidence suggests that the choice of crisis response strategies depend on the crisis types. Early research examined crisis response strategies by matching crisis types with crisis response strategies to identify effective strategies that practitioners may use during crises (Coombs and Holladay, 1996; Gonzalez-Herrero & Pratt, 1996; Cho & Gower, 2006). For example, the attribution theory was used to match the crisis types with the crisis response strategies by 'crossing them to form the 2x2 matrix' (Coombs & Holladay, 1996:284). This study categorised the crisis types into: accident (unintentional and internal); transgressions (intentional and internal); faux pas (unintentional and external); and terrorism (intentional and external). According to Coombs and Holladay (1996), accidents are unintentional; transgressions are management misdemeanours and intentional; faux pas says there is no crisis, while terrorism is intentional but not caused by the organisation. According to this category

system, characteristics of the crises should suggest the best crisis response strategy to fit the situation (Coombs & Holladay, 1996).

However, An and Cheng (2010) acknowledge that the crisis types and crisis response strategies have evolved with time. Studies have categorised crisis types (see Figure 2.4) into: natural disasters, tempering/terror, workplace violence, technical error accident, technical error recall, human error accident and transgression (An & Cheng, 2010). Research classifies the crisis types into three clusters: victim cluster, accidental cluster, and preventable cluster, and three matching crisis responses strategies; deny strategies, diminish strategies and rebuild strategies (Claeys et al., 2010: Coombs, 2004; Coombs, 2010; Sellnow & Seeger, 2013). These crisis response strategies are ordered in a continuum accommodating the needs of the victim, 'as one moves from denial, to diminish and to rebuild' (Coombs, 2013: 265).
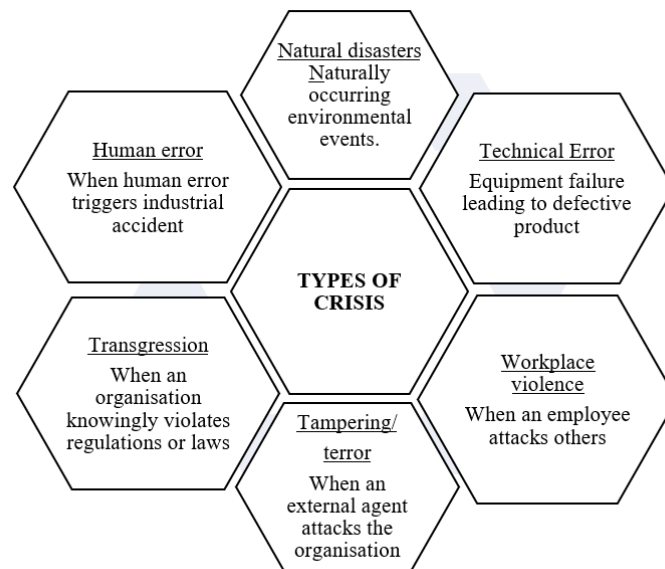
Figure 2.4: Crisis types and their definitions as suggested by An & Cheng (2010: 73)

Other studies that matched crisis types with crisis response strategies include Gonzalez-Herrero & Pratt (1996) who evaluated crisis types and examined whether the matching crisis response strategies were effective in restoring organisational reputation during a crisis. Cho & Gower (2006) also examined the effects of human-interest frames and crisis types in news coverage of organisational crisis on audience response and found that they influenced people's response to a crisis. In addition to the crisis types, crisis response strategies are based on the degree of responsibility the organisation has in making the crisis come about (Soehner et al., 2017; Ganga & Sriramesh, 2018).

Studies have also shown that several factors in a crisis render an individual crisis unique, and too many variables can 'influence choices of different approaches' (Zaremba, 2010: 36). For example, in their study of the Maggi Nestle crisis in India, Ganga and Sriramesh (2018) concluded that crisis response strategies must reflect the media system of the host country, and that crisis communication research would be enriched if research included the different media environments in which crisis occurs. Ganga and Sriramesh (2018) suggests that the tendency for multinational companies is to send press releases and recommend crisis response strategies from the comfort of their headquarters outside the host country, hoping for a positive reception of their messages does not work. This approach led to Nestle India suffering reputational damage because it failed to recognise the media systems in India. This is to say the media environments across the world are not the same because of a diversity of cultures, hence the difference in their tones and posture towards organisational crisis communication.

Earlier research also classifies the crisis response strategies into three categories of information: instructing information, which informs publics how to protect themselves during a crisis; adjusting information, which helps stakeholders to cope psychologically; and internalising information, which helps stakeholders to formulate an image about the organisation (Coombs, 2013; Roshan et al., 2016). Coombs (2013) encourages crisis managers to use the first two categories (instructing and adjusting) as the first response after the crisis breaks. However, some researchers discourage practitioners from using internalising information as the first response because organisations might be perceived as self-interested (Roshan et al., 2016). During a crisis, all these messages should be clear, unambiguous, and understandable to all to facilitate public participation. In developing messages, organisations should tailor them according to socio-economic and cultural contexts 'rather than making them a one size fits all' (Gesser-Edelsburg et al., 2015: 452). This is because different publics understand messages differently depending on the contexts. In other words, it is one thing to have a powerful and persuasive message; and it is another to remain silent and elevate an opportunity for misinformation because variables change throughout the crisis (Gesser-Edelsburg et al., 2015; Hartley, 2019). As such, organisations need to seize the moment and utilise the opportunity to be the first to share the information (Coombs, 2010; Fern-Banks, 2011; Hartley, 2019; Wheeler, 2019). Therefore, organisations in crisis determine the types of messages to share with publics depending on the type of crisis.

As such, most studies about crisis response strategies lean more towards the Western perspective, and less to the non-western contexts. The interest of this research is whether the Western-authored crisis response strategies fit contexts such as Botswana and others with similar environments in Sub-Saharan Africa, and if not, why?

2.9. Social media in crisis communication

Due to the significance of corporate reputation in public relations (Ji et al., 2017; Blajer-Gołębiewska, 2021), its management of social media has become an 'important aspect of crisis management' (Rees, 2020: 119). Ye and Cheong (2017: 441) have suggested that reputation management involves 'creating and defending public perceptions,' and includes managing all the information sent by the organisation, even on social media (Ji et al., 2017). Research indicate that social media has become an important tool for organisations to 'build relationships with stakeholders thus building reputation capital' (Ye & Cheong, 2017: 441).

Social media is one of the dominant themes in crisis communication research. It is defined as 'a group of internet-based applications that allows for content creation and exchange' (Roshan et al., 2016: 350). It includes a range of applications such as Facebook, Twitter, blogs, microblogs, forums, social networking and many others (Austin et al., 2012). Therefore, the interest of this study is on how practitioners in Botswana use Facebook to disseminate information during crises. The reason this study explores Facebook over other social media channels is because of its popularity in Botswana (Masilo & Seabo, 2015; Cornelius et al., 2019; Mosweu & Ngoepe, 2019). Twitter appeals more to the elites and journalists, whereas 'Facebook can reach the general public' (Ross et al., 2018: 2527). The 2020 Afrobarometer survey shows that social media use in Botswana has doubled over the last five years, with more than a third (34%) of Batswana saying they use Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp and other social media platforms as sources of news, twice as many as 18 percent five years ago (Lekorwe, 2020).

Furthermore, social media enables users to subscribe to other users to see their content (Zheng et al., 2018). However, social media content itself can intensify reputational threats for organisations when the content 'becomes the form of crisis' (Rees, 2020: 119). Since this study focuses on Facebook as an important tool for organisational crisis communication in Botswana,

scholars have found that reputation can, among other things, be affected by the information on this platform (Ye & Cheong, 2017). Scholars such as Ji et al (2017) have looked at the way stakeholders assign a favourable or unfavourable reputation to organisations on social media. As such, Rees (2020: 120) has concluded that reputation management must incorporate 'strategic social media activities' at all stages of the crisis and that organisations should 'deal with the speed and emotionally-charged reactions that social media facilitates.' Since social media often facilitates rumour propagation, research suggests that organisations should make informed decisions on the timing of the clarifications to minimise the impact of harm (Agarwal et al., 2022).

The increased use of social media in crisis communication and by extension in public relations activities has changed the way organisations communicate with both their internal and external audiences (Rees, 2020). Social media is one of the essential communication tools organisations use to share information with larger audiences at higher speed (Fern-Banks, 2011; Roshan et al., 2016; Zhu et al., 2017). Information is shared at a higher speed because social media sites have unique features which enable users to co-create messaging and share pictures as well as to like comments of other users (Masilo & Seabo, 2015; MacKay et al., 2021). The users can subscribe and follow hundreds other users and be followed by hundred others, making it possible for them to view, share and comment on the same post about a crisis as many times as possible, 'in the process amplifying the negative effect of a crisis' (Zheng et al., 2018:58). This might become a threat to passive organisations which do not engage their stakeholders.

Studies have advanced to examine social-mediated crises which Smith & Smith (2022: 204) term 'paracrisis', to determine the likelihood that these crises might negatively impact the organisation. While it is not the interest of this section to discuss theoretical frameworks, it is essential to note that publics in social media are explained within the frames of the social-mediated crisis communication (SMCC) model, which shall be discussed in greater details in chapter 3. This theory suggests that crises might emerge from social media through influential social media creators who disseminate information to their followers (Smith & Smith, 2022: 207).
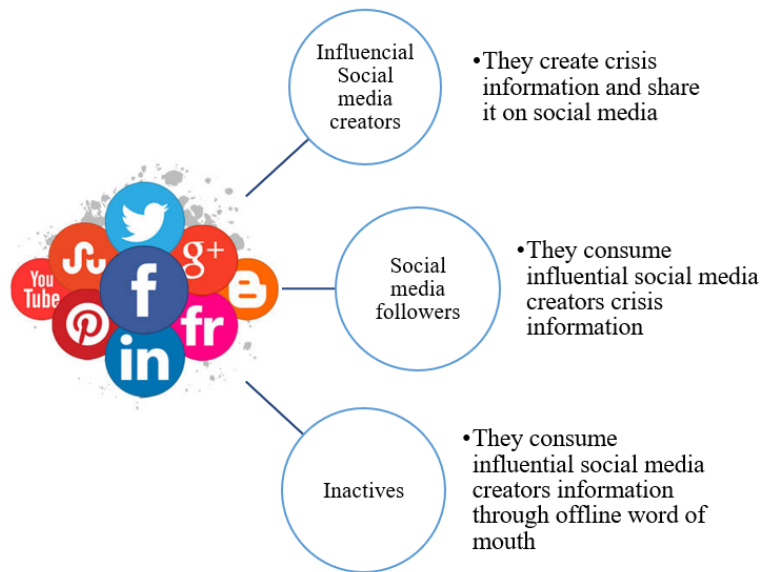
Figure 2.5: Types of social media publics identified by Austin et al (2012: 192)

The model identifies three types of publics that organisations should give attention in social media. As illustrated in Figure 2.5, this model identifies the influential social media creators, who create crisis information and share it on social media. The other audiences are the social media followers, who consume influential social media creators' crisis information, and the inactive who consume the influential social media creators' information through offline word of mouth (Austin et al., 2012; Zhu et al., 2017).

These audiences send and consume crisis information before, during and after the crisis. Zhu et al (2017) assert that the influential social media creators are the most critical participants. They are opinion leader who influence audiences by satisfying the followers informational and emotional needs, and they 'affect media coverage by setting the crisis issue agenda' (Zhu et al., 2017:488). These are some of the stakeholders that organisations mainly produce information for, and practitioners need to understand their needs to gain their trust and empathy during a crisis.

The SMCC model has been used to illuminate crisis communication in different contexts. Among others, Liu et al (2016) used the SMCC to explore how information form and source influence intended behaviour responses during a disaster and found that participants preferred offline and online organisational communication. Austin et al (2012) explored how audiences seek information from social media and found that audiences use the platforms for insider

information during a crisis and for checking in with family and friends. However, Cheng (2020) investigated how organisations in China relate with their publics by characterising social media and how it affects dialogue between organisations and their public. All these studies do not portray social media as replacing the traditional media, but as playing a complementary role.

Traditional crisis communication research focused on the relationship between crisis types and crisis response strategies before the advent of social media (Utz et al., 2013). Therefore, this study brings together traditional research dealing with crisis responses and modern research which considers social media. In the traditional crisis communication research, organisations had too much agenda-setting power because they were the ones initiating and communicating their crisis messages to the public through traditional media (Frandsen & Johansen, 2018). However, those power dynamics shifted when social media emerged because it empowers publics to send information about an organisation in crisis (Zheng et al., 2018; Hartley, 2019). Consumers have now become citizen marketers who can initiate the communication process, create widespread excitement and put the organisation's reputation at risk without the help of traditional media (Rees, 2020). Against this backdrop, crisis communication research has explored the efficacy of social media as a rising and impending alternative forms of communication during crises (Soehner et al., 2017). An organisation that uses social media to engage its publics shows that it is keen on informing its stakeholders and can resolve the crisis faster than an organisation that does not interact with its publics (Utz et al., 2013).

During the dissemination of crisis information, traditional media such as print take longer to transmit information, and in the process prolonging the time to diffuse the crisis (Lin et al., 2016). There is evidence that more and more people have become more inclined to using interactive rather than static sources of information, meaning that they prefer reading short news snippets and listening to clips and sound bites on social media and the internet (Stephens & Malone, 2010). As a result of prolonged time to transmit information, people have moved to social media, forcing newspapers to cut down on their print runs. Most newspapers have social media pages to leverage on this migration (Hartley, 2019).

The fact that organisations can use social media for free to communicate, in real-time, to their publics uninterrupted (Roshan et al., 2016; du Plessis, 2018), means that they are saving more

money which they could have spent on advertorial space in print and commercial slots in radios and televisions. Therefore, the cost-effectiveness of social media also presents an opportunity for empirical research exploring the financial impact of social media on brands in crises. As a result, social media is not fully utilised in crisis communication because data collection from social media is still at its infancy (Lin et al., 2016). For instance, collecting data on Facebook poses challenges to researchers because of its information policies prohibiting the use of the information without express permission. Twitter remains more accessible as shown by studies which examined Twitter data in crisis communication (Rybalko & Seltzer, 2010; Fowler, 2017).

Furthermore, there are debates around the credibility of information on social media. The source credibility is a unique attribute that reinforces the legitimacy of the information and can enhance public approval and that information lacking credibility would likely impede crisis communication efforts (Lin et al., 2016). As such, the high speed of transmitting information makes audiences to trust traditional media more because their stories are more credible than the information in social media where fake news is thriving (Hartley, 2019). However, these two schools of thought may not be adequate to dispel the fact that the race for information has intensified and for fear of becoming irrelevant, traditional media use social media as sources of their stories as they no longer have time to verify their information (Hartley, 2019). Their credibility becomes questionable if the primary source on social media did not verify their information.

Figure 2.6: Best practices in social media as suggested by Lin et al (2016:601)

Lastly, there is great potential for organisations using social media during a crisis to emerge out of crises with their reputation intact because they can diffuse crises faster than those that use traditional media only. Therefore, social media should not be used in isolation but alongside traditional media for them to complement each other. Researchers have suggested best practices in social media because they are useful during a crisis. These proposed best practices do not necessarily prescribe how practitioners should conduct their affairs when using social media. They are suggestions of what crisis managers should do during a crisis. Some of these best practices in Figure 2.6 are suggested by Lin et al (2016).

While Lin et al (2016) recommend that organisations should actively engage in online dialogue, research shows that not all organisations engage their stakeholders on social media. There is empirical evidence confirming this claim. A content analysis of an online communication study on how Fortune 500 companies engage stakeholders using Twitter showed that 60.2% of Fortune 500 companies responded to users' questions and comments, suggesting that some corporations use their Twitter feeds to facilitate a dialogue with users (Rybalko & Seltzer, 2010). However, these findings are not entirely conclusive because they did not consider the data of all the Fortune 500 companies. The results confirmed the importance and applicability of dialogue to online communication. This study showed that the dialogic theory is relevant to crisis communication because it considers social media as an essential communication tool during crises situations (Soehner et al., 2017). Another study by Romenti et al (2014) tested a theoretical framework through which organisations can select crisis response strategies for social media stakeholders, and found that organisations use different online dialogue strategies according to crises types.

It is, therefore, crucial for crisis managers to integrate social media in their organisations' policy development because that will inform the company's stance on the use of social media during crises. This will encourage managers to continually update and provide credible information which helps in crisis management efforts. Sharing information promptly during a crisis is essential because it helps to build trust between the organisation and stakeholders (Robinson & Eilert, 2018). Besides, crisis managers need to own hashtags for them to ascertain control in content throughout the crisis (Lin et al., 2016; Hartley, 2019). Doing so enables practitioners to follow up on any post that has a hashtag and respond to questions and queries raised by audiences.

2.10. The public sphere and crisis communication

One of the essential themes in crisis communication is the public sphere because it is where publics are situated. The sphere of society, where publics freely discuss issues of importance, is called the public sphere (Goldfarb, 2018). In other words, it is within the public sphere where voices of different publics are heard debating issues of importance during a crisis. Other researchers have likened the public sphere to an economic market of exchange where 'public policy favours are traded with votes, information or financial support' (Nyberg & Murray, 2020:583). As such, during a crisis, multiple publics are situated in the public sphere. The public sphere is the centre of communication, where different publics engage in 'diverse discussions of public affairs' (Gesser-Edelsburg et al., 2015:450). Public opinion and relevant issues about the crisis are centred in the public sphere.

The idea of the public sphere is widely discussed in Habermas (1992). The emergence of the mass media in the 20th century led to the decay of national discourse that used to dominate the 18th-century public sphere that existed in Western Europe as people could no longer gather to discuss issues of public importance (Habermas, 1992; Gesser-Edelsburg et al., 2015). This is a direct contrast to Botswana, where the 18th-century public sphere, the *kgotla* system (village assembly), where people gathered to discuss issues of national importance (Lekorwe, 2011), has not changed despite the proliferation of the mass media, and now social media which is common among the younger generation. The literature on the *kgotla* system shall be discussed in Part 2 of this chapter. Some researchers believe social media has revived the public sphere, mainly among the techno-savvy young, because of its ability to allow people to virtually gather and discuss issues of national interest (Gesser-Edelsburg et al., 2015).

Organisations consider different publics in their crisis communication. Publics are a group of people facing a similar problem; recognise that the problem exists; and 'organise to do something about the problem' (Grunig & Hunt, 1984: 145). However, all publics hold equal power within the public sphere, despite their level of education or social standing, because they can also share information detrimental to the organisation's reputation (Gesser-Edelsburg et al., 2015). These audiences should be situated at the centre of organisational crisis communication and not as mere passive recipients, to build trust and facilitate cooperation within the public sphere (Gesser-Edelsburg et al., 2015). Depending on the situation, publics,

according to Grunig and Hunt (1984), may include but not limited to, stakeholders (Government, regulators, commercial banks, civil society, shareholders, employees and others), the media (television, print, direct mail, radio, outdoor, social media and others) and the general public (comprising of politicians, experts, opinion leaders, global audiences and laypeople in communities). When multiple publics engage in discussions in the public sphere, there is no 'common good or public interest beyond the aggregation of individual interests' (Nyberg & Murray, 2020: 583).

As part of the public sphere, organisations in crisis expect the media to share their messages with the publics, but the question of who controls what the audiences read has always centred on whose agenda takes precedence. There is no doubt that the traditional media thrives on a crisis (Wigley & Fontenot, 2011). As Wheeler (2019: 47) suggests, 'a crisis is a good story. Journalists' eyes light up. They become even more competitive than usual. Editors want the story first and best.' In this connection, when a crisis breaks out, journalists go all out to get the stories and want to be the first to break the news even if it means not verifying them. Therefore, organisations should be proactive in providing appropriate information to the media for them to write stories that can help the stakeholders to form positive perceptions about the organisation in crisis. In the event of citizens breaking the news on social media site, there is a possibility that traditional media may use social media as sources of their stories, hence social media setting the agenda for the traditional media. In this way, the gatekeeping function of the media 'has all but disappeared' (Wigley & Fontenot, 2011: 338). The race by journalists and citizens to break the news is an insurmountable challenge for crisis managers to control the messages they want to send into the public sphere. Scholars suggest that one of the best ways to deal with a crisis is for organisations to control the flow of information (Wigley & Fontenot, 2011).

2.11. Power relations in the public sphere

The debate on power relations (who controls what goes into the public sphere) is one of the commonly discussed issues in media and crisis communication research. Indeed, this issue has ambivalent debates around it. As discussed earlier, social media has diffused the agenda-setting power, which used to be concentrated on traditional media, to apportion a fair share to organisations and the citizens while leaving the media with little power (Lin et al., 2016;

Hartley, 2019). One school of thought believes that the power of agenda-setting of stories about organisations in crisis rests with the media (Stephen & Malone, 2010), while another argues that it lies with social media (Wigley & Fontenot, 2011; Wasserman & Hyde-Clarke, 2016). Others argue that this perceived power is in the hands of stakeholders because citizens can start conversations and spread positive or negative information about organisations on social media, beyond the control of organisations (Johansson & Oden, 2018). All these arguments are valid because of the different environments or contexts in which crisis occurs. The argument for organisations means that when citizens start a crisis storm on social media, they expect the organisation to provide them with information that answers their questions to navigate the crisis. Organisations can also bypass the media to frame their messages and post them directly through their websites and social media networking sites.

It seems most organisations have more power because they are a source of advertising revenue for the traditional media, and this compromises the control that traditional media has over news framing. For instance, in Botswana, where the Government banned advertising in private newspapers which were considered critical of its policies (Tutwane, 2014), the media is at the mercy of organisations for advertising revenues. As suggested by Thomas (2019: 585), journalists often find themselves in a precarious situation where they are reluctant to criticise those indirectly funding them. Perhaps this is the sort of relationship that has rendered the media in Botswana weak and unimposing (Chaka & Agang, 2011). Therefore, organisations in Botswana have the upper hand on the media and can influence the news agenda depending on their relationship with the media, as shall be discussed later in this chapter. However, at the same time, arguments for power in the hands of citizens mean that their many voices can start a crisis storm on social media which make them an 'important player in the coverage of the crisis' (Wigley & Fontenot, 2011: 338). They post whatever they want and determine the news frames on social media, making other people believe a particular perspective about the crisis. As a result, organisations should be proactive to positively change people's perceptions about the organisation and the crisis.

Whilst traditional media may have abdicated part of its gatekeeping function due to social media (Hartley, 2019), there is nevertheless abundant scholarship showing that traditional media still has the respect of the publics and organisations and has the most substantial influence in disseminating information during crises (Fern-Banks, 2011; Wheeler, 2019). The

media can provide 'credible, valuable and timely information' (Lachlan et al., 2016: 647). This quality distinguishes traditional media from social media. Research suggests that 'social media role should be to bring information to us quickly; traditional media's role should be to bring information to us accurately' (Hartley, 2019: 34). While this view is valid, it does not attach any responsibility of the accuracy of news on social media because no one has control over what is shared. The internet has become a resource that organisations and even stakeholders can use for quicker updates of crisis information in whatever form. Stakeholders can use social media to open dialogue among themselves and to share fake news about the organisation in crisis if the information is scant (Stephens & Malone, 2010; Fern-Banks, 2011; Hartley, 2019).

With the faster speed at which information is shared on social media, there is virtually no time for information to be verified and this gives the public a reason to trust the traditional media for reliable and verified information (Hartley, 2019; Wheeler, 2019). For instance, a study examining power relations between sources and crisis communication in online media in Sweden found that public authorities still hold television and radio in high regard because of their crucial role in disseminating information when a crisis breaks out (Johansson & Oden, 2018). Therefore, the traditional media cannot be taken for granted because it still has an exclusive power to comment, speculate and publish investigative stories which social media cannot provide.

While traditional media, including online presence, have a significant role in communicating crisis information, a study by Ganga & Sriramesh (2018) suggests that there is minimal research about the different media environments where crisis occur. The relationship between the media and crisis communication was tested in the Maggi-Nestle India crisis because the organisation failed to appreciate the different media environments across different cultures in India (Ganga & Sriramesh, 2018). This is to say the media environments across the world are not the same because of a diversity of cultures, hence the difference in their tones and posture towards organisational crisis communication. For example, some environments like the UK have dominant news channels like Sky News, ITV and the BBC. It is against this background that crisis response strategies might need to be adjusted depending on whether the organisation is dealing with a 'corporatised media system, a developmental media system, an activist media system or a more authoritarian media' (Ganga & Sriramesh, 2018: 212).

2.12. Culture and crisis communication in a non-western context

As discussed in this chapter, trade has become global due to the internet and technology and organisations operate across different and complex cultures. For example, Botswana has many multinational organisations operating across the country such as embassies, United Nations agencies, commercial banks, insurance companies, to mention a few. Such organisations are not insulated against crises. They will at one point, directly or indirectly, deal with crisis either physically or through negative reporting in international or domestic media (Claeys & Schwarz, 2016) and they need to appreciate the local cultures. In various situations and settings, culture means different things. For the purpose of this study, a definition of culture as demystified by Causadias (2020: 310) means 'a system of people, places, and practices for a purpose such as enacting, justifying or challenging power.' This is why this study emphasises the way people perceive and respond to messages to challenge organisations in crisis. Understanding culture in this way important because, as Ganga and Sriramesh (2018:204) rightly point out, 'multinationals that ignore culture will be forced to pay a heavy price both in terms of reputation and the bottom line.' In this connection, communicators must heed cultural local beliefs and practices before developing crisis communication plans, programmes and messages (Fern-Banks, 2011).

Research indicates that culture includes the political, economic, media, society and activist environment in crisis communication (Kwansah-Aidoo & Saleh, 2017; Ganga & Sriramesh, 2018). Business culture is embedded in these different environments. The different cultural backgrounds within the organisation and the country should form part of the crisis communication strategy. Foreign organisations operating in a particular country might partner with practitioners who understand the local culture to craft appropriate messages and to manage relationships in new markets (Fern-Banks, 2011; Ganga & Sriramesh, 2018). In this connection, the cultures of other people may become strange to outsiders who are likely to fail dismally in their communication if they do not consider their audience's belief systems. These cultural beliefs, taboos and traditions are not specific to one country and are not 'manifested the same way in each country' (Fern-Banks, 2011:117). For example, this study considers crisis communication from a non-western culture because cultures in Botswana are not the same as those in Western countries. When the HIV/AIDS pandemic hit Botswana in the 1980s, some of the cultural challenges that made it difficult to change people's mindsets included, but were

not limited to, stigmatisation and women not having the power to control their sexuality; men refusing to use condoms; the concept of sugar daddies; and traditional healers using 'herbal medicine as alternatives to modern medicine' (Fern-Banks, 2011:124). These cultural belief systems might seem bizarre to the West, where women presumably have more control over their sexuality. Therefore, response strategies that Botswana used could not have been the same as those used by the West because of cultural variability. The Western culture may not be transplantable into Botswana or other African countries due to the complex cultures. As Rees (2020) puts it, the historical acceptance of Western PR as a norm is being challenged with emerging non-western research exploring different cultures.

Culture is essential in crisis communication research because it influences how organisations communicate to different audiences in various cultures. There is a school of thought arguing that the organisation centric approach to crisis communication, at the exclusion of cultural perspectives, is 'a major lacuna that reduces the global application of crisis communication literature' (Ganga & Sriramesh, 2018:205). An approach that considers culture has the potential to 'achieve tremendous and sustainable outcomes in a crisis communication plan' (George & Kwansah-Aidoo, 2017: 7). In this connection, this research builds on the need to consider crisis communication through the lens of culture to broaden its global application.

Culture presents an opportunity for scholars to explore crisis communication in the non-western perspective, as crises occurring in one country can potentially affect many countries (George & Kwansah-Aidoo, 2017). For instance, the 2015 Volkswagen vehicle recall (Che, Katayama, & Lee, 2022) across the European Union affected global customers in diverse cultures. The grounding of the 2019 Boeing 737 Max crisis (Rushe, 2019) affected many countries with diverse cultures despite the crisis starting in Ethiopia. These crises started in one country, but due to globalisation, they were far-reaching and affected various publics and cultures away from where it started. It is, therefore, important to suggest that most of the crises that negatively affect multinational companies succeed because such companies 'fail to align with local cultures' (Ganga & Sriramesh, 2018: 204). Culture affects the way people communicate and receive messages, and these challenge organisations to develop appropriate response strategies to apply in crises (George & Kwansah-Aidoo, 2017).

The implication of lack of knowledge of how people in a particular cultural context respond to messages when a crisis breaks out, mean that crisis response strategies will not be relevant, and the communication process will not achieve its intended purpose. For example, Kwansah-Aidoo & Saleh (2017) argue that in 2015, the South African government blundered when it refused to acknowledge that the attacks against foreigners were xenophobic. They argue that when the government finally acknowledged and apologised, it was too late as the crisis had dented its reputation. While a denial strategy did not work, these scholars argue that the apology crisis response strategy worked because it was considered as a humanism value (Botho). In Botswana, the humanism value of *Botho* is used to show respect and compassion for fellow human beings (Osei-Hwedie, 2010), regardless of colour, creed or country of origin. Therefore, the denial strategy might not work in other cultures because it disregards respect and compassion for others but may be relevant in other contexts where confrontations are seen as crisis resolution norm like in the United States (Guiniven, 2002). Botswana's political culture does not support extremism (Osei-Hwedie, 2010). Therefore, the denial crisis response strategy might be met with resistance and criticism, and any crisis response strategy excluding cultural values of humanism might become inappropriate to manage a crisis. Therefore, it seems it might not be feasible to universally apply Western crisis response strategies to other cultural contexts because of the needs of the publics and how they understand messages vary.

Part 2- The African and Botswana perspective

Part 1 of this literature review explained that crisis communication scholarship in Africa is scant even in developed economies like Nigeria and South Africa, but there are many cases and opinions of crises recorded across this vast continent (George & Kwansah-Aidoo, 2017). Among others, there is an analysis of South Africa's 2015 xenophobia attacks and an article on crisis communication research in South Africa (Wasserman & Hyde-Clarke, 2016; Kwansah-Aidoo & Saleh, 2017); Nigeria's 2013 Ebola crisis (George, 2017), Ghana's crisis communication during the 2014 FIFA World Cup revolt by their national team, the Black Stars (Kwansah-Aidoo, 2017); the 2011 Egypt's cultural and political crisis (Saleh & Metwali, 2017); and a book chapter with a case study of how Africa handled the HIV/AIDS pandemic (Fern-Banks, 2011). From this evidence, some scholarship on Africa may be buried in offline resources that do not have a global footprint.

To conceptualise public relations in this study, it is important to define what it means. According to Roberts-Bowman (2021:20), at a corporate level, public relations is a management function that deals with 'reputation and building relationships with non-consumer stakeholders.' While this may not be corporatist in nature, Rees (2020:16) argues that public relations has the 'ideas and objectives of the entity it represents at the heart of its practice.' However, just as PR has a Western perspective, Africa has developed its own perspective, and a wide range of research across the continent has taken shape (Akpabio, 2009). Research has challenged the 'historical favouring of Western public relations as a norm' (Rees, 2020:16). Despite the influence of Western PR, the development of this practice in Africa is documented through country perspectives due to different social, political, economic, cultural and geographical variables. Therefore, it is impossible to suggest a unified history of public relations in the African continent 'due to the varying influences and perspectives from different nations' (Rees, 2020: 19). As such, to suggest that scholarship on public relations in Africa is still at infancy, or that it is not practised widely, is a disservice to the field and devoid of truth. Akpabio (2009) lists numerous public relations scholarship projects conducted across different African countries and argues that more contributions are not acknowledged globally because they are not available online. In addition to the ones listed by Akpabia (2009), there are numerous other studies that reveal the history, growth, professionalisation and practice of

public relations across different Africa countries (Okigbo, 1995; Naude, Froneman, & Atwood, 2004; Keenan, 2016; Kwansah-Aidoo & Saleh, 2017).

Research shows that public relations in the African continent existed long before colonial history, when rulers sent messages, communicated and built relationships with their communities through, among others, traditional dance, beating of drums, the role of chiefs, marriages, payment of bride price, messengers and many other practices (Akpabio, 2009; Rensburg, 2009). Different countries have different historical and cultural communication, and this explains why African communication is rooted in their culture (Kwansah-Aidoo & Saleh, 2017). For example, the beating of drums was used to send messages, mobilise and to create awareness among specific communities (Akpabio, 2009).

A proportionate literature review about public relations in Africa should be one that considers different parts of the continent. For example, literature about Botswana and South Africa in Southern Africa; Nigeria and Ghana in Western Africa, Kenya in Eastern Africa, and Egypt in North-eastern Africa helps exemplify some of the differences and similarities in public relations history and approaches across the continent. Public relations in Nigeria emerged in the 1800s when the first newspaper, Iwe-Irohan was established (Akpabio, 2009) and its development was later influenced by the British colonial administration (Olatunji, 2014). In her review of literature on histography of public relations, Rees (2020:18) concurs that the 'colonial influence on the informational process was significant in other continents including Africa.' For example, while it is difficult to pinpoint when Ghana's public relations practice started, scholars point it to British colonial history (Wu & Baah-Boakye, 2006; Aggrey, 2009). Kenya has a similar colonial past with Ghana, and it is believed the practice, although pre-dating British colonialism, was influenced mainly by the former colonial masters (Kiambi & Nadler, 2012). In countries like Botswana, Zambia and Zimbabwe, although pre-dating the colonial history, public relations owe its development to the British colonial administration (Mawerera, 2014; Tutwane, 2014). These countries are part of a cluster in Southern Africa, whose history is so intertwined because of the influential British colonial legacy that they share (Mawerera, 2014).

South Africa, whose public relations is characterised by the search for identity, legitimacy and professional recognition, derives its influence from the American model of public relations,

despite having the British and the Dutch as former colonial administrations (Rensburg, 2009). Despite South Africa being one of the economically powerful countries in Southern Africa and being the country with the most advanced practice of public relations, the development of the practice as a strategic management function has not been comprehensively documented and researched (Rensburg, 2009). However, this position was taken more than ten years ago, and trends may have changed. While it is true that publics gain power over organisations through activism, the growing interest in this approach is central to scientific inquiry in PR (Coombs & Holladay, 2012: 881). It seems South African public relations has taken this path to play a significant role in 'promoting change' through 'conversations, dialogue and third culture building' (Benecke and Oksiutycz, 2015:818). Multicultural contexts such as South Africa pose challenges to PR practitioners to build relationships with local and global publics, hence the need for third culture building (Benecke & Oksiutycz, 2015) which helps to 'develop a relational and dialogic approach to intercultural public relations' (Kent & Taylor , 2011: 69). Based on 'dialogic orientation and shared meaning' (Kent &Taylor, 2015: 70), the third culture model 'sees human beings as active, involved, able and concerned about their own involvement in any state of affair or being which have to do with their survival, both physically and spiritually' (Benecke & Oksiutycz, 2015:823). This explains why public relations in South Africa thrives through activism and involvement of publics in conversations and dialogue. As such, the third culture model will further underpin discussions on social media and Botswana's cultural offline communication platform, the *kgotla* system, because PR practitioners use it to organise what Benecke & Oksiutycz (2015:819) term 'engagement in which people have the opportunity to converse and take part in dialogue.'

Further afield in north-eastern Africa, there is little relevance to modern public relations in the history of ancient Egypt, despite the country having a 'fascinating history pre-dating 6000 years ago' (Keenan, 2016:179). It seems there is no direct link between Egypt's ancient activities and modern public relations (Keenan, 2016). For example, as Keenan (2016:179) suggests, public relations is less understood in Egypt and is synonymous with 'hospitality or customer relations,' and there is no distinction between public relations, advertising and marketing.

However, the practice has advanced to become a strategic function, as seen in most advanced economies in Africa, which favour relationship-building public relations (Akpabio, 2009). Most practitioners across the Sub-Saharan Africa countries use research to shape

organisational activities and have contextualised and localised the practice (Aggrey, 2009; Akpabio, 2009). For example, two different studies conducted in Kenya and Ghana on cultural influences and Grunig and Hunt (1984)'s public relations models in the two countries found that both the two-way symmetrical and two-way asymmetrical models are frequently used. Press agentry and public information model were the least used in Ghana (Wu & Baah-Boakye, 2009; Kiambi & Nadler, 2012). As far as the East is to the West, so is Kenya and Ghana respectively, and the two countries do not even share the same culture except for the colonial history. Therefore, it seems the Western influence on the two country's public relations practice is rife.

Public relations across Africa is progressing towards professionalisation. Some developed economies like South Africa and Nigeria have already achieved this feat, while in some parts of Africa, PR practice is still misunderstood. In a bid to professionalise, South Africa established the Public Relations Institute of Southern Africa (PRISA) in 1957, which has since obtained the International Standards Organisation's 9002 certifications (Rensburg, 2009). In Nigeria, the practice was in the 1990s regulated through the promulgation of Decree No 16 of 1990 by the Babangida regime, which led to the establishment and conferment of the chartered status on the Nigerian Institute of Public Relations (Amujo & Melewar, 2011; Udomisor & Osademe, 2013). Kenya has established the Public Relations Society of Kenya (PRSK) as part of its professionalisation efforts (Kiambi & Nadler, 2012). All these point to the continent's efforts to recognise public relations as an essential strategic management function. The scholarship also shows that public relations is indeed widely practised in Africa despite a few contexts where it is misunderstood. Through this broader lens, it is now essential to narrow down this evaluation to the research and practice of crisis communication and public relations in Botswana.

2.15. Public relations and crisis communication in Botswana

Like the rest of Africa, Botswana has little or non-available online literature on crisis communication except for social media commentaries and news articles in most publications about exigencies affecting private companies and public entities. However, there is literature on public relations, although scant and slowly developing like in other parts of the Sub-Saharan African. Scholarship on public relations in Botswana emerges in a few studies like one

exploring public relations in the Agricultural sector in Botswana (Chaka & Agang, 2011). Another investigated how scientists communicate to non-science audiences in the Okavango Delta in Botswana (Thakadu & Tau, 2012), and yet another on communicating flood risks within the Okavango Delta communities (Thakadu et al., 2017). These studies concur that PR is practised in Botswana, albeit at a less professional level.

The government communication in Botswana has been significant in the development of public relations, and leaders and officials have used the traditional pre-colonial structures such as the *kgotla* (traditional assembly) system to play a significant role in public relations and information sharing with communities around the country (Thakadu & Tau, 2012).

Figure 2.7: Government officials (Top) and publics (Bottom) at a kgotla meeting (Picture credit: Chedza Simon)

Tracing this communication platform to pre-colonial times, the *kgotla* was a patriarchal assembly where a traditional leader (the Chief) met his tribe to discuss issues of national importance such as governance, planning and resolution of disputes (Ashton, 1947). Then, it seems the *kgotla* prohibited women and the youth from attending meetings. Exclusion of other genders was a significant weakness of this pre-colonial systems and was detrimental to public relations because it excluded goodwill. The discussions in the *kgotla* are held in a parliament set-up, or town hall-style (See Figure 2.9), where leaders and communities engage in a dialogue (conversations) and all opinions considered before consensus is reached (Lekorwe, 2011). Another understanding of the *kgotla* is that it is a place where political leaders meet the people to debate issues; a judicial institution where civil cases, infractions, misdemeanours and other disputes are resolved; or a sacred space where rituals are held (Ngwenya & Kgathi, 2011; Otlogetswe, 2018). As described by scholars;

> The official characterisation of the kgotla is that it is a repository forum for government-orchestrated development agenda. The assembly is summoned by the Chief (Kgosi) to deliberate on diverse political, social, cultural and economic issues whose implication may have local, national or international ramifications (Ngwenya & Kgathi, 2011:249)

The assumption captured here is that the traditional *kgotla* system has the potential to provide a platform where public relations can thrive because it views communication, dialogue and stakeholder engagement as critical tools to manage organisational relationships. The *kgotla* system (village assembly), to borrow from the words of Benecke & Oksiutycz (2015:819), is a typical example of 'builders of culture' because PR practitioners use this platform to organise 'engagements in which people have the opportunity to converse and take part in dialogue.' As such, the *kgotla* welcomes everyone including the global publics that live and work in societies around Botswana, and this multicultural publics present a challenge for PR practitioners and organisations to communicate during crises. As suggested by Kent and Taylor (2011: 51), instead of trying to understand all the cultures, PR practitioners may develop the relational and dialogic approach to intercultural public relations through the third culture model. According to Holmes (2015: 276), the third culture model brings together two people from different cultures to adapt and co-create a culture that 'transcends both of the original two cultures in order to cooperate to reach a common goal in an organisation.' This model is relevant to the *kgotla* system which is a congregation of people from different

cultures who then develop a hybrid culture to mutually understand each other in conversations and dialogues around national discourse, thus building a bridge between these cultures. As suggested by Benecke & Oksiutycz (2015), third culture building addresses intercultural communication in multicultural contexts with many languages and ethinic groups. Botswana is a typical example of such contexts, and third culture building through this cultural platform, might help PR practitioners to facilitate intercultural communication and for 'organisations to navigate cultural terrains' (Kent & Taylor , 2011: 50) during crises.

As indicated earlier, the *kgotla* has been used since the pre-colonial era of the British Protectorate (Ashton, 1947; Ngwenya & Kgathi, 2011). The head of the *kgotla* is the chief (kgosi in Setswana) who is assisted by deputy chief (kgosana in Setswana) of different wards in the community (Ashton, 1947; Lekorwe, 2011; Ngwenya & Kgathi, 2011; Otlogetswe, 2018). Traditionally, the position of the chief was hereditary, from father to son (Ashton, 1947). However, with the transformation of modern societies, daughters (women) can now inherit the chieftainship. For example, Botswana has women chiefs, among them Kgosi Mosadi Seboko, the paramount chief of the Balete tribe (Molomo et al., 2007), who is also a member of the House of Chiefs (an annexure to the Parliament of Botswana, which is attended by Chiefs to advise parliament on cultural and traditional matters). Many other women chiefs are heads of customary courts which are structures of the *kgotla*. The Chief was the lawmaker, the judge (presiding in customary courts) and also responsible for the welfare of the people (Ashton, 1947; Lekorwe, 2011).

The *kgotla* is part of the traditional Setswana culture, which is the cornerstone of peacebuilding and democracy because it has preserved the Setswana values of public discussions, community consensus, non-violence and moderation, which are also critical to the democratic political culture (Osei-Hwedie, 2010). Through these elements and its ability to manage relationships, one can argue that the *kgotla* might serve as a perfect platform for crisis management where organisations can isolate communities affected by an emergency to engage them in direct dialogue. Crises or conflicts might be dealt with through the *kgotla* because it allows freedom of speech (Lekorwe, 2011). The fact that the discussions in *kgotla* meetings are characterised by freedom of speech and goodwill means that this cultural communication platform might ascertain public opinion, which is essential for crisis managers and PR practitioners when developing appropriate messages and response strategies to crises.

While a direct relationship between the *kgotla* and public relations has not been established, the goal of communication in the *kgotla* can be aligned with Grunig and Hunt (1984)'s two-way symmetrical model. The goal of this model is what in the words of Guiniven (2002:396) could be to 'uncover points of agreement, open dialogue and honest exchange to resolve conflicts and reach compromise.' Therefore, it seems the *kgotla* might be an effective platform for crisis communication and crisis management because one of its functions is to manage conflicts and to encourage dialogue and honest conversations.

In addition to the traditional Setswana culture, it seems the development of PR in Botswana was largely influenced by the country's political and democratic culture, which encourages, 'consultations through the *kgotla* and constituencies by Members of Parliament' (Osei-Hwedie, 2010:121). These consultations are traceable to the duties of the chiefs before colonial interference (Maundeni, 2014). After independence, the Government of Botswana has continued to use the *kgotla* as a forum where consultations with the general public on policy matters and government programmes are held (Molomo et al., 2007; Osei-Hwedie, 2010). To this day, political leaders such as Cabinet Ministers, Members of Parliament and Councillors use the *kgotla* to communicate government policies and programmes and to update their constituencies on government decisions.

The peace that Botswana currently enjoys might be attributed to the function of the *kgotla*, which embraces several proverbs on peace and consultation. Some of these proverbs include *ntwakgolo ke ya molomo*, literally translated to mean the best way to resolve differences is through dialogue (Denbow & Thebe, 2006; Molomo et al., 2007). This maxim has through generations helped to maintain peace among Botswana communities, during conflicts and crises, because it dictates that people should talk through a conflict rather than take up arms. Organisations are also guided by this proverb to manage their publics during crises. The *kgotla* respects the traditional right to freedom of expression through another old saying: *mmualebe o bua la gagwe*, meaning that everyone has the right to say what they like in the *kgotla* (Denbow & Thebe, 2006; Gulbrandsen, 2012). Through these, the publics participating in debates in the *kgotla* are protected from victimisation or punishment from senior officials they heavily criticise. However, this does not entitle the people to throw profanities at officials and the leadership. Furthermore, there is another saying: *mafoko a kgotla a mantle otlhe*, meaning that all words spoken in the *kgotla* are beautiful and acceptable (Denbow & Thebe, 2006).

These old sayings guide the people to speak their mind knowing that their opinions would be respected regardless of their educational or social status. Some of these consultations include an exchange between government officials and the people; gauging public opinion or perception of people on government programmes and policies; explaining how government decisions will affect them; and question and answer sessions with the public (Gulbrandsen, 2012).

The ability of the *kgotla* to facilitate face to face communication with the public, is, therefore, a fertile ground for modern public relations. The *kgotla* system has remained relevant because it provides 'two-way communication between the government and the publics' (Lekorwe, 2011:383). This is in line with Grunig and Hunt (1984)'s two-way symmetrical model. These views of the *kgotla* system acknowledge its overarching public relations function, and its ability to engage the people democratically to obtain their consent. As suggested by Gulbrandsen (2012), the *kgotla* also allows the government to manage differing opinions. All these embody a functional structure that manages and facilitates communication.

One can suggest that the *kgotla* system, in its past and present form, negotiates and manage relations with the publics as opposed to managing communication. Its strength to manage relationships makes it a credible institution that can help organisations to obtain the trust from key publics. While communication is an important management function in the *kgotla*, contemporary public relations research views communication as a way of 'negotiating and managing organisational-public relationships' (Kent & Taylor, 2002: 23). This paradigm shift is necessary for crisis communication research where contexts and culture are essential in determining the types of messages to share with publics. Due to the advancement of technology in public relations and communication, Verwey (2015) challenges researchers to interrogate their approaches and assumptions to transcend the boundaries of their own values and framework to provide direction and alignment in public relations. By its very nature, the traditional *kgotla* system allows organisations to communicate important information, debate issues and democratically reach consensus with communities before binding decisions are made (Ashton, 1947; Chaka & Agang, 2011; Lekorwe, 2011; Otlogetswe, 2018). The *kgotla* is mainly used by the government to address different communities on public policy and government business, but private organisations in Botswana do not fully exploit the potential of the *kgotla* system to address their stakeholders because it is not easily accessible. The

unwieldy chains of command make access to the *kgotla* very slow. Additionally, the government cannot make any binding decisions without obtaining the consent of the people through the *kgotla*. Local organisations operating within communities 'derive their authority from the kgotla as decisions taken at this forum are regarded as decisions taken by the entire village and are binding' (Lekorwe, 2011:389). For instance, organisations that want to conduct an Environment Impact Assessment in communities for major development projects must go through the *kgotla* to ascertain public opinion and to obtain the consent of the community and cannot bypass the *kgotla*. Unlike this platform, it seems social media and news media cannot guarantee public consent.

2.16. The kgotla, dialogue and conflict resolution

The intersection between the *kgotla* and crisis communication in Botswana might be linked to scholarship on dialogue and conflict resolution. As explained earlier, one of the functions of the *kgotla* is conflict resolution (Lekorwe, 2011; Thakadu & Tau, 2012). There is evidence suggesting that when natural disasters break out, the Government of Botswana still uses the *kgotla* system to consult the people, and to manage conflict situations (Lekorwe, 2011; Thakadu & Tau, 2012), although this was not the case with the Covid 19 pandemic due to lockdowns and social distancing. Scholars point out that conflicts can potentially break out if decisions are made at the exclusion of consultations and dialogue (Ashton, 1947; Lekorwe, 2011; Ngwenya & Kgathi, 2011).

In this connection, the *kgotla* seems like an essential place for crisis communication and management. For instance, in 2019, the Government of Botswana used the *kgotla* to manage the human-wildlife conflict crisis effectively. An increase in the elephant population created congestion in their habitat (wildlife conservation areas like national parks and game reserves in the northern part of the country) and forced them to move into human habitat, in the process killing human beings and destroying their crops (Leithead, 2019). To protect the people, the government decided to lift the hunting ban to reduce the elephant population, a decision that evoked fierce reactions from the international conservationists who caused negative media coverage about the government both locally and internationally (Guardian, 2019). The Government of Botswana used the *kgotla* to consult, engage in dialogue and mobilise support from the people about its decision to control the elephant populations. In the end, the

government gained trust and sympathy from the affected communities, including the media, who patriotically defended the government's decision against the negative international media coverage of the crisis, and the process earning a positive international reputation. Had the government not used the *kgotla* meetings to solicit sympathy, it seems the publics and the media would have joined the cynical international chorus to harm the country's reputation.

The potency of the *kgotla* system in conflict resolution or crisis management is on its ability to create a dialogue between the organisation and the publics. The *kgotla* system appreciates that its relationship with the stakeholders is symbiotic, which is why stakeholders are engaged in open and honest dialogue to reach consensus (Ngwenya & Kgathi, 2011; Lekorwe, 2011). Organisations that have goodwill in their relationship with stakeholders, and have nothing to hide, are more inclined to dialogue, where issues are debated and both parties winning (Kent & Taylor, 2002; Fawkes, 2011; Bentley, 2012). The dialogic theory encourages organisations to build relationships with publics on a win-win basis (Kent and Taylor, 2002; Bentley, 2012; du Plessis, 2018). The theory affirms Grunig & Hunt (1984)'s two-way communication model to foster genuine relationships (Kent and Taylor, 2002; Bentley, 2012; Lin et al., 2016). The two-way communication is what the *kgotla* encourages when leaders discuss pertinent issues with communities. Therefore, decisions cannot be made without publics' consent.

Research shows that the concept of dialogue in public relations is based on five principles of mutuality, propinquity, empathy, risk and commitment (Kent & Taylor, 2002). As illustrated in Table 2.1, mutuality acknowledges equality between the organisation and stakeholders. However, equality in terms of power relations can only occur if PR practitioners are within what (Berger B. K., 2005) calls the 'dominant coalition' which is a decision-making group that can enable practitioners to do the right thing without dominating and manipulating their publics, as well as providing solutions. As such, organisations must make themselves physically accessible to the public (propinquity) and must affirm the importance of public views even of those who disagree (empathy). Sharing information and collaborating with publics could have unexpected consequences (risk), and that organisation should be genuine, make conversations work and give publics the benefit of the doubt, or commitment (Kent and Taylor, 2002). While scholars argue that dialogue may become a recipe for public manipulation by unscrupulous organisations (Kent & Taylor, 2002; Bentley, 2012), it seems highly unlikely that in a personal engagement where debates are held, and stakeholders

exercise their freedom of speech without fear, anyone can be manipulated. Publics and stakeholders can only be manipulated if their freedom of speech is curtailed. On the contrary, unfettered access to the organisation (propinquity), to the point of freely criticising it in open debates (risk), can become a dicey adventure for organisations although it might become an opportunity for them to establish trust, as opposed to organisations remaining faceless and being perceived as hiding behind the veil of the internet (Kent & Taylor, 2002; Hartley, 2019).

Principle	Description	Application to the kgotla system
Mutuality	Appreciating the interdependence of an organisation and publics, receiving criticism	The kgotla system treats publics as important stakeholders and shows the importance of their contribution in decision making. People are allowed to criticise the leaders, organisations and to engage in open debates. Criticism is seen as important feedback.
Propinquity	Looking for win-win solutions; informing publics of organisational plans; responding promptly and helpfully to inquiries or information requests	The reason for which publics engage in debates to share ideas that work for them is to find win-win solutions. Their ideas are then taken to parliament for further debate and adoption. In the kgotla, people are allowed to ask questions and they are responded to promptly and they receive immediate assistance to their problems. For issues without immediate response, officials usually return the feedback through the chief or other community structures.
Empathy	Creating forums for public feedback; showing sympathy to public concern	The kgotla system allows the public to express themselves and leaders use the opportunity to show sympathy to the plight of the people by providing immediate solutions to their problems.
Risk	Consulting key publics before announcing major decisions and initiatives; meeting with critics of the organisation to understand their concerns; admitting mistakes promptly and taking corrective measures;	The Government of Botswana usually use kgotla to consult the people before major decisions and initiatives are announced in order to understand public concerns. In the kgotla critics of government (opposition political party activists) are allowed to attend to express their concerns and where government has wronged, mistakes are admitted and corrective action taken.
Commitment	Dealing fairly with activists and cooperating with opposing views; investing time and resources in organisation-public relationships; revisiting organisational practices to find new opportunities for dialogue.	Through the kgotla system activists are given a fair platform and their voices always considered. The government of Botswana uses the kgotla as an opportunity to forge new avenues to improve the government–public relationship.

Table 2.1: Application of Kent & Taylor (2002:24)'s principles of dialogue to the kgotla system

Therefore, the ability of the *kgotla* to engage the publics directly, hold debates and obtain their consent before making decisions satisfies the requirements of the dialogic public relations theory. The application of dialogue in building relationships is important because it focuses on encouraging organisations to act with consideration to the views of others before making decisions, without necessarily abandoning their agenda (Kent and Taylor, 2002; Rybalko & Seltzer, 2010). In Botswana, the government would be considered unethical if it made binding decisions affecting a community without engagement through dialogue at a *kgotla* meeting.

The *kgotla* might be used to complement social media and the mainstream media, as a way of reaching out to the marginalised publics to communicate messages during crises. Social media tend to 'neglect marginalised voices' (Xu, 2018: 84). For example, stakeholders such as the elderly and the poor in remotest parts of Botswana do not use or have access to social media and information distributed in these platforms. As opposed to communicating through the mainstream media where the channel is one way and relegating publics to mere recipients of information, the *kgotla* system establishes dialogue which projects publics as 'equals with the organisation' (Kent & Taylor, 2002: 24). There is no doubt that dialogue in the *kgotla* system might help to produce immediate feedback and mutual understanding (Kent & Taylor, 2002; Lin et al., 2016).

2.17. Comparison between public relations in Canada and Botswana

This thesis posits that there are cultural similarities in the way public issues and crises are handled by organisations in Botswana and Canada. A study by Guiniven (2002) has shown that Canadian organisations have a culture of compromise, tolerance and consultation. These corporate values and principles seem prevalent among organisations in Botswana. Tolerance was engrained in Botswana's National Vision 2016 manifesto which guided the national development plan, mid-term review and development policies (Radijeng, 2013). The National Vision 2016 pillar of tolerance envisaged Botswana as a society free of discrimination while promoting the spirit of humanism (Botho) among the minorities. An Afrobarometer survey evaluating the performance on the National Vision 2016 found that tolerance is generally high in Botswana (Lekalake, 2016). As such organisations in Botswana are still guided by this principle in their relationship with different publics.

Guiniven (2002) has also found that the Canadian public relations is generally less confrontational than in the United States despite having a militant activist environment with organisations like Greenpeace, the Western Canada Wilderness Committee and others. It seems these organisations effectively deal with conflicts because of their culture of compromise and consultation (Guiniven, 2002). Like Canada, the culture of compromise and consultations is inherent in Botswana's traditional Setswana culture of 'peacebuilding and democracy which values public discussions, community consensus and non-violence' (Osei-Hwedie, 2010:121). As discussed earlier in this chapter, the custodian of this Setswana traditional culture, the *kgotla* system, widely embraces Grunig and Hunt (1984)'s two-way symmetric communication to resolve conflicts (Lekorwe, 2011), where publics are afforded an opportunity to openly and freely debate issues of national interest. When there is a public issue or a crisis, the chiefs engage communities in consultations and dialogue to reach a compromise (Osei-Hwedie, 2010). Although Canada does not have the traditional institutions such as the *kgotla* system, they have other institutions in their political systems which are custodians of the culture of compromise and consultations. The political and democratic culture between the two countries is similar in that both cultures allow for citizen participation and consultation through different dispensations (Guiniven, 2002; Osei-Hwedie, 2010; Maundeni, 2014). The fact that public debates are a norm in Botswana, is a significant indication that its public relations may thrive through consultations, compromise and tolerance like in Canada.

2.18. Conclusion

This chapter has attempted to identify useful themes in crisis communication research to help understand the environment and behaviour of organisations during crises. It also discussed the tapestry-like relationship between crises, crisis management, and crisis communication and has shown that there is need for non-western perspectives to contribute to global crisis communication research which is more organisation centric and Western (Walaski, 2011). Social media has changed the way organisations and stakeholders view crises. Organisations are now transnational and transboundary due to internet and technology, so is crises and the different cultures in which it occurs (George & Kwansah-Aidoo, 2017). Crises can be fuelled by negative media coverage in traditional media and social media, which can potentially give crises the wings to spread faster. Despite the media losing its agenda-setting power due to

social media, it remains a vital crisis communication tool. However, extant literature shows that social media does not replace but complement traditional media (Coombs, 2009; Utz, Schultz, & Glocka, 2013; Soehner et al., 2017; Zhang, Liu, & Davison, 2018; Hartley, 2019). On literature about public relation and crisis communication in Botswana, it emerged that the *kgotla* system is a dominant cultural communication institution in Botswana. While there seem to be a vague link between crisis communication and the *kgotla*, the ability of cultural platform to build relationships, uphold consultations, dialogue and freedom of speech accentuates its unique role and position in crisis communication management. As much as it helps to build relationships and trust, dialogue is situated at the heart of the *kgotla* system, and helps organisations to obtain consent, immediate feedback and mutual understanding from stakeholders during crises (Kent & Taylor, 2002; Lin et al., 2016). These themes will help to answer the following research questions:

RQ1: To what extent do the established PR theories such the situational crisis communication theory, social mediated crisis communication model and the two-way symmetrical model apply to crisis communication practice in Botswana?

RQ2: What are the characteristics of crisis messages on Facebook among publics and organisations in Botswana?

RQ3: How do organisations use Facebook to disseminate crisis messages in Botswana?

RQ4: What is the role of language in crisis messages shared by PR practitioners on Facebook?

RQ5: How are power relations exercised and negotiated in Facebook posts about the Botswana Development Fengyue glass project and the Botswana Railways crisis?

RQ6: To what extent does culture influence crisis communication on Facebook in Botswana?

2.19. Summary of chapter 2

- Crisis, crisis management and crisis communication exist in an inextricable relationship that arranges them in a continuum with crisis communication at the end.
- Crisis communication research is Western authored, and there is a need for research on non-western perspectives to build on global scholarship.
- Like other parts of Africa, Botswana has negligible research on crisis communication, and there are abundant social media commentaries and media coverage about crises.
- Social media has changed the way businesses and stakeholders respond to crises.

- Social media does not replace but complement traditional media in crisis communication.

- Traditional media has lost its agenda-setting power to organisations and publics, but still enjoys trust from stakeholders because it can provide credible and verified information.

- Culture is pertinent in crisis communication research because audiences in different contexts perceive messages differently, and crisis response strategies vary in different cultural contexts.

- Corporate social responsibility can safeguard the organisation's reputation because it helps to attribute less or no blame to the organisation during crises.

- Public relations in Botswana owe its roots to the traditional *kgotla* system which allows publics to dialogue with organisations in a mutually beneficial way.

- As a democratic institution which allows organisations to share information even during crises situations, the *kgotla* system helps organisations to build trust and more robust relationships with publics.

- The way public issues are dealt with in Botswana is similar to the way Canada and other countries handle them through the culture of compromise, consultation and tolerance.

CHAPTER 3: Theorising crisis communication

This chapter describes the theoretical frameworks that help understand the different perspectives of crisis communication in Botswana. Since research methods do not 'exist in isolation from theory' (Hansen & Machin, 2013:1), this chapter integrates theories to build a more comprehensive understanding of the research problem because theories bear a 'concrete relationship to reality and inform practice' (Sellnow & Seeger, 2013: 15). Chapter 4 will then conceptualise this study by discussing the philosophical assumptions that guide the methodological choices. In this connection, this study explores Coombs & Holladay (1996)'s situational crisis communication theory (SCCT); Austin et al., (2012)'s social-mediated crisis communication (SMCC) model and Grunig and Hunt (1984)'s two-way symmetrical model (Figure 3.1) to examine crisis communication in Botswana.
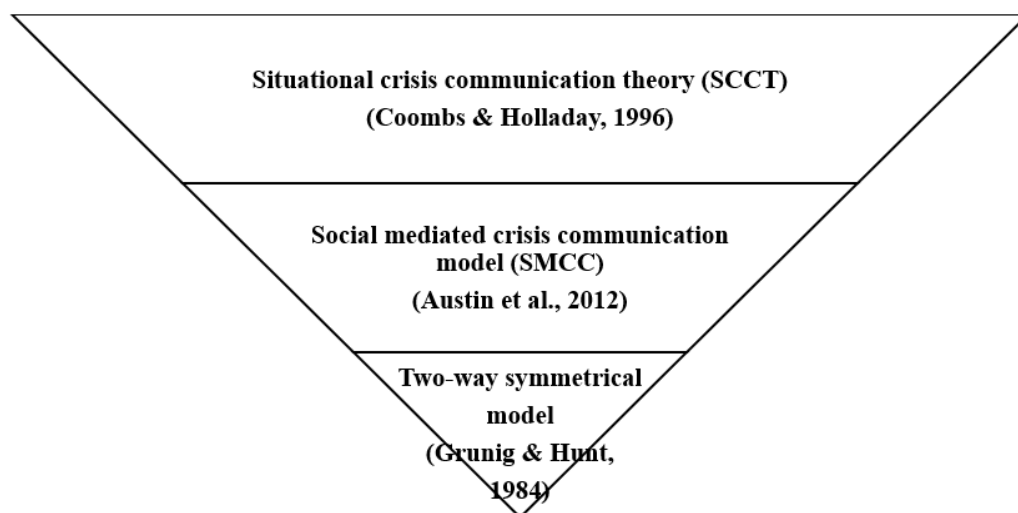
Figure 3.1: Outline of the theoretical framework chapter

There is no doubt that theories help crisis managers and organisations to apply a 'multi-pronged approach to crises' (Coombs, 2004: 266). Such an approach helps practitioners to close the information gaps that may be created by understanding crises from a single perspective. As indicated in chapter 2, there is very little to draw up on research guiding PR practitioners in Botswana on how to communicate during crisis. Therefore, a single perspective to explain crisis communication in that context, might defeat the purpose of a broader understanding of crises. As such, it is essential to consider a multi-pronged approach for this study by integrating these theories to explore crisis communication in Botswana from different perspectives.

Before discussing how these theories underpin this study, it is essential to understand the meaning of a theory. Different scholars define theory differently depending on their contexts and purpose. A theory can be understood as a speculated, educated guess based on a study or experience (Zaremba, 2010). In spite of this view, a theory is not a speculation, but a school of thought based on outcomes of research that has been validated by others to improve an understanding of a phenomenon. Such a definition makes the meaning of a theory less comprehensive and acceptable. A definition by Sellnow and Seeger (2013) which views theory as an explanation created for something that needs further understanding suffices for this study because of its proximity to, and extension of Zaremba (2010)'s definition. Both these definitions are helpful to this study.

Theories are used to explain specific phenomenon and understanding crises situations require theories that are specifically designed to understand and explain them (Zaremba, 2010; Sellnow & Seeger, 2013). Therefore, theories inform practice, organise a set of observations, explain a phenomenon and predict what will happen during a crisis (Sellnow & Seeger, 2013). In this connection, the SCCT, SMCC and Two-way symmetrical models underpin this study from three perspectives: First, on how PR practitioners select crisis response strategies depending on crisis types (SCCT); second, on how practitioners use social media to deliver crisis messages and handle responses from audiences (SMCC); and third, on how practitioners dialogically interact with their publics during crises (Two-way symmetric model). These models represent a chronological development of ideas for this thesis, buttressing the notion that subject content and process cannot be separated (Wingate, 2007). These approaches were integrated and used as the basis for analysis to provide a wider understanding of crisis communication in Botswana.

3.1. Situational crisis communication theory (SCCT)

The choice of a crisis response strategy to protect corporate reputation is not a random process. It is underpinned by certain factors and culminates from a well-researched and informed process guided by the SCCT (Coombs & Holladay, 1996; Coombs, 2010; Benoit, 2013; Ganga & Sriramesh, 2018).

This approach was developed by Coombs & Holladay (1996) to help PR practitioners to select appropriate crisis response strategies depending on crisis types. The SCCT was developed as a theory that matched crisis response strategies to protect the corporate reputation, to reduce adverse effects and to prevent harmful behavioural intention (Coombs, 2004; Utz et al., 2013; Ganga & Sriramesh, 2018). It was designed to help stakeholders to know what to do to protect themselves during crises, and for organisations to know what to do to diffuse the crisis and prevent its recurrence. The SCCT considers past crises as an essential factor relevant to the current crisis because it helps to shape perceptions about the crisis (Coombs, 2004; Zaremba, 2010). Crisis history is essential to public perceptions about the organisation. An organisation with no crisis history 'faces less blame from stakeholders during a crisis, limiting harm to the organisation' (Koerber & Zabara, 2017:194). However, if there is a pattern of past crises, the attribution of blame is likely to increase and, in the process, causing more harm to the organisational reputation (Coombs, 2009:100). In this connection, understanding perceptions of stakeholders, helps the organisation to be best prepared to handle crises. The SCCT will, therefore, inform this study, especially on investigations around the crisis response strategies.

The SCCT evolved from several studies and the attribution theory (Coombs, 2004), which holds that people search for causes of negative events and attribute their causes to something to influence how they feel and react to the crisis. The crisis types originate from the attribution theory, which provides for the category system that allows a 'linkage between crisis response strategies and crisis types' (Coombs & Holladay, 1996:284). This category system, according to the attribution theory yields four crisis types, with 'external control and intentionality providing dimensions that can be crossed to form the 2x2 matrix' (Coombs & Holladay, 1996:284). These crisis types, according to Coombs and Holladay (1996), include: accident (unintentional and internal); transgressions (intentional and internal); faux pas (unintentional and external); and terrorism (intentional and external). Accidents are unintentional, while transgressions are intentional mismanagement misdemeanour. Faux pas says there is no crisis, and terrorism is intentional but not caused by the organisation. According to this category system, characteristics of the crises should suggest the best crisis response strategy to fit the situation (Coombs & Holladay, 1996). The theory demonstrates that the choice of response strategies to fit a particular crisis type is not a random process. As such, the BDC and the BR crises fit within this category system. The BDC crisis is a transgression type (intentional and internal), while the BR crisis is an accident type (unintentional and internal). For these crisis

types, the intentionality or otherwise should be emphasised by the crisis managers in their responses to reduce attribution of blame, and any of the responses designed to create 'distancing such as excuse and justification strategies would be appropriate' (Coombs & Holladay, 1996: 284). However, transgression, as an intentional and internal crisis, provides no recourse but to use the corrective action response strategies to show how the organisation is reducing chances of future occurrence of the crises (Coombs & Holladay, 1996). The category system shows that it is the situational factors which guide the selection of a 'more or less effective response strategy in protecting the organisation's reputation' (Coombs, 2010: 263).

Furthermore, the SCCT also considers how publics perceive the crisis and how they respond to the messages through past occurrences (Coombs, 2010). In other words, it looks at past crises as an essential consideration to adjust the crisis response strategies to protect the reputation of the organisation (Coombs, 2004). Since the SCCT emerged from a challenge by Benoit (1995), it is essential to consider the Image Restoration Theory (IRT), which led to research into the development of the crisis response strategies. The SCCT and the IRT are like siblings. Some strategies that best fit crisis types emerged from the IRT. This theory was developed by Benoit (1995) and is another model that contributes to a broader understanding of this study. It suggests that any offensive act that undermines the organisation's reputation should be addressed through the image restoration discourse (Benoit, 2013; Ganga & Sriramesh, 2018). For example, the transgression crisis types require the use of crisis response strategies from the IRT. They help practitioners to develop messages that show publics what the organisations are doing as socially responsible corporate citizens to meet their expectations. The premises of this theory depart from threats to corporate reputation and an accusation of organisational responsibility for the crisis (Coombs, 2010; Benoit, 2013). If an organisation is not believed by its publics to be responsible, the organisation's reputation 'is not at risk' (Benoit, 2013:216). A crisis is a reputational threat, and depending on how people perceive the threat, and who is held responsible. As such, the IRT becomes a useful resource to manage the situation through communication.

As shown in Table 3.1, the IRT offers an inventory of crisis response strategies sitting on a continuum from denying charges; evade responsibility; reduce the severity of the offensiveness of wrongful act; taking corrective actions, to admitting wrongdoing and asking for forgiveness

(Coombs, 2010; Ganga & Sriramesh, 2018; Frandsen & Johansen, 2018). These response strategies determine the types of messages that the organisation can share with stakeholders.

SCCT crisis response strategies	IRT crisis response strategies
Denial	Denial
Scapegoat	Provocation
Attack accuser	Defeasibility
Excuse	Accidental
Justification	Good intentions
Ingratiation	Bolstering
Concern	Minimise
Compassion	Differentiation
Regret	Transcendence
Apology	Attack accuser
	Compensation
	Corrective action
	Mortification

Table 3.1: List of crisis response strategies from the SCCT and IRT adapted from Coombs (2010)

However, the SCCT and the IRT neglect the selection of an appropriate medium to use when 'sharing or forwarding the organisation's crisis communication' (Utz et al., 2013: 41). These theories also fail to explain crisis communication between organisations and the publics on social media, contrary to suggestions that the information source is as 'distinguished as the actual crisis message' (Austin et al., 2012: 192).

3.2. Social-mediated crisis communication model (SMCC)

The SMCC is also called the 'social-mediated dialogue' between the organisations in crisis and their publics (Cheng, 2020). Developed by Austin et al (2012), the SMCC is one of the first theoretical framework that describes the relationship between organisations, online and offline publics, social media, traditional media and word of mouth communication during crises (Cheng, 2020). The model does not explain crisis communication outside social media, which is why it is called the social-mediated crisis communication. However, this suggests that when dealing with crisis emerging from social media (Rees, 2020) or what Coombs and Holladay (2012: 408) term 'paracrisis', organisations should not neglect offline publics. Paracrisis might emerge from social media or online sources, and refers to 'visible crisis threats that charge an organisation with irresponsible or unethical behaviour' (Coombs & Holladay, 2012: 409).

Traditional theories on crisis communication may not 'adequately represent the social media context' (Roshan et al., 2016: 350). Therefore, the SMCC helps crisis managers to understand how social media delivers crisis responses and information to the public (Coombs & Holladay, 2010; Austin et al., 2012; Coombs, 2012). It is essential to note that this study considers how PR practitioners in Botswana disseminate information and interact with stakeholders on Facebook, but there are many other platforms and social media channels that practitioners use to disseminate information (Sellnow & Seeger, 2013). The reason this study examines Facebook is because of its popularity in Botswana (Masilo & Seabo, 2015; Cornelius, et al., 2019; Mosweu & Ngoepe, 2019). Research shows that Twitter appeals more to the elites and journalists, while 'Facebook can reach the general public' (Ross et al., 2018: 2527). As such, considering a platform that the masses access, offers an opportunity for this study to provide reliable results from a holistic representation of crisis communication in Botswana.

Furthermore, as explained in chapter 2, the SMCC model identifies three types of publics that organisations should give attention on Facebook. These are the influential social media creators (who create crisis information and share it on social media); the social media followers (who consume influential social media creators crisis information); and the inactive who consume influential social media creators information through offline word of mouth (Austin et al., 2012; Zhu et al., 2017). These audiences consume crisis information before, during and after the crisis. It seems the influential social media creators are the most critical participants because they provide issue favourable opinion leadership, satisfying the followers informational and emotional needs, and they 'affect media coverage by setting crisis issue agenda' (Zhu et al., 2017:488). These are some of the stakeholders that organisations mainly produce information for, and practitioners need to understand their needs to gain their trust and empathy during a crisis. The SMCC model proposes that there must be a relationship between these three audiences and the organisation.

Several studies have used the SMCC model to illuminate crisis communication in different contexts. Among them, Liu et al (2016) used the SMCC to explore how information form and source influence intended behaviour responses during a disaster and found that participants preferred both offline and online organisational communication. Austin et al (2012) explored how audiences seek information from social media and found that audiences use social media for insider information during a crisis and for checking in with family and

friends. Cheng (2020) investigated how organisations in China relate with their publics by characterising social media and how it affects dialogue between organisations and their publics.

3.3. Two-way symmetric model

To fill the gap left by the SCCT, and SMCC in this research, Grunig and Hunt (1984)'s two-way symmetric model emphasises mutuality between organisations and their publics, especially in their online and offline interactions. The dialogical nature of social media or online platforms explains the two-way symmetric model in crisis communication. The two-way symmetric model also explains offline communication beyond social media, on platforms such as the traditional media and the town hall style meetings, through institutions like the *kgotla* in Botswana.

Research shows that public relations should have an interactive rather than a manipulative relationship with its publics (Grunig, 1990). The predominant worldview of public relations is based on the asymmetric public relations (persuasion of the public) which focuses only on the interests of the organisation. The asymmetrical model assumes that organisations should manipulate their publics to achieve their objectives. This assumption creates a win-lose situation for organisations against publics. The symmetric model is ethical, socially responsible, and excellent public relations (Grunig, 1990: 20). However, the two-way symmetric model departs from this belief that public relations manipulate the public for the benefit of the organisation (Grunig & Hunt, 1984; Grunig, 1990; Gonzalez-Herrero & Pratt, 1996). Therefore, the two-way symmetrical model is an alternative worldview to public relations. It emphasises PR practitioners as mediators between the organisation and the publics, and that if the organisation manipulates the publics, the same audiences can also manipulate the organisation, with mutual understanding as a common goal to change attitudes and behaviours (Grunig & Hunt, 1984: 22).

In the two-way symmetric model, research uncovers points of agreement between the organisation and its publics (Guiniven, 2002; Steyn et al., 2011). The model does not perceive communication as a monologue (only from organisations to publics) but looks at communication as a two-way street where power is distributed equally between the

organisation and the public (Steyn et al., 2011). In other words, the organisation disseminates information, and the publics responds.

Communication consists of dialogue rather than monologue and responses from 'publics coming as feedback' (Grunig & Hunt, 1984: 22). Several studies have found the two-way symmetric model as an exceedingly acceptable model to facilitate dialogue between the organisation and its publics (Gonzalez-Herrero & Pratt, 1996; Guiniven, 2002; Naude et al., 2004; Zoller, 2004; Taylor & Perry, 2005; Steyn et al., 2011). The interest of the organisation in crisis, is mutual understanding, dialogue and negotiating with the public during crises (Steyn et al., 2011). The two-way symmetrical model has mutuality because relationships are based on openness and free information sharing (Zoller, 2004).

However, while this study only focuses on the two-way symmetrical model, there has been criticism that Grunig & Hunt (1984) four models of PR represent a 'largely Western focused' view of public relations development (Macnamara, 2012: 370). The two-way symmetrical model has also been criticised for its disregard of power and contextual influence. Despite this criticism, the two-way symmetric model remains robust and ideal in non-western contexts, as demonstrated by Grunig et al (1995), whose intercontinental study found that the two-way symmetrical model was dominant in most organisations in non-western contexts and made up a continuum of excellent public relations. Through the two-way symmetrical model, the organisations engage stakeholders in conversations and then use their feedback to broker influence, giving public relations practitioners more power than their publics through a model that Grunig et al (1995) called personal influence model. The study also developed a cultural translator model where practitioners can rely on those who understand the culture to communicate in intercultural settings. As suggested by Sriramesh et al (1999: 277), public relations practitioners who use the two-way symmetrical model usually 'negotiate a mutually acceptable resolution to their conflicting interests.' As such, the model remains relevant even to contexts such as Botswana where the *kgotla* system serves a useful purpose for public relations practitioners to 'achieve consensus between the organisations and its publics' (Baines et al., 2004:7).

In this connection, the two-way symmetrical model reflects how management effectively responds to crises. As suggested by Gonzalez-Herrero & Pratt (1996), one of the best ways to

avoid negative media coverage or its occurrence is to engage in symmetric communication. The internet provides organisations in crisis with both the 'one-way and two-way tools to communicate with their publics' (Taylor & Perry, 2005: 210). As indicated earlier, organisations can respond to public comments on social media sites or in public meetings or engage the media in a dialogue during press conferences. This model recommends best practices for practitioners, as shown in Figure 3.2:

Pre-crisis

Proactively search for potential problems

Engage in long term mutually beneficial dialogue and socially responsible activities

Conduct symmetrical communciation to avert development of issues

Re-emphasise balanced relationships with publics

Crisis Stage

Use negotiations, dialogue and bargaining to establish relationships with publics

Inform internal publics about symmetrical communication with external publics

Implement crisis plan that is based on symmetrical communication to minimise impact on publics and organisations

Communicate constantly and vigorously with constituencies about actions being taken to respond to crisis

Post crisis

Continue demonstrating concern and interest in solving the problem

Bring the media and publics up to date on organisational action

Develop long term symmetrical communication program to address fall out from crisis

Figure 3.2: Best practices in the two-way symmetric model adapted from Herrero & Pratt (1996)

During crises, social media platforms become information sources and communication channels, and they generally allow two-way communication between individuals, groups, organisations and authorities (Ross et al., 2018). Valuable information can be generated and shared on social media as 'messages, pictures, videos, sharing locations, giving likes or other reactions to original posts' (Ross et al., 2018:2526). Dialogue empowers publics to have a voice and open conversations with the organisation during a crisis, further cementing their relationship and mutual understanding. Social-mediated crisis communication becomes meaningful if it facilitates open dialogue between the organisation and its publics (du Plessis, 2018). While social media has increased more interaction between the organisation and its publics during a crisis, it has also 'increased their vulnerability' (Roshan et al., 2016: 350). Therefore, as organisations open this free flow of information, they must be seen as doing it out of goodwill and not selectively communicating their crisis messages. The organisations

that fail to engage in these open discussions with their publics might be seen as hiding something (Fern-Banks, 2011).

Several studies have examined how social media disseminates information during a crisis. For example, Ross et al (2018) examined how crisis-related information should be published on Facebook to reach as many people as possible by studying terrorist attacks in Berlin, London and Stockholm. The researchers collected posts about these events, shares, likes and emotional reactions and used a regression analysis to capture decisions on which information to publish and how. Additionally, earlier research examined how organisations engage their publics on social media and that they even respond to their comments (Rybalko & Seltzer, 2010), while contemporary studies have demonstrated how publics use Twitter hashtags to amplify their stories during emergencies (Lee et al, 2022). The results of earlier research confirmed the importance and applicability of dialogue to online communication. As such, PR practitioners ought to engage publics on social media and listen to them.

In sum, the two-way symmetric model contributes to organisational effectiveness and might guide any crisis communication research. Exploring these theoretical models (SCCT, SMCC and two-way symmetrical) in this study is significant because they help to explain the extent of their relevance and applicability to crisis communication practice in Botswana. In other words, each of these theories help to explore a crisis communication dimension. The SCCT helps to develop an understanding of how PR practitioners in Botswana select the crisis response strategies to manage emergencies. The SMCC helps to develop an understanding of how information is disseminated in social media and whether organisations in Botswana engage in social-mediated dialogue with their publics. The two-way symmetrical model helps explore how PR practitioners in Botswana facilitate online and offline dialogue with their publics.

3.4. Summary of chapter 3

- The situational crisis communication model, social-mediated crisis communication, and the two-way symmetric model underpin this study to illustrate crisis communication in Botswana.

- The SCCT helps PR practitioners to select appropriate crisis response strategies depending on crisis types.
- The SMCC helps crisis managers to understand how social media delivers crisis responses and information to the public.
- The two-way symmetric model considers communication as a two-way street where power is distributed equally between the organisation and their publics.

CHAPTER 4: Philosophical assumptions and methodology

Chapter 2 has shown that crises are real. We live in a complex environment characterised by emergencies that might potentially subject organisations and the publics to the highest degree of uncertainty (Falkheimer & Heide, 2006). Chapter 3 indicated that research methods do not 'exist in isolation from theory, models and socio-political concerns' (Hansen & Machin, 2013:1). As illustrated in Figure 4.1, this chapter describes the philosophical assumptions, paradigms, methodological approaches, and ethical considerations underpinning this study to answer the following research questions:

RQ1: To what extent do the established PR theories such the situational crisis communication theory, social mediated crisis communication model and the two-way symmetrical model apply to crisis communication practice in Botswana?

RQ2: What are the characteristics of crisis messages on Facebook among publics and organisations in Botswana?

RQ3: How do organisations use Facebook to disseminate crisis messages in Botswana?

RQ4: What is the role of language in crisis messages shared by PR practitioners on Facebook?

RQ5: How are power relations exercised and negotiated in Facebook posts about the Botswana Development Fengyue glass project and the Botswana Railways crisis?

RQ6: To what extent does culture influence crisis communication on Facebook in Botswana?

As discussed in chapter 2, crisis communication research lacks systematic knowledge for global applicability because most of the scholarship is Western-authored (Wasserman & Hyde-Clarke, 2016; George & Kwansah-Aidoo, 2017; Lehmberg & Hicks, 2018). Extant literature indicates that most crisis communication research relies on case studies and a functionalist approach to public relations. Few studies use critical realism despite varying cultural and global contexts in which crises occur. There is consensus among scholars that research in public relations 'should not be discussed or understood in isolation from the theories, models and socio-political concerns' (Hansen & Manchin, 2013:2).

This research adopts a critical realist approach, and this chapter explains the ontological and epistemological reasons informing this decision. Crisis communication manifests differently across cultural contexts. As such, this study has identified critical realism as an appropriate

paradigm that combines methodologies to provide what researchers call a comprehensive worldview of the realities (Ivankova et al., 2006; Scotland, 2012; Peters et al., 2013; Dieronitou, 2014; Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017). The suggestion to employ such an approach is supported by Curtin (2012), who argues that public relations theory and practice would benefit from a paradigm that embraces more methods than one unique approach.

First, this chapter illuminates philosophical assumptions (what we believe to be the object of study, ontology, and how we know it, epistemology). Second, the focus shifts to describing how philosophical assumptions inform the choice of a research paradigm, namely, critical realism to underpin this study. Third, it highlights how critical realism informs methodological choices (how we study phenomena). Lastly, it describes the ethical considerations in this research.
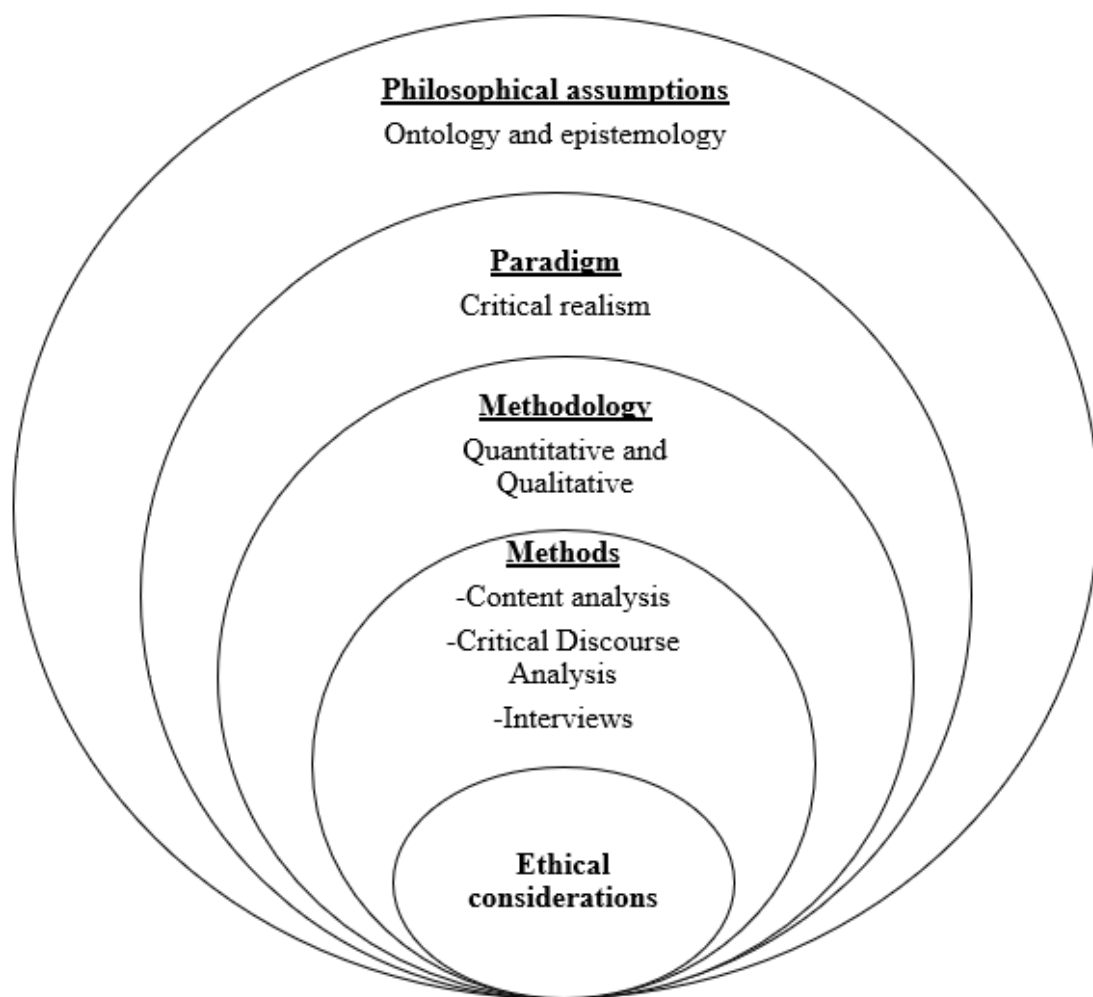
Figure 4.1: Outline of chapter 5

4.1. Ontological and epistemological assumptions

Ahead of the methodological discussions, it is essential to understand the ontological and epistemological underpinnings of this study. As suggested by Kivunja & Kuyini (2017: 27), paradigms guide a research worldview that proceeds from 'ontology, what we believe to be the object of study, to epistemology, how we know it'. This research ontologically investigated crises (as an object of study) by epistemologically using several methods that help to understand this reality. Ontology is concerned with what constitutes reality (Gunter, 2000; Curtin, 2011; Treadwell, 2011; Scotland, 2012). In other words, it has to do with the 'what' in research. Ontology can also be viewed as a branch of philosophy concerned with the assumptions that underpin the researcher's 'belief in the existence of social phenomena under investigation' (Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017: 27). Furthermore, ontology considers the fundamental nature of concepts, basic categories, and themes to be analysed to make sense of the meaning in research data. This study developed categories and themes (Appendix 2 and 3) from the Facebook posts about the BDC and BR crises (What) and subjected them to detailed content analysis to make sense of these situations. Put differently, the quantitative content analysis counted the frequency of these categories and variables (numbers) on the Facebook posts and interpreted the statistical data to provide meaningful knowledge of the BDC and BR crises.

Ontologically, this study also considered the existence of organisational crises and what the language that PR practitioners used on Facebook meant (What). In the case of this project, crises affecting local and international organisations operating in Botswana, as exemplified by the BDC and BR exigencies, might become difficult for untrained practitioners to control when reported on social media (for example, Facebook). PR practitioners used language to construct meanings when they interacted with their audiences on Facebook, and this language requires academic analysis to decode. As suggested by Easton (2010:119), one of the fundamental tenets of critical realism is that researchers can use 'language to describe the world.' At the start of this study, the researcher took for granted the role of language and how public relations practitioners use it to persuade their publics to inhibit them from challenging their organisations. The BDC and BR crises occurred and threatened the reputations of these organisations and the way they were reported on Facebook and how PR practitioners responded produced positive outcomes. After engaging with research on critical realism, the researcher realised the need to examine the way PR practitioners used language to dominate and persuade

their audiences, a blind spot that this study redresses. As such, this study explored the ontological questions which deal with the nature of existence and what it is that language meant, in essence, it posed the question; do organisational crises exist in Botswana, or is this something 'constructed in the researcher's mind?' (Kivunja and Kuyini, 2017:27).

Furthermore, these ontological assumptions then inform epistemological beliefs to progress this study beyond the existence of the BDC and BR crises and what is known as a version of reality, to the actual process of describing how we understand those realities and what counts as knowledge in the world (Falkheimer & Heide, 2006; Alakwe, 2017; Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017). In this study, what is known as a version of reality is the occurrence of the BDC and BR crises and their examination on Facebook through a content analysis, critical discourse analysis and insights from PR practitioners, which count as knowledge. The way these case studies will be examined shall be discussed later in this chapter. As such, this study embraced the methods rooted in epistemology to 'provide answers to what, how and why' (Treadwell, 2011:29). Put differently, the methodological choices answered what the quantitative and qualitative data meant.

4.2. The paradigm of critical realism

As explained earlier, every paradigm is based upon ontological and epistemological assumptions, which are 'conjecture' (Scotland, 2012: 9) and 'a matter of faith as their truthfulness cannot be empirically proven or disproven' (Curtin, 2011:41). Paradigms have different assumptions and knowledge which underpin research approaches (Scotland, 2012). However, this chapter does not delve into paradigmatic debates, but will describe how critical realism underpins this research, and how it informs methodological choices and ethical considerations.

The critical realist posits that the material world is real but that social conditioning impacts 'significantly our knowledge of this reality' (Alakwe, 2017:39). This approach holds that 'reality is constructed through the interaction between language and aspects of an independent world' (Scotland, 2012: 13). Its ontological position is 'historical realism' (Peters et al., 2013:338) which views reality as 'shaped by social, political, cultural, economic, ethnic and gender issues' (Scotland, 2012: 13). Put differently, critical realism sees reality as the

construction of a 'hegemonic imposition of ideologies', and the goal of the research is to 'uncover the ideologies inherent in political and economic structures' (Curtin, 2011:35). The fact that language is an 'irreducible part of social life' (Fairclough, 2003:2) and the purpose of the research is 'to emancipate' (Scotland, 2012:13), bolstered the suggestion that language should be considered in research, which is the case in this project. Epistemologically, the critical paradigm is one of subjectivity (Scotland, 2012). To this end, leveraging the strengths of critical realism solidified the worldview of this research because it accommodates research methodologies underpinned by 'epistemology and ontological nuances' (Dieronitou, 2014:2).

Critical realism recognises that 'multiple levels and modes of engagement exist between the knower and the known' (Peters et al., 2013: 338). Put differently, critical realism favours methods such as critical discourse analysis (CDA) and semi-structured interviews (Scotland, 2012). It also embraces interpretivist methods such as 'case studies in undertaking organisational research' (Peters et al., 2013: 338). Hence this study deploys content analysis to inform CDA to examine power relations in the language PR practitioners used in the BDC and BR crises messages on Facebook. CDA then underpins the interviews with senior PR practitioners to explain why they respond the way they do on Facebook. In other words, this methodological positioning moves away from quantitative data (realities and their categories) to examine qualitative data (the knowledge of how the types of crisis messages disseminated on Facebook are consumed based on power relations between organisations, PR practitioners as representatives of companies, and the publics). This is to say the quantitative data is collected and analysed first, and then the qualitative data are collected and analysed to 'provide explanations or elaborate the quantitative data' (Ivankova et al., 2006:5). This increases the worldview of this research through multidisciplinary foci. Critical realism accommodates the mixed-method approach because it 'incorporates the kind of work done by positivists and interpretive researchers' (Deacon et al., 1999: 11). This reciprocity gives rise to schools of thought that ontological assumption informs epistemological ones and determines research methodologies, instrumentation, and data collection (Dieronitou, 2014).

4.3. Selecting the media and sample

Before discussing the research design, it is essential to describe the process used to select a sample for this study. The organisations and senior PR practitioners (Appendix 6) mentioned

in this study are from Botswana's public and private sectors. The organisations, the BDC and BR operate as state-owned enterprises (SOE) in Botswana. As explained in chapter 1, parastatal organisations are semi-autonomous state-owned enterprises run by chief executive officers and a board of directors (Adam, 2014). They exist outside the hierarchies of the government departments and ministries, despite their board of directors reporting to Ministers and their permanent secretaries in the parent ministries.

Every research involves sampling because not everything and everyone can be studied (Punch, 2005). Therefore, this section describes the sampling plan for this study. As explained previously, the study preferred Facebook over other social media channels because it is more accessible and popular in Botswana. Crisis communication research is biased towards the use of Twitter in social media analytics despite the platform appealing mainly to the elites and journalists and not the general public (Ross et al., 2018). Botswana has more Facebook users than Twitter (Figure 1.1, chapter 1). This has led to more politicians, government, the media and private organisations using Facebook to reach their publics (Masilo & Seabo, 2015). This study inclines more towards how organisations communicate with the general publics, not a certain section of the population. As such, it uses a media that has more public reach. Despite its strict access policies on data mining and analysis, the study rides against the tide to use Facebook. The two organisations, BDC and BR, were conveniently selected because of their proximity to what Punch (2005:101) calls the 'context and purpose of research.' Their context is more relevant to crisis communication research. The BDC and BR are nationally recognised and well-established organisations that experienced real crises that threatened their reputation. Additionally, their crises as reported on Facebook were national and memorable events in Botswana. The BDC crisis is management misconduct (transgression) situated in the preventable cluster suggested by Coombs and Holladay (1996; 2002). The BR crisis occupies two groups in the same cluster: the accidental (equipment failure) and the preventable (human error accident). Therefore, the choice of these organisations as case studies provides richer perspectives to the study.

The sample from the BDC crisis is from 1 November 2011 to 31 December 2019. The BR crisis sample was selected between 10 December 2019 and 31 June 2020. The choice of these dates relates to 'a specific time-limited event' (Hansen & Manchin, 2013:94) that maps these crises. The Government of Botswana started sharing information about the BDC crisis on

Facebook on the 23rd of November 2011, while the BR crisis was communicated on the 10th of December 2019, the same day of the accident. The BDC crisis dates are broader because the crisis dragged for the longest on Facebook and kept resurfacing during party political campaigns. In other words, Facebook perpetuated the crisis because it allowed anyone to say what they want at any time. As Rees (2020:107) asserted, 'anyone with a smartphone can share information of emerging events as they unfold.' As such, the dates for the BDC crisis are broader to increase the sample size. As suggested by Gunter (2000:66), the broader sample helps to reduce the 'possibility of unrepresentative sample increasing.' Additionally, the larger sample size increases 'the more confidence one can have in its representativeness' (Deacon et al., 1999: 42).

As explained earlier, the selection of the BDC and BR crises as case studies is strategic for this research because they were major, unique and significant events in Botswana. The BDC and BR are well known organisations in Botswana because they are state-owned and have well established public relations departments. Additionally, these emergencies are useful in this study because they affected organisations that in the words of Morehouse (2021:215) 'perform the dual function of being sufficiently unique to evoke comparisons and sufficiently universal to evoke identification.' The selection of these case studies was not random. This research employed a purposive case selection process that Seawright & Gerring (2008: 299) call the 'typical case' because of its focus on small size cases studies that 'exemplifies a stable and cross-case relationship.' In other words, the typical case selection may be considered representative because the case studies represent phenomena that researchers 'explore for causal mechanisms at work in a general, cross-case relationship' (Seawright & Gerring, 2008: 299). While it is true that there might be selection bias in choosing case studies purposively, this might be overcome by the important contribution purposive selection makes to the 'inferential process by enabling researchers to choose appropriate cases, which may be either `quantitative or qualitative' (Seawright & Gerring, 2008:298).
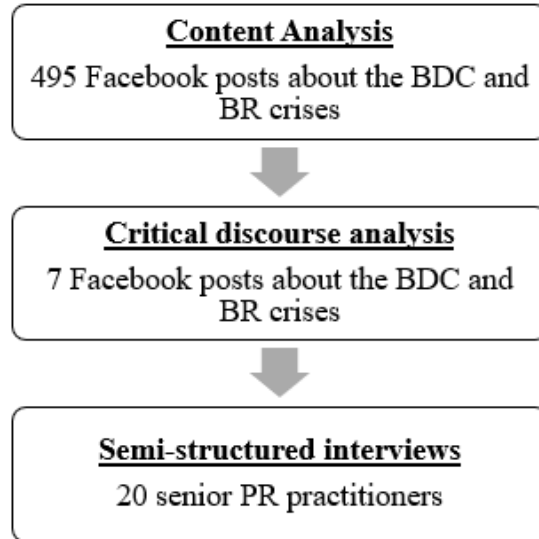
Figure 4.2: Sample size from a triangulated research design

Figure 4.2 indicates that the content analysis of Facebook posts, from various sources, on the BDC/Fengyue Glass Project and BR passenger train accident crises examined a combined total of 495 posts. These included 290 posts about the BDC crises, and 205 about the BR passenger train accident. It is not easy to tell how many posts were deleted or were missing during these crises because of the challenges of information retention and management on Facebook, where 'one moment a post is available on social media and the next moment it disappears' (Mosweu & Ngoepe, 2019: 1). In this connection, information retention of Facebook made it difficult to tell how many posts were missing or deleted. However, this does not impact the findings of this robust study.

For CDA, the analysis focused on a sample of 7 posts (see Appendix 5a-5g) from the Government of Botswana's Facebook page called *BWgovernment.* These include 4 Facebook posts between 1 November 2011 and 31 of December 2017 during the BDC crisis, and 3 Facebook posts between 10 December 2019 and 31 June 2020 for the BR crisis. These Facebook posts were selected from a content analysis sample which identified the crisis response strategies and linguistic features that PR practitioners used during the BDC and BR emergencies, as well as from posts with observed ideology and corporate values that crisis managers propagated about their organisations. As suggested by Machin and Mayr (2012), the selection of a sample should depend on whether the researcher observed an ideology and the types of linguistic features used to propagate it persuasively. While this sample might seem small, its selection was not arbitrary, but informed by research. This justifies the reasons for

using CDA to decode the Facebook posts because it often 'involves the analysis of a small number of texts, even of just one or two' (Machin and Mayr, 2012: 207). As such, the study examined the linguistic features (Appendix 5) in both crises and how PR practitioners used their organisations to propagate their corporate ideology. To this end, this data complemented the quantitative findings, and is a 'representative sample' (Hansen & Manchin, 2013:93). Considering Facebook posts in this analysis proved helpful because they are a domain in the organisational discourse. Their linguistic features helped chart the balance and imbalance of power during these corporate exigencies (Jacobs, 1999).

Finally, 20 senior PR practitioners (Appendix 6) were selected to share their insights and experiences using the semi-structured interviews. The practitioners were initially identified through convenient sampling (Deacon et al., 1999), and were willing to participate when earlier contacted to test the waters. Most of the PR practitioners chosen through convenient sampling were from established government and private organisations with PR departments and a Facebook presence. None of the participants was responsible for the Facebook posts in the 2011 and 2019 crises. When their numbers could not reach the required sample size of 20 participants, a snowball sampling technique (Krippendorff, 2004; Cohen & Arieli, 2011) was deployed. This is where the participants recommended names of those who could participate in the study. Their explanations are helpful because this research is situated within the realms of critical realism which prefers ontologically holistic explanations of what, how and why things are the way they are (Kurki, 2007: 366).

4.4. Sequential mixed method design

Media and communication research shows that several methods can often 'achieve more and better illumination of a research problem than a single method' (Hansen & Manchin, 2013:6). In fact, the quantitative data cannot, on its own, 'capture the richness of data since statistical data miss contextual details, style, approach, tone, emotional impact and drama' (Thomas, 2016:89). Put differently, quantitative data is not all-encompassing which is why it must be combined with other methods to provide a richer perspective.

Mixed-method approach sequential design

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┌──────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│ Content analysis of the BDC crisis (July 2011-December 2019) │ ⎤
└──────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┘ ⎥  Quantitative
                          ⬇                                    ⎥
┌──────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐ ⎥
│ Identification of key themes and Facebook variables (BDC crisis) │ ⎦
└──────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┘
                          ⬇
┌──────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐ ⎤
│ Application of critical discourse analysis (CDA) on Facebook │ ⎥  Qualitative
│                posts about BDC crisis                        │ ⎦
└──────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┘
                          ⬇
┌──────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐ ⎤
│ Content analysis of the BR crisis (December 2019- June 2020) │ ⎥
└──────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┘ ⎥  Quantitative
                          ⬇                                    ⎥
┌──────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐ ⎥
│ Identification of key themes and Facebook variables (BR crisis) │ ⎦
└──────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┘
                          ⬇
┌──────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐ ⎤
│ Application of critical discourse analysis (CDA)on Facebook posts │ ⎥
│                      (BR crisis)                             │ ⎥
└──────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┘ ⎥  Qualitative
                          ⬇                                    ⎥
┌──────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐ ⎥
│ Application of semi-structured interviews with senior PR     │ ⎥
│ practitioners on key themes from content analysis and CDA    │ ⎦
└──────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┘
                          ⬇
┌──────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│ Discussions of the findings of content analysis, CDA and semi- │
│                  structured interviews                       │
└──────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┘
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Figure 4.3: Sequential mixed-method design adapted from Tashakkori & Teddlie (1998) and Thomas (2016)

Methodologically, this chapter describes how the content analysis of Facebook posts (What) about the BDC and BR crises (Who) from 2011-2019 and 2019-2020, respectively (When), examine categories and variables of these corporate crises (How). The content analysis findings informed the CDA of the two organisations' Facebook posts to examine the language practitioners used during these emergencies (How). The findings of CDA then informed the semi-structured interviews with senior PR practitioners to provide explanations and insights

into how and why they respond the way they do on Facebook (How and Why). The research design is illustrated in Figure 4.3.

The study used the mixed-method approach to collect and analyse the quantitative and qualitative data to answer the research questions. This approach has become firmly embedded in mainstream research (Armitage, 2007). As most researchers concur, neither the quantitative nor the qualitative methods are sufficient to 'provide a great perspective of the situation' (Ivankova et al., 2006:3). However, bringing these approaches together is not a haphazard procedure. Hansen & Manchin (2013) point out that these approaches can be combined in any of the following ways: facilitation (using them at separate stages of the research, with one informing the other), triangulation (increasing reliability and validity of findings by using several methods to illuminate the same phenomenon), and complementarity (using different methods to examine aspects of the research question and not necessarily in the same concrete empirical domain). As such, triangulation, which this study used to combine the quantitative and qualitative approaches, involves 'combining data sources to study the same phenomenon' (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998:41).

Figure 4.3 shows that this research is a mixed-method exploratory sequential design, with the quantitative approach informing the qualitative approach (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998; Ivankova et al., 2006; Thomas, 2016). In the quantitative/qualitative (QUAN/QUAL) sequence, the researcher starts with the 'quantitative method and then proceeds with a follow up qualitative study' (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998: 46). In this design, the quantitative data was collected and analysed first, and the results were used to design or build a qualitative phase of the research. The reason for this approach was that quantitative data could not provide a more comprehensive understanding of the research problem. Qualitative data explained the statistical data through critical discourse analysis of the language used by PR practitioners on Facebook during crises, and an in-depth examination of the participants' insights and experiences (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998; Ivankova et al., 2006). Put differently, the content analysis results informed the use of CDA and semi-structured interviews. It is important to note that content analysis generated the statistical data; CDA examined language and power relations in crisis messages; and interviews explored the PR practitioners' insights and experiences of crisis communication in Botswana.

There are differences between these approaches. The quantitative approach rested on 'measurement, research questions, conceptual framework and design, and its sample is larger than in qualitative research' (Punch, 2005:237). In other words, the quantitative approach enabled standardised and objective comparisons from the data. The content analysis findings are more easily replicable than qualitative data (Hansen et al., 1998; Punch, 2005). On the other hand, qualitative methods are more flexible and suited to investigating real-life situations and the insider's perspective 'to provide a thick description' (Punch, 2005:328). In this way, it seems mixed methods are hugely beneficial to this study. They are superior to single methods and provide a more robust inference and in-depth insights into complex phenomena to provide a rich insight to research (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998). The next section offers justifications for using content analysis, CDA and interviews.

4.4.1. Quantitative content analysis

As explained earlier, the study deployed content analysis as one of the methods to examine crisis communication in Botswana. It is a technique that endeavours for the objective, systematic, replicable, and quantitative description of communication symbols (Deacon et al., 1999; Berger, 2011; Dieronitou, 2014). As a quantitative method whose purpose is to identify and count occurrences of specified characteristics of text, content analysis can 'say something about the messages, images, representations of such texts and their social significance' (Hansen & Manchin, 2013:89). Scholars in media research define content analysis as a systematic procedure devised to examine the content of recorded information or communication content (Hansen et al., 1998; Gunter, 2000).

Another reason content analysis was used in this study is because it helped to deconstruct Facebook posts about the BDC and BR crises into constituent parts. In other words, these component parts were counted and interpreted to 'examine which ones co-occur, for what purpose and their implication' (Hansen et al., 1998: 95). Additionally, the content analysis examined how PR practitioners in Botswana engaged with the publics on Facebook during these two emergencies. Coding manuals (Appendix 2 and 3) were developed to guide the counting of categories and features that must be identified from a body of Facebook content. The frequency of categories and variables, identified and defined in these coding manuals, were counted from the *BWgovernment* Facebook posts.

Content analysis also helped to count the frequency of pictures and videos to better understand how Facebook is used for crisis communication in Botswana. This might serve as a benchmark for future research on crisis communication in non-western contexts. Moreover, the technique was inexpensive and comparatively easier to obtain data from the past without depending on 'fallible memory or interfering with people's lives and as such posing no ethical problems' (Bertrand & Hughes, 2005: 177). Furthermore, it proved helpful for large amounts of data for quantification and comparison (Bertrand & Hughes, 2005). Data from Facebook was too large to handle outside content analysis. In other words, it was convenient for the data collection on Facebook, a process that could have been difficult through other methods.

4.4.2. Defining key categories and variables

As a technical method, content analysis required that the categories of classification and analysis be cleared and 'operationally defined so that other researchers can follow them reliably' (Berger, 2011:206). Some of these categories and variables were adapted from Ross et al (2018) in their empirical analysis of Facebook reactions. Therefore, the use of content analysis to examine the role of Facebook during crises in Botswana was underpinned by Ross et al (2018).

The coding manuals (Appendix 2 and 3) introduced variables and categories emerging from posts on Facebook homepage of the *BWgovernment* (a Facebook page owned and managed by the Government of Botswana). The manuals identified and defined these categories as well as the variables and examples of how they could be identified in Facebook posts. These variables and categories explained how organisations and stakeholders communicated during these crises. Specific categories helped identify posts that do not exist on *BWgovernment* Facebook pages but only appeared on the audiences' timelines.

The categories and variables were developed during a piloting stage involving coding, re-coding, and refining about 50 Facebook posts generated during the BDC and BR crises. During this stage, many variables were identified and grouped into specific categories. Some categories were marked 'Choose one per post,' 'Not Applicable,' while others are marked 'Choose Yes or No.' Facebook posts were manually searched across Facebook and screenshots taken. All posts mentioning the BDC and the BR train accident were included. Those omitted

were either missing, deleted, appeared on inaccessible private Facebook Groups, or not written with keywords used to search for the posts. The coding sheets (Appendix 2a and 3a) were then developed using the categories and variables from the coding manuals to guide the data collection.

4.4.3. Inter-coder reliability testing

Ahead of a detailed content analysis of the BDC and BR crises, the researcher conducted an intercoder reliability test (Appendix 4) to provide meaningful and trustworthy results. It was necessary for this research to determine whether the measurement could be reproduced over time in different settings by different coders and whether there was agreement, or not, among the coders. To achieve this, two inter-coders[2] (Appendix 4a and 4b), were approached to analyse a sample of 50 Facebook posts about the BDC crisis and 50 Facebook posts about the BR accident. The sample amounted to 20% of the total sample of 495 Facebook posts about these two case studies. The inter-coders were given the coding manuals. Each coder worked independently, and the name of the other coder was kept confidential to minimise chances of collaboration or cooperation. [3] Since there were two coders working with nominal data, the best approach for assessing the inter-coder reliability was to use a conventional method to calculate observed agreement from the coders (Appendix 4c, 4d, 4e) and find the pair's average using Percentage Agreement and Cohen's Kappa (Appendix 4d).

One of the advantages of using Cohen's Kappa is that it reduces the ratings of the two coders to a single number (Warrens, 2014). However, the Percentage Agreement and Cohen's Kappa have limitations. The Percentage Agreement does not correct for chance agreement between the coders. It is overly liberal (Freelon, 2010), while the Cohen's Kappa is too conservative and does not account for missing data (Krippendorff, 2004). The total number of coding decisions (N) was 25 variables (Appendix 4c). As such, the average pairwise Percentage Agreement for the three coders is 89.33% (Table 4.1), and these scores show an almost perfect or perfect agreement (Landis & Koch, 1977).

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[2] Bonny Apunyu and Zhennuo Evelyn Song from the Department of Media and Communication at Swansea University

[3] No payment was offered to the inter-coders, but the researcher offered support for their respective research work, should they require assistance.

Average Pairwise Percentage Agreement			
Average pairwise percentage agreement	Pairwise percentage agreement Coder 1 & 2	Pairwise percentage agreement Coder 1 & 3	Pairwise percentage agreement Coder 2 & 3
89.33%	88%	92%	88%
Average Pairwise Cohen's Kappa			
Average pairwise Cohen's Kappa	Pairwise Cohen's Kappa Coders 1 &2	Pairwise Cohen's Kappa Coders 1&3	Pairwise Cohen's Kappa Coders 2&3
0.806	0.772	0.828	0.817

Table 4.1: Intercoder reliability adapted from Freelon (2010:29)

The average pairwise percentage agreement scores were checked against Cohen's Kappa's alternative superior intercoder reliability coefficient because the percentage agreement has limitations. The method calculated agreement between coders using a statistical program called SPSS. In the same way, the pairwise Cohen's kappa was calculated between coder 1 and coder 2 (Appendix 4c), coder 1 and 3 (Appendix 4g) and coder 2 and 3 (Appendix 4h). The average of the 3 was 0.806 (Table 4.1). According to Landis & Koch (1977: 165), these scores show that the strength of agreement is substantial.

4.4.4. Content analysis of the BDC and BR crises

For purposes of this study, the Government of Botswana's official Facebook page (*BWgovernment*) was searched for posts about the BDC and the BR crises for two reasons. Firstly, the government communicated through this platform on behalf of these organisations during their emergencies. Secondly, the organisations' crises message on their Facebook pages also appeared on the *BWgovernment* page. Therefore, the searches on the BDC and the BR Facebook pages were excluded to avoid repetition. In this way, searching only on the *BWgovernment* Facebook pages helped to 'attain more conclusive findings' (Ki and Nekmat, 2014:143).

For the content analysis of the BDC crisis, the researcher manually reviewed the *BWgovernment* Facebook page for any post the organisations created and shared with their audiences about the crises. The unit of measurement was any Facebook post created and shared

by these organisations on *BWgovernment* page. Several keywords and phrases were run through the search function on Facebook to increase the chances of displaying more posts about the crisis. These keywords included 'BDC Fengyue Glass Manufacturing Project', 'BDC Fengyue Glass manufacturing', 'Botswana Development Corporation', 'BDC' and 'Fengyue glass project.' When the page displayed the Facebook posts about the crisis, the categories and variables from the coding sheet were identified and their frequency in each post counted and added into the coding sheet on the SPSS statistical program for analysis. A total of 290 posts about the BDC crisis were coded. For audience reactions, the same process was repeated using the exact keywords. This time, the researcher typed them into the main Facebook homepage to display the posts that audiences shared about the BDC crisis. Posts displayed on individual audience timelines and Facebook groups mentioning the BDC Fengyue glass project were reviewed and coded accordingly. The data was also input into SPSS for further analysis.

The exact process was repeated for the content analysis of the BR crisis. Facebook posts from the *BWgovernment* were reviewed and coded. At this stage, the keywords typed into the *BWgovernment* Facebook page search function included 'Botswana Railways', 'Botswana Railways train derailment', 'Botswana Railways passenger train derailment', 'Botswana Railways train accident', 'BR train accident', 'BR train derailment' and 'BR passenger train derailment.' More phrases were used to increase the chances of turning up more posts about this crisis.

Similarly, the unit of measurement was any single Facebook post that the organisation (Government of Botswana) created and shared about the 2019 BR passenger train accident. Posts that displayed BR passenger train accidents other than the 2019 accident were excluded. The posts that were displayed through these keywords were reviewed and coded accordingly. The data was input into SPSS for further analysis. For audience reactions, the same keywords were run on the Facebook homepage, and the results from individuals' timelines and Facebook groups were reviewed and coded accordingly. The data was input into SPSS. A total of 205 Facebook posts created by the organisations and the audiences about the BR crisis were coded.

The quantitative data was then analysed and interpreted for meanings. The findings then informed the choice of Facebook posts examined using critical discourse analysis (CDA) to determine how PR practitioners in Botswana used language to persuade their audiences during

the BDC and BR crises. The decision to deploy this method to complement the quantitative data supports the 'notion that content analysis and CDA share similar ontological underpinning for quantitative and qualitative approach' (Dieronitou, 2014:1).

4.4.5. Using CDA to examine language in Facebook posts

To address the concern of content analysis not 'exploring texts to develop ideas and insights' (Deacon et al., 1999: 117) as well as to complement the quantitative data, this chapter subjected the organisational Facebook posts to critical discourse analysis (CDA). The goal was to examine the role of language and how power relations were enacted, exercised and negotiated on Facebook posts during these situations.

As a precursor to explaining how this study deployed this approach, a description of CDA might provide a context. CDA is a form of linguistic analysis of media texts which gives attention to language as social interaction and as constitutive of social realities (Deacon et al., 1999; Gunter, 2000). Media texts are not facts about the world but ideas which must be explained through CDA (Gunter, 2000). This qualitative method examined PR practitioners' language on Facebook posts about the BDC and the BR crises.

CDA was used in this study because of its ability to show how language engages in 'social relations of power, domination and ideologies' (Punch, 2005:224). It is sensitive to how spoken and written language is used, how accounts and descriptions are constructed, and the complex processes for producing social meanings (Gunter, 2000; Punch, 2005). Additionally, CDA allows for a more systematic analysis of how PR practitioners used language choices to persuade people to believe their corporate values and ideologies while at the same time 'concealing their intentions' (Hansen & Manchin, 2013: 115). In this way, the approach helped to reveal power imbalances between the organisations and their publics through language use. This is because CDA views language as not powerful on its own but only through those who use it on those who are less powerful (Wodak, 2001; Fairclough, 2003; Hansen & Manchin, 2013). These benefits necessitated an approach such as CDA to examine the meanings of the language used in Facebook posts to complement the quantitative data to better understand crisis communication in Botswana.

As explained earlier, the 7 Facebook posts selected for critical discourse analysis represented a broader sample with identified crisis response strategies, linguistic features and observed corporate ideologies and values that PR practitioners used to persuade their publics to sympathise with the organisations. As such, this sample was not cherry picked to support a pre-determined narrative. Additionally, the most essential thing about the selection of these Facebook posts was not what the organisations said, but rather, to borrow from Thomas and Turnbull (2017:934), what mattered was 'where, when, why, by who and to whom' the messages were communicated.

Furthermore, these Facebook posts provided a representative sample and richer data to help understand the context, structures, and themes that played a role in the social relationships between the organisations and the stakeholders. The context of a corpus of secondary data consisting of comments (replies) made by audiences while interacting with these Facebook posts was considered to eliminate bias on the 'top-down relations of dominance than bottom-up relations of resistance' (van Dijk, 1993:250). These relations of dominance, especially the bottom-up relation of resistance, exist because social media has given more power to the publics to dominate and put organisations under unprecedented pressure (Hartley, 2019). Social media has also given wings to rumours that can spread at incredible speed, putting the organisation's reputation at risk (Fern-Banks, 2011).

As such, the study deployed Fairclough (1995)'s model of CDA to complement the quantitative data. As indicated earlier, the content analysis findings informed the choice of Facebook posts that were examined to determine how PR practitioners used language to persuade their audiences. CDA helped to unveil opaque ideological relations between Facebook posts and socio-cultural practices. According to Fairclough (1989; 1995), this model has three dimensions: text, interaction and social context (see Figure 4.4).

The context layer considered what Fairclough (1995) calls the intertextual relationships, broader societal currents, and more comprehensive economic and ideological circumstances influencing the text. Here, the analysis considered the latent ideology, socio-cultural practices, and economic circumstances influencing the production of Facebook posts during the BDC and BR crises. In other words, the analysis considered what the organisations said on Facebook, how they said it, and the extent of persuasion they intended to achieve through an

observed ideology. As explained earlier, what mattered the most at this stage, was not what the practitioners said but what in the words of Thomas & Turnbull (2017) what was said where, when, why, by whom and to whom.

Figure 4.4 shows three nested boxes with the following text:

Socio-cultural and ideological circumstances around the BDC and BR crises
(Context/ Macro level)

Circumstances of text production in BDC and BR crises
(Interaction/ Meso level)

Linguistic features in BDC and BR crises Facebook posts
(Micro level)
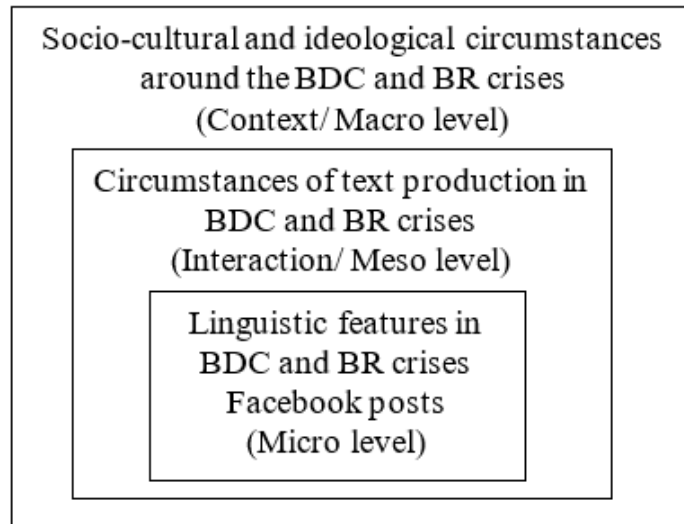
Figure 4.4: CDA three-dimensional framework adapted from Fairclough (1995)

The analysis then shifted to the meso level to consider discourse practice and circumstances of text production, consumption and how text enacts power relations (Fairclough, 1995). The study examined the circumstances influencing text production of the BDC and BR crises and the transmission of information to audiences. Facebook was the best route because of its popularity among the audiences in Botswana compared to Twitter and other social media channels. The analysis considered why the organisations used the ideology of economic development and crisis response strategies and how they influenced text production and its dissemination on Facebook.

Finally, the micro-level of text considered the syntax, structures, and linguistic devices (Fairclough, 1989; Fairclough, 1995; Behnam & Mahmoudy, 2013). This stage examined how the organisations used language to persuade Facebook audiences to sympathise with the organisations to reduce perceptions of crisis responsibility. The language analysis considered the types of linguistic devices (Appendix 5) that PR practitioners used in their Facebook posts to manipulate and dominate their audiences. Using CDA tools helped address criticisms that the approach fails to form any coherent methodology because its tools yield what is visible and better used with other methods (Hansen & Manchin, 2013).

Ahead of a detailed analysis in chapter 6, and as explained in chapter 2, it is essential to note that these linguistic devices include lexical choices, abstraction, functional honorifics and nomination. The lexical choices demonstrated how the government exerted authority and co-membership with audiences (Fairclough, 1995; Machin & Mayr, 2012) to promote a corporate ideology of economic development. Lexical choices also shape the readers' or listeners' interpretation of discourse (Poole, 2015). Abstraction then explained how the government used political language to obscure, generalise and conceal specific facts while promoting their narrative (Machin & Mayr, 2012). Lastly, functional honorifics and nomination demonstrated how the government used influential names and titles to assert legitimacy and power over the Facebook audiences to persuade and inhibit them from challenging the organisations in crisis. The findings from CDA informed the interviews with PR practitioners to parry criticisms that the approach lacks engagement with those who read and hear the texts to understand how they perceive it (Hansen & Manchin, 2013). In other words, the interviews complemented CDA to provide insights from the PR practitioners. In this way, the study can provide a detailed understanding of the production factors influencing how the PR practitioners develop Facebook messages.

4.4.6. Semi-structured interviews with PR practitioners

The qualitative data obtained from semi-structured interviews helped explain statistical data and findings of CDA through an in-depth examination of the senior PR practitioners' insights and experiences. As Dawson (2019) puts it, interviews are helpful when the researcher wants specific detailed information that can provide a comprehensive worldview of the problem. In this case, interviews helped to obtain in-depth information from the practitioners who are producers of the crisis messages on Facebook. The interviews became part of this research design because critical realism accommodates them (Gunter, 2000; Scotland, 2012) and they are combined with other methods (Gibson and Hua, 2016) to increase the worldview of research (Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017). In this study, the interviews provide further nuancing in the form of insights and experiences of PR practitioners on how they respond to crises and why they respond the way they do.

The researcher used his network contact list from his previous work experiences to recruit 20 senior PR practitioners in both the public and private sectors to participate in the interviews.

This decision was based on the practicality of recruiting such a large number of senior professionals in the midst of the Covid-19 pandemic. Reseach indicates that recruiting a large number of participants is something impossible to achieve (Gibson and Hua, 2016). The 20 participants (Appendix 6a) provided an appropriately sized sample within a multi-method research design. These participants were initially recruited through convenient sampling (Gibson and Hua, 2016; Treadwell, 2017). The researcher sent them emails requesting them to participate, but only a few responded expressing their interest. Since the recruitment process was conducted during the Covid-19 pandemic, there were challenges of access since some were working from home, or no longer working for the organisations. In this way, the researcher opened up the recruitment process for other PR practitioners to suggest names from their networks using the snowball sampling technique (Krippendorff, 2004; Cohen & Arieli, 2011).

The interviews were conducted through Zoom calls from September to October 2021. The participants were asked to switch off their cameras due to poor internet connectivity in Botswana. This was meant to enable a smooth environment where participants would not be cut off during the interviews. The researcher had also anticipated they might feel uncomfortable talking freely on cameras. As Gibson and Hua (2016:59) suggest, the face-to-face interviews might impact the interviewees' willingness 'to talk openly and honestly.' Additionally, asking them to switch off their cameras was part of granting them anonymity (Browne, 2005; Lancaster, 2015). For purposes of this study anonimity refers to keeping the names and the identities of the participants secret to protect them (Hansen & Manchin, 2013; Saunders et al., 2015). As such, this research maximised participants anonymity while 'maintaining the intergrity of the data' (Saunders et al., 2015: 616). This was particularly important because the participants were assured before hand that their identities would be protected. Besides, none of them wanted their names to be revealed. In choosing their pseudonyms, this study avoided names that could reveal their ethnicity and cultural background (Saunders et al., 2015). All the pseudonyms are in English. During the interviews, some of participants explicitly mentioned names of organisations, revealed positions of their supervisors and intimate information about their work which they would unlikely mentioned in public. As such, the names of their organisations and colleagues were reduced from the interview transcripts (Appendix 8). In the analysis, organisations were mentioned using general

terms such as 'parastatals', 'government ministry' or 'commercial bank' to avoid breaching anonymity.

However, while anonymity involves using pseudonyms and avoiding identifiable details such as 'occupation, location or demographic characteristics' (Ellersgaard et al., 2021:2), some researchers advocate for anonymity without losing contextuality (Saunders et al., 2015). This is why this study maintained the real work titles of the participants without making it easier for them to be identified or compromising the richness of the interview data. As suggested by Saunders et al., (2015), anonymising their work titles could risk undermining their insights and experience because these interviews gain significance from the lenses of their professional experience.' The risk of breaching anonymity was eliminated because PR work titles are almost the same across most organisations, and it would be difficult to identify them if their organisations' real names are not mentioned. For example, in government all senior PR practitioners are either referred to as 'Chief Public Relations officer' or 'Principal Public Relations Officers.' In the private sector, PR practitioners often have work titles coined around their communications role and other PR functions such as marketing and stakeholder relations, to mention a few. As such, identifying them through work titles does not compromise anonymity because they are not at the top echelons of power in their organisations or society, or what Ellersgaard et al (2021: 3-4) calls 'ultra elites' or 'professional elites' with whom masking would be a futile exercise since they would still be recognisable.

The Zoom interviews were recorded with the participants' permission to provide a written record that can be analysed in detail (Punch, 2005; Berger, 2011). Despite Zoom having its own transcription, recording was accompanied by 'note-taking in order to transcribe the data' (Punch, 2005: 176). The Zoom automatic transcripts were later re-checked for inconsistencies (Appendix 8). At some point, the transcripts did not match the recorded audio, probably due to Zoom missing some words or offering wrong words that were not uttered in the interviews. A series of decisions and judgments were made during the editing process because part of what the participants said was 'incoherent and repetitive in direct transcription' (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2018: 105).

Initially, there were 18 interview questions (See Appendix 6d) that were reduced to only seven (Appendix 6e) to mitigate the repetition of responses from the respondent. For example, a

question about the *kgotla* was removed because the researcher anticipated it would be mentioned as part of culture to reduce duplication of questions. This happened as anticipated and where the interview did not mention the *kgotla*, the question was asked as a follow up. The other reason was to give the interviewees sufficient time to articulate themselves, without the need to rush to other questions. As Gibson and Hua (2016:59) suggested, 'in-depth interviews require substantial time commitment lasting 60 to 90 minutes.' Put differently, dropping the other questions ensured that the interviews were completed within an hour, with an extension of 30 more minutes. Since most practitioners had indicated they were busy at work, some of the interviews were conducted in the evenings and weekends, depending on their availability. The data was then thematically analysed and coded using NVivo, which provided fruitful analysis with 'meaningful interactions between the researcher and the data' (Maher et al., 2018: 2). The NVivo summary report was printed and interpreted (Appendix 9), and the findings are outlined later in chapter 7.

4.5. Limitations of the study

Despite using mixed methods to examine crisis communication in Botswana, this study had a few limitations. Firstly, this research does not perform a test of how the practitioners in Botswana matched the crisis response strategies to the crisis types during the BDC and BR crises as suggested by Coombs and Holladay (1996; 2002). It only relied on their subjective explanations to conclude how most practitioners choose the response strategies during emergencies. This test could have helped contribute to global scholarship on how crisis response strategies are matched with crisis types in Botswana and Sub-Saharan Africa countries with similar cultures. As explained in chapter 1, there is no available crisis scholarship in Botswana guiding the PR practitioners on selecting and matching the crisis types to the response strategies.

Secondly, the study did not categorise the Facebook audiences into the three types of social media audiences (influencers, followers and inactives) suggested by Austin et al (2012). They were bundled together as either 'audiences', 'publics' or 'stakeholders.' Categorising them could have assisted this study to develop an understanding of who contributed more information during these crises, as a way of providing valuable insights to PR practitioners to know how best to interact with their publics. This would have enabled the researcher to ask

audience specific questions when interviewing PR practitioners to explain how they respond to their Facebook publics and their reasons for doing so.

Furthermore, the study did not explore the insights and perceptions of the chief executive officers (CEOs) of corporations in Botswana on the role of Facebook during crises. CEOs are essential players in crisis communication and often become spokespersons of their organisations during emergencies. They are gatekeepers for PR practitioners and decide on the choice of media and the outcome of crisis messages before they are shared with the publics. The findings of this study indicate that PR practitioners in Botswana are not empowered to communicate during crises, and that most of the decision making on the form of crisis messages to share with publics rests with their CEOs. This could have provided a deeper understanding of leadership and crisis communication on Facebook to equip practitioners with more insights when dealing with the Botswana and Sub-Saharan Africa crises. As such, the wisdom of CEOs could have complemented the experiences of PR practitioners to provide a detailed understanding of the extent of crisis communication in Botswana.

4.6. Ethical considerations

It must be noted that this research does not have ethical concerns. It adheres to the guidelines and ethical assessment framework set out by the Swansea University College of Arts and Humanities (COAH) Research Ethics Committee. The ethical approval form is attached as Appendix 1.

This research avoided sensitive topics that could cause embarrassment and emotional discomfort to the participants. Additionally, the study eliminated sensitive information that can cause physical harm and violate individual rights (Berger, 2011; Hansen & Manchin, 2013; Dawson, 2019). Such topics might impact the participants' 'willingness to talk openly and honestly' (Gibson and Hua, 2016:59). Moreover, the data collection and analysis methodologies, such as content analysis, CDA and semi-structured interviews, do not 'intrude into people's lives' (Punch, 2005: 276). The Facebook posts used for content analysis and CDA were already in the public domain and did not require individual or organisational consent. Only the information collected through the interviews required 'consent from the participants' (Punch, 2005:277). As such, all the participants received the information sheets (Appendix 6b)

to acquaint themselves with the requirements of the interviews and their rights before giving consent (Appendix 6c) ahead of the interviews.

In terms of data storage, all the information including interview video and audio recordings, SPSS analysis, coding sheets, and NVivo reports, were safely kept in password-protected locations (Swansea University OneDrive cloud, personal OneDrive cloud, memory sticks and personal computer password-protected folders). All the printed data was stored in locked cabinets that only the researcher can access.

In sum, this chapter outlined the ontological and epistemological assumptions underpinning this research. These worldviews informed the choice of critical realism to guide the selection of methodology. The choice of methods was not haphazard. The research is well triangulated to ensure 'several methods illuminate the same phenomenon' (Hansen and Machin, 2013: 6) and to provide a comprehensive worldview of organisational crisis communication in Botswana. The quantitative data informed CDA which also informed the interviews. Put differently, the content analysis data about the BDC and BR crises informed the choice of Facebook posts which were subjected to critical discourse analysis to determine how PR practitioners in Botswana used language during these emergencies and their reasons for doing so. The quantitative and qualitative data informed the interviews for senior PR practitioners to share their insights and experiences of how and why they communicate the way they do during emergencies. In hindsight, the interviews offered explanations for the quantitative and the first part of the qualitative data.

Lastly, the following chapters illuminate the extent of crisis communication in Botswana and the role of Facebook during emergencies. Chapter 5 outlines the quantitative findings from the content analysis of the BDC and BR crisis communication on Facebook. Chapter 6 complements the quantitative data by deploying CDA to examine how PR practitioners use language on Facebook during these emergencies. Chapter 7 supplements the quantitative and qualitative data through the insights and explanations of the senior PR practitioners in Botswana.

4.7. Summary of chapter 4

- This study embraced critical realism to inform the choice of mixed methodologies to provide a comprehensive worldview of crisis communication in Botswana.

- Critical realism favours qualitative methodologies such as CDA and interviews.

- The research used methodologies with similar ontological and epistemological underpinnings for quantitative methods to inform qualitative methods.

- Content analysis informed critical discourse analysis, which informed interviews with senior PR practitioners.

- A sample of 495 Facebook posts was analysed, with 290 posts about the BDC crisis from July 2011- to December 2019, while 205 Facebook posts were about the BR passenger train accident between December 2019 and June 2020.

- A total of 7 Facebook posts were subjected to CDA, with 4 for the BDC crises between November 2011 and December 2017, and 3 for the BR crises between December 2019 and June 2020.

- The study conducted 20 interviews with senior PR practitioners in Botswana.

CHAPTER 5: Findings of the crisis communication of the organisations

Chapter 4 explained that understanding the trends and characteristics of crisis communication in Botswana requires an operationalized content analysis of Facebook posts about the BDC and the BR passenger train accident crises. As explained earlier in Chapter 1 and 4, the choice of these two organisations is deliberate because as government SOEs, they are a perfect representation of both the public and private sectors in Botswana. Additionally, their emergencies were serious national events that received a lot of attention from stakeholders, political administration and the media. The content analysis examined Facebook posts made by these organisations and stakeholders, and this chapter uncovers the trends and characterises the way organisations communicate during crises in Botswana.

The analysis progresses to Chapter 6, which deals with themes emerging from the critical discourse analysis, and Chapter 7 evaluating the interviews with senior public relations practitioners in Botswana. This analysis shows that social media, especially Facebook, is popular among organisations and stakeholders, and they use it to disseminate crisis information in Botswana. This chapter describes trends from sources of Facebook posts; crisis response strategies used by the BDC and BR (with government as their central communication point); types of information sent by organisations and stakeholders; framing of the BDC and BR crises; nature of Facebook posts; stakeholder's reactions to crisis messages and dialogue between the BDC, BR, government and stakeholders.

5.1. Sources of Facebook posts during the BDC and BR crises

As explained in chapter 4, the content analysis of Facebook posts from various sources on the BDC and BR crises examined a combined total of 495 posts. There was a total of 290 Facebook posts about the BDC crises and 205 Facebook posts about the BR train accident. It is not easy to tell how many posts were deleted or are missing for the BDC crisis between July 2011 and December 2019, and how many were deleted or missing in the BR crisis sample between December 2019 and June 2020. The challenges of information retention and management on Facebook where 'one moment a post is available on social media and the next moment it disappears' (Mosweu & Ngoepe, 2019: 1) caused this difficulty.

The analysis begins with a focus on sources of Facebook posts during the BDC crisis to understand their contribution to the crisis communication efforts over a period spanning eight years. First, it is essential to note that the crisis dragged on for an extended period, and continued to generate more interest among stakeholders because it resurfaced and became a topical issue during the 2014 and 2019 Botswana General Elections.

Sources of Facebook Posts	Frequency	Percent
Botswana Development Corporation	1	0.3
Government of Botswana	26	9.0
Mmegi	30	10.3
The Business Weekly and Review Newspaper	3	1.0
Sunday Standard/Telegraph	3	1.0
The Botswana Gazette	1	0.3
Botswana Guardian	4	1.4
The Patriot on Sunday	1	0.3
Stakeholder/Publics	168	57.9
Alliance for Progressives	27	9.3
Other Facebook pages	23	7.9
Yarona FM News- The Real Story	3	1.0
Total	290	100.0

Table 5.1. Source of Facebook Posts for the BDC/Fengyue Glass Project crisis

Table 5.1 indicates that the total number of Facebook posts for the BDC crisis was 290 from July 2011 to December 2019. The findings suggest that the BDC contributed only 0.3 % of the total Facebook posts during the crisis and left the rest of the crisis communication (9.0%) to its majority shareholder, the Government of Botswana. It seems reasonable to suggest that the lower levels of their contribution to the crisis communication efforts shows they are passive in sharing information to build trust between them and stakeholders (Lin et al., 2016). Lack of proactive crisis communication left the bulk of the communication to emerge from individual members of the public (57.9%). These findings suggest that the general public (individuals) were the most significant content creators about the BDC crisis, which implies that they had control of information about the organisation in crisis. According to Coombs (2010), concentrating more power in individuals' hands means that the organisation's reputation is at greater risk. Research shows that passive organisations often leave individuals with no option but to share information among themselves and confide in 'other sources of crisis information' (Austin et al., 2012: 191). Information shared on newspaper Facebook pages comprised a combined 14.3% of the total sample. As suggested by Zhu et al (2017), the findings show that the audience relied more on information circulated by social media creators and influencers other than the organisation and the traditional media.

However, these findings are different from the BR crisis. A total of 205 Facebook posts about the BR crisis were analysed between the 10th of December 2019 until the 31st of June 2020, and Table 5.2 indicates that BR contributed 2.4% to the crisis communication efforts. Similarly, the BR majority shareholder, the Government of Botswana produced the most crisis communication (41.5%). Although this communication does not amount to more than half of the total sample, there are indications that the BR and the Government of Botswana shared more crisis information with stakeholders than during the BDC crisis. It seems the organisations generated more content and inhibited the audience from resorting to other sources of information as it was the case with the BDC crisis. It seems reasonable to conclude that the BR and the Government of Botswana were in control of the content as asserted by Roshan et al., (2016). A total of 32.2% of the posts were shared by the publics during the BR crisis, compared to the 57.9% shared by the publics during the BDC crisis. According to Soehner et al (2017) speculations and rumours are rife among publics when organisations are not in control.

Sources of Facebook Posts	Frequency	Percent
Botswana Railways	5	2.4
Yarona FM News-The Real Story	6	2.9
Duma FM	2	1.0
Mmegi Newspaper	4	2.0
Sunday Standard/ Telegraph	12	5.9
Botswana Gazette	3	1.5
Midweek Sun	2	1.0
Government of Botswana	85	41.5
Patriot on Sunday	3	1.5
Echo Newspaper Botswana	6	2.9
Botswana Federation of Trade Unions	2	1.0
Stakeholder/ Publics	66	32.2
Other Facebook Pages or Groups	9	4.4
Total	205	100.0

Table 5.2 Source of Facebook posts for the BR crisis

Table 5.1 and 5.2 indicate that the media (newspapers and radio stations) in Botswana contributed less coverage of the crisis on Facebook in both crises. They contributed a combined 15.3% of Facebook coverage for the BDC crisis, and 18.7% coverage for the BR crisis. In both crises, most of the publics' Facebook posts were their sentiments and opinions about the organisation in crisis. Compared to the traditional media, the general public shared more information (32.2%), making them, as suggested by Rees (2020), creators of the communication process who are more likely to put the organisation's reputation at risk.

5.2. Crisis response strategies used by the BDC and BR

Following a set of crisis response strategies developed by Coombs & Holladay (1996; 2002) and Benoit (1995; 2005), this study analysed the response strategies to determine their frequency in Facebook posts from organisations. Figure 5.1 shows the types of response strategies used by the BDC and Botswana Government in the crises. As indicated earlier, the Government of Botswana and BDC frequently used three crisis response strategies in messages sent to stakeholders. These are good intention (0.7%), bolstering (0.7%) and corrective strategy (7.6%). The bulk of the crisis messages (Not applicable) amounting to 91.0% of the crisis messages were stakeholders' status updates about the crisis and the organisation's Facebook status updates. Since the crisis posed a substantial risk to the organisation's reputation, the BDC and the Government of Botswana used the corrective strategies to rebuild trust by showing stakeholders that it is doing all it can to return to their expectations. For example, as one of the corrective actions, the Government of Botswana set up a Parliamentary Select Committee to investigate irregularities at BDC, and findings presented to the Parliament of Botswana.
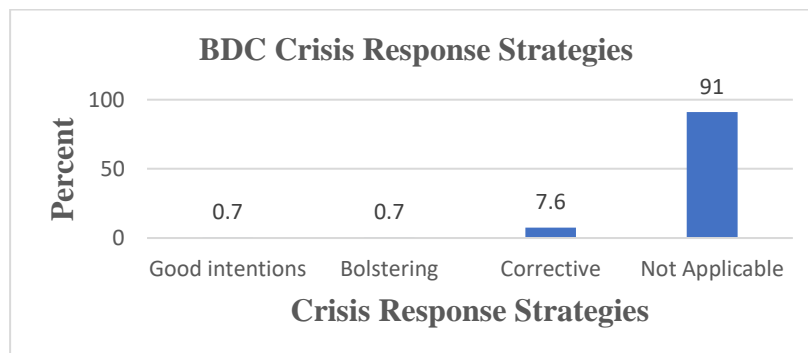
Figure 5.1: Crisis response strategies used during the BDC emergency

The frequent use of the corrective strategy aligns with research into crisis communication best practice. Coombs and Holladay (1996)'s study suggests that the only available option for an organisation facing a transgression crisis is to improve the organisation's perception by repairing legitimacy and showing how an organisation is returning to adherence with stakeholders' expectations. Since it was the first time the crisis occurred, the BDC and the Government of Botswana used corrective action because it is the only option available 'when no evidence exists to deny or distance the organisation from the crisis' (Coombs & Holladay, 1996: 284).

The other strategies included good intention to suggest that the BDC and the Government of Botswana meant well by investing in the glass project to create jobs, and never intended for the crisis to occur. Bolstering was used to remind the publics about the BDC's positive qualities. An example of a statement published on Facebook reminding stakeholders about BDC's positive attributes is when the government posted that: 'BDC has led the industrial development drive of Botswana through the likes of Sechaba Breweries, Kwena Rocla, Kromberg and Schubert, Can Manufacturing…' (BWgovernment, 22 July 2017, Figure 5.2). Therefore, it seems reasonable to conclude that using these two strategies alongside the corrective strategy, the Government of Botswana and the BDC were trying as much as possible to intensify attribution of unintentionality, thus reducing organisational responsibility for the crisis (Coombs & Holladay, 1996).
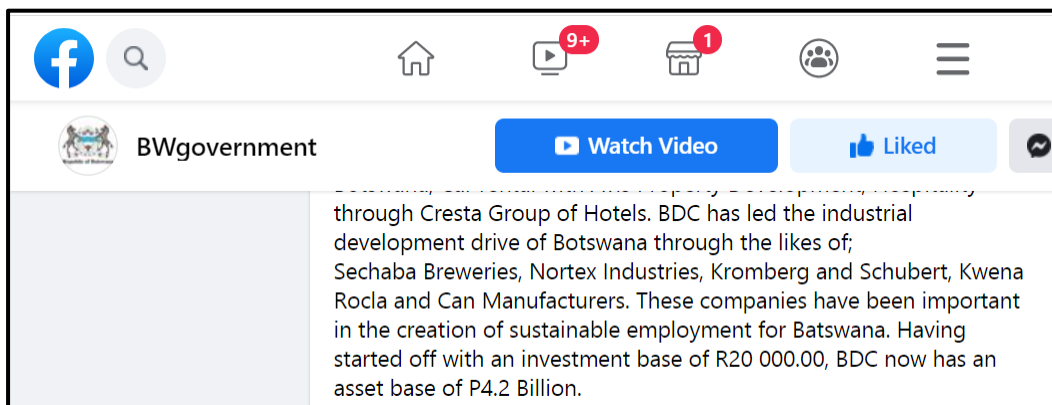
Figure 5.2: Excerpt from a Facebook post from BWgovernment dated 22 July 2017

Figure 5.3 indicates that the BR and the Government of Botswana used various response strategies to develop crisis messages shared with audiences on Facebook regarding the BR crisis. The BR accident was a repeat crisis. The BR has a history of the train derailment, especially when it rains. While accidents are unintentional, a repeated crisis is more intentional and avoidable (Coombs & Holladay, 1996). In this connection, the BR and the Government of Botswana used the corrective response strategy prominently (33.7%) to assure the stakeholders of its adherence to their expectations. It seems reasonable to suggest that a repeated accident, especially when it rained, offered no evidence for the BR to deny or distance itself from the crisis. The only way out was to use remedial strategies to rebuild legitimacy, which is why the Government of Botswana established a commission of inquiry and proactively shared information with publics.
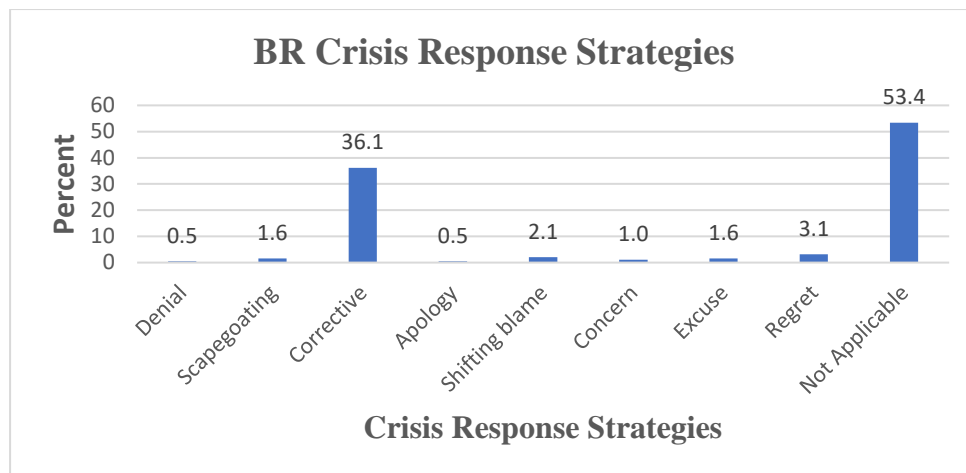
Figure 5.3: Crisis response strategies used by the BR and the Government of Botswana

The use of the rest of other strategies such as denial (0.5%), scapegoating (1.6%), apology (0.5%), shifting blame (2.1%), concern (1.0%), excuse (1.6%) and regret (3.1%) were meant to attract stakeholder sympathy to build a more positive perception of the organisation (Coombs & Holladay, 1996; Benoit, 2013). These strategies were used sparringly throughout the crisis, but the corrective strategy was dominantly used to rebuild legitimacy and public perception of the organisation. The rest of the 53.4% of the crisis messages (not applicable) were audience status updates on Facebook. According to Turel & Gil-Or (2019), the motivation behind status updates or sharing information with their networks is to elevate their social identities and self-esteem. In other words, the Facebook users who in this study were mostly members of the general public, might have been motivated to re-post to share information with their networks to update them on what was happening during these crises, as well as to obtain the affirmation of others within their networks to maintain a positive image.

5.3. Types of information sent by the organisations

The analysis examined the frequency of the types of information the BDC and the government sent out to stakeholders. These messages include instructing, adjusting and internalising information (Coombs, 2010; Roshan et al., 2016). As earlier explained in Chapter 2, instructing information tells the public how to protect themselves during a crisis; adjusting information helps stakeholders cope psychologically; while internalising information helps stakeholders formulate an image about the organisation (Coombs, 2010; Roshan et al., 2016). Figure 5.4 indicates the frequency and percentages of the types of information that BDC, BR and Government of Botswana sent to their stakeholders.
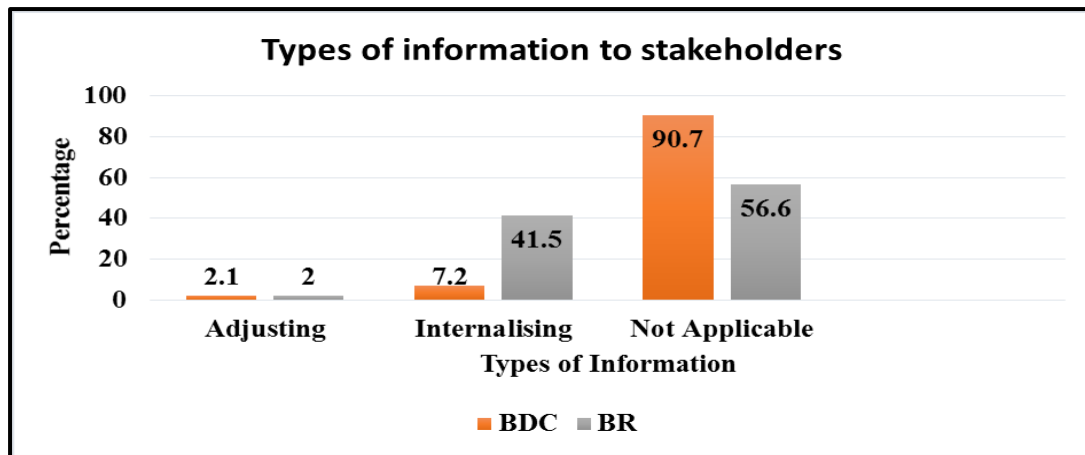
Figure 5.4: Types of information sent to stakeholders by organisations

It seems since the BDC crisis was a transgression type, practitioners did not need to use instructing information to tell audiences how to stay safe. Instead, the BDC and the Government of Botswana used internalising information (7.2%) to help stakeholders to formulate a positive perception about the organisation as suggested by Roshan et al (2016). This information helps the organisation to manage its reputation (Coombs, 2010). The best way to restore the organisation's reputation was to reduce crisis responsibility and build trust. The BDC suffered reputational loss during this crisis and did all it could to rebuild trust by developing messages that portray positive attributes of the BDC to remind the stakeholders that there was a positive side to the BDC story. For instance, some messages assured the stakeholders that '…BDC has led Botswana's industrial development drive through Sechaba Breweries, Kwena Rocla, Kromberg and Schubert, Can Manufacturing…'(BWgovernment, 22 July 2017, Figure 5.2). The statement intended to help stakeholders to formulate a positive perception of the BDC. As indicated earlier, this crisis kept resurfacing on social media especially towards the successive general elections, which is why this statement was posted 6 years after the initial crisis to maintain a positive perception of the organisation.

Research suggests that stakeholder sympathy can help build a more positive view of the organisation (Coombs & Holladay, 1996). It seems reasonable to conclude that in any transgression crisis, organisations should focus more on sharing information that helps to build a more positive perception of the organisation to rebuild legitimacy, as well as messages that help organisations to attract sympathy by portraying themselves as victims. For example, the government portrayed herself as a victim in the failed glass manufacturing project, while deploying a corrective approach, in a message saying: '…having parted ways with the Shanghai

Fengyue Glass Manufacturing company, BDC has assumed 100 percent ownership of the glass manufacturing project…' (Daily News, 24 April 2013). The statement aimed to attract sympathy by telling the stakeholders that the government could redeem its parastatal from the crisis.

The findings indicate that the BDC and the Government of Botswana shared 2.1% of adjusting information. During the BDC crisis, audiences needed diverse information such as: what happened; how it happened; why it happened, and what the organisations are doing to avoid the crisis. An example is a statement shared by the government saying: '…the Government as a sole shareholder, took steps to restore the much-needed stability and stewardship in the affairs of the corporation…' (BWgovernment, 23 December 2011, Figure 5.5). The statement was an assurance that there is goodwill on the government's part to stabilise the organisation and manage the crisis.

Figure 5.5: Screenshot of a Facebook post about the BDC crisis

Furthermore, the results of this study indicate that both the BDC and the BR relied on the same information types to stakeholders. Figure 5.4 indicates that just like the transgression crisis, the BR and the Botswana Government provided adjusting and internalising information about the crisis, with adjusting information insignificant (2.0%). It seems the BR and the Government of Botswana wanted the audiences to cope psychologically and formulate a positive image about the organisation to attribute less crisis responsibility. The organisation provided adjusting information to explain what happened and investigating the cause of the accident to avoid future occurrence. In this connection, public hearings which commenced on the 14th of

January 2020 as indicated in chapter 1, provided more information which might have influenced stakeholders' views and perceptions about the BR crisis. Stakeholders attended these hearings hoping they would have closure and be able to deal with this accident. It was necessary for the BR and the government to provide this information because there is intentionality in a repeated crisis (Coombs & Holladay, 1996).

However, since the BR accident was a repeated crisis, audiences attributed more crisis responsibility to the organisation. Studies emphasise that 'crisis type is the 'main factor in attribution of responsibility in crises' (Cho & Gower, 2006: 420). As explained in Chapter 4, the attribution theory is a useful framework to explain the relationship between a crisis and the selection of crisis response strategies (Coombs & Holladay, 1996). This theory relies on four causal dimensions (stability, external control, personal control and locus) that people use when making attribution and apportioning crisis responsibility (Coombs & Holladay, 1996). Stability assesses the frequency (stable) or infrequency (unstable) of the crisis; external control indicates whether or not the crisis is controllable; personal control assesses whether or not actors control it; and locus reflects if the event is about the actors or situation (Coombs and Holladay, 1996). In this case crisis responsibility is weakest when attribution suggests that the cause is infrequent and without a crisis history (Coombs and Holladay, 1996).

The BR and the Government of Botswana also shared internalising information (41.5%) with their audience. Since the BR crisis was a repeated accident, the audience believed it was avoidable. The organisations needed to use internalising information to help the BR build a positive perception (Coombs, 2010). For example, the BR and the Government of Botswana posted a Facebook statement to stakeholders saying: '…Botswana Railways would like to reassure the public that investigations are ongoing, and the public will be given a report…' (BWgovernment, 10 December 2019). The statement intended to assure the publics that the BR and the government took the accident seriously and were doing everything to ensure it did not happen again. A total of 90.7% and 56.6% of the crisis messages from the BDC and BR respectively, were Facebook status updates from audiences.

5.4. Types of information sent by the general public (publics, audiences and stakeholders)

Like the types of information sent by the organisation, the study analysed the types of information sent by the general public, comprising the publics, audience and stakeholders. It follows a protocol by Roshan et al (2016) who analysed stakeholder messages to determine how organisations respond. In this case, the analysis focused on messages sent by the general public who comprised publics, audiences and stakeholders. The three types of information (providing information, questions, humorous posts) were adapted from Roshan et al. (2016). Five more types of information emerged from the analysis to describe information by the general public during the BDC and BR crisis.
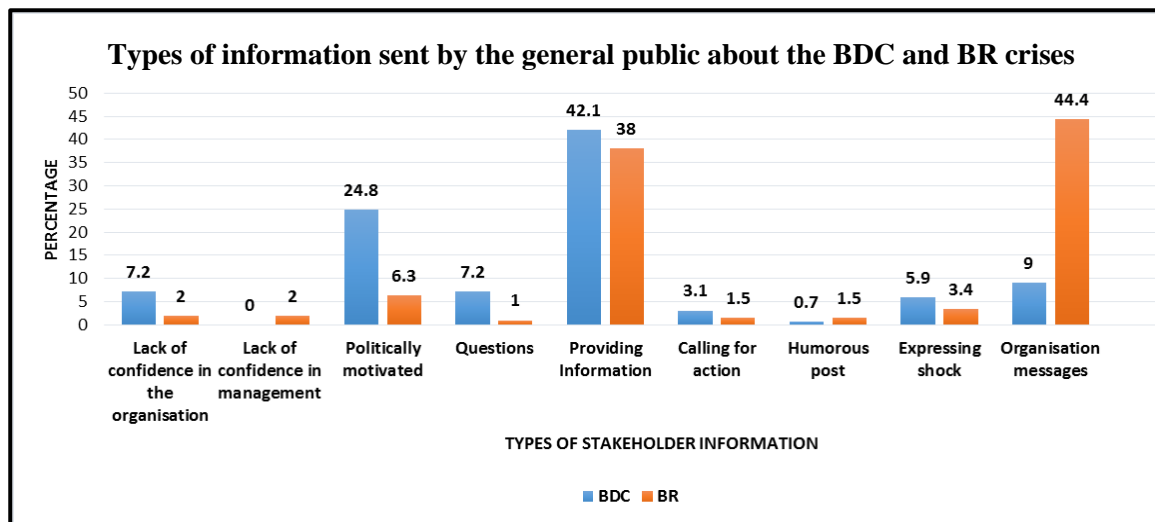
Figure 5.6: Types of Information sent by general public about the BDC and BR

Figure 5.6 indicate the frequency and percentage of types of information sent by stakeholders during the BDC and the BR crises. The types of information examined here are the Facebook posts or individual status update created or shared by the audience during the BDC and BR crisis when they expressed their sentiments and opinions about the crises. A total of 42.1% of the stakeholders' posts provided information during the BDC crisis, whereas 38.0% provided information about the BR crisis. In these two cases, there is an indication that the BDC and the Botswana Government were passive in providing information, enabling audiences to send more information among themselves. These findings suggest that fewer audiences sent information among themselves during the BR crisis. Research indicates that organisations should fully utilise social media for their two-way crisis communication (Lin et al., 2016),

instead of passively disseminating information to avoid audiences sending information about the organisation in crisis, who in the process threaten corporate reputation (Roshan et al., 2016).

Also, 7.2% of the posts expressed lack of confidence in the BDC. For instance, one newspaper posted: '…Government is still mum over its next course of action following damning findings that implicates senior government officials in corruption…' (Mmegi, 12 November 2012, see Figure 5.7). The post expressed a lack of trust on the BDC and the Government of Botswana. It seems more Facebook posts expressed a lack of confidence on the BDC and the Government of Botswana because audiences had attributed more crisis responsibility to the organisation. Coombs and Holladay (1996) suggested that transgression crises are always seen as intentional and would attract more crisis responsibility than accidents that are perceived as less intentional. However, the organisations did not respond to Facebook posts that expressed a lack of confidence. As suggested by Kent and Taylor (2002), failure to engage with the general public is a lost opportunity for the organisations to build trust because continued dialogue offers support to audiences and establishes a relationship-building narrative. These findings are consistent with previous studies that found no two-way communication between crisis managers and the audience, especially among government agencies that are less likely to engage (Lin et al., 2016). The two-way symmetrical communication is more interactive and contributes to organisational effectiveness (Grunig, 1990).
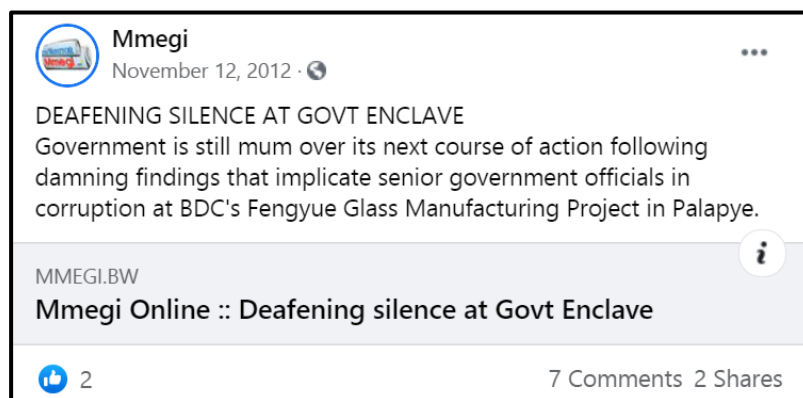
Figure 5.7: Screenshot of a Facebook post from Mmegi dated 12 November 2012

It seems reasonable to suggest that following the lessons learnt from the BDC crisis, the government became proactive during the BR crisis except that engaging in dialogue with the general public on Facebook did not improve. The findings also suggest that fewer people (2.0%) expressed a lack in confidence in the BR. It seems the posts that showed a lack of confidence in the BR were created immediately after the accident. For instance, on the day of

the accident, an individual posted: 'They were not sure about the state of the river, but they did not stop the train for safety…' (Thabo Junior Nonyane, 10 December 2019). The post attributed crisis responsibility to the BR. It showed a lack of confidence in the organisation because it believed that this repeated accident was avoidable.

However, it seems the audience position on the BR as an organisation shifted when public hearings started. The posts by the general public (2.0%) also expressed a lack of confidence in management. It seems reasonable to conclude that the publics shift of crisis blame was caused by appreciating the information that emerged from the public hearings detailing how management failed to prevent the accident. Some posts blamed management for not listening to advice from other government agencies such as the Department of Meteorological Services. For instance, a individual posted: 'The Department of Metrological services warned BR…what happened?' (Dintwa Keszman Kesaobaka, 10 December 2019). This status update showed a lack of confidence in management.

Another individual posted: ' So this man, a senior officer is telling us he long saw a safety deficiency and never took a step to intervene…' (Keaboka Curtis Abdul- Razaaq Modibed, 19 January 2020). It seems the statement is a direct lack of confidence in the management. After the public hearings, the board of inquiry recommended that management should be dismissed from work, as shown by a newspaper headline on Facebook which read: 'Investigators recommend sacking of entire BR management' (Botswana Gazette, 25 June 2020, Figure 5.8). As indicated in chapter 1, the board of inquiry recommended the sacking of the senior executives at Botswana Railways and action was taken against them.
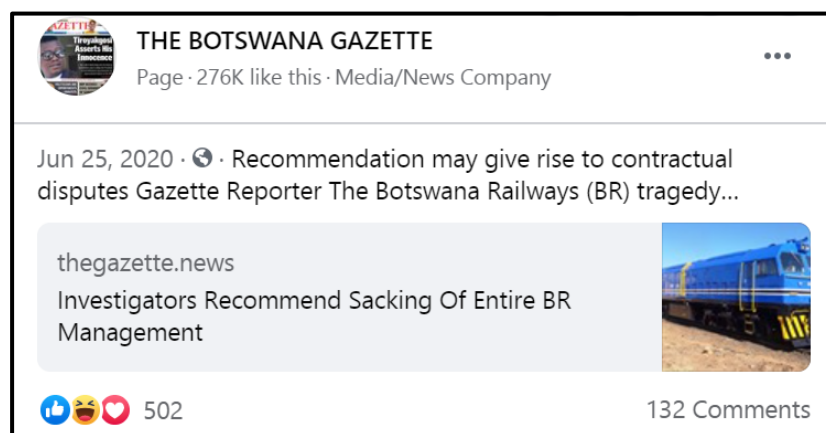
Figure 5.8: The Botswana Gazette newspaper Facebook page dated 25 June 2020

The comments and posts that the audience showed lack of confidence in management suggest that publics are now the senders of information, while organisations have less control over content (Roshan et al., 2016; Zheng et al., 2018). The analysis indicates that BR or the Government of Botswana did not respond to any Facebook posts expressing lack of confidence in management. The reasons for lack of dialogue might emerge in Chapter 7 through interviews with senior public relations practitioners in Botswana.

Furthermore, Figure 5.6 indicates that some posts about the BDC crisis were politically motivated (24.8%). The BDC Fengyue Glass Project became a political discourse during the 2014 and 2019 General Election campaign trails and dominated corruption narrative on Facebook. Politicians used the crisis to score political points. In the process, the BDC and the government suffered reputational damage. Regarding the BR, only 6.3% of the posts were politically motivated. The content was in Facebook pages belonging to political parties to generate a political discourse around the crisis. In both crises, the organisations did not respond to posts or comments from the general public. However, crisis messages that organisations send to counter politically motivated messages might require a different approach of informing the publics about the issue at hand, and appealing to their emotions.

Some of the posts during the BDC and BR crises were questions. Only 7.2% of the public asked questions, which seemed politically motivated in the aftermath of the BDC crisis. Some of the members of the public were questioning the processes of paying the Chinese contractors huge sums of money. For instance, there was a question: '…but how do you credit an abandoned project? What happened to P700 million?' (Safie Sekgwa, 15 November 2016). Other questions were asked in the Parliament of Botswana by Members of Parliament to determine if there is any action against senior executives at BDC. One of the questions was: 'to ask Minister to confirm referral of the BDC Fengyue Glass Project economic crime cases to the Directorate of Public Prosecution' (BWgovernment, 6 February 2017).

Regarding the BR crisis, a few questions (1.0%) emerged from the general public. Perhaps this can be attributed to the fact that the BR and the government were proactive in providing information throughout the public hearings. In part, the audience perceived the accidents as less intentional (Coombs & Holladay, 1996). These public hearings were part of the organisation's corporate social responsibility as the organisations wanted to portray themselves as legally and ethically responsible, as suggested by Carroll (1991). In doing so, the BR was

insulating itself against the crisis' adverse effects because CSR is a means of protection and a reservoir of goodwill (Assiouras et al., 2013). Hence, a few questions during the BR crisis. The findings indicate that the BDC, BR, and Botswana Government did not respond to these questions.

As a result of the BDC being passive in sharing information, 42.1% of the public provided information among themselves. The fact they created so much information to provide information to other stakeholders (Roshan et al., 2016) shows that the BDC and the Government of Botswana were not actively engaging or providing information. The numbers were more compared to the BR crisis where 38.0% of the general public provided information among themselves. The lower numbers of people sharing information indicate that the BR was more proactive in sharing crisis information. Lack of engagement with the public by the BDC can increase the vulnerability and reputational loss of the organisation (Roshan et al., 2016). Public hearings about the BR crisis enabled the general public to access information and share it widely. In this connection, the general public can collaborate and sympathise with the organisation in crisis (Klein & Dawar, 2004). The analysis shows that the BDC, BR, and Botswana Government did not reply to this information.

There were other types of information shared by publics such as those that called for action. Audiences shared 3.1% of the information calling for action against the BDC management and senior government officials. One individual posted (translated from Setswana to English): 'If indeed Mr Matambo misled parliament on the BDC issue, he must resign immediately. This man will finish public coffers' (Shiva Shava, 5 December 2011, See Figure 5.9). The individual made this status update calling for action to protect public coffers against the BDC and senior government officials. A total of 1.5% of the posts also called for action against those responsible for the BR accident. For instance, an individual posted, 'Heads must roll at Botswana Railways' (Makgopha Nightvigil Seretse, 10 December 2019). The status update attributed blame on the organisation and management and called for action against the senior executives for the repeated crisis. However, the organisation did not reply to this information.

Figure 5.9: A Facebook post from a stakeholder dated 5 December 2011

Some posts intended to be humorous while others expressed shock. It seems the ones intended to be humorous consisted of banter from the audience, while the ones expressing shock showed public alarm at the details of the crisis. While 0.7% of the Facebook posts during the BDC crisis intended to be funny, 1.5% was humorous during the BR crisis. For instance, during the BDC crisis, a stakeholder said in a Facebook post: 'Matambo has defended Marea the only way I can defend my girlfriend' (Rragwe Walosika, 20 November 2012). This Facebook post was intended as a pun, although it carried serious connotations and sexual innuendoes between the Minister of Finance and the Managing Director of the BDC.

However, 5.9% of the posts expressed shock during the BDC crisis, while 3.4% of the posts expressed shock during the BR crisis. An example of a Facebook post that expressed shock during the BDC Fengyue Glass Project crisis was: 'Temet, a lot of millions gone to waste and no shame!' (Modisaotsile Bakwadi, 24 November 2013). The post expressed shock at the millions paid to a Chinese company with no experience in glass manufacturing. Another example of a post that expressed shock during the BR crisis was: 'In essence, the message was he can't be right because he is junior' (Uyapo Ndadi, 2 March 2020, see Figure 5.10). Although the message expressed shock at a senior officer's condescending attitude, it intended to be funny. The analysis shows that the BR and the Government of Botswana did not reply or engage with these Facebook posts. As previously stated, these findings confirm research that government and its agencies are less likely to reply or engage with publics on social media (Lin et al., 2016).
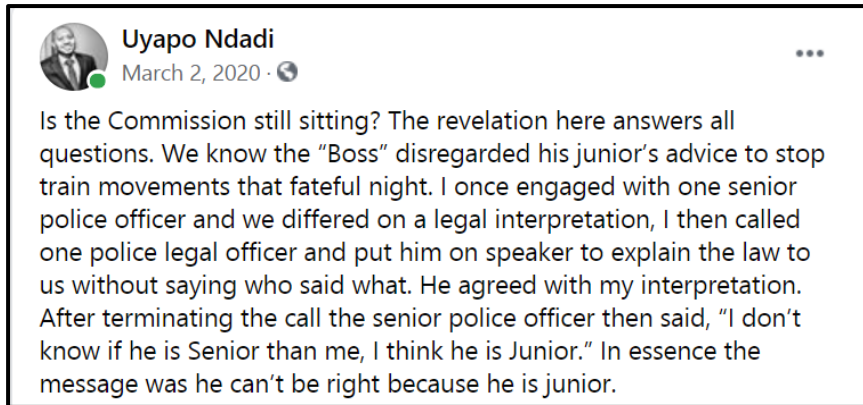
Figure 5.10: A Facebook post from a stakeholder posted on 2 March 2020

5.5. Types of discourses of the BDC and the BR crisis

Unlike the BDC, the BR crisis has different trends in terms of frequency and the mean of words framing the crises. Following a protocol by Cho & Gower (2006), it is essential to analyse how the crises framing influences stakeholder's evaluation of the crisis responsibility to the organisation. This convention examines attribution of crisis type to blame and responsibility for an organisation using tests where the Mean ($\overline{X}$) determines which crisis type has higher crisis responsibility (Cho & Gower, 2006).

The study analysed the level of crisis responsibility from the posts and status updates (see Table 5.3). The findings indicate that posts and status updates of stakeholders attributed blame to both organisations. However, the degree of crisis responsibility differed because of the crisis types (BDC is a transgression, while BR is an accident). From the status updates, an example of a post attributing blame to the BDC was from a stakeholder who posted: '…mysterious cash found in BDC staff accounts!…'(Mmegi, 8 December 2011). Similarly, an example of a Facebook post about the BR crisis said: '…simple logic when it is heavily raining especially in the central district all trains and heavy loads trucks must be grounded, so BR what the heck?..' (Comfort Philime, 10 December 2019). The post attributed blame and crisis responsibility to the BR.

Organisation	Example of crisis blame and responsibility from Facebook posts
BDC/Fengyue Glass Project	PG Glass proposal collapsed, and the Fengyue Glass used the same feasibility study for the new plant.
BDC/Fengyue Glass Project	Mysterious cash in BDC staff accounts
BDC/ Fengyue Glass Project	BDC Executive management was aware of this but kept the development away from the board
BDC/ Fengyue Glass Project	Top BDC managers fired
BDC/ Fengyue Glass Project	The axe has finally landed on Botswana Development Corporation's top three bosses
BDC/Fengyue Glass Project	BDC MD was hired after failing the interview
BDC/Fengyue Glass Project	BDC stole glass idea from Batswana and presented it to questionable characters from China- Parliament report
BDC/Fengyue Glass Project	The disciplinarian President knew about the mess
BR	Heads must roll at Botswana Railways
BR	The results of corruption
BR	The fact that we have a weather forecast and other metrological related reports every day is that we should heed the advice they render
BR	Botswana Railways loses a Train every Year without Fail during rainy seasons due to negligence…The CEO must be fired or resign.
BR	Simple logic when it is heavily raining especially in the central district all trains and heavy loads trucks must be grounded, so BR what the heck?

Table 5.3. Examples of statements apportioning blame and responsibility to the organisation

However, Table 5.3 is not, on its own, sufficient to draw conclusions that the audience apportioned crisis responsibility to the organisations, although the statements show they did. To understand how audiences attributed crisis responsibility to the BDC and the BR, it seems reasonable to examine the frequency and mean ($\overline{X}$) of discourses in these emergencies. Research suggests that the public does not consider the facts of the crisis in most instances, but the facts constructed by the media and other parties (Cho & Gower, 2006). Framing or describing the crisis, can influence the 'publics evaluation of organisational crisis responsibility' (Cho & Gower, 2006: 420), which is why framing is essential in this study.

Table 5.4 and Table 5.5 indicate how the BDC, and BR crises were framed. However, it seems some of the words were used by the traditional media in their Facebook page, which might have influenced the Facebook users to repeat them in their status updates. The type of crisis might also have played a role in the users repeating some of these words. The average for all the phrases or words used to frame both crises suggest that there was more crisis responsibility levelled on the BR ($\overline{X}$ =0.53) than on the BDC ($\overline{X}$ =0.21). The results suggest that the BDC transgression crisis was framed as an act of 'mismanagement' ($\overline{X}$ =0.04). On the contrary, the

BR accident was framed as an 'accident' ($\overline{X}$=0.49) and an act of 'negligence ($\overline{X}$=0.04). The higher ($\overline{X}$) for the BR accident suggests that the crisis was framed as habitual and more intentional, as Coombs & Holladay (1996) suggested. It seems the fact that the crisis was habitual and more intentional led to stakeholders attributing more crisis responsibility to the BR than the BDC crisis, which was happening for the first time. It might be reasonable to conclude that less crisis responsibility was levelled against the BDC as a gesture of sympathy by stakeholders. The BDC had an excellent economic track record and CSR activities that may have insulated it against the crisis, as suggested by Janssen et al (2015). It seems the publics perceived the investigations which were framed 'forensic' ($\overline{X}$=0.05) as corrective action.

Frames of the BDC crisis	N	Sum	Mean ($\overline{X}$)
Mismanagement	290	13	0.04
Briefcase company	290	4	0.01
Mysterious	290	3	0.01
Resign	290	1	0.003
Criminality	290	5	0.02
Forensic	290	16	0.05
Saga	290	8	0.03
Waste	290	6	0.02
Valid N (listwise)/ Average mean	290		0.21

Table 5.4. Discourse/ Words framing the BDC crisis

Another word used to frame the BDC crisis was 'saga' ($\overline{X}$=0.03). The BDC crisis persisted because the organisations were passive in sharing information to formulate a positive perception of the organisation as suggested by Coombs (2010) and Roshan et al (2016). The fact that the crisis was a political topic at two elections, and the same party (Botswana Democratic Party) won both elections, suggest that the people trusted the ruling government (whose political personalities were directly involved in the crisis). As such, the opposition parties' efforts to politicise the crisis to sway the votes did not succeed. In this connection, the BDC and the Government of Botswana had an opportunity to rebuild trust with the stakeholders (Robinson & Eilert, 2018). In the process, it reduced the level of crisis responsibility that the stakeholders levelled against the organisations.

Frames of the BR crisis	N	Sum	Mean ($\overline{X}$)
Witnesses	205	20	0.09
Loss of lives	205	42	0.20
condolences	205	7	0.03
Commission of inquiry	205	142	0.69
Evidence	205	13	0.06
Negligence	205	9	0.04
Accident	205	100	0.48
Valid N (listwise)	205		0.53

Table 5.5. Types of discourse/ words describing the BR crisis

Table 5.5 indicates that the BR crisis was dominated by the narrative of investigations framed as a 'commission of inquiry' ($\overline{X}$=0.69) showing support for the BR and the Government of Botswana to find the root cause of the accident to avoid future occurrences. It seems more audiences wanted the BR investigated because train accidents were a norm at the corporation. They hoped investigations would find the root cause and bring an end to future accidents. The framing of the crisis in this way elicited more conversations (Sum=142) than the BDC's framing of the investigations as 'forensic' (Sum=16). It seems the organisational discourse could have made the stakeholders sympathise with the BR, but it failed to absolve the corporation from blame. As a result, more crisis responsibility was attributed to the BR crisis than the BDC because of framing, which put an emotional angle to the BR crisis portrayed.

5.6. Nature of Facebook posts during the BDC and BR crisis

To fully understand what influences the number of reactions to a Facebook post, the study analysed five variables (press release, photograph, video, event and CSR). The analysis focused on whether these variables were present or not present in messages posted by both the organisations and stakeholders. Ross et al (2018) analysed images and videos on Facebook posts and found that the number of reactions to a Facebook post is greatly influenced by whether the post contains media (videos and photographs). While this study follows a convention by Ross et al. (2018), it examined the frequency and percentage of these variables without using regression analysis.

The findings suggest that 3.1% of the Facebook posts (see Figure 5.11) during the BDC crisis were press releases from the organisations, while 8.8% of the posts during the BR crisis were press releases. It also shows that 39.0% of the posts during the BDC crisis contained photographs, compared to the 51.2% of the posts which contained photographs during the BR

crisis. The findings further indicate that Facebook posts containing photographs or videos were more likely to have more stakeholders' reactions, confirming findings from a study by Ross et al. (2018).
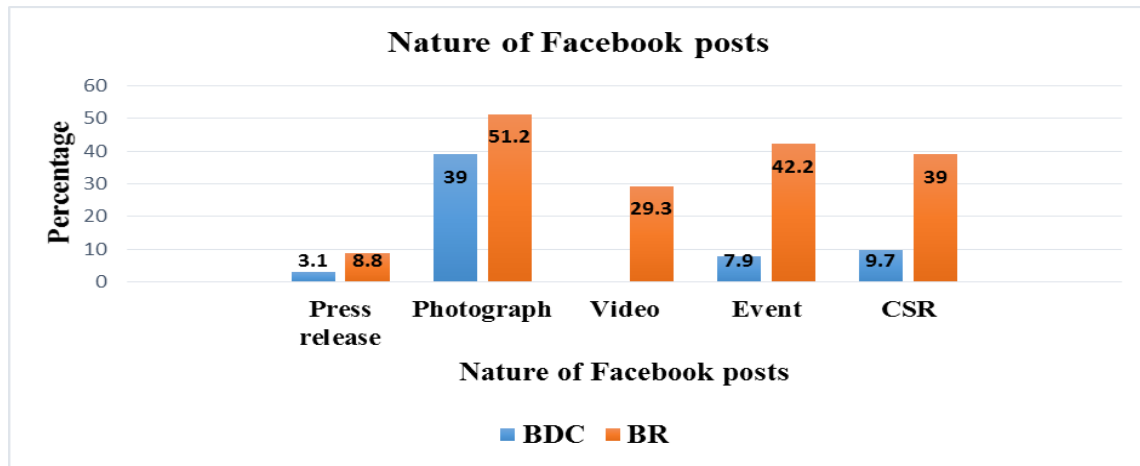
Figure 5.11: Nature of Facebook posts during the BDC and BR crises

However, the findings indicate no Facebook posts containing videos during the BDC crisis, while 29.3% of the Facebook posts during the BR crisis contained videos. It seems when the crisis started in 2011, Facebook had not launched its algorithm tweak on video uploads on the platform until June 2014 (Tandoc Jr & Maitra, 2018). Technological development of smartphones at the time might have also played a part in the absence of this algorithm. The other reason for lack of video usage is that even after the 2014 announcement of video uploads on Facebook, digital literacy and development was slow in most parts of Africa to promote the two-way communication between organisations and the public (Pade-Khene, 2018). Perhaps the only explanation to the BDC and Government of Botswana not uploading videos during this crisis is lack of digital literacy and infrastructure to support this new development in Botswana. It seems reasonable to conclude that organisations that do not use videos on social media risk losing out on broader coverage on the 'world's largest social media platform' (Tandoc Jr & Maitra, 2018: 1680).

The 29.3% of videos posted by both the organisations and Facebook users during the BR crisis suggest a significant improvement to reach out to larger audiences. The impact of using videos was more substantial during the BR crisis than the BDC crisis. For example, a video of the train accident scene attracted an enormous volume of over 56,000 views (see Table 5.6). Moreover, a total of 7.9% of the posts were shared in events such as parliamentary sittings

during the BDC crisis, while 42.4% of the posts were made during press conferences and public hearings during the BR crisis. Lastly, 9.7% of the status updates posted during the BDC crisis showed the organisation as acting ethically and socially responsible, while 39.0% of posts showed the same to be the case during the BR crisis. As such, it seems investigations of both crises were perceived as socially responsible. According to research, the audience's perception shaped the direction of the crisis by influencing their attribution of blame (Bhardway et al., 2018) and how they respond to the crises (Ganga & Sriramesh, 2018).

5.7. Facebook reactions of the general public during the BDC and the BR crises

This analysis offers an opportunity to understand the quality of stakeholders' emotions through Facebook reactions when they interacted with crisis information during the BDC and the BR crises. The descriptive statistics on Table 5.6 suggest that there were more positive reactions (79.9%) in the BDC crisis than negative reactions (20%). Facebook reactions considered positive are 'likes', 'love', 'wow', 'haha', 'care', while reactions considered negative are 'sad', 'wow' and 'angry'.

	BR N	BDC N	BR Max	BDC Max	BR Mean ($\overline{X}$)	BDC Mean ($\overline{X}$)
Likes	205	290	1800	1100	82.10	19.88
Sad	205	290	1200	281	27.62	1.71
Love	205	290	35	52	1.87	0.50
Wow	205	290	37	21	0.84	0.25
Angry	205	290	23	19	0.48	0.14
Haha	205	290	154	21	1.69	0.32
Care	205	290	1	-	0.004	-
Share	205	290	741	961	13.34	8.22
Views	205	290	56928	-	2762.80	-
Comments	205	290	934.00	625.00	35.53	16.98

Table 5.6 Facebook reactions during the BDC and BR crisis

These percentages were calculated from data marked BDC Max and BR Max (see Table 5.6). Before 2016, Facebook only had three types of interaction with content (like, comment and share), and six more (love, care, haha, wow, sad and angry) were added after 2016 (Salgado & Bobba, 2019). The only way to interact with the content, even when users disproved or disliked what they read about the BDC crisis was to press the 'like' button which is illustrated in Figure 5.12:
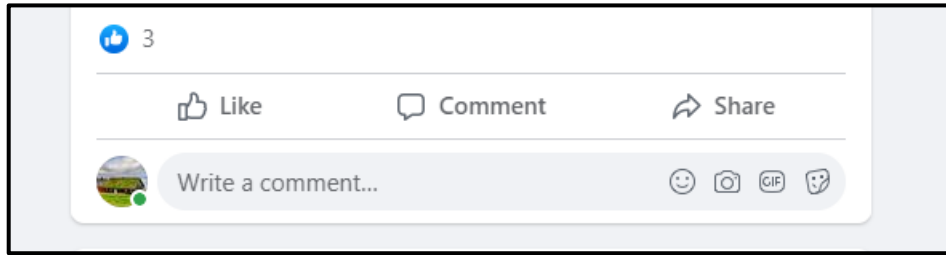
Figure 5.12: Like button on Facebook

It seemed complicated to determine the stakeholder's reactions at the time, but it is easier to determine reactions after 2016 because of the Facebook algorithms with new reactions. These new Facebook reactions offer unique insights into users' quality of emotions as they interact with content (Ross et al., 2018). An example of a post made by the Government of Botswana about the BDC crisis pre-2016 include: 'The Government as the sole shareholder took steps aimed at restoring much-needed stability and stewardship in the affairs of the corporation' (BWgovernment, 23 November 2011). The organisations had to assure stakeholders that they are trying to bring stability because they would have doubted the government's goodwill to manage the crisis (Wheeler, 2019). Despite attracting only two likes, the post was shared widely across Facebook. These fewer reactions can be attributed to less accessibility of Facebook in Botswana at the time. It seems there was a general lack of understanding of the role of Facebook. To show that Facebook was not widely accessible across all mobile networks, Orange Botswana a mobile telephone service provider, only launched its mobile Facebook services in June 2011 (Field, 2011).

Moreover, the more positive reactions (79.9%) such as 'likes', 'love', 'wow', 'haha', 'care' during the BDC crisis might have been due to it being turned into a political discourse by opposition activists towards Botswana's 2014 General Elections. This shows that users either pressed like, love, wow, haha or care to the organisational Facebook posts. There is evidence suggesting that many young people participated in Botswana's 2014 General Elections because of the presence of Facebook as an information channel (Masilo & Seabo, 2015). Similarly, Table 5.6 indicates that the BR crisis also experienced more positive reactions (62.3%) than unfavourable or negative reactions (37.6%) from stakeholders. Despite being a repeated crisis, Botswana Railways and the Government of Botswana's positive reactions may have been built through information provided during investigations. They did not wait until the end of the investigations to share the information. It seems reasonable to suggest that failure to provide the information during the investigations would have made stakeholders very anxious and to

seek crisis information from alternative sources or even create their own content (Stephens & Malone, 2010). For instance, some of the posts that attracted the most 'likes' (1800) was when the Government of Botswana posted on the day of the accident that: 'Botswana Railways would like to reassure the public that investigations are ongoing and members of the public will be given a report once completed' (BWgovernment, 10 December 2019, see Figure 5.13).
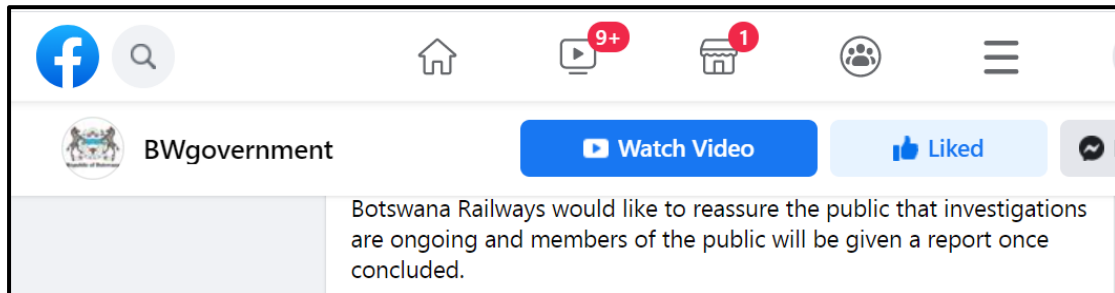
Figure 5.13: A Facebook post about the BR crisis dated 10 December 2019

However, this post garnered 1000 'sad' reactions. Another post that attracted the most 'sad' reactions (1200) was two days after the accident (12 December 2019) when the Government of Botswana posted: '…The Botswana Railways has organised a memorial service for the late two employees' (Daily News, 12 December 2019, Figure 5.14).
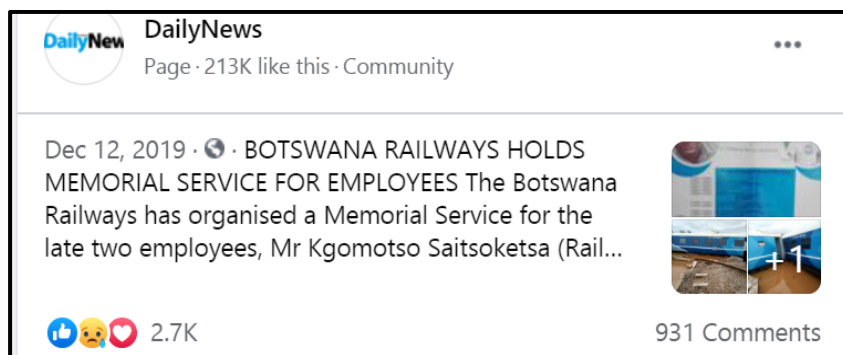
Figure 5.14: A Facebook post about the BR crisis dated 12 December 2019

It seems reasonable to suggest that the 'sad' reactions were evoked by publics' emotions towards the lost lives and sympathy for the deceased's families and friends. It might also reflect their sentiments towards the organisation which blame for failing to prevent the accident by stopping train operations during floods.

Previous research has examined the relationship between Facebook reactions using the Pearson's Correlation Coefficients (Ross et al., 2018). Correlation measures the relationship

between two variables when they 'move together in a linear relationship' (Sun et al., 2019: 529). Hence, the Pearsons Correlation Coefficient (PCC) is a measure of correlation on SPSS which has a range of +1 (perfect correlation) to -1 (perfect but negative correlation), and a 0 denoting the absence of a relationship (Adler & Parmryd, 2010). It is usually represented in samples as $'r'$ (Sedgwick, 2012). In other words, the PCC helps to understand the relationship between the Facebook reactions and might offer explanations for the types of reactions the audiences had during a crisis. For example, it helps to explain the quality of reactions such as likes, sad, love and so on. Therefore, this research follows Ross et al (2018) protocol on calculating the correlation coefficient between the Facebook reactions during the BDC crisis (Table 5.7) and the BR crisis (Table 5.8) using the Pearson correlation coefficient in SPSS.

Following Ross et al (2018)'s convention on the relationships between the Facebook reactions, Table 5.7 indicate that many related pairs of reactions had significant correlation coefficients during the BDC crisis:

	Likes	Sad	Love	Wow	Angry	Haha	Care	Share	Comments
Likes	1	.875**	.915**	.787**	.305**	.699**	.b	.568**	.857**
Sad	.875**	1	.889**	.615**	.324**	.581**	.b	.321**	.641**
Love	.915**	.889**	1	.614**	.217**	.803**	.b	.383**	.675**
Wow	.787**	.615**	.614**	1	.280**	.518**	.b	.589**	.745**
Angry	.305**	.324**	.217**	.280**	1	.188**	.b	.292**	.401**
Haha	.699**	.581**	.803**	.518**	.188**	1	.b	.307**	.532**
Care	.b	.b	.b	.b	.b	.b	1	.b	.b
Share	.568**	.321**	.383**	.589**	.292**	.307**	.b	1	.786**
Comments	.857**	.641**	.675**	.745**	.401**	.532**	.b	.786**	1
			Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).						
b.			Cannot be computed because at least one of the variables is constant.						
1			Variable is the same						

Table 5.7: Correlations matrix of Facebook reactions during the BDC crisis

The pairs with significant correlation include: 'likes' and 'sad' (r = .875); 'likes' and 'love' (r = .915); 'sad' and 'love' (r = .889); 'love' and 'haha' (r = .803); 'likes' and 'wow' (r = .787); 'likes' and 'comments' (r = .857). Although categorised as significant, some pairs had lower correlation coefficient scores and were unrelated such as 'haha' and 'angry' (r = .188). These correlation coefficient scores suggest that these pairs were used in different Facebook posts (Ross et al., 2018). Table 5.8 indicate slightly different findings from the BR crisis:

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	Likes	Sad	Love	Wow	Angry	Haha	Care	Shares	Views	Comments
Likes	1	.877**	.483**	.688**	.570**	.351**	.109	.576**	-.018	.904**
Sad	.877**	1	.327**	.715**	.540**	.025	-.010	.541**	-.015	.927**
Love	.483**	.327**	1	.136	.145*	.213**	.477**	.157*	-.041	.440**
Wow	.688**	.715**	.136	1	.395**	.062	-.016	.711**	.077	.692**
Angry	.570**	.540**	.145*	.395**	1	.058	-.018	.455**	-.032	.636**
Haha	.351**	.025	.213**	.062	.058	1	.346**	.120	-.019	.137
Care	.109	-.010	.477**	-.016	-.018	.346**	1	.051	-.019	.063
Shares	.576**	.541**	.157*	.711**	.455**	.120	.051	1	.269**	.689**
Views	-.018	-.015	-.041	.077	-.032	-.019	-.019	.269**	1	.040
Comments	.904**	.927**	.440**	.692**	.636**	.137	.063	.689**	.040	1
**.	Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).									
*.	Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).									
	Correlation is insignificant									

Table 5.8: Correlations matrix for Facebook reactions during the BR crisis

A few pairs with highly correlated coefficients and more pairs with a lower coefficient. The pairs with higher correlation coefficient include: 'likes' and 'sad' (r = .877); 'likes' and 'comments' (r = .904); 'sad' and 'comments' (r = .927); 'shares' and 'wow' (r = .711). However, the pairs with lower correlation coefficient and showed they were unrelated (Ross et al., 2018) included: 'haha' and 'sad' (r =. 025); 'sad' and 'care' (r =.010); 'likes and 'views' (r=.018); 'sad' and 'views' (r =.015). These findings confirm as valid and robust Ross et al (2018)'s study which found that 'sad' and 'haha' are unrelated and have a lower correlation coefficient, and that 'like' and 'sad' are related and have a higher correlation coefficient.

In sum, these results suggest that the BDC and the Government of Botswana were very passive in sharing information on Facebook during the crisis. The absence of this evidence does not rule out the possibilities that the organisations may have used other sources of information such as the traditional media other than Facebook because it was unpopular at the earliest stages of the crisis. Traditional media has always been a reliable and verified source of crisis information, while social media is preferred for its fast transmission of information (Hartley, 2019). However, findings show that the Government of Botswana may have learned its lessons from the BDC crisis because of significant improvement in the way the BR crisis was handled on Facebook.

Despite the traditional media being a reliable source of information (Hartley, 2019; Wheeler, 2019), findings suggest that newspapers and radio stations with Facebook presence contributed

less to the BDC and BR crisis communication. However, the newspapers and radio stations do not publish all their content on Facebook. As such, their contribution to Facebook content might not be representative. During the BDC crisis, the majority of the content came from audiences because the organisations were passive. The findings are different for the BR crisis where the content was spread among different sources. Both the BDC and the BR predominantly used the corrective strategy, internalising and adjusting information to rebuild legitimacy and the organisations' positive perception. Both the BDC's transgression and BR accident crises offered no alternative, but a corrective strategy had to be used because the situation was intentional (Coombs & Holladay, 1996). It is also important to note that the findings show that the BDC, BR, and Botswana Government did not respond to stakeholders' posts on Facebook during their respective crises. These findings are consistent with Lin et al (2016)'s findings that governments and their agencies are less likely to reply to stakeholders' posts on Facebook.

Furthermore, the findings suggest that the audience attributed more crisis responsibility to the BR than the BDC. In part, the BR received more crisis responsibility because the accident was a repeated crisis and seemed intentional and avoidable (Coombs & Holladay, 1996). However, stakeholders sympathised with the BDC because the crisis was happening for the first time, although it was a transgression. There were more positive than negative reactions in both crises, in part, because when the BDC crisis started, there were no alternative Facebook reactions to use when audiences disapproved or disliked content, except for pressing the 'like' button (Tandoc Jr & Maitra, 2018). In this connection, the correlation coefficient was high among reactions such as 'likes' and 'sad' meaning that audiences may press a 'like' button to show they saw the post even when they disapprove or were sad.

5.8. Summary of content analysis findings

- The BDC and the Government of Botswana were passive in sharing crisis information on Facebook with audiences. At the same time, BR and the Government of Botswana were proactive in sharing information on Facebook throughout the crisis.
- During the crisis, the BDC and the Government of Botswana lost control of the content to the audiences who created and posted more content about the organisation on

Facebook. In the process, the audience controlled the narrative and direction of the crisis.

- During the BR passenger train accident, audiences contributed less crisis information on Facebook.

- Traditional media (newspapers and radio stations) with Facebook presence contributed less to the BDC and BR crisis communication.

- Audiences attributed more crisis responsibility to the BR than they did with the BDC. This is because the BR accident was a repeated crisis and it was perceived as avoidable than the BDC transgression which was happening for the first time.

- Both the BDC and the BR used internalising, adjusting information and corrective crisis response strategy to rebuild legitimacy and positive perception of the organisations.

- The BDC, BR and the Government of Botswana did not reply to stakeholders' Facebook posts and comments. The reasons for lack of engagement with audiences shall be discussed in Chapter 8.

- The BDC and the Government of Botswana did not use videos but only photographs in their Facebook posts during the crisis. In contrast, both videos and photographs were used during the BR crisis to disseminate crisis information. Evidence in this study suggests that videos attracted more traffic to the BR and the Government of Botswana than with the BDC crises.

CHAPTER 6: Discourse and power relations in crisis information

Chapter 5 described the characteristics, crisis response strategies, discourses, and frames within crisis information on Facebook during the BDC and BR crises. Chapter 6 examines these discourses and frames in more detail by complementing the quantitative findings with qualitative data to provide more explanations for the statistical information. It explores how PR practitioners delivered their crisis messages using language. The statistical data from chapter 5 indicate that there was less interactivity between the organisations and their publics, and that the audience attributed more crisis responsibility to the BR than the BDC. However, the extent of crisis responsibility was not highest for the BR. Since this research is situated in the realm of critical realism, this chapter provides further explanations on how the PR practitioners used language to manipulate, persuade and inhibit the audience from challenging the organisations.

The chapter uses Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) to examine Facebook posts featuring crisis response strategies, discourses, and frames that organisations leveraged to influence the audiences during the BDC and BR crises. CDA also helps investigate how the organisations purposefully used language to establish hegemony over the audiences in these Facebook posts. This thesis establishes that CDA has not been widely used in language analysis of organisations facing crises in Sub Saharan Africa and Botswana.

Given the critical role of language in crisis messages on Facebook, research asserts that CDA aims to liberate the oppressed and is suited to decode ideologically loaded texts (Thomas & Turnbull, 2017), such as the ones about the BDC and BR crises. In other words, CDA helps to unveil opaque ideologies, socio-cultural values and power relations between the stakeholders and organisations (Punch, 2005:224). As such, CDA helps to understand how the PR practitioners used a corporate ideology that was almost impossible for the audience to challenge (Thomas & Wareing, 1999), and in the process succeeded in persuading and inhibiting the audiences from criticising the organisations. The ideology effectively manipulated the audiences to believe that while these state-owned enterprises caused the crises, the government stepped in to resolve the problems in the best interest of the publics.

To put CDA into perspective, Chapter 4 described it as a form of linguistic analysis of media texts which give attention to language as social interaction and as constitutive of social realities (Deacon et al., 1999; Gunter, 2000). Its emancipatory objectives make it suited to decode ideologically loaded texts (Thomas & Turnbull, 2017). Therefore, the analysis uses appropriate examples to explain how the Government of Botswana draws various discourses into frames that develop the crisis response strategies to embellish its narrative of economic development during these two crises while protecting corporate reputation. CDA helps shed light on these types of ideological activities and helps decode the selective version of reality (Thomas & Turnbull, 2017) depicted on Facebook. Furthermore, this analysis demonstrates how discourse framing is used decisively in crisis response strategies to map discourses through linguistic features applied in the government's Facebook posts and the reasons for doing so.

In this connection, the chapter deploys Fairclough's multilevel CDA framework (Figure 6.1) with context, interaction and text (Fairclough, 1989; 1995). To avoid repetition of explanations in Chapter 4 and reiterate its credibility to this analysis, this framework is practical when analysing media texts, and it is suitable for a sample of Facebook posts used in this study.

Socio-cultural and ideological circumstances
around the BDC and BR crises
(Context/ Macro level)

Circumstances of text production in
BDC and BR crises
(Interaction/ Meso level)

Linguistic features in
BDC and BR crises
Facebook posts
(Micro level)
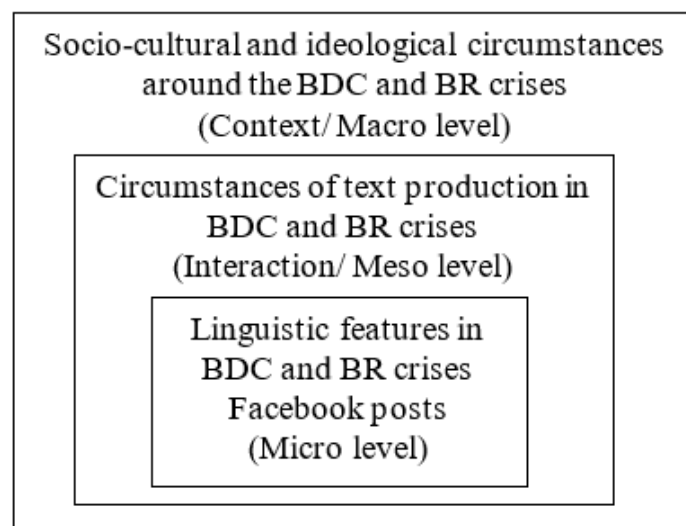
Figure 6.1: CDA three-dimensional framework adapted from Fairclough (1995)

The context layer, often called the macro level, considers the intertextual relationships, broader societal currents, more comprehensive economic and ideological circumstances influencing the text (Fairclough, 1995). Here, the analysis considers what Fairclough (1995) terms the latent ideology, socio-cultural practices, and economic circumstances, and how these factors

influence the production of Facebook posts during the BDC and BR crises. The master frame of economic development influences the production of crisis messages in both case studies, although it is more implicit in the BR crisis. In this connection, the government Facebook posts created during both crises reflect this ideology. Therefore, the analysis considers what the organisations said on Facebook, how they said it, and the extent of persuasion they intended to achieve through this narrative. However, what matters is not exactly what they said but where, when, why, by whom and to whom (Thomas & Turnbull, 2017).

The analysis then shifts to the interaction layer, often called the meso level, to consider discourse practice and circumstances of text production, consumption and how text enacts power relations. Here, the analysis examines the circumstances influencing text production of the BDC and BR crises and the transmission of information to Facebook audiences. It also considers why the organisations used certain information and crisis response strategies and how they influenced text production and delivery. The choice of Facebook for analysis in this study remains significant. Research shows that between 2021 and 2022 Facebook emerged as the most popular social media platform in Botswana, with a subscription base towering above 75% of the country's total population of 2,37 million people (Statcounter, 2022). Globally, Facebook enjoyed a huge subscription base of '1.59 billion monthly active users' in 2015 (Ye & Cheong, 2017: 441), and this figure grew to 2.93 billion monthly active users in 2022 (Statista, 2022). As such, its dominance in Botswana and globally makes it the most viable crisis communication and analysis platform for this study because social media can cause crises to spiral out of the control of the local context to become international in scope.

Finally, the text layer, often referred to as the micro level, considers the text's syntax, structures, and linguistic devices (Fairclough, 1989; Fairclough, 1995; Behnam & Mahmoudy, 2013). This stage examines how the organisations used language to persuade Facebook audiences to sympathise with the organisations to reduce perceptions of crisis responsibility. This analysis demonstrates that the language used by the government during the BDC and BR crises was not merely a conveyor belt of information but a means of implicit construction of ambiguity (Behnam & Mahmoudy, 2013). Additionally, this language analysis considers the linguistic devices (Appendix 6) and how they were used to manipulate, persuade and dominate the Facebook audiences. These linguistic devices include lexical choices, abstraction, functional honorifics and nomination. As explained in chapter 2, the lexical choices are

examined in the BDC and BR crisis information to demonstrate how the government exerted authority and co-membership with audiences (Fairclough, 1995; Machin & Mayr, 2012) to promote the narrative of economic development. Abstraction then mutually complements lexical choices when demonstrating how the government used political language to obscure, generalise and conceal specific facts (Machin & Mayr, 2012; Menegatti & Rubini, 2013) while promoting their corporate values and narrative. Lastly, functional honorifics and nomination demonstrate how the government used influential names and titles to assert legitimacy and power (Agyekum, 2003; Machin & Mayr, 2012) over the Facebook audiences to persuade and inhibit them from challenging the organisations in crisis.

For analytical purposes, chapter 2 explained the differences between discourses, rhetoric and frames. There is consensus that discourses exist separately from social actors; rhetoric is the persuasive use of discourses to push audiences to do something in the name of a supreme good; while framing ensures some aspects of reality are selected and given greater emphasis and is a unifying factor between discourses and rhetoric (Manuti, 2005; Ardevol-Abreu, 2015; Thomas & Turnbull, 2017). The analysis focuses on a sample of 7 government Facebook posts; that is, 4 Facebook posts between November 2011 and December 2017 during the BDC crisis and 3 Facebook posts between December 2019 and June 2020 for the BR crisis. These posts are representative of the output of the organisations because they were the most liked and commented on by audiences. Additionally, these Facebook posts were selected from a sample of content analysis which identified the crisis responses strategies that PR practitioners used, as well as an observed ideology that organisations propagated to inhibit the audiences from challenging the organisations. In other words, their selection eliminated possibilities of subjectivity and picking of post with a pre-determined outcome.

As explained earlier in chapter 4, this small sample complements the content analysis data and informs the semi-structured interview data. Its selection was not arbitrary but informed by research. CDA often 'involves the analysis of a small number of texts, even of just one or two' (Machin and Mayr, 2012: 207). Again, what is essential in these Facebook posts, is not what the organisations said, but rather, to borrow Thomas and Turnbull (2017: 934)'s terms, 'where, when, why, by who and to whom' the messages were communicated. Chapter 4 clearly explained that considering linguistic features in Facebook posts helps to chart the balance and imbalance of power during a crisis (Jacobs, 1999). In addition, these Facebook posts

highlighted the crisis response strategies and were ideologically loaded and advanced the organisations' narrative of economic development. The organisations established this narrative to strategically dominate and weaken the Facebook audiences' worldview of these crises. An example from Thomas & Turnbull (2017) is adapted to distinguish the screenshots. For instance, a single asterisk (*) shows that the screenshot is similar to one previously used, and a double asterisk shows that the screenshot is repeated verbatim.

6.1. Textual analysis: Establishing power using lexical choices
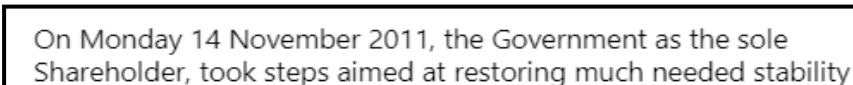
The textual analysis begins at the macro level to consider the mediation of an ideology of economic development in the BDC and BR crisis information on Facebook. The discourses around the BDC and BR crises information, implicitly and explicitly, drive the narrative that these organisations contribute to the country's economic development, are epitomes of good governance and should not be challenged.

As indicated earlier, the analysis examines 4 Facebook posts (featuring the dominant corrective response strategy) about the BDC crisis. The posts featured frames suggesting how the corporation contributed to the country's economic development and is the epitome of good governance. These Facebook posts elevated the organisations to a dominant position of power over the audiences. For example, in these Facebook posts, there is a reference to lexical choices such as 'sole shareholder' (BWgovernment, 23/11/2011, Appendix 5a), 'stewardship' (BWgovernment, 22/07/2017, Appendix 5d), 'pioneering growth' (BWgovernment, 22/07/2017, Appendix 5d), 'transformation' (BWgovernment, 16/04/2014, Appendix 5c), as well as 'capital investment and jobs' (BWgovernment, 24/04/2013, Appendix 5b).

It seems the Government of Botswana purposefully used some of these phrases on Facebook posts to persuade and inhibit the audience from challenging and assigning crisis responsibility on the BDC. When the crisis started, the government used Facebook to reach out to the youth population. By deliberately projecting the narrative of economic development through these frames, the government Facebook discourse intended to influence the audiences to believe that challenging the organisation was less patriotic and as good as biting the hand that feeds.
The lexical choices featured prominently in Facebook posts from the beginning of the crisis in 2011 to the post-crisis stage in 2017. As explained earlier, one of the benefits of lexical choices

in the text is that they help convey power over the audiences and can shape the reader's or listener's interpretation of discourse (Poole, 2015). For example, during the Covid-19 pandemic, governments used a range of selected words to influence people to behave in a certain way. There is an example from each of the 4 Facebook posts to develop explanations of how the government used lexical choices in the discourses of economic development to assert authority over the audiences:

> On Monday 14 November 2011, the Government as the sole
> Shareholder, took steps aimed at restoring much needed stability.

Figure 6.2: An excerpt from BWgovernment Facebook post on 23/11/2011 (See Appendix 5a)

When the government posted the initial crisis message on Facebook (BWgovernment, 23/11/2011, Appendix 5a), the focus was on defending the BDC against corporate malfeasance and corruption allegations storm raging across Facebook. Additionally, it seems the idea behind accentuating the government's dominant position was to foreground its reasons for stepping in to resolve this corporate malfeasance. As such, it seems the government intended to manipulate the audiences to believe that the state stepped in to protect the interests of the stakeholders since the BDC is a state-owned enterprise and funded through public tax. This might be the reason why the government promoted the organisation's corporate values and ideology of economic development to manipulate the audiences into submission and empathy. This shift of focus is not surprising because the government is a strong advocate and facilitator of economic development and uses these stories to promote good deeds (for the common good) to cunningly 'exercise power over the subordinate and subjugated groups' (Machin & Mayr, 2012:24).

One of the strategic ways to influence the audience was for the government to assert power through legal and hierarchical means (Machin & Mayr, 2012:42). Therefore, the phrase 'sole shareholder' denotes this legal and hierarchical power. Figure 6.2 (Appendix 5a) indicates that by featuring ownership through this phrase, the PR practitioners purposefully and explicitly reminded the audience that the BDC is a state-owned enterprise and that the government calls the shots. The phrase denotes the government's level of authority and legitimacy in the affairs of the BDC. It purposefully clarifies that the government has the sole responsibility for the corporation and is the final decision-maker. It sought to remind the audience that government calls the shots at the BDC and would resolve the problem and restore the firm's stability.

In addition to exerting power through legal and hierarchical means, the same post continued highlighting the critical role the corporation played in the achievement of the economic development of the country:

stewardship in the affairs of the Corporation, having regard to the critical role played by Botswana Development Corporation in the achievement of economic development of this country.

Continuation of a Facebook post at Figure 6.2*

As the Facebook post in Figure 6.2 continues, the government's discourse uses explicit language, not as a 'vehicle of communication or persuasion, but a means of social construction and domination' (Machin & Mayr, 2012:24). The lexical choice 'stewardship' seeks to influence the perceptions of the audiences about the BDC. The discourse drives a narrative that the corporation is not profit-driven but contributes to economic development. This served to highlight the organisation's good over the bad that has happened, to persuade and inhibit the audiences from challenging the organisation. The post also justifies the government's intervention because the BDC plays a critical role in achieving economic development. Using this discourse, the government successfully drives the narrative to attract patriotism and sympathy from the audience. The BDC's role in economic development is undisputed. As indicated in Chapter 1, the BDC's mandate is to fund viable large scale projects (Botswana Development Corporation, 2013). As a result, this frame manipulates the audiences because some enjoy gainful employment from businesses that the BDC directly financed. Therefore, it seems reasonable to suggest that driving such a narrative inhibits any reasonable audience from questioning the organisation's discourse. The narrative also attracts the audience's sympathy and support for the organisation in crisis.

Furthermore, the government uses lexical choices to qualify facts. The frame 'pioneering growth' portrays the BDC as an engine of economic growth (Figure 6.3, Appendix 5d). Sometimes organisations manipulate the audiences to understand reality from a particular worldview due to their limited knowledge and grasp of facts (Machin & Mayr, 2012). Figure 6.3 is an excerpt from a Facebook post showing a statement read out during a parliamentary question and answer session by the then Assistant Minister of Investment Trade and Industry.

on the 15th April 1970. The company has played a pivotal role in pioneering growth in a number of sectors such as; Aviation with Air Botswana, Car rental with Avis Property Development, Hospitality through Cresta Group of Hotels. BDC has led the industrial development drive of Botswana through the likes of; Sechaba Breweries, Nortex Industries, Kromberg and Schubert, Kwena

Figure 6.3: Excerpt from BWgovernment Facebook post on 22/07/2017 (See Appendix 5d)

Since the crisis kept resurfacing on Facebook, the government used the phrase 'pioneering growth' to inhibit the publics from challenging the BDC. The phrase is used to remind the general public that the BDC is not an ordinary organisation but a champion of Botswana's industrial growth. The phrase suggests to the audiences that without the BDC, thriving industries such as Sechaba Breweries, Nortex, Kromberg and Schubert, and Kwena, to mention just a few, would be non-existent. By extension, it suggests that there would be high unemployment without these industries. As explained earlier, the message resonates with thousands of workers gainfully employed by these industries. Ideally, most Facebook audiences would be moved by this message because they are either directly employed by these industries or their relatives and friends have gainful employment from them. With Botswana's small population of over 2 million and high youth unemployment of 32.4% (Statistics Botswana, 2021), the message appeals to all and sundry.

The lexical choice in this Facebook post also elevates the government and BDC to an absolute position of power because of their responsibility to provide solutions to the plight of ordinary citizens. The PR practitioners purposely put out the BDC's track record in everyday language to give an impression that they understand the plight of the audiences. The idea is to influence the audiences to sympathise with the organisation because it does all it can to resolve their plight of unemployment. Furthermore, the need to address unemployment is examplar of how the government uses language to manipulate the audiences, to believe that they are at its mercy to transform the economy (see Figure 6.4, Appendix 5c):

The new Botswana Development Corporation (BDC) managing director Mr Bashi Gaetsaloe is on a mission to transform his company to a profitable organisation through investment in economically viable and sustainable activities.

Figure 6.4: An excerpt from BWgovernment post on 16/04/2014 (See Appendix 5c)

Here, the government's discourse intends to manipulate the audiences to believe and accept the new managing director as exactly what was needed to transform the organisation to create jobs for the country. Moreover, lexical choices can also influence audiences through claims of organisations having 'specialist knowledge' (Machin & Mayr, 2012:42). For example, during the Covid-19 pandemic, the scientists used jargon and specialist knowledge to persuade the audiences to follow the restrictions. This specialist knowledge was not easier to challenge, although some people did. In this way, the Facebook post about the BDC crisis portrays the new managing director as a specialist and a man on a 'mission to transform his company to a profitable organisation through investment in economically viable and sustainable activities.' This excerpt is used as a corrective strategy to show the general public that the organisation is doing everything to bring in the right people to stir the company forward. The organisation purposely uses this frame to manipulate the audiences to believe that the new managing director is more trustworthy than the last executives, thus rebuilding trust in the process. The intention is to portray the organisation as doing the right things (bringing in the right people to prevent future occurrence of crisis) and influence the audiences to trust the organisation again. The idea is to portray the organisation as correcting the problem and moving beyond the crisis.

Indeed, unemployment is a problem, and the government effectively used lexical choices to drive this narrative. While it is impossible to address this problem without spending money, the government used phrases such as 'capital investment and job creation' to demonstrate the organisation's power to create jobs to eradicate unemployment (Figure 6.5, Appendix 5b):

> Zimona explained that about P400 million had already been injected into the project; hence the decision by both government and the BDC to ensure that the project, which the two parties deemed viable was completed as intended and to start operation.

Figure 6.5: An excerpt from BWgovernment post on 24/04/2013 (See Appendix 5b)

> Zimona also explained that on completion, the project, which would create about 400 jobs for Batswana, would see 70 per cent of employees sent for training outside the country.

Continuation of an excerpt from Figure 6.5*

It is important to note that in the last two years prior to this post, the government and the BDC were not proactive in sharing information, and the crisis kept resurfacing on Facebook as the

general elections approached. Most of the posts were politically motivated and emerged from Facebook groups run by political parties. As such, the information on this Facebook post was part of the BDC spokesperson's address to the community, which hosted the glass project, to emotionally appeal to the general publics by showing that the government had their best interest in this situation. For example, in Figure 6.5, the government appeals to the audiences to understand that the capital investment into the glass project was viable and a practical solution to unemployment. Here, the government paints a picture of the size of the investment to justify the need for swift intervention to rescue the project from further loss and wastage of public funds. Implicitly, the government also suggests that job creation was unattainable without capital investment into the BDC Fengyue Glass Project. In other words, the government is influencing the audiences to give the BDC a second chance because the investment was in the public interest. Hence an appeal for Facebook audiences to support the BDC Fengyue Glass Project.

Regarding the BR crisis, the analysis considered 3 Facebook posts featuring the regret, concern and corrective response strategies from December 2019 until June 2020. The posts featured lexical choices that the government deployed to dominate the Facebook audiences. These lexical choices influenced the Facebook audiences by claiming that the government speaks a language familiar to them. For example, there is a reference to 'grief and duty' (BWgovernment, 10/12/2019, Appendix 5e), 'investigations' (BWgovernment, 16/12/2019, Appendix 5f), and 'competence and expertise' (BWgovernment, 20/12/2019, Appendix 5g). The Government of Botswana used these phrases to set an agenda that projects the BR as an epitome of good corporate governance. The narrative purposefully intended to dominate, manipulate and inhibit the audiences from challenging and assigning crisis responsibility to the BR.

A total of 400 people were onboard including passengers and crew members. The passengers were safely evacuated from the scene and buses were hired to take them to their respective destinations.

Figure 6.6: An excerpt of the BR post on 10/12/2019 (See Appendix 5e).

Here, the BR discourse uses lexical choices to demonstrate co-membership with the audiences (Machin & Mayr, 2012). The discourse portrays the organisation as a responsible corporate citizen that has the compassion to help the accident victims. If the organisation was not concerned, passengers would have fended for themselves. These lexical choices purposefully

manipulate the audiences to believe that the organisations showed care and took control of the situation. It seems the idea was to inhibit the audience from challenging the corporation's legitimacy and ethical performance (Bachmann & Ingengoff, 2016). As such, the BR used its moral duty as a bargaining chip to attract public sympathy. As explained in chapter 2, CSR acts as a means of protection and a reservoir of goodwill to insulate the firm against the negative impact of a crisis (Assiouras et al., 2013; Janssen et al., 2015). It seems in difficult times, the audience tend to sympathise with companies that act responsibly. It explains why the organisation's initial crisis information featured lexical choices highlighting that the organisation is grieving and is acting dutifully by evacuating the passengers from the scene. The Facebook post continued with the government announcing the death of the two crew members, reflecting the use of the regret response strategy:

> It is with deep regret that two crew members lost their lives during the accident, names are withheld until their next of kin have been notified.

Continuation of an excerpt from Figure 6.6*

The phrases such as 'deep regret' and 'withheld until next of kin have been notified' connote the BR's authority and co-membership with the audiences. The lexical choice 'deep regret,' which highlights the regret crisis response strategy, helps the audiences appreciate that the organisations feel the same pain as them and badly about the crisis. The purpose is to manipulate the audiences to believe that the organisations speak the same language as them and deserve some sympathy.

In Botswana's culture, organisations follow a protocol to inform the public about death caused by accidents within the workplace. Such announcements may not appear in the media before notifying families. Usually, senior officials from the organisations visit families to relay the bad news and commiserate before sharing announcements with the public on Facebook. Therefore, using the phrase 'withheld until next of kin has been notified' shows conformity to this culture. It shows that the BR has the authority to inform the affected families and the audience about the accident before it is shared all over Facebook. The appeal purposefully persuades the audience and inhibit them from sharing information about the accident as it might cause further pain to grieving families. Therefore, the statement appeals for calm among the audience who may spread the news on social media before the organisations inform the

families. The government and BR's decision was strategic to project the BR as a culturally sensitive organisation. Indeed, an approach that considers culture has great potential to achieve long term and sustainable outcomes in crisis communication planning (George & Kwansah-Aidoo, 2017). Occupying this privileged position of power enabled the BR to ease anxiety and panic among the audience who had the assurance that the organisation takes responsibility for the crisis.

> The Ministry of Transport and Communications has instituted an investigation into circumstances leading to the derailment of Botswana Railway Passenger Train 0501 near Pallaroad Tuesday, 10th December 2019.

Figure 6.7: An excerpt from BWgovernment about the BR crisis posted on 16/12/2019 (See Appendix 5f)

By featuring a corrective response strategy with lexical choices such as 'instituted an investigation', suggests authority and independence (Figure 6.7). Here, the government is demonstrating its extent of power to get to the bottom of the situation and return the organisation to stakeholders' expectations. The objective is to implicitly manipulate the audiences to believe that the government is doing all in its power to meet the audiences' expectations. In other words, the intention is for the audience to believe that the government is doing what they also want- which is to bring the perpetrators to book. Lexical choices in this instance become essential for the government to demonstrate its authority and influence the perception of Facebook audiences. For the government, the use of lexical choices is purposeful, rational and appealing to the publics. It is not accidental or misplaced but helps to convey authority (Machin & Mayr, 2012). In addition to instituting a public hearing to demonstrate its authority to return the organisation to stakeholders' expectations, the government emphasises that competent authorities would conduct the investigations:

> should be done, in circumstances of this nature. I have since appointed a competent person under the requirements of section 4 of that Act to lead the investigation and primarily to go to the accident site to gather and preserve evidence. I also directed him to do a preliminary report which I have received.

Figure 6.8: An excerpt from BWgovernment about the BR crisis posted on 20/12/2019 (See Appendix 5g)

Here, the Minister of Transport and Communication presented a preliminary report about the train accident to the Parliament of Botswana. His speech features lexical choices in the

corrective response strategy when speaking to the legislators to assure them that investigations would be futile without experts. The statement was then shared on Facebook to assure the audience that the government has engaged experts to investigate the accident to avoid future occurrences of the problem. By explicitly stating that experts would lead the investigations, the government suggests leaving no stone unturned and taking the accident seriously. It seems the use of the 'I' is very significant because it suggests personal responsibility on the part of the Minister. Members of Parliament and the public they represent need to be moved by this rhetoric because, as taxpayers, they expect anyone accused of wrongdoing to be held accountable.

6.2. Abstraction as a tool for persuasion and manipulation

The analysis continues in the outer (ideological) layer. The linguistic tool of abstraction featured purposefully in Facebook posts during the BDC and BR crises. Organisations used this tool to conceal concrete details about events and used generalisations and broader concepts (Machin & Mayr, 2012). Abstraction is often common in a political language where specific facts are backgrounded or concealed. The most important questions here are: why did the government background or conceal specific facts during the BDC and BR crises? What purpose did it serve? The government information gatekeepers, especially Permanent Secretaries, are more inclined to please their political masters (the Ministers and the President) whose language, often appeals to the common masses to keep them in power, is 'largely the defence of the indefensible' (Jones & Wareing, 1999:38).

In the Facebook post about the BDC crisis, there is a reference to phrases such as 'protecting wrongdoers' (BWgovernment, 23/11/2011, Appendix 5a) and 'casualties' (BWgovernment, 10/12/2019, Appendix 5e). For example, during the BDC crisis, the government announced new board members and obscured the identity of dismissed board members accused of wrongdoing to further the agenda of economic development:

> The Board of Directors of BDC has been re-constituted following the appointment of Messrs Blackie Marole, Serwalo Tumelo and Modise Modise who replaced three board members, who have been retired as Directors. Mr. Blackie Marole is the new Chairman of the Board.

Figure 6.9: Excerpt from BWgovernment about BDC crisis posted on 23/11/2011* (Appendix 5a)

By using abstraction in a corrective response strategy, the government does not want to alarm the audience and deflect their attention from the narrative of economic development. The identity of the new board members was known, but the phrase '…who replace three board members, who have been retired as Directors' is an abstraction because it obscures the identity of these retired directors and the reason for their dismissal concealed. Notably, the government prefers 'retired', to possibly protect the reputation of the former board members and the BDC. The big question is why the government protected wrongdoers' identity? It seems the government's decision to obscure the identity of the fallen board members is purposeful.

On the other hand, the post explicitly reveals the identity of new directors because they are reputable and respected corporate leaders in Botswana. For example, Blackie Marole is the former managing director of the Debswana diamond mining company. Serwalo Tumelo was the former Permanent Secretary at the then Ministry of Finance and Development Planning, under which the BDC is a state-owned enterprise. Nevertheless, the message is apparent to the audience: that government's intervention in appointing reputable and respected corporate leaders at the corporation's helm would quickly return the organisation to stakeholders' expectations. It is clear that wherever there is such abstraction, there is an indication of some 'ideological manipulation' (Machin & Mayr, 2012: 116). This kind of message appeals to the Facebook audience because it seems the dismissal of the old board and subsequent appointment of the new board is a precondition for the corporation to move out of the crisis in the right direction. The same technique was used again in the post-crisis information published on 20/07/2017:

> assets. "Following a valuation of the assets as explained above, the land, plant, power station and railway spur were sold for the sum of P54,382,000 inclusive Value Added Tax.

Figure 6.10: Excerpt from BWgovernment about the BDC crisis posted on 20/07/2017 (See Appendix 5d)

This Facebook post responded to a parliamentary question asked by the then Specially Elected Member of Parliament, Mr Mephato Reatile, who had asked about the liquidation and sale of the glass factory. The then Assistant Minister of Investment Trade and Industry, Mr Biggie Butale, addressed parliament, and his response was posted on Facebook as part of the post-crisis communication. In his response, the assistant minister purposefully uses abstraction to conceal the cost of each asset (land, plant, power station, and the railway line). He provides the total cost of P54,382,000.00 (equivalence of £3,5 million), possibly to avoid questions on why each asset fetched the amount it was sold. That protects the organisation from further scrutiny and saves the audience unnecessary shock if details were made public. The concealment of the buyer's identity, which is the work of abstraction, is of considerable significance. Although the technique protected the organisation's shambolic procurement processes, it exposed the details of the sale process. The public could possibly get agitated if the buyers' identities were of the ruling class. Nonetheless, the same technique featured in the BR crisis information:

> At least two crew members and one passenger sustained injuries and have been hospitalized at Mahalapye District Hospital. Some passengers were treated for minor injuries and discharged immediately. Meanwhile, one female passenger have been referred to Princess Marina for further diagnosis and medical treatment.

Figure 6.11: Excerpt from BWgovernment about BR crisis posted on 10/12/2019* (See Appendix 5e)

The statement features a regret crisis response strategy and informs the audience that the hospitalised crew members and one passenger sustained injuries. Again, the government deliberately conceals details about the extent of the injuries of the hospitalised and discharged passengers to avoid shocking or alarming the audiences. The message influences the audiences to believe that only a few passengers suffered injuries, and the rest are safe. However, a few passengers sustaining injuries is not an excuse to absolve the organisation from wrongdoing in the accident. The absence of abstraction would have evoked emotions of sadness, fear and panic among the Facebook audiences. It seems the organisations used abstraction to obscure potentially alarming and shocking details to manipulate and maintain calm among the audience.

Furthermore, the use of abstraction also helped conceal the identity of the deceased crew members and injured passengers until their families were informed. The decision to use this linguistic tool looks reasonable because Botswana's culture prohibits people from announcing deaths before the authorities inform families. Revealing the identity of the dead crew members and the seriously injured passenger before the BR announced to the families could be viewed as culturally insensitive. As explained in Chapter 2, knowing what different cultures expect and how they articulate their views during crises ensures that the activities of various publics are considered when planning the crisis communication process (George & Kwansah-Aidoo, 2017). As an organisation that wants to appear culturally sensitive and caring, abstraction adds weight and credence to its discourse.

6.3. Honorifics and nomination as persuasion tools

In both the BDC and BR crises, the government used names of senior officials to dominate and influence the Facebook audiences. Names are represented differently in political discourse. Functional honorifics and nomination represent titles and names, respectively. Functional honorifics are terms that suggest a degree of seniority or a role that requires a degree of respect (Machin & Mayr, 2012). However, the term nomination refers to when participants are named to show who they are (Machin & Mayr, 2012: 81). Both functional honorifics and nomination are linguistic techniques often used in political discourse to connote legitimacy and power (Agyekum, 2003). Therefore, the government used both names and titles of influential social actors during the BDC and BR crises to dominate, influence and manipulate the audiences:

> The Board of Directors of BDC has been re-constituted following the appointment of Messrs Blackie Marole, Serwalo Tumelo and Modise Modise who replaced three board members, who have been retired as Directors. Mr. Blackie Marole is the new Chairman of the Board.

Figure 6.12: Excerpt from BWgovernment about BDC crisis posted on 23/11/2011** (See Appendix 5a)

Here, the government used nomination to manipulate the audiences to believe that the government made the best decision to appoint and announce quality leadership to steer the BDC out of the crisis. In this case, the board members are nominated for who they are and not depicted by what they do (Machin & Mayr, 2012). However, honorifics denote their gender. The title 'Messrs' reinforces the idea that the male characters are the strongest in societies in

Botswana, and always in control of difficult situations. While this is a hugely debatable issue, the government's Facebook discourse suggests that Botswana is a patriarchal society that looks to masculine power in times of trouble. This confirms observations by Gürkan & Serttaş (2017: 406), that male characters in patriarchal ideologies are often regarded as people with excellent qualities who have 'no flaws in their characters.' Accordingly, these three men are famous and respected personalities in Botswana's corporate circles. Their names ring a bell to the audience because Blackie Marole was an important figure in the diamond mining sector, while Tumelo Serwalo was the former permanent secretary in the Ministry of Finance in Botswana. These two figures played an important role in transforming the country from its poor income status in 1966 to an upper-middle income country which depends on diamonds for revenue (Botlhale, 2017; Good, 2017; World Bank, 2022).

Their track record is public knowledge and they command respect from the publics. Therefore, the government purposefully used the names of these corporate leaders as sympathy cards to strategically restore public confidence; improve audience perception; repair the BDC's legitimacy and reputation; and demonstrate a return to adherence to stakeholders' expectations (Coombs & Holladay,1996). In a different post, during the post-crisis stage, the government used nomination and this time included functional honorifics to denote legitimacy:

Having parted ways with the Shanghai Fengyue Glass Manufacturing Company, the Botswana Development Corporation (BDC) has assumed 100 per cent ownership of the Glass Manufacturing project in Palapye, the BDC Spokesperson Mr Gomolemo Zimona has said.

Figure 6.13: Excerpt from BWgovernment about BDC crisis posted on 24/04/2013* (See Appendix 5b)

Here, functional honorifics qualify the level of importance of the actor. The government uses Gomolemo Zimona's title 'BDC Spokesperson' to suggest a degree of seniority in his role. Since he was addressing the community, hosting the glass project, about some of the corrective measures that the organisation took to manage the crisis, his title signalled his level of seniority and importance in the organisation (Machin & Mayr, 2012). The government used functional honorifics to assure the audiences that a senior executive addressed the community about the corrective measures. Since the message came from a high ranking than a junior official, it seemed more appealing and impactful even to the Facebook audiences who did not attend the community meeting.

> The new Botswana Development Corporation (BDC) managing director Mr Bashi Gaetsaloe is on a mission to transform his company to a profitable organisation through investment in economically viable and sustainable activities.

Figure 6.14: Excerpt from BWgovernment about BDC crisis posted on 16/04/2014** (See Appendix 5c)

In this example (Figure 6.14), the government used functional honorifics and nomination to drive the narrative that a new broom sweeps better than an old broom. The intention was to influence the audience to believe that the new managing director would transform the BDC into a profitable organisation that can contribute significantly to the country's economic development. The title 'managing director' makes Bashie Gaetsaloe appear strategically positioned to transform and lead the BDC out of the crisis. Here, the government does not explicitly say the former BDC executives failed to turn the company around but uses implicature for the audiences to make sense of the information (Machin & Mayr, 2012). All these discourses manage audience minds, although 'mind management is not always blatantly manipulative' (van Dijk, 1993: 254).

This post-crisis information might help the audiences to formulate a positive image about the organisations and to rebuild trust. The narrative that this post is driving is that the BDC has been rescued from failure and is now in capable hands that will normalise operations and make it profitable. The use of functional honorifics and nomination makes the message more appealing. It helps to project the government as actively leading the organisation out of the crisis and doing what people want, thus attracting audience sympathy. It makes sense to persuade audiences by showing them that what they want is what the organisation wishes to do (Jones & Wareing, 1999: 34).

Furthermore, the government used this technique during the BR crisis to denote legitimacy and power. On the day of the BR accident, the government posted a Facebook message informing audiences that the senior government officials visited the scene and hospital to commiserate with the grieving and injured:

> The Minister of Transport and Communications Honourable
> Thulagano Segokgo visited the scene of the accident and Mahalapye
> Hospital to meet the injured crew members and passengers. He was
> accompanied by the Botswana Railways Board Chairperson Adolf
> Hirchfeld, Chief Executive Officer Mr. Leonard Makhwinja and Acting
> Permanent Secretary Mr. Garekwe Mojaphoko.

*Figure 6.15: Excerpt from BWgovernment about BR crisis posted on 10/12/2019** (See Appendix 5e)*

Here, the government uses functional honorifics and nomination to clarify that a cabinet minister, accompanied by senior government and BR officials, visited the accident scene and hospital. The minister's entourage comprised: Botswana Railways Board Chairperson, Mr Adolf Hirschfeld; Botswana Railways Chief Executive Officer, Mr Leonard Makwinja; and Acting Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Transport and Communication, Mr Garekwe Mojaphoko. These are titles of high-ranking officials 'that required a degree of respect' (Machin & Mayr, 2012: 82). The social significance of high ranking government and BR officials at the accident scene and hospitals is striking.

The BR CEO is not at the same level of importance and power as the minister, and delegating him would not have carried the same weight as the minister. The audience would have perceived it as arrogant and condescending. Therefore, the minister's visit to the accident scene and hospital (moral duty) affirmed the level of respect the organisations extended to the audiences, who reciprocated it. The injured, their families and friends must have felt more honoured and comforted to receive a guest of the minister's stature. In addition, the minister's visit conforms with Botswana's culture and humanistic ethos of respect and manners (Livingston, 2011). Therefore, the use of functional honorifics and nomination in this crisis message was purposeful- to inhibit audiences from challenging the BR. The use of titles and names influences and manipulates the audience to sympathise with the organisation because it took the accident seriously.

On the other hand, the Facebook discourse would have taken a different turn had the organisation sent junior officers to the accident scene and hospitals, and audiences could have reacted angrily and disrespectfully. Therefore, the use of functional honorifics and nomination inhibited the audiences from challenging the organisation. It seems discourses featuring high

ranking officials can attract a certain level of respect from Facebook audiences in Botswana. As a result, audiences can lessen the extent of crisis responsibility on the organisation.

In sum, the analysis demonstrated how the Government of Botswana used language in the BDC and BR Facebook crisis information to establish hegemony to manipulate their Facebook audiences and inhibit them from challenging the organisations. It is important to note that political discourse dominated the BDC and BR crises because of the way the government intervened in the crisis communication process. The government used state power to dominate the Facebook audiences. State power played an essential role during both crises, and the government intervened because of vested interest in the BDC and BR, which is 'tied to capital' (Fairclough, 1989: 33). These are some of the broader economic circumstances influencing the production of crisis information during these crises. The Facebook information about the BDC crisis demonstrated how the government used its dominant position over the corporation and the audiences.

Moreover, this chapter considered institutional practices which people draw upon to embody assumptions that 'directly or indirectly legitimise existing power relations' (Fairclough, 1989: 33). During the BDC crisis, the government aggressively drove the narrative of economic development. However, the government implicitly propagated this ideology during the BR crisis. The analysis demonstrated that ideologies might shape crisis information to persuade Facebook audiences to sympathise with the organisations in crisis. The Facebook discourse featured an ideology that appeared as a 'shared value, common sense, and challenging to question' (Jones & Wareing, 1999:34). Therefore, the analysis unmasked an ideology of economic development, which the government propagated as a narrative during the BDC and BR crises. In setting this economic development agenda and stating the BDC and BR's significant contribution, the government used linguistic features to dominate, manipulate and influence the audiences to sympathise with the organisations.

Furthermore, the organisations engaged in socio-cultural practices that legitimised their existing power. For example, the organisation leveraged the power of cultural sensitivity and conformity when the Minister of Transport and Communication and high-ranking officials visited the accident scene and the hospital to comfort and commiserate with the injured and grieving families. Their visit reflected both the organisations' and Botswana's culture and

humanistic ethos of respect and manners (Livingston, 2011). The discourse would have changed considerably if the organisations sent junior officers to the accident scene and hospitals. As such, observing this culture contributed to the development of the text. The cultural practice helped the BR, and the government to assert their power, corporate legitimacy and 'demonstrate ethical performance' (de Colle et al., 2014:177). It showed that the BR was morally, ethically and culturally compliant with the expectations of the stakeholders. The practice also helped the organisations to inhibit the audience from challenging their legitimacy and ethical performance (Bachmann & Ingengoff, 2016).

Furthermore, the government effectively and purposefully used lexical choices, abstraction, functional honorifics and nomination to inhibit audiences from challenging the organisations' discourse. Therefore, the organisations packaged their crisis information around the dominant corrective response strategy to rebuild trust and legitimacy by assuring stakeholders they would do all they can to return to their expectations. The way the organisations asserted legitimacy emerged through the dominant discourses of power and lexical choices to 'indicate the level of authority and co-membership with the audiences' (Machin & Mayr, 2012: 42). The discourse portrayed the government as the ultimate authority that called the shots at both the BDC and the BR. This position of power persuaded the audiences to believe that the government had more legitimacy to bring order at the two state-owned enterprises during their emergencies. This Facebook discourse persuaded the audience to believe that the organisations have their best interest at heart. Lexical choices were used in both crises to dominate and manipulate Facebook audiences to believe that the government had more authority than the BDC and the BR to manage and end the crisis. Through a demonstration of power, authority and co-membership (Fairclough,1995; Machin & Mayr, 2012) with the audience, the government effectively used lexical choices to achieve its communicative objective of inhibiting audiences from challenging these state-owned enterprises.

The government used abstraction to conceal details that could have alarmed and shocked audiences. However, it seems abstraction manifested more in political language when organisations defended what they were not supposed to defend. It also played an essential role in creating a particular worldview showing that the organisations conform to the local culture when planning crisis communication. Additionally, the analysis found that Botswana's culture is sensitive to the announcement of workplace bereavements and accidents. As such, the names

of the deceased cannot be announced until senior officials inform families. The work of abstraction in such discourses makes perfect sense.

Moreover, the government's Facebook discourse also deployed abstraction to protect wrongdoers during the crisis. These were employees who had connections to their political appointing authorities. Concealing their names was purposeful to protect the organisation's reputation and to lessen the extent of crisis responsibility. As such, abstraction furthered the narrative that the organisations deserve a second chance because they contribute significantly to the country's economic development.

Lastly, functional honorifics and nomination attracted the attention of the Facebook audiences to the faces and titles behind what the organisations said, who said what, and how they said it. Since the BDC and BR leveraged these linguistic devices to connote legitimacy and power, the organisations used influential social actors for trading respect, and they received it in return from the Facebook audiences. Although this analysis did not consider Facebook comment reactions, the use of functional honorifics and nomination effectively persuaded audiences to react respectfully when the government announced the reputable names of the new BDC directors. In addition, they also reacted respectfully in their comments when the minister and his high-level delegation visited the accident scene and hospitals to commiserate with the passengers. In these incidents, the government effectively used functional honorifics and nomination to demonstrate that the degree of seniority of officials attending to the crisis commands public respect and can save the organisations' reputation. Functional honorifics and nominations demonstrated that the government and the BR cared about the plight of passengers and the audiences. It seems this is what stakeholders wanted to see if they were to sympathise with the organisations in crises. An arrogant organisation may find it difficult to attract public sympathy during a crisis. Such organisations may also find it challenging to connote legitimacy and power over their audiences. Therefore, the narrative developed in this chapter is as follows:

- Crisis information embedded with ideology might inhibit Facebook audiences from questioning the discourse and challenging the organisations in crisis.

- Culture shapes crisis information and might positively influence audience reaction on Facebook because knowing what different cultures expect helps in the development of crisis information.

- Institutional practices might help organisations to assert power, corporate legitimacy and demonstrate ethical performance.

- Corporate social responsibility is a valuable bargaining chip for organisations in Botswana to negotiate relationships with Facebook audiences.

- Linguistic tools like lexical choices effectively achieve the communicative objective of inhibiting audiences from challenging the organisation.

- Purposeful use of lexical choices might help organisations establish hegemony over the audiences and enable organisations to dominate, persuade and influence their audiences.

- Abstraction is a tool for persuasion and helps to conceal details that might alarm and shock audiences.

- The use of functional honorifics and nomination demonstrate that the degree of seniority of officials attending to the crisis might command respect from audiences and save the organisation's reputation.

CHAPTER 7: Insights and experiences of industry experts

Chapter 5 established the characteristics of crisis communication in Botswana through the content analysis of Facebook posts about the BDC and BR crises. Chapter 6 then added a qualitative richness to complement the quantitative findings through the critical discourse analysis of the Facebook posts about these two case studies. Now, using the thematic analysis of 20 interviews with industry experts (senior PR practitioners) from private, parastatals and government organisations in Botswana, this chapter further enhances and complements the numerical and qualitative findings by adding the practitioners' explanations, insights and experiences. Most of these practitioners were chosen because their organisations are either state-owned or private with established and structured PR departments. The study uses pseudonyms to give them anonymity, but their real work designations are used to refer to them throughout the chapter to maintain the integrity of the findings (Saunders et al., 2015). Their explanations are helpful because this research is situated within the realm of critical realism, which prefers ontologically holistic explanations of how and why things are the way they are (Kurki, 2007: 366) because 'nothing happens for nothing' (Alakwe, 2017:39). This chapter establishes that there is a disparity between the Western and non-western crisis communication approaches and calls for PR practitioners in Botswana to change their approaches to practice excellent public relations.

Chapter 4 has indicated that these semi-structured interviews with senior PR practitioners in Botswana were conducted through Zoom calls between September and October 2021. Since the interviewees are senior practitioners and experts in PR, anonymity was granted to gain access because they occupy positions where barriers can be produced to resist research scrutiny (Browne, 2005; Lancaster, 2015). [4] Additionally, anonymity is further granted through the use of pseudonyms for participants (not their real names), and these names are nothing like their real names.

Furthermore, the researcher used his network contact list from his previous work experiences in Botswana to recruit the senior practitioners to participate in the interviews. Ethical considerations as per the university's ethics system were taken into account. The number of

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[4] As a former private media and PR practitioner as well as a former Private Secretary to the Minister in the Government of Botswana, the researcher knew that to have access to the senior practitioners, anonymity must be guaranteed for them to open up.

participants identified through this process was inadequate to reach a representative sample of 20 participants (Appendix 6a) because some had either been retrenched, transferred, retired or left for greener pastures. As such, the researcher opened up the recruitment process for other practitioners to suggest names from their networks using the snowball sampling technique (Cohen & Arieli, 2011). The decision to use this technique was because the researcher had difficulty locating and accessing practitioners as most of them were working from home during the pandemic.

As indicated in Chapter 4, the Zoom interviews were recorded with the participants' permission, and the Zoom automatic transcripts (Appendix 8) were thoroughly swept for inconsistencies. At some point, the Zoom transcripts did not match the recorded audio, probably due to Zoom missing some words or offering wrong words that were not uttered in the interviews. A series of decisions and judgments were made during the editing process because part of what the participants said was 'incoherent and repetitive in direct transcription' (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2018: 105). Initially, there were 18 questions (Appendix 6d) but were reduced to only seven (Appendix 6e) to mitigate the repetition of responses from the respondent. However, follow-up questions were asked for supplementary information and to provide clarity on responses. Dropping the other questions also helped to ensure the interviews were completed within an hour, to one and a half hours, since most practitioners had indicated they were busy with work. Some of the interviews were conducted in the evenings and weekends, depending on the availability of the participants. The data was then thematically analysed and coded using NVivo, which provided fruitful analysis with 'meaningful interactions between the researcher and the data' (Maher et al., 2018: 2).

The data was then segmented into categories (nodes) used to sort and develop a comprehensive understanding of crisis communication in Botswana from the practitioners' perspectives. The transcribed interviews (Appendix 8) were then exported to NVivo to facilitate the coding and retrieval process and organised into various categories. The text was examined line by line and coded into corresponding categories. No data was discarded, except that a node on reputation was dropped from the coding manual. The reason for doing this was to avoid repetition because the practitioners mentioned corporate reputation and reputation management throughout their responses.

In addition, a node on 'overview of crisis' and its sub-categories like 'examples of crisis, types of crisis and understanding crises' were assimilated into the 'understanding crisis' node to reduce repetition. Since seven key questions were asked during the interviews, only seven nodes, except for the node on reputation, and 12 sub-categories (nodes), were developed into a coding manual (Appendix 3).
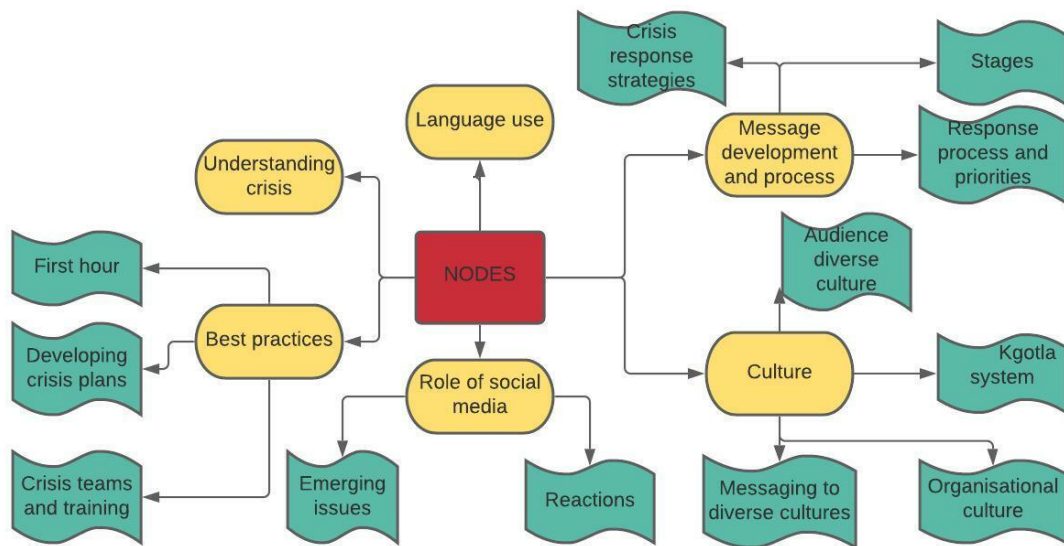
Figure 7.1: Nodes and sub-categories from the interview data

The extracted data was eventually coded into the following categories (Figure 7.1): understanding crisis; best practices (developing crisis communication plans, establishing crises teams and training, communicating within the first hour); culture (conservative organisational culture, unassuming and forgetful audience, messaging to diverse cultures, kgotla system); message development and processes (stages of development, response process, crisis response strategies); role of social media (emerging issues, reactions, hesitancy to use Facebook, lack of social media readiness, discreet engagement with audiences) and language use. The presentation of data in this study is attributed to the participants using pseudonyms and their actual work titles (see the list of interviewees at Appendix 6a).

7.1. Understanding organisational crisis

Generally, the findings indicate that practitioners in Botswana understand what constitutes an organisational crisis. One of the emergent issues from these interviews is that the practitioners'

understanding of a crisis determines their stance on crisis communication. It seems there is a group of practitioners whose understanding resonates with Western perspectives or culture and occupy a more proactive posture to crisis communication. As such, the Western approaches involve the way PR practitioners in countries such as the United States of America (USA), the United Kingdom (UK) and European countries respond to crises. The non-Western approaches include other contexts or countries, apart from the USA, UK and European way of responding to crises. As indicated earlier, the Western and the non-Western crisis approaches represent two different cultures and how 'these cultures play a crucial role in communicating crises' (Low et al.,2011: 219). In this connection, findings indicate that some practitioners in Botswana are faithful to cultural and traditional knowledge systems where societal peace is built through social values such as courtesy (Molomo, 2009). It seems reasonable to conclude that practitioners who occupy this posture are unassuming and reactive when communicating because they wait for crisis to unfold and react to negative and hostile media reports. Several of their views have been captured as follows:

7.1.1. Crisis as abrupt and disruptive

The first emerging view of organisational crisis, according to practitioners, is that it is abrupt and disruptive. An interviewee, Jane Rick, who works as the Head of Communications and Stakeholder Relations at a state-owned enterprise, explained that an organisational crisis is 'any situation with a disruptive nature to business… there is the public safety, the financial and the reputation aspects that crisis affects.' Another participant, Charity Crane, a communications manager for another parastatal organisation, suggests that its disruptive nature is sudden, unplanned and unexpected, adding that a crisis also disrupts the natural flow of business. Robert Rhys, participant who works as the Head of Communication and Marketing at a commercial bank, explained that crises negatively disrupt the normal flow of business and tend to announce themselves in a much-unexpected fashion. Moreover, Olivia Matthew a PR practitioner who works as the Head of Communication and Public Education at another parastatal, explained that a crisis could throw the organisation out of control and requires management. It seems practitioners who view crises in this way are swift and proactive because they believe that action must be taken to manage the situation before it gets out of control and harm the organisation. Most of them explained that they are always prepared and do not observe the situation unfolding before taking appropriate actions.

7.1.2. Persona-generated crises

Some of the crises affecting organisations in Botswana are perceived from a reputational point of view. For example, an interviewee explained that one of the crises he handled undermined 'the business from a reputational point of view…' (Robert Rhys, Head of Communications and Marketing). In addition, some of the crises are persona generated crises and are caused by executives and individuals within the organisation. According to the interviewees, the impact is usually 'little public confidence… regulatory backlash or loss of income or revenue for the organisation,' explained Boyd Andrews who works as a Digital Communications and Marketing Manager at a commercial bank. It seems the persona generated crises can also be as a result of wrong messaging, as suggested by an interviewee, Ethan Peters, who works as the Director of Communications and Stakeholder Relations at one of the parastatals. The interviewee explained that his organisation has dealt with crisis in the form of public backlash as a result of the messages they shared with their publics. In one of the instances, Peters said the message was misunderstood because it was ambiguous. Therefore, it seems reasonable to conclude that persona generated crisis might emerge from public outrage as a result of ambiguous organisational messages. These ambiguous messages can potentially erode public confidence in organisations, which is why there is need for organisations to proactively share clear and concise crises messages.

7.1.3. Consumer perception crises

However, other participants have a different school of thoughts about corporate crises. They perceive any hostile media (traditional and social media) reports as crises. The findings indicate that their lack of strategic planning and boundary scanning to anticipate potential crises are more likely to cause them to treat any negative media reports as crises. Evidence from this study show that they wait for traditional and social media to report incidents before jolting into action to respond. It seems such practitioners occupy a more traditional, laid-back and reactive position to crisis communication. For example, they characterised crisis as any media report that can negatively affect institutions or individuals within the organisation. An interviewee explained: 'the other crisis we deal with, for instance, is media reports on certain issues about the corporation, even though some are not serious…' (Johan Mend, Corporate Communications Manager). Perhaps it explains why Rees (2020:120) suggests that

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organisations should incorporate 'strategic social media activities to counter emotionally charged reactions' generated by social media. This suggests that social media reports might 'become a form of crisis' (Rees, 2020:119).

These adverse media reports have been identified as 'consumer perception crises' by a participant, Boyd Andrews who works as the Digital Communication and Marketing Manager at a commercial bank. According to this interviewee, some of these crises emanate from public backlash, from the messages that the organisations share with their audiences. In this connection, it seems that when consumers form a perception about the organisation, it can escalate into a crisis. When such a crisis breaks, some of the cautious and laid-back PR practitioners have explained that the best cause of action is to wait until things unfold and see how the publics respond. Explaining her position, a participant who works for a parastatal said: "Let things unfold… I would rather occupy a conservative position than be proactive' (Stephanie Joshua, Brand and Communications Manager).

It seems occupying a laid-back approach is common among other PR practitioners. One of these participants was Carl Bruce, who worked for one of the major hospitals in Botswana as Head of Communications. He explained that most PR practitioners in Botswana are 'more reactive than proactive.' Therefore, these findings reflect Botswana's social values and traditional belief systems where freedom of speech thrives when people tolerate dissenting voices. However, this does not suggest in any way that proactive public relations practitioners are not democratic, or do not allow dissenting voices. One of these social values is derived from Setswana cultural proverbs suggesting that everyone can freely speak their mind (Nhlekisana, 2016). In other words, social media allows these social values to thrive because it allows everyone to speak. In this connection, those speaking their mind are usually not interrupted, but are allowed to speak and responses made when they have made their point. It seems this posture influences the PR practitioners to let crises unfold before responding.

7.1.4. Crisis as natural disasters

Some practitioners understood organisational crises as natural disasters and workplace accidents. An example of the natural disasters that some of these PR practitioners treated as crises were the 'terrible floods up north that raged and caused much damage' (Abigail Rogers,

a participant who works as Head of Corporate Affairs at one of the universities). Another example of death in the workplace was given by Kevin Edwards, a participant who works as the Communications and Social Impact Manager at one of the mines when he explained: 'we have seen crises in the mining space where shafts collapse, and there was a loss of life and property damaged as well.' Some of the PR practitioners categorized natural disasters and workplace accidents occasioning death as crises because publics expect them to act with humanity during difficult times, and failure to do so diminishes public trust. Incidents such as natural disasters and death in the mining sector are rare occurrences. Therefore, it seems their rare occurrence make practitioners categorise them as crises because they can potentially attract negative media publicity, and public backlash if organisations do not have strong corporate social responsibility (CSR) programmes. While such events might become crises when they affect organisations, it seems not every natural disaster is an organisational crisis.

It appears that perceptions of what a crisis looks like to PR practitioners in Botswana determine how each organisation respond to those situations. The findings of this study indicate that practitioners do not have a uniform understanding of crises because crisis communication is still a new practice in Botswana. It seems practitioners are still grappling with importing and localising Western approaches to managing and communicating crises. As explained by one of the participants, David Thomas, who works as a communications manager at one of the parastatals: 'crisis communication is still at its infancy in Botswana… There is a lot to be desired in handling crisis here as communications practitioners.' However, the infant stage of crisis communication in Botswana is a learning process to most practitioners. As one of the interviewees, explains:

> ...not many organisations have the best standards. However, through professional associations, we are coming to that call. I think practitioners are coming up...It is not hopeless (Tom Bayle, Communications Manager).

It seems there is hope of professionalising PR in Botswana to help practitioners to practice like their counterparts in the West. Data indicates that there is still lack of training of PR professionals and organisational leaders in crisis communication and crisis management. For example, an interviewee, Tryfina Rays who works as a Principal Public Relations Officer at one of the district councils, explained: 'Sometimes our professionals want to engage in crisis communication, but they rely on Chief Executive Officers who are also not knowledgeable in

crisis communication management.' This indicates that there is poor preparedness among PR practitioners and confirms the need for them to receive training.

7.2. Best practices from a non-western context

The second central theme emerging from the interviews is best practices from non-western context. Concerning how practitioners communicate during a crisis in Botswana, the findings indicate that there is generally poor preparedness among practitioners to manage and communicate crises. As explained in the emerging issues from a question requiring practitioners to share their insights and experiences on best practices, some organisations that are poorly prepared do not have crisis communication plans and social media policy frameworks to guide their communication. Their poor preparedness also hinders them from conducting boundary scanning in the pre-crisis stage. It also emerged that practitioners are not trained in handling crises. In addition, some of the organisations lack support from their leadership. The sub-categories under the theme on best practices include developing crisis communication plans, establishing crisis teams, and communicating within the first hour.

7.2.1. Developing crisis communication plans

Firstly, this analysis indicates that most practitioners in Botswana cannot differentiate between risk management, crisis management and crisis communication. It seems this lack of understanding of the relationship between these fields of study makes it difficult for them to develop a standard framework to guide their crisis response. Practitioners talked about using crisis communication plans, crisis management plans, crisis communication policies, crisis communication strategies, risk management strategies and generic communication plans.

One of the participants explained that her organisation has a crisis communication plan that helps them to 'manage issues of stakeholder confidence and loyalty at the same time' (Jane Rick, Communication and Stakeholder Relations Manager). There are some organisations that use crisis communication policies instead of plans. For example, an interviewee, David Thomas explained that his organisation has a crisis communication plan and a policy to equip them for crises. However, some organisations do not have crisis communication plans but rely on crisis management strategies to '…plan how to react or respond to a crisis' (Stephanie

Joshua, Brand and Communications Manager). Another interviewee, Camila Scott who works as a Communication Manager at one of the parastatals, uses a crisis management plan to communicate during crises. She explained that when she joined her organisation, 'they did not have a crisis management plan, and my executive allowed me to come up with it (Camila Scott, Communications Manager). These findings indicate that there is a general lack of understanding and confusion on which tools can best guide practitioners to communicate during crises. Therefore, it seems reasonable to conclude that the practitioners cannot differentiate between crisis management plans and crisis communication plans. As explained by Lando (2014), crisis management plans detail, just to mention a few, crisis response drills and evacuation plans while crisis communication plans outline who, what, how and when to release the crisis information.

Furthermore, it seems organisations that use the risk management model lean more towards risk management plans and crisis communication policies. A participant whose organisation uses a risk management model, explained that they are guided by a 'solid crisis communication policy' (Johan Mend, Corporate Communications Manager). His counterpart, Charity Crane, also depends on a policy to guide during crises. According to another interviewee, Benjamin Frank who worked as Head of Communication and Marketing at a mining company, the policy should be signed by all employees. However, it appears the crisis policy is not only used by parastatals. Some private organisations use it to guide their communication during a crisis. For example, Kevin Edwards, the Communications and Social Impact Manager at another mining company explained that they rely on a policy to guide their crisis communication. He said:

> 'the work starts when there is no crisis. Have the policy in place…So I think many practitioners have a policy gathering dust because there is usually no crisis' (Kevin Edwards, Communications and Social Impact Manager).

Moreover, it seems most practitioners in government are guided by generic communication plans generated from communication strategies that practitioners develop every five years. These plans do not get evaluated within 5 years, and this might be attributed to their delayed responses. Ronald Dean, a Former Principal Public Relations Officer, explained that 'every year, you pick a chunk from the strategy and develop a communication plan.' When developing these communication strategies, the government practitioners are guided by a risk assessment of possible crises affecting their ministries. According to another participant, the

communication plan contains information on 'what communication channels we would use during that crisis' (Tryfina Rays, Principal Public Relations Officer). However, participants like Camilla Scott 'deal with crises as they come.' In this connection, it seems reasonable to conclude that government practitioners might be poorly prepared because they do not have the right tools to guide their communication during crisis. It seems these plans might also help them with the pre-crisis preparedness and to know when and how to do boundary scanning. In their current state, generic communication plans might guide their day-to-day communication, not at the time of crisis.

7.2.2. Establishment of crisis teams and training

Secondly, establishing crisis communication teams was one of the best practices that emerged from the interviews. It seems some organisations have huge teams which inhibit practitioners from responding within a reasonable time. For example, one of the interviewees, Jane Rick explained that her organisation's crisis team include the CEO, PR practitioner, legal expert, a security personnel, finance officer, and HR officer. As pointed out by Rick, her crisis team is always on standby, ready to mobilise when there is a crisis. According to this participant, the plan identifies members of the crisis team and describes their roles. Rick explained that the spokesperson is not necessarily the CEO as anyone appointed by management can assume the role. It seems the composition of crisis teams in other organisations depends on the expertise within the organisation to manage crises. For example, in parastatal organisations with the Board of Directors, some crisis teams comprise 'the chairperson, secretariat, the communication personnel and an audit personnel,' according to Olivia Matthews, who works as Head of Communication and Public Education.

In other parastatals that lean more to the risk model, crises teams include risk experts. Johan Mend and John Cry's organisations have the Chief Executive Officer (chief spokesperson), risk manager, strategy manager, and the head of PR in the crisis team. To this end, the practitioners talked about training and drilling the crises teams after assigning them roles. These participants explained that it is essential to equip and develop the team's readiness through 'simulation exercises.' In addition, one of the participants explained that his company trains team members after allocating them roles as part of crisis preparedness. He said it is essential to 'identify who

is responsible for what… and always sort of dry run the team periodically' (Kevin Edwards, Communications and Social Impact Manager).

Moreover, it seems that in the public sector crises teams are not typical of government because they comprise a small number of personnel. So typical is Michael William's Ministry, where he has two people in the team: the Permanent Secretary and the Head of PR. He explained that sometimes, one or two people working close to the crisis are co-opted into the team and 'selected as the spokesperson at that very point in time' (Michael William, Chief Public Relations Officer). According to William, small teams help expedite the consultation processes, which are sometimes too long depending on the size of the crisis team and the number of people in the command chain. For example, one of the interviewees, Tryfina Rays, explained that the council she works for has an unwieldy chain of command which must be involved in crisis decisions. She explained:

> There is a chain of command. I meet the executive management to inform them of the crisis. They then meet and decide. The decision is then communicated to the political leaders who also advise accordingly, and then we communicate to staff members before sharing the information with publics (Tryfina Rays, Principal Public Relations Officer).

It seems such chains of command inhibit PR practitioners from responding to crises with speed as they are forced to wait for political leaders who the participants said are always difficult to mobilise and bring together within a short period of time.

7.2.3. Communicating within the first hour

Another emergent issue from best practices was the practitioners' ability to communicate within the first hour of the crisis. The question sought to establish if practitioners in Botswana can respond to a crisis within the first hour like their counterparts in the West. Crisis communication scholars have asserted that the first hour is very critical and golden because organisations have the best opportunity to address the crisis before negative media coverage (Wasserman & Hyde-Clarke, 2016).

During the interviews, practitioners in Botswana explained that it is theoretically possible to communicate within the first hour but practically impossible. One of the emergent factors

inhibiting PR practitioners from proactively communicating within the first hour like their counterparts in the West, as indicated earlier, is partly due to their understanding of a crisis. Another reason is Botswana's laid back and traditional culture (which shall be discussed later in this chapter) and the long and unwieldy chains of command. For example, one of the participants explained that the government's bureaucratic red tapes impede their communication efforts within the first hour. She explained:

> *...with our organisation, it is not usually easy to communicate within the first hour or reach anyone within the first hour...Firstly there must be consultations with the executives of the organisation. We have the administrative leadership and the political leadership. Sometimes it takes the whole day to meet the chief executive, who must communicate with the political leadership before anything happens, especially when addressing the crisis. So, it takes a bit of time for a decision to be made...* (Tryfina Rays, Principal Public Relations Officer).

It seems the long consultation processes in government inhibit practitioners from responding to a crisis within a reasonable time. Such a chain of command is more typical of government organisations where many people are involved in making decisions on what to say, how to say it, who says it and when to say it, when the crisis breaks.

Other practitioners in government establishments have shared the same sentiments. One of the participants explained that responding to a crisis within the first hour is not practical, especially when working for the government because he should 'have the sanction of the Permanent Secretary' before making an important announcement (Michael William, Chief Public Relations Officer). Depending on the nature of the crisis, William explained that the Permanent Secretary might want to consult the Permanent Secretary to the President, who then consults the President before an official position is made about the crisis. According to the practitioner, communicating in an hour is impossible because 'social media platforms allow for immediate response of certain things that happen' (Michael William, Chief Public Relations Officer), while they should first consult and get the approval of their superiors. Another government practitioner, Ronald Dean, corroborated these sentiments and explained that the government's communication protocol must be followed during a crisis. He explained:

> *I have to wait for the Permanent Secretary and the Minister's approval. I work for the Government of Botswana, and there is protocol* (Ronald Dean, Former Public Relations Officer).

He further explained that consultation in government is frustrating because there are steps that should be taken before a press release is issued to the public. The long and cumbersome chain of command does not only affect government ministries. Parastatals are also affected because they all report to Permanent Secretaries in their parent ministries. In addition to reporting to ministries, all the parastatals in Botswana have a board of directors (non-executive directors) involved in making decisions about a crisis. To overcome some of these hurdles, a participant explained that his parastatal organisation has empowered him as the Head of Communication to engage the publics proactively, and the results have been positive. Regardless of being empowered, he said 'anything that goes out has to get an approval of the executive office and usually that is where the delays are' (Johan Mend, Corporate Communications Manager). However, if the crisis is not escalated to the parent ministry, the participant said they usually encourage their executive management to make approvals within an hour to communicate with the publics within a reasonable time. Adding to this, another interviewee commented on her recent experience where their communication was not 'in the first hour but quick enough. It is always a challenge to go out quickly, even in the private sector' (Olivia Matthew, Head of Communications and Public Education).

There are indications that some of the parastatals can respond to a crisis within the first hour despite the government protocols and unwieldly chains of command. For example, an interviewee explained that her organisation responded to one of their latest crises within an hour because they had a crisis team and a crisis communication plan. She added: 'My view is that we would have taken a very long time if we had not set up the crisis team and had a plan. We could have had a media storm by the time we responded' (Camila Scott, Communication Manager). Some practitioners in other parastatals also shared the same sentiment. As highlighted by an interviewee, '…once you have a plan and strategy in place, the first hour should be golden' (Benjamin Frank, Former Head of Communications).

However, practitioners have noted that communicating within the first hour is meant to acknowledge a crisis and to pay attention to the organisation. A participant said of their recent crisis: 'It was essential for me as Director of Communications to go out there and acknowledge that, yes, we have remodelled our institution…' (Abigail Rogers, Director of Corporate Affairs). Another practitioner revealed that his former organisation recently survived a crisis, and the idea of communicating within the first hour was not to 'unpacked the whole crisis but

to inform our stakeholders that there is a crisis that is taking place and we are managing the risk from getting out of control' (Carl Bruce, Former Head of Communication). Hence, communicating within an hour means taking control of the narrative before the media (traditional and social media) develop a narrative. For example, an interviewee explained that if a crisis is not handled from the beginning, 'all control can be lost' (Mia Gary, Communications Manager). In this connection, empowering practitioners to respond to crises by ensuring approvals are made faster and there are pre-approved statements ready to be deployed when the crisis breaks might all add to the speed at which practitioners are expected to start responding to crises.

7.4. Botswana's laid-back culture and crisis communication

As indicated in Chapter 3, Botswana has many tribal groups with diverse cultures (Wagner, 2006). As such, culture emerged as one of the significant issues influencing crisis communication in Botswana. As indicated earlier, organisations and audiences in Botswana have a laid-back culture which influences their perceptions of crises. It seems this culture inhibits the practitioners from being proactive during a crisis. In addition to the organisational and audience culture, practitioners talked about Botswana's cultural communication platform, the *kgotla* system (traditional village assembly where issues of national importance are discussed), and its benefits during crises.

7.4.1. The laid back and traditional organisational culture

As indicated earlier, one of the issues that emerged about culture is the laid-back or traditional organisational culture. This chapter has indicated that this culture influences some organisations to wait for the crisis to unfold to assess public reactions before responding. Explaining this cultural dynamic, one of the interviewees said:

> *... We sort of still have a conservative culture. I have worked for three to four parastatals that tells you that you may have the CEO, but if the crisis happens, then you cannot speak until you get hold of the Permanent Secretary or the Minister'* (Kevin Edwards, Communications and Social Impact Manager).

It seems reasonable to conclude that this traditional culture delays the process of information dissemination during a crisis. In addition, a participant explained that when the Covid-19

pandemic started: 'We saw how other countries responded and us sitting there. The ordinary people were like, where is our response and then you get it a few weeks later when it is too late or giving it when things are already bad' (Kevin Edwards, Communication and Social Impact Manager). It seems the culture is so entrenched in most parastatals and government organisations where leaders restrain their PR practitioners from responding with anticipated speed, hoping the publics would never find the truth. This is also evident in an interview from a participant who explained:

> *Botswana is a conservative society... Now, that presents a massive problem in managing a crisis because it is a problem for people to say that no one will find out unless we say there is something wrong. So, let us keep quiet. I have experienced it with several colleagues who say we do not want to draw attention to ourselves'* (Robert Rhys, Head of Communications and Marketing).

As indicated earlier, the culture within some organisations in Botswana seems to influence the organisations to become passive during crises. For example, an interviewee shared his experiences when he said: 'We were in a bad light recently because people felt we are not very active and proactive in what we do. Some people misunderstand what we do, and we were not doing enough to correct whatever misconceptions were out there' (Ethan Peters, Director of Communications and Stakeholder Relations). From this evidence, it appears this traditional culture is a product of societies in Botswana. It seems the societies culturally accept concealment of the truth, hoping it would never surface. This evidence might indict some organisations in Botswana that still believe that sharing information during crises is more of putting themselves under the spotlight, despite the fact that the best way to deal with issues is to share as much information about the crisis as possible.

7.4.2. The unassuming and forgetful audience

As indicated earlier, the laid-back culture is a product of society in Botswana. Therefore, it is expected for the audiences to manifest it as well. Practitioners described their audiences as traditional, laid back, unassuming and too quick to forget about problems that do not directly concern them. A former government PR practitioner explained this when he said: 'let me say unfortunately Batswana are a nation that forgets quickly. An issue would be a crisis today, and tomorrow they have forgotten and moved past it' (Ronald Dean, Former Principal Public

Relations Officer). Another interviewee added: 'there is this belief that Batswana forget quickly. There is that culture, and it influences how organisations respond during crises. Some organisations may be passive in responding because of this culture' (John Cry, Communications Manager).

One of the emergent issues is that most practitioners might easily evade crisis blame because most people in Botswana do not really care about issues that do not directly concern them. The evidence emerged from Dean's interview when he revealed that the Government of Botswana and its agencies take advantage of their audiences' culture because the people 'do not care about certain things if they do not affect them… it makes it straightforward for government PR practitioners to get away with matters' (Ronald Dean, Former Public Relations Officer). Furthermore, he added that Batswana are unwilling to interrogate things that matter because 'we are a country that makes it look like people are being done a favour' (Ronald Dean, Former Public Relations Officer). To this end, one can conclude that Batswana do not usually stick their nose in matters that do not directly concern them, and this might provide a window for passive practitioners to avoid crisis responsibility at the slightest opportunity.

7.4.3. The *kgotla* system and crisis communication

Traditional platforms such as the *kgotla* system (Figure 7.2) form part of the broader communication culture in Botswana. The Government of Botswana and its agencies use the kgotla system to share information with communities across the country. Another role is to provide a platform where issues of national importance are discussed and resolved through dialogue and stakeholder engagement. However, practitioners in Botswana are divided on whether the kgotla system lends itself to crisis communication.

Figure 7.2: Botswana President, Mokgweetsi Masisi, addressing a kgotla meeting (Source: BWgovernment Facebook page)

Firstly, PR practitioners who argued that the *kgotla* system lends itself to crisis communication explained that it presents them with a platform to address the communities directly. One of the participants explained: 'I can write messages in newspapers and TV, but I would be missing out on engagement with the public to build a lasting relationship if I do not use the kgotla' (Ethan Peters, Director of Communications and Stakeholder Relations). It seems the *kgotla* works best in rural communities across Botswana. Talking about its suitability in rural settings, an interviewee explained that Botswana is one of the few African countries that can handle crises in rural and remote areas because 'everybody on that platform is free to speak their mind. That sets the tone in terms of a crisis. It is the best platform for people-stakeholder relations management' (Benjamin Frank, Former Head of Communications and Marketing).

Furthermore, access to the platform can be quick for government PR practitioners, and slow for the private sector. For example, Jane Rick, who works for a parastatal explained that she used the kgotla system during the old-age pension payment crisis which affected several communities. She said she approached the chiefs in various communities for permission to address the public and used public address (PA) systems mounted on vehicles (see Figure 7.3) to share the crisis information while also inviting the elderly to *kgotla* meetings. She explained: 'That is what we did, and the following day the kgotla was packed with the elderly' (Jane Rick, Communication and Stakeholder Relations Manager). Another participant added: 'the older generation still believes in traditional platforms such as listening to the radio or being told on a loudspeaker that there will be a crisis. That is the kgotla system' (Benjamin Frank, Former Head of Communication and Marketing). While it ordinarily takes longer to gather people

around the community for a meeting, practitioners unanimously agree that public address mounted vehicles disseminate the information faster.

Figure 7.3: Vehicle with PA system disseminating information around community (Source: Harvard AIDS initiative)

What intrigues some of the participants about the *kgotla* system is its ability to reach out to many people and answer their questions in one meeting. As a result, an interviewee explained that his parastatal has 'initiatives such as the *kgotla*…We still adopt the system' (Johan Mend, Corporate Communications Manager). In addition, it seems the *kgotla* system is still more believable and trusted than traditional media channels and social media. During crises, PR practitioners who use the *kgotla* system talked about the platform complementing traditional and social media. Deliberating on the integrity of the *kgotla* system, Crane explained:

> *…the authority in the kgotla is respected… many people still adhere to the kgotla. The information from the kgotla is binding to the communities. We still find a way to engage with the kgotla alongside social media and traditional media. So, you must be mindful of the traditional and cultural expectations* (Charity Crane, Communications Manager).

It seems the *kgotla* system is helpful because the chief's presence makes it credible. A participant who works for the government indicated that more people 'still believe in traditional leadership…the *kgotla* is an effective crisis communication platform' (Michael William, Chief Public Relations Officer). Another interviewee who works for the government added that crisis information is disseminated faster once approval is granted because the *kgotla* can use cars mounted with a public address system to invite the general public to attend meeting where information about the crisis is shared. He explained: '…within a short time, everyone has the information' (Ronald Dean, Former Principal Public Relations Officer).

Furthermore, it seems the *kgotla* system is more relevant in rural than urban areas. Findings indicate that people depend on traditional and social media in cities for crisis information. For example, a private PR practitioner indicated that people in urban areas do not abide by the *kgotla* as publics in villages. He said: 'You would probably have to use multiple platforms to communicate the crisis…it can be beneficial in villages' (Kevin Edwards, Communications and Social Impact Manager).

However, not all practitioners find the *kgotla* system helpful during crises. Practitioners from some parastatals and the private sector have indicated that the *kgotla* system does not lend itself to communicating during crises but have acknowledged that it is suitable for pre and post-crisis communication. One of the emergent issues which impede private organisations and most parastatals from using the *kgotla* system is its cumbersome processes of gaining access. It is evident that the organisations cannot use this cultural communication platform without the permission of the village chiefs (custodians of the kgotla). Sharing his experiences with the *kgotla* system, an interviewee who works for a commercial bank said:

> The kgotla system does not lend itself to disseminating crisis messages because of the extended protocol for accessing the platform. As you know, you cannot use a kgotla without the chief's permission. There is a Headman or Sub-chief; they must relay your request to use the kgotla to the chief or paramount chief. So, we never use the kgotla system for crisis management purposes (Robert Rhys, Head of Communications and Marketing).

Sometimes, the requests to address the affected stakeholders through the platform are routed through District Commissioners, Councillors, Members of Parliament or Ministers. Communication with these political leaders is done through formal written letters, which take several days to reach the relevant office due to the government manual filing systems. A participant explained: 'our customs dictate that when organisations want to talk to the elderly or senior citizens, we approach their Members of Parliament or the Minister' (Charity Crane, Communications Manager). Moreover, it seems one of the problems about this ancient platform is that the *kgotla* system has veto powers over the types of messages that can be shared with communities. Private companies and parastatals are not allowed to use it to propagate their brand messages without the consent of the chief. For example, a participant who previously worked for a commercial bank but now with a parastatal explaining that the 'kgotla would not

allow or propel brand messaging that creates a positive image of the company facing a crisis' (Stephanie Joshua, Brand and Communication Manager).

Findings of this study indicate that during the pre and post-crisis stages, the *kgotla* system helps obtain feedback from stakeholders through dialogue. For example, an interviewee Tryfina Rays explained that they usually use the platform to obtain feedback from communities post the crisis. The district council also help other organisations that cannot access the *kgotla* system due to the lengthy access procedures. The organisations can address councillors to share information with their constituents during *kgotla* meetings. For example, a participant who works at one of the universities in Botswana explained that they usually address sub-district council meetings, parliament and even the house of chiefs for politicians to relay messages to their communities through *kgotla* meetings. She said: 'You do not just go straight to the *kgotla* meetings and start addressing communities… culturally that will cause a huge problem' (Abigail Rogers, Director of Corporate Affairs).

Lastly, findings indicate that the *kgotla* system is not suitable for crisis communication because it discriminates against women in terms of dress code. It seems some of the chiefs, who are custodians of culture, are still patriarchal and maintain a tight grip on male chauvinism. Participants talked about some of the chiefs barring women from attending *kgotla* meetings wearing trousers or pants. One of the interviewees explained: 'women cannot wear trousers at a kgotla, which can be a hindrance and a limitation on its own' (Camila Scott, Communications Manager). It seems such rules conflict with contemporary society and undermine the relevance of the *kgotla* system where everyone is expected to freely participate in public and national discourse regardless of their sense of dress.

7.5. Development of crisis messages in Botswana

The development of messages in Botswana also emerged as a significant theme from the interviews with the PR practitioners. The findings showed that the message development landscape is polarised. As indicated earlier, some practitioners are proactive, while others are traditional, passive and reactive. One of the findings is that Botswana's proactive practitioners make a risk assessment and draft crisis messages (holding statements, questions and answers) in anticipation of a crisis. As the crisis unfolds, they then develop specific crisis messages for

different media platforms, including social media. On the other side, there is traditional, passive and reactive practitioners who prefer to wait for a crisis to unfold before drafting any crisis message. As indicated earlier, culture also influences how practitioners frame and package their crisis messages for different contexts.

7.5.1. Stages of message development

As discussed earlier, the proactive practitioners draft their messages in anticipation of various crises affecting their organisations. Some of these practitioners are guided by the risk management model in drafting these messages. As explained by an interviewee, their crisis messages are drafted and made available on their websites for public access. She explained: 'they should not be developed right there when the crisis begins' (Jane Rick, Communication and Stakeholder Relations Manager). Other organisations rely on risk assessment to develop messages ahead of the crisis. In addition, another interviewee said: 'we have a risk register that helps us develop messages ahead of the crisis' (Charity Crane, Communications Manager).

Moreover, it seems practitioners depend on crisis history (previous experience) to pre-draft messages in anticipation of a situation. For example, a participant explained: '…We know what can go wrong from the past issues we have experienced. We need to craft our messages so that when something happens, we know exactly what to respond to' (Johan Mend, Corporate Communication Manager). In addition, another interviewee explained that since her organisations already know the crises that affect them, they develop 'holding statements based on hypothetical situations and scenarios' (Stephanie Joshua, Brand and Communications Manager).

However, it seems the laid-back, passive and reactive practitioners do not draft crisis messages in anticipation of crisis like their counterparts in other organisations. Some practitioners blamed their passive and reactive stance on their unsupportive leadership. As suggested by an interviewee, their principals do not see the value of PR, and that is why in most cases' anybody can just be Head of PR when the office bearer is not available… that is how we often fall into the trap of not providing good messaging…' (Ronald Dean, Former Principal Public Relations Officer). This seems to be a common problem in Botswana's public and private sectors. Talking about this issue, another participant commented:

The most important thing is to inculcate, to teach organisations the value of PR and crisis management and for all organisations to know that when there is a crisis, a PR person is a key to managing that crisis... Strategic PR requires you to be situated strategically in an organisation, particularly in the boardroom and executive management (Robert Rhys, Head of Communication and Marketing).

That notwithstanding, some practitioners draft messages as the crisis progress because 'different situations require different messages' (Camila Scott, Communications Manager). Others produce messages as the crisis unfold because they claim they can only know what to say as the crisis unfold as they never anticipated it. As suggested by a participant who works for a parastatal: 'It is challenging to generate a message to address something you do not know (Chloe Dennis, Communications Manager).

7.5.2. Response process and priorities

Another emergent issue is response processes and priorities of PR practitioners in Botswana. Findings indicate that one of the critical priorities when responding to a crisis is first communicating with the staff. For example, after consulting the leadership (administrative and political), some participants explained that they communicate with staff to inform them about the crisis. The reason it is essential to communicate with staff is that 'when they are out there, people will be asking them what is going on and they should be able to respond with the same messaging in various circumstances' (Robert Rhys, Head of Communications and Marketing). In addition, some interviewees believe internal communication is essential because it 'empower your internal stakeholders with information because you do not want them to respond to something they are not sure' (Johan Mend, Corporate Communications Manager).

In addition, the findings indicate that PR practitioners find it essential to identify a strategic media partner that sympathises with the organisation. It seems helpful to deploy crisis messages through journalists with certain strengths to share them with their publics. An interviewee explained: 'I have to know which journalist to go to. Some of them will sympathise with your cause, and some will sympathise with the other party' (Robert Rhys, Head of Communications and Marketing). Another vital step is stakeholder engagement which should

be an 'ongoing exercise to build lasting relationships' (Johan Mend, Corporate Communications Manager).

Lastly, it seems reasonable to suggest that proactive practice, as opposed to reactive practice, helps practitioners to build a positive perception of the organisations. Most practitioners indicated that they do not wait for a crisis to unfold to start sharing information. For example, a participant said: 'we share information by consistently, issuing press releases or media advisories on anything we want to communicate' (Michael William, Chief Public Relations Officer).

7.5.3. Crisis response strategies

The issue of crisis response strategies also emerged from the interviews with PR practitioners in Botswana. Unlike in the West, where there is a pool of crisis response strategies, practitioners in Botswana talked about three dominant strategies: corrective, denial and shifting the blame. However, this does not to suggest that the other strategies that Western practitioners use are not prevalent in Botswana. The question followed the content analysis findings in Chapter 6, which identified three dominant strategies from Facebook posts about the BDC and BR crises. It sought to establish whether these strategies are prevalent in Botswana and effective or less effective in repairing reputational damage.

The practitioners acknowledged that the strategies are prevalent and that some of the organisations in Botswana often combine them. For example, a participant explained: 'I have seen the three at play, and then the most common being where somebody is showing that they are fixing the problem, and at the same time blaming someone' (Stephanie Joshua, Brand and Communications Manager). She suggested that organisations should take full responsibility and manage the crisis rather than shift the blame. Despite acknowledging the corrective strategy as the most dominant among organisations in Botswana, some of the participants suggested it as a time-buying strategy and expressed reservations about using it during crises. For example, Rick said: '…never lie to a customer or never buy time with a customer because it may come back to haunt you, even more than the crisis you are handling' (Jane Rick, Communications and Stakeholder Relations Manager).

However, other practitioners find the corrective response strategy very helpful and effective during a crisis. A participant explained that he finds it dangerous for organisations to be offensive when something happens. He said buying time is helpful and 'a strategy that works…' (Johan Mend, Corporate Communications Manager). One of the examples of this strategy is when one of the organisations called a *kgotla* meeting to address the pensioners when it was faced with a crisis of failing to pay them. An interviewee said her organisation assured the pensioners that it was working on processes to expedite their pension payments which were made within two weeks after the meetings. However, some organisations fail to deliver on their promises when using the corrective strategy. For example, findings from Chapter 6 indicated that the Government of Botswana, the BDC and the BR have never made their investigations reports public through social media. It seems when organisations go back on their promises to inform the publics on the outcomes of their investigations, 'nobody knows there was corrective action until another crisis hit and people wonder what happened to the previous one' (Kevin Edwards, Communications and Social Impact Manager). Therefore, it seems the organisations might make the corrective strategy more useful and relevant if they maintain their promises to correct a situation. For example, this can be through sharing investigations reports and putting in place measures to ensure the crisis does not repeat itself.

Nonetheless, some practitioners indicated that the denial strategy is popular among organisations in Botswana because they believe people would never find the truth. As explained by a participant who works for a commercial bank: 'it is perilous to assume they will never know the truth. It is always critical to be upfront and sensitively package the message because you want people to know that there is a particular issue….' (Robert Rhys, Head of Communications and Marketing). Another participant who works for a parastatal explained that many organisations are quick to deny the existence of a crisis before 'fully establishing if there is not a crisis' (Boyd Andrews, Digital Communications and Marketing Manager). This was also articulated by an interviewee who explained: 'across the country, denial is probably the most prevalent' (Kevin Edwards, Communications and Social Impact Manager). It seems the Government of Botswana has earned a reputation of denying every negative media report through press releases. For example, a participant explained that the district council she works for, likes 'writing rebuttal messages against media reports' (Tryfina Rays, Principal Public Relations Officer). Giving an example of a denial strategy used by a government ministry, another interviewee explained that instead of telling the people that they paid for COVID-19

test kits, 'they shifted the blame and denied media reports without providing the necessary answers' (Chloe Dennis, Communications Manager).

Other practitioners talked about their apprehension of using denial or shifting blame strategies because they diminish trust among their audiences. According to a participant who works for government: '…we have not done that because people would lose trust in us if we were doing it. It would eventually catch up with us' (Michael William, Chief Public Relations Officer). It seems organisations that use denial and shifting the blame strategies usually emerge out of a crisis with a tarnished reputation. For example, an interviewee observed: 'once you deny, once you shift the blame, it clearly says you were facing a crisis, and now you are trying to deal with it…For me, that is a band-aid approach…' (Ethan Peters, Director of Communications and Stakeholder Relations). In this connection, it seems when the truth concealed through denial strategies eventually surfaces, the organisations that used this strategy might bear the brunt of lying to their audiences. Therefore, it seems helpful for organisations to tell the truth to maintain trust with their audiences.

7.5.4. Messaging for audiences from diverse cultures

As explicated earlier, Botswana's diverse cultures and demographics are primary considerations when sending crisis information to the audiences. For example, a participant explained that they do not 'package a message for people living in urban areas the same way as for people in remote areas. It is quite different. The people in rural areas are not more educated than those in the urban areas' (Tryfina Rays, Principal Public Relations Officer). Another interviewee explained that theoretically, he is supposed to be considering culture when developing and communicating with his audiences, but 'it is challenging in practice, especially for Botswana where we have many cultures' (Kevin Edwards, Communication and Social Impact Manager). When practitioners communicate during crises, they focus on the younger generation than the older generation. Part of the reason is that the younger generation constitutes a larger population in Botswana and has a substantial social media presence than the older generation. Another reason they do not focus on the older generation is because 'even if there is a crisis, some of them would not even know that there is a mess out there… The older cohort may not be interested in what is going on….' (Robert Rhys, Head of Communication and Marketing). Therefore, the cultural and demographic differences of various publics mean that organisations cannot use a one-size fits all approach when developing messages for a crisis affecting different

communities across the country. It seems reasonable to conclude that crisis messages should be tailor made to suit the cultural and demographic needs of different publics in affected communities.

Furthermore, findings indicate that practitioners in Botswana develop different crisis messages for different cultural contexts across the country. For example, an interviewee observed that due to culture, 'you may fail to be heard as an organisation because you chose a different platform, or you chose culturally inappropriate messages or culturally inappropriate platform' (Ethan Peters, Director of Communications and Stakeholder Relations). Another participant added that messaging should be well communicated to a specific culture because different cultures understand messages differently. He further explained: 'if you say something, it could be misconstrued as something else…because you are working with conservative people' (David Thomas, Communications Manager). In addition, the results of this study indicate that the audience in Botswana are different from their Western counterparts who respond favourably when scaremongering tactics are used in crisis messages. A participant explained: 'in my culture in Botswana, they will not be scared if you use scare tactics (Abigail Rogers, Director of Corporate Affairs). Therefore, it seems reasonable to conclude that certain messages might become appropriate for some cultures in Botswana but inappropriate for others.

7.6. Facebook usage among PR practitioners in Botswana

The role of social media, mainly Facebook, also emerged as a theme during the interviews. The question sought to understand how practitioners in Botswana use Facebook during crises (the extent of Facebook use, and how organisations and practitioners react to Facebook comments.) The practitioners talked about the role of social media during crises, which resonates with Western perspectives. Before delving into these issues, it is important to note that organisations in Botswana also use social media platforms such as Twitter and Instagram to share information (Figure 1.1, chapter 1). However, Facebook is more popular among organisations because it has a larger population of adults and youth, while Twitter is used by the elites and journalists (Masilo & Seabo, 2015). However, some of the emergent issues from these interviews include lack of social media readiness, discreet engagement with audiences, and hesitancy to use Facebook.

7.6.1. Lack of social media readiness

Lack of social media readiness amongst some organisations in Botswana was another emergent issue. Practitioners talked about organisations lacking resources to use social media during crises. One of the participants who work for a parastatal said: '…what is lacking is policies to guide in that space and dedicating resources' (Tom Bayle, Communications Manager). He further explained that in addition to lacking a policy, his organisation is not ready to use social media during crises because it does not have dedicated personnel. Crane said many organisations have a Facebook presence but are still struggling with the 'rules of operating traditional businesses on social media… many companies do not have policies in place' (Charity Crane, Communications Manager). Furthermore, a participant who works as a digital communications practitioner for a commercial bank suggested that companies should invest in social media readiness because no 'amount of money spent on other media kits can fend a crisis' (Boyd Andrews, Digital Communications and Marketing Manager).

7.6.2. Discreet engagement with audiences

Due to poor preparedness and lack of social media engagement strategies, it appears most of the practitioners in Botswana are apprehensive about openly engaging and responding to Facebook audiences in the comment section (Figure 7.4). Chapter 6 indicated that practitioners in Botswana do not respond to individual comments on Facebook, and they were asked to explain their reasons for being discreet. As explained by an interviewee, it is not easy to engage and respond to audiences in a public space, but 'once you have proper rules of engagement that translate into a policy for the business, you will respond because you are forced to respond as a matter of policy' (Benjamin Frank, Former Communications Manager). As a result, it seems most practitioners prefer to privately engage their audiences via messenger (inbox) and not on the comment section like their counterparts in the West.
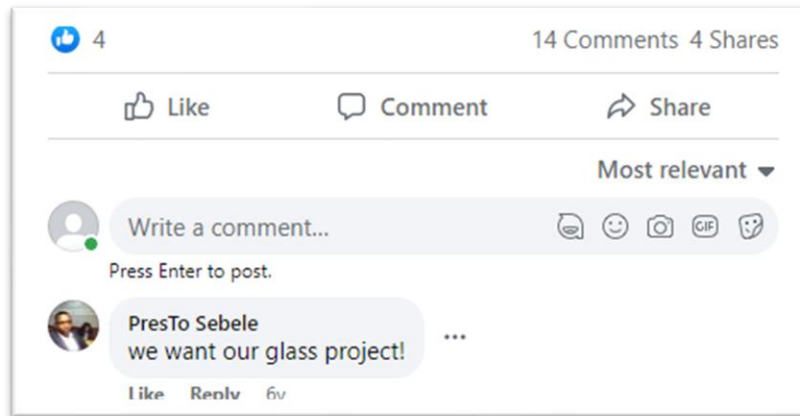
Figure 7.4: Screenshot showing a Facebook comment section

Practitioners talked about engaging their audiences on messenger to provide them with confidentiality. For example, a communications manager for a major insurance company explained that her organisation avoids responding in the public domain because they want to keep their customers' issues confidential. She explained:

> *We do not want to be discussing people's private lives on their timeline because most of the time, people have issues that were not handled properly by organisations* (Mia Gary, Communications Manager).

Additionally, another interviewee explained that they do not engage audiences in the comments section and would rather 'inbox that person so that it becomes a battle between us and them' (Chloe Dennis, Communications Manager). Those who use messenger to engage with audiences said when their publics 'directly inbox us, we respond in record time' (Olivia Matthew, Head of Communications and Public Education). As such, it seems some PR practitioners prefer offline and not online dialogue with their audiences. Since this is purely a matter of preference, company policies might change this practice by encouraging practitioners to respond online.

However, there are instances where PR professionals respond on the comment section if many people are asking the same question. For example, when they respond in the comment section, they also 'address other people who were thinking like that person' (Robert Rhys, Head of Communication and Marketing). A participant, who usually responds to trending comments, said she uses pre-approved holding statements to determine her response. She explained: 'We

insert that holding statement because many people ask about this particular theme. You can answer a hundred comments with a paragraph…' (Stephanie Joshua, Brand and Communications Manager).

Lastly, some practitioners only respond to comments when they believe they are misleading. As such, PR practitioners do not always respond to comments about every communication they make on social media 'but to the ones that in our view can potentially mislead the public' (Michael William, Chief Public Relations Officer). It also emerged that some practitioners do not engage their audiences directly because 'some people ask hard questions' (Ronald Dean, Former Principal Public Relations Officer). However, practitioners explained that for conversations that are taken offline, publics that seemed hard-nosed usually softens up, and are easier to engage. This explains why there is personal preference for offline communication as opposed to online communication. Furthermore, it seems the way PR professionals in Botswana engage with their publics on Facebook is a direct contrast to how their Western counterparts use the same platform to interact with their audiences during emergencies. While Botswana practitioners view a timely and direct response on Facebook comment section as unfavourable, Western practice views it as enhancing a more favourable social media behavioural intentions of continuing to like, share and commenting on the crisis post (Huang & DiStaso, 2020).

7.6.3. Hesitancy to use Facebook during crises

Despite acknowledging the effectiveness of Facebook during crises, one of the emergent issues from the interviews is that there is hesitancy among some organisations in Botswana to use Facebook during emergencies. For example, most organisations in Botswana have Facebook pages which have not been updated in a long time. The findings indicate that sometimes organisational leaders say, 'we do not like this Facebook, this thing of yours, let us ignore Facebook' (Robert Rhys, Head of Communication and Marketing). Some of these attitudes are caused by their laid-back and traditional culture, which perceives social media as a 'younger generation type of thing or activity' (Johan Mend, Corporate Communication Manager). Additionally, the profiles, age of the practitioners and their senior, as well as levels of self-esteem as suggested by Forest and Wood (2012), might also play a role in them hesitating to use Facebook as they cannot reap the full benefits of Facebook. The study also demonstrate

that Facebook has developed a reputation as a platform where everyone can comment or share information to the detriment of organisations. Additionally, audiences interpret issues 'in a way that is not accurate' (Robert Rhys, Head of Communications and Marketing). Such audiences are what other PR practitioners called 'keyboard warriors and vigilantes who are just out there to cause mayhem using their pages and following' (Kevin Edwards, Communication and Social Impact Manager). Other practitioners have branded these audiences as 'bitter and angry people, leading to organisations choosing the silent route' (Charity Crane, Communications Manager).

However, it appears the keyboard warriors have dented the confidence of personnel responsible for social media in most organisations in Botswana, causing them to become hesitant to engage on Facebook when responding to official matter during the crisis. As explained by an interviewee who works for a parastatal, the loss of confidence is because 'people have not been properly trained' (Charity Crane, Communications Manager). Due to lack of training, a participant acknowledged that it is challenging for them to 'constantly engage through the same platform' (Tryfina Rays, Principal Public Relations Officer). Part of the problem, according to the interviewees, is caused by organisations employing people who do not have social media and public relations skills and training to manage social media pages. It seems most organisations in Botswana employ people to manage social media because they can read and write English. As explained by a participant, employing the right people for social media roles is 'not about them knowing how to read and write to take up the roles. It does not work like that' (Benjamin Frank, Former Head of Communication and Marketing).

Furthermore, it emerged that some organisations are hesitant to use Facebook because they do not have social media engagement strategies. For example, Facebook requires excellent engagement because 'you cannot control people on Facebook… everybody has an opinion… you will get spiteful people in your engagement' (David Thomas, Communications Manager).

7.7. Language use during crises

In Chapter 6, a critical discourse analysis of how practitioners in Botswana use language during crises found that they use it to persuade, manipulate and dominate their audiences. Based on the assumption that it is the practitioners who communicate on behalf of the organisations, one of the questions during the interviews sought an explanation of why practitioners prefer this

tactic. The industry experts said cultural dynamics influence how they use language in different contexts when communicating to their audience.

It appears the country's culture and demographic distribution play an influential role in how language is used when communicating during crises. It is essential to understand that the urban population, which comprises adults and the younger generations, understands English (Botswana's official language), while the rural and remote parts of the country (primarily the elderly and the uneducated) understand Setswana (national language). Therefore, practitioners use language differently depending on these contexts. As such, PR practitioners communicate differently when addressing the younger generation in urban areas and the elderly in rural communities. A participant explained: 'sometimes you might even consider the language that people speak there' (Tryfina Rays, Principal Public Relations Officer).

Furthermore, it appears that audiences across the country are more sympathetic to organisations that use calm and respectful language. An interviewee explained that while persuading his audiences to sympathise with his organisation, he finds it helpful to 'deploy calm language, language that is not condescending…language that is maybe emotive' (Robert Rhys, Head of Communications and Marketing). As such, it seems Batswana are humble and averse to arrogant and offensive language. A participant added that arrogant language: 'can turn them off. They want to see the human side of what you are doing as an organisation' (Chloe Dennis, Communications Manager).

Another explanation was that some organisations use dominating and manipulative language to inhibit audiences from holding them accountable. The tactic is used to blackmail the audiences when organisations want to escape crisis blame. When the audiences seek answers, they can be 'labelled cheap…others are labelled troublemakers…they try to patronise, insult people's intelligence or just persuade people to rally behind them' (Ronald Dean, Former Principal Public Relations Officer). It seems there is a tension between government and private PR practitioners on the use of persuasive language. A PR practitioner working in the private sector explained that the tactic of using language to dominate and manipulate audiences is widespread in government establishments where they use 'language to suppress you, so you do not speak your mind' (Stephanie Joshua, Brand and Communications Manager). However, government practitioners explained that they use the tactic to give the audiences hope during

a crisis. For example, a participant, Michael William who works for the government, said he finds nothing wrong with his organisation manipulating and dominating audiences to give them hope. As such, language may seem dominating and manipulative when used in a poorly understood setting in other contexts. For example, using English in rural and remote areas, where it is not understood, may seem dominant and manipulative (Kevin Edwards, Communications and Social Impact Manager).

7.8. Conclusion

In sum, this chapter established that crisis communication in Botswana is practised differently from the West. Evidence from this study helped to explain how and why PR practitioners and organisations respond the way they do. Additionally, the interviews with the senior PR practitioners were instrumental in providing richer data on the context of crisis communication in Botswana. They provided explanations for some of the quantitative and qualitative findings. The findings of the interviews indicate that the way practitioners understand a crisis influence their stance on crisis communication. Most PR practitioners in Botswana understand crisis the same way it is understood in the West, but some have a different understanding of organisational crises. PR Practitioners whose understanding resonates with Western perspectives on organisational crises, especially those in private and parastatal organisations, seem to be more proactive during crises. Some in parastatals and government establishments, with a different view of organisational crises, tend to be passive and reactive as they do not know what to do when crisis breaks. Evidence from this study suggests that they wait for a crisis to unfold before responding.

In terms of best practices, practitioners in Botswana are still grappling with importing Western practices into their context since crisis communication is relatively new. There seems to be a lack of understanding in the relationship between risk management, crisis management and crisis communication, making it difficult for practitioners to develop a standard tool that can best guide their communication during crises. Some organisations develop crisis communication plans, others develop a crisis communication policy, yet others develop crisis management plans, crisis management strategies, and generic communication plans. This poor preparedness makes it difficult for organisations to communicate within the first hour of the crisis. In addition, some organisations have crisis teams, while others do not have crises teams.

Others have huge teams that are difficult to mobilise during emergencies. Spokespersons (in some cases, a CEO or Head of PR) are appointed and trained through crisis simulations.

Furthermore, this chapter has indicated that Botswana has many tribes with different cultures and that the conservative or laid-back culture is more dominant across the country. This culture, as indicated, causes PR practitioners to become passive and reactive. It causes them to perceive their audiences as unassuming and forgetful and makes them slow to respond as they hope the audiences would never find the truth. Additionally, it seems organisations vary messaging when communicating in various cultural contexts because an appropriate message in one cultural context can be inappropriate in another.

Another emergent cultural issue was Botswana's ancient communication platform, the *kgotla* system. Practitioners were divided on the role of the *kgotla* system during crises. Those from the private and some in parastatal organisations suggested the platform does not lend itself to crisis communication because of its stringent access protocols. They argued that access processes are too long, and crisis can unfold and end before access is granted. However, PR practitioners acknowledged that the *kgotla* system is more suitable for pre and post-crisis stages to obtain feedback from affected stakeholders and build relationships with the communities. On the other hand, government practitioners maintained that this cultural platform lends itself to crisis communication because it is within their purview and easily accessible. The chiefs are in the government payroll, and they work closely with the District Commissioners, who help mobilise communities to attend *kgotla* meetings. They use vehicles mounted with public address systems to deliver messages across communities within a short time. Moreover, this chapter indicated that the traditional communication platform has integrity and is still more believable and credible than the traditional and social media channels. Nevertheless, it seems reasonable to conclude that the *kgotla* system does not replace but complement the traditional and social media channels.

Furthermore, another emergent issue was the development of crisis messages. This chapter established that the proactive PR professionals draft messages ahead of the crisis while the passive and reactive practitioners draft messages after the crisis. Some practitioners blamed their unsupportive leaders for this stance on crisis communication. The findings revealed the three dominant and prevalent crisis response strategies in Botswana (corrective, denial and

shifting the blame) that PR practitioners commonly deploy during crises. While the corrective strategy was viewed as a time-buying strategy, the denial strategy seemed to be the most common among government establishments. However, it seems reasonable to conclude that the denial and shifting the blame strategies are not helpful to reputational repair in the context of Botswana because they can potentially diminish trust among audiences if truth surfaces.

Evidence from this study further demonstrate that while practitioners understand the role of Facebook during crises, there is still hesitancy among some organisations in Botswana to use social media, including Facebook, during crises. Part of the hesitancy was attributed to the country's laid-back culture, poor preparedness, and the organisations' fear to directly engage with what Loebach et al., (2019: 281) terms the 'keyboard warriors.' There is also a lack of social media readiness among some organisations, and most of them do not dedicate resources to social media. It has been indicated that some organisations discreetly engage with their audiences through Facebook messenger and not in the comment section. One of the explanations for this kind of engagement is that their audiences deserve privacy and confidentiality.

Finally, the chapter established that some organisations vary language when communicating with an urban and rural audience who do not understand English. It seems the different tribal and cultural contexts in Botswana make messages appropriate to one culture and inappropriate to another. However, it appears this cultural diversity make audiences more sympathetic to organisations that share crisis messages with calm and respectful language. Therefore, it seems reasonable to conclude that some organisations deliberately use dominating and manipulative language to inhibit audiences from challenging them. The findings of this chapter are summarised as follows:

7.9. Summary of chapter 7

THEMES	SUMMARY
Understanding organisational crisis	• A crisis is an abrupt and disruptive event that can disturb the natural flow of business. It is a threat to public safety, can affect the organisation's finances. • A crisis is any unplanned event that can damage the company's reputation. • It can be any adverse media reports about the organisation or individuals within the organisation. • Consumer perception crises emanate from public backlash due to messages shared by organisations. • Natural disasters can become a crisis for an organisation if they disrupt the natural flow of business.
Best practices	• Since crisis communication is relatively new in Botswana, practitioners are still grappling with importing Western practices to their context. • However, there is generally poor preparedness, lack of planning and confusion on which tools best guides practitioners when communicating during crises, whereas Western practice emphasises on preparedness, planning and the use of crisis communication plans. • Practitioners have crisis teams in consonance with Western practice. • Most practitioners, especially those in government establishments and parastatal organisations, cannot communicate within the first hour of the crisis, like their counterparts in the West. Practitioners in Botswana are inhibited by among others, lack of planning and unwieldy chains of command
Culture	• Botswana has many tribes with different cultures, influencing how organisations and audiences perceive crises. • The laid-back culture and consultation processes entrenched in societies in Botswana inhibit PR practitioners from responding in record time like their counterparts in the West.

	- The traditional and laid-back culture which make some organisations passive and reactive during a crisis, could be similar to Western organisations with a laissez-faire attitude. - Organisations in Botswana perceive their audiences as traditional, unassuming and forgetful, whereas Western organisations perceive their audiences as influential and powerful. - Botswana audiences are generally humble and do not appreciate arrogant and condescending messages, whereas Western audiences are more assertive and combative. - Organisations in Botswana vary messaging when communicating in different cultural contexts as some messages can be culturally inappropriate in other cultures, whereas Western practice develops a uniform message for all audiences. - Private practitioners and some parastatals argue that the *kgotla* system does not lend itself to crisis communication because of the extended access protocols. In the West, townhall meetings (the equivalence of the kgotla) do not lend themselves to crisis communication because of high population and advancement of technology. Botswana has a small population (2 million) and through its structures, the government can address meetings across the country through the *kgotla* system in a day. - From the perspective of some private PR practitioners the *kgotla* system is only suitable for pre and post-crisis communication with affected communities to build solid relationships and obtain feedback through dialogue with stakeholders. - In addition, the *kgotla* system discriminates against women as they are not allowed to wear trousers during meetings. - Government practitioners maintained that the *kgotla* system lends itself to crisis communication because they can quickly access it and spread crisis messages around communities using vehicles mounted with a public address system. - Generally, the *kgotla* system is more believable and credible than traditional social media platforms.

Development of messages	• Proactive practitioners draft crisis information (holding statements, questions and answers) ahead of the crises and this in consonant with Western practice. • Passive and reactive practitioners wait for the crisis to unfold before drafting their initial messages. This is similar with passive practitioners in the Western. • Some passive and reactive practitioners blame their unsupportive leadership stance on crisis communication. • There are three prevalent crisis response strategies (corrective, denial and shifting the blame) that practitioners in Botswana often deploy during crises, whereas Western practitioners deploy a wide range of crisis response strategies. • Corrective strategies are perceived as time-buying strategies. • Denial strategies are prevalent even among government establishments. • Denial and shifting the blame strategies can diminish trust among audiences in Botswana.
Facebook	• Despite acknowledging the role and benefits of Facebook, there is still hesitancy among some of the practitioners in Botswana to use it during a crisis. • Some of the reasons for hesitancy include the traditional and laid-back culture, poor preparedness, and the fear to engage directly with keyboard warriors. • There is a lack of social media readiness among organisations in Botswana, and most of them do not dedicate resources to the platform. • Organisations discreetly engage their audiences through messenger and barely engage in the comment section to protect their audience's privacy.
Language use	• Organisations vary language when communicating with the younger generation in urban areas and the elderly in rural communities. • Audiences are more sympathetic to organisations that use calm and respectful language.

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CHAPTER 8: Theoretical implications and Facebook

Chapters 5 to 7 presented several quantitative and qualitative findings that emerged from the analysis of the BDC and BR case studies using content analysis, CDA and interviews with senior PR practitioners in Botswana. Now, chapters 8 to 10 explain and conclude these findings. In other words, these chapters create connections between the findings and draw conclusions to provide a narrative that this research develops. Chapter 8 focuses on how theoretical concepts such as Coombs & Holladay (1996)'s situational crisis communication theory (SCCT), Austin et al (2012)'s social-mediated crisis communication model (SMCC) and Grunig and Hunt (1984)'s two-way symmetrical model guide practice in Botswana. In other words, this study road tested these theories to determine their relevance and validity in non-western contexts such as Botswana. It also considers how PR practitioners use Facebook and how the *kgotla* system complement this social networking platform. Figure 8.1 illustrates chapters 8, 9 and 10.
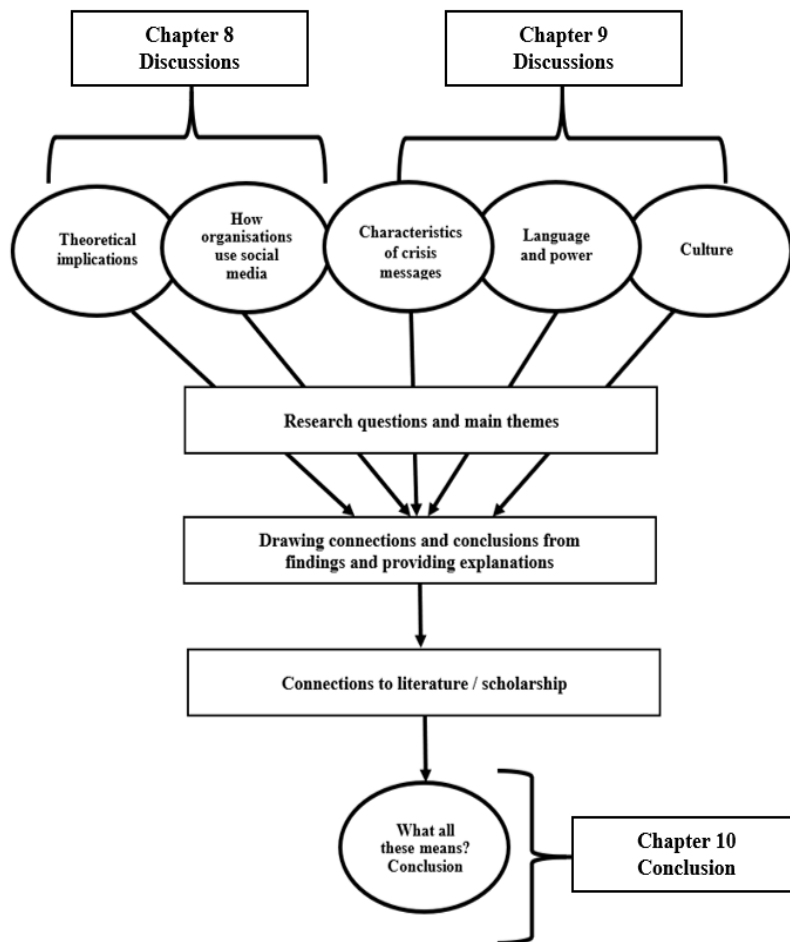
Figure 8.1: Outline of chapters 8, 9 and 10

The illustration shows that after chapter 8, the focus then shifts to chapter 9, which critically discusses how the organisations use Facebook, characteristics of Facebook crisis messages, language and power relations, and the influence of culture on crisis communication in Botswana. Lastly, chapter 10 concludes that Botswana's embryonic crisis communication landscape is distinctive, and a disparity exists between the Western and non-Western contexts. As such, adjustments are required for PR practitioners in Botswana to change their approach to match international best practices.

Firstly, and before a detailed discussion, it is essential to note that this study aims to explores crisis communication in Botswana from a non-western multicultural perspective to increase knowledge and to better understand and inform professional practice in Botswana. Using the case studies of the 2011 Botswana Development Corporation (BDC) Fengyue Glass Project and the 2019 Botswana Railways (BR) crises, this thesis explored how PR practitioners responded to these crises, how they used language on Facebook, as well as their insights and experiences on crisis communication. In doing so, this study seeks to answer the following research questions:

RQ1: To what extent do the established PR theories such the situational crisis communication theory, social mediated crisis communication model and the two-way symmetrical model apply to crisis communication practice in Botswana?

RQ2: What are the characteristics of crisis messages on Facebook among publics and organisations in Botswana?

RQ3: How do organisations use Facebook to disseminate crisis messages in Botswana?

RQ4: What is the role of language in crisis messages shared by PR practitioners on Facebook?

RQ5: How are power relations exercised and negotiated in Facebook posts about the Botswana Development Fengyue glass project and the Botswana Railways crisis?

RQ6: To what extent does culture influence crisis communication on Facebook in Botswana?

Blending these research questions with explanations to draw connections and conclusions, it might be reasonable to suggest that the ways that the BDC and BR dealt with their corporate crises might be indicative of the way most organisations in Botswana respond to emergencies. Linguistic analysis of the organisational Facebook posts also illuminates how PR practitioners use language on Facebook during exigencies. Therefore, it was essential to examine Facebook

over other social media platforms because it is popular in Botswana (Masilo & Seabo, 2015). With a relatively small population of 2.37 million people (Kemp, 2021), the Facebook subscription base in Botswana reached 75% of the total population in 2022 (Statcounter, 2022). Globally, Facebook enjoyed a huge subscription base of '1.59 billion monthly active users' in 2015 (Ye & Cheong, 2017: 441), and this figure grew to 2.93 billion monthly active users in 2022 (Statista, 2022). Therefore, it seems millions of people in Botswana and billions across the world might use Facebook for information during crises. As such, chapter 8 finds some contrasts between the crisis communication strategies adopted by Western organisations and those that are used by PR practitioners in Botswana. While Western PR practitioners are guided by theory and research to select the crisis response strategies, this thesis finds that practitioners in Botswana are guided by intuition when choosing their response tactics. Additionally, crisis communication practice in Botswana is underpinned by theoretical concepts such as the SCCT, SMCC and the two-way symmetrical model.

Furthermore, the study concludes that the dominant corrective crisis response strategy that most organisations in Botswana deploy when a crisis breaks seems to be emotionally appealing to attract sympathy and persuade the audiences than to correct or prevent the reoccurrence of an emergency. This assertion is crystalised by the PR practitioners who indicated that organisations make veiled promises to investigate the crisis. Still, they never provide a report for public consumption assuring them of corrective action. As a result, audiences seem to distrust organisations that make such promises. However, the corrective strategy has proven to work alongside other strategies. Aside from this, some strategies that government organisations deployed seemed to inhibit audiences from challenging the status quo. In this connection, most organisations in Botswana use Facebook in ways that do not obviously advance their image or corporate reputations. Due to lack of training and poor preparedness, most practitioners are hesitant to exploit and leverage on Facebook's fullest potential. However, it seems reasonable to conclude that while Botswana's crisis communication landscape is still embryonic, the future looks bright.

As shall be discussed in chapter 9, several emergent issues dictate the direction and form of crisis communication in Botswana. Some of the issues that significantly influence PR practitioners and their organisations to assume a passive and reactive stance to crisis communication include, among other things, cultural dynamics, unwieldy chains of command,

unempowered practitioners, poor preparedness and a negative attitude of the leadership towards Facebook. The chapter also establishes that Botswana is still a traditional and culturally laid-back society that prefers ancient offline communication platforms for its publics in rural and remotest areas. However, this cultural platform seems to present an opportunity for crisis communication efforts because it is still trusted and regarded as credible by both the practitioners and communities, but its limited use requires intervention to open it for private companies to easily access it. As such, this study concludes that the *kgotla* system (the 18th-century public sphere or village assembly) and Facebook are two sides of the same coin. Therefore, this thesis concludes that Facebook can be conceptualised as a 21st-century *kgotla* system where people meet virtually to discuss issues of national importance.

Moreover, this research found that most PR practitioners still operate without appropriate planning and tools to guide their communication in dire situations. Due to a lack of training, there is a misunderstanding between risk management, crisis management and crisis communication. It seems the absence of a more precise understanding between these fields makes the practice more abstract and stunted. Using critical realism, the reasons and explanations for these disparities, their implications and the use of Facebook as a platform for crisis communication management are now considered.

8.1. Theoretical implications on crisis communication practice in Botswana

To answer RQ1, this study examined the applicability of theoretical concepts such as the SCCT, SMCC and the two-way symmetrical model to crisis communication practice in Botswana. The reason for conceptualising this study from this perspective segues nicely with scholarship suggesting that deploying a multi-faceted approach to exigencies helps close gaps created by understanding crisis from a single view (Coombs, 2004). Hence the need to examine the extent to which PR practitioners in Botswana select crisis response strategies using the SCCT; how organisations use Facebook during the crisis from the SMCC and the two-way symmetrical model point of view. First, this section puts the spotlight on the applicability of the SCCT to practice in Botswana.

8.1.1. The SCCT and selection of crisis response strategies

Scholarship has highlighted the importance of the SCCT in selecting crisis response strategies. Ahead of a detailed discussion, it is vital to provide a little background and reminder about the SCCT. According to Coombs (2006), the SCCT has three elements: the crisis, crisis response strategy, and the system matching the situation and response strategy. As indicated earlier, the first focal point of the SCCT is the crisis type. Coombs and Holladay (2002) have grouped the crisis types into three categories (see Figure 8.2). These crisis types are arranged in a sequence showing an increase in crisis responsibility and reputational damage from victim cluster to preventable cluster (Coombs, 2006: 243). Therefore, the victim cluster attracts less crisis responsibility, while the preventable set attracts more crisis blame from the publics.
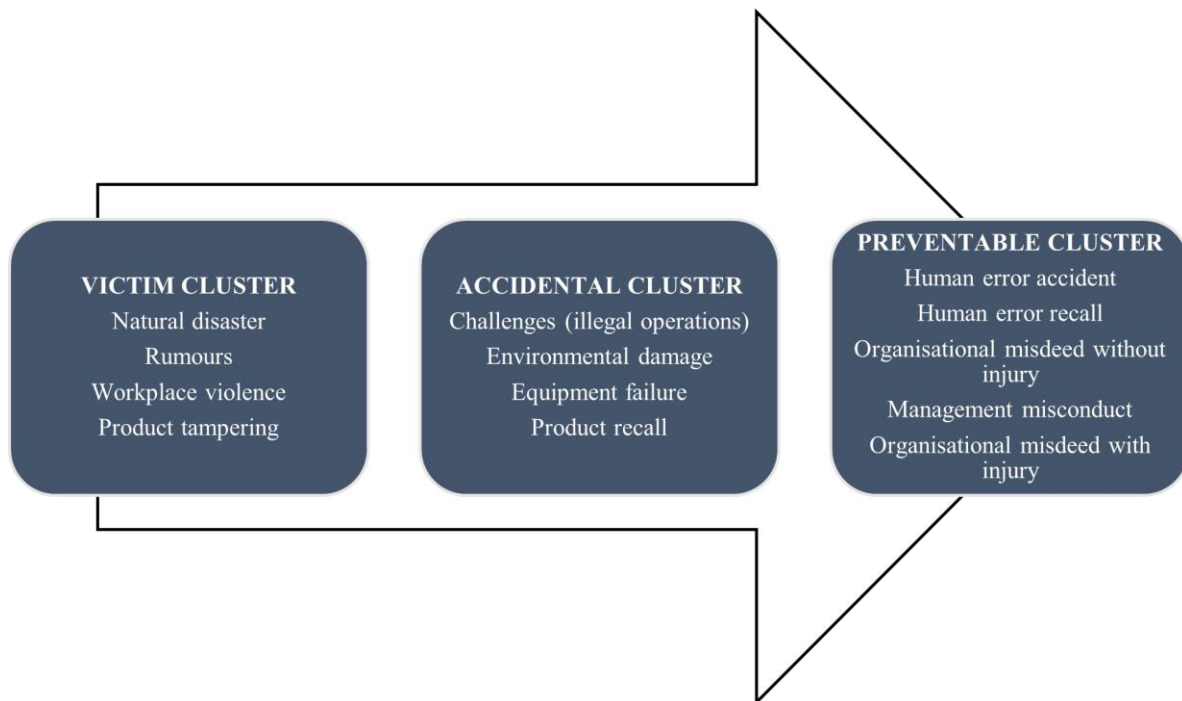
Figure 8.2: Crisis types and clusters adapted from Coombs (2006)

According to this classification, it is crucial to start from the premise that the BDC crisis is management misconduct (transgression) and is situated in the preventable cluster suggested by Coombs (2006). In the same way, it can be said that the BR crisis occupies two groups, the accidental (equipment failure) and the preventable (human error accident) as indicated in the findings, suggesting that the situation was an accident and while the BR might have planned to prevent accidents in their risk analysis, the incident still occurred. However, other Facebook posts indicated that the BR knowingly placed people at risk when it allowed the trains to

operate in rainy conditions. In this connection, the quantitative findings suggest that audiences attributed more crisis responsibility to the BR than the BDC, despite both occupying the preventable cluster where more crisis responsibility should be apportioned. This study explains why the degree of responsibility differed, yet they occupied the same cluster. Simply put, the degree of crisis responsibility in this case differed depending on intentionality of the crisis (Coombs & Holladay, 2002). As such, the findings of this study confirm Coombs and Holladay (2002)'s study suggesting that the preventable cluster attracts more crisis responsibility.

The second element of the SCCT is the crisis response strategies. Implicitly, the findings demonstrate evidence of the influence of the SCCT in selecting and matching the crisis response strategies with crisis types. The question of what informs their selection decision was answered by the qualitative results indicating that choosing an effective crisis response strategy 'is situational' (Olivia Matthew, Head of Communications and Public Education) and that the 'type of crisis you are handling should match the type of response' (Jane Rick, Communications and Stakeholder Relations Manager). For example, the evidence demonstrates that the selection decisions of PR practitioners in Botswana are based on intuition and not on a systematic process of selecting and matching crisis types with response strategies, as suggested by Coombs and Holladay (1996; 2002). Perhaps, one of the explanations for PR practitioners failing to deploy scientific and systematic processes to guide their decisions is because they are poorly prepared and not trained in crisis communication management, as demonstrated by the findings of this study. Additionally, the fact that practitioners in Botswana can match crisis types to crisis response strategies intuitively, without training or scientific intervention, suggests that Western strategies are valid in non-western contexts because they are simply transplanted without empirical evidence.

Furthermore, the findings indicate that some of the Western composed strategies used during the BDC crisis were corrective, bolstering (ingratiation), and good intentions (excuse). In contrast, the BR mostly used the corrective, regret and scapegoating (shifting the blame) strategies. As indicated earlier, the corrective strategy, which is not part of a cluster (Table 8.1) suggested by Coombs (2006), seems dominant. It originates from an inventory of crisis response strategies recommended by Benoit (1995). Coombs (2006) only mentions the corrective action as part of the elements of instructing information, which he suggests is compulsory and should be provided during the crisis.

DENY RESPONSES	DIMINISH RESPONSES	DEAL RESPONSES
Attack the accuser	Excuse/ Good intentions	Ingratiation/ bolstering
Denial	Justification	Concern
Scapegoat/ shifting the blame		Compassion
		Regret
		Apology

Table 8.1: A set of SCCT crisis response strategies adapted from Coombs (2006)

However, it seems the reason the BDC and BR used the corrective response strategy as dominant has cultural significance. This will be explained later in chapter 9 when the focus shifts to culture. For now, it is essential to note that the findings confirm research by Coombs (2006) suggesting that the strategies in his cluster can help the crisis manager to deny the existence of a crisis; diminish responsibility for the situation or address the stakeholders directly (deal responses) in the aftermath of the problem.

In addition, the findings demonstrate that the BDC and the BR had crisis types within the same cluster (preventable) but did not receive the same depth of blameworthiness and reputational damage. The question is, why? Perhaps the answer lies in one of the elements of the SCCT, which is the crisis history of the organisations that can aggravate crisis blame (Coombs, 2006). Since the BR had a history of train derailments, especially during rainfall, it can be argued that crisis history intensified the organisation's blameworthiness and reputational harm. As indicated in chapter 5, the study used a protocol by Cho & Gower (2006), to determine the level of blame worthiness and reputational harm on the BDC and the BR. A test was conducted to determine the extent of crisis responsibility and reputational harm. This convention examines attribution of crisis type to blame and responsibility for an organisation using tests where the Mean ($\overline{\overline{X}}$) determines which crisis type has higher crisis responsibility (Cho & Gower, 2006). On the other hand, the BDC, which had a positive prior history of good corporate governance, escaped the crisis with less blame. In hindsight, the government consistently used the corrective strategy and language to protect its reputational assets.

The corrective strategies seem like a saving grace for the government and its agencies. For example, in the 2007-2008 global financial crisis, the corrective strategy and language were used to dominate and persuade the audiences to sympathise with the government and its

agencies. The then Finance Ministers, Baledzi Gaolathe and his successor Kenneth Matambo (who was appointed as Minister of Finance in 2010 from his previous position as the Managing Director of the BDC), used their budget speeches to protect the reputation of the government (Gaolathe, 2009; Matambo, 2010). In their budget speeches, the two Ministers used the corrective response strategy to assure the nation that the government was working hard to restore the situation and the financial losses. They also diminished the government's responsibility for the crisis and blamed developed countries. Based on this experience, it is possible to conclude that the government relied on crisis history and previous knowledge to protect the BDC's reputation. This confirms Coombs and Holladay (1996)'s SCCT as still valid and robust.

Moreover, the selection of the crisis response strategies is based on reputation, protective properties and threat posed by the crisis (Coombs, 2006). It can be argued that the BDC and BR crises could seriously dent these organisations' reputation. For the BDC, the choice of the crisis response strategies reduced the organisation's responsibility for the problem and distanced the corporations from the situation. One of the limitations of the SCCT is that it does not address how language is used in the crisis response strategies on Facebook to influence the behaviour of various publics. This justifies the reason to deploy CDA to examine how the BDC and the BR used language in their crisis responses on Facebook to dominate, persuade, and manipulate the audiences to inhibit them from challenging the organisations. The findings indicate that the government used language with some distinctive linguistic features such as lexical choices, abstraction, honorifics and nomination, to inhibit audiences from challenging its parastatals.

As a result, despite the crisis still resurfacing in 2017 and being used by political parties to score points with the electorates, the BDC escaped the crisis with less blame, despite being a transgression crisis. The findings support earlier findings by Coombs and Holladay (1996) that the only available option for organisations facing transgression crises is to improve perceptions by repairing legitimacy. The same was with the BR. As such, it can be argued that the zest of the crisis response strategies is in the linguistic ingredients PR practitioners use during a crisis. The study demonstrated the importance of language in making crisis response strategies effective. At least in this manner, it seems reasonable to conclude that the use of persuasive and dominating language inhibited the audiences from challenging the organisation and its

corporate values. Therefore, one can conclude that the organisations' reputation might remain intact because of how language was used to dominate, persuade, and manipulate the audiences. These findings emerged from CDA, which is a method developed to reveal how language is used to achieve exactly these outcomes.

On the other hand, it is also clear that the government did not use instructing information in their initial crisis communication on Facebook during the BDC crisis but prominently used internalising information. This is not consistent with Coombs (2006), who suggested that instructing information is compulsory when the crisis hits. Perhaps, the absence of instructing information about the BDC crisis on Facebook indicate that the organisations may have issued it through the traditional media, which was not examined in this study. In the absence of such a likelihood, the organisations may have run out of time to issue instructing information because they waited for the crisis to unfold and resorted to internalising information to repair their reputational image. This reflects on the findings suggesting that some organisations in Botswana have a laid-back approach, are reactive and prefer to wait and see the crisis unfolding before they issue a crisis response.

A communication posture such as this defeats the efforts to respond promptly using instructing information. Perhaps it is reasonable to suggest that the organisations replaced the instructing information with the corrective response strategy to explain the crisis and demonstrate what the organisations are doing to prevent the return of the situation. Some scholars recommend against internalising information as an initial crisis response because organisations may be perceived as cynical (Roshan et al., 2016). Since the BDC had a positive prior reputation, one can conclude that the only available option for the organisation was to use internalising information to influence stakeholders' perceptions, as suggested by Coombs and Holladay (2002). This is also consistent with Roshan et al. (2016)'s findings of Australian organisations using internalising information to communicate during natural disasters.

However, in the case of the BR train accident, there is evidence of the organisation using instructing information in its initial crisis response on Facebook, although it neglected the elements of protection, which is emphasised by the SCCT (Coombs, 2006). Nevertheless, the information featuring prominently on the BDC, and BR Facebook pages was internalising information which according to Coombs (2006) helps the audience to form a positive image of these organisations. Having considered all the evidence and explanations, it seems

reasonable to conclude that the SCCT, in many aspects, significantly influences the way PR practitioners in Botswana handle crises.

Nevertheless, they do not look through the lenses of the SCCT when selecting and matching the crisis response strategies. As such, their decisions are not guided by 'theoretically derived and empirically tested evidence' (Coombs, 2006: 255). Therefore, this presents an opportunity for PR practitioners in Botswana and Sub-Saharan Africa to learn the values of the SCCT when selecting the response strategies.

Furthermore, it seems PR practitioners in Botswana are aware of the need to share instructing information with the audiences, despite neglecting some of the elements suggested by the SCCT, such as protection and corrective action, as shown in the case of the BR. In answering RQ1, evidence demonstrates that PR practitioners in Botswana instinctively interact with the SCCT, suggesting that they may fully integrate the SCCT to guide their practice with proper training in crisis communication. Using intuition to interact with the SCCT is particularly problematic because it might lead to PR practitioners using guesswork, especially when matching crisis types with strategies, which might lead to undesirable outcomes for the organisations. Additionally, the media system in Botswana remains distinctive and government controlled, which is why there is a need to adjust the crisis response strategies for this context.

8.1.2. Social-mediated dialogue with audiences

Alongside the SCCT, this study examined how organisations communicated and interacted with their audiences on Facebook during the BDC and the BR crises through the lens of the SMCC. One of the essential things to note is that the SMCC conceptualises the origin of crisis information on social media. It describes an interaction between the organisation and the three types of social media publics: influential social media creators (create a crisis message for others to consume), social media followers (consume the influential social media creators' crisis information) and the social media inactives as those who may consume influencers content indirectly (Jin and Liu, 2010; Austin et al., 2012; Zhu et al., 2017). In addition, it conceptualises social-mediated dialogue between the organisations in crisis and their publics (Cheng, 2020).

First, the quantitative findings indicate that much of the crisis information about the BDC crisis originated from the audiences. At the same time, the government created most of the information about the BR crisis (Table 5.2, Chapter 5). In this connection, the origin of information, as suggested by the SMCC, can help researchers to understand how social media delivers crisis responses and information to the stakeholders (Coombs & Holladay, 2010; Austin et al., 2012; Coombs, 2012). Perhaps the most plausible explanation for the most information originating from the audience during the BDC situation can be attributed to the organisation's passive stance. The audiences controlled the narrative during the BDC crisis, and this study supports earlier research that if organisations fail to share information, they risk reputational damage as audiences might peddle harmful content about them (Roshan et al., 2016).

Secondly, the SMCC describes the interaction between the three publics and the organisations. However, it was unexpected when PR practitioners indicated that their priorities are more focused on the social media influencers during emergencies because they can potentially rally other publics against the organisation. The role of the influencers resonates with Grunig and Hunt (1982)'s two-way communication model because their followers directly provide feedback to their status updates on Facebook, and in the process these comments from the publics might benefit the organisations in crises. For example, one of the participants suggested:

> *In social media, everyone has a voice, and anyone can be listened to. You need to watch for the very influential people as much as you would not want to get to every comment. Powerful people with political status, social status, and educational status influence the followers differently and for different reasons. If you have a strategy that includes influential people, it's easier for your crisis communication because you know how to handle them* (Stephanie Joshua, Brand and Communications Manager).

However, this is not surprising because organisations with a closer relationship with social media influencers are more likely to close the information gaps and control the narrative during a crisis (McCorquodale, 2021). It seems developing a strategy that only targets social media influencers might mislead and blind-spot the organisations' view on the power that other audiences possess. This is particularly true because audiences who were previously silent now have a voice and can express themselves through Facebook in ways that can put the

organisation's reputation at greater risk (Etter & Vestergaard, 2015). Everyone with a voice has power, and it might be helpful for organisations to resist the temptation to classify their audiences as benign during a crisis. The findings of this study explain the reasons organisations in Botswana do not respond or interact with their audiences, especially the social media followers, on Facebook. This attitude will be discussed further in chapter 10. But for now, it seems reasonable to conclude that selectively monitoring Facebook posts, as it was the case with the BDC and the BR crises, and only responding when it is the influencers commenting sounds arbitrary and problematic.

As explained earlier, findings indicate that PR practitioners do not engage in dialogue with audiences because they are not trained in crisis communication management and social media. Additionally, their organisations do not have dedicated social media personnel. Therefore, it seems reasonable to suggest that responding to individual Facebook comments and messages might be overwhelming for organisations with untrained practitioners. These findings support earlier research suggesting that PR practitioners refuse to engage in dialogue because of the impossibility of responding to large quantities of individual messages on Facebook (Ki & Nekmat, 2014; Roshan, 2016). It seems the organisations in Botswana are overwhelmed because of the many social media users, whose expectations are changing and increasing against the backdrop of a lack of training to handle such situations. As explained by one of the PR practitioners:

> The capacity to respond individually to all those messages is a huge challenge because its time consuming, especially if you work for a company that deals with a product that's sensitive. We get questions on the business WhatsApp line, as well as social media platforms. Normally we concentrate on individual questions that are sent through a messenger in the comment section (Johan Mend, Corporate Communications Manager).

Regardless of these challenges, social media is rife with challenges because audiences now expect organisations to respond directly to their comments and share information within an hour (Huang and DiStaso, 2020). As such, it is evidently clear that organisations might be overwhelmed by the increasing demand for information by the many users who resort to social media during a crisis. It seems resourcing or capacitating the PR departments to increase the number of staff as well as more training might help to match the information demand on social media. That notwithstanding, some practitioners have explained that they react to selected

personal messages through inbox or Facebook messenger to address this problem. For example, PR practitioners in the private sector explained they respond to their publics' comments with a general statement to benefit users with similar concerns (Kevin Edwards, Communications and Social Impact Manager). As such, it seems reasonable to conclude that such efforts might amount to individualised dialogue. In other words, the extent of their conversation with audiences through texting cannot be validated and might only be considered superficial because there is no research to prove it actually happens.

Furthermore, findings indicate that dialogue does not exist because PR practitioners in Botswana only use Facebook for a status update of crisis information and not to establish and maintain dialogue with their stakeholders. Insofar as dialogue on Facebook is concerned, this aspect of the SMCC is less significant for practitioners in Botswana because they maintain dialogue in offline communication platforms, as evident from the qualitative findings. Furthermore, there is another impediment to the conversation. Practitioners have indicated that their leaders are not comfortable with using Facebook during emergencies. This problem will be discussed further in chapter 9 because of its cultural implications. As suggested by one of the interviewees:

> *You might even have the leadership of an organisation say I know we don't like this Facebook, this thing of yours, let's ignore Facebook. As much as we don't like Facebook, we won't know what people are saying there, which is a dangerous posture to take* (Robert Rhys, Head of Communications and Marketing).

It is clear from this evidence that leaders dismiss Facebook because of their culture, age and inexperience, which seems to trivialise audiences as benign and apathetic recipients of the information. While it might be unfair to conclude that some organisational leaders are reluctant to use Facebook based on the perceptions and experiences of the PR practitioners, this might present an opportunity for further research into perceptions of executive leadership on Facebook during crises among organisations. However, the absence of open discussion with audiences on Facebook, especially by the government and its agencies, is not surprising. It reflects Lin et al (2016)'s suggestions that governments and their agencies are less likely to reply to their stakeholders' posts on social media. Similarly, news organisations with social media presence do not engage with their audience directly on the platform.

Additionally, it is clear from this research that most of the organisations in Botswana do not have adequate resources to monitor and respond, at least in real-time, to Facebook comments made by various publics. Crisis literature has demonstrated that a quicker response provides greater organisational credibility than a slower response (Huang & DiStaso, 2020). Therefore, the slow responses that characterise most organisations' crisis communication reflect on their credibility. Based on these findings, and in response to RQ1, it seems reasonable to conclude that there are limitations as far as the SMCC framework is concerned on Botswana practice. Perhaps this provides an opportunity for PR practitioners in Botswana to leverage the SMCC to establish dialogue and mutuality on Facebook.

8.1.3. Offline platforms and Facebook

The absence of Facebook conversations between the organisations in Botswana and their audiences does not mean the organisations are reticent or disinterested in establishing dialogue. Unlike the West, Botswana still maintains its 18th-century public sphere where people physically meet in community assemblies known in Setswana (Botswana's national language) as *kgotla* to discuss issues of public importance (Lekorwe, 2011). Scholars assert that in the West, the 18th-century public sphere, which is an essential aspect of national discourse, has decayed due to the emergence of the mass media (Gesser-Edelsburg et al., 2015). Social media has occupied that space, which is why most organisations today complement Facebook with offline communication.

Since this study has concluded that online conversations on the Facebook comment section do not exist between the organisations and their publics, Grunig and Hunt (1984)'s two-way symmetrical model helps explore mutuality and dialogue through offline communication platforms that complement Facebook. The findings indicate that PR practitioners do not respond to Facebook comments because they reach out to their publics through texting via inbox or messenger. In other words, the exchange starts online and moves offline, a swim against technological tide. They also make follow-up phone calls to answer their audience's queries and engage in face-to-face conversations with audiences during *kgotla* meetings, especially if they work for the government or its agencies. Essentially, discourse in the *kgotla* system resonates with social values that Botswana has held from the pre-colonial to the post-colonial eras as part of their culture.

These social values, including proverbs and sayings, guide communication in the *kgotla* systems. For example, some of the proverbs and sayings that help organisations to create dialogue and mutuality in the *kgotla* system include *matlho a phage a lebagane*, meaning conversations are better held face-to-face, and *mafoko a kgotla a mantle otlhe* which translates to everyone expresses themselves freely in the *kgotla* system (Dube & Kgalemang, 2017: 366), among others. While these sayings encourage freedom of speech, there is another saying that *there is no hurry in Botswana* (Xu, 2018), reflecting on the organisations' laid-back approach to crisis communication. These sayings guide organisational communication in Botswana and suggest that time is not a priority for most organisations and PR practitioners. These sayings also guide offline communication in traditional media such as radio and television. Additionally, it also guides Facebook discourse and how organisations respond to their audience, despite the social media platform failing to conform to social values because of lack of regulation. It seems no one holds Facebook users accountable for negative or inappropriate discourse, unlike in the *kgotla* system, where community leaders can reprimand those who abuse their right of speech.

In addition to reasons for preferring offline conversations, evidence in this study suggests apparent hesitancy to use Facebook as emanating from beliefs that the platform contributes to westernisation and moral decay. While Facebook hesitancy shall be discussed in greater detail in chapter 10, it seems logical to suggest that most organisations in Botswana prefer offline dialogue to social-mediated dialogue with their audiences. Therefore, this study concludes that while the SMCC conceptualises social-mediated dialogue, it does not guide practice in Botswana because organisations and PR practitioners prefer offline communication. In other words, the government and its agencies still trust traditional offline communication platforms over Facebook. While private practitioners indicated they engage meaningfully in Facebook dialogue, with more training and empowerment, it seems an opportunity might exist for government PR practitioners to embrace Facebook to establish a dialogue with their publics.

Given this evidence, this research concludes that Grunig and Hunt (1984)'s two-way symmetrical model guides crisis communication in Botswana, especially in offline platforms, among them the *kgotla*. Facebook serves the same purpose as the *kgotla* system, and they complement each other. Put differently, the kgotla enable publics to physically gather to discuss public discourse, while Facebook allows publics to discuss public discourse in a virtual

environment. As explained earlier, the two-way symmetrical model emphasises mutuality between the organisations and their publics, especially their interaction on social media and offline communication (Grunig and Hunt, 1984). This research proposes what it refers to as the Cross Cloverleaf Relationship Matrix (CCRM) to illustrate the interdependent relationship between social media and the *kgotla* system. The CCRM is inspired by the cloverleaf traffic interchange (Wang & Zhou, 2018), which examined the flow of vehicles at the interchange, hence the name *Cloverleaf*. The introduction of this model into crisis communication studies is a significant contribution to the global scholarship on how information flows between the organisations, offline cultural platforms, and social media publics. It shows that Facebook and other social media platforms can be used to complement the offline communication platform such as the *kgotla* system in non-western multicultural contexts like Botswana (Figure 8.3).
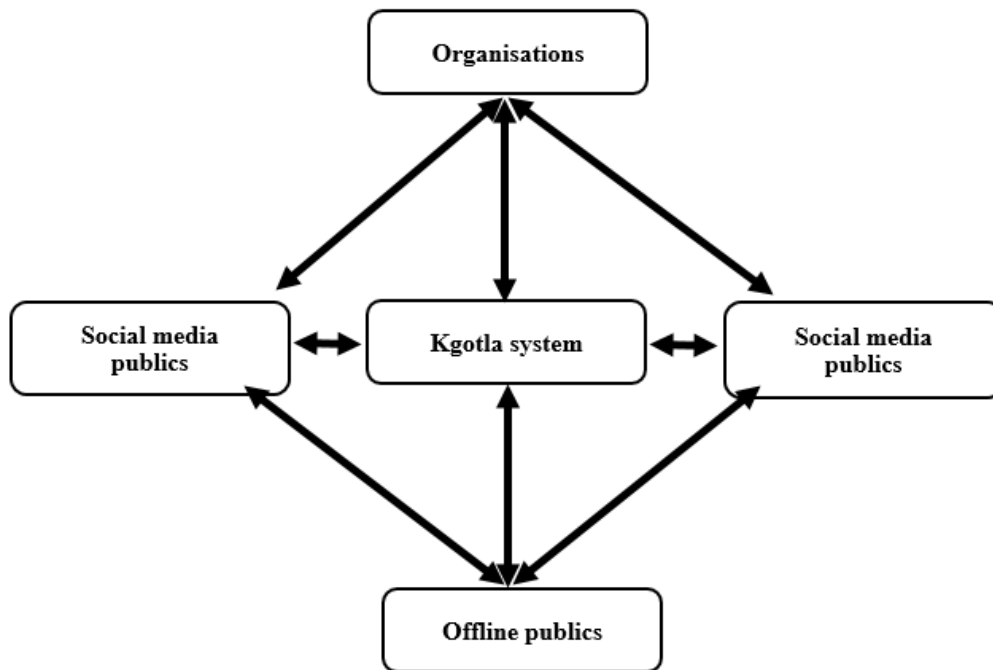
Figure 8.3: The Cross Cloverleaf relationship matrix (CCRM) between social media and kgotla system in Botswana

The CCRM is an opportunity for PR practitioners to utilise offline cultural platforms in the digital age. Earlier in chapter 7, PR practitioners in the private sector indicated that the *kgotla* system was not ideal for crisis communication due to access and operational challenges. To address this problem, the CCRM which has the *kgotla* system is at the heart of crisis communication proposes that the platform should become virtual to enable PR practitioners to access and utilise it effectively during crisis. The model also indicates that using both physical

and digital *kgotla* might help authentic and credible information to flow into social media platforms such as Facebook since this cultural platform is more trusted and still held in high regard. As indicated in Figure 8.3, using the CCRM enables crisis information to flow in both directions from social media and other online platforms to offline publics with ease, and vice versa. In this way, crisis information shared by the organisations on Facebook might simultaneously reach the online and offline publics. This model facilitates and supports third culture building where PR practitioners can organise online and offline engagements for people to 'converse and take part in dialogue' (Benecke & Oksiutycz, 2015:819). As indicated earlier, the offline publics comprise those who are not techno-savvy or those without internet access in rural and remotest parts of Botswana. The model also suggests that the crisis information disseminated through the *kgotla* system to the offline publics (in rural and remote areas) is shared with and by the social media publics, who can then provide feedback to the organisations through their Facebook comments sections and timeline. As such, it seems reasonable to suggest that in the context of Botswana, crisis communication on social media might not be effective if isolated from the offline platforms such as the *kgotla*. As much as it allows for instant audience feedback, the *kgotla* system also helps to give feedback to the organisations and their stakeholders. This is captured by one of the participants when he explained:

> *Indeed, the kgotla system we know in our society is beneficial when communicating during a crisis. It disseminates information faster and clears uncertainties and questions from stakeholders. The government uses it a lot to disseminate information, given that much of the communities are in rural and remote areas without internet to access social media* (Johan Mend, Corporate Communications Manager).

In this way, organisations in Botswana might find it helpful to consider disseminating crisis information on Facebook through the *kgotla* system, although it is still challenging for PR practitioners, especially in the private sector, to access this cultural offline platform. With the government working on improving the digital infrastructure, it seems there are hopes that faster internet speed and connectivity might bridge this divide. Furthermore, it seems neglecting the offline public might be detrimental to the organisations' reputation. Evidence in this study suggests that the *kgotla* disseminates crisis information faster and provides instant feedback to the stakeholders and the organisation during a crisis. Therefore, it seems reasonable to

conclude that the *kgotla* system's ability to clear uncertainties and provide instant feedback to the stakeholders, mirrors Grunig and Hunt (1984)'s two-way symmetrical model.

As explained earlier, the information shared through the *kgotla* system might become a credible source of information for Facebook. In other words, the *kgotla* as a credible source of information complements Facebook because it provides trustworthy and believable information that users might share, and in the process helping establish and maintain trust between them and the organisations. As explained earlier, many people in rural and remotest communities in Botswana still respect the system and abide by any decisions made on this ancient communication platform. These findings mirror a study on social media best practices by Lin et al. (2016), which suggests that source credibility is an effective medium for power controls and source influence. Perhaps this explains why the *kgotla* system has remained a relevant, powerful, and influential offline communication platform in Botswana. As suggested by an interviewee:

> *There is still a lot of people who still adhere to the kgotla. The information from the kgotla is seen as binding to the communities. We still find a way to engage through the kgotla alongside social media and traditional media.* (Charity Crane, Communications Manager).

In the absence of online conversations on Facebook, this evidence demonstrates that in multicultural non-western contexts, dialogue exists in offline platforms alongside Facebook. These findings also support research on how audiences seek out crisis information, demonstrating that 'face-to-face communication is the most reported form of crisis communication, followed by television, text messaging, phone calls and Facebook' (Austin et al., 2012:203). Furthermore, the inclusion of the *kgotla* system into crisis and PR scholarship and how it complements social media platforms including Facebook is a significant step in the right direction because it provides insights on how PR practitioners can use the platform to establish dialogue and mutuality during crises. As such, this study validates, as credible and robust, Grunig et al (1995)'s personal influence and cultural translator models of PR which they developed in their international study of PR models in the US, Greece, India, and Taiwan. Evidence of PR practitioners in Botswana posting information on Facebook and then shifting to offline communication to obtain information from audiences, which they then 'broker for influence,' validates Grunig et al (1995: 183)'s personal influence model of PR as still relevant.

This shows the authentic biopower of individual communication practitioners. In the same way, evidence from this study of the PR practitioners using the cultural communication platform to communicate with audiences with diverse cultural backgrounds across the country validates Grunig et al (1995)'s cultural translator model of PR as robust. Not only is this model suitable for a setting with diverse groups, but it also works for multinational organisations, where these international firms might 'hire local citizens for their public relations departments' (Grunig et al, 1995: 183). As such, crisis communication might only succeed if organisations are well versed with the cultures of various environments they operate.

While the findings indicate that access to the kgotla system is restricted by the unwieldy chains of command, removing such obstacles for the private sector to use the platform might help the organisations to reach their offline publics to establish dialogue during a crisis. There seem to be contradicting views on whether, or not, the *kgotla* lends itself to crisis communication. One of the reasons private PR practitioners gave was that crisis communication is hurried, while access to the kgotla system is slow because of the unwieldy chain of command. Perhaps adjusting the administrative bottlenecks as well as training the chiefs on crisis communication might help the organisations across the business spectrum to use this offline platform during emergencies. Evidence from this study suggests that the platform is the backbone of crisis communication for government PR practitioners. It is only suitable for post-crisis communication because the organisations can share adjusting information, which helps stakeholders cope psychologically, and internalising information, allowing stakeholders to formulate a positive image about the organisation as suggested by Coombs (2010) and Roshan et al. (2016).

As earlier explained, sayings such as *there is no hurry in Botswana* (Xu, 2018) create an environment that slows down proactive PR practitioners from sharing information. During the interviews, the private practitioners emphasised their keenness to communicate as soon as the crisis breaks as they cannot wait for several days to gain access to the kgotla. When they finally gain access at the end of the crisis, they only have an option to share *adjusting* and *internalising* information. Crisis scholarship discourages organisations from providing internalising information when the crisis breaks because they may be perceived as self-interested (Coombs, 2010; Roshan et al., 2016). When an emergency occurs, organisations are encouraged to provide instructing information, representing what audiences should do and

'want to know after a crisis hit' (Coombs, 2006:246). As such, the lack of access to the *kgotla*, makes it difficult for private PR practitioners to use the platform to interactively live stream their meetings for people to comment, ask questions and receive answers in real time. Currently, some government Ministries with access to the *kgotla* often live stream their meetings on Facebook, but do not respond to comments and questions on Facebook. Apart from this, other organisations do not have this privilege. As such, this thesis proposes that the government should make the *kgotla* more accessible and avail infrastructure for the *kgotla* to become virtual to enable interactive live streaming of content during exigencies.

Furthermore, it seems the private practitioners' contention that the *kgotla* system does not lend itself to crisis communication seems valid because it does not support prompt responses. Crisis research suggests that the speed of crisis response in any platform is critical because it can significantly influence the outcomes of crisis management (Huang & DiStaso, 2020). As far as the *kgotla* system is concerned, speed seems problematic due to the chains of command and consultations; hence the saying *there is no hurry in Botswana* (Xu, 2018). The government practitioners have indicated that they can access the kgotla system within a reasonable time. However, a good time in their context does not refer to the first hour (golden hour) or stealing the thunder (Hartley, 2019; Wheeler, 2019). To them, a reasonable time might mean 24 hours after the crisis has unfolded because of the hurdles and chains of command they must overcome before communicating. Therefore, while the concepts of the golden hour or stealing the thunder are noble, they do not apply in the context of the *kgotla* system. Even the private practitioners in Botswana find communicating within the first hour unachievable if they have to use the *kgotla* system for their crisis communication.

8.1.4. Conclusion

In sum, this chapter has established that the SCCT seems helpful and remains valid and robust and still guides crisis communication practice in Botswana, despite a need to adjust the crisis response strategies due to Botswana unique media system which is government controlled. However, its aspect of helping PR practitioners in Botswana to select and match the crisis response strategies has not been fully exploited. It has been discussed that their decisions are based on intuition, and not on research and scientifically proven methods suggested by the SCCT. Perhaps, practitioners do not leverage this aspect because they are not trained in crisis

communication. This study suggested that PR practitioners should look through the lens of the SCCT to select and match the crisis response strategies with crisis types.

Furthermore, this research has concluded that the SMCC also guides practice in Botswana, although it is not fully utilised for dialogue due to cultural reasons, and this is further discussed in chapter 10. Additionally, evidence in this study indicates that dialogue does not exist on Facebook because the practitioners prefer offline communication platforms used from the post-colonial era. Some of these offline platforms include the *kgotla* system, which serves the same purposes as Facebook in discussing public discourse. In other words, while this cultural offline communication platform still maintains the 18th-century public sphere where people physically gather to discuss national discourse, Facebook is the 21st-century public sphere where audiences gather in a virtual space to discuss issues of national importance. This study has proposed a relationship matrix which demonstrates the relevance of the kgotla system in the digital age. It shows that discussions on Facebook and the *kgotla* system complement each other. This chapter summarises the narrative developed as follows:

- There is a disparity between the West and Botswana's approach to crisis communication.
- Western PR practitioners are guided by theory and research to select the crisis response strategies whereas this thesis finds that PR practitioners in Botswana are guided by intuition and culture when choosing their response tactics.
- Dialogue does not exist on Facebook because the practitioners prefer offline communication platforms.
- The SMCC guides practice in Botswana, although the aspect of dialogue is not fully utilised for dialogue due to cultural reasons.
- While developing a strategy targeting social media influencers sounds like a noble idea, it might mislead and blind-spot the organisations' view on the power that other audiences possess.
- Theoretical concepts such as the SCCT, SMCC and the two-way symmetrical model influence crisis communication practice in Botswana.
- The *kgotla* system (the 18th-century public sphere) serves the same purpose as Facebook (the 21st-century public sphere), and their relationship is intertwined because

dialogue flows from Facebook to an offline environment, the kgotla and from offline platform to the online platforms.

- The concept of speed seems problematic for the *kgotla* system because of the chains of command, consultations, and cultural factors.

- The *kgotla* system lends itself to crisis communication for government practitioners, but it is suitable for only pre and post-crisis communication for private practitioners.

- Organisations should have access to the kgotla to interactively live stream meetings into social media platforms. The livestreams might allow publics to attend meetings in the comfort of their homes, and still comment on the discussions, ask questions and receive answers in real time.

CHAPTER 9: Facebook, culture and language use

Chapter 8 demonstrated that Coombs & Holladay (1996)'s situational crisis communication theory (SCCT), Austin et al (2012)'s social-mediated crisis communication model (SMCC) and Grunig and Hunt (1984)'s two-way symmetrical models remain relevant, robust and guide crisis communication practice in Botswana. The chapter also identified and added to the knowledge of how these concepts work in practice and how they might be adapted to different cultural contexts. It also contributed the CCRM model to global crisis scholarship to help explain and facilitate the flow of crisis information between Facebook and Botswana's cultural offline communication platform, the *kgotla* system. Chapter 9 continues this narrative and discusses the characteristics of Facebook crisis messages and establishes that Botswana has a unique culture from the West, which significantly influences how PR practitioners handle crises. It also establishes that organisations in Botswana use language to dominate, persuade and manipulate audiences to inhibit them from challenging them and apportioning crisis blame.

9.1. Characteristics of Facebook crisis messages

Having discussed the applicability of the PR theoretical concepts to crisis communication practice in Botswana, there is no doubt that the SMCC remains relevant and guides PR practitioners. To answer RQ2, if it is first, essential to consider the source of crisis information, as suggested by Austin et al (2012). The findings of this study indicate that most crisis messages originated from the audience during the BDC crisis, followed by the media outlets with Facebook presence and the organisations in crises contributing less information (Table 5.1, chapter 5). However, this changed during the BR crisis when the organisations contributed more information, followed by the audiences and the media outlets (Table 5.2, chapter 5). These results are consistent with Austin et al. (2012)'s study, which demonstrated that the source of information influences how audiences seek crisis information. Consistent with this study, audiences during the BDC crisis heard about the situation through the influential social media creators, mostly politicians who are often less trusted for abandoning election promises and bad behaviour (Rose & Wessels, 2019), who turned the organisation's situation into a political topic. In the absence of more information from the BDC, the audience resorted to seeking information among themselves.

It is evident that when the crisis hit, the organisations were not proactive, and the audiences controlled the narrative. Perhaps, it can be argued that the management at the BDC was conflicted to provide information because some of them were involved in the financial embezzlement allegations. However, when the government took over the crisis communication at the BDC, the narrative changed, and PR practitioners used language to dominate, manipulate and persuade the audiences not to challenge the organisation. This explains why the audiences then attributed more crisis responsibility to the management than to the organisation. Similarly, the BR and the government provided information from the onset of the crisis. Audiences focused on the organisations' information and ignored other sources, hence they attributed less crisis responsibility to the BDC. The crisis information that the organisations shared was considered credible and consistent with Austin et al (2012)'s findings that audiences are less likely to look from other sources when information is provided.

Secondly, it seems reasonable to suggest that the three dominant strategies used by the BDC and BR are representative of the response tactics that most organisations in Botswana deploy during crises. These include the corrective, denial and shifting the blame strategies. However, several other strategies exist, and they are optional depending on which ones are appropriate for a particular crisis (Coombs, 2006). The quantitative and qualitative findings suggest that most of the organisations in Botswana occupy two extremes of the response continuum: either they acknowledge the crisis and provide information on corrective action, or they distance themselves and deny their involvement in causing the crisis. The same happens with PR practitioners in the West. The results of this study are helpful to crisis managers globally (some work for transnational companies operating in Botswana) and crisis communication scholars because it provides insight into the crisis response strategies appropriate for a non-western multicultural context such as Botswana. The selection of these three dominant crisis response strategies confirms, as robust and relevant, a study on the protective powers of the crisis response strategies, which grouped the 'crisis response strategies into three clusters: deny, diminish and deal' (Coombs, 2006: 256).

However, since Coombs (2006)'s cluster does not accommodate the corrective strategy found in a set proposed by Benoit (1995)'s Image Repair Theory, and only identifying it as a type of instructing information, this study proposes its addition to the cluster. This might allow PR professionals in non-western contexts such as Botswana to choose appropriate strategies that

fit their setting and the crises they face. For example, the BR used corrective action as a dominant strategy, contrary to Coombs (2006)'s suggestion that the diminish strategies should be used for accidents. This seems to corroborate the evidence in this study that corrective action works better in non-western multicultural contexts for accident crisis, while diminish strategies might work best in western contexts for similar situations.

Furthermore, the results demonstrate that practitioners in Botswana predominantly use the corrective strategy, accompanied by other crisis response strategies. For example, the Government of Botswana successfully managed the BDC crisis using the corrective strategy alongside the good intentions strategy and the bolstering or ingratiation strategy. Similarly, the BR crisis was managed using the corrective strategy combined with regret, shifting the blame, scapegoating and excuse. The qualitative findings also indicated that PR practitioners in Botswana are more comfortable with the corrective strategy because denial strategies might, as Kwansah-Aidoo and Saleh (2017) suggest, aggravate the crisis. It seems audiences do not take kindly to denial strategies because they might make organisations look dishonest and untrustworthy. Talking of the denial strategies, one of the participants explained the reasons for not using them:

> We have not done that because people will lose trust in us if we were to do it. It would eventually catch up with us. Once trust is gone, it would be not easy to build. So, my position is that I would not advise any organisation to adopt any of these strategies, except for the corrective strategy. (Michael William, Chief Public Relations Officer).

As such, it seems reasonable to suggest that the denial strategies might potentially irritate the audiences in Botswana and aggravate the situation. One can argue that the denial strategy might be criticised as inappropriate for Botswana because it disregards the culture of respect, compassion, and humanism entrenched in Botswana societies (Osei-Hwedie, 2010). Therefore, the denial strategies might be relevant and acceptable in cultures where confrontations are a crisis resolution norm like in the United States (Guiniven, 2002). Therefore, these findings support a context analysis of the 2015 South African xenophobic attacks, demonstrating that the denial strategies aggravated the crisis (Kwansah-Aidoo & Saleh, 2017). The outcome is not surprising because South Africa and Botswana are neighbours, and the people share common cultures and values. As such, using denial strategies might be perceived as dishonest, arrogant, and selfish. It seems reasonable to suggest that the corrective strategy works best in

non-western contexts where the audiences expect organisations to be upfront, respectful, and honest about the crisis and tell them what they are doing to resolve the crisis and prevent its reoccurrence. For example, the BDC and BR predominantly used the corrective strategy accompanied by others to fulfil their publics' expectations and in the process protect their reputation.

Moreover, Facebook crisis messages among organisations in Botswana are characterised by the types of information that they provide to their audiences. Evidence indicates that the BDC and the BR did not provide instructing information as there was no need for information on how the publics should stay safe during the crisis. Most of the information these organisations provided to the audiences was internalising information to help them create a particular image about them (Roshan et al., 2016). As indicated earlier, the BDC crisis was a transgression, while the BR crisis was a train accident. Perhaps, it might be helpful to suggest that in the case of the BDC, instructing information was communicated through the traditional media since the organisation's initial crisis message on Facebook was provided in the middle of the crisis. The BR had a bad prior reputation of accidents because of poor infrastructure and mismanagement. Therefore, it seems internalising information may have assisted audiences create a positive image was necessary. In addition, both organisations provided adjusting information to help the audiences cope psychologically (Roshan et al., 2016). It seems this type of information is required in the post-crisis stage, especially where an accident claimed lives, such as in the BR train derailment. According to Coombs (2006), organisations do not have much choice but to share this information.

In addition, audiences also send information during crises. For example, during the BDC crisis, much of the information was generated by influential audiences who happened to be politicians (Table 5.1, chapter 5). Most of their content was found in political party Facebook groups and pages. The influencers in the BDC crisis created and shared politically motivated content and provided information about the situation. Considering these results, it might be reasonable to suggest that the audiences controlled the narrative because the organisation was not forthcoming with information. This is consistent with Zheng et al (2018), who suggested that when organisations are not honest with information, the audience resort to other sources of information and control the narrative. Furthermore, the information created by the influencers was shared by their followers to reach more audiences, such as the inactives. However, in the

case of the BR, most of the content originated from the organisation itself and shared widely through the Government of Botswana Facebook page, the *BWgovernment*. Therefore, organisations should not ignore politically motivated influencers because they are integral to helping organisations to widely spread their content. These audiences are compelling because of their political connection, and it might be helpful for organisations to include those in private sectors to identify and plug into their online following and connections during crises.

Consistent with a study by Roshan et al (2016), which proposed three types of information sent by audiences such as providing information, questions and humorous posts, this study identified and added five more categories from the quantitative analysis of Facebook posts about the BDC and BR crises. These include lack of confidence in the organisation, lack of confidence in management, calling for action, expressing shock, and being politically motivated (Figure 5.6, chapter 5). These crisis messages categories emerged from the content analysis of the BDC and the BR, and they might be useful when added to Roshan et al (2016)'s typology for use in non-Western contexts.

9.2. The influence of culture on crisis communication in Botswana

Chapter 8 demonstrated that Botswana is one of the few African countries that has maintained the 18th-century public sphere, where people still gather face-to-face to engage in national discourse through the kgotla system. The chapter established that the *kgotla* system complements Facebook which enables publics to gather in a virtual space to discuss issues of national interest. In other words, Facebook reinvents the *kgotla* system when it is used for interactive dialogical communication. Using the SMCC, the chapter established that dialogue does not exist on Facebook but instead exists on the cultural and traditional offline communication platforms such as the *kgotla*, among others. As explained earlier, dialogue in offline and online platforms facilitates conversations between publics and organisations (Kent & Taylor , 2011; Benecke & Oksiutycz, 2015). Having established its connection to Facebook, it is now essential to consider how culture influences crisis communication in Botswana.

As indicated in this study, culture influences the way organisations and audiences in non-western contexts interact and react to crisis information. The findings of this study are consistent with research indicating that knowing what people 'want culturally is essential to

successful communication' (George & Kwansah-Aidoo, 2017:8). In other words, the organisations might find it challenging to communicate in multicultural contexts if they do not understand the cultural needs of their publics. However, PR practitioners do not need to know and understand all cultures (Kent & Taylor , 2011). For example, a Western PR practitioner working for an embassy in Botswana might not produce a culturally sensitive crisis message, unless they are guided and assisted by a local practitioner working for the embassy. As such, culturally insensitive crisis messages might potentially create reputational problems for organisations.

This study confirms research suggesting the need for third culture building in public relations for multicultural settings, to help PR practitioners to understand how publics co-construct meaning for organisations to navigate cultural terrains (Kent & Taylor , 2011; Benecke & Oksiutycz, 2015), especially in times of emergencies. For example, Facebook and the *kgotla* contribute to third culture building and provide PR practitioners in Botswana an opportunity to understand how various public co-create meanings and to navigate these cultural terrains. Facebook has brought the world closer, and global audiences actively engage in conversations and dialogue about crises happening in another countries. Even Western PR practitioners have admitted that crisis communication has become 'international and multicultural in scope and they are not fully prepared, either individually or organisationally, for these changes' (Lehmberg & Hicks, 2018: 358). Since Facebook has reinvented itself as the 21st century *kgotla* system where people virtually engage in public discourse to bring change, and not physically as in the *kgotla*, it seems reasonable to suggest that third culture building through intercultural crisis communication might bridge the gap between various cultures to help PR practitioners to build relationships and manage crises. In the context of the *kgotla* blending into social media, the younger generation and the older generation might be able to engage in conversations in a hybrid space that promotes multi-cultural interactions where new meanings and identities can be negotiated (Casmir, 2009), thus building a third culture.

Furthermore, evidence from this study suggests that most organisations in Botswana, private and public, have an unhurried culture and consultative ethos. As mentioned in chapter 8, sayings like *there is no hurry in Botswana* (Xu, 2018) influence the attitude of organisations and practitioners to slow down on timely responses. Even during exigencies, this attitude prevails and significantly influences the organisations' posture to crisis communication. It

seems these cultural beliefs are widespread across Sub Saharan Africa, where there is a saying that 'Africans do not wait for time; instead, time waits for Africans' (Xu, 2018:47). In other words, this means that since things happen at their own time, PR practitioners can also respond at their own time. In social life in Botswana, this ethos significantly impacts on people as they are unable to attend events or celebrations on time. As such, PR practitioners and organisations might also wait for the crisis to unfold to assess their publics' reactions on Facebook before responding, as suggested by a participant, Stephanie Joshua who works as Brand and Communications Manager in a state-owned enterprise.

Additionally, the organisations have consultative ethos characterised by the cumbersome chain of command and top-down hierarchical system, where PR practitioners are discouraged from disseminating crisis information without the approval of their principals, who are also sanctioned by their superiors up the bureaucracy. For example, as explained in chapter 7, PR practitioner in government cannot share any crisis information without the approval of the Permanent Secretary, who reports to the Permanent Secretary to the President who might also want to obtain permission from the President of the Republic of Botswana. It seems these chains of command frustrates even practitioners from parastatal organisations. For example, one of the participants explained:

> I have worked for three parastatals that tell you that you may have a CEO, but you cannot speak if a crisis happens until they get hold of the Permanent Secretary and the Minister. So, you are not going to respond in an hour if you still must engage other superiors at the government level (Kevin Edwards, Communication and Social Impact Manager).

These unwieldy chains of command inhibit PR practitioners from sharing information regardless of their levels of preparedness. Their inability to share information because of entrenched cultural belief systems and policies indicates that PR practitioners in Botswana are not empowered enough to protect the organisation's reputation. More power is concentrated in their superiors, who are also not trained in crisis communication. Evidence in this study indicates that senior PR practitioners in Botswana are not in strategic management positions and do not have a seat and a voice in the boardroom. In other words, they serve as figureheads who occupy nominal positions in which they cannot make strategic communication decisions. This rides against the waves of the excellence theory which suggests that PR professionals

should serve in managerial and technical positions because PR plays an 'important role in the strategic management of the organisation' (Grunig & Grunig, 2002: 38). As such, it might be helpful for PR practitioners in Botswana to serve in strategic positions and become empowered to make final decisions on the types of crisis messages shared with the audience. It seems restructuring PR and appointing senior PR practitioners to executive management level (for example, at Deputy Permanent Secretary level in the public service, and Director level in the private sector) might help the organisations to determine the direction of crisis communication. This might reduce the burdens imposed by the chains of command for them to proactively provide information and catch up with the audience's information demands locally and globally.

It also emerged that most organisations in Botswana believe that audiences might not find the truth if organisations withhold the crisis information. As explained by one of the interviewees who works as the Head of Communications and Marketing at one of the commercial banks, this belief system contributes to most organisations adopting a reactive stance to crisis communication. In this way, PR practitioners who proactively provide information during the crisis are discouraged by their superiors and colleagues because they may bring unnecessary attention to the organisations if they provide information during an emergency. Therefore, when the crisis has become global through Facebook, it might be difficult for the practitioners to cope with information demands, thus putting their organisations' reputation at greater risk.

Furthermore, it seems leaders in some organisations in Botswana are somewhat culturally apprehensive about using Facebook during emergencies. Senior PR practitioners expressed this strong opposition from their leaders. For example, an interviewee, Robert Rhys who works as the head of communication and marketing at one of the commercial banks, explained that sometimes there is resistance from senior executives who tells him to ignore Facebook because he knows they despise the platform. As explained in chapter 8, it seems part of this negative attitude is perpetuated by cultural perceptions that Facebook, a Western communication platform, corrupts society's moral fibre. It seems there are perceptions that it gives young people too much power to challenge and disrespect those in authority. In other words, Facebook allows users to speak their minds on any subject, even those considered taboo in various societies in Botswana. As such, the absence of regulation on this platform, to curb incidents where users might abuse their free speech, has opened Facebook to abuse especially

during organisational emergencies. The only available option is for companies in Botswana to train organisational leaders and practitioners on managing crises through social media to address cultural bias and to enable them to counter any negative comments that might put the reputation of the organisation at risk.

In this connection, PR practitioners in Botswana expressed fears that most Facebook users have transformed into what Geddes (2016: 5) calls 'keyboard warriors', making it difficult for them to interact with their online publics. This term spotlight Facebook users who do not engage in face-to-face confrontations with the organisations but hide behind their smartphones and computers to challenge the organisations, predominantly in ways that negatively affect reputation. It seems keyboard warriors cause organisational leaders to become apprehensive about using Facebook during crises to establish dialogue and mutuality with their publics. Perhaps, it explains why organisations prefer offline communication platforms or face-to-face interactions with their audiences. As such, it seems most organisations in Botswana use Facebook for status updates only, during crises and do not establish a conversation.

The conflict between the cultural values and the liberal stance of Facebook might continue to threaten the organisations in non-western contexts. As suggested by one of the interviewees most of the comments on Facebook are 'nothing short of banter, criticism and insults' (Kevin Edwards, Communications and Social Impact Manager). In other words, while social media is hailed as a game-changer in Western societies because of the power it gives audiences and the way it transmits information (Lin et al.,2016), organisational leaders and some PR practitioners in Botswana perceive it as harmful to the society's moral fibre, which has kept the communities together through the social values of respect for the elders and those in authority. As indicated earlier, Batswana are among Africans who still respect those in power, and this culture has made societies resilient to negative Western influence (Jeremiah, 2019). Therefore, it seems reasonable to suggest that senior executives in Botswana consider audiences who are very critical of their organisation and leadership styles as disrespectful and uncultured. Hence the leaders are taking a laid-back approach on Facebook, a posture that poses a risk to organisational reputation. However, it seems reasonable to suggest that this worldview of Facebook is connected to the African culture. This study supports previous studies which investigated how individuals with low self-esteem recognise but cannot reap the full benefits of self-disclosure on Facebook (Forest & Wood, 2012). It also presents a further opportunity

to examine how self-esteem affects leadership decisions when using Facebook during an emergency.

In addition to these less encouraging cultural beliefs, there is a notion that Batswana (citizens of Botswana) have an apathetic culture and forget quickly. In other words, Batswana seem reluctant or show less concern to confront issues that do not directly affect them. For example, one of the participants explained:

> ...That makes it easier for government PR practitioners to get away with matters. Sometimes they rely on the cultural practices of our people where in most cases, they do not care about certain things if they do not affect them. We are a country that makes it look like people are being done a favour. Most PR practitioners rely on that to manipulate people into believing everything they say (Ronald Dean, Former Principal Public Relations Officer).

Perhaps this is another reason why some PR practitioners prefer to slow down on sharing information as soon as the crisis breaks. It seems the audience is somewhat unpredictable because when a crisis starts, they might perceive an event as a crisis and not a problem the next day. To this end, the PR practitioners' perceptions that Batswana forget quickly, as explained by Ronald Dean, a former Principal Public Relations Officer in government, is a cause for concern because it somehow retards the crisis communication management efforts. PR Practitioners, especially in the public sector, seem to exploit this cultural attribute, and those who view their publics as inattentive and oblivious are more likely to suffer a loss of trust and reputation during a crisis. This attitude influences the PR practitioners to disregard the best practices, such as responding within the first hour or stealing the thunder, as suggested by Soehner et al (2017). Perhaps, one might suggest that the practitioners' view of their audience as passive and apathetic influences their laid-back approach to crisis communication. As indicated by the evidence in this study, the audience does not react to issues that do not directly affect them. However, that does not suggest weakness on their part. As such, it seems reasonable to suggest that not having these cultural perceptions might help PR professionals to establish legitimacy and manage crises.

In sum, Botswana's culture significantly influences the way organisations and audiences interact during a crisis. There are several cultural beliefs and sayings, especially on the notion

of time, which influences the PR practitioners to take a laid-back approach to crisis communication. These sayings dictate their posture and discourage practitioners who wish to match the demands of the fast-paced crisis communication ecosystem. Several other cultural attributes, such as the organisational leaders' perception of Facebook, significantly contribute to their position on using the platform during crises. Arguably, one might suggest that their perceptions are genuinely out of cultural concerns for Facebook westernising and radicalising users into agents of moral decay. On the other hand, it can be suggested that the leadership stance highlights low self-esteem because they, including PR practitioners, are not trained in crisis communication and Facebook.

9.3. Language and power relations in crisis messages

The last theme to discuss is the way PR practitioners use language on Facebook. This was in response to a research question seeking to establish the role of language and how power relations are exercised and negotiated in crisis messages shared on Facebook. The starting point was to view language as discourse and as social practice and not 'just analysing text but to analyse the relationship between text, processes and their social condition' (Fairclough, 1989: 24). This justified the need for a critical discourse analysis (CDA) to examine what, where, how and why the organisations said what they said (Thomas & Turnbull, 2017). CDA also helped analyse how the organisations deliberately used language to establish power over the Facebook audiences. In other words, it went deeper to unveil blurred ideologies, socio-cultural values and power relations between the audiences and the organisations (Fairclough, 1989; 1995; Punch, 2005).

Using a convention by Cho & Gower (2006), the quantitative findings considered how the audiences framed the crises and influenced their evaluation of crisis responsibility to the organisation. The results demonstrated that the dominant narratives that the audiences established through their status updates ranged from poor governance (mismanagement), corruption and embezzlement of funds at the BDC, and poor management at the BR. The findings indicated that the BDC and BR took control of the narrative by developing a narrative of economic development as a dominant ideology during the two crises. This led to the audiences failing to challenge the organisations and blaming them. As indicated in chapter 6, these Facebook posts elevated the organisations to a dominant position of power over the

audiences. In this way, crisis information embedded with ideology might inhibit Facebook audiences from questioning the discourse and challenging the organisations in crisis. Evidence suggests that the audiences framed the BDC crisis as 'mismanagement', reflecting their outrage at the senior executives for embezzling public funds. Perhaps this explains why they attributed more crisis blame to the executive management of the BDC than the organisation. However, it is surprising why these executives were isolated from the organisation and blamed for the crisis, without apportioning blame to the organisation. It seems reasonable to suggest that somehow this had to do with the acceptance that these senior and powerful executives caused the problem that the organisation or junior officers could not prevent. This is why the BDC escaped with less crisis responsibility, while the senior executives were held accountable and dismissed from their jobs.

Furthermore, the use of ideology in crisis messages was supported by the participants who pointed out that language is helpful when setting an agenda to achieve their objectives for communicating. While their messages are significantly influenced and sanctioned by the dominant leaders, the unempowered PR practitioners in Botswana seem to have mastered the art of framing their crisis information to manipulate their audiences to believe everything they say. Evidence in this study has shown that their messages are often emotionally charged especially when denying media reports during crises, to power and legitimacy over the audiences and persuade them to think that the organisations did nothing wrong for the crisis to occur. As such, it seems the influence that the practitioners get from their principals might significantly impact the types of messages they share with their publics. As explained earlier, the way the practitioners present their crisis information to make it accessible to their audiences at all levels and how they understand it (Scheufele & Tewksbury, 2007) might influence the success of crisis management (Huang & DiStaso, 2020).

Against the backdrop of public outrage in Facebook discourse, evidence suggests that the organisations used language to dominate, persuade and manipulate their audiences. In this way, the organisations' posture to use this kind of language, at this level, was reactive because they allowed the crisis to unfold without responding, as suggested by the evidence. These tactics seem apparent within government institutions, as explained by a former senior government practitioner that sometimes they use language to dominate and manipulate the audiences to get away with issues and escape accountability (Ronald Dean, Former Principal Public Relations

Officer). Given the findings that the organisations developed a narrative of economic development and used linguistic features and framing to dominate and manipulate the audiences, it seems reasonable to conclude that language should be used to persuade the audiences, at least ethically (Fawkes, 2017). Arguably, persuasive (as opposed to dominating) use of language in PR is more desirable and more ethical because the less ethical language use gets implicated in corporate short-termism without future regard for how the Facebook users will place other pronouncements by those corporations, once the crisis has passed. One of the aims of crisis communication is to create shared meanings between the audiences and organisations to reduce or mitigate reputational harm, as suggested by Coombs (2009) and Sellnow & Seeger (2013). It is worth noting that these shared meanings segue nicely with the overarching goals of public relations: establishing and maintaining goodwill, understanding, and relationships between the audiences and the organisations (Fawkes, 2017). Therefore, it seems reasonable to conclude that other than ethical persuasion, dominance and manipulation of the audience should be discouraged as organisations might be seen as self-interested and arrogant than caring and wanting to resolve the crisis, especially in less confrontational non-western contexts such as Botswana.

The findings of this study also indicated that purposeful lexical choices might be helpful for organisations to establish hegemony over the audiences and enable organisations to persuade them. For example, some of the lexical choices that featured in the Facebook posts included 'sole shareholder' (BWgovernment, 23/11/2011), 'stewardship' (BWgovernment, 22/07/2017), 'pioneering growth' (BWgovernment, 22/07/2017), 'transformation' (BWgovernment, 16/04/2014), 'capital investment and jobs' (BWgovernment, 24/04/2013). Therefore, it seems reasonable to suggest that when organisations use positions that resonate with audiences' expectations, they are more likely to sympathise than challenge them. It seems these frames were difficult to challenge because the audiences benefited from the organisation's contribution to the economy. These linguistic choices on the organisations' Facebook posts might have encouraged the audiences to become more patriotic and to support the organisation that has helped them.

Moreover, the effective use of linguistic features such as abstraction might help the organisations because it conceals details that can alarm and shock audiences (Manchin & Mayr, 2012), thus making it impossible to influence and manipulate them to sympathise with

the organisations. Therefore, it is not surprising that the organisations used abstraction to conceal facts that could have caused panic and driven the audience away from the organisations. As explained in chapter 6, the government also hid the buyer's identity of the BDC Fengyue Glass Project to avoid alarming the audiences if the buyer happened to be a famous ruling elite in the country. Another example is the concealment of the identity of the train crash victims during the BR crisis in conformity with Botswana's culture regarding the announcement of deaths. In culturally sensitive contexts like Botswana, it seems reasonable to suggest that the absence of abstraction might evoke emotions of sadness, fear and panic among the Facebook audiences and possibly aggravate the crisis. Revealing the identity of the dead crew members and the seriously injured passenger before the BR informed the families could be viewed as culturally insensitive.

Furthermore, the findings indicate that the use of functional honorifics and nomination demonstrates that the degree of seniority of officials attending to the crisis can command audience respect and save the organisation's reputation. Both the functional honorifics and nomination are linguistic techniques often used in political discourse to connote legitimacy and power (Machin & Mayr, 2012). Therefore, the government used both names and titles of influential social actors during the BDC and BR crises to dominate and manipulate the audience. This is not surprising because the organisations needed to use the names of famous people with good reputations to assure the publics that they were working around the clock to return to normalcy. The government's decision to deliberately name the corporate leaders in their crisis messages was purposeful and aimed at bringing the publics closer to the organisations and attract their sympathy. Therefore, their names were strategic to restore public confidence; improve audience perception; repair the BDC's legitimacy; and as suggested by Coombs & Holladay (1996) demonstrate a return to adherence to stakeholders' expectations.

To sum it up, the way the organisations in Botswana used language on Facebook became an area of interest for this study. Previous research has provided valuable insights into how organisations and the publics in various contexts negotiate a crisis on Facebook (Ki & Nekmat, 2014; Huang & DiStaso, 2020, inter alia), but less attention has been given to organisations and publics in Botswana and Sub-Saharan Africa. To this end, understanding how language depicts reality on Facebook requires CDA to shed light on the types of ideological activities embedded in crisis messages and decode the PR practitioner's 'selective version of reality

(Thomas & Turnbull, 2017: 936). Undoubtedly, language is an essential source of power (van Dijk, 1993) and as Fairclough (2003) suggests, political power seems like the best machinery to reach and persuade audiences to believe corporate values and ideologies. Therefore, it is not surprising to see how PR practitioners in Botswana used language to establish hegemony and legitimacy over their audiences. In other words, PR practitioners should use language rich with linguistic features such as lexical choices, abstraction, honorifics and nomination to persuade the audience. It seems for preventable crises, such as accidents and transgressions, organisations can ethically use language to influence the publics to believe their corporate values. In other words, language should be used to achieve a win-win situation for the organisations and the audience. Doing so seems like the only option when they must protect their corporate reputations in situations where they are more likely to suffer harm. Therefore, the narrative developed in this chapter is summarised as follows:

- The dominant corrective crisis response strategy that most organisations in Botswana deploy when a crisis break seems to be emotionally appealing to attract sympathy and persuade the audience.
- The corrective strategy should be included, as the fourth cluster, in Coombs (2006)'s set of response strategies to allow non-western organisations to choose appropriate strategies that fit their context and the crises they face.
- The study contributes a typology of 5 types of messages sent by audiences to Roshan et al (2016). These include lack of trust on management, lack of trust on organisations, call for action, expressing shock and politically motivated.
- The denial strategies might potentially irritate the audiences in Botswana and can aggravate the crisis.
- Corporations should not ignore politically motivated influencers because they are integral to organisational crisis communication.
- Botswana is still a traditional and culturally sensitive society that prefers ancient communication platforms.
- The concept of time and urgency for PR practitioners in Botswana is different from the concept of time in the West.
- The cumbersome chains of command among organisations in Botswana frustrate PR practitioners who want to keep up with the demands of information during a crisis.

- Keyboard warriors make organisational leaders and PR practitioners in Botswana apprehensive about using Facebook to establish dialogue and mutuality with their publics during crises.

- Crisis information embedded with ideology has the potential to inhibit Facebook audiences from questioning the discourse and challenging the organisations in crisis.

- Language should not be used randomly and unethically to dominate, persuade, and manipulate audiences.

CHAPTER 10: Conclusion

Chapters 8 and 9 provided a detailed discussion of the findings. Chapter 10 concludes that crisis communication in Botswana is still new, and adjustments should be made to help PR practitioners to scale up to international standards. This includes adjustments of crisis response strategies to fit the crisis types and the prevailing media environment in Botswana, which is government controlled. These adjustments might also help to bridge the disparity between Western and non-western approaches to crisis communication. As such, there is hope for growth in Botswana's embryonic crisis communication ecosystem. This chapter outlines implications for practice, contributions to academic scholarship and opportunities for future research.

The study explored crisis communication from a non-western cultural context. It explored organisational crisis communication in Botswana, specifically investigating the crisis response strategies and the role of social media (specifically Facebook). The project responded to calls for crisis researchers to extend an understanding of how 'crisis response strategies can be used most effectively to protect and repair corporate reputation' (Coombs, 2010: 275). It also responded to a challenge for crisis researchers to apply quantitative methods to explore the use of social media in organisational crisis communication in different contexts (Roshan et al., 2016). This study road tested the situational crisis communication theory (Coombs & Holladay, 1996), the social-mediated crisis communication (SMCC) model (Austin et al., 2012) and the two-way symmetrical model (Grunig and Hunt, 1984) to understand their relevance and applicability to Botswana's context. This study has found that the SCCT is relevant although PR practitioners do not fully utilised this theory when selecting the crisis response strategies. It is evident from this study that the SMCC remains relevant but the aspect of dialogue is not fully utilised by PR practitioners in Botswana. Lastly, the two-way symmetrical model has also been found relevant to Botswana. The later works of Grunig et al (1995) on the personal influence and cultural translator models have been found useful and robust in Botswana because of the evidence of PR practitioners using them to communicate with audiences from diverse cultures across the country.

Since this thesis is situated within the realm of critical realism, it moved beyond quantitative descriptions toward explanations (Stebbins, 2011; Thomas, 2016) of how and why PR

practitioners in Botswana respond to crises the way they do on Facebook. The thesis used case studies of the Botswana Development Corporation (BDC) Fengyue Glass Manufacturing Project crisis of 2011, and the Botswana Railways (BR) passenger train derailment crisis of 2019. A detailed quantitative content analysis and critical discourse analysis of Facebook posts about these crises provided a more comprehensive understanding of crisis communication in Botswana. Further interviews with senior PR practitioners in Botswana provided explanations of why they respond the way they do during crises. The study provides valuable insights into how PR practitioners respond to emergencies in non-western contexts, and how the socio-cultural, political and ideological factors significantly influence their message development processes to manage corporate reputation.

Reflecting on where it all began, this study set objectives to explore the SCCT, SMCC, and the two-way symmetrical models to establish their applicability to practice in Botswana. Other objectives established the characteristics of crisis messages on Facebook, the crisis response strategies, the role of Facebook, and the power struggle in the language that PR practitioners use on Facebook to control the corporate narratives and values. However, the findings of this study might be applied to other contexts in Sub-Saharan Africa because most of these countries share similar socio-cultural, economic and political values, which significantly influence the way organisations respond to crises. Thabeda (2008: 233) suggests the need to be 'sensitive to the African worldview when dealing with the African clients because this worldview informs the way in which Africans relate to phenomena.' Additionally, Jeremiah (2019) points out that African countries still cherish a 'wisdom that what affects one member affects all members of the community.' Put differently, a crisis affecting one country can affect other African countries, and this requires more crisis research in Africa to develop the continent's crisis response capacity.

10.1. Implications for practice

Firstly, the study has several implications for practice. This project calls for PR practitioners in Botswana to change their approach to crisis communication, because it provides interventions and insights to improve practice and for them to match up with international best practices. Most multinational companies operating in Botswana, with headquarters in the West, have their crisis messages developed by foreign PR practitioners who are oblivious of the

cultures and factors determining the effectiveness of their communication in African contexts. Without a body of knowledge to guide these PR practitioners to respond to emergencies, their messages might fail to make an impact in Botswana and Sub-Saharan Africa countries. As George and Kwansah-Aidoo (2017:8) rightly put it, 'knowing what people want culturally is essential to successful communication.' As such, this study provides insights for PR practitioners in Botswana and globally to understand crisis communication in various contexts where they are unaware of socio-cultural and political factors influencing the success of crisis messages.

Furthermore, the findings of this study indicate that PR practitioners and their superiors need training in crisis communication management and social media to keep up with crises. This training could also benefit the political and traditional leadership. The study indicated that the chiefs are more trusted and respected by the publics, and their endorsements in the *kgotla* is very important and useful in authenticating the crisis messages disseminated through this cultural platform. The skills learnt from this training could help the organisations and PR professionals to interact with their publics, even on social media where the influencers and the hostile keyboard warriors are central to crisis communication. Additionally, it could help them step up their preparedness levels and match up to international best practices. Evidence from this study demonstrated that most organisations do not have crisis communication plans and social media policies and that practitioners were confused about what to do during crises. Therefore, this study might help them understand the need to develop crisis communication plans that integrate social media. Moreover, the insights might help them become more systematic in their approaches, especially when selecting response strategies.

Practitioners in Botswana might also use the findings of this study to renew their concept of time to respond to crises with speed before the audience resort to other sources of crisis information. It has emerged that their cultural beliefs blind spots their appreciation of the need to respond to emergencies quickly. Put differently, PR practitioners lose out on the benefits of quick responses on Facebook because of their cultural lenses. Lin et al (2016:603) assert that speed 'affects cognitive processing and information-seeking,' and it also provides 'greater organisational credibility than slow response' (Huang & DiStaso, 2020: 2). In this connection, the findings of this study might help practitioners renew their sense of urgency in sharing information when responding to emergencies. Aside from culture, most organisations in

Botswana have cumbersome chains of command that inhibit unempowered practitioner from providing information when a crisis hits. Therefore, this study might help organisational leaders to recognise the need to empower PR practitioners to share information proactively. Additionally, it might motivate the Government of Botswana to recognise PR as a profession, leading to its restructuring, development and strategic practice.

In addition, the results of this study might provide insights to help PR practitioners to understand that crisis information embedded with ideology might inhibit Facebook audiences from questioning the discourse and challenging the organisations in crisis. For example, the Government of Botswana propagated an ideology of economic development for both the BDC and BR crises to persuade the audience to look at the brighter side of the organisations and not criticise them. Evidence from this study suggests that this ideology resonated with the audiences and was difficult to challenge. It might help them realise that language should not be used randomly and unethically to persuade the audience. With this understanding, PR practitioners could develop compelling and successful crises messages. Given that the study explored the crisis response strategies, the findings might help PR practitioners in Botswana and globally to understand which strategies work best in similar contexts. Audiences in Botswana remain traditional and culturally sensitive and prefer ancient offline communication platforms. Focusing only on Facebook and excluding offline communication might place the organisations at reputational risk. Therefore, this study confirms and validates Austin et al (2012:203)'s suggestions that 'face-to-face communication is the most reported form of crisis communication followed by television, text messaging, phone calls and Facebook.'

10.2. Contribution to academic scholarship

Thirdly, this study contributes knowledge to enrich the global development of scholarship on social media and crisis communication management. The thesis confirms Benecke & Oksiutycz (2015)'s study suggesting the need for third culture building in non-western multicultural contexts as robust and relevant, even to crisis communication. As suggested by Benecke & Oksiutycz (2015: 823), 'effective change and third culture can be built through involvement of multiple players in society like individual citizens at grassroots level, not for profit organisations, businesses and public entities.' In other words, the ability of the *kgotla* to engage the publics directly, hold debates and obtain their consent before making decisions

satisfies the requirements of the dialogic public relations theory and third culture model. As such, the *kgotla* system and Facebook are examples of platforms that facilitate these conversations and dialogues and are a further contribution to global scholarship on what Benecke & Oksiutycz (2015) calls third culture building.

To help PR practitioners and organisations to navigate cultural terrains in Botswana and Sub-Saharan Africa countries with similar multicultural contexts during emergencies, this thesis conceived the Cross Cloverleaf Relationship Matrix (CCRM) model (see Figure 10.1). As explained in chapter 8, the CCRM is inspired by the cloverleaf traffic interchange (Wang & Zhou, 2018) which illustrates the flow and movement of vehicles in several directions to ease congestion at intersections. The introduction of this model into crisis communication studies in non-western contexts, is a significant contribution to global scholarship on how a trustworthy offline cultural platform might facilitate and authenticate multicultural crisis communication. It shows that Facebook and other social media platforms complement the offline communication platform such as the *kgotla* system in multicultural contexts like Botswana. As such, it seems reasonable to suggest that Facebook and the *kgotla* system fit well within the third culture model because of their ability to facilitate intercultural crisis communication in Botswana during crises. Facebook is the 21st-century version of the *kgotla* system, an 18th-century public sphere. In other words, Facebook and the kgotla system are two sides of the same coin. Whereas the *kgotla* system is a physical and controlled public sphere where people gather to discuss issues of national importance, Facebook is a virtual, uncontrolled and an unchecked public sphere. The findings of this study indicated that Facebook face resistance from organisational leadership, and this model illustrates a beneficial relationship between these two public spheres. Their relationship functions like a traffic interchange. It shows that crisis information flows from the organisations to the *kgotla* system and social media and in different directions to reach social media and offline publics and back to the organisations.
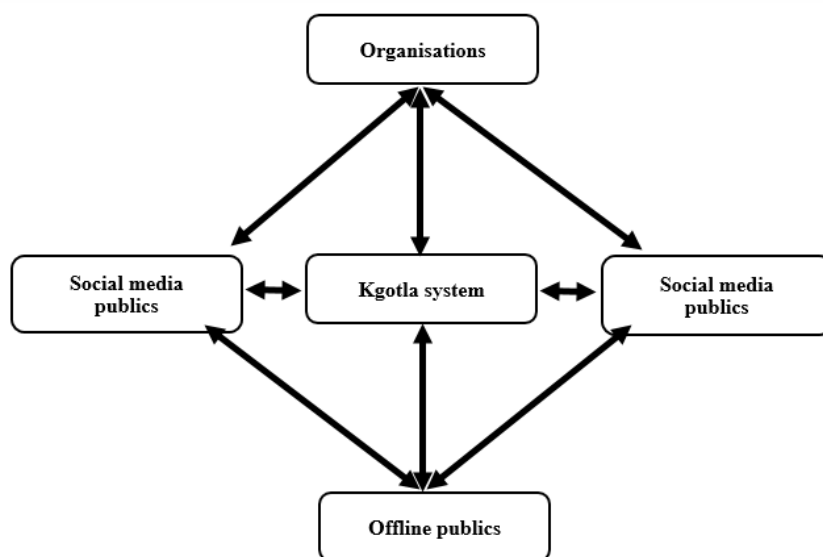
Figure 10.1: The Cross Cloverleaf relationship matrix (CCRM) from Chapter 8

Furthermore, evidence from this study suggests that organisational leadership is apprensive to use Facebook during emergencies. As such Figure 10.1 demonstrates that the *kgotla* system- a more trusted cultural communication platform- facilitate crisis information flow into Facebook and other social media channels, offline publics and provides feedback to the organisations. Since social media has been blamed for propagating fake news (Wheeler, 2019), the *kgotla* validates and authenticates the crisis information and makes it more trustworthy by the time it reaches Facebook and the offline publics. The same applies to crisis information from offline publics to organisations and Facebook. The reason the *kgotla* system validates information on Facebook is that it has a broader acceptance among communities in Botswana because of its compatibility with their cultural values. Evidence from this study shows that people across Botswana trust and respect the *kgotla* system, and that their organisations still use it alongside social media and traditional media. However, the findings have also indicated that Facebook is not a trusted platform due to cultural factors. In other words, Facebook crisis messages might be considered trustworthy and authentic when validated through the *kgotla* system, which is why these two communication platforms should be integrated in crisis communication planning.

Additionally, this thesis proposes that the virtual *kgotlas* to facilitate the movement of trustworthy information into social media platforms. If it goes virtual, it might significantly reduce hesitancy among organisations to use Facebook during crises. It might also help private organisations, who previously had access problems to the *kgotla* system, to interactively live-

stream their crisis messages through this cultural platform. This might significantly help the publics to increase their engagement in national discourse from the comfort of their homes, as they would still be able to comment on live discussions, ask questions and receive instant feedback. Indeed, this shift of the *kgotla* into a digital platform is necessary. As suggested by Kellner (2000: 267) the 'public sphere itself shifts with the rise of new social movements, new technologies, and new spaces of public interaction.' The study validates this school of thought, and proposes that a time has come for the *kgotla* system to shift into the virtual space to remain relevant by plugging into the new digital technology space. This might help the *kgotla* to accommodate social media publics, who cannot attend physical meetings. Since the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic, physical meetings have been limited and societies are drifting further apart in a bid to social distance. The fully packed *kgotla* meetings seen before the pandemic (see Figure 7.2, Chapter 7) might become a distant memory in the future. Even scholars acknowledge that the pandemic restrictions have 'generated a global need for technologies that enable communication' (Byrnes et al., 2020: 82). As such, shifting the *kgotla* into a virtual space might also help to facilitate authentic crisis messages while remaining steadfast in protecting the cultural needs of Botswana publics.

Another key contribution of this study is that it confirms and validates Coombs (2006) study as reliable and robust. However, this research suggests an extension to Coombs (2006) typology of crisis response strategies to include the *corrective strategy* as an independent cluster, as shown in Table 10.1, to enable PR practitioners in non-western multicultural contexts to choose appropriate strategies that fit their cultural context and the crises they face (See Table 8.2, Chapter 8). Currently, Coombs (2006) categorises the corrective action as a type of instructing information, which he asserts as compulsory at the start of the crisis. While this is the case, evidence in this study suggests that PR practitioners in Botswana use it throughout the crisis as a dominant strategy, and this calls for it to earn a place among other strategies as an independent cluster. As such, it is clear from this study that the corrective strategy works better in non-western multicultural contexts, while the denial, diminish and deal strategies might work best during crises in Western contexts.

CORRECTIVE RESPONSE	DENY RESPONSES	DIMINISH RESPONSES	DEAL RESPONSES
• Corrective action	• Attack the accuser • Denial • Scapegoat/ shifting the blame	• Excuse/ Good • Intentions • Justification	• Ingratiation/ bolstering • Concern • Compassion • Regret • Apology

Table 10.1: A set of SCCT crisis response strategies adapted from Coombs (2006) including the proposed corrective response cluster

This study demonstrates that the denial strategies might potentially irritate the audience in Botswana, and similar contexts in Sub-Saharan Africa, and aggravate the problem. Nonetheless, this study demonstrates that these strategies might be grafted into non-western contexts such as Botswana, and similar settings in Sub-Saharan Africa, with the corrective strategy as the dominant approach.

Meanwhile, from a theoretical aspect, this project proposes five more categories to Roshan et al. (2016)'s typology of audience information which include *providing information, questions and humorous posts*. Therefore, this study suggests typologies of audience information denoting *lack of confidence in the organisation; lack of confidence in management; calling for action; expressing shock; and being politically motivated*. These audience information types might be helpful and applicable in both Western and non-western cultures.

10.3. Recommendations for future research

This study provides opportunities for future research. First, this thesis provides researchers with an opportunity to engage in comparative studies to explore the relevance and applicability of the *kgotla* system and the CCRM model into Western contexts and others around the world. In other words, this thesis provides a platform for other researchers to map and connect PR practice in Botswana to Western PR and other disciplines.

Theoretically, this study demonstrated that Grunig (1995)'s personal influence and the cultural translator models of PR are still relevant and robust. As such, this study might help researchers to further develop these theories in their contexts across the world. The study has provided sufficient evidence that these models are still relevant and valid in contexts like Botswana

where PR practitioners use Facebook for public information and then shift offline to obtain information from audiences to broker influence. It has also been indicated that PR practitioners still use the offline cultural communication platform, the *kgotla* system, to communicate with diverse audiences during crises.

The study confirms and supports, as valid and reliable, Coombs (2010)'s work suggesting further research on different response strategies that received little attention as academics focused on apologies, compensation, concern, and denial strategies. As explained in chapters 8 and 9, adding the corrective strategy to Coombs (2006)'s cluster offers an opportunity for future research into other strategies that academics previously neglected. It also provides an opportunity for researchers to investigate factors that make the corrective strategy more effective during crises in non-western multicultural contexts. Since this study did not perform a systematic test on how PR practitioners in Botswana match the crisis types to the response strategies as suggested by Coombs and Holladay (2002), future research might perform systematic tests to offer a possible match between crisis types and response strategies in non-western contexts.

Another opportunity is for researchers to categorise their publics to understand how much information originated from the influencers and how much came from the followers. This might help practitioners to develop appropriate messaging strategies for each of these social media audiences. Evidence in this study indicates that PR practitioners in Botswana feel the need to create a messaging strategy for social media influencers, excluding followers and inactive audiences. However, their decisions are not guided by research and theory- hence the need to explore the types of audiences during crises to inform PR practitioners' decisions. Perhaps, this study presents an opportunity for further research to consider categorising their publics during crisis to understand who, what, how and why publics say what they say during a crisis.

Moreover, further research might explore the perceptions of chief executive officers of corporations in Sub-Saharan Africa on Facebook during crises. Evidence suggests that chief executive officers of some organisations in Botswana have a negative perception towards Facebook, which might inhibit practitioners from dialogically engaging with publics on the platform during emergencies. Further studies could provide a deeper understanding of

leadership and crisis communication on Facebook, to equip practitioners with more insights. Additionally, findings suggest a conflict between Facebook and Botswana's culture, which perceives it as westernising its users and leading to moral decadence. Further research could investigate this conflict to improve the PR practitioners' understanding of different multicultural contexts and the use of Facebook during crises.

Given the importance of language in establishing organisational legitimacy and decoding corporate narratives, values and ideologies, this study conducted a critical discourse analysis to contribute to crisis scholarship from non-western contexts. While the way organisations use language has become a subject of academic interest, little attention has been paid to how organisations in Botswana use language during crises, which is a gap that this study redresses. The lack of language analysis in crisis studies using CDA in non-western contexts results from researchers preferring qualitative methods. Therefore, this study provides insights into the critical role of language during crises in non-western contexts. Further research could use CDA to explore the way PR practitioners in other contexts use language during crises to dominate and manipulate their audiences.

In sum, while there was little surprise in the findings, the future looks bright for the crisis communication ecosystem in Botswana. This field might be generally unresearched, but there is much to be learned from future research, and much that can make an important contribution to PR practice in Botswana and similar contexts in Sub Saharan Africa. This study advocates for change and adjustments to crisis communication practice in Botswana because of the predominantly government-controlled media system, and the culture that complicates the management of social-mediated crises. These changes might guide PR practitioners in Botswana and similar contexts across Sub-Saharan Africa to strategically communicate during emergencies. This thesis has established a disparity between Botswana's crisis communication ecosystem and the West due to socio-cultural, ideological, and political factors. While some scholars argue that the Western typology of crisis response strategies is 'inadequate for dealing with global and transboundary issues of concern' (George and Kwansah-Aidoo, 2017:8), this study suggests that they are adequately valid and reliable and can be grafted into Botswana's context, and possibly in similar settings across Sub-Saharan Africa, provided the corrective strategy dominates the crisis communication. The following recommendations, not in any order, might help PR practitioners in Botswana improve their crisis communication:

- Restructure PR in Botswana and appoint senior PR practitioners to executive management level (for example, Deputy Permanent Secretary level in government, and Director level in the private sector) for them to become strategically empowered to make decisions during crises.

- Conduct research to understand the information needs and culture of the audience.

- Conduct research to match the crisis types with crisis response strategies ahead of crises.

- Develop crisis communication plans for your organisations.

- Have pre-approved statements, laden with corporate ideologies that are difficult to challenge, ready for use during crises.

- Strategically use persuasive language, and not explicitly show you want to dominate or manipulate the audience.

- Strategically use Facebook for crisis communication and develop internal capacity to maximise on this platform.

- Interactively livestream crisis messages to strategically allow the publics to get involved in the organisational discourse by commenting, asking questions and receiving instant feedback.

- Engage in dialogue as much as possible with the publics on Facebook and other social media channels to obtain desirable change or outcomes.

- Use, mostly, videos to disseminate crisis information on Facebook to attract more viewers and increase visibility of crisis messages.

- Strive to respond within the first hour after the crisis has started, and consistently update the audience.

- Limit the size of your crisis teams to less than 4 people who can be mobilized within a short period of time.

- Train staff and conduct crisis simulations, at least every quarter.

- Avoid arrogant and confrontational crisis messages on Facebook even if the stakeholders criticise the organisation.

- Use the corrective strategy as a dominant approach and accompany it with other response strategies.

- Avoid long crisis information on social media.

- Adopt a proactive stance to crisis communication.

- Adjust organisational culture and avoid stereotyping your publics.

- Develop and equip war rooms (command centers) with resources and trained and qualified social media personnel to manage crises.

- Government of Botswana should make access to the *kgotla* system easier for private organisations and state-owned agencies.

- Equip the *kgotla* with digital technology and internet to enable interactive live streaming of organisational messages and community meetings using Facebook and other social media channels.

- Organisational leaders should be more open-minded and support PR practitioners to use Facebook and other social media channels.

- Political, traditional, organisational leaders and PR professionals should be trained in crisis communication, crisis management and social media.

- Engage in more CSR activities to possibly attract the sympathy of stakeholders during emergencies.

- Respond to audience comments on Facebook to retain their patronage on your communication platforms.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Ethical approval

This research project was approved by the College of Arts and Humanities (COAH) Research Ethics Committee at Swansea University. It adheres to all the guidelines and ethical assessment framework set out by the university. Below is the ethics approval from the COAH Research Ethics Committee:

College Ethics Committee/AWERB Group DECISION on Ethical Review

Application Details

Project Title: Organisational crisis communication in Botswana: Investigating the crisis response strategies and the role of social media in disseminating crisis messages

Applicant Name: Chedza Simon

Submitted by: Sian Rees

Full application details can be found in College Human Subjects Ethics Application .

Having examined the information included in the above application with Reference No. STU_MDST_132207_310320104914_1, this Committee has decided to:

☑ **Approve this application**

with the following reputation risk to the University

☑ Low Risk ☐ Moderate Risk ☐ High Risk

Any amendments to approved proposals should be emailed to College Ethics Committee for review: COAHresearchethics@swansea.ac.uk

Appendix 2: Coding manual for the BDC crisis content analysis

Social Media Platform: Facebook

Date: All the dates of Facebook posts about the BDC/ Fengyue Glass Project crisis between 2011 and 2019 were recorded using the format dd.mm. yyyy. These are the date in which posts were made on Facebook by various users about the crisis in question.

Nuancing of Facebook posts: Only posts with the following keywords were searched and selected from various pages, groups and individual users' timelines: 'Botswana Development Corporation, 'Botswana Development Corporation/ Glass Project', 'Botswana Development Corporation/Fengyue Glass Project', 'Fengyue Glass Project,' 'Shanghai Fengyue,' 'Fengyue.' Variables and categories from these Facebook posts were coded, and the following nuances were captured:

1. **Source of posts (Choose One per post):** This category was considered because posts about the BDC/Fengyue Glass Project crisis were generated by many users in their Facebook timelines, groups, and pages. The sources of posts were identified from the following Facebook users:

    a. **Botswana Development Corporation (BDC):** The Government of Botswana wholly owns this organisation. The organisation set up a company called BDC/ Fengyue Glass Project which was affected by a crisis in 2011. Any post from BDC Facebook page mentioning Fengyue Glass Project was added inductively.

    b. **WeekendPost-Insightful:** Is a Facebook page to a Botswana weekly newspaper called WeekendPost. Any post from this page mentioning the BDC/Fengyue Glass Project was added inductively.

    c. **Government of Botswana:** This is the Government of the Republic of Botswana which owns the BDC. The Government of Botswana has Facebook pages: 'BWgovernment', 'DailyNews', 'Ministry of Investment, Trade and Industry Botswana' which were grouped under this category. As such

'BWgovernment', 'DailyNews' and Ministry of Investment, Trade and Industry.'

d. **Mmegi:** Relating to a Facebook page belonging to a privately owned daily newspaper in Botswana called 'Mmegi.' All posts mentioning the BDC/Fengyue Glass Project crisis were added inductively.

e. **Botswana Guardian Newspaper:** Relating to a Facebook page for a privately owned weekly newspaper in Botswana. Any post from this newspaper's Facebook page mentioning the BDC/ Fengyue Glass Project crisis was added inductively.

f. **The Business Weekly & Review:** Relating to a Facebook page for a privately-owned weekly newspaper in Botswana. Any post from this newspaper's Facebook page mentioning the BDC/ Fengyue Glass project crisis were added inductively.

g. **Sunday Standard/ Telegraph:** Concerning a Facebook page belonging to a privately-owned weekly newspaper in Botswana. Any posts from this newspaper's Facebook page mentioning the BDC/ Fengyue Glass Project crisis were added inductively.

h. **The Botswana Gazette:** Relating to a Facebook page belonging to a privately-owned weekly newspaper in Botswana. Any Facebook post from this page about the BDC/ Fengyue Glass Project crisis were added inductively.

i. **The Midweek Sun:** Relating to a Facebook page belonging to a privately-owned weekly newspaper in Botswana. Any Facebook post from this page about the BDC/ Fengyue Glass Project crisis were added inductively.

j. **The Voice Newspaper Botswana:** Relating to a Facebook page belonging to a privately-owned weekly newspaper in Botswana. Any Facebook post from this page about the BDC/Fengyue Glass Project crisis were added inductively.

k. **All Parties Conference:** Relating to a Facebook Group belonging to a political party Facebook group with over 173,000 members and open to everyone in Botswana. Any post from this group about the BDC/Fengyue Glass Project crisis were added inductively.

l. **Alliance for Progressives:** Relating to a Facebook Group belonging to a political party Facebook group with over 34,000 members and open to all Facebook users. All posts from this group about the BDC/Fengyue Glass Project were added inductively.

m. **Youth of Botswana:** Relating to a Facebook group with over 546,000 members and open to everyone in Botswana. There are several Facebook pages bearing the name Youth of Botswana. Any post mentioning the BDC/ Fengyue Glass Project from this group only was added inductively.

n. **The Patriot on Sunday:** Relating to a Facebook page belonging to a privately-owned weekly newspaper in Botswana. Any post from this page about the BDC/Fengyue Glass Project was added inductively.

o. **Yarona FM-the real story:** Relating to a Facebook page belonging to a privately-owned radio station 'Yarona FM' in Botswana. Any posts from this page about the BDC/Fengyue Glass Project was added inductively.

p. **Stakeholder:** Concerning any Facebook user who posted about the BDC/Fengyue Glass Project in their Facebook timeline, groups or pages. All Facebook posts from stakeholders about the BDC/ Fengyue Glass Project were added inductively.

q. **Other Facebook pages:** Concerning all Facebook pages and groups not associated with any of the above users but have posted about the BDC/Fengyue Glass Project. All Facebook posts from other pages about the BDC/ Fengyue Glass Project were added inductively.

2. **Summary of Post:** Concerning a brief explanation about the Facebook post. Summaries of all posts were a maximum of 150 characters and were added deductively.

3. **Crisis response strategies (Choose one per post or Not Applicable):** Relating to messaging strategies that BDC and the Government of Botswana used when communicating during the crisis. The decision on which response strategy to select in a message or Facebook post was based on the thrust of the post. Where a Facebook post had more than one response strategy used, a dominant strategy was selected based on how much it is highlighted in the post. Facebook posts made by the BDC, Government of Botswana or any Government Ministry about the BDC/Fengyue Glass Project were assigned the following crisis response strategies:

    a. **Attack:** Relating to any messages or Facebook posts made by BDC, Government of Botswana or any Government Ministry confronting a group or persons claiming that something was wrong at BDC/Fengyue Glass Project. All Facebook posts or press releases made by BDC, Government of Botswana, or any Government Ministry confronting any Facebook user, groups or pages claiming there is a crisis were considered. These are some of the examples of words or phrases suggesting the use of an attack strategy and the list is not definitive: 'We are challenging', 'We dismiss', 'it is not true.'

    b. **Denial:** Relating to any messages or Facebook posts made by BDC, Government of Botswana or any Government Ministry claiming there is no crisis. All Facebook post or press releases denying or refuting the presence of a crisis were considered. These are some of the words and phrases suggesting the use of a denial strategy and the list is not definitive: 'deny', 'refute', 'not responsible', 'did not do so.'

    c. **Scapegoating:** Relating to any messages or Facebook posts made by BDC, Government of Botswana or any Government Ministry blaming some outside entity for the crisis. This strategy is different from the attack strategy in that the attack strategy confronts stakeholders who say there is a crisis, whereas scapegoating apportion responsibility for the crisis to external entities. All

messages, Facebook post or press releases in which the BDC or the Government of Botswana apportioned responsibility for external entities were considered. For examples, words or phrases that blames an external entity for the crisis, although the list is definitive, include: '…is the one to blame for this problem', we are not responsible for this', 'the organisation is not to blame', 'investigations are still on-going to establish the cause', 'management had no control.'

d. **Good intentions:** Concerning any messages or Facebook post made by BDC, Government of Botswana or any Government Ministry suggesting that BDC meant well and never intended for the crisis to occur. As such, all messages or Facebook posts suggesting that the organisation did not intend for the crisis to happen were considered. Some examples of phrases indicating that the organisation never meant for the crisis to occur, although the list is not definitive, include: 'We did all we could', 'it was not our intention.'

e. **Minimisation:** Concerning any messages or Facebook posts made by BDC, Government of Botswana or any Government Ministry claiming the BDC/Fengyue Glass Project crisis did not cause much damage to BDC financial standing or reputation. This strategy differs from the denial strategy in that denial refutes there is a crisis, while minimisation admits there is a crisis, but emphasises that the extent of reputational or financial damage is minimal. These are some of the examples of phrases suggesting the crisis caused less damage, and the list is not definitive: 'there is less harm', 'much was not lost', 'we emerged unscathed.'

f. **Differentiation:** Concerning any messages or Facebook posts made by BDC, Government of Botswana or any Government Ministry comparing the BDC/Fengyue Glass Project crisis to similar ones. Therefore, all messages or Facebook posts made by any of these organisations, suggesting a comparison of the Fengyue Glass Project to any other were added. Although the list is not definitive, some examples of phrases offering a comparison of crises, although

the list is not definitive, include: 'Similar to', 'in the past a similar', 'it is not different from.'

g. **Bolstering:** Concerning any messages or Facebook posts made by BDC, Government of Botswana or any Government Ministry reminding Facebook users about BDC's positive qualities. Therefore, any messages or Facebook posts where any they reminded Facebook users about BDC's positive qualities were considered. Although the list is not definitive, some examples of phrases reminding stakeholders about the good qualities, although the list is not definitive, include: 'BDC contributes to economic development', 'BDC has invested in many other companies', 'BDC investment has created employment.'

h. **Compensation:** Concerning any messages or Facebook posts made by BDC, Government of Botswana or any Government Ministry suggesting that BDC will offer money or reward to anyone affected by the crisis. As such, any similar messages or Facebook posts were considered. Although the list is not definitive, some examples of words or phrases suggesting that money or a reward was offered include: 'compensate', 'reward', 'repay the money.'

i. **Corrective:** Concerning any messages or Facebook posts made by BDC, Government of Botswana or any Government Ministry suggesting that BDC or Government was taking action to restore the situation or promising that the crisis will not be repeated. This strategy differs from compensation because corrective message show what an organisation is doing to restore the situation, whereas compensation strategy says money or reward was offered to anyone affected by the crisis. Any messages or Facebook posts showing this response strategy were considered. Although the list is not definitive, some examples of words or phrases showing that action was taken to restore the situation or that such an act will not be repeated include: 'we are working hard to restore', 'such action does not repeat itself', 'action will be taken', 'not sitting idle', 'those responsible will be prosecuted.'

j. **Apology:** Concerning any messages or Facebook posts made by BDC, Government of Botswana or any Government Ministry suggesting that BDC or the Government accepts full responsibility for the BDC/ Fengyue Glass Project and asks for forgiveness from stakeholders. This strategy differs from good intentions in that apology strategy accepts responsibility and asks for forgiveness from stakeholders, whereas good intentions strategy also accepts responsibility but emphasises that the organisation meant well and never intended for the crisis to occur without asking for forgiveness. Any messages or posts suggesting an apology strategy were considered. Although the list is not definitive, some examples of words or phrases showing that BDC or Government accepts responsibility include: 'We are sorry', 'We ask for your forgiveness.'

4. **Types of organisational information (Choose one per post or Not Applicable)**

A decision on which type of information is disseminated to stakeholders in Facebook post made by the BDC, Government of Botswana or any Government Ministry, was based on the impetus of the post. Only one type of information was selected per post, and where a post had more than one type of information, a dominant information type was selected based on how it is highlighted in the post. Facebook posts made by the BDC, Government of Botswana or any Government Ministry about the BDC/Fengyue Glass Project were assigned the following types of information:

a. **Instructive:** Concerning information that inform stakeholders how to protect themselves physically from a crisis. Therefore, a decision on selecting this type of information was based on the thrust of the post, and whether it is sharing information on how stakeholders can protect themselves physically from the crisis.

b. **Adjusting:** Relating to information that help stakeholders to cope psychologically by expressing sympathy. A decision on selecting this type of information was based on the thrust of the post, and whether it is sharing any information that helps stakeholders to cope psychologically. Although not a

definitive list, some of the examples of words or phrases that suggests the information helps stakeholders to cope psychologically by expressing sympathy include: 'we sympathise with the stakeholders', 'we are sorry about what happened', 'action will be taken against those responsible.'

c. **Internalising:** Concerning information that help stakeholders to formulate a perception about BDC or Government of Botswana. A decision on selecting this type of information from Facebook posts was based on the thrust of Facebook posts, and whether the information help stakeholders to form a perception about the organisation. Although not definitive, some of the examples of phrases that can help stakeholders to form a perception include: 'BDC has contributed to economic diversification', 'BDC has invested in various sectors', 'BDC will make sure this never happens again.'

5. **Types of stakeholder information (Select one per post or Not Applicable):** Relating to the information that stakeholders disseminate about the organisation. A decision on which type of information to assign a Facebook post made by stakeholders was based on the overall aim of the post. Only one type of information was selected per post, and where a message or Facebook post had more than one type of information, a dominant type was selected based on how much it is highlighted in the post. Facebook posts made by stakeholders about the BDC/Fengyue Glass Project were assigned the following types of information:

a. **Lack of confidence in the organisation:** Concerning all Facebook post which aimed to disparage or show that the stakeholder does not trust BDC or the Government of Botswana. A decision on whether the stakeholder does not trust these organisations is based on the thrust of the post. Although the list is not definitive, some of the examples of the phrases suggesting a stakeholder does not trust BDC or the Government of Botswana include: 'blocks an investigation', 'cabinet blocks parliament', 'P100 million into the wrong pockets', 'so entrenched was corruption', 'played a game of hide and seek', 'should be worried knowing the details.'

b. **Lack of confidence in management:** Concerning all Facebook posts which aim to disparage or show that the stakeholder does not trust the leadership of BDC or senior officials in the Government of Botswana. A decision on whether the post fits into this information type is based on the overall thrust of the posts. Although the list is not definitive, some of the examples of phrases that suggests stakeholders do not trust management include: 'likelihood of executive exerting influence', 'mysterious cash in BDC staff accounts', 'BDC executive management was aware', 'Top BDC managers fired.'

c. **Politically motivated Posts:** Concerning all posts which are shared or made in political party Facebook groups or pages, to politicise the crisis or attract political commentaries. Although the list is not definitive, some of the examples of these political party Facebook groups or pages include: 'Alliance for Progressives', 'Umbrella for Democratic Change', 'Botswana Democratic Party', 'Botswana Congress Party', 'Botswana Movement for Democracy', 'Botswana National Front.'

d. **Questions:** Concerning all posts which ask questions about the BDC/Fengyue Glass Project. A decision on whether the user is asking questions was based on sentences ending with question marks. Although the list is not definitive, some of the examples of phrases suggesting stakeholders asked questions include: 'but how do you credit an abandoned project?', 'why Goya quit?', 'what happened to the P700 million?', 'parliamentary questions', 'how far with the Fengyue Glass project?'

e. **Providing information:** Concerning all posts which aimed to provide information about the BDC/ Fengyue Glass Project. A decision on which post provides information was based on its overall thrust. Although the list is not definitive, some of the examples of the phrases providing information include: 'know key players', 'parliamentary select committee announced', 'he received donations', 'Government restored stability.'

f. **Calling for action:** Relating to all posts which are calling for action to be taken concerning the BDC/ Fengyue Glass Project. A decision on which Facebook posts belonged to this cluster was based on the overall thrust of the post and on some of the discourse used to suggest a call for action, although the list is not definitive, include: 'we call for action', 'parliament cannot lie idle', 'action should be taken', 'investigations should be made', 'an inquiry should be made.'

g. **Humorous posts:** Relating to all posts that are intended as jokes about the BDC/ Fengyue Glass Project. A decision on which post belongs to this cluster was based on the overall thrust of the post.

h. **Expressing shock and sympathy:** Relating to all posts that are intended to convey shock at the state of the BDC/ Fengyue Glass Project crisis. A decision on which post belongs to this cluster was based on the overall aim of the post, but some phrases highlighting shock include words or expressions such as: 'it's unbelievable', 'what a waste', 'stunned', 'words can't describe', complete shock.'

6. **Discourse used in posts:** Relating to words or phrases that stakeholders used to describe the BDC/ Fengyue Glass Project crisis. Some words were chosen based on their portrayal of the crisis:

    a. **Mismanagement:** Concerning the way the BDC or Government of Botswana poorly managed the BDC/ Fengyue Glass Project. The frequency of this word in all Facebook posts about the BDC/ Fengyue Glass Project was added inductively.

    b. **Briefcase:** Relating to how BDC partnered with a new Chinese company that had no track record in glass manufacturing. The frequency of this word in all Facebook posts about the BDC/ Fengyue Glass Project was added inductively.

    c. **Mysterious:** Relating to the fact that BDC partnered with a Chinese company that had no traceable trade references in China. The frequency of this word in

all Facebook posts about the BDC/Fengyue Glass Project was added inductively.

d. **Resign:** Relating to stakeholders calling on BDC executives to resign. The frequency of this word in all Facebook posts about the BDC/ Fengyue Glass Project was added inductively.

e. **Criminality:** Relating to the decisions by BDC executives to implement resolutions that were not sanctioned by their Board of Directors in partnering with the Chinese company. The frequency of this word in all Facebook posts about the BDC/ Fengyue Glass Project was added inductively.

f. **Forensic:** Relating to forensic investigations into the BDC/ Fengyue Glass Project. The frequency of this word in all Facebook posts about the BDC/ Fengyue Glass Project was added inductively.

g. **Saga:** Relating to the BDC/ Fengyue Glass Project on-going crisis at the time. The frequency of this word in all Facebook posts about the BDC/ Fengyue Glass Project was added inductively.

h. **Waste:** Relating to the waste of public funds in the BDC/ Fengyue Glass Project. The frequency of this word in all Facebook posts about the BDC/ Fengyue Glass Project was added inductively.

7. **Press release (Choose Yes or No):** Concerning official statements shared by the BDC, Government of Botswana or any Government Ministry bearing the phrase 'PRESS RELEASE', letterheads and a signature of the author. On whether a post is a press release, a 'Yes' or 'No' response was chosen, and this decision was based on whether the post had the phrase 'Press Release' and a message written on letterhead and signed by the author.

8. **Photograph (Choose Yes or No):** Concerning any images or pictures illustrating the post. On whether the post had a picture, a 'Yes' or 'No' response was chosen, and this

decision was based on whether any image or photo was accompanying the post as an illustration.

9. **Video (Choose Yes or No):** Concerning any motion digital picture or images posted on any timeline, group or page as a message relating to the BDC/ Fengyue Glass Project crisis. On whether any post had a video, a 'Yes', or 'No' response was chosen, and this decision was based on whether there was any video at on the timeline.

10. **Event (Choose Yes or No):** Relating to whether the post was made at an event or not. Where a 'Yes' or 'No' response was chosen, a decision was based on the post highlighting the venue where it was shared. Some examples of venues, although the list is not definitive, include: 'parliament', 'press conference', 'kgotla.'

11. **Corporate social responsibility (Choose Yes or No):** Relating to whether BDC or the Government of Botswana are showing that they have an ethical responsibility and an obligation to do what is right. Facebook posts on Government taking action to restore the situation and Ministers responding to parliamentary questions about the BDC/ Fengyue Glass Project are some of the examples that show an ethical responsibility and obligation to do what is right. Other examples showing a moral (ethical) responsibility on the part of BDC and Government of Botswana, although the list is not definitive, include: 'Board of Directors reconstituted', 'BDC executive fired', 'New BDC Boss appoints', 'BDC/ Fengyue Glass Project liquidated.'

12. **Likes:** Concerning the number of 'Likes' Facebook reactions in a Post. These reactions are found at the bottom left side of every post. Stakeholders end reading the post by pressing a 'Like' emoji if they liked it. The number of times a post received likes were added inductively.

13. **Sad:** Concerning the number of 'Sad' Facebook reactions in a post. These reactions are found at the bottom left side of every post. Stakeholders end reading the post by pressing the 'Sad' emoji if they felt unhappy after reading the post. The number of sad emojis on a post were added inductively.

14. **Love:** Concerning the number of 'Love' Facebook reactions in a post. These reactions are located at the bottom left side of every post. Stakeholders end reading the post by pressing the 'Love' emoji if they adored the post. The number of 'Love' emojis were added inductively.

15. **Wow:** Concerning the number of 'Wow' Facebook reactions in a post. These reactions are located at the bottom left side of every post. Stakeholders end reading the post by pressing the 'Wow' emoji if they were surprised or shocked by the post. The number of 'Wow' emojis were added inductively.

16. **Angry:** Concerning the number of 'Angry' Facebook reactions in a post. These reactions are located at the bottom left side of every post. Stakeholders end reading the post by pressing the 'Angry' emoji if they post elicited anger. The number of 'Angry' emojis were added inductively.

17. **Haha:** Concerning the number of 'Haha' or laughter Facebook reactions in a post. These reactions are located at the bottom left side of every post. Stakeholders end the post by pressing the 'Haha' emoji if the post made them laugh. The number of 'Haha' emojis were added inductively.

18. **Care:** Relating to the number of 'Care' Facebook reactions in a post. These reactions are located at the bottom left side of every post. Stakeholders end reading the post by pressing the 'Care' emoji if the post elicited a caring emotion. The number of 'Care' emojis were added inductively.

19. Views: Relating to the number of times a video was viewed in a post. This reaction is located at the bottom right side of every post. The number of views were added inductively.

20. **Shares:** Relating to the number of times a post was shared. These reactions are located at the bottom right side of the post, and stakeholders press them if they want to share the post. The number of shares was added inductively.

21. **Comments:** Relating to the number of comments from other stakeholders who read the post. These are found at the bottom right side of the post. Therefore, the number of comments on a post was added inductively.

22. **Reply (Choose Yes or No):** Concerning whether the BDC, the Government of Botswana or any Government Ministry engaged with or responded to stakeholders' post or comments about the BDC/ Fengyue Glass Project crisis. Where a 'Yes' or 'No' was chosen per post, a decision was based on whether BDC, Government of Botswana or any Government Ministry responded to such post or comments.

Appendix 2a: Coding Sheet for the BDC crisis

START DATE: _____   **END DATE:** _____

CRISIS TYPE: Transgression

CATEGORIES AND VARIABLES (Use multiple sheets depending on the number of posts per page)

VARIABLES AND CATEGORIES OF POSTS	DATES													
Source of Posts														
Botswana Development Corporation (BDC)														
Weekend Post-Insightful														
Government of Botswana														
Mmegi														
The Business Weekly & Review														
Sunday Standard/ Telegraph														
The Botswana Gazette														
The Midweek Sun														
The Voice Newspaper Botswana														
All Parties Conference														
Alliance for Progressives														
Youth of Botswana														
The Patriot on Sunday														
Yarona FM- the real story														
Stakeholder														
Other Facebook pages														

Summary of Posts														
Response strategies (Choose one per post)														
Attack														
Denial														
Scapegoat														
Good intention														
Minimisation														
Differentiation														
Bolstering														
Compensation														
Corrective														
Apology														
Types of information disseminated to stakeholders (Choose one per post)														
Instructive														
Adjusting														
Internalising														
Types of information disseminated by stakeholders (Choose one per post)														
Lack of confidence on organisation														
Lack of confidence on management														
Politically motivated posts														
Questions														
Providing information														
Calling for action														
Humorous posts														
Expressing shock and sympathy														
Discourse used in posts														
Mismanagement														

Briefcase													
Mysterious													
Resign													
Criminality													
Forensic													
Saga													
Waste of public funds													
Nature of post (Choose 'Yes' or 'No'													
Press release													
Photograph													
Video													
Events													
Corporate Social Responsibility													
Facebook reactions													
Likes													
Sad													
Wow													
Angry													
Love													
Haha													
Care													
Share													
Comments													
Replies **(Choose 'Yes' or 'No')**													

Appendix 3: Coding manual for the BR crisis content analysis

Social Media platform: Facebook

Date: All the dates of Facebook posts of the BR train accident crisis between December 2019 and July 2020 were recorded using the format dd.mm. yyyy. These are the date in which posts were made on Facebook by various stakeholders about the crisis.

Nuancing of posts: Facebook posts were selected because they contained the following keywords: 'Botswana Railways', 'Botswana Railways train accident', 'Botswana Railways train derailment.' This is to say that all Facebook posts with these keywords were selected. These Facebook Posts captured the following nuances:

1. **Source of posts (Choose one per post):** This category was considered because of the many stakeholders who posted about the BR train accident in their Facebook timelines, groups of pages. The sources of posts were identified from the following stakeholders:

    a. **Botswana Railways (BR):** The Government of Botswana wholly owns this organisation. BR owns and runs train business (transportation of passengers, goods and fuel haulage) on behalf of the Government of Botswana. It has a history of accidents which caused much damage to its reputation and cost to the taxpayers. In 2019, the organisation experienced a passenger train accident crisis which adversely affected both stakeholders and the organisation. Therefore, all posts from BR Facebook page mentioning the 2019 passenger train accident were added inductively.

    b. **WeekendPost-Insightful:** Is a Facebook page belonging to a privately-owned weekly newspaper called WeekendPost in Botswana. All posts from this page mentioning the BR train accident were added inductively.

    c. **Government of Botswana:** Relating to the Government of the Republic of Botswana which owns BR. This organisation has several Facebook pages;

BWgovernment, DailyNews and Ministry of Transport and Communication, among others, which are used to disseminate information to stakeholders. All Facebook posts from BWgovernment, DailyNews and Ministry of Transport and Communication were grouped under this category- Government of Botswana and added inductively.

d. **Mmegi:** Relating to a Facebook page belonging to a privately owned daily newspaper in Botswana called 'Mmegi.' All posts mentioning the BR train accident were added inductively.

e. **The Business Weekly & Review:** Relating to a Facebook page belonging to a privately-owned weekly newspaper in Botswana. All posts from this newspaper's Facebook page mentioning the BR train accident crisis were added inductively.

f. **Sunday Standard/ Telegraph:** Relating to a Facebook page belonging to a privately-owned weekly newspaper in Botswana. All posts from this newspaper's Facebook page mentioning the Botswana Railways train accident crisis were added inductively.

g. **The Botswana Gazette:** Relating to a Facebook page belonging to a privately-owned weekly newspaper in Botswana. All Facebook posts from this page about the BR train accident crisis were added inductively.

h. **Botswana Guardian:** Relating to a Facebook page belonging to a privately-owned weekly newspaper in Botswana. All Facebook posts from this page about the Botswana Railways train accident crisis were added inductively.

i. **The Midweek Sun:** Relating to a Facebook page belonging to a privately-owned weekly newspaper in Botswana. All Facebook posts from this page about the BR train accident crisis were added inductively.

j. The Voice Newspaper Botswana: Relating to a Facebook page belonging to a privately-owned weekly newspaper in Botswana. All Facebook posts from this page about the BR train accident crisis were added inductively.

k. All Parties Conference: Relating to a Facebook page belonging to a political party Facebook group whose membership (over 173,000 people) is open to everyone in Botswana. All posts from this group about the Botswana Railways train accident crisis were added inductively.

l. Youth of Botswana: There are several Facebook pages bearing the name 'Youth of Botswana.' However, this name relates to a Facebook group with membership above 546,000 members, whose posts about the BR train accident crisis were added inductively.

m. The Patriot on Sunday: Relating to a Facebook page belonging to a privately-owned weekly newspaper in Botswana. All posts from this page about the BR train accident crisis were added inductively.

n. Echo Newspaper Botswana: Relating to a Facebook page belonging to a privately-owned weekly newspaper in Botswana. All posts from this page about the BR train accident crisis were added inductively.

o. Yarona FM-the real story: Relating to a Facebook page belonging to a privately-owned radio station called 'Yarona FM' in Botswana. All posts from this page about the BR train accident crisis were added inductively.

p. Duma FM: Relating to a Facebook page belonging to a privately-owned radio station called 'Duma FM' in Botswana. All posts from this page about the BR train accident crisis were added inductively.

q. Botswana Federation of Trade Unions: Relating to a Facebook page belonging to the workers' trade union in Botswana. All posts from this page about the BR train accident were added inductively.

r. **The Parrot Online:** Relating to a Facebook page belonging to an online Facebook news source. It is neither a newspaper nor a news website. All posts from this page about the BR train accident were added inductively.

s. **Stakeholder:** Relating to all Facebook users who posted or commented about the BR train accident in their timeline, groups, or pages. All their Facebook posts about the BR train accident were added inductively.

t. **Other Facebook pages:** Relating to all Facebook pages and groups not associated with any of the above users but have posted about the Botswana Railways train accident. All Facebook posts from other pages about the BR train accident were added inductively.

2. **Summary of Post:** Concerning a brief description about the Facebook post. The summaries of all posts should be a maximum of 150 characters.

3. **Crisis response strategies (Choose one per post or Not Applicable):** Relating to messaging strategies that BR, the Government of Botswana and any Government Ministry used when communicating during the crisis. A decision on which response strategy to select in a message or Facebook post made by the BR, Government of Botswana or any Government Ministry was based on the thrust of the post. Where a Facebook post had more than one response strategy used, a dominant strategy was selected based on how much it is highlighted in the post. Facebook posts made by BR, Government of Botswana or any Government Ministry about the BR train accident were assigned the following crisis response strategies:

a. **Attack:** Relating to all messages or Facebook posts produced by BR, Government of Botswana or any Government Ministry confronting a group or persons claiming that something is wrong at BR. Some of the examples of phrases or words suggesting the use of this strategy, although the list is not definitive, include: 'we are challenging' or 'we dismiss.' All Facebook posts or press releases made by BR, Government of Botswana, or any

Government Ministry confronting any Facebook user, groups or pages claiming there is a crisis were considered.

b. **Denial:** Relating to all messages or Facebook posts produced by BR, Government of Botswana or any Government Ministry claiming there is no crisis or wrongdoing on the part of BR. Some of the examples of keywords or phrases suggesting the use of this strategy, although the list is not definitive, include: 'BR did not disregard safety', 'deny', 'refute', 'not responsible', 'did not do so.' All Facebook posts or press releases denying or refuting the presence of a crisis were considered.

c. **Scapegoating:** Relating to all messages or Facebook posts produced by BR, Government of Botswana or any Government Ministry blaming some outside entity of factors and apportion them crisis responsibility. This strategy is different from the attack strategy in that the attack strategy confronts stakeholders who say there is a crisis or wrongdoing, whereas scapegoating admits the crisis but apportion crisis responsibility to external entities. Some of the examples of phrases or keywords suggesting the use of this strategy, although the list is not definitive, include: 'the broken rails', 'systems cannot help us see broken lines', 'not having functional voice recorders compromised train safety', 'company failing to keep up with train inspection', 'rail tracks were submerged in floods', 'communication equipment was obsolete', 'technology was obsolete.' All messages, Facebook posts or press releases in which the BR or Government of Botswana blames some outside entity for the crisis were considered.

d. **Good intentions:** Relating to all messages or Facebook posts produced by BR, Government of Botswana or any Government Ministry suggesting that BR meant well and never intended for the crisis to occur. Some examples of phrases suggesting that BR never meant for the crisis to happen, although the list is not definitive, include: 'We did all we could', 'it was not our intention.' As such, all messages or Facebook posts suggesting that BR did not intend for the crisis to occur were considered.

e. **Minimisation:** Relating to all messages or Facebook posts produced by BR, Government of Botswana or any Government Ministry claiming the BR train accident crisis did not cause much damage to BR's reputation and financial standing. This strategy differs from the denial strategy in that the denial strategy completely refutes there is a crisis or wrongdoing, while minimisation admits there is a crisis, but emphasises that the extent of reputational or financial damage is minimal. Some of the examples of phrases suggesting minimisation, although the list is not definitive, include: 'there is less harm', 'much was not lost.' All messages suggesting this strategy were considered.

f. **Differentiation:** Relating to all messages or Facebook posts produced by BR, Government of Botswana or any Government Ministry comparing the train accident crisis in question to similar ones in the past. Some examples of phrases suggesting the use of this strategy, although the list is not definitive, include: 'This is not the first time', 'in the past similar accidents', 'it is not different from', 'compared to past accidents.' Therefore, all messages or Facebook posts suggesting a comparison of this train accident to past accidents were considered.

g. **Bolstering:** Relating to all messages or Facebook posts produced by BR, Government of Botswana or any Government Ministry reminding stakeholders about BR's positive qualities. Some of the examples of phrases or words suggesting this strategy, although the list is not definitive, include: 'Botswana Railways has done well in heavy haulage', 'Botswana Railways has been providing efficient passenger transportation', 'Botswana Railways contributes to economic development.' All messages or Facebook posts suggesting the use of this strategy were considered.

h. **Compensation:** Relating to all messages or Facebook posts produced by Botswana Railways, Government of Botswana or any Government Ministry suggesting that Botswana Railways will compensate anyone involved in the train accident. Some of the examples of words or phrases meaning

compensation, although the list is not definitive, include: 'compensate', 'reward.' All messages suggesting the use of this strategy were considered.

i. **Corrective:** Relating to all messages or Facebook posts produced by BR, Government of Botswana or any Government Ministry suggesting that BR or Government was taking action to restore the situation or promising that this crisis will not be repeated. This strategy differs from compensation because corrective response strategy shows what an organisation is doing to restore the situation, whereas compensation strategy says money or reward was offered to anyone affected by the crisis. Some examples of words or phrases showing that action was taken to restore the situation or that such an act will not be repeated, although the list is not definitive, include: 'Board of inquiry', 'public hearing', 'Directorate of Accidents is leading investigations', 'preliminary reports', its services are back', 'we are working hard to restore', 'such action does not repeat itself', 'action will be taken.' Therefore, all messages or Facebook posts showing this response strategy were considered.

j. **Apology:** Relating to all messages or Facebook posts produced by BR, Government of Botswana or any Government Ministry suggesting that BR or the Government accepts full responsibility for the train accident, loss of lives and asks for forgiveness from stakeholders. This strategy differs from good intentions in that apology strategy accepts responsibility and asks for forgiveness from stakeholders, whereas good intentions strategy also accepts responsibility but emphasises that the organisation meant well and never intended for the crisis to occur without asking for forgiveness. Some of the examples of words or phrases showing that Botswana Railways or Government accepts responsibility, although the list is not definitive, include: 'We are sorry to the families', 'sorry to stakeholders for the damages caused', 'We ask for your forgiveness', 'we regret the loss of lives.' Therefore, all messages or posts suggesting the use of this strategy were considered.

k. **Shifting blame:** Relating to all message or Facebook posts produced by BR, Government of Botswana or any Government Ministry blaming someone or an employee, other than the organisation for the train accident. This strategy differs from scapegoating in that shifting blame strategy points a finger at someone within the organisation and absolve the organisation of any blame, whereas scapegoating points a finger at external factors and apportion crisis responsibility on them other than the organisation. Some of the examples of words or phrases showing this strategy, although the list is not definitive, include: 'a trainee train driver', 'traffic controller labelled BR management as indecisive leaders', 'supervisors failed to take action', 'engineers did not provide advice', 'accident could have been avoided if trains had been cancelled by authorities', BR nurse did not go to the scene.' As such, all messages or posts suggesting this strategy were considered.

l. **Concern:** Relating to messages or Facebook posts produced by BR, Government of Botswana or any Government Ministry expressing concern for the victims. Some of the examples of words or phrases showing this strategy, although the list is not definitive, include 'will visit the injured in hospitals', 'entourage headed to Mahalapye hospital', 'to check the two trainees', 'organised a memorial for the deceased employees', 'Minister visits accident scene', 'two crew members lost their lives', 'condolences.' Therefore, all messages or posts suggesting the concern strategy were considered.

m. **Regret:** Relating to all messages or Facebook posts produced by BR, Government of Botswana or any Government Ministry indicating they feel bad about the accident. Some of the examples of words or phrases showing this strategy include: 'it is with deep regret', 'we deeply regret', 'Botswana Railways wishes to express regret' 'night trains have been cancelled.' All messages or posts suggesting the excuse strategy were considered.

4. **Types of organisational information (Choose one per post or Not Applicable)**

A decision on which type of information to stakeholders was projected in Facebook posts made by BR, Government of Botswana or any Government Ministry was based on the impetus of the post. Only one type of information was selected per post, and where a post had more than one message type, a dominant message type was selected based on how its highlighted in the post. Facebook posts made by the BR, Government of Botswana or any Government Ministry about the BR train accident were assigned the following types of information to stakeholders:

a. **Instructive:** Relating information that inform stakeholders how to protect themselves physically from a crisis. Therefore, a decision on selecting this type of information was based on the thrust of the post, and whether it is sharing information on how stakeholders can protect themselves physically from the crisis.

b. **Adjusting:** Relating to information that BR or the Government of Botswana sent to help stakeholders to cope psychologically by expressing sympathy. A decision on selecting this type of information was based on the thrust of the post, and whether it is sharing any information that helps stakeholders to cope psychologically. Although not a definitive list, some of the examples of words or phrases that suggests the information helps stakeholders to cope psychologically by expressing sympathy include: 'sorry to the stakeholders', 'we are sorry to the families', 'deep regret that two crew lost their lives', 'I will be taking time to visit hospital', 'action will be taken against those responsible.'

c. **Internalising:** Relating to information that help stakeholders to formulate a perception about BR or Government of Botswana. A decision on selecting this type of information from Facebook posts was based on the thrust of Facebook posts, and whether the information help stakeholders to form a perception about the organisation. Although not definitive, some of the examples of phrases that can help stakeholders to form a perception include: 'Botswana Railways has organised a memorial', 'Directorate of Accidents

is leading investigations', 'preliminary report indicates the rail line sheered', 'services are back', 'commencement of public hearings.'

5. **Types of stakeholder information (Select one per post or Not Applicable):** Relating to the information that stakeholders disseminate about the BR. A decision on which type of information to assign a Facebook post made by stakeholders was based on the overall aim of the post. Only one type of information was selected per post, and where a message or Facebook post had more than one type of information, a dominant type was selected based on how much it is highlighted in the post. Facebook posts made by stakeholders about the BR train accident were assigned the following types of information:

   a. **Lack of confidence in the organisation:** Relating to Facebook posts, by stakeholders, which aim to disparage or show that the stakeholder does not trust BR or the Government of Botswana. A decision on whether the user does not trust these organisations was based on the thrust of the post. All posts showing lack of confidence in the organisation were considered.

   b. **Lack of confidence in management:** Relating to all Facebook posts, by stakeholders, which aim to disparage or show that the stakeholder does not trust the leadership of BR or the Government of Botswana. A decision on whether the posts belong to this cluster was based on the post referring to senior officials within BR or the Government of Botswana. Although the list is not definitive, some of the examples of posts showing lack of confidence in management include: 'the problem is that BR management is cowards', 'BR management is indecisive', 'BR nurse did not go to the scene.' All posts showing lack of confidence in management were considered.

   c. **Politically motivated Posts:** Relating to all posts, by stakeholders, which are shared or made in political party Facebook groups or pages, to politicise the crisis or attract political commentaries. Although the list is not definitive, some examples of these political party Facebook groups or pages

include: 'Alliance for Progressives', 'Umbrella for Democratic Change', 'Botswana Democratic Party', 'Botswana Congress Party' to mention a few. All posts that were posted with political motives were considered.

d. **Questions:** Relating to all posts, by stakeholders, which posed questions about the BR train accident. A decision on whether a stakeholder was asking questions was based on all statements ending with question marks. Although the list is not definitive, some of the examples include: 'who will claim responsibility?', 'what corrective measures are going to be taken?' These statements were considered.

e. **Providing information:** Relating to all Facebook posts, by stakeholders, which aimed to provide information about the BR train accident. A decision on which post provides information was based on its overall thrust. Although the list is not definitive, some of the examples of phrases suggesting a stakeholder was providing information include: 'two crew members lost their lives', 'pictures of the Botswana Railways passenger train', 'just after Pallaroad, the rail broke', 'entourage headed to Mahalapye Hospital', 'the north bound train derailed.' Therefore, all posts providing information were considered.

f. **Calling for action:** Relating to all posts, by stakeholders and organisation, which are calling for action to be taken against those responsible for the train accident. A decision on which Facebook posts belonged to this cluster was based on the overall thrust of the post. Although the list is not definitive, some of the discourses used include: 'we call for action', 'parliament cannot lie idle', 'action will be taken', 'investigations should be made', 'an inquiry should be made', 'a regulatory body should be established.'

g. **Humour:** Concerning all posts that are intended as jokes about the BR train accident. A decision on which post belongs to this cluster was based on the overall thrust of the post. Although the list is not definitive, some of the phrases used include: 'in essence the message was he can't be right because

he is a junior', 'just like Botswana Railways commission of inquiry…Botswana Meat Commission has run into many accidents', 'after the commission of inquiry, the board should join Township Rollers.'

h. **Expressing shock and sympathy:** Relating to all posts that are intended to convey shock at the BR train accident crisis. A decision on which post belongs to this cluster was based on the overall aim of the post. Although the list is not definitive, some phrases highlighting shock and sympathy included words or expressions such as: '…eish…eish…temet', 'our deep condolences', 'so sad', 'it's unbelievable', 'what a waste', 'stunned', 'words can't describe', complete shock.'

6. **Discourse describing the crisis:** Relating to words, phrases, and language that Facebook posts carried to describe the BR train accident crisis. Different stakeholders used many words, but some were chosen based on how they described the crisis. Some of the chosen words included:

a. **Witnesses:** Relating to all the people who witnessed the accident and those who testified at the commission of inquiry. The frequency of this word in all Facebook posts about the BR train accident was added inductively.

b. **Lives:** Relating to loss of lives in the accident. The frequency of this word in all Facebook posts about the BR train accident was added inductively.

c. **Condolences:** Relating to comforting messages to the families of the deceased. The frequency of this word in all Facebook posts about the BR train accident was added inductively.

d. **Inquiry:** Relating to a Commission of Inquiry into the BR train accident. The frequency of this word in all Facebook posts about the BR train accident was added inductively.

e. **Evidence:** Relating to available information validating or invalidating beliefs on what caused the train accident. The frequency of this word in all Facebook posts about the BR train accident was added inductively.

f. **Negligence:** Relating to failure to take proper care by BR and its employees leading to the accident. The frequency of this word in all Facebook posts about the BR train accident was added inductively.

7. **Press release (Choose Yes or No):** Relating to all official statements produced by BR, Government of Botswana or any Government Ministry bearing the phrase 'PRESS RELEASE/ STATEMENT', letterheads and a signature of the author. On whether a post is a press release, a 'Yes' or 'No' response was chosen, and this decision was based on whether the post had the phrase 'Press Release / Statement,' and that the message was written on letterhead and signed by the author.

8. **Photograph (Choose Yes or No):** Concerning any images or pictures illustrating the post. On whether the post had a picture, a 'Yes' or 'No' response was chosen, and this decision was based on whether any image or photo was accompanying the post as an illustration.

9. **Video (Choose Yes or No):** Concerning any motion and digital images posted on any timeline, group or page as a message relating to the BR train accident crisis. On whether any post had a video, a 'Yes', or 'No' response was chosen, and this decision was based on whether there was any video or not.

10. **Event (Choose Yes or No):** Relating to whether the post was made at an event or not. Where a 'Yes' or 'No' response was chosen, a decision was based on the post highlighting the venue where it was produced or shared. Although the list is not definitive, some examples of venues include: 'parliament', 'press conference', 'commission of inquiry', 'public hearing', 'kgotla.'

11. **Corporate social responsibility (Choose Yes or No):** Relating to whether BR or the Government of Botswana are showing that they have an ethical responsibility

and an obligation to do what is right. Facebook posts on Government taking action to restore the situation and posts about the Board of Inquiry or public hearings about the BR train accident are some of the examples that show an ethical responsibility and obligation to do what is right.

12. **Likes:** Relating to the number of 'Likes' Facebook reactions in posts. These reactions are found at the bottom left side of every post, and users end the post by liking the post if they enjoyed reading it. The number of times a post was liked was added inductively.

13. **Sad:** Concerning the number of 'Sad' Facebook reactions in posts. These reactions are found at the bottom left side of every post, and stakeholders end the post by pressing the 'Sad' emoji if they felt unhappy after reading the post. The number 'Sad' emojis on posts were added inductively.

14. **Love:** Concerning the number of 'Love' Facebook reactions in posts. These reactions are located at the bottom left side of every post, and stakeholders end the post by pressing the 'Love' emoji if they adored the post. The number of 'Love' emojis were added inductively.

15. **Wow:** Concerning the number of 'Wow' Facebook reactions in posts. These reactions are located at the bottom left side of every post, and stakeholders end the post by pressing the 'Wow' emoji if they were surprised or shocked by the post. The number of 'Wow' emojis were added inductively.

16. **Angry:** Concerning the number of 'Angry' Facebook reactions in a post. These reactions are located at the bottom left side of every post, and stakeholders end the post by pressing the 'Angry' emoji if the post elicited an emotion of anger. The number of 'Angry' emojis were added inductively.

17. **Haha:** Concerning the number of 'Haha' emojis or laughter Facebook reactions in posts. These reactions are located at the bottom left side of every post, and

stakeholders end the post by pressing the 'Haha' emoji if the post made them laugh. The number of 'Haha' emojis were added inductively.

18. **Care:** Concerning the number of 'Care' Facebook reactions in posts. These reactions are located at the bottom left side of every post, and stakeholders end the post by pressing the 'Care' emoji if the post elicited a caring emotion. The number of 'Care' emojis was added inductively.

19. **Shares:** Concerning the number of times both the stakeholders or the organisation shared a post. These reactions are located at the bottom right side of the post, and stakeholders or the organisation can press them if they want to share the post. The number of shares was added inductively.

20. **Comments:** Concerning the number of comments from other stakeholders who read the post. These are found at the bottom right side of the post. Therefore, the number of comments on a post was added inductively.

21. **Reply (Choose Yes or No):** Concerning how BR, the Government of Botswana or any Government Ministry engaged their stakeholders by responding to their posts or comments during the train accident. Where a 'Yes' or 'No' was chosen per post, a decision was based on whether BR, Government of Botswana or any Government Ministry responded to the post or comments.

Appendix 3a: Coding sheet for the BR crisis

START DATE: _____   END DATE: _____

CRISIS TYPE: Accident

CATEGORIES AND VARIABLES (Use multiple sheets depending on the number of posts per page)

VARIABLES AND CATEGORIES OF POSTS	DATES												
Source of Posts (Choose one per post)													
Botswana Railways													
WeekendPost-Insightful													
Government of Botswana													
Mmegi													
The Business Weekly & Review													
Sunday Standard/ Telegraph													
The Botswana Gazette													
Botswana Guardian													
The Midweek Sun													
The Voice Newspaper Botswana													
All Parties Conference													
Youth of Botswana													
The Patriot on Sunday													
Echo Newspaper Botswana													
Yarona FM- the real story													
Duma FM													
Botswana Federation of Trade Unions													

The Parrot Online Stakeholder													
Other Facebook pages													
Summary of Post													
Crisis response strategies (Choose one per post)													
Attack													
Denial													
Scapegoating													
Good intention													
Minimisation													
Differentiation													
Bolstering													
Compensation													
Corrective													
Apology													
Shifting blame													
Concern													
Regret													
Types of information to stakeholders (Choose one per post)													
Instructive													
Adjusting													
Internalising													
Types of information by stakeholders (Choose one per post)													
Lack of confidence in organisation													
Lack of confidence in management													
Politically motivated posts													
Questions													
Providing information													
Calling for action													
Humour													

Expressing shock and sympathy												
Discourses used in posts												
Witnesses												
Lives												
Condolences												
Commission of inquiry												
Evidence												
Negligence												
Nature of posts (Choose 'Yes' or 'No')												
Press release												
Photograph												
Video												
Events												
Corporate Social Responsibility												
Facebook reactions												
Likes												
Sad												
Wow												
Angry												
Love												
Haha												
Care												
Share												
Comments												
Replies (**Choose 'Yes' or 'No'**)												

APPENDIX 4: Inter-coder reliability testing

To provide meaningful and trustworthy results in this research, it was important to measure the reliability of variables and categories. This is to say whether the measurement can be reproduced over time, in different settings by different coders as well as whether there was agreement among the coders. To achieve this, two inter-coders (PhD candidates within the Department of Media and Communication at Swansea University) were approached to conduct an analysis on a sample of 50 Facebook posts about the Botswana Development Corporation/ Fengyue Glass Project crisis, and 50 Facebook posts about the Botswana Railways passenger train accident crisis. A combined total of 100 Facebook posts amounted to 20% of the total sample of 495 Facebook posts for the two case studies.

The inter-coders were given the coding manual (Appendix 4a and 4b). Each coder worked independently, and the name of the other coder was kept confidential to minimise chances of collusion or cooperation. No payment was offered to the inter-coders, but the researcher offered support for their respective research, should they require assistance.

Since there were two coders and the data used was nominal, the best approach for assessing the inter-coder reliability was to calculate observed agreement from the coders, and find the average between the pair using Percentage Agreement and Cohen's Kappa. One of the advantages of using Cohen's Kappa is that it reduces the ratings of the two coders to a single number (Warrens, 2014). However, the Percentage Agreement and Cohen's Kappa have limitations, as the percentage agreement does not correct for chance agreement between coders and is overly liberal (Freelon, 2010), while the Cohen Kappa is too conservative and does not accounting for missing data (Krippendorff, 2004).

A total number of coding decisions (N) was 25 variables. The first step was to calculate the Percentage Agreement on a spreadsheet, by adding the number of instances in which the three coders (including the main reader) agreed, dividing it by N and multiplying it by 100. The average of the three coders was divided by 3 to find the Average Pairwise Percentage Agreement. The table below shows that the pairwise agreement is 88% for coder 1 (main reader) and Coder 2. It is 92% for coder 1 and coder 3 and 88% for coder 2 and coder 3.

Therefore, the average pairwise percentage agreement for the three coders is 89.33%. This scores show an almost perfect or perfect agreement (Landis & Koch, 1977).

As indicated earlier, these scores were checked against an alternative superior intercoder reliability coefficients, the Cohen's Kappa, because the percentage agreement has limitations as it does not correct for chance agreement between coders and is overly liberal (Freelon, 2010:21). In this instance, the Cohen's kappa was deployed and calculated through a statistical program SPSS. In the same way, the pairwise Cohen kappa was calculated between coder 1 and coder 2, coder 1 and 3 and coder 2 and 3. The average of these 3 pairwise Cohen kappa was calculated to come up with the average pairwise Cohen's kappa. The table below shows that the average pairwise Cohen's kappa for coder 1 and coder 2 was 0.772, the average pairwise Cohen's kappa for coder 1 and coder 3 was 0.828, the average pairwise Cohen's kappa for coder 2 and coder 3 was 0.817, while the average of the 3 was 0.806. These score, according to Landis & Koch (1977: 165) show that the strength of agreement is substantial.

Average Pairwise Percentage Agreement			
Average pairwise percentage agreement	Pairwise percentage agreement Coder 1 & 2	Pairwise percentage agreement Coder 1 & 3	Pairwise percentage agreement Coder 2 & 3
89.33%	88%	92%	88%
Average Pairwise Cohen's Kappa			
Average pairwise Cohen's Kappa	Pairwise Cohen's Kappa Coders 1 &2	Pairwise Cohen's Kappa Coders 1&3	Pairwise Cohen's Kappa Coders 2&3
0.806	0.772	0.828	0.817

Table adapted from Freelon (2010: 29)

Appendix 4a: Intercoder confirmation (Coder 2)

This is to confirm that I was asked to become an intercoder for this study. The researcher gave me a coding manual and told me to code a sample of 100 Facebook posts (20%) for the content analysis of both the Botswana Development Corporation (BDC) and Botswana Railways (BR) crises. This is to say, I coded 50 Facebook posts for the BDC crisis, and 50 Facebook posts for the BR crisis.

The intercoder scores were calculated using the Percentage Agreement on the spreadsheet and Cohen's Kappa on SPSS. The average of the scores were calculated for the Average Pairwise Percentage Agreement and the Average Pairwise Cohen's Kappa. The scores were calculated as follows:

Average Pairwise Percentage Agreement			
Average pairwise percentage agreement	Pairwise percentage agreement Coder 1 & 2	Pairwise percentage agreement Coder 1 & 3	Pairwise percentage agreement Coder 2 & 3
89.33%	88%	92%	88%
Average Pairwise Cohen's Kappa			
Average pairwise Cohen's Kappa	Pairwise Cohen's Kappa Coders 1 & 2	Pairwise Cohen's Kappa Coders 1&3	Pairwise Cohen's Kappa Coders 2&3
0.806	0.772	0.828	0.817

SIGNED: ███████████ 11·11·2020

Bonny Apunyu

PhD Candidate, Department of Media and Communication

Swansea University

Appendix 4b: Intercoder confirmation (Coder 3)

This is to confirm that I was asked to become an intercoder for this study. The researcher gave me a coding manual and told me to code a sample of 100 Facebook posts (20%) for the content analysis of both the Botswana Development Corporation (BDC) and Botswana Railways (BR) crises. This is to say, I coded 50 Facebook posts for the BDC crisis, and 50 Facebook posts for the BR crisis.

The intercoder scores were calculated using the Percentage Agreement on the Spreadsheet and Cohen's Kappa on SPSS. The average of the scores were calculated for the Average Pairwise Percentage Agreement and the Average Pairwise Cohen's Kappa. The scores were calculated as follows:

Average Pairwise Percentage Agreement			
Average pairwise percentage agreement	Pairwise percentage agreement Coder 1 & 2	Pairwise percentage agreement Coder 1 & 3	Pairwise percentage agreement Coder 2 & 3
89.33%	88%	92%	88%

Average Pairwise Cohen's Kappa			
Average pairwise Cohen's Kappa	Pairwise Cohen's Kappa Coders 1 &2	Pairwise Cohen's Kappa Coders 1&3	Pairwise Cohen's Kappa Coders 2&3
0.806	0.772	0.828	0.817

SIGNED: _____███████_____

Zhennuo Song

PhD Candidate, Department of Media and Communication,

Swansea University

Appendix 4c: Percentage Agreement (Coder 1 and 2)

Variables	**Coder 1**	**Coder 2**	**Agreement**
Source	15	15	0
Strategy	11	11	0
Types of Organisational Information	4	4	0
Types of stakeholder information	3	3	0
Mismanagement	0	0	0
Criminality	0	0	0
Forensic	0	0	0
Saga	0	0	0
Resign	0	0	0
Waste	0	0	0
Press release	2	1	1
Photograph	2	2	0
Video	2	2	0
Event	2	2	0
CSR	2	2	0
Likes	6	2	4
Sad	0	0	0
Love	0	0	0
Wow	0	0	0
Angry	0	0	0
Haha	0	0	0
Care	0	0	0
Share	1	0	1
Comments	8	8	0
Reply	2	2	0

Coder Agreement = 0.88

Appendix 4d: Percentage Agreement (Coder 1 and 3)

Variables	Coder 1	Coder 3	Agreement
Source	15	15	0
Strategy	11	11	0
Types of Organisational Information	4	4	0
Types of stakeholder information	3	2	1
Mismanagement	0	0	0
Criminality	0	0	0
Forensic	0	0	0
Saga	0	0	0
Resign	0	0	0
Waste	0	0	0
Press release	2	2	0
Photograph	2	2	0
Video	2	2	0
Event	2	2	0
CSR	2	2	0
Likes	6	6	0
Sad	0	0	0
Love	0	0	0
Wow	0	0	0
Angry	0	0	0
Haha	0	0	0
Care	0	0	0
Share	1	0	1
Comments	8	8	0
Reply	2	2	0

Coder Agreement = 0.92

Appendix 4e: Percentage agreement (Coder 2 and 3)

Variables	Coder 2	Coder 3	Agreement
Source	15	15	0
Strategy	11	11	0
Types of Organisational Information	4	4	0
Types of stakeholder information	3	2	1
Mismanagement	0	0	0
Criminality	0	0	0
Forensic	0	0	0
Saga	0	0	0
Resign	0	0	0
Waste	0	0	0
Press release	1	2	-1
Photograph	2	2	0
Video	2	2	0
Event	2	2	0
CSR	2	2	0
Likes	2	6	-4
Sad	0	0	0
Love	0	0	0
Wow	0	0	0
Angry	0	0	0
Haha	0	0	0
Care	0	0	0
Share	0	0	0
Comments	8	8	0
Reply	2	2	0

Coder agreement= 0.88

Appendix 4f: Cohen's Kappa using SPSS (Coder 1 and 2)

			Coder2								Total
			.00	1.00	2.00	3.00	4.00	8.00	11.00	15.00	
Coder 1	.00	Count	11	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	11
		Expected Count	5.7	0.4	2.6	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4	11.0
	1.00	Count	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
		Expected Count	1.0	0.1	0.5	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	2.0
	2.00	Count	0	1	5	0	0	0	0	0	6
		Expected Count	3.1	0.2	1.4	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	6.0
	3.00	Count	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
		Expected Count	0.5	0.0	0.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.0
	4.00	Count	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
		Expected Count	0.5	0.0	0.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.0
	6.00	Count	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
		Expected Count	0.5	0.0	0.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.0
	8.00	Count	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
		Expected Count	0.5	0.0	0.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.0
	11.00	Count	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
		Expected Count	0.5	0.0	0.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.0
	15.00	Count	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
		Expected Count	0.5	0.0	0.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.0
Total		Count	13	1	6	1	1	1	1	1	25
		Expected Count	13.0	1.0	6.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	25.0

Table title: **Coder1 * Coder2 Crosstabulation**

Symmetric Measures

	Value	Asymptotic Standard Error[a]	Approximate T[b]	Approximate Significance	
Measure of Kappa Agreement	0.772	0.101	7.305	0.000	
N of Valid Cases	25				

a. Not assuming the null hypothesis.

b. Using the asymptotic standard error assuming the null hypothesis.

Appendix 4g: Cohen's Kappa on SPSS (Coder 1 and 3)

			Coder3							Total
			.00	2.00	4.00	6.00	8.00	11.00	15.00	
Coder1	.00	Count	11	0	0	0	0	0	0	11
		Expected Count	5.7	3.1	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4	11.0
	1.00	Count	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
		Expected Count	1.0	0.6	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	2.0
	2.00	Count	0	6	0	0	0	0	0	6
		Expected Count	3.1	1.7	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	6.0
	3.00	Count	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
		Expected Count	0.5	0.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.0
	4.00	Count	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
		Expected Count	0.5	0.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.0
	6.00	Count	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
		Expected Count	0.5	0.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.0
	8.00	Count	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
		Expected Count	0.5	0.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.0
	11.00	Count	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
		Expected Count	0.5	0.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.0
	15.00	Count	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
		Expected Count	0.5	0.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.0
Total		Count	13	7	1	1	1	1	1	25
		Expected Count	13.0	7.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	25.0

Coder1 * Coder3 Crosstabulation

Symmetric Measures					
	Value	Asymptotic Standard Error[a]	Approximate T[b]	Approximate Significance	
Measure Kappa Agreement	0.828	0.091	7.665	0.000	
N of Valid Cases	25				
a. Not assuming the null hypothesis.					
b. Using the asymptotic standard error assuming the null hypothesis.					

Appendix 4h: Cohen's Kappa on SPSS (Coder 2 and 3)

			Coder3							Total
			.00	2.00	4.00	6.00	8.00	11.00	15.00	
Coder2	.00	Count	13	0	0	0	0	0	0	13
		Expected Count	6.8	3.6	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	13.0
	1.00	Count	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
		Expected Count	0.5	0.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.0
	2.00	Count	0	5	0	1	0	0	0	6
		Expected Count	3.1	1.7	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	6.0
	3.00	Count	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
		Expected Count	0.5	0.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.0
	4.00	Count	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
		Expected Count	0.5	0.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.0
	8.00	Count	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
		Expected Count	0.5	0.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.0
	11.00	Count	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
		Expected Count	0.5	0.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.0
	15.00	Count	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
		Expected Count	0.5	0.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.0
Total		Count	13	7	1	1	1	1	1	25
		Expected Count	13.0	7.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	25.0

Coder2 * Coder3 Crosstabulation

		Value	Asymptotic Standard Error[a]	Approximate T[b]	Approximate Significance	
Measure of Kappa Agreement		0.817	0.092	7.022	0.000	
N of Valid Cases		25				
a. Not assuming the null hypothesis.						
b. Using the asymptotic standard error assuming the null hypothesis.						

Symmetric Measures

Appendix 5: Glossary of CDA tools and list of Facebook posts

TOOL	DESCRIPTION	EXAMPLES
Lexical choices (Fairclough, 1995; Hansen Manchin, 2013)	Text can use lexical choices to indicate levels of authority and co-membership with the audiences	…the government as the **sole Shareholder** took steps aimed at restoring much-needed stability and stewardship in the affairs of the corporation, having regard to the **critical role played** by Botswana Development Corporation in the achievement of economic development of this country (BWgovernment, 23/11/2011) The **new Board** would be required to **resolve any outstanding** issues threatening the successful completion and implementation of the Float Glass Manufacturing Project under construction at Palapye (BWgovernment, 23/11/2011) Should **the Board** find that there is indeed proof of wrongdoing or criminality against anyone within the corporation or in relation to Fengyue Glass Manufacturing Botswana, **it will be expected,** and **indeed required** of them to **take such action** or **steps as warranted against individuals and hold them accountable** (BWgovernment, 23/11/2011). Mr Gaetsaloe has been on BDC **hot seat** for almost two months and has inherited an organisation that, despite having numerous profitable subsidies, has failed to pay dividends to the government (BWgovernment 16/04/2014). It is with **deep regret** that two crew members lost their lives during the accident, **names are withheld until their next of kin have been notified** (Botswana Railways, 10/12/2019)
Representation of social actors (Fairclough, 2003; Hansen & Manchin, 2013)	**Personalised** (How participants are described as individuals or part of a collective); **Impersonalisation**	**Anonymised/Impersonalisation: the government** as the sole Shareholder took steps aimed at restoring much-needed stability and stewardship in the affairs of the Corporation (BWgovernment, 23/11/2011).

(gives weight to a statement. It is not just a particular person but a whole institution); **Nominalised** (who are the participants and what they do); **Anonymised** (Participants can be anonymised. Their names may not be mentioned but anonymised); **Functional Honorifics** (people are represented through what they do)	**Anonymised/ Impersonalisation: The Government** views this Project as one of the most important pillars and initiatives towards the national objective of diversifying the economy of Botswana.

Impersonalisation: In addition, the **Ministry of Transport and Communications** has engaged the **Directorate of Accident Investigation**

Personalisation: The Board of Directors of BDC has been re-constituted following the appointment of **Messrs Blackie Marole, Serwalo Tumelo and Modise Modise,** who replaced three board members who have been retired as Directors (BWgovernment, 23/11/2011).

Impersonalisation/ Anonymised: The new Board would be required to resolve any outstanding issues threatening the successful completion and implementation of the Float Glass Manufacturing Project under construction at Palapye (BWgovernment, 23/11/2011).

Functional honorifics/ Personalisation: The new Botswana Development Corporation (BDC) **managing director Mr Bashi Gaetsaloe** is on a mission to transform his company into a profitable organisation through investment in economically viable and sustainable activities (BWgovernment 16/04/2014).

Functional honorifics: The MD said BDC was looking into expanding its horizon beyond Botswana but added that the corporation had a challenge as it did not have the capacity or capability to do so.

Functional honorifics: The Minister of Transport and Communications Honourable Thulaganyo Segokgo visited the scene…He was accompanied by the **Botswana Railways Board Chairperson** Adolf Hirschfeld, **Chief Executive Officer** |

		Mr Leonard Makwinja and **Acting Permanent Secretary** Mr Garekwe Mojaphoko (Botswana Railways, 10/12/2019) **Personalisation/ Functional honorifics:** MR M. REATILE (SPECIALLY ELECTED): asked the Minister of Investment, Trade and Industry to state the amount of money spent on the construction of:- (i) the power Sub-station at the Botswana Development Corporation (BDC) Fengyue Glass Manufacturing plant in Palapye; and (ii) the railway spur situated in the 100 hectares of BDC Fengyue Glass Manufacturing Plant in Palapye (BWgovernment, 01/04/2017) **Functional honorifics/ personalisation:** **Assistant Minister of Investment Trade and Industry** (MR G. B. BUTALE): Afternoon **Madam Speaker** and thank you (BWgovernment, 01/04/2017) **Functional honorifics/ personalisation:** Assets of Botswana Development Corporation (BDC) Fengyue Glass Manufacturing plant in Palapye were sold for P54,382,000 inclusive of Value Added Tax, **Assistant Minister of Investment, Trade and Industry, Mr Biggie Butale** informed Parliament (BWgovernment, 20/07/2017) **Impersonalisation:** He said the **Board of BDC** resolved to place Fengyue Glass Manufacturing Botswana (Pty) Ltd under liquidation in 2013 (BWgovernment, 20/07/2017)
Suppression (Hansen & Manchin, 2013)	This is what is missing from a text. This could be a clue to what the author wished to hide	…who replaced **three board members**, who have been retired as Directors (BWgovernment, 23/11/2011) **…**what remained following the sale of 100 hectares of Fengyue Glass Manufacturing Industrial Estates was sold for P50 million (BWgovernment, 20/07/2017)

		Two crew members and one passenger **sustained injuries** and have been hospitalised… (Botswana Railways, 10/12/2019)
Implicature (Thomas & Wareing, 1999).	Implicature allows the audience to make assumptions about implicit information	Should the Board find that there is indeed proof of wrongdoing or criminality against anyone within the corporation or in relation to Fengyue Glass Manufacturing Botswana, it will be expected and indeed required of them to take such action…(BWgovernment, 23/11/2011)
Abstraction (Hansen & Manchin, 2013)	This is where actions become generalised and non-specific	Should the Board find that there is indeed proof of wrongdoing or criminality against anyone within the corporation or in relation to Fengyue Glass Manufacturing Botswana**,** it will be expected, and indeed required of them to take **such action or steps** as warranted against individuals and hold them accountable **(**BWgovernment 23/11/2011**).** **Assets** of Botswana Development Corporation (BDC) Fengyue Glass Manufacturing plant in Palapye was sold for P54,382,000 inclusive of Value Added Tax, Assistant Minister of Investment, Trade and Industry, Mr Biggie Butale informed Parliament (BWgovernment, 20/07/2017) Two other crew members and one passenger **sustained injuries** and have been hospitalised… Some passengers were treated for **minor injuries** and discharged…
Pressuposition (Hansen & Manchin, 2013)	It relates to what kinds of things are assumed in a text	**Pressuposition**…who replaced **three board members**, who have been retired as Directors (BWgovernment, 23/11/2011)

Appendix 5a: BWgovernment (23/11/2011)

https://www.facebook.com/BotswanaGovernment/posts/pfbid02Ggc8rRoHpZbxfxUErxZUju
JSvRRa3pxyYGnua8zAaXLAwnf7pWMgS1k6q8JkVoQl

Appendix 5b: BWgovernment (24/04/2013)

https://www.facebook.com/BotswanaGovernment/posts/pfbid035kPkfyGJxz7XzXsaepTCW
dJCGibUa9RpGcN2XoAzKLkzNpLQgRWKp5hJ8NDqtpBml

Appendix 5c: BWgovernment (16/04/2014)

https://www.facebook.com/BotswanaGovernment/photos/a.336021353147196/61319828209
6167

Appendix 5d: BWgovernment (22/07/2017)

https://www.facebook.com/BotswanaGovernment/posts/pfbid0UZNCuXvU6hmngCwP1kFU
uhWANBkAHaeVPuxEiVys6pfeyfLLWgXgxtrdXCtihJMml

Appendix 5e: BWgovernment (10/12/2019)

https://www.facebook.com/BotswanaGovernment/posts/pfbid02NrMCinnJwHBxMDgoCPa2
aVCbL8EmR5ahyhtgf2MNWmDPQzwB6HnNLgpksQhXGC64l

Appendix 5f: BWgovernment (16/12/2019)

https://www.facebook.com/BotswanaGovernment/posts/pfbid02jXuvt8RuzNhYihWz6jZSbP
QJBD6FaTk4mcGjKhXmgdrG3N1esG5RGCYLNiEYgvv1l

Appendix 5g: BWgovernment (20/12/2019)

https://www.facebook.com/BotswanaGovernment/posts/pfbid0i2Ye7DYNiwPrhm6VFoPH6
vRagbGTytXB8XMnTX7WJ8mBxJ1VtgvXSnY5Dg9kTpRfl

Appendix 6: Semi-structured interviews

Appendix 6a: List of participants

NB: All the names are made up and are not real names of the participants. Only their work positions are real

DATE OF INTERVIEW	PARTICIPANT PSEUDONYM	POSITIONS	Nature of Organisations
14 September 2021	Jane Rick	Communications and Stakeholder Relations Manager	Parastatal
15 September 2021	Tom Bayle	Communications Manager	Parastatal
16 September 2021	Johan Mend	Corporate Communications Manager	Parastatal
17 September 2021	Charity Crane	Communications Manager	Parastatal
17 September 20121	Tryfina Rays	Principal Public Relations Officer	Government
18 September 2021	Robert Rhys	Head of Communications and Marketing	Private
20 September 2021	Michael William	Chief Public Relations Officer	Government
20 September 2021	David Thomas	Communications Manager	Parastatal
21 September 2021	Stephanie Joshua	Brand and Communications Manager	Parastatal
21 September 2021	Olivia Matthew	Head of Communications and Public Education	Parastatal
22 September 2021	Boyd Andrews	Digital Communications and Marketing Manager	Private
22 September 2021	Kevin Edwards	Communications and Social Impact Manager	Private
23 September 2021	Mia Gary	Communications Manager	Private
27 September 2021	Ronald Dean	Former Principal Public Relations Officer	Government
27 September 2021	Camila Scott	Communications Manager	Parastatal
27 September 2021	Benjamin Frank	Former Head of Communications and Marketing	Private
28 September 2021	Abigail Rogers	Director of Corporate Affairs	Parastatal
4 October 2021	Chloe Dennis	Communications Manager	Parastatal
4 October 2021	Ethan Peters	Director Communications and Stakeholder Relations	Parastatal
8 October 2021	Carl Bruce	Head of Communications	Parastatal

Appendix 6b: Participants information sheets

Swansea University
Prifysgol Abertawe

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET FOR

SENIOR PUBLIC RELATIONS PRACTITIONERS IN BOTSWANA

<u>TITLE OF RESEARCH</u>

ORGANISATIONAL CRISIS COMMUNICATION IN BOTSWANA: INVESTIGATING THE CRISIS RESPONSE STRATEGIES AND THE ROLE OF SOCIAL MEDIA IN DISSEMINATING CRISIS MESSAGES.

You are being invited to take part in a PhD research. Before you decide whether or not to participate, it is important for you to understand why the research is being conducted and what it will involve. Please read the following information carefully.

PURPOSE OF THE RESEARCH?

I am conducting a PhD research on organisational crisis communication in Botswana, specifically investigating the response strategies that practitioners use and their usage of social media (e.g. Facebook) to disseminate messages during crisis situations. The study aims to explore the context of crisis communication from a non-western perspective and how theoretical frameworks relate to practice in Botswana; to investigate the impact of crisis response strategies that practitioners use on different crisis types; and examine how they use social media to disseminate crisis messages. Your participation in this study will take approximately 1 hour. This study will contribute to global crisis communication literature with non-western perspectives from Botswana. It will also provide practical implications of the situational crisis communication theory, the image restoration theory and the dialogic theory of public relations on crisis communication to this study; and illustrate the importance of face to face communication during crisis situations.

WHO IS CARRYING OUT THE RESEARCH?

The data is being collected by Chedza Simon, a PhD student in the Department of Media and Communication within the College of Arts and Humanities (COAH) at Swansea University. This research is supervised by Dr Sian Rees (primary supervisor) and Dr Richard Thomas (secondary supervisor), both from the Department of Media and Communication at Swansea University. The research has been approved by the College Research and Ethics Committee.

WHAT HAPPENS IF I AGREE TO TAKE PART?

The participants will be asked to take part in the Zoom interview. Permission will be sought from you for the interview to be recorded. After the interviews, the video will immediately be converted to MP3 to protect your identity. You will be given a code (e.g. Participant 1) and a pseudonym will be used in your reference. Your names will not be mentioned throughout the interview. Your privacy and confidentiality will be respected and as such, you shall remain anonymous in this study. All electronic data will be stored in password-protected folders in a password protected laptop as well as in the university repository. All paper records will be safely kept in lockable filing cabinets at Swansea University and will not be shared with any third party. The questions are open-ended and will basically ask you to share your knowledge and experience on the crisis response strategies you have used; the media platforms you have used; the use of the kgotla (village assembly) to share crisis information; and your appreciation of the role of corporate social responsibility during crisis situations. During the interview, follow up questions will be asked for you to clarify or share deeper insights of the issues.

ARE THERE ANY RISKS ASSOCIATED WITH TAKING PART?

This research has been approved by the College Research Ethics Committee and there are no known risks associated with your participation.

DATA PROTECTION AND CONFIDENTIALITY

Your data will be processed in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018 and the General Data Protection Regulation 2016 (GDPR). All information collected about you will be kept strictly confidential. Your data will only be viewed by the researcher/research team. Data will not be shared with any third party. All electronic data will be stored on a password-protected file in my laptop and all paper records will be stored in a locked filing cabinet in the Department of Media and Communication. Your consent information will be kept separately from your responses to minimise risk in the event of a data breach. Please note that the data I will collect from this study will be made anonymous, right from the date of the interview to the completion of this research. Please note that it will not be possible to identify and remove your data at a later date, should you wish to withdraw from the study. Therefore, if at the end of this research you decide to have your data withdrawn, please let me know before you leave.

WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO THE INFORMATION I PROVIDE?

An analysis of the information will form part of my report at the end of the study and may be presented to interested parties and published in scientific journals and related media. Please note that all information presented in any reports or publications will be anonymous and unidentifiable.

IS PARTICIPATION VOLUNTARY AND WHAT IF I WISH TO LATER WITHDRAW?

Your participation in this study is entirely voluntary – you do not have to participate if you do not want to. If you decide to participate, but later wish to withdraw from the study, then you are free to withdraw at any time, without giving a reason and without penalty.

DATA PROTECTION PRIVACY NOTICE

The data controller for this project will be Swansea University. The University Data Protection Officer provides oversight of university activities involving the processing of personal data, and can be contacted at the Vice Chancellors Office: dataprotection@swansea.ac.uk. Your personal data will be processed for the purposes outlined in this information sheet. Standard ethical procedures will involve you providing your consent to participate in this study by completing the consent form that has been provided to you.

The legal basis that I will rely on to process your personal data will be processing is necessary for the performance of a task carried out in the public interest. This public interest justification is approved by the College of Arts and Humanities Research Ethics Committee, Swansea University. The legal basis that we will rely on to process special categories of data will be processing is necessary for archiving purposes in the public interest, scientific or historical research purposes or statistical purposes.

HOW LONG WILL YOUR INFORMATION BE HELD?

I will hold any personal data and special categories of data for 5 years. The information will not be kept beyond this period as it would not be necessary.

AUTOMATED DECISION MAKING AND PROFILING

This study will not use automated decision making or profiling.

WHAT ARE YOUR RIGHTS?

You have a right to access your personal information, to object to the processing of your personal information, to rectify, to erase, to restrict and to port your personal information. Please visit the University Data Protection webpages for further information in relation to your rights. Any requests or objections should be made in writing to the University Data Protection Officer:

University Compliance Officer (FOI/DP)

Vice-Chancellor's Office

Swansea University

Singleton Park

Swansea

SA2 8PP

Email: dataprotection@swansea.ac.uk

HOW TO MAKE A COMPLAINT

If you are unhappy with the way in which your personal data has been processed, you may in the first instance contact the University Data Protection Officer using the contact details above.

If you remain dissatisfied, then you have the right to apply directly to the Information Commissioner for a decision. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at: -

Information Commissioner's Office,

Wycliffe House,

Water Lane,

Wilmslow,

Cheshire,

SK9 5AF

www.ico.org.uk

WHAT IF I HAVE OTHER QUESTIONS?

If you have further questions about this study, please do not hesitate to contact us:

CHEDZA SIMON	Dr Sian F. Rees and Dr Richard Thomas
Department of Media and Communication	Department of Media and Communication
Swansea University	Swansea University
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**PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM FOR SENIOR PUBLIC
RELATIONS PRACTITIONERS IN BOTSWANA**

PROJECT TITLE: Organisational crisis communication in Botswana: Investigating the crisis   response strategies and the role of social media in disseminating crisis messages.

PRINCIPAL RESEARCHER: CHEDZA SIMON (EMAIL: ███████████████)
SUPERVISORS: Dr Sian Rees and Dr Richard Thomas

		Participant initial
1.	I _____ confirm that I have read and understand the information sheet for the above study.	
2.	I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time, without giving any reasons.	
3.	I understand what my role will be in this research, and all my questions have been answered to my satisfaction.	
4.	I understand that I am free to ask any questions at any time before and during the study.	
5.	I have been informed that the information I provide will be kept safely and confidentially	
6.	I am happy for the information I provide to be used anonymously in academic papers and other formal research outputs.	
7.	I give consent for the interview through Zoom to be recorded.	
8.	I have been provided with a copy of the Participant Information Sheet.	
9.	I agree to the researchers processing my personal data in accordance with the aims of the study described in the Participant Information Sheet.	
10.	I confirm that I am 18 years of age or over	

Thank you for your participation in this study. Your help is very much appreciated.

_____   _____   _____

Print name of participant   Signature   Date

_____   _____   _____

Print name of researcher   Signature   Date

Appendix 6d: Initial interview questions

Swansea University
Prifysgol Abertawe

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

PROJECT TITLE: Organisational crisis communication in Botswana: Investigating the crisis response strategies and the role of social media in disseminating crisis messages.

INTRODUCTION

My name is Chedza Simon and I am conducting a PhD research on organisational crisis communication in Botswana, specifically investigating the response strategies that practitioners use and their usage of social media (e.g Facebook) to disseminate messages during crises. The study aims to explore the context of crisis communication from a non-western perspective and how theoretical frameworks relate to practice in Botswana; to investigate the impact of crisis response strategies that practitioners use on different crisis types; and examine how they use social media to disseminate crisis messages. Your participation in this study will take approximately 1 hour. With your permission, this interview will be recorded. You will be asked open-ended questions which requires you to share your knowledge and insights on communicating during crises. Follow up questions will be asked for you to provide further details to the questions. Please feel free to attempt all the questions as best as you can.

QUESTIONS

Please answer the following questions as fully as possible, sharing your insights, knowledge and experiences.

<u>CRISIS RESPONSE STRATEGIES</u>

1. What is your understanding of crisis?

2. Please take us through the steps you would take to generate an appropriate message to share with your stakeholders and publics during a crisis.

3. Which crisis response strategies do you find effective or less effective for accident crisis types when developing messages? Why do you think these strategies are effective or less effective?

4. Which crisis response strategies do you find effective or less effective for transgression crisis types when developing messages? Why do you think these strategies are effective or less effective?

5. Is there anything you wish to add about the response strategies which we did not discuss?

Media and audiences

1. Please describe your audiences and explain what types of messages appeal to them.
2. How does your choice of media determine the way you frame your messages?
3. Some organisations use the traditional media (newspapers, radio and television) to communicate during a crisis, while others have embraced social media. Which medium of communication, especially social media, do you find appropriate to use during a crisis?
4. What do you think is the role of social media especially Facebook during crises?
5. What is your view about responding to individual comments and questions on social media?
6. In the advent of social media which allows anyone to post what they want about the organisation in crisis, how do you control over what your publics hear?
7. Organisations usually race to share information on social media after the occurrence of a crisis. To what extent do you agree with the notion that organisations should respond within the first hour after the occurrence of the crisis?

The Kgotla and dialogue

1. How conversant are you with the kgotla system?
2. The kgotla is an institution that the Government of Botswana has used the pre-colonial and post-colonial era to communicate and dialogue with publics. To what extent do you

think the corporate sector should use the kgotla to communicate with their audiences during crises?

3. What do you think are some of the challenges associated with using the kgotla to disseminate crisis messages?

4. During crises, some organisations engage their publics in a dialogue to ensure mutual understanding. Can dialogue open organisations to manipulation?

5. What do you think is the value of face to face communication during crises?

Social Corporate Responsibility (CSR)

1. What do you understand by the concept of social corporate responsibility (CSR)?

2. What is the role of CSR to organisations in crisis?

3. CSR comprise of responsibilities ranging from economic, legal, ethical and philanthropic. Which CSR activities do you think are more common in Botswana and why do you think they are common?

4. CSR has been described as an 'insurance premium' for organisations in crisis. What is your view on this statement?

5. To what extent can CSR prepare the organisation to withstand the negative effects of a crisis?

6. Any last thing you wish to add about CSR?

Thank you for participating in this study

Swansea University
Prifysgol Abertawe

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

PROJECT TITLE: Organisation crisis communication in Botswana: Investigating the crisis response strategies and the role of social media

INTRODUCTION

My name is Chedza Simon, and I am conducting a PhD research on organisational crisis communication in Botswana, specifically investigating the response strategies that practitioners use and their usage of social media (e.g. Facebook) to disseminate messages during crises. The study aims to explore the context of crisis communication from a non-western perspective and how theoretical frameworks relate to Botswana practice, investigate the crisis response strategies that practitioners use on different crisis types, and examine how they use social media to disseminate crisis messages. Your participation in this study will take approximately 1 hour. With your permission, this interview will be recorded. You will be asked open-ended questions which requires you to share your knowledge and insights on communicating during crises. Follow up questions may be asked for you to provide further details to the questions. Please feel free to attempt all the questions as best as you can.

QUESTIONS

Please answer the following questions as fully as possible, sharing your insights, knowledge and experiences.

Key questions

1. What is your understanding of crisis communication?

2. Crises does not announce its arrival. From your experience as a PR profession, what can be done to prepare organisations in Botswana to withstand the adverse effects of crises to protect their reputation?

3. There are suggestions that some organisations use corrective, denial or shifting the blame strategies, especially in transgression crises. Are these strategies prominent during crisis in Botswana, and from your experience, how effective or less are they in repairing reputational damage?

4. What is the role of social media, for example Facebook, during crises?

5. What is the role of culture when developing crisis messages for your Facebook audiences?

6. From your experience as a PR professional, what role does Corporate Social Responsibility play for organisations in crisis as far as reputation protection is concerned?

7. There are indication that some organisations in Botswana purposefully use language to dominate, persuade and manipulate their audiences to believe that there is no crisis or to lessen the extent of crisis responsibility. What are your views on this?

Thank you for participating in this study

Appendix 7: Qualitative coding manual for semi-structured interviews

NODE AND SUB-NODES		DEFINITION	EXAMPLE
Understanding of crisis		Practitioners talk about what they understand as a crisis as well as give examples of the crisis they experienced in their organisations	Code anything suggesting crisis as an unplanned event; an unpredictable event that can harm the reputation of the organisation; its revenues; safety of workers; danger; natural disaster
Best Practices	Developing crisis plans	Practitioners talk about what kind of document they develop to guide their communication during crises	Code anything around crisis communication plans; crisis management plans; crisis communication strategies; communication strategies; communication policy; crisis communication policy
	Establishing teams and training	Practitioners talk about the teams they assemble to handle a crisis. They also talk about the roles of the team members and train the spokesperson and team members on what to say and how to respond during a crisis	Mostly anything about teams comprising the CEO (Chief Executive Officer), head of PR, risk manager, audit manager, head of departments, communication team can be coded. Any mention of roles of the team members and training should also be coded
	Communicating within the first hour	Practitioners talk about the first hour as golden and whether they usually communicate within the first hour when the crisis breaks. They also give reasons why they cannot communicate within the first hour	Anything to do with communicating within an hour and the reasons therein is coded here.
Message development and processes	Stage of development	Practitioners talk about when they develop crisis messaging (pre, during or post-	Pre-crisis, during a crisis, post-crisis stages and reasons why they develop messages at those stages are coded here

		crisis) and provide reasons why they develop crisis messages at those stages	
	Response process	Practitioners talk about the steps they take to start sharing crisis information with their audiences	Any step such as consultations with management, internal communication, traditional media, social media is coded here
	Crisis response strategies	Practitioners talk about the three crisis response strategies (messaging strategies): corrective, denial and shifting the blame	Code anything on corrective, denial and shifting the blame and why they use them. For example: 'one can never use time-buying as a strategy… Corrective strategies can be centred around the truth.'
Culture	Audience diverse culture	Practitioners talk about the diverse culture of the audiences in Botswana, which influence their perceptions of the organisations	Anything on the audience being forgetful, audiences being conservative, unassuming and docile is coded here. For example: 'let me say unfortunately Batswana are a nation that forgets quickly.'
	Organisational culture	Practitioners talk about the culture influencing their posture to crisis communication, whether they are proactive or reactive, and the culture influencing that stance	Code anything on conservative culture; consultations; unsupportive leadership For example, 'We sort of still have a conservative culture of consultation'; 'Botswana is also a conservative society.'
	Messaging for diverse audiences	They talk about the different messages they develop for diverse audiences around different cultures	Code anything about messaging for urban population; rural and remote population; youth; elderly. For example, 'The people in rural areas would not be more educated than those in the urban areas
	Kgotla system	Practitioners talk about using the kgotla system (community	Code anything about the kgotla system, including its benefits and why practitioners use it.

		assembly/ townhall meetings) and whether it lends itself to crisis communication	For example: 'everybody on that platform is free to speak their mind.'
Role of social media	Emerging issues	Practitioners talk about the role of Facebook during a crisis and emerging issues around the role of Facebook. They also talk about issues inhibiting the use of Facebook in Botswana.	Code anything on Facebook and whether there is an uptake among practitioners during crises. For example: 'we do not like this Facebook, this thing of yours, let us ignore Facebook.' 'what is lacking is policies to guide in that space and dedicating resources'
	Reactions	Practitioners talk about how they respond and engage their audiences on Facebook. They may talk about responding on the comment section or responding to messenger	Code anything on the comment section and messenger (inbox). For example: 'deploy calm language, language that is not condescending, factual language…language that is emotive.'
Language use		Practitioners talk about why they use persuasive, dominating or manipulative language when communicating to their audiences	Code anything on language use. For example, 'It is important to package the message so that people would not feel offended… the way you deliver your message should not be arrogant.' - 'It should persuade rather than manipulate and dominate…persuading is good but have negative connotations
Corporate Social Responsibility		Practitioners talk about their experiences with Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) during a crisis and how beneficial or less beneficial it is.	Code anything on CSR benefits during a crisis. For example, CSR should not be manipulative and sneaky 'It should not be a panacea for the organisation's bad behaviour.'

Appendix 8: Interview transcripts

Transcript for Participant 1 (PT 001)

CS: Ok. We are all set.

Pt 001: Okay.

CS: So the first question that I am going to ask you is for you to, to tell us about your understanding of a crisis.

Pt 001: Okay, my understanding of a crisis, you know, it's something that happens so unexpectedly and suddenly, and it is something that has an impact on the uuhm... In fact, before I will explain it is interesting that I, when I was you know. Two weeks ago, I came across something... There is a new new definition on crisis that we report on using social media platforms. Understandably, it is called a para-crisis.

Pt 001: Okay, now back to the question because I will keep on referring to para-crisis, so that you are away, where I am getting the jargon or terminology from.

Pt 001: Okay um, as I indicated, crisis is an event that can occur suddenly and most unexpectedly and, in most cases it is never planned for and it's got an impact normally or the threats, usually they are related, and these are the public safety, the financial losses, the reputation. Reputation, it means that there is a loss or your image is an organization gets affected. And then on the financial loss side, it means that you're going to lose finances for the organization. And then for the public safety, it means that obviously there'll be casualties. So this is how I would expect to define the crisis, you know. In most cases, it demands a quick response and you'll find that if the people in the workplace mismanage it, it can result in, you know, litigations. Some as I indicated, you know, like job losses, decreased employee morale, as I indicated earlier, the reputation and then the competitive strength for organisations that are into sales, you know, or those that are into my marketing their products, as opposed to those that are service oriented.

Pt 001: You know, in this regard, that means that for them to survive, they should manage those relations with stakeholders, but if they don't have a robust, stakeholder management plan, that means that they are likely to be affected. In our case as [name of organisation], I remember many years ago, when we had a crisis, obviously, it was the learners, you know, but that was way before or immediately after we rebranded to [name of organisation] coming from [name of previous organisation].

During those years, our mandate was primarily touching on dealing with issues of student registration, you know, and also quality assurance aspects of the tertiary education sector, while [name of organisation] was dealing with the vocational aspects on the same.

Pt 001: So we had one morning we just woke up, I went to office, and when I got there, because normally, you know, I can only get to the office early, I found a mob of students, a group of students, you know outside

and the building, you know. When I looked at my phone I found that there were many missed calls from the office, you know, that means the security guys have been trying to report to say there is as a challenge I must rush to the office,luckily, I was there earlier around half six so I was able to manage that you know through the help of security, you know, having to call the CEO and executive management to say here we are, here is the crisis, how are we going to to respond to this. Obviously when we have got a government relations in our case as a parastatal, we were able to manage that. We just almed those students. We got obviously their side of story. And we started, explaining that as you know that we have recently, you know, changed on mandates and we are responsible for human capital side of things, and [name of organisation] is responsible for the quality assurance out of things. But now that you are here and we are almost in the same compound, and injury to [name of organisation] image, You know, also affects us. So we sat down, you know, using our negotiation skills and also interpersonal skills to hear what was the problem, only to find that those learners were coming from [name of college]and they had come, they've been trying to write to management seeking their intervention, because they were registered in a program that was not accredited.
Understandably and the majority of those students, they had failed the program and they were getting threats from the sponsor to say that they'll be terminated. And what they just wanted was audience, you know, from our executive management and that couldn't come through, you know, having worked for the government when a letter comes, it is to go through the registry first and then re-routed to the right office. Sometimes the CEO is not there, has traveled and the file is right there, the stakeholder is getting affected, and the only thing that they could do to respond or make us to respond was for them to, you know, to strike and come, all the way, you know, around 5am walking. Imagine students walking from [name of college] all the way to [location of offices]. I hope you still remember the cadinal points in [name of city]. So it was that part of the crisis to me because we just woke up, and you know, we just found that it was some sort of disaster.

CS: I see.

Pt 001: You know, so with the introduction of social media as we are aware, more crises now revolved around reputation, you know. We are using these platforms, you know, to manage our reputation. But at the same time, there will be dynamics such as language use or excluding other stakeholders.

CS: We will definitely be coming to that. My interest here is that, on this particular crisis that you dealt with... You had to communicate with them face to face to manage the crisis. Thats what you are saying?

Pt 001: Yes, yes. Yeah because these are the students that i've been dealing with them, you know, through the fair, so they knew, you know my persona. They knew who I was, and it was quite easy, you know. I just calmed them down, you know, used to my parental skills to say that I hear you my children. Listen to each other let's try to understand each other. We are here to solve a problem you know. We know that you cannot be walking all way from [name of college] to here if there was no challenge. So with those negotiation skills and interpersonal skills we were able to resolve this one, and to our surprise when we're still in the middle of this... boom... [name of television station] from Nowhere...boom...

[name of tabloid newspaper], from nowhere... Wow! How did this happen? You know how learners
are when they go on a strike they'll make sure that they amass all...I don't know what wod to use, missiles, you know, that would at the end of the day, you know, have an impact on a certain target or individual organization that they are targeting.

Pt 001: But with interpersonal skills, well the story ended up by being covered. It was concerning [name of college], as I mentioned, and also another institution in [name of location].

CS: I see. So what is the extent of social media at the time was social media more as more developed as it is now or not?.

Pt 001: No. those were the infancy stages of social media, you know, development in Botswana. That was 2012/14. As we know the social media is the latest phenomenon
in Botswana. NO matter how we tried, you know, to communicate, you know, was never on social media. We used the print media or traditional platforms to address them.

CS: Indeed. Thank you. So you have said crisis does indeed affect organizations in Botswana. In what other ways does crisis affects organizations in Botswana. Would
you also give other examples of how organizations are affected by crisis.

Pt 001: As I indicated when we started, I mentioned there is the public safety, the financial and the reputation. As far as I can reall, this are the only ones, because that is why, you know, when you compose the crisis communication team obviously have to have the PR, the legal, because they know that there are legal aspects, you know, and then the security, the finance, HR because of the employee side of things. I want to believe that, you know, this team composition, usually is there for them to manage, you know, the impact that may come out from the crisis that arises at any given point. In this case, we will be there to use, I mean, there will be there to use their expertise to handle any sort of crisis.

CS: I see. You are basically now talking about how organizations can be prepared to withstand the adverse effects and to protect reputation. So why does the reputation
matters so much to organizations.

Pt 001: Reputation, just like communication is the bloodline of every organisation. Reputation touches on the stakeholders. If they still do not have confidence in your services, how would you survive? How would the organsiation survive? It is the backbone, you know. When you talk about reputation, it means a lot, I mean we're in this competitive, you know, 21st century landscape. Its all about as good as satisfaction. If the stakeholder is not happy, how are you going to resuscitate your customers interest strategy to take you out of these issues.

Pt 001: When reputation has already been damaged, it takes a lot to work on, or to manage the the brand after it has been infested with any form of crises.

CS: Okay, thank you very much, the other questions that I want to ask you is that when crisis breaks there is this notion that the first hour is golden, meaning that
organizations should share information within the very first hour after the crisis has broken. What is your view on this notion?

Pt 001: I support this notion of effectively managing the crisis. As you rightly said, it is the golden opportunity, you need to have the right team, well trained, that is the starting point. Even when you develop the crisis communication you know, because it differs from disaster and business continuity, you should make sure that even the messages that will be communicated to those affected by the crisis, they are the right ones, you use the rightly trained, you know, workforce that will manage this, not somebody who will be coming and saying 'im still going to consult'. You know, it should be somebody who's ahead of their game and somebody who's well versed to deal with this issues. So messaging... messaging... messaging... is critical when you are handling the crisis during this golden hour or the of the
first hour of the crisis. So usually you know, this is a time where you need to showcase your skills, you know to those affected by the crisis, you know, usually starts with the employees, you know their families if it affects the employees, you know. But, most importantly, the concerned stakeholders and members of the media, those ones, do not even forget them during the process yeah. Um the other thing I gained, a robustly prepared communication plan has a number of elements, you know, and the most important is just to keep it simple because during a crisis, you know, people need to document and understand, you know, what is supposed to be happening. You need to have that team, train employees at the workplace or even if its at your own home, you need to train your helper to know what they should do
when there is a crisis.

Pt 001: Yeah, so the whole you know messages about keeping the plan clean and simple, you know, not using lexicons that not any average person will be able to, you know, to understand and also to address the critical issues, you know coming out of this crisis.

CS: Thank you very much, thats very insightful. You have been going through some of the best practices in crisis communication. Can you tell us about the role of the spokesperson?

Pt 001: The spokesperson, as I indicated, you know, the competencies of the spokesperson should speak volumes. It should demonstrate that this is a person who has been trained because he's the one who can make or break the organization, you know. You should get the right person who knows his stuff. They always say that mature disposition also counts, when you have a crisis. But it's not just about, you know, mature disposition but it's all about giving them knowledge to deal with the crisis, you know. Many organizations or many workplaces, this is something that they never take or think it will happen, you know. But

crisis can strike at any minutes. Any type of crisis. We have different types of crisis, you know. Normally when this person has the competencies, they should own the communication plan, and you know, and also come with a detailed plan that should outline or explain how [name of organisation] or any organisation will be communicating about crisis and how to handle the crisis, and they should clear steps you know. There should be steps for the purpose of the plan and explain why it is needed. This is not just about that person, what if the crisis happens when that that person is in UK and there's a time difference, or whatever? There should be a blueprint or a manual you know, that is adopted or well understood by everyone. So, there is adage that goes 'a candle never lose anything by lighting another candle.' I don't know that
i've put it correctly. This is when now as a spokesperson, you need to amass or assemble a team and train them on crisis communication because crisis communication is critical, you know. Remember this is the team that will be collecting information, you know, disseminating key messages and working with the media. When you are dealing with this and you happen to be the only person dealing with this, it is also it also becomes a disaster to the organization. Obviously there are there are procedures that should be followed, you know, for them to address ,you know, the internal and external stakeholders. So and also the mediums that are used to handle this one, there should also be up to date, you know, and also indicating or showcasing that this spokesperson is indeed knowledgeable. So, and I think the
crisis communication team is also one of those, you know.

Pt 001: Within the plan, I would normally say, as I have indicated, you identify the members of the crisis communication team and describe their roles. They should be what we role clarity, its important everywhere. The spokesperson should be appointed by management, you know. There should be another person who should be able to act as a spokesperson in the event, this one is not there, and this is the person who should be knowledgeable as well, you know, this is the person who fields media calls, somebody who's robust, somebody who should be able to have good media relations as well, you know. Internal communication is also key when you have a crisis so normally the backups should also be coming from the office of the spokesperson, you know, to ensure that they are also imparting knowledge to others. Their numbers or the contact details, should also be available so that even a cleaner, who comes across the crisis, should have a place where they would get numbers, you know.
The security guards should also have a place where they are able to get numbers to call. As I indicated when I gave an example of those learners that were on strike, you know, simply because my number is out there, right in the reception. In the event of classes, please call and they all know me so it was easy you know. I don't know if that adequately answers your question?

CS: Very well, I think you have answered very, very well. You mentioned messaging as very critical, when you spoke about the the best practices. So the question is to what extent do you believe organization should develop their messages or response strategies ahead of the crisis or, while the crisis is in progress?

Pt 001: As indicated a robust crisis communication team, they should have the pre-draft selected crisis management messages which touches on the content, you know, and this messages you know, usually that they

should be available on websites. They are normally standard. They are applicable to any crisis, you know. There should be templates, you know, for crisis statement as well.

Pt 001: Now, considering all possible crises within an organization that could that they could face, you know, it is important to develop key messages to be used in times of need, or in times of response. There should not be developed right there when the crisis begins.

PT 001: I also want to to say that, to consider what possible questions one could ask or they would be asked by the media, there should be that manual, you know because...(give me just a second to manage my kids)

CS: Thats fine.

Pt 001: Sorry about that...

CS: Thats fine. I totally understand.

Pt 001: During these evening times, its always a challenge.

Chedza Simon: I also asked my kids not to disturb but can still hear them talking in the background...

Pt 001: Now back to the question on what is advisable...I'm of the view that messages should be pre-drafted, you know, and available for any type of crises, you know. There are those generic crisis communication management questions and answers. You know, and also for the media. At least be you know be averse, or be amenable or be knowledgeable you know about anything or the processes. Once you have knowledge of the process, you know you're good to go. The other thing again is to develop what the what you call vulnerability and risk assessment. These ones will help when you want to know the likely crisis that can occur at [Name of organisation] or if any within the Community, that you are living in.

CS: Thank you very much for that response. What informs your decisions, I think you may have answered this, but what informs the decisions to choose a particular response strategies over the other?

Pt 001: Okay, um what normally influences the choice of a particular response you know over the other. Normally would be the type of crisis you're handling. The types of crisis you are handling should match the type of response, you know, a strategy that you have in place. Without necessarily, you know, taking you back to the to the messaging, when we know that, not necessarily, messages should be a verbatim, they can also serve as a starting point, you know, to help us put statements together when they are needed. You know, the messages should also tally with the response plan, that is one having been able to provide a brief description of what happened, you know, and then also identify the cause of the crises, communicate to the any affected individuals and also providing, you know, turnaround times, because when you have to address a crisis, you must indicate to the affected the turn around time. So normally these are linked to response strategy that you have in place. So while I am not an expert in crisis communication, this is a my two cents contribution that I can say towards crisis communication.

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Pt 001: They other contribution is the internal communication procedures that we have in place, you know, that normally determine what type you know of our response strategy that we have in place. Normally it affects the employees and normally the key messages, are given whether to departmental meetings, voicemail or whatever. When you have a robust response plan we are able to tie it to the to the messaging and the entire internal communication procedures and then lastly, would be the contact and then the media list. This one, as we know, media can make or break so it's normally critical for you to have media. You can also use media as part of your response strategy. Once you have a good media list, they can became part of your responses plan.

CS: Okay, thank you very much. This one I am going to apply your experiences on what may have happened. There are suggestions that some organizations use corrective strategies, others would deny, while others shift the blame, especially where there are transgression crisis. Are these strategies prominent in Botswana during crises? Can they repair reputational damage?

Pt 001: This one from my experience as a communication practitioner, it is always good to tell the truth. One can never one can never use a time-buying as a strategy. It never works, it comes back to haunt you at the end of the day. Corrective strategies can be centered around truth, you know, or being candid with what could have happened so once you start employing, you know, strategies that are likely to buy time you are now really aggravating the situation. So normally, you know, it's clear, there should be guidelines. This guidelines should be able to inform management to decide or an organisation to decide on wherever the type of corrective strategies, they want to deploy will work for them. So normally, you know, its the checklist you know that you have in place to support and then the media policy, what does it say? Who is the spokesperson? When there's a crisis, who could be used to communicate.

Pt 001: You should never ever lie to a customer or a stakeholder. You should never lie about anything to anyone, because that one again, its a crisis, that is likely to cost you reputation, as well as financial loss should they find that to actually lying to them, you know. So it's always best to come out clear, and then there should also be the social media policy in place, you know. The media called call log document where Communications department normally state who calledfrom the media, you know, so that at the end of the day when the document or a press release, that should be addressed within the first, the golden hour, you know you know where to go and then internal and external communication checklists, you know, about the crisis that this is now who you would be targeting internally and externally, and also the facts sheets, you know, the copies of the of the brand manual. As I indicated, as a spokesperson, if not everything should be centered around you, so this is the time, where you should be able to you know adopt corrective strategies that are centered around a platform that you have in the workplace. This could be in a form of a website where you immediately write and post on social media page where you immediately write a press release and post there, or maybe do the the fast fact sheet regarding the crisis that has just happened. Just to sum it up on the on the one on the corrective strategies, never lie to a customer or never buy time with a customer because it may come back to haunt you, even more than the crisis you are handling.

Pt 001: In Botswana you have heard about atypes of crises where the majority of them are centered around maladministration, you know. Maladministration is most at the center of all crisis here in Botswana. That includes embezzlement of funds, you know, issues affecting leadership because leadership is failing to manage things or issues in the workplace, you know. We've just had crisis that have to do with workplace disasters, such as in mines where you hear an employee went underground and the pit collapsed and killed them. There is a lady that I am working with the son here. The lasy was a driver of this huge truck, you know, this huge trucks that go underground. So we don't know what happened during that day, the poor lady drove the truck around the pit in [name of mine], and somehow the truck rolled
back, you know, into there and then she immediately died. So those are some of the crises that were not effectively manage because they forgot that there
is the emotional side of things, there is family, you know. If I remember you know, asking the young boy about they were informed about their mother, and he said they saw it on Facebook. So Facebook also or social media also tends to be, you know, a threat to the same time, while it is also has good attributes or qualities when using it because of its agility and in many others, you know ,it tends to also be something else. I don't know how to describe it, but something bad. Imagine learning about your mother, that your mother has died, on Facebook, and you know that she is one of the few female drivers at the mine and you get to learn about that you know horrible accident, and you also wonder how did it happen because in mining operations, you know, things like cameras and cell phones are not allowed, I think, when you go underground and wonder what could have happened with that one.

CS: Thank you very much, now talking about social media. What is the role of social media especially Facebook during crisis?

Pt 001: Social media is basically used to manage or disseminate or manage expectations, you know, manage situations that you may have, you know. But I want to believe that the landscape especially in social networking has changed on how we respond to a crisis.

Pt 001: At times social media itself becomes a disaster, you know, because it can be a source of the crisis, you know. As I indicated, just now, in the case of [name of mining company], it was also a source of the crisis, you know, to the family. So when you come up with plans, you must also indicate within your plan and, in that you are likely to consider how you use social media to respond to the crisis. There has to be a plan, you know,that covers or demonstrated that while it's a vehicle, you know, that is used worldwide, you should be having a strategy on how to use or manage it, you know, because during times of crisis, you know, its normally abused.

Pt 001: So for an organization like [name of organisation] which is already using social media channels like Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, to communicate with the stakeholders, we must be very, very careful on what, I guess, is to be uploaded or be very careful on what gets to be shared, you know, from the organizational point of view because in that regard we have control, but from outside, you know, we would not have control because you never know how somebody is going to report that.

CS: Okay, um can you share some of the best practices, maybe on how best to use social media to leverage its power.

Pt 001: Um, I think the best practices, you know, to consider, some of them, is how you manage the audiences. This one works when you have an established goodwill.Goodwill, meaning that having a robust, or a rapport with your stakeholders normally works best for you. And then also the other thing that you can also consider as an organization is how you're going to implement its use, you know, how you're going to monitor conversations or messages that I shared on your on pages. You also advantage of anything that could happen by developing a relationship with your stakeholders and also the media during a crisis, you know. It depends on how you have handled the crisis, you know. As part of the crisis communications plan, there should be somebody in the, remember when I started our interview, I mentioned the team composition, which is normally PR , legal, finance, security, HR and then operations. There should be somebody who's available to monitor social media sites during crises, just to find out what people are saying about this crisis and organization and be able to respond, Or do what you called responsive messaging, meaning that you actually responding to what people are saying on the on the social media website. This could be, you know, by simply listening to the conversations that could be a potential crisis. As I indicated social media can also pose a further crisis because it is a risk, as you know. You never get to... You know this funnel model where you never get to select what goes in and the level of interpretation of encoding and decoding messages. You never get to know how to deter a potential crisis or at least to engage a dissatisfied stakeholder. So I think with regard to that, thats how best I could respond to that.

CS: I see. Talking of which, there are suggestions or indications that organizations in Botswana are passive in sharing information on Facebook during crisis. What is a view, considering the fact that, as you just said, this high speed at which information is shared on Facebook?

Pt 001: Okay, now this boils back to Crisis communication team, the training that they receive. Its not that every organization, you know, normally does that but you must, when you appoint the crisis communication team, you should make sure that they are properly trained. There should never be a crisis that should not be given attention. Every crisis should be given the due attention, and make sure that this, once you have the properly trained team, they should be able to attend to any type of crisis and be able to execute a plan that at the end of the day, will work out best for the organization. Trained employees or the Committee or the crisis team should be made aware of the proper communication channels, you know, in the workplace and also to report possible crisis as they come throughout they year. There should also be a dashboard, you know, in every organization, where you report the crisis.

Pt 001: Some crisis, as in risk, there should be a risk board, there should be at the end of the week or whenever they should be able to publish notification procedures, along with the information on the roles and responsibilities of the crisis communication team, just to continuously urge them to know what is happening or what should be happening when there's a crisis. But once we have a crisis roll, you should be able to classify any type of crisis. That means the other type of crisis that may sound, you know less important is this one that when you are in the workplace, you know, then there happens to be a security

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guy who sleeps, you know, during the night, and then it happens that the computer lab or the computers get heated and all of a sudden these fire. I, you should be able to to assist them to know that when they are at work, they are also managing the crisis because those are some of the incidents that could lead to a crisis, but when they are properly managed the execution of the duties they would be managed better.

CS: I see. You talked about training someone who is responsible for responding to individual messages, and that there are proper channels that are within the organisation. Don't you think if the person is junior, they are constrained by the channels of communication to swiftly publish information on Facebook?

Pt 001: No. You know, the 21st century workforce should be able to employ what you call bottom up communication not top-bottom approach. It should be across. That time we were setting up the communications and stakeholder relations team at [name of organisation], using , you know, my expertise obviously you go to management
and say, kindly give me names of your departmental REPS. What they do normally they'll be giving you from managerial up. You know what I said? I said, for us to develop, you know ambassadors within the workplace, communication ambassadors, we should make sure that we cater for everyone. We must have representatives of all cadets in the committee.

Pt 001: Communication, as you know, there is what is called inclined communication, where certain groups of people they get to understand somebody who is of their Level or somebody who is their close associates. So when you're trying to communicate, you know, a crisis in this regard, have all sorts of people according to their levels in the communication team. Gone are the days when executive would be saying that the crisis communication team should be should comprise of the managers only. You should also have the security guard in the crisis communication team. You should also have a cleaning lady in the crisis communication team, you know, to make sure they also understand and also be able to handle issues of language barrier because the language barriers could also serve as an impediment when you're trying to implement a crisis plan in the workplace.

Pt 001: So coming back to to to employee training. You must have a crisis communication training manual that caters for everyone, even for that lady a tea lady who works in the kitchen who handles hot water. The other time I heard that at some ministry, the poor lady came in the morning, the water, you know and then somehow she tripped and the kettle fell and the water scalded her. You can imagine, you know that boiling water on someone. Thats a crisis that should have been, you know, easily managed. Her counterparts, instead of managing the crisis, they were quick to point a finger at the employer saying that their employer has never provided any protective clothing to them, their employer has never trained them. That means that crisis communication cuts across the organisation.

CS: I see. You just raised a very important point that employees should be trained and empowered to do what they're supposed to do. But why do we still have a lot of organizations not responding to individual comments on Facebook during crisis in Botswana?

Pt 001: I think it's just negligence because when you're not able to attend to a crisis, like currently right now, at [name of organisation] there is a crisis, a crisis, you know, students are trying to apply... The system is not working and instead of them assembling a crisis communication team, they just keep sending public notices. That is that is not good at all. You know, you cant be sending the public notice and doing what is called blanket response strategy. Blanket response strategy can never handle a crisis. You should assemble a team who would say we have 1800 messages in a day and be able to look at those messages, count them and delegate them to members of team and be able to respond to everyone.

Pt 001: As I indicated, communication is the bloodline of every organization. When you fail to communicate or manage the customers expectations, your organization will be as good as dead. So, this would be linked to crisis management.

CS: Great! Thank you very much, and then, last but not least, what is the role of culture, when developing crisis messages for Facebook, considering that different people have different cultures and receive messages differently?

Pt 001: hmm um I think that one...on the culture, first it boils back to the culture of the organization. If the organization has an open door policy or has an open up culture where every staff member gets to know what is happening at every now and then, then it could also help. Same thing, when the organization is poor at managing internal communication, they are likely to be...

[network lost...]

CS: Sorry, I lost you lost... You were still talking about the organizational culture.

Pt 001: Yeah. The organisational culture, as I indicated, it can make or break the rganization. The culture, once have it is something that takes ages or takes , I don't know what strategies to change it. That is why there has to be the change management and communication strategies in place to manage issues like this, once we have those plans in place, you should be able to manage any type of challenge now relating back to the crisis, once we have a change management...

[network interruption...]

CS:I lost you again...

Pt 001: Hello.

CS: hello, I lost you.

Pt 001: Okay.

Pt 001: We were still talking about impact of culture. It can also influence, you know, the crisis. As I indicated corporate culture, directly impacts on any type of organizations' crisis management. So, I

will say there is a correlation between corporate culture and successful management of any type of crisis.

Pt 001: Any organization that embraces communication and that has taken the necessary preparatory steps to effective communication or effective crisis communication, should be able to embrace the opportunity to connect with stakeholders during trying time when there is a crisis. Thats the time we are able now to communicate, you know, anything that is in the workplace, any failures, because they can never be an organization that can say they are perfect. So this is the time for reconnecting with your stakeholders, so through culture, you know you should be able to achieve some of the challenges that you have had.

CS: To what extent have you used, or can use the kgotla to disseminate crisis messages? How helpful or less helpful is the kgotla system during crisis?

Pt 001: Yes, we have used the kgotla. We believe in community dialogues. Community dialogues are powerful in the sense that the messages is able to reach the intended publics.
We have used the kgotla to disseminate crisis messages. When i used to work for Botswana Post, we had a challenge with the systems. we ended up using the kgotla to communicate
because we were not yet digital. Kgotla was our flagship dissemination platforms. We were also working with the elderly (pensioners) and kgotla was their area of engagement their meeting their area. we communicated that crisis through the kgotla becausee we had gone for 3 weeksnwithout paying their pension. We ended up using the kghotla to dissemiante the messages. When we got there we spoke to the kgosi because he is the ambassador of the village or the spokesperson of the village. Thats leadership, and he called a well attended kgotla meeting where we disseminated the crisis message, and it was well received. This is where we got the feedback from the elderly in the village regarding the new system. It encouraged us to continue using the old one. We were trying to migrate to the new one because the change management that we had put in place was not effective. There are some who stay in cattle posts. So it was very good and helpful. The kgotla system uses the PA system mounted on the car to go around announcing a kgotla meeting. Thats what we did, and the following day, the kgotla was teaming with elderly people. It was full. We even shared other messages to communicate the need to go through that change and shared the interventions we had in place. So, yes it was very good. Even during the HRDC days, we had the lifelong learning system, where we used to reach out-of-school learners to take advantage of the tertiary education system to help them into self sustaining streams. We used the kgotla to reach out to these learners. We also launched the our development strategy. It was misconstrued and after communicating it was understood. There was also a time when students protested after government decided to cut their stipend from P1900 to P1300. Yet again, we used the kgotla to go around the country to communicate with the learners who were on recess. We went across the country such as in Hukuntsi, Kasane and Palapye. We engaged the kgosi to also relay the messages to their communities. It was quiet instrumental.

CS: And then lastly, from your experiences of PR practitioner, what role does Corporate Social Responsibility play for organizations in crisis, as far as the reputation protection is concerned?

Pt 001: As if you were reading my mind. I was going to touch on that. This morning, during a meeting we touched on crisis communication to say that crisis communications plays a critical role, you know of managing the reputation. Normally, its for organisations that are profit oriented, but even for those that are service oriented it plays a critical role in the sense that the CSI or CSR program that we have in place should be able to drive the brand, and be a platform where you are able to celebrate your achievements. So what link it to this, you know it's actually a good platform, you know, because in our cases as [name of organisation]
we have a robust Corporate Social Responsibility program in place. This is where I get to hide my brand and also celebrate achievements that you've had in place, you know the threats emanating from the crisis. This is the time we should be able to show the Community what you are capable of doing, because at the end of the day, whatever crisis happens when it comes in goodwill from the corporate social responsibility, it is always welcome. So we can really capitalize on our CSR to mend broken relationships or the image or to maintain using your CSR interventions.

CS: Thank you very much, so basically what you're saying is that it can be an insurance premium of some kind.

Pt 001: Yeah!

CS: Thank you very much, so any last thing that you wish to share, about crisis communication.

Pt 001: What I would like to say about crisis communication is that it can drive the organisational image. It shouldn't always be looked at from the negative side of things. Effective crisis communication plan as well when properly executed, can assist the organization to manage issues of stakeholder confidence and loyalty at the same time. So in my case, I would say, organizations should embrace having the the crisis communication plans in place, because they normally come handy during crisis. And this is a plan that should be updated every now and then. At least a plan to update the crisis management plan on an annual basis. If it ends on an annual basis, you know experts in the workplace, you should go about you know benchmarking and looking at the current trends and also suggesting them to the management.

Pt 001: Also, the channels that we forgot to touch on the channels. The channels Or the templates as i've indicated, they should always be ready, they should be a crisis communication manual in place. I mean looking at the 21st century organization, should have that. Every organization communication strategy, should have the crisis communication strategy under it.

CS: Is that all you wish to share?

Pt 001: I think that's all. That's pretty much what I would like to see if there's anything I can think of, and then we can we can plan, maybe 10 minutes meeting to add. I had not prepared for this one.

CS: Yes, yes, if there's anything that you wanted to add after this you can let me know and then can arrange another Zoom meeting where you can you can share, I mean this was very insightful.

CS: Thank you very much for sharing your experiences for this interview. I'm very grateful.

CS: I will now stop the recording.

Transcript for Participant 2 (PT 002)

CS: The first question is what is your understanding of crisis?

Pt 002: The crisis any situation that is has got disruptive nature to business.

CS: Uh huh. So does crisis affect organizations in Botswana, and in what ways are organizations affected by crisis, if any?

Pt 002: Indeed they do affect organizations. Also reputation wise. I will just mention cases like a... pardon me for picking on certain institutions. May be the one that you know, I was working for [name of organisation], where we had a crisis of a teacher Union fighting with the Institutions, saying that the teachers should not mark the national examination. So it was a big crisis that we really needed to manage very well to ensure that at the end of the day the student papers are marked so that there is continuity. Reputation was damaged and we needed to do a lot to restore that parity.

CS: I see! You spoke of reputation, why does reputation matters so much to organizations?

Pt 002: It matters so much because it takes just a little to damage the reputation. But it will take a some years to restore it, so it is very critical to ensure that you know, a you jealous guard your reputation. That the processes that you have in place, are efficiently and effectively implemented and followed for the letter, so that you avoid anything that might damage your reputation. Even the crisis management tools should always be in place, you know, so that when they is a crisis, you need to have the affected departments, a crisis management team, represented by the affected departments, whereby a should on a daily basis, daily or weekly meet, and come up with a ways, through which you reach out to different a affected stakeholders.

CS: I see! Yes, you spoke about the processes and the crisis management tools. Now when crisis hit, it doesn't announced arrival. So from your experience, having talked about the processes, what can be done to prepare organizations in Botswana to withstand the adverse effects of crisis?

Pt 002: You should have the crisis management plan in place. You should do simulations so that you are always ready for such kind of or whatever crisis that might come your way. So to prepare the whole organizations, make sure you have that plan; you have those simulation exercises to try to emulate a crisis and to see how you effectively, you know, respond to

it. So it's very critical to have the simulation and also the plan in place.

CS: Thanks for that response...

Pt 002: I was saying, to some extent, even training of especially the management team, even the stuff... training might not be there but it can be even a through a meeting and when we have tools like change management in place where you where you, on a continuous basis you touch base with a staff, you raise awareness of the crisis that you might encounter and how to respond to that.

CS: I see. Thank you very much for that response. So when crisis breaks, there is a notion that the first hour is golden, meaning that organizations should share information within the first hour. What is a view on this notion?

Pt 002: That's correct indeed because there's this saying that silence means consent. You know, the crisis when it comes around and You leave people to speculate, lies if repeated tend to presume the position of the truth or facts. So you need to be proactive in terms of... this is why you have to have that plan in place and the simulation exercise, so that you are always ready and not waste time when there is crisis. You communicate immediately; you put up the team; You communicate to the relevant stakeholders, especially say in case the cultural aspects should be taken into consideration; say for in case you have lost an employee during the course of delivery on his or her a duty...you have to take cultural aspect on how you go about telling people. Nowadays in the advent of social media, the government is always cautioning people that we don't rush to the social media, you have to engage the parents and relatives first.

CS: Thank you very much.

Pt 002: You know, the crisis come in different forms, but you have to be prepared; you have to understand the culture of the society that you operate in; how to communicate in that set up. Thank you.

CS: Yes, thank you very much. That's very insightful. I was going to ask that question, on the role of culture in crisis communication, so I think you've answered it very well. So, you spoke about the processes, some of the best practices on what should be done when a crisis breaks out. Can we touch on the role of the spokesperson, and how you bring them into the picture before or during the crisis?

Pt 002: Normally, you would have the head of communication or public relations, who is the official spokesperson and you should be clear that this person should always be part of the crisis management team. But when you choose that team, you should make sure it's made up of the head of the affected department or units or division and then the communication team and the head, and other affected stakeholders within. The spokesperson might be the head of the organization, depending on what set up you have put in place or the normal spokesperson, being head of PR or communication. So they have to make sure they they advice on the

most efficient and effective way of communicating during that time, and also to make sure that they are prepared for question and answers, so that the Communication person or the spokes person chosen for that role will not struggle in terms of responding to the media or other stakeholders.

CS: So, to what extent do you do believe designating a chief executive officer or head of the organization, as you said, as the spokesperson helps to rebuild legitimacy, and trust between the organization and its stakeholders?

Pt 002: Yes, because then it shows that he or she is on top of the game, he is not hiding anything, or he or she is not hiding behind anyone, for example, behind the head of communication or public relations. But that person also before he or she can go out, as the head of PR or communication, You should mentor, you should sit down with that person, and you know mentor and guide them on how to handle the media.

CS: Okay, thank you very much, so that's that's very, very insightful. Now let's talk about the messaging. To what extent do you believe organizations should develop that messages or response strategies, ahead of the crisis or while it is in progress?

Pt 002: Yes, the messaging is very critical because you need to be consistent in terms of delivering your messages, hence the crisis management team, hence the designation of their spokesperson, and hence also the preparation of the question and answer, potential question and answers that you should reach out to do stakeholders. That in itself will create consistency, even if today is the head of PR and then tomorrow is the CEO, they should be in tandem with each other in terms of delivering messages.

CS: I see, so the question answers you are talking about are they developed in line or consistent with the types of the crisis, or they are just generic across all the crisis types.

Pt 002: Like I have pointed out, the crisis, when a crisis emerge, you have to have that team, the head of department affected, a communication CEO and other relevant stakeholders for that particular crisis. So this is why, even the question and answer is based on that particular crisis crisis.

CS: Okay, thank you very much. The next question is what would inform your decisions to choose a particular response strategy over the other?

Pt 002: Yes, like I said it depends on what kind of crisis we have. For example, some crisis are not very impactful. Some crisis will need just the head of communication to respond, to attend to those but, like you have pointed out, or we have already discussed some crisis will need a CEO himself or herself to go out there and communicate. Sometimes it depends on the technicalities of the issue. Sometimes you need to prepare the spokesperson, as the head of that particular or impacted department.

CS: There are suggestions that some organizations in Botswana prefer corrective strategies,others would use denial strategies, where they deny that there is no crisis or others will shift blames. Are these strategy prevalent during crisis in Botswana, and how effective or less effective are they in repairing reputational damage?

Pt 002: Yes, I would say, they are there. As you know we are a developing nation. This profession, the communication and public relations profession is still at an infant stage. So they are there. This is why you know but professionals are trying to put up bodies that will assist in raising awareness, and also speaking to integrity for the profession because we are not supposed to be spin doctors. We're supposed to tell the truth, and always tell the truth as a spokesperson, as a PR and communications professional, and advice the same: tell the truth, tell the truth... that will also help in terms of consistency for your message.

CS: I see! So what you are saying is that the denial strategy, where organization simply deny issues, but later on truth surfaces are not effective in repairing reputational damage in Botswana?

Pt 002: Indeed, because you can name a number of organizations, where you will hear this, and tomorrow is something else, and then you know the organization's reputations is under.

CS: Whats your view about language use by practitioners during crisis? Should it be used to dominate, persuade or manipulate the audiences?

Pt 002: Language is indeed critical tool during crisis communication. Communication during a crisis should take into account cultural dynamics and language fit in those dynamics. it should persuade rather than dominate and manipulate. You should use language carefully to make the message come out clear and well understood by stakeholders. Persuading is good but have negative connotations. I would settle for persuade because as a practitioners, I should have the art of using language to tell the truth. You need to be well understood by stakeholders so they see where you are coming from. They should see you are not trying to condescend or undermine them. Our job is to create understanding between us and stakeholders. They should see that you respect them, you value them and should fit well with what you stand for. Stakeholders should be regarded and be made to understand.

CS: I see! Thank you very much, Sir. Now let's talk about Facebook, what do you think is the role of Facebook during crisis for organizations in Botswana?

Pt 002: It helps in terms of putting out the message in the shortest possible time to stakeholders, especially the public. So it is very critical but then you need to have a someone designated to respond timely, because if you don't respond timely also you are creating some problems.

CS: You're raising a very, very important point there on responding timely because there are suggestions that some organizations do not respond to individual comments on Facebook during crisis. What do you think could be the reason for that?

Pt 002: It might be because they dont have social media policy in place to guide on who is to respond and how to respond. But if you have got that policy, you have got processes like ISO 9001 2015 which is tailored towards customer satisfaction. It shows that there are processes in place and the staff or the employees are aware of them. It helps a lot.

CS: I see! Please share your experiences in regards to this social media policy for maybe the organization your have worked for. Do they have any social media policies on who respond to what particular crisis or they do not have?

Pt 002: Yes, my previous one, we had the policy, but where I am currently working we just infuse the or inserted, the social media aspect into the communication policy to guide. But like I said, the aspect that is behind now is to have an individual fully focus on social media, who is able to interact on real time.

CS: I see! So that is what most organizations are lacking according to your experience?

Pt 002: Yes, because maybe resource constraints.

CS: I see! Could this be the reason why some organizations in Botswana are very passive in sharing information on Facebook, especially during crisis?

Pt 002: Yes, because social media if you don't handle it well, It can cause reputational damage to the organization. May be that's why many organization this side regard a social media as a taboo, a no go area. But it has got so much potential and benefits if handled well.

CS: Indeed, you are raising a very important point for most organizations, regarding it as a no go area. What could be some of the challenges that makes them to have a bit of fear or phobia to use Facebook?

Pt 002: Like we pointed a while ago that currently we are more of a traditional. So people have been announcing accidents, putting accidents happening into social media space, announcing there before relatives or families can be informed. And the government has been coming forth to say that is not acceptable. And even Botswana, in general, have condemned the practice. So it might be more so, also because of the kind of society that we live in and also because of lack of policies to guide in that space and lack of resources dedicated to that space also.

CS: I see! Thank you very much, sir. The other question that I wanted you to share from your experiences, is to perhaps share some of the best practices for using social media especially Facebook during crisis.

Pt 002: Yes, I think, if you have got the policy in place, you have got those simulation exercise, crisis management plans, the social media policy in place

and a designated individuals or professionals for that space to respond in real time, to interact, and also to make Facebook more lively by not just putting texts out there, but even the clips of video in that space it will become more vibrant. As you also continue to update it so that it doesn't become stale or something like that. So that in itself will make sure that your audience are always engaged, they're always going through, as you interact with them and it doesn't lose momentum.

CS: I see! Thank you very much, sir. Is there anything else that you wanted to talk or or make reference to about Facebook and how it should be use effectively?

Pt 002: Yes, I think most organizations have realized the importance of social media, Facebook, youtube, instagram and stuff like that. And they are going, that side, but what is still lacking is, I think, is coming up with policies to guide in that space, and also dedicating resources because you don't just put a Facebook page out there. You need to have resources dedicated to that, human and financially.

CS: I see, thank you very much, say, the last question is from your experience as a PR expense, what role does corporate social responsibility to play for organizations and crisis as far as reputation protection is concerned?

Pt 002: Yeah, it is very critical, because if you assume that you are a global citizen, that is, if you practice that you become a global citizen that you care about Your stakeholders, you care about the environment. Whenever there is a crisis, these practices are the ones that will make it easy for you to reach out. Even the stakeholders will come out and speak for you. The public opinion there is already positive. Social responsibility is very critical.

CS: I see! So, in other words you agree with the notion that it is an insurance premium of some kind for organizations.

Pt 002: Yes, that's why in some other spaces they call it social investment.

CS: Indeed. The very last question is on the role of culture. i'm just taking a slightly back. You emphasized that it is very important for practitioners to understand the culture of the societies that they're operating from. There are organizations in Botswana whose headquarters are outside of the country. Some of them are in the United Kingdom, some of them in America, and so on and so forth. Do you think messages that are produced in the United States would find the relevance, or acceptance to audiences in Botswana because of the different cultures?

Pt 002: If it's a one size fit all kind of a message, that wont work, but if it's in such a way that the teams in the localities out there, are able to send synthesize the message to localize it, that will work. This is what we have to do as a practitioners, to ensure that even though we have got this cut across messages, as it

comes to our locality, we understand the culture, we should make the message resonate well with the traditions and the cultures of the locality.

CS: I see! thank you very much that's very, very insightful. Is there any last thing you wish to share about crisis communication in Botswana.

Pt 002: Yes, like I pointed out, not many organizations are up there. But through professional associations, we are coming to that call. I think practitioners are coming up, especially with PRISA, the Public Relations Institute of Southern Africa. It has quite a large following and a footprint in Botswana, and it's this kind of topics that you know they run and even offer professional courses in that area. So I think we are coming up. Its not hopeless.

CS: I see, thank you very much, Sir, for that insightful interview. I will now end the recording.

Pt 002: And thank you very much.

Transcript for participant 3 (PT 003)

WEBVTT

CS: Thank you very much so. The first question that i'm going to ask you is what is your understanding of a crisis?

Pt 003: Yes, um. My understanding of the process is pretty much basic. A crisis is any activity or event that can negatively affect an institution. An institution could be a company, it could be a country, and if we take it that far, crisis can also happen to individuals. So it's any situation that has the potential to negatively affect any institution, let me put it that way.

CS: Thank you very much, so does crisis affects organizations in Botswana, and in what ways are organizations affected by crisis if any?

Pt 003: Yes, we deal with crisis on a daily as professionals and the public relations field, and a lot of organizations, especially here in Botswana deal with crisis pretty much and in different ways, depending on what the policy say with regards to dealing with such crisis. I'm only going to speak about an organization that I represent because i'm much more familiar with it. We have different crisis that we deal with and there's one that I, I remember as far back as a couple of years ago, I think more than 10. It wasn't really much of a big crisis, but it was a crisis in itself, in that it led to a stampede. There was an advert which we flighted it regarding houses we wanted to dispose, I mean selling them at Block 7 and we had a number of houses that we're selling. We put up an advert invited citizens to show interest by applying for them and we have this way of selling houses, and since demand it's outstrips supply, especially when you talk about housing products. So since we had a limited number of houses we were not really anticipating that a lot of people would respond and that way when the deadline for the advert came, we experienced an unprecedented numbers of people who came to our offices to apply in that way. It was a bit of a crisis because the media came, you know, because there was somewhat of a stampede. Everybody wanted to get a chance to apply and stuff and, we had to jump in and arrest the situation. The way the situation was, in itself, it was a crisis and we couldn't really tell since some people came as early as four o'clock in the morning. Some even claimed that they had slept by the gate there. So we had to cancel everything and sort of find a way to manage the situation altogether. The other crisis that we deal with, for instance, from time to time we get media reports on certain issues about the cooperation and, even though some are not serious, there are some that have the potential to cause crisis.
So there's a policy that we follow, we tend to follow when we deal with crisis, obviously a top management has to be involved in studying the whole crisis and crafting their responses and solution to that particular crisis. So yes, to answer your question, companies deal with them crisis on a daily basis, and crisis largely affects the reputation of the organization. If it's not managed very well it's going to first heat on them and the reputation of the organization that would be the brand, the integrity of the corporation as a whole. So you really have to be careful about managing it such that it does not negatively impact on the brand and as PR professionals, we have been trained to always have an ear on the ground to make sure that we manage certain situations that have a potential to damage the reputation of their corporation.

Pt 003: Fortunately, for us at [name of organisation], we have a risk management model that we follow. We have top risks that we closely monitor in terms of reputation and how they can affect the cooperation.

CS: You talked about the risk models. Let me make a follow up because you mentioned an important point when you spoke about the stampede about the Block 7 properties. Well, how did you ensure that the public was safe when the crisis started. The other question is on reputation that you just mentioned. Why does reputation matters so much to organizations?

Pt 003: Let me start with your last question, the follow up question, reputation matters a a lot to organizations. It's a make or break for an organization because reputation concerns the brand. We all know that brands take time to build and what your brand represents is the most critical thing to yourself, and what you stand for. It should be determined by the public, and in our instance where we had that stampede, it sort of identified a lot of loopholes in our processes in terms of applications for housing. In terms of ensuring safety, we had thought that because we didn't anticipate a lot of people would come into our offices to show interest for such houses. So we couldn't really determine that we would have a lot of people come into them to the offices, but unfortunately that happened and once that happened, to ensure safety of everyone, and we sort of jumped in and had a little address to those who had convened by the gate to tell them that we will no longer be following the process that we had intended to follow due to the fact that it was quite chaotic, and everybody like I was saying earlier, we couldn't quite determine who came first and last and so forth, because some people had claimed that they were there since 12 o'clock midnight, and some had even claimed they were there earlier. So in that sense, we had to address them and let them know that safety is much, much more important because stampedes by nature are not a very positive activities. We had to disperse the crowd and tell them that we would now accepts written applications. W had a form that we designed that we floated around to individuals that wanted to buy the houses. They have to fill out that form and depending on who paid the administration fee and submitted that form first and follow that process. That way, we managed to control that situation and i'm happy to announce that it's a system that we've been following ever since where people can apply through the system. We are living in a digital era, right now, so people use whatever gadgets, like computers, laptops and phones to fill out the application forms and send them out to us, including payments are made online. So that way we sort of dealt with that situation, but the downside of it, though, the media caught attention of the whole situation and we had to respond accordingly. We had to admit that the system that we had thought would work for us didn't really quite work, so we were really unaware, and had to make amends and make sure that people are protected; we don't call out people to offices, because the demand of housing is quite up. We could see similar situations in the future so from then on, that's when we implemented the application process where people don't necessarily come to our offices.

CS: Yes, the last question, as a follow up before we proceed, is did you advertise through Facebook at the time?

Pt 003: Facebook hadn't gained much friction, this was, if memory serves me well, this was end of 2006 beginning of 2007 so even though Facebook was a much more popular, especially in the developed world. Here at home, it wasn't really up to the standards it is today, and then operation we had not drafted policies for social media. We didn't have a Facebook page

then, Twitter page or anything like that. The media that we relied heavily on back then was newspapers, your traditional media newspapers and your TV and your radio where we'll go into radio and speak about the different products that we have. But large part we used newspapers and magazines to advertise our products. Back then social media wasn't really much of a much of a case then. I'll take you through another somewhat of a crisis issue that we had and fortunately, that one happened when social media was widely used in Botswana. The government took a decision that the [name of corporation] as a housing authority would put up some houses which would be sold to the youth through what we call the installment purchase considering that a lot of youth and then couldn't access loans at the bank plus them basically we are targeting the Youth in low income earners. So the government decided that they will fund a project where we will put up some high rise properties that eventually will be sold to the youth, as well as low income earners through what we call installment purchases where the customer pays us directly in installments, much more similar to how the mortgage weeks. When we were supposed to get funding from government, I think, then, government had a financial issues, so they request that we secure loans, a guaranteed by them to set up those houses and went ahead and did that and upon completion of that project when we are ready to roll out the project, it then became apparent that the installment purchases scheme model wasn't going to work very well for us, because we had borrowed money from capital markets.

Pt 003: The wat capital markets work is that once you borrow money from them, you then have to pay back that money with an interest and if you consider a situation where somebody pays you over a period of 20 or 25 years that money comes in very slowly, and for you to pay back your loans, it becomes very difficult. So we approached the government to tell them about the situation that we had borrowed money from a capital and financial markets, and now this model of installment purchase isn't going to fully function, and therefore the only option that's going to work for us is if we test the viability of the model that we proposed, where we would advertise and allow the youth, as well as low income earners to come forth and buy the units outright, by an outright could mean if we know that some will would have cash readily available from various sources, some are business men, while some are gainfully employed and normally for the gainfully employed, they can easily secure mortgage loans from the banks. So we wanted to test if that model works. Upon discussing that there was the issue of communicating that to the public, remember that before we initially set up the construction of that project we had informed people that and the project will be sold through the installment purchase scheme, and then along the way, upon their completion of the project, things changed, and we have to manage that communication very, very carefully because It was something different from what was communicated initially and lot of people had a lot of hope that now they would be able to buy houses through installment purchase scheme without necessarily going through the banks. That sort of exploded on us because it's like we reneged on what we had initially communicated to the public. it had a huge backlash in the sense that the whole trust that we had from the public was eroded in the sense that people couldn't now understand why we were switching from our initial plan to dispose the properties through the installment purchase scheme, and we had to engage with the media, because the media was asking a lot of questions like why have to go back on the plans to sell the properties through the installment purchase scheme and now demanding that they buy the properties outright.

Pt 003: What we did is we engaged the Minister Minister of infrastructure and Housing Development to set the tone, and give reasons as to why the properties will no longer be sold for installment and you understand [name of organisation] is one of those parastatals that has a history, especially revolving around crisis, because of the 1990s, and all of that, corruption and maladministration and all that sort of came back to haunt us because we have always been thought to be somewhat of a company that's not trustworthy and that sort of came back, even though we had made strides from that reputation. But the fact that we now changed everything people became very suspicious that asking why now all of a sudden we are trying to change things and say that they'll now buy houses. Some people even went to social media and they even expressed that we want to sell houses to our relatives and family members and friends and all that. When the Minister went through the media to lay down the whole issue he talked about the fact that the corporation doesn't really get some money from the government to run our operations. So that was them so. That meant that the corporation has to go to the capital markets to fund a majority of the project. The government had initially thought they would manage to fund the project but eventually it turned out that the government had other commitments. We had, as an agency of the government, to take it upon ourselves as the housing authority in the country to secure loans to be able to put up such properties, which we did. Eventually we had to come up with a model that will ensure that we can easily pay back the loans that we got from the financial markets. In hindsight, I believe the crisis could have been better managed, had we somewhere along the way, maybe communicate something to that effect, and make sure that we touch base with people not to surprise them at the end when they had full expectations that the houses were going to be sold as we had communicated before.

Pt 003: The issue was even after the houses were bought it turned out later that the model that we were trying to test on both the youth and low income earners worked because we saw unprecedented numbers in terms of those who were interested in our properties, and a lot of those qualified in terms of the financials, in terms of what they qualified for at the bank. Some even had readily available cash to purchase, yes, but there are some who still felt hard done. As we would have it, social media is one of those platforms, where people vent, especially in this country, a lot of people rely on social media to discuss social issues, especially pertaining to the economy, pertaining to how the countries is run, pertaining to how some parastatals operate. So we had our fair share of being bashed by the public in terms of that whole issue of the Youth and low income housing.

Pt 003: So it is still an issue that once in a while somebody would throw it in that we haven't forgotten that you once promised that you'd build houses for low income earners and the youth and in the end you changed from your initial plan to say that you are now selling the House outright.

CS: I see, so thank you very much that's very, very insightful response. We will keep on referring to that crisis as we go on. Crisis does not announced its arrival and from your experiences what can be done to prepare organizations to protect them from the adverse effects of crisis?

Pt 003: Yes, um I think for me and from my experience, you need a solid crisis communication policy. Then you need an elaborate plan in terms of how you will deal with crisis once it comes. It's unfortunate that a lot

of crisis, as you rightly pointed out, comes when you least expect it. But it's interesting that events that we deal with in our organization, could somehow hint that if you don't take care of 123 something adverse might affect you. We are fortunate that in our last organizational transformation, we incorporated risk as one of those critical factors in our business to try and manage a crisis situation better. It sort of gauge risks, especially if you look into my area of work, reputational risk, especially where you see stuff in the media about your organization. Normally when there's stuff in the media, it means the media has sniffed or has caught attention of something about yourself somewhere. Normally what would happen is that they would contact you immediately if not some would even go ahead and write without even getting the first right of response. So the way we deal with it, is that we, like I did explain earlier, we have a risk model that we follow at the beginning of every financial year. We sit as the organization; different departments sit and identify a top risks that might affect the organization, and we also discuss interventions in case that happens. We discuss interventions, as to how we will deal with different risks, or rather how we would work towards reducing the impact. The model that we use is quite elaborate in terms of gauging risks.

We use even colours; your ambers and your greens to highlight theintensity of the risks, so that we always have our eye on it pretty sure that nothing really happens. We use that model and every month we have to issue reports in terms of how we are performing according to that model. Of course, like you, rightfully pointed out risks or a crisis just comes. A lot of crisis that affect us in the organization, we get it through the media. Sometimes it can happen that a certain issue would come out, would spring up and the corporate communication team that's supposed to be dealing with the communication and crisis sometimes is unaware, but we try as much as possible to express to other business units to say that anything that happens that affects the organization, be it positive or negative, should be communicated to the relevant authority being us the gate keepers.

Pt 003: Its important to have constant communication with business units to ensure that you manage certain risks. You don't want to be caught up in a situation where you see issues written in papers and you have to put out the fire. Our view is that crisis should be proactively managed and it should be actively managed. It is really important to have a very good relationship with the media, because a lot of things come through the media. The media is the watchdog for the society and that is why they are going to report on controversial issues or issues that may be deemed to be negative. We try as much as possible to build relationships with media through various activities. We have your media roundtables; we have your press conferences whenever there's a development in the corporation that we feel it's important for the media to know about and in turn inform the public. We do call them and invite them over into such a press conference, so that we have discussions about this issues they asked questions and we provide full information. We have annual plans that we do work on every year, where we will try as much as possible to make sure that we respond accordingly whenever the media try as much as possible, to find out information about us. The brightest thing to do is that, with the advent of social media, try as much as possible to share a lot of information, so that we sort of clear the air in terms of some of the processes that you follow.

Pt 003: There was also an issue because this one is still fresh in my memory. [name of organisation] as a parastatal owned owned by the government, provides a housing products for the public. Our biggest customers is the government as well as the public, corporates as well as some local authorities being the councils and others. Some of our operations are governed by the government. In order for us to increase rentals, we have to first seek authority through our parent ministry then ultimately the government of Botswana. The last time we had our increase was in 2004, some 17 years ago. Last year, after back and forth, for a number of years, we engaged the government to try and persuade them to allow us to increase rentals. We managed and they finally acceded to our plea in the sense that if you compare the rentals, the last rentals we had, and the maintenance costs now, it doesn't make sense. It doesn't make business sense so on those grounds, after hearing us they allowed us to adjust the rentals. Initially for individuals, we were going to do it on an incremental basis over a period of five years and for companies and the government we're going to do it once or where we would have a lump figure that will stay there until adjustments. We had a press conference last year to inform the media about it, it wasn't really well received by the public. Following letters to our tenants, including government corporates and local authorities. In January, after the Christmas break, when we came back there was this whole uproar about a rentals. There was a lot of confusion in terms of our approach to us the rentals. A lot of people, especially those who are renting through corporates thoughts it wasn't justified in the sense that you cant just have a lump increase like that. Why don't we maybe consider doing it like we had planned for the individuals. In our research and discussions, we discovered that a lot of corporates normally would get a check from say the University of Botswana for the houses that's occupied by their stuff. It turned out that it wasn't really somewhat of a benefit from that institution. People had to what what UB would do is it'll take a housing allowance from its stuffs' salaries in pay. In that way they thought it was a bit unfair for them. The tenant's thought it was a bit unfair on an upward site. So we then had go back and review that and the decision that was taken was that we would use the same model that we used to be applied for individuals, where everything will be incremental for five years, to help us cover some of the costs that we experienced.

We rolled out communication. Fortunately, for us, we had a very passionate Minister who was willing to go a long way with us. We started with radio interviews, TV interviews to break down the whole issue. I remember there was, in the middle of that, an opposition member of parliament, who challenge the issue and they wanted a motion to have that thwarted. Unfortunately, we argued other case and eventually we were allowed to increase rentals from 1st April 2021. It caused a lot of confusion really so we had to line our ducks in a row, and make sure that we issue communication; communicate with our tenants, and it was difficult because it was during this period of covid 19. We had to find other ways to make sure that information gets out there, so we have to book space in TV; book space in newspapers and use social media to disseminate information in terms of how the whole rental adjustment plan was going to unfold. So in the end weccould say it was successful and the noise has gone down, even though there were some who still felt the incrementals were quite huge. Consider being in business for 17 years without increasing rentals. It really justified our case.

CS: Thank you. When crisis breaks, there is the notion that the first hour is golden. What is your view on this notion?

Pt 003: Exactly um, thank you for that question I think it's quite critical as you put it, and I do tend to subscribe to that motion especially in today's world when information is real time you say something, and two seconds later it's all over the world through social media platforms and others. Sometimes it's very challenging for the organization, especially if you look at the approval process. That's why in communication policies, We do try to empower the head of communication, but normally how it works in Botswana, and especially in my organization, is that anything that goes out has to get an approval from the executive office and usually thats where delays are. Once you delay information gets out. Negative information travels way faster than positive information. Thats the challenge that we really a lot of times find ourselves in, where we would respond within the first 30 minutes, or even an hour, but then we can't take out the information before it's scrutinized by the executives then they'll give it a thumbs up. Sometimes it even has to go to to the ministry and to the ministry level. There was an issue in a couple of weeks back where one of the local newspapers journalists sent a questionnaire asking about the dissolution of the [name of organisation] board. It came as a surprise to us because we're not really told that the board had been dissolved. The Minister did that, but I believe the executives knew. So what we did is we engaged the executive to discuss how we're going to respond. They wanted to know a lot of things about in terms of how the corporation would operate without a board and who's going to move for the appointing authority and so forth. We did that, but then we hit another stumbling block because we had to pass that information on to the ministry, so that it was approved accordingly. It took us two to three days and eventually when we got back to the reporter, and the first thing they did they took pictures of the Board from our website and just had a big headline saying '[NAME OF ORGANISATION] BOARD DISSOLVED.' Imagine how that was received by the public and that particular weekend they had the headline and the story out, including our commentary on there on the whole issue. So it's very critical and and for companies and corporates to ensure that they capitalize on that first hour, because it can make or break anyone. Unfortunately the challenges that i've just highlighted where they're just too many approval processes that you have to follow for information to go out especially in this era where there is a lot of information leakage and you need to manage that very well. I believe with a solid communication function, you can still try as much as possible to proactively disseminate information timeously.

Pt 003: We try as much as possible to express to the executives in the ministry that it is critical that we share this information as early as possible. Even though when you work with government it takes time. At least with management is within our control to try and manage the situation where we would encourage them to do the approvals, but sometimes we find ourselves in a tight whereas as communicators we can make a decision, especially when you determined the issue sensitivity of the issue, we can make a decision to say this is what we can provide to the media for now without necessarily compromising the reputation of the organization. Those are the instances where we don't necessarily go through the process, because we know it will delay the whole process. But it depends on the severity of the issue.

The issue that I talked about before concerning the board, the Board is approved by the Ministry that's why we had to go that route. But if it's an internal issues that we are well aware of, we can make a decision as a department to see what we're going to share with the media without compromising the reputation of the organization. We are constantly engaging with the parties to try and stress the point that information is power. Information needs to be shared timeously. We are living in the era of digitization where, if you don't share, and someone does, your reputation might be damaged in seconds. So we really need to up our game in terms of responding especially to news items because news is really time bound. Newspapers work on a deadlines as well.

CS: Thank you. Can you share some best practices in crisis communication from your experience?

Pt 003: Indeed, there are some best practices that we I can share. I tend to believe that organizations that share information on a regular basis, especially information that might deemed to be sensitive, there's a way to share such information. There's information concerning financials. You might know we are all experiencing challenges from covid and, obviously, a lot of organizations are not doing well and we find ourselves in a very tight corner and sometimes such information is critical, and you need to make sure that you share it continuously with the media so that the public is well informed, especially if you are dealing with a public organization like ours. Information sharing is quite critical. And we are fortunate because we live in an era where social media can share information from wherever you are at in the world to reach millions with that information. Other best practice is stakeholder engagement, the media is a very critical stakeholder especially when it comes to sharing information about a public organizations like the one I represent. You need to make sure that you have a media engagement strategies that will ensure that information is shared on a regular basis with the media. Dont communicate with the media when you have a crisis because you'll get it wrong. I tend to believe that constant engagement, stakeholder engagement, not only the media, your shareholder, the public, because a system that everyone is a journalist nowadays, considering that all of us have access to social media. One thing I say as a member of the public and influencer in social media can make or your break your organization and then you would find yourself having to run after that and putting out fires so it's really important to make sure that you utilize the platforms that are available to share information on a regular basis. Make sure that you have a social media engagement strategy so that you're able to share information on a constant basis with the public and you're not caught off guard about issues that might be somewhat negative and eventually affect your reputation. It's basically a mastery around stakeholder engagement. Know your stakeholders, make sure that you share information because stakeholders have different information needs. Make sure you manage that very well and make sure your social media engagement strategy it's also up to par especially with information because one thing that destroys a lot of organization is information. They say information is power, so you need to constantly ensure that people are up to date with developments within your organization.

CS: Have you engaged influencers during crisis to try and build legitimacy for the organization and to manage the crisis?

Pt 003: We haven't. we haven't really it's an area that we haven't really explored, even though we notice that it's good for some organizations

that tend to have bad reputation in the past. There's a particular one I want to mention by name that's using an influencer and now it has brilliantly managed to turn the tide, it has really worked for them, because it has revealed so much that we don't know as the public about that particular organization and the good things that they're doing. But just because they use this particular influencer with a large following in social media, it has really worked for them and simplified things. It goes back to that issue that I explained earlier about information sharing. For them it worked because information is shared by somebody who the public really trusted. The issue of influencers works especially depending on what agenda you're trying to pursue. I've spoken to my manager about but it's something that maybe would consider for disposing products and sales. It could be something to consider when we do our marketing strategy and stuff because and it's an area or it's something that is widely used, even in the developed world.

CS: Thank you very much, now I want to zoom into the internal processes of developing the messages. T what extent do believe organizations should develop their messages or response strategies before the crisis or while it is in progress?

Pt 003: Simulation is very, very, very important. If you have a risk identification model, risk management model, it should and tell you that those are some of the issues that you discussed before crisis happens. I'm of the view that you need to simulate some of these. We know what can go wrong from experience, from the issues that we've experienced in the past. I believe we need some sort of simulation, we need to craft, our message is such a way that when something happens, we know exactly what to respond to, and also we need to have resources in place that we would engage when something happens. But of course, like I mentioned it's really, really important for an organization to make sure that they sort of sit together and sort of go over the scenario because crisis happen without you knowing. It's really important to simulate some of these things so that, when it happens, you are and will not be caught off guard, at least, you know how to respond such that your reputation doesn't really get negatively affected. One other aspect that I think that's really worked for our organization is the issue that I was talking about earlier where you to build relations with the media. Sometimes you'd find that situation is where the something damning. A journalist will call you about something bigger.
Some professionals, have a way of making sure that the manage the editor by sort of delaying it if you don't have fully information. It's always like you're saying it's always very, very important to make sure that you manage issues before they come. We all know that crisis would come at some point or another, so simulation of this is the best way to do it and make sure that you get your resources ready, so that when that happens, everybody knows, and there's no confusion. Also make sure that you empower your internal stakeholders with information because you don't want them to be responding to something that they are not sure of. It's always really important to ensure that when crisis starts the first stakeholder to consider, besides the board and the shareholder are you employees, so that you may get them to know what happening and how you plan to respond to it, so that even when they get questioned out there they know exactly what to say.

CS: So tell me about the role of the spokesperson, who should be the spokesperson?

Pt 003: From experience depending on the level of crisis because there are instances where the head of communication would assume the role of the spokesperson for the company, depending on the severity of the issue, but in other issues you'd find the CEO being the chief spokesperson, as the top most guy in the organization. If he is indesposed, then the next person in line is the head of communication is always in site to advice, looking at a variety of the issue, but the policies says the CEO assumes that role, but the communication manager will come in, depending on the issue itself.

CS: There are suggestions that some organizations in Botswana use corrective strategies, others use denial strategies, while others use shifting the blame during crisis. Are these strategies prevalent in Botswana and how effective or less effective are they?

Pt 003: I have seen those strategies being employed by several organization, but the rule of thumb, especially for crisis management in PR is of course, responding immediately. If you're still investigating the issue or make sure that you see exactly that you are still trying to find out the issue be it's an issue involving safety or fatality in the organization. Normally it helps to have that initial response, where your request to be given a bit of time to investigate the matter so that you can gain full knowledge about the crisis then respond back at a later time to give full details. What I've noted with being quick to deny is that sometimes when, especially with the media, when the media asks you questions or makes inquiries already they have information. So once you start denying they will go and publish and normally when the publisher they'll reveal information that you were trying to hide. So it's always very important to admit if there's an issues without going into details. If there is death of personality due to negligence, admit without really necessarily getting into details, because with death, there is a family involved, there's privacy, and all of those issues. I think you need to stick to the basics, to say yes there's an issue here, but we are still trying to gain full understanding of what transpired, so that you can offer details after the family has been informed. It really depends, but I find it really dangerous for organizations to outright be on the offensive once something happens, especially when there's an issue. Denying is a no go area. Rather buy some time because if you buy some time it might help you in the long term. It's a strategies that really works, we have also used that in the past where if you are trying to buy time, you comment and say we're still studying so we determine what we could communicate at that point in time.

CS: I see! thank you very much. Now let's talk about Facebook. What would you say is the role of social media during crisis?

Pt 003: It helped us to disseminate information much faster. It helped us respond to various communication needs. A lot of people will be asking questions. If you issue a press statement and Facebook, obviously there's going to be a lot of questions posed by different individuals, and it has really helped us to sort of them and critically look at some of the common questions. 10 people can ask something that's much more similar, so it has really helped us gain an understanding of what communication needs are for the different segments of people that we communicate with using those platforms. It has helped in terms of dishing out information quicker,
it has really helped because it's real time. Once you post something in the next 5-10 minutes you are flooded with responses, further inquiries

and stuff like that, so it really does the gauge, and how much of an understanding the public has regarding a certain certain issue, as opposed to newspapers. Social media in terms of quickly disseminating information it's really is a big help to organizations. For instance, If we seem to experience an issue in the corporation, maybe, infrastructure for the call center has crushed, we are able to disseminate that information much faster using Facebook and giving people alternatives. It's really bigger if you compared it to the traditional media or writing letters or sending faxes.

CS: I see, thank you very much, now i'm going to go back to the issue of information sharing, that you, you mentioned earlier. There are indications that some organizations are very passive or they have a Facebook phobia that makes them passive in sharing information. What is your view on this?

Pt 003: Much as you know, Facebook could be a very positive tool to use for information sharing, it's very, very, very critical that you sort of assess what you share through Facebook, because it could have a backlash in terms of sharing negative information or whatever you are sharing. They are afraid of backlash. Some organisations don't have good engagement strategies that's why they are even afraid to utilize Facebook, though I'd rather issue a press release to newspapers, but anything that goes to newspapers now you'd find it in social media. People just simply take pictures and share. So I tend to also believe that a lot of companies are still a bit apprehensive about utilizing social media for their benefit. It is a tool that if you use properly, it can really help to build your organization.
Some companies are not really quite keen in investing in such platforms to help them disseminate information. Some don't have the right resources to manage such platforms for them, because you need a dedicated resource that will make sure that requests are responded to in a timely manner. They are even analytic tools in social media platforms to tell you your response rate; telling how many people have seen a particular post that you have done. So, those are really beneficial tools for a lot of companies or communication experts out there who are representing various companies. So in Botswana, I see a lot of companies really doing the uptake of social media, especially to share information about their companies or any latest developments within our institutions. It is true that as companies in Botswana are, we are embracing the positive role that social Media is playing in terms of crisis. I haven't really seen a lot of companies communicating crisis on social media. We get a lot of them still writing the press releases the traditional way. I believe, it also has a lot to do with the resources that they have because it's widely believed that social media is a younger generation type of thing or activity. But if you look closely really it's a tool that can really help. If used properly, or you have a proper social media engagement strategy you can use it to benefit as an organization to communicate just about anything. You just need a clear cut strategy that will guide you in terms of what to communicate and how to go about it. Of course you can't communicate everything through social media, but issues of public interest, more money, if you want to reach larger audience. It can work to our advantage.

CS: I see. You mentioned the fact that comments or feedback should be provided immediately and should be provided fully but there are

suggestions that some organizations do not respond at all to individual comments on Facebook. What is your view on this?

Pt 003: We tried as much as possible to respond to individual comments, but it depends on individuals. Anybody, even through social media is empowered to ask whatever they want to ask or comment. So it is a our responsibility as corporates to determine what can be responded to, and the best way to respond to those particular issues. For instance, comments which are very negative or Vulgar in their nature. Sometimes you gauge by the type of that comment or inquiry if it's something that's worthy of responding if it's something that build or that you feel a lot of people can benefit from you respond. So it's just a matter of determining which comments or which inquiries are much more beneficial, especially get to not only that particular person. But if you look at how other people can benefit from that business question in response to it, and how we do it is we gauge the comments that people throw in the comments section where the public is able to view those and there are those that normally people to ask God for messenger which maybe could be something that somebody and that could be some beneficial to that particular person about such issues, sometimes you can group them if you realize that there's a certain issue that receives a lot of attention, you can normally craft some sort of response which is a bit elaborate and publish it so that you set the record straight.

Pt 003: The capacity to respond individually to all those messages is a huge challenge because it's time consuming, especially if you have to sit for a company that deals with a product that's really sensitive. We get questions on the business on whatsapp line, as well as on our social media platforms. And normally we concentrate on individual questions that are sent through messenger in the comments section. What we've realized is that it's usually people just making general comments, but if it's something like I mentioned again if it's something that you believe it could benefit other members, you do respond to that section, so that everybody can benefit. It could be a question that is asked by four people; sometimes you don't have to respond to all of those new ones, because it answers all those other customers and everybody else who might have a similar question would be able to benefit from that response.

CS: So what is the role of culture, when developing crisis messages for Facebook.

Pt: 003: We have different cultures in Botswana. Unfortunately we are going through very challenging times. We have different sections in the population and it's widely believed that social media, especially the audience is much more younger in terms of age. This is a very sensitive stakeholder. When we craft messages we are alive to a lot of issues and especially the fact that, when we respond, we are not only responding to the youth. It might be other people who are not necessarily young. So we make sure that we can consider a lot of factors. When we can talk about issues of youth housing, the majority of people who ask questions are either youth. We make sure that we structure questions that specifically address their needs. If it's any other group we also try and vary communication and make sure that it is relevant to them. So it depends on the type of your demographics. We carried out a survey just to gauge the level of perception amongst the public, in terms of our products and services. There was a recommendation later that we need to come up with communication that is focused because the youth is a very important stakeholder to us. It's so unfortunate that the products only came out

or the decision to start building for the scheme at very late stage. All is not lost because we have future plans to address issues of this important stakeholder. They tend to be very probing in their approach in terms of asking questions they demand answers immediately when they ask questions and stuff like that. So, we always find ourselves having to check in most of the time and ensure that we share information on a regular basis so that we don't end up agitating this particular group.

CS: To what extent, have you used, or can you use the kgotla to disseminate crisis messages? How helpful is the kgotla system during crisis?

Pt 003: Indeed the kgotla system which we know in our society is very helpful when communicating during crisis. It disseminates information faster and clear uncertainties and answers from stakeholders. Its a great system and still works because of its ability to reach out to many people and provide clarity to any questions. The goverment uses it a lot to disseminate information, given that much of the communities are in rural and remote area without internet to access social media. The kgotla meetings are a great platform that can be used to communicate during crisis. In corporates we have initiatives such as kgotla. AT BHC we have kgotla sessions especially during review of performance where we go online and do performance presentations and respond to questions and clarity. We still adopt the system even in corporate sessions. Its a great initiative.

CS: I see. The next question is on the role of social responsibility during crisis. Is it very effective in protecting the reputation of organizations in Botswana?

Pt 003: To some extent it is, but in our set-up in Botswana, I believe, a lot of people tend to believe that CSR is more like a duty. You are a serving the public; because you are taking money from us, and you should give something in return. I find it very, very critical, for organizations to have a proper CSR strategy, so that the public understand understands why even engage in CSR activities. But for some especially here what I found out is it's more like what society expects from you as a corporate citizen that you should always give back because you're taking our money, you're selling houses you're taking money. Make sure that you play a part and improve living conditions and our communities. If you look at Debswana, the way they are doing in terms of CSR, their budgets are quite a astronomical compared to our budget which is normally around 1.5 million, yet there's so much to do. I believe if it's done correctly, it could be used to the benefit of an organization, especially when you have issues of crisis. People always tend to remember that you are a good corporate citizen; whenever they had issues you came in and responded much quicker. It just depends on the strategy that you follow. That's why it is important to always not necessarily shout from the rooftops that you are helping communities out there, but it should be visible. It should be impactful so that people are able to speak for you. You don't just put up billboards and tell them how you've helped communities with groceries or built houses, for them, it should be impactful. So, that's what's effective, especially when you deal with issues of crisis. Debswana does that so beautifully. They do a lot for the community and the impact is there, we see it. We never really hear much about Debswana crisis because they do a lot of beautiful things that are visible that they don't talk about. In fact, if they want to talk about it, they will

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talk about them as what they represent. A lot of organizations can make sure that it works for them in times of need. As a company, you really need to do your business responsibility. You shouldn't really rely on the fact that you take care of communities it'll come up for your other negative stuff. You should do business in a correct manner. Public governance is very, very critical, especially for businesses.

CS: I see! then, you spoke about a minister who is able to go all out to speak to the communities on your behalf. The question is to what extent does Facebook crisis messages, showing that organizations leadership are leading the crisis communication management efforts helpful in building legitimacy and trust?

Pt 003: This notion of opinion leaders is valid. IN Botswana whenever a crisis falls, you always look up to the leadership and that's the same model that we believe. If you talk to somebody of the ministers position it's usually easy to get audience with the newspapers radio stations, essentially journalists, because they tend to be believable depending on the issue at hand. It's a matter of setting the tone. Normally the ministers are politicians, a lot of people don't believe in politicians, they make promises and there are only problem later or. We normally use the minister in instances where we want them to set the tone, so that we can build from what they say as decision makers, especially when you talk about parastatals.

CS: You spoke about your crisis history as an organization and that it came back to haunt you. Did the Minister's engagement with the public help you to rebuild that legitimacy and trust that you had lost in the past?

Pt 003: To some extent in the sense that he crystallized some of the information that we want to share. He answered the difficult questions the public and the media were asking. On whether it helped to re-build legitimacy and trust, we can only know after we maybe run another set of perception survey to determine if indeed that helped.Rebuilding trust takes a very long time to and normally depends on a lot of variables, including doing things right, being ethical and all of that. The fact that we know that politicians lie all the time sometimes it takes time. It's not like the minister get on with you and talk and people believe it right there. It takes time.
People are going to scrutinize how you do things. Overtime that's when you can tell whether you re-built trust or you've lost it completely. So it really also depends on the business activities.

CS: The very last question say is that of language use during crisis. The indications that some organizations in China purposefully use language to dominate to persuade and to manipulate the audiences. What is your take on this?

Pt 003: For me it really depends on the audience you're communicating with. Fortunately for Botswana, we tend to use English a lot for obvious reasons. It's easy to communicate, but sometimes you'd find that, for the most part the audience largely understands Setswana. Its a very, very somewhat difficult language, not for a lot of us, even though it's a native language. And like you rightly pointed out some organizations determine which language to use, depending on what they want to achieve.

It's really important that you pick a language that does not distort the message. Sometimes it helps to try and communicate in both languages so that you get much coverage in terms of getting your message across, because there are certain people in certain sections of our society, who understands if you're talking to the middle class in towns and cities, English will work. But if you're talking to that old men in the village or woman in the village, sometimes the vernacular would work in your favor in terms of getting those issues, across. Organizations do sometimes tend to manipulate the use of language in order to get out and get away with a lot of stuff. Achieving a Win-win is tricky, especially if you are trying not to prolong the issue. But at the same time, you are trying to manage a situation, so you shouldn't really manipulate. The whole situation, depending on what your agenda is, what you're trying to achieve, you can easily use language to make sure that you achieve that thing if there's a balance in terms of both yourself and the public wins, thats alright.

CS: Thank you very, very, very, very much. I am sincerely grateful. I will now stop the recording.

Pt 003: OK. Thank you.

Transcript for participant 4 (PT 004)

WEBVTT

CS: Thank you very much for coming through for this interview. I'm sincerely grateful for your time. Now, the first question that I wanted to ask you is what is your understanding of crisis.

Pt 004: Well. I think, crisis is essentially any disruption to normal business operations that has not been planned for, or that is unexpected, which puts a business or an organization at a disadvantage. It can also put it under disrepute. Basically, crisis is any activity that tends to a disadvantage the organization, one way or the other, that will disrupt business and even just the relationship that an organization has with its various stakeholders.

CS: Okay, thank you very much for that explanation. The next question is does crisis affects organizations in Botswana, and in what ways are the affected by crisis if any?

Pt 004: Well, certainly, I mean crisis is the order of the day. To be honest, I think, in any business setting there is an expectation that at some point, there might be a crisis. The crisis that an organization faces is both internal and external. Some of the crisis that recently we've seen sterm from the internal. There has been a lot of uncertainty with regard to covid. Conversations have been around job losses; companies needing to retrench; companies needing to change their systems; policies such as we can workfrom home.
That created a crisis sort of environment if one can say. The other has only been in terms of business operations relating to customers, especially in service driven industries, you find that we've had situations recently of lockdowns or curfew. So this has meant a lot of organizations needing to trim their hours of operation, which means one is not able to make the same returns that they were able to make before. I mean part of the business that i'm involved in now entails courier. So you can imagine a situation where you're not able to reach certain destinations because of curfew. So it means you are impacting on someone else's business because they have an expectation that delivery should have reached a particular place in time. These are some of the challenges that businesses are faced with which then means it creates somewhat of a crisis for especially for your SMEs, that is dependent on smaller margins. They do have smaller margins in maybe the stuff that they move. Its quite small, but it's really key to that business. Those are some of the newest crisis that we're seeing across the board.

Pt 004: Some crisis are peculiar depending on an industry that you're in. I mean, for instance, a few years ago I worked for a TV subscription management company which essentially was providing TV services, access to channels. And one of the biggest drivers is sports which I think is the key. You have a lot of leagues that so many people for like that are football specific. People follow these leagues. I mean people get very emotional about football and a few years ago after many years of broadcasting leagues, people just assume the League is coming on and were willing to pay subscription which essentially means paying a premium subscription which is obviously high end. It's much more expensive than any other. What happened was that that same year, a new entrant in broadcasting had essentially setup shop and paid exorbitant prices for EPL. So they basically modelled their business around football. No one

really could match what the new entrant had put on the table, so they won for EPL. We put out communication with regards to what was going on. But you can imagine just out of nowhere, I think it's information that people might have missed.

We didn't necessarily go all out with the message, and make a lot of noise about what we lost. So when the time came, people flooded the [name of offices] to subscribe, only to find out that they're not able to get all the wanted, that will be aired and that was quite a bit of a mess. The issue even made it to Parliament. People were angry; customers literally came to our offices. They broke down the door, they got really violent. We were challenges in terms of how do you deal with so many people to manage what was going on. It wasn't so much about demanding refunds, people were demanding the games. But, as I mentioned, we're not able to give them the Games. Remember that they have been subscribing for so many years and, at the time I remember most of these games were to come on at the weekends, from your Friday evenings, your Saturdays. So that particular week was a very busy period. I'd gone into the office and I was pretty much making observation of what was going on at the time. You can imagine, weekend means we didn't have our full management compliment on site.

At the time I was the most senior member of stuff, and I had to make a call and go out and face the angry crowd because it was a crisis. On the one hand, we had a situation where infrastructure was being tampered with. I was seeing people breaking the door; people were angry; people were getting on top of the counters. It was really quite a scene and I had to literally, I think the first thing that I had to do was to gather my thoughts around what to do. I had to put myself in their shoes and the frustration that obviously these people were going through. One can also imagine that people had made plans together in groups. You also have establishment like your pubs, clubhouses that depend on these Games to attract patrons. So it's not just individuals watching the Games at home, but you also have a situation where you do have businesses that are dependent on numbers to finish their stock.

If these leagues were in our subscription, we could have put out ads, but at the same time from marketing and PR perspective, I can think no one ever talks about what the can't give you. It's practice, you can say to some of the Games, because it's not like we can give you some of the Games. So we were not giving EPL. We did put out communication and using various media platforms. At the time newspapers were still quite relevant widely read. So we needed to ensure that we did put out a press release with regards to us not showing the Premier League but also just sort of breaking down what it is that we're going to be carrying. We also shared the same communication with radio station. But like i'm saying we didn't explicitly tailor the messages that we are not showing the games. Since the messaging wasn't in their face, people felt like they had been blindsided. But the message was there. We did put it out, but didn't necessarily have a campaign that we ran that said basically we are not showing some of the Games.

CS: Did you use Facebook as well? yeah What about messaging let me ask was Facebook well.

Pt 004: I wouldn't say to the extent that it is now, and I will tell you, because I think it's been different, unfortunately, at this point in time. I think in as much as it wasn't popular for a lot of organizations who use social media because the country's social media has to a large

extent been established a platform for marketing and for even a PR. It was a lot easier to sort of communicate and we did use social media, but like i'm saying, I think we used it the same way that we would place any messaging on any other media platform. It wasn't necessarily in your face or spoken about the things we are unable to give to clients.

I would say the difference between social media then and now is that now it's widespread and every single organization has since come on board, but the unfortunate bit is the rules of operating your traditional businesses on social media, where a lot of companies are struggling with at this point in time. It's easily accessible, there hasn't really been a lot of organizations, perhaps with policies in place. I think a lot of people go onto social media without the frameworks that would allow for them to operate in this space.

CS: In your understanding of crisis, you said it can affect reputation. Why does reputation matters so much to organizations?

Pt 004: What they say is that it takes many years to build a reputation and it can take a split second to essentially erase all that. How people view an organization is extremely important because it influences their interaction with that organization. People I think the same way as we do in terms of personal relationships or professional relationships people wanted in business with organizations that are seemingly reputable. People want to be able to engage with organizations that they are able to trust. People want to engage with organizations that they feel have got their best interest at heart. If one will if you're going to be spending any money you want to know that are going to gain value from the money that I spent. So even if an organization gets involved in any act that its clients or customers will view as questionable it can affect their engagement with that particular business. And remember, also, that reputation is not just between customers and organization. A lot of organizations are governed by so many different laws of doing business in a particular country. For instance, if your customers are seemingly not happy with you and use social media it can in actual fact affect your reputation.

CS: Indeed, thank you very much. When crisis breaks, it does not announce its coming. What can be done to prepare organizations to withstand the negative effects of crisis and to protect their reputation?

Pt 004: As much as we say crisis does not announce itself, I do think that there are very key steps that organizations can have to mitigate some of these situations. First and foremost, you find out what policies do you have in place; do you have a crisis management policy in place as a business? Is it widely shared within the organization? Do we understand what a crisis is to start off with? Do we have a process that one is able to follow? Should a crisis happen, how do we determine what type of crisis? Do we have a risk register that is constantly being updated so we are able to anticipate what could happen? If you have a risk register, you should have risk champions within organizations who ensure they keep checking what these risks are, and then we do have processes that are able to roll out within an organization.

Pt 004: When a crisis happens staff will know this is the process. For instance, do you tell your factory manager? A lot of times, the issue is do people know? You need to be prepared and having a framework in place

and ensuring that there is communication that is followed can go a long way to managing the situation. And like we said, crisis may not necessarily announce itself, but once we're faced with a crisis, it is also important for an organization to take charge. What we've seen in the past is that when something happens that is great, organizations are quick to share; but when something that is negative happens the same organizations starts dragging its feet, and they don't necessarily discuss it and then it blows into an even bigger issue. For instance, some stuff members at some bank were found in possession of drugs and when investigating it was found that we were part of a syndicate that was moving drugs among young people. The Bank itself found out and perhaps what could have been more ideal in that situation would have been to maybe even have a precedent to save the reputable of the organization. They could have said to the public we found out this and this is what we're going to follow, but the news leaked to media houses and the next thing it seemed as if perhaps the Bank was hiding something and it caused quite a bit of a rift between that particular organization and the media. It means all the stakeholders within the bank got to know of the news from reading it in the media and they were not in control of the narrative. Had they been the very ones that had invited the media they could have been in control.

CS: I see. There is a notion that the first hour is golden when the crisis breaks. What is your view on this notion?

Pt 004: It will be something that I am currently also faced with. Like i'm saying, our preparation means, for instance, it's easy to say Oh, we need to communicate, but how are you communicating via the templates? Can you have the messaging ready and approved? That part of the processes or part of the policies is also around timelines. What is the turnaround time for you to have communicated to your staff and your customers? You may find that for somebody else within the next hour, they have very important business that needs to happen, it impacts on how you communicate. If you are well prepared, you've got your templates, you got your message in the right time, it has already been pre-approved, then within the first 30 minutes you should be able to start communicating.

Pt 004: Obviously that's different from if your building catches fire, you may not have the two minutes because you have to be evacuated. However, you do need to have one of the things that I wrote in terms of the risk register that we've been working on. The messages must always be developed ahead of the crisis. That's why it's important like I said to have a risk register that I spoke about.

CS: Now I want you to talk about the best practices of communicating when crisis breaks.

Pt 004: The same way that we want to have ambassadors that speak of the good about an organizations or that carry our products and services, in a crisis is the same as the spokesperson. When a crisis happens, is that the head of the organization or is it the public relations specialist? This needs to be very clear, because then it means that the messaging also is aligned. You don't just have anybody else speaking or saying whatever. Some people will be speaking from an emotional perspective, some people will speak from effects related perspective. In a crisis mode, training is also very important, the same way as you train other

business functions. You also need to have some sort of a scorecard. It's okay when the messaging has gone out within this particular period, when we have reached X number of people when we have created feedback channels. You need to be able to have those in place to be able to say, this is a good way of handling the crisis or this is what we're able to gain out of it. Even your response to the crisis, the same way that you want to measure your own profits, you must be able to measure your response as well. You know how concise, is the message that you're putting out; it's inclusive of the stakeholders that you need to reach.

Pt 004: I think the number one case as well, over and above the fact that we need to have these in place, we also need to be mindful of the historic nuances, that's the tradition because you will find that culture also play a part because we will find that. Our customs dictate that when organisations want to talk to the elderly or senior citizens, we approach their Member of Parliament or the Minister. For those in rural setups we can talk to the chief. For instance, with the post office, if we cannot pay the pensioners, we have to communicate to the chiefs or the political leaders to avoid a crisis. The chief is the head of the kgotla, and if we have problems in paying the pensioners, we usually inform them and they spread the messages to their communities during kgotla meeting. In Botswana, the kgotla is an extremely important platform which is still reverred. The kgotla is central to consultation. In every village, there is a kgotla and its seen as the authority that assist us to keep our culture and the law of the country. Its a right hand to govenment. The authority in the kgotla is respected and seen as such. If anything happens be it bad or good news, we go to the kgotla. Even when organisations visit the village, they go through the kgotla. We use it to disseminate the information. Even with the post office, despite having a network of buildings across the country, its not every single village with a post office. When it comes to paument for pensioners, we go through the kgotla to do that. Its extremely important that when there is a crisis, you engage with the kgosi and the kgotla to dissemiante information. ANy issue that requires public authority must go through the kgotla. It plays a very important role, even if we restrict ourselves to the social media and traditional media, there are a lot of people who still adhere to the kgotla. The infromation from the kgotla is seen as binding to the communities. We still find a way to engage with the kgotla alongside social media and traditional media. The kgotla still remains a relevant platform for us since we deal with the elderly who are not techno-savvy in rural and remote communities. So for crisis management, you must also be mindful of that; the tradition and the cultural expectation.

CS: There are indications that organizations in Botswana use corrective strategies; others use denial, while others use shifting the blame strategies during crisis. Are these strategies prevalent in Botswana and how effective or less effective are they in repairing reputational damage?

Pt 004: I think a lot of organizations have really gotten it wrong. I don't know where this solution comes from, or what influences that. I don't know why there is a perception that when you bring big news you're creating some sort of negativity around your products and services yet you are more open. For company, whatever it is, so I think that's where the biggest issue is. We are finding that a lot of companies tend to be reactive. They tend come out as defending when they get the opportunity

to possibly engage with their customers. The long and short of it is that the majority of companies have had a hard time dealing with crisis.

CS: What role does Facebook play during crisis?

Pt 004: I think, a few years ago, we would only publishing information in the newspapers. The process of just having something go into the newspaper was very tedious. It will go through the different stages until it's actually printed. With Facebook is like immediate. What we found out is that a lot of the crisis that have happened was because of officers leaking information. That goes to show that there's no social media policy in a lot of organizations. In actual fact each time I tell people that we have a social media policy at work. You can get a written warning for taking a selfie in the office. So social media now in terms of crisis has advantages and disadvantages depending on which side of the table you're sitting at. If something breaks on any organizations page, for instance, and get shared, chances are the messaging that was packaged internally is what will go out so if the messaging is ill packaged with new then ill messaging is going to go out and the feedback or the response to those posts are going to be as equally ill packed. was going to be built in, you know feedback.

Pt 004: If a crisis happens, you go into an official Facebook page, because in as much as everybody's on social media, people still go to official pages for information and all of us still want to go to official fans. If there isn't anything, I am essentially giving the general public, a leeway, to speculate and spread false information.
Social media is now all interlinked, so anything that you are picking up from Facebook, is going to be shared via whatsapp, is going to be shared via instagram. So you can't now divorce yourself from one social media platform. Facebook is widely used in Botswana. You have a younger generation that is very active even on Twitter. Then they can be active on other platforms. So even if you are controlling the narrative on Facebook, for instance, you have thousands of other individuals that are able to take that same narrative and tweak it anyhow they choose to and put it on those other platforms. So what i'm saying is that in as much as we use social media, Facebook has traditionally been a platform that is is widely used in Botswana, we must be mindful of the group that other platforms have.

Pt 004: If you look at how Trump and Obama won elections, based on the fact that they used social media campaigns, that was powerful. Almost every nation in the world is getting into all those platforms. Facebook is more prominent.

CS: There are indications that organizations in Botswana some organizations are very passive in sharing information on Facebook during crisis, what is your view, considering Facebook as a platform that disseminates information faster?
Pt 004: I think number one, we can't run away from the fact that this platform exists and is being used. Number two, yes, we have taken a very long time to have measures in place that will speak to ways from a law perspective. What are the controls? Do we know what consequences are there for Facebook users?

CS: There are also suggestions that some organizations will not respond to individual comments on Facebook during crisis. What is your view on this?

Pt 004: It's one of the things that i'm faced with, and it goes back to training. So what what I actually found out very close to home, is the fact that the very people that we have put in charge of communicating with our customers on that particular platform are not confident to do that. Remember social media is used the same way as if you and I are having a conversation so when you give somebody a technical response, for instance, is not appreciated. It's not appreciated because somebody wants to feel that you hear them. That also plays a role. People are bitter, people are angry, people are tired. I think sometimes organizations choose to choose the silent route. My assumption is not necessarily because they don't want to engage but they are really challenged as to how they engage with customers that are angry; customers that speak without being mindful of the words that they're using. Also there's no timing. Remember like I said, Facebook is 24 hours. Organizations tend to operate between eight to five, as an example. But engagement on social media doesn't stop. I can be engaging at six in the morning. I can engaging at 12 midnight.
What mechanism do you have in place to communicate outside work hours? How do you respond if somebody had an issue at 12 midnight and you're only going to attend to it after eight in the morning because you had closed shop? You may be considered the worst of the worst. That's what social media has actually introduced but organizations have not caught up to that. The same way that we speak of shift is the the same way that we speak of all these other platforms or frameworks. We must also be mindful of that social media is not like the newspaper.

Pt 004: If there is a crisis and you go on social media, you should have a plan in place. Who responds? I should not seem like I'm bashing organizations. The real issue is that people have not been properly trained. Their training has been on the job and it's trial and error for lots of people and we learn as we go along. And also information on these social media platforms changes. The dynamics, the changes, a few days ago you couldn't do certain things, but now you are able to do certain things. So organizations are grappling with understanding the platforms, or the technology to start off with. There is lack of training, there's a lack of understanding of the technology and because the technology evolves so quick and it doesn't give people enough time to really sort of grasp it then slows our response time as organizations.

CS: What are the best practices to effectively use Facebook?

Pt 004: Have a strategy. I think, to start off with have a strategy; be very clear on what your social media page looks like; what are you trying to communicate and also remember social media or Facebook allows you to be able to tell who will access your information. A strategy will allow you to periodically go back on Facebook and not wait for crisis to happen. You're constantly feeding your customers with information, whether good or bad. You're constantly saying Oh, these are the top five questions that we have received, we want to address them, so you might be really active and not reactive. The same way that you run a campaign, you also need to be running a social media campaign. That is good tactic that it's got evaluation and monitoring processes in place as well. You must also put in your business intelligence, I mean, as it is right now we have a

whole unit at the [name of organisation] called business intelligence. Engagement of your customers in these platforms is very important.

CS: Can you talk about use of pictures and videos or to maximize or to leverage social media or Facebook.

Pt 004: You have to. I looked at some of my posts from many, many years ago and I realized they were text heavy. It was still not the popular thing. People have smartphones that take absolutely amazing pictures. Having these pictures you're able to do all kinds of things. And videos even in terms of TV, for instance, the reason why they would say in as much as Radio will still be popular, we now have podcasts. You can't take away the value of picture, sound, color. A post with this will be accessed a lot faster and a lot wider than the one with text. Also be mindful of time. We must be very mindful of time. Remember social media allows for us to be able to be in and out. Multitask has really gone to another level now.

CS: There are indications that some organizations use language purposefully to dominate, to persuade and to manipulate their audiences. What is your view on language use during crisis?

Pt 004: Look, I think, language is important, like i'm saying you want to be heard. You don't want ambiguous words. So, even in terms of our language use it must match our actions as well, we need to be able to use an appreciation of the fact that we're not talking down people. The fact that these people spend time accessing our products and services, that's why we are constantly evolving constantly finding better ways of bettering our product offerings. It means we're engaging with extremely smart and intelligent customer so even in terms of us handling crisis, we must never treat our clientele as we do the kids were you're trying to sugar coat everything. There is a manner in which language is used. But the long and short of it is that your language must support core values of what organizations stand for. The words that we use in the manner in which we use them is extremely important.

CS: Any last thing you wish to share about crisis communication?

PT004: Well. I think there is opportunity for organizations to grow and do a lot better. I think, even in terms of training, I think this is an area or there's a gap that I think can be filled. Even in terms of like i'm saying, from training there's an opportunity to be able to speak to senior officials. I mean if the University is giving that as an example, the training institutions and books which really hone into using experiences as examples and tailoring modules that will be able to speak to this issue, I think it will be beneficial. Many years ago, it would have been unheard of for someone to say i'm going to school to specialize in social media. I think that there is an opportunity for organizations to consistently invest in this area, which ultimately will serve both the organization and the clientele in this instance being the various stakeholders that we have, right from government, to the person that buys your products and services.

CS: Thank you very, very, very much for this insightful interview. I'll stop the recording...

Transcript for participant 5 (PT 005)

WEBVTT

CS: Yes, so the first question that I want to ask you is on your understanding of crisis. What do you understand by crisis?

Pt 005: Basically the way I understand a crisis to be is that it could be a danger. It can be an organization facing a difficulty or when its going through a difficult era. It can be an organization or a country at large, it can even be at individual levels, as individuals we kept we sometimes go through crisis, so I can specifically say a crisis can be a danger that one encounters or a difficult time, but an organization can go through. I say an organization or a country or yes or no reason can go through a difficult time.

CS: Does crisis affects organizations in Botswana, and in what ways are they affected, if any?

Pt 005: An example of a crisis is what the whole world is going through. We are experiencing the spread of the covid-19 virus which we actually originated from Wuhan in China, but gradually spreading through the world, and our country was not spared. We learned about the Covid-19 around December 2019. By then Botswana had not yet been affected by the virus but with time.

Pt 005: I would actually say our country has experienced difficult times that I saw in my lifetime in public relations working in the [name of organisation]. We were not spared. We are a people centered organization. We are an organization that give services to the people, especially in the city of a [name of city]. So we were not spared. We also had that difficult time during the Covid-19. Before Covid, we experienced a cyclone that caused a lot of destruction to property way back in 2018. It was affecting us directly because we provide municipality infrastructure services to the people. Apart from the cyclones, the torrential rains destroy road infrastructure around the city, and everything turns into a crisis.

CS: You mentioned that crisis affect organisations. Why does the reputation matters so much?

Pt 005: Reputation is the way people perceive you or perceive an organization. They would trust the organization if it has positive reputation. Trust is very important. So, having a very good reputation among the people that you serve as an organization or among your clientele builds trust. Creating that good image with stakeholders actually assist you in providing the service to the people. As you have continuous

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engagement with your stakeholders, you will find your organization giving and improving in service delivery. So good reputation actually helps in improvement of service delivery.

CS: Can you take us to behind the curtains of how you prepared the organization to withstand the negative effects of crisis?

Pt 005: As the [name of organisation], we are a service oriented organization. When covid started, for example, we didnt fold our arms and say we are not affected. We have neighbouring countries that we work with. As a landlocked country , we had to engage in constant communication on how the supply chain should be maintained consistently. We didn't want the movement of goods to be affected across these countries. So we knew that that advancement of technology would be very important in this manner, so we prepared ourselves in that regard. We knew that traveling across countries would be affected. So we resorted to other forms of communication, apart from meeting in person.

Pt 005: Basically, what we do at the beginning of each financially is that we prepare what we call a communication plan to know what tools we are actually going to use to reach to our clientele and what other channels we are going to use for the clientele to reach to us. So basically in that communication plan we develop at the beginning of each financial year, we also include a portion where we prepare for crisis and what communication channels we would basically use during that crisis.

CS: When cases breaks there is this notion that the first hour is golden. Is this practical for you? meaning that organizations should start sharing information within the first hour i'm in your particular engagement is this possible and what's your take on this view.

Pt 005: Yes I would want to believe that is is practical in a crisis. But you would find that with our organizations it is not normally easy to communicate within that first hour or to reach out to to the people within that first hour. I am not the head of the organisation. Firstly, there has to be consultation with the executives of an organization. The executive is not usually easier for me to reach as a communications person. I could easily get hold of the chief executive and we plan within a second. In my organisation, we have two arms of leadership. We have the administrative leadership and we have the political leadership. Sometimes it takes the whole day to meet my chief executive, who then has to communicate with the political leadership, before anything could happen, especially in relation to address in the crisis. So it takes a bit of some time for a decision to be made as to exactly what should be done if if there is a crisis that needs to be attended to. Its quiet a challenge in that regard. Sometimes we try to communicate and the media would have already reported about the issue and people having formed perceptions.

CS: What are some of your best practices that you can share about communicating when crisis has broken?

Pt 005: First, we communicate internally with the stuff. They have to know that we are experiencing a crisis and these are the steps that we

would take to work out the crisis. Before the staff is informed, we meet with the executive management to inform them of the crisis, then they make a decision. The decision will then be communicated to the political leadership. The political leadership will also advise accordingly and then the crisis will be communicated to staff. The staff will be made aware of the crisis and the steps that the organisation is going to take. concern is going to take, and then from there.

CS: Now let's talk about messaging what goes on behind the curtains when you develop the messages. Do you prepare them ahead of the crisis, or when the crisis is in progress?

Pt 005: We prepare generic crisis management messages ahead of the crisis and as the crisis unfolds, we have specific mesages. We use these general messages that we have and work through them to prepare the proper messaging for the particular crisis. Each particular crisis has its own kind of language that needs to be used for the people that you're communicating with to be able to clearly understand the message.

CS: There are suggestions that some organizations in Botswana use corrective strategies, denial strategies, and shifting the blame strategies. Are these strategies prevalent in Botswana?

Pt 005: Okay, from my experience at the [name of organisation] for the past five years, I realised that most of the organisations here use denial strategies. They like writing rebuttal messages against the media reports. You'd find that a media House would have published an article where they would have conducted an interview and you'll realize that actually this article was balanced. You discover that the writer of the article or the journalist would have taken time to do research on that particular article and from nowhere there is a rebuttal from the organisation. In the rebuttals the organization comes back to say they do not know anything. They're not aware of what has been described in that article. In no time, the truth comes out and you discover that the newspaper was correct.

Pt 005: The corrective messaging is the best practice to actually opt for. It is very important for organizations to have knowledge of risk management. Yes, we have risk officers or risk managers in organization, so that whenever we face a crisis, they would actually apply their risk management skills to manage the situation. I believe once you take the corrective messaging strategy, it will show that you accept that your organization is going through a crisis or is it going through a situation. Sometimes a crisis can be an internal crisis where it is people in the organization that are causing the crisis. So, once you correct yourself, it's very clear you acknowledge the problem and you are willing to resolve it.

CS: The next question is to what extent do you consider the culture of the people when you prepare a message during a crisis?

Pt 005: Yes, i consider their culture of all the people and it is very important. It's very important on how you are going to package your message to the people. For example, you cannot package a message for people living in an urban area like people in remote areas. It's quite

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different. The culture of the people in remote areas is different to how you are dealing with a cosmopolitan kind of community that needs a certain level of communication. The people in rural areas would not normally be more educated than the people in the urban area. So the language, the type of language matters a lot. Sometimes you might even consider using the local language that people speak here. In urban areas you definitely have to use English across all the communication channel because you are mostly dealing with a customer who understand English. We also deal with international audiences. They speak official language being English. Sometimes in your message, you have to consider that there is this generation kind of language. You would not communicate to the youth, as you are communicating to the elders. It depends on the kind of age group.

CS: Now that you mentioned the importance of language, the question here is that there are indications that some organizations in Botswana use language to dominate their audiences, they use language to persuade and to manipulate their audiences during crisis. What is your view on that?

Pt 005: Sometimes languages can be a barrier. For the message to be clear and deliberate in the way it is delivered, it's very important for people in an organization to be thoughtful of the recipient of the message. It's important for you to package your message in such a way that people would not feel offended in any way. So normally it's very important to be neutral when you communicate to your audience. As an organization, the way you deliver your message should not be arrogant. Language is very important. The tone of language is very important.

CS: To what extent is the kgotla system important to disseminate messages during crisis?

Pt 005:Yes, we use the kgotla system to address our issues around and to address the crisis that we experience in the city. as I said before, the [name of organisation] is an institution that basically provide service to the community. So it will be very important to engage the community at that level at the kgotla meeting level.
So, on an annual basis, our mayor who is the political leader actually addresses our kgotla meetings around all the five constituencies in the capital city. We have the Ward Development Committees, we have health extension committees and what happens is that on an annual basis, the mayor would go around these five constituencies to address kgotla meetings. Remember these meetings are meant to get feedback from the community on the services that we provide. These meetings are attended by male or female, young and the old as long as they follow our traditional way of doing things and give all the people a chance to actually express their views on what they believe. We will be given feedback on everything that they would have communicated. The kgotla system is quite a very good way and it has been used from time immemorial until now. It has been playing a very pivotal role in giving feedback and getting feedback from the community.

CS: Thank you very much. That's very profound. Now let's talk about the role of social media especially Facebook in Botswana during crisis?

Pt 005: Yes, the advent of Facebook actually came as a positive thing. I believe it came as a positive addition to the platforms that organizations

can use to communicate. It's at the tip of the finger like that and people get information, unlike a time where we have to make appointment with radio stations or interviews with the newspaper. We only have 2 daily newspapers in the country and social media has actually brought a faster way of doing things or dissemination of information to the people. I was saying the advent of social media has actually come as a blessing because as an organization we need to quickly communicate with those techno-savvy kind of clients that we have. You'll find that most of the people are on social media actually 24 hour. Whether it's 3am in the morning, you get on social media you find that people have been logged on to Facebook. Then the other thing I like about Facebook is that the message does not get dated. It is a quick way of getting to the content. We use Facebook to communicate all messages on a daily basis and we have had tremendous feedback from the customers on our Facebook page. We have even made a provision for our clients to actually be able to inbox us. Inbox services are quite important because as they inbox us instead of making a phone call where they will be charged by the mobile network providers. They just inbox us and we give them feedback through that inbox service. So I will say yes Facebook, is very important and will continue to actually use it.

CS: Can you share some of the best practices of effectively using Facebook during crisis?

Pt 005: We actually respond in a positive way. When our clients complain about services such as bad roads or garbage, we always respond positively to maintain positive relationships with our clients.

CS: There are indication that some organizations in Botswana are very passive when sharing information during crisis. Why is that the case?

Pt 005: The knowledge of technology is very important. Social media management is a cost on its own. So sometimes when people do not have enough knowledge on how to manage their social media it will not be easy for them to constantly engage through the same platform.

CS: You mentioned the fact that your clients can inbox you and then respond to them right away. Is that the reason why organisations in Botswana do not respond to individual comments on Facebook?

Pt 005: Sometimes responding to direct individual comments can be both positive and negative at the same time. Sometimes when you respond directly to a comment on Facebook, it may attract a lot of negative attention. It may raise more other engagements that necessary. Playing that silent diplomacy kind of strategy can be important until the person who is aggrieved comes directly to you to ask a question.

CS: Thank you. The last question is on corporate social responsibility. How useful is it to organisations in crisis in Botswana?

Pt 005: Our social corporate responsibility is embedded in our mission as an organisation. We have a social and community development department that specifically deals with taking care of the needy and the

underprivileged children and individuals. So we have that social welfare unit within our social and community development department. Corporate social responsibility is very important to the organization because you would basically be giving back to the Community that you serve. It also create that positive image about the organisation.

CS: Any last thing you wish to add.

Pt 005: I believe it's very important for our communications professionals here to actually be educated on crisis communication. Sometimes our professionals, you might want to engage in crisis management communication here but you'll find that they rely on their chief executives who may also not be so educated in crisis communication management. It's very important for our communications professionals to be educated on this. The Heads of organizations like permanent secretaries and chief executive officers of all parastatals and private organizations need to be educated on crisis management and communication to really be at par with the communications managers; to know exactly what is supposed to happen when organisations are in crisis.

CS: Thank you very much for finding time for this interview.

Pt 005: Ok.

Transcript for participant 6 (PT 006)

WEBVTT

CS: yeah so the very first question that I wanted to ask is basically an understanding of what crisis is?

Pt 006: Well, a crisis from my knowledge and experience is an event, whether it is internal or external to the organization which disrupts the normal flow of business in a very bad or negative way. We spend quite as the business to act in a decisive manner to contain it, least it undermines the survival of the business itself, and what I have seen in the past is that crisis tend to announce themselves in very unexpected fashions. On a certain day it's a normal day and then, all of a sudden,people are running wondering what happened; people barging into your office until you know that something major in the business has gone wrong.

CS:Does crisis affect organizations in Botswana, and in what ways are organizations affected?

Pt 006: Well, it does in several ways, and I think the most obvious one is from a reputational point of view. I've seen recently in the crisis that we were dealing with at [name of organisation] involving a Board, which was out of its way going out with their term coming to an end, and they were not particularly keen to compete against other individuals who had shown interest. That's the very first thing that undermines the

business from a reputational point of view you then have investors becoming worried as to whether they should continue being stakeholders in the business. You have shareholders who will become affected because the stock is suspended by the stock exchange, until the crisis is resolved. You also have staff panicking, and not knowing where the business is going on and not knowing whether the management team that provides support will be there tomorrow, and if they are not there tomorrow what is going to happen to them. You also have the public, especially if it is an entity which the nation has invested in emotionally, and if it is a home grown business. People wondering what is happening to that particular business and whether it will weather the storms.

CS: That that's very, very insightful. Why does the reputation matters so much?

Pt 006: Well, reputation in my experience, is the bread and butter of a business because if it is the bread and butter of the business and if the reputation is harmed you then have flight of capital and financial capital. You possibly also have flight of human capital and then the converse of that is that you find it very difficult to do new investments. You also find it very difficult to attract competent high flyers to come and join your business or the ripple effect is manifold right across. You might have heard that four months ago our entity had a major corporate governance crisis. Five of the board members were retiring and they had offered themselves for re-election, and on the other hand, you had a few interested parties who also puts their names into the roll to compete for those positions. Now, the current directors were not happy that they will be competing for these positions with these other candidates and they sought to stop the annual general meeting and they then had a dispute with the managing director and inevitably I was thrown into the fire in my capacity as company secretary, in addition to being head of communications and marketing. We now had a situation where they were trying to stop the annual general meeting, and we as management were saying they don't have that rights. We went to court. In the space of 50 days, which I think is a record, for what's one, ultimately, the annual general meeting was held and a new board was ushered in. But the the consequence of that, from a crisis management point of view or from a PR point of view is that in the course of the disputes you had this business being suspended by the stock exchange. So with us not being able to change the share price moving down we were repeatedly in the news with print traditional media, social media continuously for that entire month and you also had a situation where some funders were saying look we don't think this is good for us, we are pulling out our funds.
And some employees who were entertaining offers from other potential employers. Then I think we're driven to act decisively at that point. There was that exodus by some staff members. We're still in the process of rebuilding confidence in the business internally and externally. We still have a situation where some external potential funders I saying have you sorted out your corporate governance issues? We will need time to see whether indeed you have done so, so we're hoping that it is something that will put to bed in the not so distant future. So crisis management or when a crisis hits an organization from what i've seen it really does and among a lot of things and the other thing that it does is that it affects relations amongst colleagues. Before the crisis, you might have been relating in a particular way, and by the way, once a crisis hits you do find that you split not the suddenly down right down the middle, but they will be other colleagues who see things differently.

Yes, once you start getting back together again you have to work on that kind of relationship and from a communications point of view, internally, you have to engage with staff right across to assure that things have been resolved. Externally shareholders, other stakeholders, the media, the public, they continue to be interested in what is going on in the organization and you continuously have to deploy various forms of communication, whether it's through the traditional media or through social media such as Twitter, facebook, Linkedin.

CS: You said crisis does not announce itself. Were you prepared for this particular crisis and how did you prepare organization ahead of this crisis?

Pt 006: Well, we didn't think it would blow up in the manner that it did. We have a situation where the old board convened a special board, meeting specifically to discuss director elections at the annual general meeting. And when they instructed management to stop the AGM. First of all, they were told that they did not have the authority to stop the shareholders when the post is structured management to remove the issue of elections from the agenda. There will also advised that they did not have the Legal standing to do so, because it is a meeting of shareholders, it is not a meeting of Directors. Shareholders are owners of the business so when they persisted And there was no other option but to proceed to court to stop them. By proceeding to court, they effectively putting our dirty laundry to public scrutiny, which is what happened and when neither party was prepared to back down, that is the old Board and the management team, then you had an all out crisis unfolding for a period of a month, leading to the annual general meeting and even have a general meeting itself, which the old board had tried to stop the from going ahead, but fortunately around 7am management had gone to court and obtained an Ex parte order to ensure that the annual general meeting did not stop. So the fact that the old board did not have the order meant that the meeting proceeded with the items in the agenda. We dealt with it as per the expectations of the shareholders.

Pt 006: We were communicating right as the events were unfolding. We kept updating the shareholders, the public and the regulators who are our authorities. As to what was happening, we had a whole range of stakeholders to deal with: shareholders, regulating bodies, the Central Bank, the stock exchange and the non-bank financial regulatory authority the financial accounting oversight authority, etc. We had a matrix of stakeholders that we're engaging with throughout the crisis to update them as to what was going on. You simply cannot wait for the crisis to come to an end to then start informing people about what will now effectively be a historical event. You have people who have putting money in your business and quite like that a lot of wonder what is happening to their money. You have to assure them.that you are handling the crisis in a responsible manner as possible, and in an expedient manner as possible to ensure that it comes to an end quickly for the business to continue operating without any hindrance.

CS: There is a notion that the first hour is golden in crisis communication. What is your view on this?

Pt 006: I when it started, I think it would be correct to say that within an hour after that special board meeting and concluded that we moved very quickly to issue notice of shareholders of the meeting. Because we were

worried that if we didn't, the board might issue its own notice to stop a scheduled general meeting so immediately that meeting ended we dispatched the notice of the annual general meeting to the stock exchange, because we are required as the company that is registered with stock exchange, we are not listed, yet our shares are registered in a secondary in the local bourse. So we are required to communicate to our stakeholders through the stock exchange, so, which is what we did immediately. After the conclusion of that meeting, I can confirm that we're able to move very quickly within the hour of that meeting, ending to issue communication, and then thereafter once we had issued communication, of course, the former directors were not pleased, then the drama started escalating from then on.

CS: In your case what was your position, did you prepare ahead of the crisis in anticipation, or you had to do with it, as it was unfolding.

Pt 006: Well, we do not already subscribed to the first school of thought because you know your business and you generally have a sense of the key message areas and which would be of interest to your various publics. So what we normally do is to prepare holding statements which would have the key facts about a particular issue. Now, as the situation itself unfolds, you are then able to amend that holding statement as appropriate, because it saves me a lot of time. If you if you have draft statements ready, which you are then able to amend, as appropriate, and then you dispatch them quick, you simply cannot wait. For for events unfold, because they can overwhelm you and to a point where you generally then find it difficult to sit down and draft appropriate messaging and remember this kind of messaging also has to go through one or two or three filters to make sure that it doesn't misrepresent the organization or what is or what is happening. I subscribe to, to the first couple of thoughts, where you have draft holding statements ready and then you amend them as an appropriate because there's not time, you have to move with speed.

CS: What advice, can you give to other organizations in terms of preparing for cases to extend their negative effects and to protect reputation?

Pt 006: Well, it's a number of things. I think one of them for me is the team that handles the crisis itself, because what you don't want is to have an unwieldy team, or one that is too big, because you then the risk. And the possibility of information leaking before you are able to control the type of messaging and the other thing is to make sure that you are clear on the messaging and you agree on the Miss judging as quickly as possible before it is disseminated. It is also important to realize that crisis, once you have disseminated, a message you can pull it back and we've had a few instances well not too many thankfully where we have dispersed, the message and you then realize that perhaps one or two things should never have been in that statement. You have to react to contain any follow ups that might that might come out of that of the elements which you not have wanted to put out at that time, of course, you also have to be aware that, in a crisis.

Pt 006: You, that is, this is where you are dealing with advisors that also know the bank. You have to be a let to watch that doing and be able to respond appropriately and it has also been helpful in my experience. To have access to to media practitioners journalists. And to know the strengths of journalists in the various media house. If I need to deploy a message with the heavy financial messaging during a crisis, and I

wanted simplified. I have to know which journalists to go. Some of them will sympathize with your cause and some of them will sympathize with the other parties. There's a temptation when is the realization that oh sure that [name of journalist] seems to be sympathetic to our foes to try and then deny you access to information which doesn't help. So my approach is always to treat all journalists equitably, even the ones which I know are not necessarily sympathetic to our cause at a particular time.

Pt 006: With monitoring, what I normally do is to have an individual who just sits there and watch everything that is flowing either on social media. Crisis we are dealing with more in the past, because now, you have a multiplicity of media outfits. Some of them are online. In the past you didn't have Facebook, you have Twitter, you have whatever else where even ordinary members of the public issuing rude commentaries second by second. You ought to have someone monitoring social media; ought to have someone monitoring the traditional press. And it is interesting dealing with a crisis because not only do you have to engage with your various stakeholders internally and externally. You have a media practitioners wanting to do interviews every other minute. They also have regulatory bodies wanting to be engaged, sometimes in person, instead of over the phone or via statement. Now if you're dealing with a central bank, and those are generally very conservative people throughout the world, I think, central bankers are. They would want to set a team and go into the organization to come and understand what is going on. So you find yourself that you're stressed right across the spectrum. So the overall message is to remain calm. I'm not sure, besides tracked by emotions because it's not personally at the end of the day. I mean if you personalize it and you're going to lose the plot because you're then going to refuse to speak to certain people which might have your back because they will then have their own perceptions, because they don't have your side of the story. So it's important to remain calm and to be decisive in your actions, if you have to release a statement or make a statement you do so quickly.

Pt 006: With social media, some of them wants to break the news on their social media pages before the story appears in the print paper the following day. So you literally don't sleep, and you can put your phone on silent or you can put your feet, or you can switch it off because you'll be engaged throughout.

CS: There are suggestions that some organizations use corrective strategies, other engage in denial strategies, while others shifting the blame. Are these strategy prevalent in Botswana and from your experience, are they effective or less effective in repairing reputational damage?

Pt 006: Let me start from a broad perspective. I think generally in Botswana, crisis management is still very new. Botswana is also a very conservative society and you find that inevitably, of course, those that have organizations are products of our society and they themselves are conservative. Now that presents a very big problem when it comes to managing a crisis because it's a problem for people to say ah unless we say there is something wrong, no one is going to find out so let's keep quiet. I mean i've experienced it with a number of colleagues who then say we don't want to draw attention to ourselves. By saying 1234 and now only say to them look even if you hide under a rock someone is going to so and so is under that rock. You cannot hide this thing forever because someone in the organization is going to tell someone out there and you

will wake up to find yourself on the front page of the newspaper. So my approach is always to be frank with the public within reason. To say yes, there is challenge X and this is what has been done to address it, you obviously have to show your publics that's there is a problem, and it is being dealt with. But it is very dangerous to assume that they will never know the truth. It is always critical to be upfront and package the message in a sensitive manner because you want people to know that there is a particular issue but you're also mindful of the interests of other parties, including the organization. So, it is critical to be honest, when dealing with crisis. Do not lie. You will be caught out. It does happen and once you're caught out your own credibility is diminished significant. You will never be able to contain that crisis if you yourself are seen as an evil person.

CS: I see, thank you very much. That's very, very insightful. So, can you share what informs your decisions when you choose a particular crisis response strategy over the other.

Pt 006: The primary consideration is to contain the crisis as quickly as possible so that you can restore normalcy to the organization. So it's critical to assess what the issue is. It is critical to have a crisis communications plan which will help you to protect your reputation and that of the organization. Normally, let me just give you a rundown of how I normally ensure that we have a particular flow and organized flow to deal with a crisis. Phase one for us, is always to collect data and assess the incident. Once we have done that we are then able to determine if an incident is a crisis. If it is a crisis and we then move into action quickly, but if the incident is a potential crisis, then you have an opportunity to escalate it to the crisis management team. We don't have, as I said, you want to have a small crisis management team, which comprises key people. You don't want to have a big group because if you have a huge group there is a greater possibility for indecision.
And a crisis is not going to wait for you. So once we've determined that this is a crisis, we then go into what we call in-depth information gathering and then we determine what our objective is. Objective would then be, as I said, to try and contain the crisis in as quick manner as possible. Once you determine that objective, we then develop a strategy and that strategy is going to involve preparing messages and holding statement and preparing a questions and answers document and preparing fact sheet about some incontrovertible things which cannot be disputed will then pay a fact sheet. We are, then, once we have done those we then determine the impact of this crisis and where we should pitch it in terms of escalation. We then ask ourselves if the crisis is a proper crisis, Or is the original crisis or is it confined to a particular geography of the country? But these days, of course, with the advent of social media it is virtually impossible to assume that if a branch is burning or there has been a robbery in a branch in Francistown, it will be confined to Francistown. The minute that happens, will be online and treating so once we have developed the action plan and we then engage in communication. We implement our internal and external communication strategy, and then we monitor and evaluate the situation as it evolves.

Pt 006: Basically it is also critical I think in when you're dealing with a crisis to do sort of a risk or that situation, because by doing so you are able to see where there are weaknesses, where there are strengths, where there are opportunities and whether threats will then inform you in terms of crafting appropriate messaging and controlling it. By finding

the critical core four points in the process, a weaknesses can be reduced or completely moved. What I also like doing and is to look for worst case scenarios for the crisis and also plan for them, and have mitigating practices or interventions for worst case numbers in case things really grow further south. Yes, when you manage a crisis it's important to have a very active mind as to what might happen. You just cannot confine yourself to what is evolving at a particular point in time. You want to think about the worst case scenarios and how you can deal with those and the other critical thing. It is important,during a crisis, from an internal comms point of view to equip your stuff with the right information because when they are out there, people will be asking them what is going on, and they should be able to respond with the same messaging in various circumstances. You also want to do help them look out for whats happening, you have a crisis you'll say look don't just sit back if you see a particular thing happening, don't sit back. Let me know, let's talk to the communications and marketing or PR department as quickly as possible.

Pt 006: There is also the crisis team, I think I mentioned. So it is critical during crisis and it may experience, this has been particularly evident that members of the team, each team Member must know what that is possible for and how far their responsibility goes because you don't want me stepping into your area under the assumption that you're not very much as opposed to between us. Well once that happens, and the balance is going to be the steps between collective decision making and a final decision that has to be made by the leader. The crisis team leader is going to be is going to be steps. Strong leadership is also essential. You cannot afford a situation where there is indecision, there is infighting. It's critical for strong leadership to be evident throughout the crisis to the team to make sure that each team Member delivers. What I don't want to happen is to be in a position where a lot information is gathered, but when you're looking for it, no one knows. I always take it upon myself as the head of communications department to make sure that log is within my grasp all times.

CS: Do you find yourself using language that is dominating persuading and manipulating on the part of the audiences as a tool to resolve the crisis very fast?

Pt 006: Okay, let's start with the language bit. I've always found it useful to deploy language that is calm, language which is not condescending, language which is factual, mindful of course that you add the midst of a crisis, and there are possibilities that's the people that you are in dispute with will engage in propaganda tactics. So you do find that inevitably during the course of a crisis. You might have to deploy language that is maybe emotive. But language, which seeks to sway your stakeholders to your side that points where your adversaries might complain and say you're casting them in an unfriendly lights. Of course it is not a friendly situation at that point. It might help you to say to your stakeholders, including the public that the people that are causing problems do not have the best interests of the organization at hearts. And normally that doesn't sit well with the other party. But yes it's a mix and you make that decision, as the crisis evolves.

Pt 006: On the issue of the spokesperson, the managing director or the CEO is normally the chief spokesperson of the organization. You might find that if a crisis is at the board level, the Board chair would be

the chief spokesperson. In other circumstances, the head of communications or the head of public relations would play a supporting role primarily, and when you have a crisis unfolding, and let's say these around the bank robbery and in such well in such a situation, you would have the managing director or the CEO as the chief spokesperson. Now it is critical to have during a crisis, a single spokesperson, of course, there might be instances when the spokesperson is indisposed and in that situation, because the media and the public already know who the head of PR is in a particular organization, that is easy for the head of PR to step into and deal with issues. Generally and it will depend on the issue. If it is a big issue, I always prefer the managing director to be the chief spokesperson and supporting in that role he then becomes the only person who deals with the media. In terms of interviews, of course, we would have called him to some mock interviews. Practising is an advantage in that you tend to know the styles of interviewing of various channels. So if it's a journalist X from from X TV you say look I know this guy is combative he's going to come at you, and make you emotional. So this is how it would be best to deal with this interview. I then deal with external requests for information and package messaging appropriately for him and make sure there is understanding of the issues. as I said, ensure that we stick to key messages because we would have developed key messages which we want to repeat through interviews to enforce or that the sticks in the minds of the of the people.
My role as I said, would be to gather as much information as possible about the crisis. I also check feeds to make sure that the spokesperson is up to date with what is happening and keep the logs of incoming and outgoing information.

Pt 006: Now, in events that a CEO, it is not immediately available in the building, for whatever reason; he might be on leave, hopefully he might not be in a coma in a hospital somewhere, the critical thing is to make sure that, as I said, you gather as much information as possible to understand what the crisis is. Get him on the phone or zoom or teams, or whatever means you're able to use depending on the time zone. Agree on how to communicate; what is happening and what would be ideal. Once you have agreed with the CEO with statement in his name, you should start communicating. The people would say the person is in charge, this is what is happening, and this is what he's saying, and we should be able to buy time for him to get back to the office, so that you can deal with the crisis. It is critical for the PR team to equip the spokesperson with the right information and with the right training, and with whatever intelligence that might that be required for that particular crisis because they will be relying on you in terms of the communication strategy or your writing abilities and your all sorts of things now. I happen to be in the fortunate position and of having not only have worked in the in the media industry but having some legal background. So it normally helps to manage situations quickly, because you don't necessarily have to be running through your external legal advisors. In the events that your legal advice is not around, you're the person officially tasked with legal issues in the organization. Him and I are able to debate certain positions, from a legal point of view and not just rely on him to say that legally you can't do this or say this I'm fortunate to be able to say but look, I think, as far as I understand the law, and this is what we can do from a crisis point of view in order to manage this this situation.

CS: Let's talk about the role of social media, especially Facebook during a crisis.

Pt 006: Social media is both good and dangerous. It is dangerous because you have all sorts of characters on social media. Some of whom do not have a direct interest in the business but are interested in the events as they are unfolding, and they would interpret them in in whatever way which in some cases is not accurate. Now, the fortunate thing is that social media is immediate. And now, if you have your statements ready, if you have your facts ready, you are able to respond in real time to whatever issues that may be arising from those that are interested in your matter. Well on social media you also have your own free will to deploy any statements or updates very quickly to social media. I mean the print media is having a very difficult time catching up with social media. By the time they print a story, the following day, the public would have consumed it 24 hours before throughout the night. We then find that even the newspapers themselves are have social media editions in real time. You have to take a lead to all those things so that you've been able to use social media in a very useful manner. But critically, as I said, whether it is social media or whatever medium, you don't lie. You should also know when to keep quiet and you define your message, you define your parameters you focus on solutions not problems because you will have realized from social for that on social media, in particular, people will be focused on problems. Focus as well on action not speculation, because social media, as I said, is full of people who will be speculating about all manner of things. If you focus on action rely on facts, you also simply because it is social media, and it is moving in real time and you also don't volunteer what you don't know. Sometimes the temptation is to say, people are up in arms on social media that also does it all sorts of things and you want to respond without facts and then you later on have to come back on Facebook or Twitter to say we are correcting a statement we made a few hours back, these are the facts, and the statement is such a big statement. Even if it's social media it takes experience because if you experienced you go out and gather the true facts because you don't want to fall on to what you don't know. in the meantime you will be getting the reactions on social media, so you have to move with speed to gather the facts and come back and tell people what is factual. You don't give anything away.
Discipline teamwork. The other thing with social media which tends to cause problems with PR practitioners is that because it is real time, people are making all sorts of things in real time and there is a risk that you might forget to tell your own people. So what you want to avoid is to have a situation where your own people, your colleagues, your employees and the organization pick up information, pick up your statements, your interventions from social media. We always make sure that what we see on social media during a crisis, our staff get to have the facts first. Before we go to the media we communicate with our people first. It will give them five minutes to make sure that everyone has received this email or whatsapp update or whatever it might be. Once we've given them the five minute lead, then we'll go social media and make sure that we update social media in the same manner as we did employee. You don't want the inconsistency as well.

CS: What could be some of the best practices of using social media especially Facebook?

Pt 006: I don't know whether it's a good or bad thing. Is these people just don't want to read? I think people who read, we must be a dying breed. And so it is critical to remember that this generation, especially people who are born post 2000 or maybe mid 90s, right through the 2000s are generally worse at reading. If it's in the written form in somebody's phone, it is in a short form as possible. Alternatively, as you say, as the spokesperson, because it's this generation, we are always fortunate in that we are able to source tv clips and then package them appropriately. If you don't have TV journalist coming through we're able to record our own little videos with key messages package them nicely and then post them on our social media pages because people really don't want to read. Apart from that people are quite busy. Even those that don't mind reading or like reading sometimes they have the time. It is always helpful to package audio or audio visual for them. Now what also helps our regular interviews because, fortunately, the radio interviews are very easy compared to TV interview, so we are also able to source those clips and then package them appropriately and put them out on our social media pages. It does help and sometimes we proactively do so, package voice messages or video messages and then encourage our staff members, in addition to putting them out on our own social media pages to put them on that social media pages.

CS: There are indications that some organizations in Botswana are very passive in sharing information on Facebook. What is your take on this?

Pt 006: I think that's an idea and Botswana is still a very conservative society. We believe in the good of humanity in the sense that, if there is a crisis in an organization, you are often astounded to hear colleagues, some colleagues say you know these are people, they will understand. They will not come down hard on us, they are people we live with them, our sisters and brothers so there'll be sympathetic, which is a folly, in my view. So that culture is a huge problem for PR practitioners, especially PR practitioners, who know what they're doing because when a crisis hits and you tell colleagues 'look, this is going to be a huge problem, we need to move now we need to be proactive and manage this', you'll find that you also have to fight this other conservative force who say no let's just like oh let's keep our heads below the carpet. We don't think people will find out, and when people do find out, they come running to you.
And of course the professional can say well remember, and I said let's do this, but there is lack of understanding as to the value of public relations, which is why you often find that in some organizations and public relations practitioners are tucked away in some corner somewhere. It is always assumed that these are people that can be sent around for menial tasks, and whereas it is critical that there should be head of public relations, who sits in the executive management and who is there when critical issues are discussed so that they don't rely on second hand information when there is a crisis. The impact of a PR practitioner who who sits at executive level is, in my view, able to respond and to advice quickly and appropriately and know what to do when a crisis hits. They will also know what you say and what not to say during a crisis. That is why you find that some organizations have social media pages which have not been updated and I'm being charitable here, for months. You will find a Facebook page was last active. Now, with a coronavirus it's worse. You might find a Facebook page, which was less active, three, four years ago. And you might find SOS for websites, it is terrible. You go to the media section of websites and you will be shocked to find that's the last public statement they released was five years ago. This is an organization

that is operated and you have to wonder if nothing goes on in that organization so from a social media point of view it is a challenge for your participants especially when there is a crisis. You might even have the leadership of an organization say I know we don't like this Facebook, this thing of yours, let's just ignore Facebook. As much as we don't like Facebook and we won't know what people are saying there, which is a very dangerous posture to take. The conservative culture which has seeped into the corporate world or even in government, I think, in government. I was invited with a number of colleagues from the private sector and to form a communications or PR team for the Covid 19 Task Force. When we got there because the Task Force is constituted significantly by people from governments and it took a lot of work and to have them appreciate the need to communicate issues with speed, including reacting to sentiments from the public about Covid with a certain level of efficiency. It is a huge problem. I think PR practitioners have a lot of work to do. If it is a good thing, it means PR practitioners if they know what they're doing will be relevant in the Botswana context for many years.

CS: Having spoken about organisational culture, do you consider the diverse cultures of people when you develop messaging during crisis?

Pt 006: There are diverse cultures. It is important to realize that, in terms of demographics. The biggest cohort is young people, people who are still fairly young. The older generation constitutes a comparatively smaller population, and that is the group which would ordinarily want to bury its head in the sand and hope that the problem will go away so in an organization, it is critical to realize that group is in the minority. Most of them would not be economically active and therefore generally positive about things that are going on in society. Even if there's a crisis, some of them would not even know that there is a mess out there. But the young people who constitutes the population which is, which is a young cohort is the one which you have to be particularly aware of, and you have to develop messaging with an understanding of how they think and how they will react, including the fact that they're looking to buy everything in anything you say they question. The older cohort may not be interested in what is going on, but, of course, you also have to make sure that you have messaging which is appropriate for that which will largely be factual information. This is happening, this is why it is happening, this is how we're dealing with it, and we are hoping that we would have resolved it by this time. We'll give you an update as and when. In between those factual point, as you are dealing with events, skeptical cohorts questioning all these. You have to react to that cohort with a quick message.

Pt 006: One of the things I realized as well during a crisis is apart from the various age cohorts, you're also going to have certain stakeholders who will tell you that you know what we don't want. We don't like this noise that is happening in your organization and you have to explain to them that look, we also don't like what is happening, but we have to react to it.

Pt 006: I recall that in 2006, we had another crisis which involved government shareholding in the business. The Minister of Finance, at the time had indicated in his budget speech, the government would be divesting from our business and we then pro-actively sought a replacement

shareholder. And, once we have that shareholder in and we redeemed government shares but government said no we're not accepting this money, we will leave at a time of our choosing. Then we said we already have another shareholder who stepped in and that on its own led to a huge flare up between ourselves and government. What then happened is, you have the guys in government and putting pressure on this Chairperson, putting pressure that tell those guys to bring us back in. Otherwise we will deny you business. We ended up going to court, again, it was a huge mess and the President at the time [name of President] called the MD who and the Minister of Finance. He called him and said look I'm seeing these things. I just don't like this kind of noise can you guys just pipe down so we had to explain to them that look, we would like to we didn't want things to reach this level. Yes, the Minister of Finance, is engaging all these things. We are now in court, but we will do our best to make sure that we were reconciled at some point, which ultimately happened.

CS: Having spoken about culture, what is the place of the kgotla in disseminating crisis messages?

Pt 006: The kgotla system does not lend itself to disseminating crisis messages because of the long protocol of seeking access to the platform. As you know you can't use a kgotla without the permission of the chief. Where there is a headman or sub-chief they have to relay your requests to the use of the kgotla to the chief or paramount chief. So we never use the kgotla system for crisis management purposes.

CS: There are suggestions that organisations don't respond to individual comments on Facebook during crisis. What is your take on this?

Pt 006: We responded to give our comments. In addition to issuing general statements, if an individual makes a particular statement, other people might be thinking the same thing. So if you respond directly to an individual you do it in such a manner that you are also killing many other birds with one stone. You're not being personally but that particular individual you got is pointing to them, but also mindful that you are, at the same time, addressing other people who were thinking like this person. What i'm saying is and because it goes back to the capacity of the PR team. As I said in the challenges, there is a lack of understanding of the value of PR teams, which is often why you would find that even in big organizations, they have a small team. That will only become apparent when there is a crisis we do not have to have individuals some monitoring social media some monitoring and regulating the websites, to see what the regulators are saying about your organization others drafting statements and what have you. So social media, and it is critical that you have maybe two or three people who don't sleep and who comment on social media at 3am at terribly ungodly hours.

Pt 006: You want to have a team, which is able to wake you up in the middle of the night to say there's just been a Facebook post, someone is saying 1234, how do we respond to that? Normally there's the fact sheets, or they would have standard answers they would know generally. What you see but there might be certain things which needs to be embedded into the response. We live and breathe social media so during crisis and I'll get a call at 12pm at night to say we just did a Facebook post someone is saying this, and this is how I think we should respond, and I say okay hold on just send me your draft response, are calibrated, calm.

Pt 006: In a crisis, you will always get a reaction. There are no two about it, which is why I always have the following tips in what we call the war room during a crisis somewhere on the boards: remain calm. It is in your interest as a spokesperson, to talk positive attitude towards whether it's journalists have all these people on social media. It is always critical to remember, in particular, with regards to journalist, because some of them are on social media. They have a job to do, because if they can reach you by mobile about those post, something on your page, they have a job to do. It is also important to remember that you are not personally being accused of wrongdoing, so there's no need to run or to hide, or to be aggressive. It's critical, of course, as I said, from a legal point of view that you don't make statements that that imply legal responsibility and you don't also try to pass the buck to third parties, because that is often what happens, even when some entities respond on social media during a crisis, when they respond to queries or to concerns or text. It's important as well to not to allow yourself to be drawn into emotional arguments by a provocative questions.

Pt 006: Get the information out clearly and politely. The minute you refuse to respond to people on social media or to the traditional media, you are effective retaining the crisis personality, which is what it should not be and you're not helping the situation

CS: Thank you. What is the role of corporate social responsibility for organisations in crisis?

Pt 006: In my experience CSI what it does, how to cast an organization in a positive light and the day you have a crisis, I can assure you, no one is going to say ah let's be soft on them because he built a library for a school in a remote part of the country. Even the ones who benefited from your generosity from a CSI point of view are interested in the crisis. I don't think there's any benefits from CSI during a crisis.

Pt 006: Remember, there was a strike in which led to over 300 people being dismissed from the mining company. I was at the mine at the time. That mine was huge on CSI. When that industrial action took place, the then managing director decided to go hard on the miners to a point where over 300 miners were were dismissed at the time. I personally from my experience don't think that pre crisis CSI activities help to buy you goodwill during a crisis. Post a crisis, you can engage in CSI activities for people to remember that this is a company with his soul, which cares about them, we care about people. But in events that you have a crisis, people will not be interested in the CSI things. It's place is in building the brand of an organization; in empowering the public and disadvantaged communities, etc. But I don't think it will solve your problems when you have a crisis.

CS: Any last thing that you may wish to share, about crisis communications in Botswana?

Pt 006: The most important thing is to inculcate, to teach organizations the value of PR and crisis management and for organizations to know that when there is a crisis, a PR person is key to managing that crisis. What pains me sometimes when I speak to other colleagues, is that they'll call me when a crisis is unfolding in that organization just for thoughts and

what's up and i'll be asking so when did you know about this? Strategic PR requires you to be situated strategically in an organization, in particular, having a place in the boardroom and executive management.

CS: Thats the end of the interview. I'm sincerely grateful for this interview. It was very insightful very educational. Thank you very much. I will now stop the recording.

Pt 006: Thank you.

Transcript for participant 7 (PT 007)

WEBVTT

CS: Yes, the very first question that I want to ask is your understanding of crisis, what do you understand crisis to be?

Pt 007: I understand a crisis to be an unexpected situation that an organization finds itself having to deal with. This wouldn't normally be an event or a situation that an organization would blend in time.

CS: So does crisis affects organizations in Botswana and in what ways are organization affected if any?

Pt 007: I believe organizations are affected differently. In the case of Botswana, you can see organizations like what one can call for profit organizations, for instance, the tourism business has been largely affected by the ongoing Covid-19 crisis and as well, as equally not for profit organizations like government, tourism businesses, they are for profit organizations. In years they have been affected in terms of the cash flow from income streams. If you take individual government employees in most countries, including Botswana, they continue to get paid their usual salaries, and this is not the case for private sector business, which have been hard hit by the Covid-19 pandemic, which I regard as one good example of a crisis. So each organization, will be affected differently and in my view the for profit organizations, especially non-governmental organizations will be affected, even more.

CS: Crisis does not announced its arrival. From your experience as a PR practitioner, what can be done to prepare organizations to withstand the adverse effects of crisis and to protect their reputation?

Pt 007: It is my belief that organizations should have a crisis communication strategy. The crisis communication strategy would mean that organizations, first and foremost would know that it is possible that a crisis can be for us. And then once they get that knowledge that it is possible that crisis of whatever nature can affect them, then the crisis communication strategy would inform what to do for a crisis of whatever nature before us. So the preparatory processes for anything that can happen that could disrupt the normal functioning of the organization in question, I am submitting here and now that a crisis, a communication strategy can we help an organization to mitigate the possible negative and devastating effects that any crisis would have on any organization.

CS: Why does the reputation matters so much to organizations?

Pt 007: What reputation mean to us is, if you take for profit organizations, it may be the reason why they are still in business, maybe, because they have a certain reputation. Now damaged reputation normally means that their continued stay in business is also in danger. In these days, maybe number, but again for a government organizations, like government departments so on and so forth, it still matters in that if you are a government, for instance, and you do not have any reputation, whatever you say people do not believe it. So you also need reputation as a government for purposes of allowing you room in a manner, so that you will not be going through discomfort. People are very critical. People being suspicious of anything you say because perhaps you'll have no reputation.

CS: You are at the helm of the covid-19 crisis communication in government. How are you ensuring that government's reputation remains intact in the midst of this pandemic.

Pt 007: Firstly, we relay information to the public and the media proactively, unsolicited and out of our own volition. We volunteer information to them by consistently issuing press releases or media advisories on anything that we want to communicate. For instance, when vaccines are arriving or when we're expecting some certain number of vaccines, we announce unprovoked to the public or media to say we are going to receive this amount and then after arrival also announced when the rollout is going to start. In my view, doing so actually helps build a certain reputation of government or a government organization that takes itself seriously. That also shows we take our audience seriously, being members of the public, being the media, the critical stakeholders. That way, is that we also respond to all the inquiries, without exception. It's without exception, regardless of how controversial the inquiry is; we always give our response. So in my view this is most of the time in positive light, and to also regard us as people who can be trusted. So I believe those two, as some of the ways in which we help keep our reputation intact, especially in relation to the information we give out and the responses we give when requested to do so.

CS: Can you share some more best practices that you engage in when the crisis has started?

Pt 007: I would say other best practices would include timely response to inquiries for purposes of avoiding issues of misquoting, whether deliberate or not deliberate, especially the print media. For certain information we require them to send us a written questionnaire, which we then respond to. So what we do is we will respond between 24 and 48 hours of receipt of the inquiry. In cases where we are not able to respond within that time or where we are not able to respond before the date, we let them know in advance that we are still compiling more information on their inquiry. In my view, this has helped create a good working relationship between us and the media. In the process, it is also help them highly and in the process keeping our reputation intact.

CS: There is a notion that the first hour is golden when a crisis starts. Whats your view on this?

Pt 007: Yes, the correct answer is that it is not practical especially when working for the government organization. What happens is that before I make any important announcement, I should have the sanction of the Permanent Secretary. What this means is that I need to have the Permanent Secretary understand the position i'm trying to communicate and agree to it and own it up. In terms of government, the way it works is that the chief spokesperson is the Permanent Secretary who is the CEO of the Ministry. As the head of public relations or communications department, I do so on behalf of the Permanent Secretary and whatever I do it should have the sanction of the Permanent Secretary, except for the cases where we are dealing with information previously communicated. This media House may ask you something about some certain subject matter and then two-three days later, another media house asks you the same question. In that case, I need not make reference to the Permanent Secretary, because it would have been discussed. It is not very possible to move with speed in a lot of cases especially in these years where the social media platform allows for immediate response or immediate announcements of certain things that happen. But government being government has processes that have to be followed because, even if I have spoken to the Permanent Secretary, the Permanent Secretary may still need to also consult his superiors, in this case, the office of the President. Therefore, sometimes it may take a little more hours than perhaps if we were not a government organization.

CS: Please take us behind the curtains to the processes of development of messages. At what stage do you develop messaging: ahead of the crisis, or while it is in progress?

Pt 007: It is important that appropriate messages be developed in view of any on ongoing or forthcoming crisis. When the message has been developed, it then means the message become like themes that organization will be communicating. So what would then happen is that whether you have one or two people selected to be the spokesperson of the organization in relation to the subject matter at hand. It means that whatever message that they communicate will be in line with what has been the messages that have been a pretty developed. The theme will remain constant. This helps bring credibility, integrity, believability to the messages that are being communicated. So yes, I agree, it is important that certain messages be angled in a specific manner and be developed such that whatever updates are being made, whatever communication is being made, then it is in line with the messages that have been developed. This also helps to maintain consistency of what is being communicated so that eventually an organization does not seem to be communicating from all and every angle and in the process, contradicting the initial communication.

CS: Is there a team that is put together as a part of the crisis communications team to deal with crisis and what is the role of the team members?

Pt 007: Yes, normally there is a team. If you take, for instance, in the case of a government ministry like ours, you will find that the team include the head of the public relations unit and the Permanent Secretary.

So we would then have another person or two who have been selected perhaps on the basis for being people who work closely with the issue at hand. They can also be selected to be the spokesperson at that very point in time. So yes, even in our case in government whenever we have an issuec we would have somebody selected to go and talk about it. Otherwise the Permanent Secretary and the head of the public relations unit remained constant. In the case of my ministry, it is myself as the head of the public relations unit who's been almost on all the issues.

CS: Regarding the development of the crisis communication strategy are you informed by any risk assessment of the possible crisis types that can affect the organization?

Pt 007: Yes, in the formulation of the communication strategy, we are guided by a risk assessment of possible crisis that can affect the ministry. We also look at the bigger crisis that we may be grappling with, because it is possible that in midst of a crisis, more crisis crop up on top of an existing crisis. A crisis would prompt you to do more risk assessment of further crisis that affect you.

CS: What informs your decisions to choose a particular response strategy over a particular messaging over the other messages?

Pt 007: What informs our messaging selection process is the subject matter. At the end I would determine what it is that we want to communicate. For instance, we are in the Covid-19 crisis. There is many people being infected and many are dying in the process and the kind of a message that may be appropriate for the situation should be a positive one, a positive one, that brings hope to the people; that shows that government is doing something to avert any escalation of the crisis. The main goal at the end, would be to try and stabilize the emotions of the people and bring hope to the people so that they don't come to think and believe that they are all going to die, and would not live to choose to see their children grow or their grandchildren growth. So the motivation will be to bring hope to the people. The message that you are crafting, like I said, you wanted it to be a message of hope, a message of positivity. That will motivate how you craft your message.

CS: Talking of which, there are indications that some organizations use corrective strategies, others deploy denial strategies, while others shift the blame. Are these strategy prevalent in Botswana? How effective or less effective are they in repairing reputational damage?

Pt 007: In relation to what we are doing here, we have not adopted any of the two strategies, you mentioned denial and shifting the blame strategy. We have not done that because if we were to do it, people are going to lose trust in us. It would eventually catch up with us. Once trust is gone, it would be very difficult to build. So my position is that I would not advise any organization to adopt any of these strategies, except for corrective strategies. I think they possibly provide a temporary relief and because you cannot deny a truth forever, eventually it comes out. When it comes out you don't look good in the eyes of the public and your critical stakeholders. Similarly if you keep shifting blames and it eventually catches up with you, your audience eventually come to realize that the problem is not the others whom you're pointing fingers at, but the problem is actually with you. When things come to

that people and your critical stakeholders would distrust you and, once you are not trusted, you cannot succeed. If you are a profit making business, then you'll eventually close shop. If you are a government department, you are eventually going to serve people who do not believe in you, people who do not trust you. You lose credibility, you lose integrity. You cannot even enjoy doing that which you may wish to do.

CS: Let's now talk about the role of social media, especially Facebook during crisis.

Pt 007: Yes, we do happens to use Facebook. Any communication, any press release, public notice, media advisor or a public statement that we make, we also put it in our own social media platforms. In cases where we need to make a prompt or instant announcement, we use our Facebook page. What would also happen is that when we issue a press statement and then also use Facebook or social media platforms, we would then have some members of the public commenting on it. So we will then take time to respond to specific inquiries or specific questions. When we feel somebody is misleading others, we respond to correct. It could be on the Facebook or the messenger.

Pt 007: The advantage of social media is that it is instant. You communicate instantly and the information riches all and everyone immediately and again social media is cheap is not an expensive medium of communication. Its very cheap. Again you don't need too much training to operate it. You just need to know how to write, and you can deliver your short messages through it. It also reaches quite a good number of the intended targets.

CS: Are there some disadvantages that you have seen when using it during the present crisis or the past crisis?

Pt 007: Yes, there are some disadvantages. Some people are may deliberately distorts information shared in social media. They may deliberately distorted and if those people are influential people, then some good number of people may be convinced by whatever wrong argument that this influential people keep sending us against your organization. May be its because social media allows anyone to respond even people who are less informed about your organization can respond and critique publicly whatever you may have communicated for your organization. This criticism is going to reach many more people as well, so really social media has some advantages, but it also has some disadvantages, where some people may use it to ruin the image of your organization.

CS: You spoke about the influential people, have you engaged influencers to speak sympathetically about your Ministry?

Pt 007: Christopher Nyanga: Yes, in the recent past, we have engaged some influential people to help us convince people to go and get vaccinated. In the early stages of the vaccination process, there were certain myths and mythologies about getting vaccinated. Some people said if you get vaccinated you will die or you will no longer have an erection; or if you're a woman you will no longer be able to conceive; or if you are a man, you will develop breast. There were so many things, so we decided to rope in some influential members of the Community in the form of chiefs, like retired politicians. We got them vaccinated publicly and

then, after which they would make certain statements in support of vaccination and also encouraging people to get vaccinated. So somehow I believe the strategy worked, because we have seen quite a good number of people coming up for vaccination. We no longer experience vaccine hesitancy.

CS: There are indications that some organizations in Botswana are very passive in sharing information on Facebook. What is your take on this?

Pt 007: My position is that if you don't share information or, if you are reluctant to share information, you allow the peddling of rumors about your organization to go on. You allow the media to keep on speculating about your vision. You allow the public to form certain views about your organization which may not be the current news about your organization and then at the end of the day you will not enhance your reputation and your image before the various publics within which your organization is situated. I believe that it is important that an organization should be willing to share information preemptively and also respond to inquiries when made it to them. I believe that we do share information voluntarily. As a result, we have done away with the huge negativity that used to be there. We have also done away with the corruption that was said to be rampant around vaccination and vaccines, tenders relating to the Covid-19 crisis and at the end of the day, it brought more understanding about the organisations and the function of the ministry. Even Members of the media are finding it difficult to keep on making speculations.

CS: Do you respond to individual comments?

Pt 007: Yes, we do sometimes respond to individual comments on certain issues that we post about. We do not always respond to comments about each and every communication we make in social media, but to the ones that in our view can potentially mislead the public. Some influential people only attempt to interpret or respond to our communication in a deliberately wrong manner and you come to find that, by so doing, many more people are likely to believe them. So we look at the subject matter at hand and then decide that on this one, we are going to follow up each and every comment that is being made. If these comment mislead then we will immediately respond and correct them.

CS: Do you have a social media team?

Pt 007: I have a team. it's not necessarily specific to social media, it does other communication duties, but we deliberately take a decision to keep an eye on how whatever communication is trending and the kind of responses that the communication is getting and then respond. I believe there are organizations that subscribe to the strategies you mentioned earlier where they try to avoid scrutiny; avoid the media and also avoid people. They forget that when they avoid people, people mention certain things about them and they don't respond. It ends up giving people the impression that what is being said about you, is correct. In my view, I don't think it is the right attitude, for an organization to adopt not respond to issues being raised about it, or even to ignore whatever misinformation about it that is being spread around. I don't think that's the right way to do it.

CS: What are some of the best practices you engage when using social media?

Pt 007: I believe that one of the best practices is to have a team dedicated to social media, responding to whatever issues that members of the public raise. They should monitor communication that would have been made by the organization, where there is need for response, then they immediately do so. I think this would ensure that even people out there would believe that the organization is taking itself seriously. Use photographs and videos to illustrate your messaging. Then the information would reach as many people as as possible.

CS: To what extent do you consider culture when developing messaging?

Pt 007: We do consider culture. We become sensitive to the different cultures that exists in our audience and therefore when we craft messages; whatever communication we ensure that it is culturally balanced, it does not appear to be casting aspersions on one culture or the other. So we tend to adopt a neutral stance and deliberately so.

CS: To what extent have you used, or can you use the kgotla to disseminate crisis messages?

Pt 007: Yes, the kgotla set up is useful in that the presence of the chief makes what is being said there to have credibility. More people still believe in traditional leadership, therefore, what is said in the presence of the chief and possibly even endorsed by him is seen as holding more water. So yes the kgotla is an effective crisis communication platform.

CS: Thank you. What role does social corporate responsibility play for organisations in crisis?

Pt 007: I believe it provides an opportunity for the organization to meet with most of the public or the Community within which it does its business. They get to meet in a more relaxed manner environment and then they truly understand each other in more relaxed atmosphere. Even the society would also have something to point at that this organization which is doing businesses in our area, has contributed to our growth and development as a Community.

CS: The last question is on language use. Some organizations purposefully use language to dominate, persuade and manipulated their audiences. What is your view on this?

Pt 007: In my view it is not wrong for organizations to use language in a manner that would convince people that there is hope at the end of the dark situation. There is nothing wrong if such organizations communicate positively and showing people that they shouldn't lose hope because doing so would keep people supporting the organization. It would be to remove a lot of stress from people. However, such organizations should leave to their promise and actualize the promise that they make. They shouldn't just make promises for the sake of making people happy.

CS: Any last thing about crisis communication in Botswana?

Pt 007: Well, my last word, can only be that crisis communication should be ethical. It should be truthful and it should carry messages of hope.

CS: Thank you very much, I am eternally grateful. I will now stop the recording.

Pt 007: Thank you

Transcript for participant 8 (PT 008)

WEBVTT

CS: So the first question that I am going to ask you pertains to your understanding of crisis, what do you understand by a crisis?

Pt 008: Well, my firm understanding of crisis is that it is situation over and above your normal situation. It is something that you need to, in most cases, it's a very active situation that's quite different from your normal day to day situation. Crisis may also be interpreted in various ways to the severity or the the size of the issue. It could be loss of life, it could be crisis to reputation damage. It could be a variety of things, but i'd like to believe that it is anything above the norm of a day to day running. It could be something that is of detriment to an organization's public image or reputation. That is really my perspective of crisis, as opposed to using an academic reasoning of it. But it is a situation that happens right there and needs to be resolved. There are obviously steps to approaching it, but key to it, I look at the crisis as maybe a situation which could be damaging to organizational reputation, which is something we really need to safeguard.

CS: Thank you very much. Does crisis affects organizations in Botswana and in what ways are organizations affected?

Pt 008: Okay, look in Botswana, a magnitude of crisis has been in various situations to institutions. As I had said previously, a lot of issues that communications deals with has to do a lot with a lot of reputational risk. I think in Botswana, being a country that, I don't want to say reserved, but not much happens, other than organizations, but a key thing that really does happen is a lot of damage to your reputation by virtue of organisations being corruption or by virtue of mismanagement or by virtue of little incidences like that. But top of mind, key things are a lot to do with reputational risk, more towards an organisation having issues of maybe corruption, issues of mismanagement of funds, or misappropriation of power. Those are the elements that i've picked up in Botswana that really affect damage to organizations or issues of maybe people not being hired properly, issues of nepotism. They may seem small to other nations, but they do have a certain amount of hit in terms of

reputations to organizations. I mean that's the perspective and that's the area that i've been particularly seeing as a lot of reputational risk to organizations yeah.

CS: I see, thank you very much. That's very, very insightful. You spoke about reputational damage. As a professional, why does reputation matters so much to organizations?

Pt 008: Well, I think it's part and parcel of an organizational, of an organization working well within its environment. I mean reputation is based on goodwill; based on trust; is based on elements of the Community within which you serve your stakeholders who have high levels of confidence in you being able to do things. You may be achieving the bottom line. Reputation in all, I would perceive in my profession as the be all and end or having continued organizational success. You can achieve high profits, but without a great reputation behind it, then there's a gap between you and your stakeholders. Okay great! they make millions every year, but their practices and the people running their organizations are not grounded in their own, have a good reputation. For example, a number of organisations have been facing challenged of late with a lot of them being blacklisted. I mean those are elements of your reputation for a country as a whole. The organizations that I worked for in Botswana are now obviously having issues that people are picking up. They don't know what is happening to the country which is not really standing by its reputation that it has always had in the 55 years of its independence. The perception that people have, has taken a knocking on the reputation and it's those organizations that are representative of Botswana.

CS: Thank you very much. What can be done to prepare organizations to withstand that adverse effects of crisis, in order to protect that reputation?

Pt 008: Well, first and foremost, I think what needs to be done is to start at the top. We need to create policies. We need to create plans. We need to create teams and we need to have a high level of training to be able to absorb another crisis, to be able to respond to that crisis. As you've just said, it's something that comes out of nowhere but levels of preparedness come from having policies and structures. If you can have a structure that says how you address it in certain risks. You need to obviously have a well trained risk management department. They need to obviously at times also identify potential crisis situations, and then they could do simulations of each situation. You could have a situation of loss of life in an organization; you can have a situation of reputation management; you can have a situation of financial loss. You can have put as many scenarios to the table in training simulations. You have simulations that could address these issues around with that as well. I think there's a big element of having good media relations. A lot of crisis get out of hand when there's leakages in organizations. You should have a you're going to have a crisis communications team, with your CEO as spokesperson. Your head of communication crafts the messaging; you're going to have your risk manager; you're going to have a strategy manager. You're going to have this team, but if it's not trained and if it's not understanding how to manage it, you're going to have challenges of leakages of people telling media outlets those types of information. So where I come in and say media relations needs to be really key in informing key media personnel of what's really happening on the ground,

whether it's press conferences, whether it's to press releases, you need to have a strategy where you know that you are disseminating the right information to the right people who can really verify your story as it is in terms of crisis communication. So it's really about structuring a team, have a policy, having a plan, having relationships and safeguarding above all the reputation of your organization through these teams.

Pt 008: Like they say without failing to plan is planning to fail. So having a proper crisis communication plan you are better equipped and in a better vantage point to absorb the pressures so you leave unscathed. But you can actually soften the blow in terms of what could have happened in terms of that so i'm really about having a policy; having a plan; having a structured team; having a well trained team so that it's a well oiled machinery. Should the situation come dont come across as being reactive but being very active in situations and this way it comes in with having good media relations where you can channel the right type of information to people.

CS: When crisis break out, there is this notion that the first hour is golden. Whats your view on this? Is it practical in Botswana?

Pt 008: Well, in the past, some issues need more detailed. It's not possible in the first hour. You can be quick to divulge information, or make a press release, or address the media quicker, but you also need to give yourself enough time to address some of those issues, and also somewhat preempt what could be lying behind that first issue within that first hour, yes, you can go ahead and tell the media that this is the situation. I also think you need to leave some element or leeway to be able to build a better case because I know as a crisis happens certain things unravel, and it becomes layer after layer after layer. You need to be able to have all the cards on the table, to be able to address those issues. Fine, in the traditional communications nowadays, you know that too many channels and too many holes and too many leakages, to communicate within that hour, yes, you may have communicated. In the world we live in, with fake media, internal leakages and all of that, how do you cover yourself, but you need to give yourself time. Within the first hour only so much can be investigated and discovered, and within that hour you can't try and assume that by just having that one communication, you will have covered it all. I think it takes in-depth knowledge of the scenario before you go in and try and cover your bases or your tracks. You need to give yourself time to understand your situation before you can respond. But, in saying that i'm not saying when you give yourself time or by time let's say maybe you buy time. You can keep your media at hand, if you do take too long, it also opens an area or a gap or opportunity for them to think that you're really building something that isn't there so it also opens up doubt where people are going to say what these guys are building something that isn't there or they're trying to cover their tracks. You need to be smart enough or you need to be well equipped enough to know that you've got this amount of time and respond within a very good amount of time back to your key media personnel, because if you leave people doubting they can form their own assumptions. Then you're going to have to work harder to try and uncover those different assumptions from people because nowadays everybody's got an opinion.

CS: Please share some of these best practices that you know which can be helpful to organizations in Botswana during crisis?

Pt 008: I think first and foremost, is having a policy and a crisis communication plan. Those two things will coordinate. Let's assume that those will be your Bible. They will set the tone of what do we do. Through the crisis communication training you'll know how to address each situation. But within that you know you can have a team. Like I say what we do is we've engaged our risk department in a lot of crisis communications. That crisis communication issues that they can think of and say Okay, but when you and your team, how would you address this? So it's a policy, it's a plan, it's a training, good media relations, containment of responses. You need to contain the time of your response. Like I said in terms of response you need to manage the time. It can't be too long. You need to have well documented responses. There's another element, chance, which I keep saying that we need to look at. We need to do a lot of internal communications training. Your own staff is at the risk of being your own worst enemy. One day if issues pertain to them, they could possibly be the same people who now go back to the media and say but yeah, the situation is really like this. Most people, those people are not telling you how it is. So you need to have built some form of trust within your staff for your staff to know that during the situation, let your seniors help handle it. You can have non-disclosure agreements and so forth. But you do know that in situations like this there are people with a lot of leakages, so we need to control what comes out of that organization. It's very difficult and in an ideal world, people wouldn't share information, but you know people inside and people share information for any odd reason, whether it's despite an organization, whether they said to someone in passing or whether it was just that it was a small friendly talk and it happened to reach the media. So it's also about that containment where you need to find way higher level of controlling communications that comes out but that's also stemmed with being able to ensure that you're informing your staff as early as possible so that they're not finding information out from the media.

Pt 008: You can control the narrative but these days people create their own opinions and are privy to certain information. People think differently and as much as you can control the narrative and set the tone, people create their own opinion and form their own opinion on certain crisis's and certain situations. They're not afraid to divulge it, but you've got to create some element of trusting your staff or onboarding your staff, so that when they feel that they do need to be telling anything they will know that it's the responsibility of the chief spokesperson, or the CEO.

CS: s Now let's talk about messaging and what happens behind the curtains. Should messaging be developed ahead of the crisis or while it is in progress?

Pt 008: Let me say it again. Failure to plan is planning to fail. In terms of messaging, I think you genuinely need a public relations team or corporate affairs team or brand team that is well equipped to be able to relay a message that is according to that crisis. They need to be smart and cognizant enough to understand what message fits into the puzzle; what message defuses the situation; what message will put fuel to the situation. So messaging has to be well crafted. You can plan and

plan and plan, but it depends on the situation. Within that first hour a lot can happen. You can still in that first hour, be able to craft, a message that also allows you to buy time or to request for time to give a better update of the next situation. So messaging is very important. Yes, you can craft a message that is standard for that situation, but as the situation comes, you need to be crafty enough and smart enough to configure that messaging for that particular point in time. While there's no set answer for that set situation you get people who are opinionated. You get media thats very smart and you get people who are looking for different angles, and those are challenging. So you want to have a team that's smart enough to help you address key issues.

Pt 008: I think that communications practitioners or people who are involved in crisis need to do a lot of research. I think your risk management department comes in handy. Over the past two years, i've realized that PR practitioners also need to have a high level of understanding in terms of risk to the organization; risk to the reputation. So you can have a static message. You need to be able to craft it. I think that also comes with the knowledge that you can build or tap into with people from the risk department or the strategy department, because they can help you know that the potential outcome of one particular message is not going to be the same as when this happens. So I mean this is me coming from a professional opinion of having seen it. Certain crisis didn't need to get to certain situations if we had just listened to legal and risk department because they go hand in hand as an organization. You can't be stagnant in your messaging. You need to be able to evolve your messaging. You can have your core message, but as it goes on, you must remember that it needs to be backed by that core message. But with time, situations change and you need to be able to keep abreast of those.

Pt 008: I firmly believe that we as communications practitioners, we don't know it all, and I think we need to come to that firm understanding. When the risk team comes in, they delve a little bit deeper. You can you see the situation at face value, but the risk department can tell you what the ramifications will be maybe a year down the line or six months down the line. Legal will tell you what the legal ramifications may be in six months down the line, a year down the line. You messaging need to have tapped into risk and legal experts to save the organisation from costs. legally to save. As much as I think i'm protecting reputation what of the risk what of the legal elements into it? There is something that dawned on me when I sat with one of my colleagues who is in compliance. She sat me down and gave me a risk register. She asked me a lot of issues about challenges with governance. She asked for a communications point of view, when you got issues of governance and it affects on reputation. How we address issues of loss of life; damage to property and sexual harassment issues. She gave me a long list, and I was like I didn't foresee some of these things. She was like have you thought about the reputational risk? Have you thought about the legal ramifications? What constitutes your team and your messaging.
She gave it to me straight, as this is me now coming to you as an educated person. She said to me i'm going to be one person with many huts. She asked me how I address each of these people: legal, CEO and journalist with one message that addresses all of them in one formal understanding. Those are elements that that came to me, and they came too late, getting late. Crisis communication can be taken lightly. With all these issues, you've got the new age issues more especially now, in terms of social

media. And it's difficult to control them now because channels of communications consistently grow.

CS: There are suggestions that some organizations in Botswana tend to use correction strategies, others embrace the denial strategies, while other deploy shifting the blame strategies. From your experience, are these strategies prevalent in Botswana during crisis? How effective or less effective are they in repairing reputational damage?

Pt 008: There is the shifting the blame; the messages of hope, then some organizations just choose to ignore. People choose to ignore. Yes they're very prevalent in Botswana. You have seen that there are some organizations that are well equipped, that are actually well versed in the communication strategies of crisis management. There are organizations that have been very good in managing and containing the crisis through communication. They came out of the issues not completely unscathed but they limited the reputational risk. In this day and age, it's very difficult to shift the blame because like I said there's always that situation of leakages, where your own people divulge information and they say organisations are not telling the truth, here's the truth. The ones that that use corrective strategies are the ones that have a genuine story. If you're going to offer hope you've got to ensure that you deliver on that promise.

Pt 008: I think, honestly and genuinely we need to be able to manage that crisis, but we need to manage it professionally. Like I was saying earlier on the question of building a team of people that really poke holes in your crisis communication strategy. They poke holes and see how a tight, it is. Can it hold water and will not come back to bite you if you weren't telling the truth or if you are not sharing all the truth or if you wanted to be crafty with your messaging.

CS: You spoke about social media. What is the role of social media, especially Facebook during crisis?

Pt 008: Facebook, I always call it an institution in itself because it's not easily controlled because you must remember that once you put something on Facebook, its always going to be there. There are ways of communicating on Facebook. On the positive side, Facebook is a great platform because it's got different media houses who have platforms on it. For a social reason, Facebook can be used for multiple reasons. But in terms of messaging you need to be very careful how you use it. Social media, Facebook, in itself can be evil in a sense that you are you're going to get people who are really spiteful in your engagement. So you've got to be really careful and you're going to have a team that is committed to engaging if you put a statement. They should be ready to respond to that statement with one unified message. Responding to that one statement you need to have people who are very good in tracking communications. I mean you can put a statement and then not allow people to comment or allow people to engage. So Facebook really requires a high level of engagement and a high level of alertness of what people are saying, why because it could end up spiraling into something that you never meant.

Pt 008: Yes, we use Facebook. We find it as a good medium to communicate. I can't say statistically, but I think anybody who's got a handheld

gadget with access to Internet is a Facebook subscriber. So there's a high level of usage in Facebook. So there is need to communicate crisis and to manage crisis through Facebook. It's a very good media. It goes back to high level of engagement, and a high level of alertness of what's going on. Because Facebook has got a very high level of engagement, it's tiresome. And it's not controlled. You can't control people on Facebook. You can create a message, but everybody's got an opinion and they've got every right to put it on. Nowadays when it is we're living in a world where people speak their mind. Whether they are being rude; whether they are being insensitive; whether they are being disingenuous or whether they're hiding up support from somebody else, people speak off the cuff. They could care less what the ramifications are because in most cases in Botswana, people don't get taken to the book for what they say on those channels. So Facebook is good, but it needs to be highly managed. Your level of alertness on it needs to be extremely extremely well organized.

CS: There are suggestions that some organizations will not respond at all to comments on Facebook? Whats your view on this?

Pt 008: This is where I go back to my just ended statement now, saying that a lot of people can say a lot of things out of spite. I think you need to be smart enough to sift what is addressing the bigger issues. People can genuinely ask questions for the better to actually understanding what the crisis is. Unfortunately they're just people there who just want to be unfriendly to a situation or who just want to put fuel to the already burning fire that you are dealing with. So there's a high level of sifting in that level of alertness. Like I said you'll have 1000 messages and maybe at 860 message addressing one issue. Like an organization that has built goodwill as well, there are stakeholders who will be in support of the same situation and will actually rally behind you. It can help you with levels of engagement where people will say no, but this organization hasn't been doing this all the time, this is their first time in such a situation. Amongst those thousand people you're going to get people who are actually rallying behind you and who are more informed, not by actually knowing the situation, but maybe haven't gone through the situation or having a better understanding.

CS: There are suggestions that some organizations are passive in sharing information on Facebook during crisis. Why could that be the case?

Pt 008: Those organizations are passive by virtue of them not knowing how to respond. It's a question of trying to relate to what strategy I employ. I think some organizations can put a statement and leave it. Some crisis build and develop over time and you need to manage it over the different stages. For some organisations it could be a strategy of them knowing fully well that it it's something that they cannot respond to, or they don't feel that it's perfect. For them if people want information they will come to them, or they will have a strategy where the Channel Derek is the key to the media.

Pt 008: You get a lot of leaders who believe being heard in a crisis means they are responding to situations. And then you get leaders who know better to leave it to the professional to know how best to communicate to those situations. Now, when you get a leader who says no

put something people must know, you find a communications person or the crisis communications team being put in a corner.

CS: What is the role of culture when developing crisis messages for audiences.

Pt 008: There's a certain culture or there's a certain way of doing things or there's a certain belief system that a certain particular group of people will have. There is this belief in Botswana that Batswana forget quickly. There's that culture and it influences how organisations respond during crisis. Some organisations may be passive in responding because of this culture. You can craft messages and communicate cultural point of view. I think if you go against it people now will start saying that this is not something that's normal to me why are they doing this, why are they communicating this. Your messaging and your response strategy needs to be well communicated to that culture. To understand the little nuances, you need to understand these little innuendos that you know if you said something it could be misconstrued into something else, or if I put it in that particular format, it is going to not read well to certain people because you're working with people who are conservative. Now, with all these different platforms, we can say that we're becoming a lot more liberal in what we're saying because there's no fear for consequences.
Our digital networks, and our social media, rules and regulations, they allow a lot of people to say what they want, when they want and how the want it. As a corporate you need to be smart enough in understanding the culture and the processes of the people you serve.

CS: What about the role of corporate social responsibility for organisations in crisis? How helpful is it?

Pt 008: This one is something that I actually look closely into when it is CSI. CSI, for me, I believe, is goodwill. But today's CSI needs to be sustainable. Today's CSI needs to be empowering. I believe in this thing of community relations in terms of CSI, it can be the corporate giant giving a certain amount of money, you need to see that there's an actual corporate social investment with a lot of involvement. If you want your organization to be to be involved in that community to adopt the Community or to empower our Community or to employ a community to do better and be self sustainable or something that you can find, you build good relations. So should crisis come about you're going to get a lot of people sympathizing and empathizing and saying but let's not forget what these people have been doing for this Community.

Pt 008: It should not be manipulative and sneaky. There must be a commitment to a certain Community in terms of relations in terms of empowering them in terms of capacitating them. It should be an element of you genuinely wanting to build communities through your organization. It's an investment within your community, so that when it comes that you are in a crisis you're going to get people who will say no, but hold on these people have been genuinely helping out in different areas. CSI must not be an afterthought because there is a crisis.

Pt 008: Like I said, one of the strategies is where there is messages of hope or messaging of saying no we will do better or acknowledging that

yes, we are at fault in a certain situation and will do better, but CSI needs to be honest. It cannot be disingenuous, and it can't be your scapegoat. It can be an insurance and must be honest and genuine. CSI should also be aligned to your corporate strategy.

CS: The last question is on language use. There are indications that some organisations purposefully used language to dominate, persuade and to manipulate their audiences. Whats your take on that?

Pt 008: We really eloquent and you have got people who are well versed in both English and the vernecular. That can be to the detriment of your organization, because now they want to come across as saying things that don't need to be said in addressing the situation.

CS: Any last thing you wish to add about crisis communication in Botswana?

Pt 008: Crisis communication is still at its infancy in Botswana. I don't think we've had serious crisis in Botswana. Yes, they've been reputational practices here and there, compared to our neighbour South Africa and internationally. There is a lot to be desired in how we handle crisis here as communication practitioners.

CS: Thank you. I will stop the recording.

Pt 008: Thank you.

Transcript for participant 9 (PT 009)

WEBVTT

CS: Yes, so the first question that I wanted to ask is what is your understanding of crisis.

Pt 009: I think a crises in my understanding is something that went wrong because it was quite difficult for you to handle. So i'm going to keep that short, so that you can make your follow up. The context I want to provide is that it is the difficulty of something that has gone wrong, not everything that has gone wrong is a crisis.

CS: The next question is does crisis affects organizations in Botswana and in what ways are they affected?

Pt 009: Yes, they do. I think even the smoothly run organizations, they do at some point come across a crisis, and in my past experience you would remember, I was working for a bank and as a service oriented organization there is highly likely to be a crisis because when you offer services they may be a breakdown, but it's only when that breakdown is so difficult to manage, for example. At a bank it is not a crisis when you've run out of cash, but you can have the tech crisis affecting the process of banking. You replenish cash. That means it becomes a crisis when an ATM has been bombed. So when an ATM has been bombed, it questions

the security, the safety of your stakeholders. That would mean your customers, or even those that are taking care of your facilities could be doing something wrong. If it's bombed, that means you couldn't do something right, something went wrong, it could bombed, but it means you couldn't prevent it so then it becomes a crisis and requires some communication of some sort to allay the fears of the different stakeholders. Are customers safe to queue at ATMs if this likely would have a bomb attack happening. That's were to internalize.

Pt 009: You would remember how I actually started our conversation on how I understand what a crisis is. Something has gone wrong and it's difficult for you to handle so in my view, when you have run out of cash, thats not a crisis yet. But if you have a difficulty in replenishing cash or the ATM is now down during banking days what we called ATM downtime or uptime, you make the promise to customers that 98% of the time this ATM will be working. So you make that so that means it caters for replenishing. So should you not be able to replenish or the ATM is on downtime and exceed that time parameter that you have set for yourself, once they start taking into social media, then you need to do the crisis communication and, in that we should have all these hold statements of what could have happened beyond just replenishing of cash. I want to believe something beyond that. That's why I say the difficulty of managing something that has gone wrong becomes a crisis.

CS: Why does reputation matter to organizations?

Pt 009: You know reputation is everything. If there's one thing that marketing and communications or PR practitioners are hired for, actually is to manage reputation of an organization. I think you have gone to the level of PhD so that you get back here as the master that can really show organizations how to have a good reputation. It's very very important to maintain a good reputation in the stakeholders eyes, because that's how you can attract more customers. That's how you get believed it by the communities. If you need to collaborate with the community they know you are a reputable company. If you are a profit making organization that's essentially how you get to your bottom line; how you increase your shares. That's how we also maintain shareholders confidence.

CS: Crisis does not announce itself. How do you prepare organisation to withstand the negative impact of crisis to protect its reputation?

Pt 009: There is what we call crisis management. We should different from crisis communication. I am tempted to make a distinction between the two. Crisis Management is when you have an operational plan, sort of procedures and plans on how you would address effects of a crisis. You sort of have a plan that you say in the event that there is a crisis, this is how we manage it. Organizations should better plan for any unforeseeable crisis. They need to have a crisis management plan in place.
So these are the procedures that we follow when a crisis happens. If it happens crisis communication will be handled in this manner: Who are the people are supposed to gather the information and who is the legal advisor because it depends on the magnitude of a crisis. Sometimes you would need a system so that the crisis communication becomes very efficient. In a nutshell, I would say to prepare for communication or to even communicate a crisis effectively, you need a crisis management plan in place.

CS: When crisis breaks out, there is the notion that the first hour is golden. How practical is this in your case?

Pt 009: It is practical particularly if you have a crisis management plan in place because it's a matter of the crisis has happened and what is the information around that crisis. So if the plan dictates that whenever there is a crisis, you bring together the crisis committee, they know their duties. So it's not a matter of I can't communicate that because I don't have the information. The moment you inform the crisis Committee, the information gathering stats, collecting all the facts, all the details, give them to the spokesperson. So I believe that within an hour you should be able to communicate a crisis effectively.

CS: Should the message be prepared ahead of the crisis or while the crisis is in progress?

Pt 009: When the crisis begins, it informs the messages. You can have what you call holding statements and informed by the type of organization that you are, and also from the experience of the type of crisis that you may be facing. The oil industry probably face crisis different from the banking industry where you anticipate things like ATM booming. So those types of crisis helps you to prepare messages ahead of time; sort of lift the down and create scenarios and see how would we deal with this. When you have time, you develop what you call holding statements, based on the hypothetical situations and the scenarios that you would have created. In the event that you do have a crisis, the information rollout should happen as the event, as the crisis happens. You can have information about a crisis that has not happened yet, and you can have a structured holding statement framework that you would operationalise.

CS: What are some of the best practices of crisis communication in Botswana?

Pt 009: Immediately, that's why it's important to have a team into a crisis management plan so you plan on how you need to react or respond to a crisis. The first thing that you need to do that is say we can call it phase one or step one is to have the people that have the expertise. The owner of the crisis is the highest person in an organization, which is a CEO or the director. The owner of the crisis is the CEO because crisis affects the brand. Stage two is the formulation of a crisis committee and remember you are working on the crisis Management Plan which dictates that there should be a crisis committee. The Crisis Committee will then have the operational team. They immediately developed what we call an action plan which is only going to respond to this crisis. Number three, you communicate directly to the crisis owner, because it becomes a crisis because it's going to involve our external people including the media and other stakeholders. So as soon as the crisis committee that has the operational team develop an action plan of how they're dealing with the communication, that flow of information now goes to the spokesperson, who now sifts through all the information and now categorize that this information is OK to go to the media. The media is the main stakeholder because then they disseminate information to the general public. So stick to one owner of the crises who will be acknowledging that there is a crisis.

Pt 009: You should be proactive, but be sure that the information that's supposed to go to the public is really ready to go to the public. Create a spotlight on a crisis. So my view is that you wait until things unfolds, and you can see how the public is responding. Just those 1015 responses, particularly now that these social media, you are able to tell within the next five minutes of a crisis, what the public perception is. So being proactive can be done, but I don't think it is the best way to let things unfold. Get your facts right; plan the messages right and then disseminate them. I would rather occupy a conservative position than being proactive.

CS: What would influence your choice of response strategy over the other?

Pt 009: I think the magnitude of the crisis. First and foremost, if you're not careful and you're not really using the right strategies, you can raise alarms where there is no crisis. Remember the distinction between something that has happened that has gone wrong, but then the difficulty of managing it is a crisis. So if you're not careful on what's really making a determination of what really needs to be taken out, you end up communicating things that have gone wrong that is not really crisis. Almost every business does come across things going on. I mean if you look at the pizza business today you would appreciate they probably burn so many pizzas at their kitchen, but the issue is do they make statements? Today they burn 4 of them or 10 and they forge ahead. They still cook pizza and deliver pizza. We used to laugh about this example at the bank. They would be those colleagues on a panic mode because the ATM is down and would say please let's communicate because that service breakdown will cost us. Yes it costs us, but it can be solved and we can improve our uptime and the two minutes downtime that we have. Its already planned, so it depends on the magnitude of the crisis. If you are being proactive, you will find yourself communicating unnecesarily.

CS: There are suggestions that some organizations in Botswana use corrective strategies, others deploy denial strategies, while others use shifting the blame strategies. Are these prevalent in Botswana and how effective or less effective are they in repairing reputational damage?

Pt 009: All the three are common in Botswana like the reassuring or the denial or the finger pointing with the blame game. I think i've seen all the three in action. I've seen all the three at play, and then the most common being where somebody is really showing that they are fixing the problem, and at the same time blaming someone. Then you wonder why they can't just acknowledge they end at fixing and not blaming someone. They would want to through a service provider under the bus and thats your internal processes. So there's that common mistake of a people combining the two strategies. It's best to stick to one. Just correct their behavior because they have done this and that now it doesn't really help you because you know where we sit. You all know that when you have contracted someone, you take the responsibility.

Pt 009: With denial, you just want to make it two ways. So first people that say we are sorry and wait to see if the crisis will go on or die down. If you are telling the truth that there is no crisis, you stick that and don't say i'm apologizing.

CS: What is the role of social media, especially Facebook during crisis?

Pt 009: In Social media everyone has a voice and anyone can be listen to. You need to watch for the very influential people as much as you would not want to get to every comment. When its influencial people and by influence they could be political, they could be social status, education status, they come to influence the followers in different ways and for different reasons. So you also need to sort of a have that play at the back of your mind if you've got the influencial in your strategy or marketing through influencers. It will be very easy for you even with crisis management or crisis communication to know how to really handle the people because you are acknowledging that there are those people that are very powerful. In attending to something when they say something, you may not do it publicly.

Pt 009: It could just be an eye opener to simplify this issue because its of great concern. For example in the innovation space its about technology issue and you find those tech gurus talking about the topic wholeheartedly, then you must see how many people are following them because they're experts in their own right in your space. If you have categorized them already, even if you're not using them as influencers, for marketing purposes, you acknowledge that the people that are quite respectable in a particular area and really that's something you need to pay attention to.

CS: Have you engaged influencers to help you during crisis? Julian said.

Pt 009: Yes, in my past life, yes, banking. We have used social media influencers to really sort of calm down the situation because they are easier to believe, particularly like I said, if they are part of your strategy.

CS: What are some of the best practices of using social media especially Facebook in Botswana?

Pt 009: It's a very, very powerful platform. It connects millions of people all over the world and i'm speaking from a brand perspective, a company perspective, and I think you can utilize it well, when you turn your company to be a person; you give it a persona so that then when you speak to your audience they they are part of you.
You don't just speak to them, you speak with them. They feel you as a person who stands for 123 which is aligned to those that have also followed you so and how do you make sure you stick to a persona and you attract a like minded or the people that really want to follow you? Develop a deliberate strategy. You do a monthly content plan that say deliberately every month or every week, this persona called the [name of organisation] is speaking about innovation trends. I will be connecting with the followers because I know my followers love everything about innovation. That's why when it was suggested it is something that they can follow they clicked if I want to follow. So that persona needs to remain relevant to the audiences and even attract more. Very, very deliberate messaging that need to establish a persona. You need to use visuals in in marketing and communications. That's how you attract many likes.

CS: So tell me about the Facebook phobia that most organizations seem to have when it comes to responding to individual comments, especially during a crisis?

Pt 009: I think if you don't operate from a management plan, then you would have a problem because you find yourself running after each and every comment. So the golden rule is look at the trend of comments and then insert that response in your holding statement because a lot of people are asking about this particular theme. You can answer hundred comments with a paragraph that you have always planned that when people are boiling at hundred and 10 degrees, this is how I managed to calm them down. So it's not a matter of just running after every comment. You can develop that phobia to respond particularly if you don't have that plan of how I need to address a certain set of questions. They stop and shiver in the corner because they do not know what to do with all sorts of comments.

CS: What is the role of culture when developing messages for Facebook audiences during crisis in Botswana?

Pt 009: Definitely you need to know your audience. Remember when I spoke about your brand persona. You are more or less part of them. So if you're part of them, you understand their culture. So it's very, very important when you craft your messages to know the type of culture you're dealing with. Even language is part of culture, how do I speak to these people. During certain times like the Covid-19 era, you need to really come with messages, bearing in mind the culture of the audience.

CS: Have you used the kgotla system to disseminate crisis messages? How helpful is it during crisis?

Pt 009: I dont think the kgotla system would be that efficient because of the therisanyo (consultation) nature of its setting. It takes time whilst crisis communication is fast paced. Plus the kgotla wouldnt allow or propel brans messages that creates a positive image of the company thats facing crisis, unless its a crisis of national importance or concern.

CS: There are indications that some organizations in Botswana purposefully use language to dominate, persuade and manipulated their audiences. What is your view on this?

Pt 009: I think there are organizations that do so, particularly government organizations. They have the tendency of using language to manipulate the audiences to believe otherwise. I've seen those instances, but you know with the corporate brands you need to be very careful with how you use language because it shouldn't be something that you take advantage of in order to persuade your audience. They use langague to suppress you so you dont speak your mind. This is weird.

CS: What is the role of Corporate social responsibility for organisations in crisis in Botswana?

Pt 009: Generally, people like associating with organizations that do some corporate social responsibility. It is in bad taste to say it doesn't really matter because we do so much good. That will be in bad taste. Let the remembrance of your good deeds be the one that would guide people on how they judge you on crisis. You don't have to stick it out there. If it's good deed and it's consistent that's why with Corporate Social Responsibility it's important to have a media strategy around it.

CS: Thank you very much for this insightful interview. I will now stop the recording.

Pt 009: Thank you.

Transcript for participant 10 (PT 010)

WEBVTT

CS: Thank you very much for finding time to be with me this evening to share your insights and experiences as a PR practitioner a PR professional, the first question that I want to ask is what is your understanding of crisis?

Pt 010: Okay, my understanding in the simplest terms of a crisis is an unexpected event that is out of one's control but requires management.

CS: Does crisis affects organizations in Botswana and in what ways are organizations affected by crisis, if any?

Pt 010: Crisis do affect organizations in Botswana. Organizations can find themselves destabilized to the point where business is disrupted. Normal business is disrupted to the point where customers lose confidence in an organization, to the point where an organization actually loses business if the crisis is not well managed,to the point where an organization can even lose its resources if a crisis is not well managed.

Pt 010: In my area of work, i've come across crisis. Our product was not well received. It received a lot of negative publicity. Well, it wasn't well accepted by the target audience. To be specific, it was employment figures. There's always issues around those. So basically the general public, did not accept the statistics that were produced by my organization. In terms of communication, we quickly put together a team of experts to manage the crisis. As part of that team, the executive director or the Director General, was appointed as the chairperson. The Deputy Director General was appointed as vice chair position so that we could have him on standby in case the issue escalated and the Director General gets busy with other issues such as committees, rather than being the one dealing with everything. Other members of the committee included the communication experts, as well as internal auditors, subject matter experts. We already had guidelines on how to manage the crisis. In particular a crisis communication plan has always been in place. So, we were able to move quickly in terms of assembling this team, because the guidelines were already in place.

Pt 010: In terms of management, we ensured regular communication with our stakeholders, including our internal publics, our media partners and the shareholder, updating them on what the crisis was about and what we were doing to handle it. Each audience was updated in the tone and language appropriate for them. We also moved quickly into using the expertise within the crisis communication team to delve into the issues around the crisis to pick out what the public, the general public, was complaining about with regards to the statistics so that we could quickly move into solving the problem. While we were doing that we kept communicating with the media, with the general public through the media so to say. Fortunately, we heard the people's concerns and we told them we will be addressing all the issues as they've been raised and indeed within a couple of days, we were able to host a press conference where we were able to articulate our processes and methodologies in terms of how we we produce our statistics and explained the figures and all the concepts that we put out there.

CS: At this stage did you assemble the team? Was it before the crisis struck or whe the crisis was in progress?

Pt 010: Okay, what we had in place was a basic structure for composition of the team in case of any crisis. There were some members who I can say were founding members of any crisis. That would be the chairperson, secretariat and the communication team and internal audit. Depending on what the crisis is, we then put in whichever subject area experts we needed to pull in. So in this case all the other Members already knew that they would be part of the team. The only new members, the only additional Members that we pulled in where those that were from subject matters of the crisis issue.

CS: Why does reputation matter so much to your organization?

Pt 010: Reputation matters so much because if there's no confidence in an organization, then the organization will lose its customers. Customers will opt for alternative products. In our cases but, just like sports arena, if our customers have no confidence in our statistics then it means they will not use the statistics that we produce to make decisions. Instead they will opt for statistics from other sources. So it's very important for an organization to manage its reputation if it's a profit making organization. As you can imagine they'll lose money. Basically, they lose clients, people will be coming in to buy products because they don't believe in it.

CS: Thank you very much. That's that's very, very insightful. There is a notion that when the crisis breaks, the first hour is golden. Did you find this notion to be true in the crisis that happened with your statistics?

Pt 010: I totally agree with that notion. That first hour or the first few hours. It is very, very important because if an organization does not act accordingly, does not act in the right way towards addressing the crisis during that those first few hours, then you find that a crisis can get out of hand because if it's things that are being said then

anybody can say whatever they want to say and your brand can be tarnished in any way. So you need to act quickly if you dont, then people will hear any other voice, but as out bay. So you dont even need to have like your messaging or your crisis communication messaging intact or solid at that point in time. But it's that contact that you should make with your public that can turn things around or stabilize things. Keep things afloat, while you sort things out behind the scenes to solve the crisis. So definitely yes, if you're quiet and you're not handling your crisis communication, within the first few hours of the crisis breaking, things can definitely get out of control. You have your stakeholders and whatever you want to say, you'll have your media partners ready because anything will go haywire, unless you drive things in the direction that you want them to go. So definitely and without a plan if you don't have your crisis communication plan in place and you don't know what the best thing to do is, you're not going to be able to use it effectively. So being prepared is everything.

PT 010: yeah.

CS: See, were you able to respond within the first hour in your statistics crisis considering the red tapes and bureaucracy in government agencies?

Pt 010: It wasn't in the first hour, but it was quick enough. Its always a challenge to go out so quick even in the private sector.

PT 010: When our with been sweating specials I was out definitely always a challenge actually that's a challenge in most most places even in even in private sector. But for me, because I believe that whatever contacts you make with your audiences within a short time possible is important, even if you don't have any answers at that point in time. It is golden. So in terms of what we did, we made that initial contact with our stakeholders to say we are listening we've heard the concerns and we will be coming back to you to address your queries. So at least we were able to calm things and have people waiting anticipating what we were going to say something about the issues that they were bringing forward. If people are questioning your product and they're questioning how you put it together, then while you are looking at the technical considerations, you can just respond. If you're not prepared to answer, you shouldn't answer. That doesn't mean you should be silent. You have to say something to the publics and just to manage the environment, to manage the atmosphere, otherwise everything just goes south.

CS: Indeed, thank you very much for that insightful response. Can you share some of the best practices of communicating when a crisis breaks out?

Pt 010: Okay. First, your must make sure that your leadership is visible. Leadership must be visible. You must collects your information as quickly as possible. Look at your crisis communication plan to guides you in terms of what needs to be done; who needs to be called in and so forth. Immediately make contact with your stakeholders to make sure that you get them to know that you are aware of what is unfolding. Even if you don't have answers to their questions or queries at that point in time, reaching out is very, very, very, very important. The shortest time possible in terms of best practice, I could be wrong, but I think in 48 hours you should have resolved your crisis. Your internal publics as well

should be informed immediately because those are your spokespeople. They need to know what is going on and how you intend to address the issues so that they can represent the organization well.

CS: That's very, very insightful more informative. You said you appointed the deputy statistician general as the spokesperson of the organization during your crisis. Why was it not the Statistician General?

Pt 010: Okay, let me fix that. So the committee is one that was led by the Deputy. But, obviously, then the Statistician General is the one who's the spokesperson. He's the one who appears in the public. The committee needs to be driven by somebody else, so that the Statistician General can have like an outsider's look or perspective towards what the committee is bringing. But in terms of who then faces the public is the Leader.

CS: There's a school of thought that heads of PR should be the spokesperson of the organization, while the CEO focuses on the most important matters. What is your view?

Pt 010: I think that heads of PR can do it, depending on the complexity of the issue at hand. When things break, it's always best to have leadership. They are at the forefront because it brings elements of complete trust into the whole matter. But definitely when things eases up, I think PR should then take over when it's less technical, when it's less sensitive. I think it's okay for PR to always take the lead, but there are instances when you need the leader. For example, if it's a country level there are instances when you need the President to be the voice and not the Statistician General or the Head of PR.

CS: Very interest. To what extent do believe organizations should develop messages ahead of the crisis or while it is in progress?

Pt 010: Definitely ahead of the crisis. It's good practice at best practice to preempt and when possible your crisis communication plan should have those preemptive scenario as crisis situations. It then makes it easier for you to manage a crisis when it does happen.

CS: What would inform our decisions to choose a particular response over the other?

Pt 010: It's situational. You look at all the factors at play. It's different because nothing is static. You don't actually know what's going to happen and how it's going to happen, but you can only plan. So your plan should guide in terms of what to say, what to do. What you finally say will be dependent on how things have happened. But definitely having those structured and prepared messages, prepared scenarios etc will save you a lot of time and help you to react or act in that golden hour.

CS: There are indications that some organizations in Botswana use corrective strategies; other use denial strategies; while others use shifting the blame strategies.

Are these strategies prevalent in Botswana and how effective or less effective are they in repairing reputational damage?

Pt 010: In my organization such don't exist. But other organisations around the country use them. I think it's very detrimental to the organizations reputation if that's how they choose to manage the crisis in that way. They'd lose trust. Customers or clients or the general public lose trust in such organization that use denial and shifting blame strategies.

CS: What would you say is the role of social media, especially Facebook during crisis. Did you use Facebook in the statistics crisis?

Pt 010: Its presents an opportunity for an organization to tell its story quickly because of the way that Facebook or social media works. It presents opportunities for an organization to tell stories about itself, like positive news, while that crisis was going on.

Pt 010: Yes, we absolutely used Facebook. We used social media to inform them, but as the crisis was progressing we were using traditional media just as we used social media to disseminate information about the activities that were going on during the crisis.

CS: Were you passive or active when sharing information on Facebook?

Pt 010: We were proactive in sharing information. Social media wasn't our main platform for sharing this information, but we were proactive in terms of using it. We were not waiting for people to ask for information around the crisis. We also used social media to keep the audience busy, telling them other stories about our other positive things that we're doing, while the advisory was going on. We also used social media to monitor what people were saying, because on social media everybody is free to say whenever they want to say. So, that's where you check your temperature and check what people are saying about your organization regarding the issue at hand. We were able to check how they were moving along in terms of regaining trust in the organization. So yes, we used social media effectively during the crisis.

CS: Did you respond to individual comments on Facebook at that particular moment in time.

Pt 010: Yes, we have a policy to respond to every comment that requires our attention on Facebook directly or indirectly. But directly people inbox us and we respond in record time. And then, general comments that are made, that we pick as people are discussing the issue on their different pages on Facebook, whether that of media house pages or personnal pages of influencers on the platform. We look up what they are saying and then we address those through our communication, during and after the crisis.

CS: Do you think there is any phobia among organisations to respond to individual comments?

Pt 010: I don't know how to answer that one. But I think that organizations shouldn't be afraid to engage in this day and age. Organizations really shouldn't be afraid to engage with the publics on Facebook. Everything is kept professional on the side of the organization. I think it should be fine. The general public on Facebook or on other social media platforms will say whatever they want to say. As professionals, we need to be able to recognize the message behind the Facebook post. We should look at what is being said and what messaging you need to use to address that comment. Organizations really shouldn't be afraid to engage. They are there to serve. I think an organization should be forthcoming in terms of engaging. Of course, from our lesson, it may not be appropriate to engage individuals on those platforms, because the issues are sensitive in nature. But if it's anything around the main products and services, then engagement should happen.

CS: Thank you. Please share some of the best practices of using Facebook during crisis.

Pt 010: I think the first thing is that an organization needs to determine its personality for social media and design it's executions in terms of what it puts out. The tone and voice of its messaging; the kind of artwork that it puts out; the kind of community engagements on its platforms, etc. An organization is to predetermine all these things before actually utilizing social media and an organization needs to have a social media strategy that informs all of that in place and that strategy should detail all of the things that i've said such the objectives of the social media platforms and how the organization intends to utilize that. It's important for us as communication practitioners to engage and get buy in from leadership in our organizations in terms of how social media is utilized. If that buy in is there from the onset from a strategic standpoint, then the organization can enjoy maximum value from its social media platforms, including investments on use of those platforms. Sometimes the generic content is not effective. I have to fight harder to make my product appealing and visible to people. So getting that buy in from your leadership, enables you to tend to organizational resources to support social media activity and investment in the same. Once you've established all that, from a strategic resource mobilization standpoint, then implementation has to be consistent in terms of putting out content so that you keep people engaged. If people get to appreciate that you're always putting out content they look forward to receiving content from your pages. From the emotional standpoint that translates into trust and reputation for your organization.

CS: What is the role of culture in developing messages? Do you ever consider cultural when creating crisis messages?

Pt 010: Absolutely, in craft communication messages culture has to be a consideration. The way that you communicate the way that you phrase your messaging has to be acceptable within your context. So yes, absolutely cultures are contextual awareness of your environments. What can be seen, acts as acceptable or unacceptable and it is very important. Yes, crafting and delivering of the messaging in a crisis is absolutely a consideration. When we're talking about culture we're not just talking about norms and practice within society but we're also looking at norms and practices within the organization.

CS: What is the role of corporate social responsibility for organisations in crisis?

Pt 010: I think it helps. After a crisis or during a crisis it shouldn't look staged. It shouldn't look like it's not authentic. It is very important, it doesn't look like you're buying or paying off. This is why it's important for the culture or culture of CSR to be part and parcel of an organization. Will it look believable if it's only done because you found yourself in trouble?

CS: What if it is done before the crisis, can it help to attract sympathy?

Pt 010: I think so. Any communication around that can can really helpful during a crisis. When you're communicating, you throw it back to the all the good things that you've done. You tell them i've been reputable, i've done this. I can be trusted because i've been trusted before, and getting back to this particular problem because i've always been a good person, this is how I will fix it. Definitely CSR in the past can help.

CS: Finally, there are indications that some organizations purposefully use language to dominate, to persuade and to manipulate their audiences. What is your view on this kind of language usage?

Pt 010: Okay, first of all, I haven't observed any organization that has deliberately used that kind of language to deceive people or to manipulate them. If they did, that would be unfortunate. I think authenticity, truthfulness are very important. When addressing issues, an organization should just come out and tell the truth and where they don't know, they should be able to tell people that they don't know and they will go and find out more information.

CS: Thank you very much for such an insightful, informative, and educative interview. I will now stop the recording.

Pt 010: Thank you.

Transcript for participant 11 (PT 011)

WEBVTT

CS: Yes, so the first question is, what is your understanding of crisis?

Pt 011: crises from a communication perspective, really I think it's when a brand or organization is faced with either backlash or disruption to business. And then, from a comments perspective, obviously in terms of either public messaging, public perception or public messaging or related issues to the brand or the organization or even individual.

CS: I see does crisis affect organizations and in what ways are they affect if any?

Pt 011: Crisis really affect organizations in Botswana. I think my experiences has been with government, quasi government and private sector players. There are many instances, and many, many iterations of crises. One of them would be either reputation based on issues around product or issues around messaging- public messaging, be it for advertising consumption or otherwise. And then I think the second level of common crisis is related to executives or individuals within the organization, so it could be a persona generated crisis in relation to the brand or the organization. And then lastly consumer perception crisis, these are usually generated over a period of time. They are then repeated incidents or service issues and the like. So all these are iterations of crisis that i've come across within the Botswana market. In terms of the level of impact, the level of impact have gone from as little as public confidence or customer confidence being dented to regulatory backlash or impact and at the worst loss of income or revenue due to the crisis.

CS: That's very, very insightful. So you spoke about reputation, why does reputation matters so much to organizations in Botswana?

Pt 011: I like to give this example and I don't know if it's a quality acceptable example. So I like to say this to sales teams that i've worked with. That without the brand know how, your product is less likely to be able to sell. So that is always in conversation of why every marketing message still needs to be cognizant of the reputation of the brand itself. So the brand needs to exist and live as an individual. It's a breathing living organized organism because without it, without it being known, customer confidence within your product will be purely based on what you say. But when when there's a strong brand that exists, customer or audience confidence exists on the product. I don't know if it's a long winded answer to your question, but for me that is why reputation matters because brand and reputation go hand in hand. So without a positive reputation, the conversation is enhanced.

CS: That's very, very insightful. Crisis does not announce its arrival. As an experienced PR experts, what can be done to prepare organizations in Botswana to withstand the negative effects of crisis and to protect the reputation?

Pt 011: There are three levels of preparations that needs to take place within organizations, be it at government, or private sector organizations. So first and foremost, the best way to prepare for a crisis is obviously to try and ensure that you're doing business ethically and all that, but the best way to prepare for a crisis is to train your staff around your brand enthuse and your reputation excellence and on what is it that as an organization use them for your promise to deliver and the like. Secondly, you need to have a crisis preparation document or a specifically a crisis communications document. This is one that will have roles and responsibility for individuals in the event of a crisis and will have anticipated crises incidents. Number three, from an executive perspective or spokesperson perspective extensive training regarding public speaking guiding media engagement and the like. So where you haven't designated spokesperson that spokesperson has to be well trained. This has to happen prior to the crisis, obviously where you do

have a spokesperson. Similarly, they should always be frequently trained around crises.
Lastly, as an underlining perspective, there is need for staff to be refreshed within the organization or around the brand as frequently as maybe yearly or every other year.

CS: I see, thank you very much for that response. The next question is when crisis breaks, there is a notion that the first hour is golden, meaning that organizations to share information within the first hour. What is your view on this notion? Is it practical in Botswana?

Pt 011: I think it depends on the level of crises. When its a life and death situation, organizations need to be seen to be alive or brands have to be seen to be alive to that situation. Though yes, definitely I agree with the sentiment that it is that first hour or the first notice in the first 24 hours are totally critical. But I also hold the perspective that there are instances where you need to allow a crisis to develop so that you are able to actually provide the best possible feedback or possible address for that crisis. The worst case scenario is to respond to crisis when you don't have the full information.

CS: Now let's talk about the best practices when a crisis starts.

Pt 011: When a crisis starts, the first thing is to do a dip-stick investigation and to consider the 5w's of communication and journalism: What does that mean, Where did it take place, who's impacted or Why they are impacted and then how it happened. So I believe that for you then engage, principle applies to a crisis because then if you are able to answer majority of the W questions and you have a holistic view or comprehensive view, you can start your first level of response of the crises. You can then develop or try addressing the cause of the crises and doing the media or data collection.

CS: You spoke about the role of the spokesperson. Who should be the spokesperson of the organization?

Pt 011: So organizations are different. Obviously, depending on what their principle or guidance is, or what is it that they do. Commercial organizations and quasi-government organizations have chief executives or some sort of accountable person or officer. Those are always the first principal individuals, because there are purely on an accountability basis. Those are the people who upon being contacted, they give us a stance on a crisis, actually stating the position of the organization. I think it applies both even in government because similar structures exist within. So if they have a deputy those are also the second in line to ensure that they train.
Thirdly, because not all organizations have spokespersons, you also have to cascade. Definitely, the spokesperson, has to be the project manager around the crises, even if they're not only the communicator.

CS: Let's now go into the issue of messaging. To what extent do you believe organizations should develop messages ahead of the crisis, or when it is in progress?

Pt 011: To a very high degree I believe that organizations have to first and foremost, have a policy that speaks to crisis depending on the size of the organization. It'll also determine the size of the policy. Now within that, the organizations then can hone in within from a communications perspective. Once that has been done they can then preempt first and foremost crisis issue. The worst case scenario in a crisis is to lose people's money if you are government, a breach of national security. There needs to be periodic stress testing of the crisis preparedness. That's my perspective.

CS: I see. So basically you are saying messages should be prepared ahead of the crisis?

Pt 011: They should definitely be prepared well ahead and stress tested as much as possible. In my perspective, acknowledgement of the crisis it is the first point of contact of test messaging. So acknowledging to the affected or impacted public that there is indeed a crisis or an incident is quite important. That explains what has happened? What caused the crisis? The second stage is remediation or even apologize to the audiences. But I hold the perspective that one needs to determine the extent of the crisis and responsibility of the crisis before they can apologize.

CS: There are suggestions that some organizations in Botswana use corrective strategies; others use denial strategies; while others use shifting the blame strategies. Are these strategies prevalent in Botswana, and how effective or less effective are they in reparing reputational damage?

Pt 011: Denial strategies are quite prevalent in Botswana. So what will happen, as an example, is that a lot of organizations are really quick to deny the existence of a crisis and before they fully establish if there isn't a crisis. Now the risk is your reputation obviously, should the truth come out. It means that the company's reputation, our weight obviously becomes reduced and impacted. With that said, denial can never be a first point of communication in a crisis because like I said, in the majority of cases, crises is a surprise both to the organization and to the public. So until you have the full effect of what has transpired what extent it has transpired, who has been impacted and how, then it is not advisable to deny. But like I said in Botswana it is quite common and unfortunately, organizations end up being caught up because they denied before they establish the facts.

CS: That's very, very insightful. Now let's talk about the role of social media during crisis.

Pt 011: I think traditionally crises communication was premised on media, either print, radio or TV. In the last decades, what we have seen is the emergence of social media. People use social media networks, then they are consuming anything what come on real-time. I'm seeing time and time because traditional media is also transitioning into digital and social media platforms. That presents quiet a whole slew of changes for the communicator in a crisis perspective because whilst communicator used to

first start with a holding statement, today consumers and the public have more access to organizations and leadership via social media. This means that the organization can no longer afford to wait to be asked. So in the instance that you're not being asked about the problem, it means that then your holding statement does not necessarily work because it is premised on getting a question or request. What digital and social media has presented like I said is accessibility from mobile context. I can give you stats. In terms of activity, Facebook has the highest penetration of almost 98% of the penetration rate even higher than the people who actually have access to Internet. So you have a unique situation that might not be present in other markets or other countries. So that's the new game within the reputation circles that you need to know what to do on social media in the instance of a crisis because the public that's where they are.

CS: Comment on suggestions that some organizations in Botswana are passive on Facebook during crisis.

Pt 011: It is critical, even more so in today's world to be seen to be doing something, be upstanding and to be accountable to the public. So if you lose your reputation is tied to the trust that the public bestows upon you, and where the customers are involved and the revenue risk or revenue loss.

CS: There are suggestions that some organizations do not response to individual comments on Facebook during crisis. What could be the reason?

Pt 011: So for the different organizations I have worked with in different capacities, may be thats one part I didn't touch on. From a preparation perspective and resources for reputation crises a lot of organizations, no matter how large they are will have one person mandated with managing reputational crises. But in terms of actually managing the crisis there's usually one person. So I know that in many organizations, there's not enough hands to go around to handle a multi-layered or multi-platform communication strategy. So in such instances, you will find that there is lack of responsiveness and is a big issue. The organisation, on its own accord, is stone deaf and is just not responsive, may be due to a lack of information.

CS: Is it not that that they're afraid of being battered by the viral characters on Facebook?

Pt 011: During the crisis is a war room type of situation. So there is need for somebody to handle communication. There is need for somebody to handle responding. So if the crisis is large enough, you have media involved and on social media. So that multiple touch points. that I existing and obviously the internal.

CS: Please share some of the best practices of social media in Botswana?

Pt 011: Firstly, build a reputation that you do good. That way, then you will have the benefit of the doubt. It allows you a bit of latitude where there is a problem with crisis to address and remediate. I always say

social media is a platform just like radio, just like that other platforms, just that it's two way actual. So, because it's such a two way, constant live environment, it means that it is really important for people or for the audience as the customers and the public to have a positive view of the organization. Secondly, obviously, your crisis communication policy and documents will prepare you in terms of what are the likely points of contention and guide you to address them. They'll always be limitations in terms of what you can communicate, but firstly acknowledging the issue then move in to elaborate on the extent of the issue helps gain public confidence and regain, rebuilt public confidence. Like they always say the best apologies change behavior. So if you are going to apologize, ensure that this is not a frequent occurence.

CS: Thank you very much. So as we wrap up, I want to understand whether you do consider culture when developing crisis messages for Facebook.

Pt 011: If your Organization has no communications discipline, no amount of a policy documents will help you. If your organization also lacks delivery, discipline doesn't matter. It means you are predisposed to crises or problems. Culture is centered around the perception of the organization to the tonality of how the organization sounds to other publics and what the organization can say to the publics. So obviously, if you are running communication for a secret organization or a security agency, you're not at liberty to share everything. However, like I say the internal culture is critical to your tonality and it's critical to your response. We don't want a situation whereby if the customer has agreed what you're seeing on social media from your Community management perspective or what you've put up as a statement varies to what the customer is going to experience at that point of contact like a walk in or a contact Center or the phone or whatever or email. So there needs to be a organizational discipline trying to do the exercise of the organization missions, communication strategy and policies. There is also need for full alignment within the those who are either customer centric.

CS: I see! So what about corporate social responsibility? Can it help organizations in crisis if practice before the crisis strike?

Pt 011: I believe so. That's goodwill. It goes a long way. However, it is really important to caution that it is not a panacea of bad behavior as an organization.

CS: There are indications that some organizations purposefully use language to dominate, to persuade and to manipulate their audiences. What is your view?

Pt 011: The use of heavily technical language is not commendable. However, the reality of social media is that you cannot out talk the audience. You cannot shout above them. No can you muffle them unless you are a government organization and can shut down the Internet or whatever. Usually people find ways around that so if people are able to circumvent authoritarian regimes with other technologies, they get across that disclosure around organizations and governments and the honours are no longer on the organization to determine what they are perceived as, but on the audience and the publics to determine what they perceived

organisations as. That being said, it means that no amount of bombastic or technical or any nefarious intent language will make the crisis go away. This can either impact trust in terms of the organization's ability to deliver or it can really unfortunately impact revenue of an organization. The rule of thumb for social media is keep it simple, keep it concise.

CS: Thank you very much for this insightful interview. Any last thing about crisis communication in Botswana?

Pt 011: A few decades ago brand building was an internal exercise, and those days are gone. Its over. The public determines who you are based on how you behave. With That being said, it's important for brands to really extensively investing actually and knowing what the customer thinks or the public thinks of them and preparing for crises and in that preparation, know that the game has changed. Social media is the leading platform for communication and no amount of money spent on other media kits can fend the crisis. I live in social media so i'm going to deeply invest in social media crisis readiness. To invest in resourcing social media personnel within the organization. What I would advise any organization is that there is need to invest in tools that can track that brand perception on an ongoing basis to ensure that any public places that may arise from social media are able to know about it and nip it in the bud.

CS: Thank you very much. I will stop the recording.

Pt 011: Thank you very much.

Transcript for participant 12 (PT 012)

WEBVTT

CS: So the first question that i'm going to ask you is your understanding of crisis. What is your understanding of crisis?

Pt 012: Yes. I think, for me crisis in terms of what people's lives or colleagues or communities lives in danger, then there's crisis that affects the company, it affects the organization in a way. For example, it can be a corruption case or a graft case that becomes a crisis. I think, you will have followed the NPA case crisis.
Even though there is no loss of life or there's no endangerment to the community or to the population at large. So when we still based on those two crisis or two examples that I just gave, you find that there's a crisis where everybody agrees there's a consensus about the crisis. Okay, this is the crisis and what needs to be done at the crisis, and then the crisis where you have sort of organizing people sort of seeing the crisis differently, and those who don't see the crisis. It can somehow affect people's lives, whether it's like I said physically or financially or otherwise. We've had the financial crisis. We've seen crisis in a space

in mining, collapsed shaft mining. War is a crisis. The loss of life, damages to property as well. They're all varied in that way, but the question that remains is how does the responses of those crisis remains the same.

CS: I see! Yeah you are talking about the process of responding to crisis. How do you prepare the organisation to withstand the negative effects of crisis?

Pt 012: I think in our space, the first thing that you need to do is work ahead of the crisis. What are the existing processes or policies? The crisis policy does it exist? Is everyone who needs to be in the crisis team aware of the policy? If you identified your crisis team, if you identify your spokesperson who will speak on behalf of the company. One of the things that we usually as practitioners make a mistake is when there's a crisis, then you have various peoples, somehow end up having a disconnect of the information. That's when we lose the control of the crisis or managing the current crisis. So the work really starts when there's no crisis. Have the policy in place; have the crisis team in place; train the crisis team in terms of what they need to do; identify who's responsible for what; and what channels we are going to use if there's a crisis and also if there's a crisis room that is needed. If it's a fatality or let's say a fire that affects the building, what are the things that can be used to manage the crisis. Always sort of dry-run the crisis team periodically. So I think a lot of us as practitioners, we sort of have a policy gathering dust because there is usually no crisis. In our cases it happens that we start to try to memorize and remember it and then that's when you make mistakes.
So once, the crisis happens obviously because we don't do dry runs periodically, everybody will know what needs to be done. You don't need to just call your Expo asking for it to be in a crisis team, and then 10 minutes or one hour later, you think you've left your legal guy and risk person behind because now you're sort of being reactionary. So obviously when that crisis happens, yes, they have to determine what happened, which is the initial assessment. If it's on site it's easier to do the initial assessment. But if it's offsides, let's just give an example of the crisis happening and you are in a holiday. Does that work for a company? If there's a derailment of the train, the assessment needs to be on site. So you obviously know the crisis team and who can be on site to help with assessment. Who can quickly beyond on site to help with assessment to collect the data because in a crisis effects come first. If you try to hide the fact they're going to come out, so acknowledge. If you are not in control of the assessment, the public is in control of that assessment. They are sharing videos of whatever has happened with the incident live, so when they do that that means they're in control of the narrative or that assessment of the crisis and obviously post that to then notify your crisis team. During a crisis there is a crisis log, whether you're doing a media you're calling the media on site or you're doing a press release or you're doing social media on your own pages. It is then key to prepare the spokesperson. Who needs to say what? Then there is monitoring and media, whatever will come later after the crisis. So those are the processes that I have in place.

CS: Wow! Thank you very much. That's very, very insightful. You spoke about the spokesperson. Who is usually the spokesperson for organization?

Pt 012: Even before, besides the crisis, the chief spokesperson of have any organizations is the CEO, with a delegated role to the head of communication. So, usually in paper and that's how the structure is composed. The CEO is the key spokesperson of the company. In the absence of the CEO, who is the second best person to speak of the crisis in most organizations. There's always obviously someone who is at a technical level. It's the CEO or the head of technical. The head of technical would be more suitable to be the second in terms of speaking because they can speak the language of what is happening because if they will delegate to a PR person sometimes the terminology and everything that happens will be a challenge.

CS: You spoke of reputation. Why does reputation matters so much?

Pt 012: I think reputation is the goodwill of the company. Whether you're selling a product or selling a service, people needs to be able to trust you as an organization or as a company and the trust is derived from the reputation. For example, if you talk of a company that produces food. I know some years back in 2017 the entire southern Africa was nearly got wiped out by a Polony. When there is that crisis, people lose lives, and your reputation is gone. Nobody's gonna trust buying from you. But in other jurisdictions, especially in instances where you are a listed company, crisis can actually just take your stock to zero, and people will lose their money. CEOs have lost their jobs because of the company's reputation.

CS: That's very insightful. When crisis breaks out, there is this notion that the first hour is golden. What's your view on this?

Pt 012: It is practical. It will be practical for companies that are running globally or their global outlets know that if they did not react, the crisis may become bad. IN Botswana, if you get our government to do that, it will take time because government is the biggest entity in this country. The second thing is that we sort of still have a conservative culture of consultation. I've worked for three to four parastatals that tells us that you might have the CEO, but if crisis happens then you cannot speak until they get hold of the PS or the Minister. So you're not gonna be able to respond in an hour if you still need to go and sort of engage your other superiors right in the government level. So there's a lot of crisis in terms of how we are structured. So, in that way, it sort of also makes that one hour window good in paper and not practical in our setup. I mean we followed the Covid crisis. The worst thing about Covid crisis is that we were seeing how other countries were responding and us sitting there. The ordinary person were like where's our response and then you get it a few weeks later when it's too late or giving it when things are already bad.

CS: With so much experience, what could be the best practices in crisis communication in Botswana?

Pt 012: I think it's the fundamental simple things that they teach us in crisis communication in school is that you should speak now. Speak the truth; Speak fast. Just those basic things like the truth, the facts and

be available to communicate because like I said in a crisis you'll sit in a crisis team and all the facts would be decided. They will say, let's let's give them 50% of the facts so that we are not held liable for the problem. Eventually information comes out because as an organization you've experience or know what has happened. That bond to have a chat with someone is sometimes even the worst. If you don't go to the media, by the end of the day, staff will have a chat with the friends. They will say this and this happened today at work. The media will come to the organisation for the facts which the organisation should have given out. You don't wish the crisis away because even a month later, it'll still be as bad in terms of reputation if you dont share information. What i've learned is the leadership within organizations needs to be more trusting and seeking counsel and advice from communication specialists or PR practitioners. They should also have the best interest of the company, at heart. That could go a long way because sometimes it look like the crisis now is about leadership. A PR person is called when things have gone bad and you're asked to come and fix it. What are they expected to fix when they have not been in the forefront of the decision-making of how to respond to the crisis.

CS: So let's talk about messaging during crisis. At what point do you develop messages?

Pt 012: It's in two parts right because sometimes you can't predict a crisis. But as a company, you always have to have key messages on what you do and how you do it and and maybe the service or the product or the business itself. You should always have sort of a folder with all the key messages in terms of the message that talks to your shareholders; a key message that talks to your Community; key messages that talks to how you want to position yourself to the media; and to everyone else should always be packaged. Whenever a crisis happens everybody knows that you can just pull the messages that speaks to it. You're not going to think about it, and start crafting and wondering if this is the right terminology to use. Those key messages should always be consistent and everybody knows about that. But once you've assessed the crisis that is happening live, for example the fire, you need to have messages in terms of the damages and safety comes in. All those other messages now needs to be developed to save this key message.

CS: Thank you very much. There are suggestions that some organizations in Botswana use corrective strategies, others use denial strategies, while yet others use shifting the blame strategies. Are these strategies prevalent in Botswana? How effective are they in repairing reputational damage?

Pt 012: Obviously they're very prevalent. I think we see them a lot from different organizations. Like I said earlier, with social media you cannot deny, you cannot hide. We've seen during crisis, companies instituting investigations and never publishing the results of the investigation and nobody really knows if there was corrective action taken until another cases happens and then people wondering what happened to the previous crisis. Across the country, denial is probably the most prevalent one. A lot of denial that leadership was not aware of the crisis, but will come back to you until the crisis is bad. But they're not very effective like I said in a crisis, you need to acknowledge the crisis so that also even when you approach the crisis, one of the things

that happens when you acknowledge the crisis is that you actually inflate or reduce speculation. One of the worst things is that if you as an organization keeps quiet or deny people starts speculating. Speculating on social media and our society tend to be alive during crisis.

Pt 012: Whenever there's a crisis, they'll take an action but there is no apology and empathy. In most setups, for organisations I have worked for, this is what happens, we might not know a lot but whatever happens, we apologize, we feel the pain, we will take action to make it go away, we will support the family in a fatality. So what happens is that as a practice when crisis happens, there is no apology to the nation, there is no apology to the families affected. So that's one of the biggest gaps in crisis management.

CS: Let's now talk about social media, especially Facebook. What is the role of social media or Facebook during crisis?

Pt 012: Social media has brought two things to the whole process of managing a crisis right. It is brought one advantage of speed in terms of telling this information right. Imagine before the social media or the Internet was if a crisis happens you have to sort of rely or depend on newspaper. If a fire happens, it could take a week to be reported on newspapers, but it's no longer so because social media has brought an advantage of speed. We're now able to respond with speeds in terms of going on social media which says look this happened five minutes ago, and this is what happened. You can actually even take people every hour every 30 minutes of what is happening, what has been done. Like I said earlier, one of the things that happens in this instance, when when speculation starts or rumor starts, you can control them, but if you are in control of the information through your own page as an organization, as a company is that you can control that narrative.

Pt 012: I used Facebook in a crisis. I see a lot of companies really now using it. Sometimes you find paople using their own pages to respond to the crisis, which should be the case. It should be the organization managing and leading that information. Thats the disadvantage of social media now. It has created citizen journalists. It has created vigilantes on Facebook. People who are just out there to cause mayhem using their pages and their following. They use the power of their following to sort of spread false information. They like sharing without even verifying the information they share. You can naturally as an organization or as a spokesperson, or as a CEO know about the crisis from people posting on social media before you know it officially. You can imagine now you don't even have control of the crisis. It's already out there, someone has shared it or they are sharing it live on Facebook.

You can use it to the advantage of the organisation to be in control of the messaging. But it can also go ahead of you and make you now become reactive about the crisis. So it has its advantages and disadvantages. Even our media now here, traditional media, they own their own social media pages. A newspaper sometimes share a citizen's post or citizen's video or picture without verifying. It's because everyone wants to be the first to tell the story. You can actually lose the control of managing a crisis.

CS: Is the fear of these vigilantees the reason organisations are passive in sharing information during a crisis in Botswana?

Pt 012: That's one of the reasons. Even if you post some good news on the internet or social media, somebody can just take and spin it around. It could be because of the image that you used in that. It could be one word that you used which they can spin and turn into something negative. Those people are very good at that, so they actually make you shy away from social media even if you have a good story to tell. So you can imagine in a crisis now it's even worse because you wanted to have the responses for those people or them questioning or putting a different facts out there. So, most people tend to be more believable than you as an organization, so that's why I said if you are sharing half the facts, then those guys will pounce on you.

CS: Is that also the reason why some organizations do not respond at all to individual comments on Facebook?

Pt 012: Yeah, it is because I can imagine managing social media page for my organization and there's a crisis and then there are 300 to 400 comments. Most of the comments are actually banter and criticism. Would you then respond to the criticism? Would you respond to the banter? Would you do respond to the insults? We just actually put a solid statement out. We've seen, and we were followed how the former US President Trump was that person who responds with quickness as well. Remember social media page of organization have human being sitting behind them and if somebody goes personnal, you might also want to go personal and it doesn't end well. As soon as that happens, as an organization then it's assumed you don't have the moral ground, and you dont feel any emotions.

CS: You spoke of the conservative culture among audiences. To what extent do you consider culture when developing message?

Pt 012: In theory we should be able to consider them, but in practice it becomes very difficult especially for Botswana where we have many cultures.

CS: Talking of culture, do you think the kgotla system is helpful in crisis communication?

Pt 012: It depends on the locality. For example, if there is a crisis in Masunga or Ghanzi area, thats the most logical place to use. Thats the community's gathering areas. In urban areas it will be difficult as much as there are kgotlas. People there dont abide to the kgotla as they would in the villages. You would probably have to use multiple platforms to communicate the crisis. It depends on the context, and it can be very helpful in villages.

CS: What role does corporate social responsibility play for organisations in crisis?

Pt 012: It goes back to a question of goodwill that we spoke about earlier or reputation. So any organization it's like you're a persona. So, through your social responsibility, you then have a persona that you care, especially when you have specific communities that we work with, social

organizations that have zones of influence in terms of communities. Let's say you work with communities and qualified that you sort of go beyond. Their livelihoods must be improved, you should support them on agriculture, you support them to create jobs. If your crisis happens I think those people will sympathize more because you cared as an organization. There would be sympathetic in a crisis, they would not be too hard.

CS: Thank you very much for that response, the last question is on language, the way language is used in messages. There are indications that some organizations in Botswana purposefully use language to dominate, to persuade and to manipulate their audiences. What is your view on this?

Pt 012: We've come to use English and Setswana as accepted communication languages. If you use English for an audience that does not understand it, it might seem you using it to dominate them. Language can become a barrier to people, in terms of knowing and understanding. I could somehow sympathize because if you go to the rural areas and speak oxford English, they will not understand. Its a disadvantage in terms of disseminating the information.

CS: Thank you very much, Sir for those responses and taking time for this interview.

Pt 012: Thank you.

Transcript for participant 13 (PT 013)

WEBVTT

CS: The first question is on your understanding of crisis. What is your understanding of crisis?

Pt 013: Its mishap that happens, which can happen to an organisation. Its something that unexpectedly happens, that might interrupt a business as it usually does on a daily basis. An example can be maybe the building has a fire or maybe the pipe suddenly bursts, and then there's water all over the premises, so that means that your business on that particular day or for that hour also may not be able to continue as it normally does. So, the business needs to find a way of continuing with business as best as possible. I guess that's it.

CS: Does crisis affect organizations in Botswana, and in what ways are they affected?

Pt 013: Yes it does affect organisations in Botswana. There was once a crisis of a girl who jumped from a 7 storey building where I worked and died on the spot. That was a typical example of a crisis because no one knew that the girl would just come into the building and do what she did. That girl just asked for the bathroom and then jump out of the window and it came as a shock to everyone that was there. Yes, it didn't upset

the business for that day but those who saw it firsthand took pictures and then started posting on social media. That's something that we could not control because it just happened at the moment. Everyone was shocked at first, but measures had to be taken to make sure that people have to be moved away from the scene so that officials could do what needed to be done at the time.

CS: How did you it affect the reputation of the business since you said it was all over social media?

Pt 013: The thing about such things is that everyone will have their own story to tell. Some jumped to conclusion and said that maybe that girl wasn't receiving the help she had requested at the Ministry, which is why she jumped out of the window. But the honest truth is no one knew what she was there for. No one came up and said that she had been to the office to ask for help. So it really wasn't known why she chose that place to commit suicide. It was all just assumptions, but the truth of the matter is that it had nothing to do with the Ministry.

CS: You said crisis happens unexpectedly and affect the company's reputation, so why does reputation matter so important to organizations?

Pt 013: Reputation is very important because you need to have it for continued business with all your stakeholders, be it your clients, your service providers, your suppliers. No one wants to be associated with people who have been viewed badly by the public because that's where you get your business from. Those are the people that provide your daily business. So if you're going to be associated with someone who has been viewed negatively, your business might also be viewed negatively, and it will be affected in a way.

CS: Okay, that's very, very insightful. Crisis does not announced its arrival. From experience as a PR expert, what can be done to prepare organizations in Botswana to withstand the negative effects of crisis?

Pt 013: Although you might anticipate what will actually happen, but when you have a crisis plan at hand it will help guide you when the time comes. I believe the best way to deal with it is just to have a team that will be able to handle such things. Someone will be able to know who to call at times of crisis, know what to do. Leadership of your organization should be more visible. You should have a relationship with the media because they would want to know what's going on. So, there should be someone who will be able to inform them in a proper manner. It is very useful to avoid speculations like I said before. So it helps to have that person who's going to be able to find out what's going on and then share information. That's really necessary to avoid speculation. I think it also helps with business continuity processes because it is a business that needs to continue so that the public gets help. The spokesperson depends on the market magnitude of the crisis. If it's really burning issues you need to have your CEO or your Minister or the PS to show the resonance of the situation and to also show accountability. But if things aren't really that bad, you can have your focal person as the head of public relations.

CS: There is the notion that when crisis breaks out, the first hour is golden. What is your take on this matter?

Pt 013: These days, I feel that it is practical with the use of social media because people always have their phones on to check breaking news. So I think the first hour is really important, it's very critical because if it is not handled from the beginning, then I think all control can be lost. It's very critical for everything to be impactful and information is appropriately shared.

CS: What are some of the best practices in crisis communication in Botswana during crisis?

Pt 013: Okay, the best thing to do is to be open and honest. This is sometimes that's not really easy. Organisations don't usually tell the truth as it is, but telling the truth and being honest is very important. It shows that you can be trusted. It shows that you have an open door policy with your clients.

CS: Lets now look at the messaging. What happens behind the curtains when messages are developed. To what extent do you believe organizations should develop their messages before the crisis or when you crisis is in progress?

Pt 013: Like I said before you should always have a crisis plan in place. I think, behind closed doors maybe a little meeting before sharing a statement is important, or something. There should always be that contact person to share messages.

CS: There are suggestions that some organizations in Botswana use corrective responses, denial strategies and shifting the blame strategies. How prevalent are these strategies and how effective are they in repairing reputational damage?

Pt 013: Yes, I can recall that most organisations like deploying denial strategies where they simply deny that some crisis exist. Sometimes like the first organisations would choose to say they are still trying to figure out what's happened are still investigating. If they really aren't aware of what actually is happening, then the best thing to do is to just investigate and then come back up and tell what is happening. Denial and shifting the blame can happen, and you might find that sometimes it is true that they shift the blame, but it does help to maybe also investigate and then come together with whoever to blame and share the message together to show unity.

CS: Let's talk about the role of role of social media during crisis? Have you used Facebook to communicate during crisis, what role did it play?

Pt 013: I think Facebook is very helpful during a crisis because the message is just immediate. You don't have to go through a lot of channels to get the message through. So if you have your message, then sharing it through Facebook is helpful because a lot of people use Facebook. These

days, I mean like I said almost every phone has Facebook on it. So when you share your crisis message on Facebook, the one person that sees that is going to share with their friends. The message can get through very fast.

CS: What could be some of the disadvantages of using Facebook during crisis?

Pt 013: Sometimes people can just copy that message and then come up with their own stories and jumped to their own conclusion and just share what they think. They want to share the whole story as it is. So people can change the narrative and dent the image of the organization.

CS: There are indications that some organizations in Botswana are very passive when sharing information on Facebook. What is your view on that?

Pt 013: I think most organizations seem to be more appreciative of the value of sharing information proactively. We're seeing the value of Facebook, let's say the value of social media as a whole. I guess we're still learning and it will improve with time. As time goes on, we'll see the value in using Facebook and other social media platforms as a way of communication because we really need to move with the times. If our clients use that platform to communicate any matters, we should be able to communicate with them in places where they will be able to get the messages that you're sharing with them.

CS: There are suggestions that there is Facebook phobia for most organizations in Botswana as they do not respond to individual comments on Facebook during crisis.
What could be the reason for this?

Pt 013: I dont believe in sharing issues on the public domain. Most of the time it shows that people are fighting. I believe that maybe behind the scenes some organizations do reach out to their clients and stakeholders because it's a private matter. Organisations cannot go on to Facebook walls and then say okay tell us what your problem is or maybe say we've resolved your problem in a certain way. So I believe that behind the scenes, organisations do reach out to their stakeholders.
They respond to the Facebook comments through inbox. You cannot blow your own horn in that way. We can go back to that comment on the wall and say okay you're not telling the people that we've helped you, but here is the truth. So it's some kind of an ecosystem situation. We go into their inbox and ask them to tell us how best we can help them,, what their problems are, and even ask for their telephone number so that we call them. Such issues are dealt with behind the scenes and then life goes on. Organisations cant just respond on the wall because there some vile characters who would just use every little opportunity to tear down the reputation of the organisation. We dont want to be discussing people's private lives on timeline because most of the time, people have issues that maybe were not handled properly in offices at your organization. So you need to really take their privacy into consideration and then deal with it privately.

CS: Let's talk about culture. Do you consider diverse cultures when developing crisis messages?

Pt 013: We do. I believe it's very important because if you're looking to get the most out of it you need to know we are communicating and how you need to communicate with them to get the most out of them.

CS: To what extent is the kgotla system useful for disseminating crisis information?

Pt 013: I have previously used the kgotla to communicate. We normally use it in rural areas. Thats where the system is still very much in use. So it does help to use it to dissemiante crisis information because in village people believe its a traditional platform and whatever messages come, they believe all those messages. I believe that during a crisis using it may be very helpful because the messages are delivered face to face and people usually ask questions and get answered on the spot. Whatever messages are delivered there tend to be serious and community believes those messages. I believe it can work because its more believable and people are free to ask and share issues that they have. We have a setswana saying that Mafoko a kgotla a mantle otlhe. People are at liberty to ask questions so they can be in a better position to share the information they got from the kgotla.

CS: What is the role of social corporate responsibility for organisations in crisis in Botswana?

Pt 013: If a company has all along been socially responsible for the community they become sympathetic to you when there is a problem because they have some sort of relationship with that organization. They believe that the organization is really faithful.

CS: There are indication that some organisations purposefully use language to dominate, to persuade and to manipulate them. What is your view on that?

Pt 013: I don't believe that's the truth. We always use both languages because there are people who cannot understand English. When we send information to newspapers we use English because the audience understand English. To those who do not understand English, we use Setswana, which is our national language. So language has to be simpler for people to understand it without being manipulated. We have your ordinary people, we do make use both languages. Yes it's mostly English but when it's really necessary and we understand that here our target audience are people who are mainly Setswana speaking. We do make sure that our message is shared in both languages as well.

CS: Thank you very much. I am sincere grateful for that insightful interview. I will now stop the recording.

Pt 013: Okay

Transcript for participant 14 (PT 014)

WEBVTT

CS: So the first question that I want to ask you is your understanding of crisis. What is your understanding of crisis?

Pt 014: Crisis is that action or activity that happens when it was not planned for. Sort of like an emergency and in most cases, it would be due to the lack of information on the part of the people. In most cases that's what i've realized.

CS: So does crisis affect organizations in Botswana, and in what ways are they affected if any?

Pt 014: Having worked for about 1,2,3 maybe four or five organizations, not organizations but departments let me stay in government, because I have only worked for government. I would say that crisis does affect especially government because that's what I will be dealing with in most cases. It does affect organizations or departments, that I have worked with and in different ways in which different people in different positions have dealt with crisis. We all also depends on what type of leadership skill the person have because some people would want to volunteer information before the crisis. But others would wait for the crisis to actually happen and then give information after.

Pt 014: I think, to be precise, recently we had a crisis with people in sport decrying the fact that they're not getting enough information on the involvement of governments, especially when it comes to welfare issues. For instance, there was an issue of the relay team that went to Poland which was preparing for the Tokyo Olympics. They took it into the Winter Olympic Games. One of the athletes wrote on his social media that he went to Poland using his own money and that government did not contribute anything. And for a lot of people who are in sport, they will know that under no circumstances can government refuse to fund an athlete on an international competition. It wasn't necessarily for the committee to make sure that athletes are taken care of when they go on these trips to represent the country. The government actually spent about P71 million in preparation for the Olympic Games. The team that went to Poland was funded by the government and that's government money by the way.
When the athletics team won, the Minister said congratulations on qualifying for the relay in the Tokyo Olympics. The athlete wrote back and said Oh, I didn't know the minister knew that we were in Poland. That caused an uproar in Botswana because people were saying this minister only comes when people have won. He doesn't even know that the team was in London. They were just riding on that wave to say that government is not taking care of athletes. The people who are in the ministry knew that but the public did not have information on that. It caused the whole brouhaha of back and forth between the [name of organisation], government, the athletes and the media.

Pt 014: So it's something that could have been avoided by just a statement from either the Ministry or the [name of organisation] saying we're sending a team of about six or seven athletes who are trying to qualify

for the Olympic Games. They will be in Poland from this date to that date and government has spent this amount of money to ensure that the athletes will be taken very good care of for that duration.

CS: You said crisis affects the company or the organization in terms of reputation. Why does reputation matter so much to organizations in Botswana?

Pt 014: I think reputation matters to us because we sell services and programs to the people. They need to have as much information as possible and, in most cases I have realized that when people don't have information that's when we get a crisis. You eventually have to explain to them that for them to get access to [name of product] they're supposed to be under 35, and should have a registered company or have a company name or you're supposed to have an idea of what exactly you want to do as a young person. Business wise you're supposed to have a either a land or you're supposed to have a place of operation and whatnot. So if people don't have that information, then they will say that the government is providing this idea of thing, and nobody knows what to do, how to go about it. So you need to give people information so that they are able to access your service or your product.

CS: What do you do as a PR practitioner to prepare an organization for crisis and for it to withstand the negative effects of that crisis?

Pt 014: First and foremost, every five years we develop a communication strategy. The one that we're still using right now is for 2017-2022. So we are in the process of reviewing the communication strategy. We don't want to wait for 2022 and then start doing that. We want to get to a point where by 2022 we have the strategy for 2022-2027. Every year you pick a chunk of the strategy, and then you come up with a communication plan. In the case of the current crisis (Covid-19), we came up with a communication plan which was relevant to the crisis so that everything that we're doing because we're not going to have activities where we had lots and lots of people coming in, and because we're not going to be traveling since there was a travel ban, we're not going to be able to meet face to face with people that we were interviewing. We came up with a strategy to say Okay, we definitely would love to have a situation where we use as much online presence as possible and in one of the ways in which we provide information to our customers is through our TV show which is called [name of programme]. We ensure that we provided information to our customers through this programme on a government radio station. We also provide information to our people on social media or platforms, we are on Facebook. We are on instagram, we are on Twitter. At [name of Ministry] those are the platforms where we provide information or where we provided information throughout the travel restrictions. We didn't have activities for example the [name of competitions].We didn't have activities for the [name of celebrations], but what we did was to engage the people in the various regions. We engage even young people who had cameras and other production equipment and whatever to capture certain activities which will make the [name of competitions] and [name of celebrations] memorable to the people. We then provided the clips on online platforms and tv programme for people who were not able to see those things. So we tried as much as possible to tweak our communication plan to have too many things virtually to get the limelight, so to speak. So we used a lot of online presence.

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CS: Did you do any risk assessment of the types of crisis that are likely to affect the organization?

Pt 014: Of course. That is what is involved. You first and foremost need to find out your strategy should be informed by what you anticipate for the next five years. Right now, one of the big issues that we're looking into post Covid is on conference or an international event for the country to host. One of the biggest event is that we anticipate to host is the [name of games] and we have put that into our communication strategy for 2022-2027 because we want to prepare for any eventualities. We need to have a strategy that's going to be relevant to the [name of games]. We need to have hotels, we need to work hand in hand with various ministries, and we need to put that in the communication strategy to say we're going to be working with the Ministry of tourism; and we're going to be working with the Ministry of Trade; we're gonna be working with the Ministry of Health; the Ministry of Gender and immigration because a lot of people will be coming; we're going to be working very closely with the Ministry of international cooperation. All these ministries need to be part of the organising committee. You should then have a crisis management plan.

CS: There is a notion that when crisis breaks the first hour is golden. What is your take on this, is it practical in government?

Pt 014: First and foremost, you don't forget that as a government employee. I will have to wait for approvals from the Permanent Secretary, the minister. I work for the Government of the Republic of Botswana and there is protocol. First and foremost, I need to know the levels at which I can comment on an issue or I can leave it to the government spokesperson; or when PS can comment on an issue or when the Minister can talk; or when the President of the Republic of Botswana can speak on the issue.
So you need to be aware of all these levels of communication so you do not flout your PR processes. Even if you flouted them, are you flouting those because you talked within the golden hour? We all know that within an hour you're supposed to have addressed all the crisis issues that arose. But the issue is if it's a big issue that involves the main government, the minister has to be involved. You cannot just handle it alone. We craft a response. It's taken to PS, who then shares it with the Minister to see if that is what government would want the people to know. When the Minister is not too sure about that then he or she can take it up with the boss, the President to say we are going to say 1,2,3 about this athlete who said 1,2,3 about government. Would you want us to proceed, or is this something that you want to handle at that level. Within that time you may realize that maybe it happens on a Wednesday here in Botswana it's a Cabinet day. So the Cabinet meeting will be from eight o'clock to midday. Their phones are kept off. You don't have access to the Minister. You don't have access to the President, but the crisis is happening. So you sort of like wait and hope and pray that the crisis does not reach levels where you cannot do anything. It does frustrates a lot of people, especially those who would be coming from the private sector where the person that you need to talk to is the head of communications or whatever and then they talk to the CEO and the next thing you have a response. In government there are steps that needs to be taken before a press release is issued to the public, and all that

because you're not only dealing with the administrative issues, but the political leadership.

CS: What are some of the best practices when crisis has started in Botswana?

Pt 014: What I have observed and what we do is volunteer information. You can never over-communicate, though some people sometimes feel we can't over-communicate. Rather give people as much information as possible so that what happens afterwards if crisis does arise, other people would be able to say here is a press release. They told people that [name of programme] has been extended by another month. This is something that works if you do it right. So the first thing that you need to do is to volunteer as much information as possible about your organization, about your services, about your programs. Second if you can have frequently asked questions, you should share them with your team so that the team would be able to answer certain questions which people may frequently ask. This is how we ensure all of us are on the same page. If it does happen that the head of communications is the one who only has that information, then it becomes a problem when, God forbid, a crisis strikes while you are on a trip with the Minister, but if you are there to address that situation and if your team Members are not aware of the relevant things to say about a certain crisis then the organization is in trouble.

CS: Thank you very much. Let's now move on to messaging. Do you prepare messages ahead of the crisis or as the crisis unfold?

Pt 014: Unfortunately, in government we are not really selling anything but services and programs. Let me give you an example. If a new program is being rolled out by government, there isn't any robust budget that is given to the responsible unit. Most of the time, the bosses dont see the value of giving PR a lot of money to market programs. That's why, in most cases, anybody can just be the head of PR when the office bearer is not available. They can just simply pick anybody who has been doing programming and whatnot until this person comes back. They feel that anybody who knows the program and the services of the ministry can do PR work. But that is not always the case and that is how we often fall into the trap of not providing good messaging on the various programs and services. If we're talking about the culture, for instance, there is no point in us going around on TV or radio talking like we're doing right now speaking the best English. We can because when you're talking about cultural issues, you need to make your messages understood in the language the audiences understand better. For example, when talking about an old lady who is making crafts, she may not necessarily even understands English in the first place. So you need to put the type of messaging that's going to reach this woman or this old man who is making floor carpet using leather. For instance, how do you tell him to stop killing animals to make this floor carpets? He needs to be told that message that are relevant to language that is being used to address him. You dont patronize them; don't insult him; don't belittle him; but try and show him the importance of conservation of these animals.

Pt 014: So messaging is very important and if you don't have the right people who know how to talk to young people, how to talk to artists, how

to talk to elderly people, how to talk to cultural practitioners, how to talk to our elders, then we have the crisis.

CS: I see. Thank you very much. You just spoke about the importance of using relevant language. There are indications that some organizations purposefully use language to dominate, to persuade and to manipulate their audiences during a crisis. What is your take on that?

Pt 014: It happens a lot where people are made to feel bad about certain decisions; where people are made to feel bad about trying to get accountability especially from politicians. For example, I am on a holiday the Delta. If I were to talk about the things I saw and how I was treated, I will then be treated like a racist and that I am trying to incite people to do all kinds of things. I'll be regarded as anti-government because i'm seeing something in the delta, which, personally, I do not subscribe to. When I try to find answers for that I will then be labeled a troublemaker. Most organizations in Botswana usually do that through language when people try to find out information. People are often labeled cheap. Others will blatantly tell you are not the target market because we're talking about people who can afford certain services and products. Others when you ask why the water bill is so high, then you are labeled a troublemaker. If you try to complain, the PR unit will try and come up with some form of narrative that's going to make you feel so bad. They try to patronize, insult people's intelligence, or just persuade people to rally behind them. They do use that and in Botswana as a nation, we do not like complaining. We are shy to do that, you don't want to complain you don't want to celebrate your successes, lest you be misconstrued to be too arrogant. When you want accountability, you are labeled troublemaker so organizations that have tended to use those tricks.

CS: Thank you very much. To what extent do you consider culture when developing messages?

Pt 014: We cannot turn away from that. There are certain thing we have to look at the many faces of our client. I talked about sports both professional and recreational. I talked about culture, cultural practitioners both visual and performing artist. I talked about young people who are not a homogeneous group. Among young people you have your gays and lesbians, you have young in music, you have our young people in business, you have young people who have many faces. We may fall into the trap of trying to look at our customers as a homogeneous group. So messaging is very important for the various people who are served by the different organizations.

CS: Talking of culture, how useful is the kgotla system in disseminating information during crisis in Botswana?

Pt 014: We use the kgotla frequently to communicate to communities across the country. Like I said, there are people who are in rural areas who do not have access to social media and other information platforms. Government Ministers and Members of parliament, as well as councillors usually reach hold kgotla meetings during constituency weeks to update people on government policy, programs and services. Our ministries reach out to them through the respective Ministers. When there are pressing

matters, Permanent Secretaries or Deputy Permanent Secretaries can accompany Ministers on a nationwide tour to disseminate information to different communities.

The kgotla is useful because decisions there are binding. Our people still respect the kgotla systems and the chiefs. People are able to ask questions and get responses face to face and immediately. During crisis, information disseminated from kgotla systems is effective. A car with a mounted loud speaker can move around the village disseminating information and within a short time everyone has the information. In every district, government has officers such as District Commissioners who work closely with communities and the kgotla. So the kgotla is very effective for government and can help during crisis.

CS: There are suggestions that some organizations in Botswana use corrective strategies, denial and shifting the blame strategies. Are these prevalent in Botswana and how effective are they in repairing reputational damage?

Pt 014: Let me just say unfortunately Batswana are a nation that forgets quickly. Issue would be a crisis today and tomorrow they have forgotten and moved past it. When a small story comes up online, they run with it and forget the crisis. So it becomes very easy for organizations or even ministries to denied in most cases.

You start wondering and doubting if the crisis happened because now the government is denied or this organization is saying they are not stealing money from your bank accounts or whatever it is. You end up thinking that maybe there's something wrong with your interpretation of certain things and you really didn't understand, which makes it very easy for government PR practitioners to get away with matters. In most cases they rely on the cultural practices of our people were in most cases they don't care about certain things if they don't affect them. We are a country that makes it look like people are being done a favour. Most PR practitioners will rely on that and they will manipulate people into believing everything they say.

CS: Thank you. Lets now talk about Facebook or social media. What is the role of Facebook during crisis?

Pt 014: Unfortunately, we are living in times when everyone have smartphones. They are able to see stuff on their phones. Governments cannot afford to ignore the role of social media, be it Linkedin, be it Facebook, be instagram or Twitter. Every form of social media should be utilized for the benefits and marketing, for brand positioning of organizations and especially during the crisis. We saw during Covid 19 where the amount of consumed social media content skyrocketed because everyone was home. People were tired of watching TV. So they were on their phones, on their laptops most of the time. So, if your organization was not present it missed a huge opportunity. That was the opportune moment when organization should have just put in stuff about their services products and programs so that people could see it.

Unfortunately, with social media again you have the latitude to scroll down. If I see something that doesn't really concern me because I don't bank with them, I just scroll down and I go to another post.

CS: I see. What are some of the best practices for using social media in Botswana?

Pt 014: These days people don't like reading huge paragraphs. Your messaging should have pictorials. Your messaging should have pictures. Your messages should have limited text because nobody wants that. You can imagine if i'm driving and I see breaking news especially the newspapers. I want to read quick and know what it is about and not having to read long paragraphs. It has to capture the attention of the person and I need to know what its about in five seconds. So that is the strategy that you need to use to ensure that people or the traffic comes to your organization.

CS: There are indication that some organizations are very passive in sharing information on Facebook during crisis. What is your view?

Pt 014: Like I said, these people are using or are taking advantage of the type of people in Botswana who are not really willing to interrogate things that matter.
Let me give you an example of what happened in South Africa. There was an incident of a famous gay celebrity who was abusing his husband. When people who said the celebrity was an abuser, the radio station he was working for suspended him. Big brands that were working with him also suspended him. They said until he sorts out his problems. In Botswana, it would have been business as usual. No suspensions, and no one caring. What I am saying is that our organizations don't see anything wrong with not communicating.

CS: There are suggestion that some organizations in Botswana do not respond to individual comments at all on Facebook during crisis. Why is that the case?

Pt 014: Its not a phobia. Its only that people just don't want to engage at individual level because that person who is asking the relevant questions is seen to be asking hard questions or is calling them out. But thats the person who could assist you in your next communication plan. Why not engage them and try to find out, even if they provide you with their number or even call them to the office for a chat. Things will be better. Instead, what do we do we delete the mess we delete the comments or we block the person and say thats our social media pages, its only for the people who are praising us. You do not stifle people like that because they can help you grow as an organization or at a personal level. They help you grow so that you are able to deal with crisis better.

CS: Chedza Simon: Thank you very much, the last question on the role of corporate social responsibility for organisations in crisis. What is your view on this?

Pt 014: It's always good when organizations do corporate social responsibility because you're giving back to the Community that is accessing or doing uptake of your programs. You get the opportunity to interact with a lot of those people who are willing to again give you more insight into what and how they want to be serviced.

We've got to remember you're not just doing stuff for them. You are doing stuff with them and it's important for you to ensure that you keep constant communication and content interaction with the people so that you are aware of what changes they want to see in your programming or what changes they want to see in your project in your product.

CS: I see, thank you very much. Is there any last thing you wish to share about crisis communication in Botswana?

Pt 014: I wish organisations, especially government understand that we are no longer in 1996 or 2006. We are now in the modern age where we are dealing with the younger generation. They want things happening instantly. Unfortunately, you cannot afford to drop the ball and hope and pray that things will die. So you cannot bury your head in the sand and hope that they will not ask you to account. They want accountability. Some of them have been to schools abroad and whatnot and they come back with that level of knowledge and they want things done right. Organizations and government need to be on their toes and provide the best services because today's young people will demand good service.

CS: Thank you very much for this insightful and educative interview. I will now stop the recording.

Pt 014: Thank you.

Transcript for participant 15 (PT 015)

WEBVTT

CS: Thank you very much for finding time for this interview. The first question that I want to ask is what is your understanding of crisis?

Pt 015: Thank you very much. When we're talking about crisis in my understanding, we are talking about an unstable situation that is arising immediately. Its about how our organization can emerge with a positive image from the situation that we find ourselves in. So it is an issue, it is a situation, it is a situation that arises with urgency. It is an unforeseen situation that also requires you to act promptly and to try and avoid a disaster.

CS: Thank you very much for that insightful explanation. Does crisis affects organizations in Botswana and in what ways are they affective if any?

Pt 015: Yes, most definitely and there are cases of a lot of crisis in Botswana, government included as well. For example, if you take from the previous ministry that I worked for, we had a crisis. The crisis was about the [name of organisation] website being hacked. Our website was very important because we were using it to disseminate information. It contained a lot of research and a lot of people were using the website

to access a lot of information. At the time I realized that the website was hacked when it was already after hours. So you can imagine the panic that I had. I had to immediately phone the accounting officer and let her know that the website has been hacked. She was saying there's nothing that we can do, let's hope that overnight there won't be a lot of damage. We will attend to it in the morning.

CS: You spoke about the harm that crisis can cause to the organisation. Why does reputation matter?

Pt 015: It can either influence people to trust the organization. It can also tell or give an overview of whether you are having a positive image or a negative image.In every institution reputation matters in that if you don't manage your crisis very well, you are going to end up losing clients and being seen as untrustworthy. The organisation loses credibility.

CS: Crisis does not announce its arrival. What should be done to prepare organizations to withstand the negative effects of crisis?

Pt 015: You should always have a crisis management plan in place. This is a document that will basically describe the process that your organization or your institution should go through to respond to a critical situation that could affect your profitability, your reputation, your ability to operate. So you need to always have a crisis management plan in place to ensure that you try and reduce the damage that a crisis can do to an organization. I must say, if I may give you an example with current institution they didnt have a crisis management plan and the management gave me an opportunity to come up with a crisis management plan. I also made sure hat we came up with a crisis management team that involves the accounting officer because when you've got a crisis in an institution, you need to have the leadership on board. This will make sure that when there is a crisis, this is how we are going to manage it and within that team we specifically deliberately made sure that we specified a spokesperson. You cannot have all the people respond. You should have one person who basically can be able to respond to issues when there is a crisis. Not only that we also made sure that we share the plan with the whole management team.

CS: Thank you very much. There is the notion that when crisis breaks, the first hour is golden. What is your take on this?

Pt 015: Well, that is the golden rule for crisis. That is very important. I agree with it because if you do not share information within an hour other sources particularly the media will share the information that will damage your institution in such a way that by the time you release information there are a lot of discussions and a lot of people have already received information. Let's say that with this golden rule, why is it that the first hour is important, you are trying to also manage perceptions. People can perceive a lot of things with whatever situation that you may have led. For example, we had a crisis when people leaked a report for tertiary education before it became official. With us, any report must be tabled before parliament for it to become official. That's when it becomes a public document. So, in our case, the report was leaked

before it was tabled. So we needed to respond and the way we respond was that we told the public that this is not an official document because it has not been before Parliament. I must say, we received a lot of positive feedback from the public. It also gave us an opportunity to do a little bit of public education to inform the public that if the report is to come out as a public document there are steps that a report will go through. The minister has to sign it off. It then has to be taken to Parliament, then it becomes a public document. So we took advantage of the crisis to do that.

Pt 015: We responded within the hour. Remember, I said we set up a crisis management plan. My view is that had we not set the crisis management plan and even have the crisis management team in place, we would have taken a very long time. By the time we responded, we could have had a media storm. Crisis management team really helped us a lot and we made sure that we responded within an hour. When we realize that there's been a leakage what we did was the team called a meeting and the press release was a little lighter. We shared it with the media right away. I must say with our system, the way it is working in Botswana is that we have the leeway of using the government media within that hour to make sure that we release that information to say there's been this leakage.

CS: To what extent should messages be developed ahead of the cases or when it is in progress?

Pt 015: Messages should be developed during or when the crisis is in progress because different messages for different crisis or different situations require different message. As much as we can prepare, for example, a format of how you are willing to respond, the content is going to be determined by the kind of crisis that we have. It is very good to always have the format of how you're going to address issues. For example, you may say we are going to be sending all the press release; you need to address the five W's, a press conference where messages will be different from the kind of message that will have in a press release because of the face to face interaction with the media. You're also going to be have follow up questions and all that. But, all in all, you need to have come up with a script of what you need to say so you don't end up addressing issues that are outside the crisis or issues that are going to delay the main message of your address in the crisis to be relayed.

CS: I see. Thank you very much. There are suggestions that some organizations in Botswana use corrective strategies, denial strategies and shifting the blame strategies. Are these prevalent in Botswana and how effective are they in repairing reputational damage?

Pt 015: Well i'm not saying that I have seen them in practice in Botswana, but one that is more prevalent is the blame game. I must say that they are not really good strategies to ensure that you deal with the crisis effectively. For example, denial strategies. If it is factual at the end of the day, at some point in time, citizens or the public one way or the other find the truth. Denial is one of the strategies that most organizations like to play along with thinking that it is the safest strategy. While looking at issues of integrity as well, it is very very important to make sure that you don't deny factual information or you don't deny information that is truthful.

CS: Do you consider culture when developing a messages?

Pt 015: Yes, organizational culture in terms of developing information is very important and in such a way that different organizations have got different messages that they would have been intended to communicate with people. For example, if an organization needs to communicate information we have to ask ourselves what is our mission saying about my institution. For example, our mission is to promote accountability through quality reports. Now, under quality reports if there is the leak of report, we cannot assure the nation that resources are being used transparently and its value for money. Then there's a problem.

CS: Talking of culture, to what extent do you use the kgotla system to disseminate information during crisis in Botswana?

Pt 015: A kgotla system is not effective in terms of managing crisis the reasons being that you have to call the people to gather in a kgotla and that takes a long time. You need everyone to understand what you are telling them. The way our setup is done in terms of the kgotla system is that there is a particular dress code to attend a kgotla meeting. Women cannot wear trousers at a kgotla and that can be a hindrance and its a limitation on its own. It requires processes of informing the chief before the people know whats happening. That on its own can take a bit a time. Post-crisis the kgotla system can work to inform the people of what happened and that in future this is how we intend to do certain things.

CS: Indeed, thank you. Let's go to the role of social media during crisis, what do you think is the role of social media, especially Facebook during crisis in Botswana?

Pt 015: Well, social media, I must say plays a critical role in managing a crisis. Social media is one of the tools or the platforms that an institution can use because you are able to reach a lot of people very fast. We have our Facebook page but we are also linked to our government Facebook page. You can imagine when there's a crisis and we share information in the media, it is instantly all over. Hundreds of thousands of people would have access to this information, while waiting for other traditional media platforms, for example use of radio. Our government radio has broadcast every hour. But through Facebook, our leaders can share information for people to see it to know the truth. When newspapers go for printing, already social media has done the work. Facebook can even do a live coverage. The key is to engage with the audience. So Facebook is very very beneficial in terms of managing crisis in Botswana.

CS: There are indications that some organizations are very passive in sharing information during crisis in Botswana. What is your view?

Pt 015: Well, I think we should look at the advantages than the disadvantages of using facebook during crisis. Technology is advancing each and every day and you can have people accessing information Tuesday, Wednesday, Saturday, Sunday. Literally everyday.

You get a lot of updates via social media. So it is very impactful when used very well by an organization and it can reach a lot of people. You find that in Botswana, a lot of I am people are very active in social media. There is no point for organisations to shy away from sharing information on Facebook.

CS: What is your view about organizations that do not respond to individual comments on Facebook in Botswana?

Pt 015: I must say that before setting up Facebook pages, organisations should have dedicated teams to deal with those pages. Before I address okay Oh, Chris and I must say that it is very important for an organization that when you set up your. It important because you are showing people that you are not only providing information, but you are also able to respond. So your communication becomes a two way communication it doesn't become a one way communication. Apart from that, it gives a bit of credibility because people are aware that when they post issues you are able to respond promptly. So it's time to build that credibility and reputation as well as trust.

Pt 015: In our office we monitor the posts daily. We receive inquiries and questions from publics. We have two employees who respond on a daily basis. Sometimes they respond at the end of the week and provide a report of how many comments they received and how many responses they gave, the challenges they faced. Those are important to make sure that you'll be able to becomes impactful.

CS: What are some of the best practices you can share about crisis communication in Botswana?

Pt 015: Yes, once you set up a Facebook page, you should know the role of that Facebook page. Secondly, you should develop your social media policy to address a lot of issues. There should be a code of conduct that will provide guidelines for employees who post content on Facebook.

CS: I see. The next question is on the use of language. There are indications that some organizations purposefully use language to dominate, to manipulate and persuade their audiences. What is your view on this kind of language use?

Pt 015: I have realized that organisations use language to persuade stakeholders. At the end of the day, people are the ones who make a decision on the kind of information that you are releasing. If you release a persuasive message or use a persuasive or manipulative language, how do you want the audiences to respond? You have to make sure that the way you package information isnt obvious that this is persuasive. People should feel it is their responsibility, for example to wear a mask. They shouldnt feel persuaded or manipulated to wear masks. They should feel that they are protecting themselves from the virus. As much as persuasive language is used at the end of the day, people make a decision to find out what kind of benefit they can derive from it.

CS: The last question is on corporate social responsibility. Do you practice corporate social responsibility and how helpful is it for an organization in crisis?

Pt 015: CSR is very important in an organization and I must say it is important to understand why we undertake it. If we feel the need to contribute to the society that we operate within, then that is a bit of charity and it is good. Let me give an example of the recent CSR that we undertook. Our branch in Francistown adopted a school in a remote area. When the pandemic started, we contributed some money and we bought some masks for them. Their CSR was a strategic initiative that can basically contribute to our brand reputation.

PT 015: see that, yes, so it can it into Femmes it doesn't give them the the though the idea that these are just this is just the government dealing with audit they don't care about us, and all that. Through such initiatives people can also relate with us and will sympathise when we have a crisis.

CS: Any last thing you wish to add?

Pt 015: I have observed that in Botswana, most organisations do not have crisis management plans. We deal with crisis as it comes. It is very important for us to have a plan. Most organisations do not learn from the previous crisis. to make sure that they put a crisis management plan in place. ALso to say in terms of crisis management, organizations should not shy away from using social media. it is a powerful tool. it looks like we wait first without using social media, especially in government.

CS: Thank you very much for your time.

Pt 015: Thank you.

Transcript for participant 16 (PT 016)

WEBVTT

CS: The first thing is to talk about is your understanding of crisis. What is a crisis?

Pt 016: Well, in my previous engagement with the companies I worked with, i've come across various crisis and to me crisis is changing the way there's an immediacy that needs or that demands a person on behalf of the company or way of when the risks involved in making sure that everything's aligned to the business objectives. I managed to take my objective as a PR person to be able to cap that. Crisis is something like when we have other business in terms of when the risks is involved.

CS: Does crisis affects organizations in Botswana and in what ways are they affected if any?

Pt 016: Well, obviously, there's three ways in terms of how as a communication strategy in every business in Botswana. You have to be able to measure yourself first, you have to have a goal. Well, crisis does exist in Botswana's market. In most cases, as a business, you have to create awareness to audiences and when that doesn't exist in a way there's a crisis. For example, I worked for a mining company and ones in a while we had a situation at the mine. At some point the mine went down and somebody died. So that was a crisis. This was huge. We had to stop operations. The share price dropped.

Pt 016: The other crisis was one affecting the [name of company], its a telecommunications company and share prices dropped as well. I also worked for [name of company] and there was a situation where the train got off the rails and we stopped the operations. It affected the cash flow of the business. There was also another crisis at my former Ministry where we dealt with the elephant tusks campaign. Botswana could not sell the tusks and we had to travel abroad to convince our stakeholders to buy the tusks.

CS: You mentioned that the crisis affected the reputation of the organisations you worked for. Why does reputation matters so much to organizations in Botswana?

Pt 016: For companies on the stock exchange, crisis affect the share price. Once you default in reputation, share price is affected.

CS: How did you prepare your organizations to withstand the negative effects of crisis?

Pt 016: Well, there's five things that you need to be able to do as a PR practitioner and internally, you need to have a plan. You need to have a strategy that involves a policy and everyone should sign it. In that policy you discuss everything that as an employee you need to know about in terms of what the company regards as a crisis. Secondly, a business in itself internally, you have to have communication tools like noticeboards. You got to have social media for your employees. You got to have an internal communications strategy. You may have videos to disseminate information on your internal tvs. For instance, at the mine, we had 6000 employees and most of them could not read and write. We introduced internal TV channel where in every area of the mine we had TV sets to cater for the 6000 employees to listen to the messages. The message had to be very, very clear to employees.

Pt 016: At the same time, we had to prioritize our risks. So we had a risk assessment from internal communication on what employees regarded as a risk and what they will not regard as a risk in terms of internal communication.

CS: When crisis breaks, there is this notion that the first hour is golden. What is your view on this? Was it practical for you?

Pt 016: Look, I think it all depended on the size of the business, and it is true. But, obviously, as I said before, once you have a plan and a strategy in place and the first hour should be golden. Every hour should

be golden. It is different in sub Saharan Africa because quite a number of people that are involved internally because quite a few harness the power of information technology which is very easy because of the click of a button. But sometimes you find yourself as a PR practitioner knowing that most of your audiences cannot read and write. These are your allies and when you know this awareness about your employees and audiences then every hour becomes golden.

CS: What are some of the best practices of communicating during crisis in Botswana?

Pt 016: One of my strengths as a PR practitioner or communications manager was that I had segmented my audiences internally and externally because southern Africa has a demographic change in terms of audiences. Young people are tech-savvy and they have access to information technology. They have cell phones. The older generation, still believe in traditional platforms such as listening to the radio or being told on loudspeakers that there's gonna be a crisis. Thats the kgotla system.

Pt 016: Right now we are going through the crisis of Covid and you can actually tell who gets information passed with a click of the button. They're sending everyday messages on social media and it's so fast. People in the rural areas where there's still a digital divide rely on radio for breaking news. So you find that young people in the urban areas of Africa get information faster about a crisis as opposed to the ones who are getting it like maybe five hours later.

Pt 016: The kgotla is part of our culture and has been used for generations, since the beginning of time. Whenever there's a crisis and two parties have to meet and discuss, that is the principal thing that kept our nation together even democracy is built on that. Whenever there's a crisis we make sure that we need all the key stakeholders to come to a common ground so that we can be able to weigh the risks and be able to channel our messages to different target audiences and that has really worked for us. During crisis, the custodian of the brand, the spokesperson, is the managing director or the general manager.

CS: Thank you very much. That's very, very insightful. Now let's look into what happens behind the curtains in the process of message development. Do you develop them ahead of the crisis or while the crisis is in progress?

Pt 016: With the mine i worked for what we did as part of messaging was to harness the power of cartoons. We had a newsletter which came every week. This newsletter was printed both digitally as a soft copy and also as a hard copy. So employees who had access to information technology got PDF newsletter every week. For safety and health, we used cartoons to generate awareness about safety. Our employees came to love these cartoons because they could not read and write.

CS: There are suggestions that some organizations use corrective strategies, denial strategies and shifting the blame strategies. Are these prevalent in Botswana and how effective or less effective are they in repairing reputational damage?

Pt 016: Well, I think those are all fantastic strategies. Obviously, as I said, every company's got its own implementation strategy. Look and there's different audiences and there's a lot of cultural factors involved. We should make sure that we are more proactive and not reactive. We wouldn't wait for the crisis to happen then we act. We always had our ducks in a row.

CS: Earlier you mentioned culture. To what extent do you consider culture when developing messages?

Pt 016: Culture is an influencer. Africa has thousands of cultures and coming from Botswana, we take pride in our fabric of society that puts us together. We are one of the African countries that are able to manage crisis better because of what our forefathers did in terms of the kgotla system. I mentioned the kgotla system because everybody in that platform is free to speak their minds. That in itself sets the tone in terms of a crisis. Its the best platform for people-stakeholder relationship management. So the importance of stakeholder management is that it is able to influence a crisis in terms of keeping it and in terms of creating a common understanding.

CS: Thank you. Now let's look at the role of social media especially Facebook during crisis. Did you use Facebook to communicate in the various crises you encountered?

Pt 016: Social media is a communication channel. In Africa as you're aware, we have a population that is very tech savvy. Almost over 60% of the population of Africa right now is online. Of course, we still have a digital divide and it's proving as a solution for communication. Everyone is going that route. But, obviously, there has to be a power of a media plan within the company.

CS: Thank you. You spoke about being proactive and not reactive. There are indications that some organizations in Botswana are passive when sharing information on Facebook. What is your view on that?

Pt 016: Well, my view that they need to hire the right people. If you hire the right people who understand social media or information technology, TV and who understand public affairs you will be proactive on Facebook. You want to hire the right person for that role is not something that should be taken lightly. Its not about them knowing how to read and write that they can take up this role. It doesn't work like that. You need to hire the right person for that job and who's also good to people.

CS: Thank you very much. There is also suggestions some organisations in Botswana do not respond to individual comments on Facebook. What could be the reason?

Pt 016: Well, if you don't have a policy in place, you wont respond. Once you have proper rules of engagement that translate into a policy for the business, you will respond appropriately because you're forced to respond as a matter of policy. If you just don't respond you won't be able to measure yourself.

CS: What are some of the best practices for using Facebook during crisis?

Pt 016: Well, I think, just to summarize is that there's a responsible social media. And of course that's what I do right now and we are seeing a trend now where the organisations are hiring social media personnel. So it's a new thing in Botswana and we expect a lot of revolution into the whole area of social media. One thing that we managed to do was on a weekly basis we will check the backroom of the mechanics of Facebook page or Twitter, or whatever you have and be able to see the insides of how the public is responding to our messages. It's both geographically by race, by sex. We managed to do that then that informed on how we need to maneuver our communication to different segments. If you're in London and i'm here and we worked for a global company, I can be able to have messages, just for the audience of London. I can be able to sponsor different messages.

CS: Thank you very much. There are indications that some organizations in Botswana purposefully use language to dominate, to persuade and to manipulated their audience. What is your view on this?

Pt 016: Again i'll refer to the policy. The policy clearly defines what and how you need to communicate internally or externally.

CS: What is the role of corporate social responsibility for organisations in crisis. How helful is it?

Pt 016: In all the five organizations I worked for, I have an experience with corporate social responsibility or corporate social investments. We had it in those organizations. We used it to build trust. Building trust is the main reason why corporate social responsibility or investment is done. Some organisations do it to become good citizen. For example, governmnet has a problem of unemployment and private companies can donate computers to youth to help them in business. You dont wait for the government to do it, but you do what the government is supposed to do. For example, at the mine we planted oranges and used water from the mine to water the farm. We donated these oranges to schools. It helped to build trust with stakeholders, both internally and externally.

CS: Thank you. Any last thing you wish to add?

Pt 016: What i realized when I enter into some of these organizations, including where i'm currently working right now is that there's never a policy. If only organisations had policies, then it would be easier to manage crisis.

CS: Thank you very much.

Pt 016: Ok.

Transcript for participant 17 (PT 017)

WEBVTT

CS: The first question that i'm going to ask you is on your understanding of crisis. What do you understand by crisis?

Pt 017: Crisis from my understanding is a phenomenon that occurs unplanned, maybe within a short space of time, that gets you to think on your feet. It's not something that is going to happen in a day or so. It's an event that comes to disrupt your time.

CS: Does crisis affect organizations in Botswana, and in what ways are the affected, if any?

Pt 017: Yes, we have crisis in Botswana which occur in different forms. Whether or not I perceived something to be a crisis is another discussion for another day. We had terrible floods up North raging and causing a lot of damage. From my perspective, that was a crisis because it seriously affected people's lives. These are the things that we do not anticipate, which is in their nature of crisis. It comes unanticipated, but we should be able to participate, say by putting up firebreaks around our homes if we are prone to fire crisis. Some of these crises can be at a national level, and we do have that. Last year, we had heavy rains that affected the small village where I come from. Houses and vehicles were destroyed by hailstorm, and thats a crisis. People are still highly inconvenience because insurance companies refused to cover the vehicles and houses. Crises come in to disturb the normal routine, and the question is whether or not, when that happens, people are ready.

Pt 017: When students start going on strike, they get carried away and break everything on their way. We have power outages and water shortage around the country. You may go without water water for five days, for a month, for two months. Crisis really takes you from your comfort zone instead realizing you will not have to go back.

CS: You mentioned the serious nature of crisis which can harm reputation. Why does reputation matter so much?

Pt 017: Reputation is the number one thing that defines you and defends you as a country, defends me as a person, defines me as an institution. When as a country we are saying we are not being vaccinated because you do not have Covid vaccines, it doesnt helps us as a country that is known to be stable, to be peaceful, to be well managing resources. I don't know what happened. We are only 2 million people and up to now vaccination rate is so low. It doesn't make a lot of sense, it means there is a crisis. Reputation defines us as a country.

CS: Thank you very much for that response. How do you prepare an organization to withstand the negative effects of crisis to build or to protect the reputation?

Pt 017: Yes, you need a strategy. That is the starting point: the how you will manage this crisis. We need a crisis management strategy. You've got to really communicate to what the problem is and what you are doing to ease the problem. If you can't it means you don't know what you're doing. You need to communicate so that people realize that you are looking into how you are going to address this. As part of the crisis management strategy, you need to have a team and know who communicates what, who takes up after that and to do what. So it is very important to have a strategy. But the strategy should be anchored on a very clear strategy.

There should be clear communication because most of the time, the classes becomes even wider and much more serious because people look for answers and they tell themselves what makes sense to them at that time. So that's when the crisis gets out of hand.

CS: When crisis breaks, there is a notion that the first hour is golden. What is you take on this? Is it practical for you?

Pt 017: It is very practical. A typical example is what happened here at [name of institution]. My first few years, there was a crisis because we were just starting a new [name of department], and the [stakeholders] were outside of campus. So they felt like they're not part of the institution. When they started complaining we took it to the powers that be at that time. It is very very important for either myself as the director of communication or the head of the organization to go out there and acknowledge that, yes, we have remodeled our institution and all the resources that are required to assist teaching and learning. Our students did not understand and were going to look for answers elsewhere and create a much larger problem then we're supposed to have.

CS: What are some of the best practices of communicating when there is a crisis?

Pt 017: Most of the time, we do have steps like that. It may not really make sense from one culture to the other. For instance, where I am right now in Botswana we have shortage of covid vaccines and shortage of oxygen and shortage of hospital beds. We need to have a medical personnel who really is the first person to break the news to say we have a crisis, anticipate this. We are with you, we are scared, but we are doing 1,2,3,4,5 so that will remain safe. It should be the most senior person. Once he has stipulated that we do have a spoke and do not have oxygen. As soon as we start receiving vaccines, then the roll out will start. I do trust in our case, the case of Covid 19 was handled by the Minister of Health and Wellness, the task force and the President. In our case it is always the highest office in the country or a university or an organization is the one who started laying down what is going to be done, how it is going to be done. This is done so that people are convinced that this is taken seriously, even from the most high office.

CS: Now let's go into messaging. What happens behind the curtains as you develop the messages; do you develop them ahead of the crisis or when it is in progress of when the crisis starts?

Pt 017: For me it's a question of whether your strategies is in place or not. For instance, it's easy for me to anticipate that [stakeholders] can go on strike because their stipend came late. But there are some crises that I may not anticipate, but the faster cue will be from another person saying we have a problem; we are experiencing severe drought and, therefore, we do not have water. That gives you a cue to start coming up with messages and to tell people that because we did not have, what is this, what is that? This is how you can save every drop that we have at your accommodation facilities. So you always get a cue from the the opening message, and that is why i'm saying it is always very important to have it and telling the truth here. I don't mean laying yourself bare naked, but you tell people to situation as there are some things that

you will not tell. You cannot tell your daughter that you don't have money. You tell her you want to start soft porridge three times a day, but you tell her that there is a crisis because you now have to pay for her brother as he is now growing. So we are going to do some belt tightening. It is very important to start the messaging, just as the news break, but as the news break the communicator is supposed to know what is going to be said.

CS: You mentioned that messaging differs from one culture to the other. To what extent do you consider cultural in developing crisis messages?

Pt 017: Yes, culture is considered to touch on the diverse culture of the people. Culture prescribes your understanding and where you are situated in that is culture.
For example, when government wants to roll out Covid vaccines, we didn't even know that there's a disease called Covid 19. Messages on how to conduct yourself during this pandemic will be imported from outside the country and will then be adapted to our different cultures for different people across the country to understand. Culture plays a very important and part of how we do things. There are some cultures that when you use the scare tactics, they will be really scared and conform to everything you tell them. But in my culture here in Botswana, if you use scare tactics, they will be not be scared. If you tell them Covid is from bats, they will tell you we dont eat bats here. In China it wil be easier to control the pandemic, but in Botswana it will take people some time to understand. We know about malaria. When we get malaria outbreak, we don't get scared. We know it will be managed. Culture defines who we are, it speaks about addressing our understanding.

CS: Talking of culture, do you consider the kgotla system as a helpful platform for communication during crisis?

Pt 017: Yes. We may not have considered it deliberately, but it is a place to consider because we serve the people. Sometimes we do not go directly to the kgotla, but we would use platforms such as district council meetings for councillors to deliver our messages to their various communities when addressing kgotla meetings. For example, if our [name of hospital] requires the public to donate cadavers for scientific purposes, we may have to address sub district council meetings, parliament and even the House of Chiefs for them to talk to their communities. You don't just go straight to the kgotla meetings and start addressing communities asking them to donate their dead bodies for scientific purposes. No, No, No, culturally that will cause a huge problem. You have to find a way of addressing this issue.

CS: There are suggestions that some organizations in Botswana use corrective strategies, denial strategies and shifting the blame strategies. How prevalent are these strategies in Botswana and how helpful or less helpful are they in repairing reputational damage?

Pt 017: The first answer is yes, they are prevalent and the second is they do not help. For instance, their prevalence lies with the problem which may be influenced by politics meaning that a lot of things are at play. The problems may be within government structures or at different levels including private organisations. So you will find organizations

working very hard to be politically correct. What i'm trying to say is as much as it is not a good thing to deny or shift the blame, there's always a reason behind it. The reasoning of those people who use these different types of strategies to manage the crisis. Some private companies have nothing to lose, they can just say we have a network problem or we have electricity outage.

CS: Thank you very much. Lets now talk about the role of Facebook during crisis. Have you used it, and how useful or less useful was it?

Pt 017: It is very useful. Facebook is the best and the worst of what you can get. For instance, when the Covid 19 hit and the President declared a state of Emergency and lockdowns, Facebook was the quickest way to get information, to reach our workers and stakeholders to say do not work or do not go into that area. As an institution we told our stakeholders to go home because we knew they will be stranded. We had to come up with other ways of facilitating them and Facebook was the best platform. Even when we opened, we reached them through Facebook. It is good, it reaches them. Our communication never got distorted, and that was what surprised me about Facebook. When we are communicating you know lockdowns and stuff like that to save if you come from somewhere and you want to go. It was even easier to communicate and inform our stakeholders that their stipends will be delayed by two days. On the other side, our youth just type anything to put someone into trouble. They start exaggerating messages and sending out the wrong information.

CS: What are some of the best practices for proper use of Facebook?

Pt 017: Social media is generally a very difficult thing to manage. But the best way to use it is to always communicate, and communicate on time. If something happens communicate. Make your messages short, so that people don't have a lot of time on their cell phones. Using social media, you should ensure you come up with short messages that are precise, on point. If you delay somebody else may have already talked about it.

CS: Thank you very much. There are indications that some organizations in Botswana are very passive when sharing information. What is your take on this?

Pt 017: I don't think it's a phobia. From a personal standpoint I don't think so. I honestly think we do not share information. If you are not confident, you cannot share something that you are not confident about. It gives the other person power over you. When crisis breaks, we need to share as much information as we possibly can.
It is very very important. Sometimes we do have a challenge here. For example, when there is a strike and police tells us to leave the building, we cannot share anything. The media would be calling asking questions at a time when we do not have access to buildings and resources and we are unable to say anything. We wont even be able to post anything on social media as a result. The best thing is to tell the people that the [stakeholder] is on strike and we don't know what caused the strike.

CS: Thanks for that response. There are indications that some organizations don't respond to individual comments on Facebook during crisis. What could be the problem?

Pt 017: I don't see how see how that can be. From my standpoint when there's a crisis, you already have frequently Asked Questions. Those are the ones you will respond with. You started generating frequently asked questions. If you dont respond, they will find answers for themselves. Yes, you may not respond to everyone, but you may have someone who's picking critical ones. So frequently asked questions are very important for you to have.

CS: There are indications that some organizations purposefully use language to dominate their audiences, to persuade them and to manipulate them. What is your view?

Pt 017: For me any institution that will use language to dominate its audiences is lost because in other words you're not communicating. Its a very, very bad tactic to use during crisis. Its just using scare tactics like AIDS is a killer disease. You leave people feeling defeated. Thats not why you want to communicate. A language is powerful. Language defines your character. So it's very important for me to listen to someone talking. But if you want to be using language that people don't understand, its as good as not talking to them. In the case of Botswana, if all your messages are always going to be in English hoping to dominate your audiences or to manipulate them, then you're losing them in the process and they will not understand what you were saying.

CS: What role does CSI play for organizations in crisis in your context?

Pt 017: It can work to attract sympathy and it shows that you care and sympathize with people. It should not be used to divert attention. It should not be done because you want to pay back for what you did it several years ago.

CS: Any last thing?

Pt 017: As a matter of fact we should develop crisis communication strategies. Whatever they call them; road map for me. I am not happy with how we managed covid. We adopted methods that almost killed all of us. It is because we did not have a sound communication model, sound crisis communication model, roadmap whatever you call it.
We excelled in the way we managed HIV, but failed with Covid. So we really need the crisis management plan as a country and as organizations.

CS: Thank you very much for finding time for this interview.

Pt 017: Thank you.

Transcript for participant 18 (PT 018)

WEBVTT

CS: Yes, so the first question that I want to ask you is on your understanding of crisis. What do you understand by crisis?

Pt 018: Crisis from an organizational point of view is really something unpleasant, possibly any event that is unplanned possibly also unforeseen and requires immediate attention from leadership of the organization.

CS: Thank you very much. So does crisis affects organizations in Botswana and in what ways are they affected if any?

Pt 018: Well, they do affect organizations definitely because because crisis is essentially something that can happen that will disrupt business activity and that will disrupt the way you conduct your business. It needs immediate attention to address. Well, generally there's been a lot of crisis in Botswana. A random example of a crisis that happened like last year is when we had a fluid situation. It was a national crisis. There was no petrol in the country. It was not like it was planned to happen. There was no petrol for anywhere. So that was a crisis for everybody. The Minister of Energy had to engage people to tell the nation about the situation and what they were doing to resolve it. They also told the nation that it may take time and they expect people not to fill up their cars to capacity. Petrol was rationed so there was enough for everybody. I feel like there are varying degrees of crisis because it can be so impactful that everything literally stops. For example, last year during the pandemic, we had a case where the first person tested positive in our office. We had to shut down the whole office and then fumigation of course. Business was interrupted. Management had to talk to stufff and let them know about the situation. This is why I say that there are different degrees of crisis because somebody wouldn't think this is a crisis. We have a situation where the contract of our CEO wasn't renewed. That was a leadership crisis. The question on everybody's mind was who's coming next? Why is this one going and that definitely affected the way things work and disrupted business.

CS: I see. You spoke about crisis disrupting the business operations and reputation. Why does reputation matters so much?

Pt 018: Well, reputation is literally the currency because if an organization does not have a good reputation, nobody trusts anything they say or do. I can come in and talk all the beautiful things but at the end of the day, we will not trust that you're going to do those things. That's why reputation is so important. If you say you are going to do something and you dont, people wont trust you and you will lose integrity.

CS: Thank you very much. Crisis does not announced its arrival. How do you prepare your organization to withstand the negative effects of crisis?

Pt 018: The first thing would be a crisis communication plan. You need to have a plan in place to know how to handle the crisis at that time. What you need to know is when the crisis happens, who is going to talk to the people. That chain of command is very important to the people. People want to see stability during the crisis. They want assurance that we have the situation under control. The CEO could be the spokesperson. As much as he is accountable to the board, he is also accountable to the ministry and he's also accountable to the staff and people know him.

CS: When crisis breaks there is that notion that the first hour is golden. What is your view on this?

Pt 018: I think it is practical in our case because when a crisis hits and everybody panics, what we need to see is a sense of somebody who comes in and says 'it's okay. This is the situation. We have a pipe burst or finally oil is everywhere it's filling but we were attending to this. We have contractors working day and night to make sure they stop that spill. We have technical people working on it. They are saying to us within two-three days they will have the situation under control. If it's fine we'll tell you. During a crisis leadership should be responsive. They know this is happening, and they are attending to it. They have measures in place to make sure that they contain whatever is happening and, in future, this is how that would prevent that from happening again.

CS: Which best practices in crisis communication can you share from your experiences?

Pt 018: You need to make sure that you acknowledge the crisis. You cannot say we don't have a crisis, when we can all see that there is a crisis. So there's a level of responsibility, of honesty that you need to give to people so that they know that you see that what they see is also being addressing and you are attending to it.
But honestly, of course, it will vary on how much information you divulge, but you need to give people a somewhat honest response. We cannot be in a crisis and people are quiet. They're not acknowledging what is happening. They are blind to it because then it makes us feel like we are living in two different worlds.

Pt 018: When the class starts, a plan is important because it speaks to how you will respond. You will introduce the media releases to say this is the situation that we're facing. But the important thing is really to be out and about, to be in front and center so that people are not breaking news. You are going out there and saying this is our situation. You dont want things to get out of control. But when your organization is quiet and silent on an issue that affects you, things get out of control.

CS: Now, lets talk about messaging and what goes on behind the curtains during production of messages. Do you produce messages ahead of the crisis or while it is in progress?

Pt 018: In the processes of our message development, as soon as you know the crisis like immediately, you will definitely need to say this is the situation that as an organization we're dealing with. But you need to have, as soon as you have that situation, your messages right then and there when the situation hits so that your messages are consistent with what you're doing. Your messages will dictate further communication that you will have with your stakeholders and whoever else you'll be talking to. Maybe in some industries it's easy to predict what crisis would happen. If you know that kind of crisis, then you can prepare messages ahead. Crisis by nature is unpredictable because it's literally something that you did not plan for it. You did not anticipate.

Pt 018: Its difficult to generate a message to address something that you don't know, hence you need to develop these messages, now, when you

know the situation that you're in and having the information that you need. For some industries, you have to know possible crisis but generally most places that I have observed, crisis has been unpredictable in the sense that it's hard sometimes to predict crisis because some of these come from people's behavior.

CS: Thank you very much. What then informs your decisions to choose a particular response over the other?

Pt 018: I think you have to look at the information that you have at that time, the type of crisis as well as the resources at your disposal to be able to attend to the situation.

CS: There are indications that some organizations in Botswana use corrective strategies, denial strategies and shifting the blame strategies during crisis. Are these prevalent in Botswana and how effective are they in repairing reputational damage?

Pt 018: It's very true because from observation, we recently saw the Ministry of Health denying that there was a problem of shortages of vaccines. A newspaper had reported that the Ministry did not pay for the vaccines as they claimed. Instead of them telling people if they paid, they shifted blames and denied media reports without providing the necessary answers. Thats all the publics wanted to know so that they can have faith and trust in what the Ministry is doing.

CS: To what extent do you consider culture when developing messages for your various audiences?

Pt 018: Culture definitely plays a larger and bigger part because we have different cultures in Botswana. Batswana are very humble people. They do not like arrogance, as it were. They like humble people. When you communicate with Batswana, you should always choose the right words to make sure that you're not offensive, inconsiderate or very arrogant. That can really turn them off. They want to see the human side of what you're doing as an organization.

Pt 018: In our society, media plays a large role in communicating. You find that a lot of people in the urban areas in the cities are the ones that have access to these resources such as social media. Then you have people in remotest areas where they use the kgotla system to discuss issues of national interest to understand their opinions in what is happening because not everybody has access to the technical savy communications platforms used in the city.

CS: Let's look at the role of social media in your engagement. Do you use social media, especially Facebook and what is its role during crisis?

Pt 018: The wonderful thing about social media is that people get to express themselves. For example, we have a database in our organisation of job seekers etc, and people get to use Facebook to complain about the user friendliness of our database. We always improve our database based on their comments for easier access. The other things is that social

media is like wildfire because now it has gone beyond print media. We read print media now for more in depth stories. But before it even hits print media, it's generally on Facebook. People have talked about that. I don't have to wait for newspapers to find out about a breaking story.

CS: What are some of the best practices of using Facebook during crisis?

Pt 018: I think the key with social media is really engagement. You have to ensure that whatever content that you put out is engaging to people. What most organizations do these days is that they just put up a post to share information, but there's really zero engagement. Nobody's commenting on it. Posts become a billboard if you do not engage. But also the danger with encouraging engagement is that sometimes people ask uncomfortable questions. As an organization, we are not ready to talk about it. We cant write a press release to respond to that question. If you respond in a way that people do not like, they will take you head on.

CS: You mentioned that people ask uncomfortable questions. Is that the reason why some organisations in Botswana are passive in sharing information?

Pt 018: Yes, from an outsider perspective people are always on the offensive. But there are also internal politics that affect the way you do your job because you cannot just go out and say this is what we're doing with this team. Sometimes there's a consultation process. Working in semi-government organisations, you have to understand your role that you cannot control or go against the agenda of the government. We are by extension part of government and our policies have to be aligned with those of government. So we cannot be out there bashing the policy of the government. So there's always that delicate balance that you have to figure out. How to play around with it, how to ensure that you service your clients and maintain integrity with them. Also give them a level of honesty to people within the organization to find out what is the proper way to respond to some of these people.

CS: There are suggestions that some organisations in Botswana do not respond to individual comments. What is your take on that?

Pt 018: It's very true. In our experience people who leave comments on our page, we have not been responsive to individual comments. What we have rather tried to do is to inbox that person so that it becomes a battle between us and them. If it's public anybody can see what we're communicating. The way social media is like these days is that people are frustrated with a lot of things. If they feel like we're not responding the way they need you to respond, they go all out. If you dont respond, it seems you are hiding something.

CS: There are indications that some organizations in Botswana purposefully use language to dominate, to persuade and to manipulate the audiences. What is your take on that?

Pt 018: My personal belief has always been that if you are willing to communicate with people talk to them like you are talking as a person. Let it sound natural. It should sound conversational. It should be a flowing conversation. I think that's what most organizations miss. Sometimes we talk in the language, and i'm not saying you should be casual, but let it be very clear to somebody in simple enough language, without manipulating words and phrases. Let it be a natural conversation as i'm talking to you now. Here in our country, we have this thing of self doubt that we want to use big words to show that we are an organization with academics, but we miss out on the simplicity of communication so that the essence of it is that I talk you here, and then you respond.

CS: What is your understanding of the role of corporate social responsibility for organizations in crisis in Botswana?

Pt 018: The issue of corporate social responsibility is a very delicate one because organizations use it for the wrong intentions. They are using it to profile themselves. They want to sort of give themselves a good image and a good reputation, yet they have employees that have issues that they are not even attending to. If you use it to sort of create a good reputation it misses the mark. Your employees actually are literally your ambassadors. They will share the word positively.

CS: Any last thing?

Pt 018: I wish organizations will see the need to somewhat give the public a sense of transparency. Most organisations here like denying the truth and shifting blame. There is too much secrecy and little accountability. Organisations should not just deny facts as its currently the case.

CS: Thanks a lot for finding time to share your experiences with me.

Pt 018: Ok. Thank you.

Transcript for participant 19 (PT 19)

WEBVTT

CS: Thank you very much, Sir, for coming through. The first question that I want to ask you is about your understanding of crisis, what do you understand by crisis?

Pt 019: Crisis is anything that could damage the image or the reputation of an organization.

CS: Thank you very much. Does crisis affect organizations in Botswana and in what ways are they affected, if any?

Pt 019: Organization encounter crisis of varying degrees, and I would say in Botswana, we are not immune to crisis. We are affected. Various organizations are affected. And it would depend on the scale of the crisis. But I can say organisations are affected across board. For instance, we were at one point perceived in a bad light because people felt we are not very active and very productive of what we do. So, some people misunderstand what we do and we are not doing enough to correct whatever misconceptions out there. Sometimes crisis could be as a result of how we mishandle issues in terms of us in public relations. It could also be wrong communication, it could also be leaders in that organization, the way they are portrayed. It could even be in their private lives. But then that would also sometimes affect their company. What you do as an ambassador of your company can affect the company. Your work, your own personality are consistent and contiguous with that of the organization. So people can't tell the separation or the borderline between who you are, as a person, and that of the organization. So that's why I said it's contiguous.

CS: Thank you very much. You mentioned damage to reputation. Why does reputation matter so much to organisations?

Pt 019: Reputation is mostly what organisations exist for. Organizations are about trust. Organizations are about credibility. You want the credibility that you portray yourself with. As an organisation, you may sell a product or a service and people may need them, but it's mostly about credibility and trust. If you have an organisation that cannot be trusted, it doesn't matter what they sell or its meant for the communities' good. The bottom line is that can you be trusted; are you credible enough; when you say yes, is it yes. That's why reputation is very critical and important.

CS: Well, thank you very much. Crisis does not announced its arrival. As a PR expert, how do you prepare your organizations to withstand the adverse effects of crisis in order to protect reputation?

Pt 019: We cannot afford to be reactive. We need to be very proactive and very deliberate about what we want to do. We protect the brand, the integrity of the organization by doing things that matter to us as an organization on a daily basis. The little things that we don't do on a daily basis, the little mistake that we take for granted, the little complaints that come in and we shove them under the carpet, day by day, they lead to a crisis. So crisis, as you say doesn't just come on expected. There are few instances where a crisis would just hit you an hour. So most of the time really, crisis has been precipitated by a number of things that you don't do or things that you do. The first thing that we need to prioritise is to have the crisis management system in place. Let's have all the system that we have in place; our strategy in place. Let's have our media engagement in place and make sure that we

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follow this. Once we laps on any one of these, or key areas we are inviting crisis without us knowing. One day it will come unannounced.

CS: Thank you. That's very, very profound. Can you elaborate more on the crisis management systems and strategies you mentioned?

Pt 019: Your crisis management strategy would talk to what you do on a daily basis in case of any eventualities; how you engage your customers and talk to them. Crisis is very expensive. It takes away all your effort. Instead of using them on what matters to the organization, you spend efforts on the negative attention which is a bad place for any organisation. So we have all these crisis management policies and programs.

CS: Thank you very much. When crisis breaks, there is a notion that the first hour is golden. Is it practical in your case?

Pt 019: Yeah it is. It is practical. But I think the question that you are proposing is that is it been done? It's not. Atleast I have been on the other side where I worked as a journalist. I used to look at the PR practitioners and their organization and wonder what kind of policies they employ. I used to wonder whether they are proactive or they're just reacting when crisis hit. The best policy is that you must own up and share information. Be as open and transparent as you can be. But most of the time you find that we want to conceal facts. I think we do that to save our skin as employees sometimes and helping the organization. But most of the time you will find that this doesn't help the organization to respond through transparency in a timely fashion. When a crisis hits don't delay. An hour is very expensive.
It's a deal breaker and it could lead to the collapse of the whole organization. So it's very important that we are transparent. It is very important that we are timely. We should be very upfront about what we said. That's when we can gain the support and the confidence of the people that we serve.

CS: That's very insightful. What are some of the best practices that you can share about communicating when a crisis has started?

Pt 019: We should talk about crisis management committees. They should be established, and they should be working in times of peace. It is very important not to try and assemble a committee when when you already dealing with a problem. Otherwise they won't even know what they ought to be doing. Ahead of the crisis, auditing processes should be conducted. This will save you and you'd have relief for the most part. Other than that, most of the time you are going to be trying to fight hard to stop the water that broke out from the dam. It is a very difficult exercise. So it's very important that we have particularly this crisis committees very active on a daily basis. When I did it, it seemed like a routine but it's very it's very helpful. The spokesperson is very important. Have two seniors singing from the same script.
We are talking about your branding and organization and it is important that organizations avoid miss messaging. This is critical in the building

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of our brand, in the building of integrity. So you can't have organization with too many flanks, too many mouths speaking. So it is very important that you have a defined, determined and possibly one spokesperson who will talk to a consistent message. It's very important that the message become consistent. It is not because we want to concentrate power in an individual or in an office. It is for purposes of having consistency of message because conflicting messages leads to confusion, leads to a lack of trust on the organization. One spokesperson talking one message building one brand. Consistency is critical.

CS: Let's now look at messaging and what happens behind the curtain during message development. Do you prepare your messages ahead of the crisis or after it has started?

Pt 019: Yeah, I think the best practice is usually before the crisis. For me that the best response and it works when you develop your messages way before a crisis hits you. You can use this strategy to reach out to your stakeholders and also identify what platforms you are going to use to share the message. You can also know which best message to give to a particular audience, and decide which platform to use for other stakeholders, other than waiting for a moment. In that moment, you have no control over radio, media platforms, your messaging. So messages are done and the best time is when you are not under pressure. So for me, and I think this works is that they should be done preemptively. Yes, there are instances where you are forced to give a message when you are hit with a crisis. But really the bulk of our time messaging is done before a crisis hits.

CS: What would inform your decisions to choose a particular response strategy over others?

Pt 019: There are a lot of factors and one of them would be what do you exist for. What is your reason for existence as an organization. What are you hoping to achieve in your mission, your vision. You have all these foundational keys. A key document is your strategy document. That would determine your message. Your message doesn't come from anywhere else really. It comes from this.

CS: Thank you very much. There are indications that some organizations in Botswana use corrective strategies, denial strategies and shifting the blame strategies. Are these prevalent in Botswana and how helpful or less helpful are they in repairing reputational damage?

Pt 019: Well, I haven't had the privilege of doing any study by scientific method to say this is what is happening. I can talk from my observation which is that they are substantial. But let's make the point here very clear that these are already active measures. Once you deny, once you shift the blame, it clearly says you were facing a crisis and now you are trying to deal with it. Is that even the best approach. For me, that is a band aid approach. You have blood gushing out and you need to deal with the wound. Inside you can't apply band aid on it and hope that the wounded heals. It might take some time but would show when the band aid is removed. The truth will come out, then crisis will hit. So anyway

i'm trying to say to you that I think that's not a good strategy. Denial will never be a good strategy. Two to three days, a week, the truth comes out. The best strategy is transparency. Even when you have messed up, invite people to say this is what we did. This is what we should have done. We own up, we are better than this. You should even tell the board that this is what we did wrong and this is where the problem really emanates from.

CS: Thank you very much. Do you consider culture when developing messages during crisis?

Pt 019: Yes, culture characterizes your context. So you can't work outside your context. You can't afford to be generic. When you enter this specifically culture would force you to choose certain platforms over others because you are operating within that social space. Otherwise, if you like, something that is used elsewhere and a message imported into Botswana doesn't work. Who misses out? You! You may fail to attract customers and clients. You may fail to be heard as an organization because you chose a different platform, or you chose a culturally inappropriate messages or culturally appropriate platform. So culture can be very decisive in most instances where you could go outside it and still survive. But in most instances, culture cannot be ignored. As Batswana, we believe in honest. Secondly, we believe in being inclusive and consultation. That's a key part of our culture. You can't collaborate without consultation. So you are bound to fail just because there's no consultation there's no collaboration. If a PR person in his packaging of a message decides to exclude honesty and consultation, chances are that whatever programs, you are proposing may not succeed.

CS: Talking of culture, to what extent have you used the kgotla system to disseminate crisis messages?

Pt 019: Yeah, the kgotla can be very, very useful. This is where issues are discussed and finalised. The center of the kgotla system is imbued with that consultation I spoke about. It's also in this consultation, where you are saying we see this point, but you also see this other part so that could also help. It really helps during crisis. The system can be used in a communication environment. The community participates in the democratic processes and decisions. It's here where you expect transparent. The system is all about transparency. You say your mind out. This is where a whole organization can go to a village which is affected by the messaging to resolve the problem. It presents you as an organization an opportunity to say we made a mistake. This was the perspective but we know now that this is wrong.
As small as our nation is, I think the kgotla system really present us with a platform where in a crisis, you can address the communities directly and talk to them. I can write messages in the newspapers and TV but I would be missing out on engage with the public to build lasting relationships. For us the kgotla system is the best system and I have seen it being used in that way. It's better than any communication medium that I know.

CS: Thank you very much. Now let's talk about the role of social media during crisis, especially Facebook. What would you say about its role?

Pt 019: It plays a big part because that's where the bulk of the communication is. That's where you know opinion leaders; that's where there may be a significant population. When you have made a mistake, its good that you are sharing information on Facebook and other social media platforms. But at the same time, it has also increased the number of errors and mistakes that organizations can make. It doesn't afford you the time to be thinking through some of the stuff that you put out there on social media. And like you know, our own traditional media okay from an organizational point of view, is a nugget. It's a gold dust. You have this audiences that have access to you 24/7. That is very good for us. We are excited and it's cheap, accessible to everyone. That's very good for us, but at the same time it could also be a goldmine in the sense that much as you'd want to access social media so that you put across your message your reach out to various clients and stakeholders and increasing the clicks thing pressing the visitation to your side and then your brand growth like that. It is a landmine in the sense that the number of the mistakes that could be made on social media has increased phenomenally. If someone says, for instance, I need an answer and they are talking to you at 4pm and you are busy doing something you need to be checking and making sure that what you put there is correct, is accurate. You need to be ensuring that you also responding so that you don't experience and meet expectations and demands which could lead to a crisis.

Pt 019: For instance, if someone asked a question and it stayed for six hours that could lead to a crisis, but as an organization, you are seen or you are portrayed as this organization that is not responsive. Facebook has also increased the number of errors that you could make. Exposure has grown phenomenally. But Facebook and social media are a goldmine. They are a blessing to us in so many respects. In organization, particularly at a time when budgets are dwindling for communication and PR divisions, it's a breath of fresh air for us. But at the same time, it could be a banana peel. I've seen organization tripping over.

CS: What are some of the best practices of using Facebook that you can share?

Pt 019: You see, there's always been this talk of a curse or a blessing? I think Facebook can be a curse or a blessing to communication departments or to organizations. This is not the question to be debated at this stage of whether we should be using social media or not. Otherwise we will miss the train as organization if we don't. This is where communities are. This is where customers are. This is where people who need our services are. So organizations should go where people are. Traffic is going into social media, so we cannot remain aloof and say we will determine what platforms to use. We don't have that luxury. We go where people are. If people are in social media, we cannot remain rooted in old platforms or traditional platforms. Yes, we will still use those as we go to the people where we will find them.

Pt 019: The question is when we go there, do we have strategies to use social media? As much as there were strategies that we use in other platforms social media also ought to have strategies. You can't afford to be hesitant. You can't afford to be passive. You must come up with strategies that are very efficient. We should not fear to use social media because of keyboard ninjas that have their guns cocked and ready

to shoot at anything they see on Facebook. You should make your organisation as favorable as possible and to have a high positive perception, and you can do that by implementing this proactive strategies that we are talking about. Businesses have to give people answer and be responsive. What do people need? Give them information. When they ask you questions, give it. The only way to overcome our fears is come up with strategies.

CS: Thank you very much. There are indications that some organisations in Botswana do not respond to individual comments. What is your take on this?

Pt 019: Yeah and organization that does not respond to individual comments, I think are making a huge mistake. You can't take customers lightly. They make your organisation.

CS: There are indications that some organizations in Botswana purposefully use language to dominate, to persuade and to manipulate their audiences. What is your take?

Pt 019: Language is a means of communication. The main reason why you are communicating is that there's a message that you want to put across. You're putting it across because you want the other person to receive it. That's why organizations have communication department. The communication department, solidly exists for repackaging the information. They do away with a lot of misinterpretations. They ensure that this is how we want to be understood. Let's understand that the very reason why we communicate is that we have an intended meaning and this intended meaning must reach the intended audience. Anybody who uses language, particularly to hide, he's not communicating. The communications department would be failing in that very basic responsibility. For example, I work with economists who use their jargons and my job is to scrape that text to make it more clearer and make sure that I put in a language intended for our audience. So that's the role of the communications department.
We repackage the information. We are not a conveyor belts. We don't get information from lawyers, like I work with the lawyers, and pass it on to our audiences colored in legalese. We will be failing in our duties.

CS: What is the role of corporate social responsibility for Botswana organisations in crisis?

Pt 019: I think all organization come up with a social responsibility not to use it as a buffer during crisis. Organization should use social responsibility for what it is meant for. It should not be used as a carrot. You invest in the community because you are showing your connection to that Community. You are investing is associated investment in that Community. You are not buying that community. We are not even trying to carry favor with them but we are only showing that you are a good citizen. So any organization that will say I hope they remember us if we get into a crisis. They should remember that we built houses for them, we built a community Hall, we put some portable water for them. That would be a sad day and that is not what social responsibility should be used for. It should be used with all good intention to basically just

to show your affinity to the Community that you serve. That we are privileged to be benefiting from this Community. So in our case, it's not for it to be used as a carrot or a stick.

CS: Thanks a lot for this insightful interview.

Pt 019: Thank you.

Transcript for participant 20 (PT 020)

WEBVTT

CS: Yes, um now, the first question that I am going to ask you is on your understanding of a crisis. What do you understand a crisis to be?

Pt 20: Thank you very much for the question. For me, I believe there are a myriad of perspectives. It's really a collection and a number of situations that take place. In as far as a situation in an organization may have taken place. It is the difficulty or a danger. It tends to be a risk that an organization might be experiencing at a time when a situation is occuring. One of the major crisis that I have come across was when I was at [name of organisation]. What had happened, I believe that most telecommunication companies can experience a similar crisis, was that there was a network black out across the whole country, and this network blacked out in the early hours of the morning. I think 2pm until 7am in the morning. It was really a crisis because people could not call, people could not send SMS, people could not wake up or do a form of communication whatsoever.

Pt 020: Another crisis was at the [name of organisation] and really this was the beginning of the Covid-19 pandemic. I call it a crisis, but it wasn't really a crisis because it was more of the preparation for crisis. When the covid 19 pandemic started in 2019 around China, the [name of organisation] started preparing for the pandemic. We had to divide ourselves according to levels to say this is how we're going to approach the covid 19 pandemic in Botswana.

CS: Take us behind the curtains on how your organization prepared for this crisis.

Pt 020: I think what is key is ensuring, first of all, that there is a crisis communication framework in place and a policy in place. It will then assist in ensuring that the plan is well executed. We had to determine who the spokesperson is going to be in the organization and on behalf of management. We had to engage on a very strong and robust proactive damage control process. This is to say that it's quite important to understand how the damage control is going to take place or how crisis communication is going to work and also determine that there is a crisis case escalation process. We had to deal with the following questions: how are you going to work around the issue? How are you going to handle it at what level and what intervals? Are you willing to handle the escalation? I think, another key thing is understanding the kind of media

response and community engagement strategies or tactics that you bring to put in place and then after ensuring that there is a very robust and strong customer feedback or stakeholder engagement feedback and analysis. So it is those elements that assist in ensuring that there is a very robust strong process of communication or Crisis Management Plan which is a detailed plan. It is also important to highlight at least at the very first instance and the purpose of the plan and why. But plan is important and also the procedures that are involved and who is going to be executing those procedures and he will belong to the crisis communication team, and also the key messages that we are going to be communicating throughout the crisis.

Pt 020: In terms of where do we begin, when we talk about key messages which are the key identifier, during the course of the crisis, we asked ourselves which key message to share to provide a brief description of what happened; which key message to share to provide a timeline for future plans or what the organization is going to do next. We also ensured that there is a very strong communication or other message for compassion during crisis. This is a crisis that would have impacted the organization and its stakeholders in a negative manner. We also had to look for a very strong message for the protection of the organization. Quite key also was the change management strategy of the crisis management plan that would include your internal communication processes and procedures. We had a very big and grounded guidelines and checklist that helped us to inform the process management plan that we engaged. In the checklist, we had to ensure we have the media to inform after informing the Board of Directors. Above that we then ensured that there is business continuity beyond the crisis that has transpired.

CS: That's very insightful. You spoke about damage control or and protection of the organizations reputation. Why does the reputation matters so much?

Pt 020: Well, reputation is very important to the organization. It is an asset that is not tangible to the organization. I usually see that reputation is the one thing that influences your key customers or stakeholders perceptions and what they think about the organization and how the organization is perceived by other people.

CS: When crisis breaks there is this notion that the first hour is golden. From the crisis that you experienced was this practical and what's your view on this?

Pt 020: Well, with me, I think the first hour was regarded as platinum and I think it is very key in actual fact. It is a defining moment. Where you're able to create enough time to appreciate what needs to be done and how, the action is going to unfold. But its different between organizations. For [name of company] it was difficult to communicate within the first hour, I mean with everybody else, but within, our key stakeholders were informed and engaged, to ensure that they are aware that there's a crisis that is currently taking place and for them not to be alarmed, and that we are working around the clock to ensure that we identify potential risk and we identify potential opportunities within the crisis itself.

Pt 020: Its not only in government where its difficult to communicate within the first hour. There are two or three determining factor, and one being if you've got a very strong business continuity plan and the other being a very strong strategy and risk management plan. It makes it quite easy to communicate certain issues, especially in the health sector. Communication is key to everything. So within an hour what I can confirm is that a lot of the key stakeholders were communicated to. Remember that this golden time is really to inform stakeholders about the crisis, it is not to say we unpacked the whole crisis. The idea is to inform and say there is a crisis that is taking place and we are managing the risk of the crisis from falling or getting out of control. So I would definitely say within the hour, a lot of the information around or surrounding the person had been communicated.

CS: What are some of the best practices of communicating during crisis that you can share?

Pt 020: I always approach a lot of my professional communication with the five W's: who, what, when, how. I think when I look at crisis management exercises what is key for me is that we need to establish a number of things. We need to identify what has happened? What has transpired? We need to strategize and we need to develop the channel of communication and then we also need to ensure that our research and analysis is very robust. I think that's what I believe is quite key in crisis management. I think, maybe, if I may add to that maybe even to analyze the list itself from an internal perspective and also ensure that there's a very strong activation protocol. The activation protocol is to say, what then is going to take place, the chain of command and then you need to also create a command Center. I mean i'm very proud to say it's a similar message in [name of organisation]. We had a very strong command Center. A command Center for crisis management and then also ensure that there is a response action plan in place. There is a very robust internal communication and external communication and ensure that resource mobilization is done, parallel to the elements that are put in place where they need training. You need to ensure that you develop a training plan or a training process of a certain magnitude. You have to also ensure that there's a very high level overview. This is behind the scenes to ensure that there's a team, that keeps on reviewing where the crisis is evolving.

CS: Thank you very much. Let's go into the messaging process. Do you develop messages ahead of the crisis or when it is in progress?

Pt 020: I think that is very key and that is quite important because developing those messages for me I usually view them into three aspects: protecting the reputation, then reducing the potential impact, and also burying the negative content that we come with a crisis. So in terms of protecting or building a reputation or protection around the organization, it is quite important to protect the brand from emerging threats and future issues around that particular crisis. It is also quite important, through the messages, because the messages will ensure that there is a very high reduction of potential impact and therefore increase the recovery. From viral news cycles more quickly if I mean put it that way, in simple terms, I think the messages will assist in ensuring that you reduce the viral news cycle and increase the chance of people understanding what the process is really about and what has transpired

around the crisis. In terms of reducing the negative content, you are, then, ensuring that there is a platform or a basis of building positive sustainable reputational alignment for the organization.

Pt 020: It is very important to ensure that in the first instance, you have the messages, the conversation along the involvement of the crisis, then you get to craft other messages that would augment what you had already started.

CS: What would inform your decisions to choose a particular response strategy over the others?

Pt 020: I think, for me, one of the key things I have noticed, especially in managing reputation and also in managing crisis is premised on enterprise on organizational enterprise risk management. My approach to attacking crisis management is based on risk response strategy or risk response strategy.
The risk response approach to crisis management is quite key. It is four pronged in its nature if you do remember. When you talk about risk management, you speak to issues of quality management and you are simply saying as an organization, the programs that we run, we need to ensure that we maintain the quality and also the process of documentation to ensure that our documentation process is intact, then there's also the process of products and services management plan. These are quite key because it ensures you run multiple projects. For instance, the [name of organisation] was a project based environment. Project management played a major role in how we respond to any form of crisis, and also understanding the project itself or understanding the crisis with which the project falls.

Pt 020: When your approach is based on the risk management strategy, you also look at the scope script and the risk response strategy also gives you an opportunity to break down the working structure, because it says to you, who is responsible for this particular risk. It gives you an opportunity to list activities that would include, for instance, the duration, or the timeframe in which it would give you an opportunity as saying what cost risk is associated to this particular crisis?
What also in terms of our dependencies and synergies? What pages are there in this particular response process and also what resource management plan are you going to put in place and what color resources do we have in place in order for us to be able to respond to this type of crisis. It also gives you an opportunity to get a holistic draft of a project management schedule and in this particular project management schedule the crisis itself becomes a project. Then you draft the budget, then you will think what am I going to incur from a cost perspective and then any other important information. because remember the risk appetite of an organization is really determined by what is risky for the organization. You have to consider if you are to involve the media, will the media not be a part of a crisis. I mean in a hostile environment, for instance if you involve the media to talk about covid 19 , and the media turns around and say the [name of organisation] is a death dungeon. What do we do? Do I bring the media on the ground to come and experience the environment? Yes, they have to come while we also ensure we are not exposing them to the
pandemic.

CS: There are suggestions that some organizations in Botswana use corrective strategy, denial and shifting the blame strategies during crisis. What is your take?

Pt 020: I don't know whether I can agree with the corrective strategy. But those strategies are prevalent here. But I think when we look at the different crisis management model. They range from three to six or 10 relational model. The corrective model, as you rightly put it for me, I think it differs from one organization to another. I can never say any of the two are quite prevalent because another key challenge for me in particular is that i'm inclined to saying that in Botswana I think we are more reactive than we are proactive. I'm pretty sure some of the main strategic professionals in my country would not would entirely agree with me, maybe because they want to save their jobs. But here's my thing. I think when we look at the different crisis that have taken place, for instance the mine closure, the question that I would have for any leader, whether in government or in the private sector, is did we not realize that the mind was going to collapse. Where was the crisis management plan. I mean if the world can know that we are going to have an economic downturn, since 2008 to current; If the world was able to see that the covid 19 pandemic was going to impact the economy and now a lot of international organizations are busy trying to see what are the crisis warning. So I don't think that I can agree with the first with the corrective model, but I can say if indeed there are organizations that are pushing the corrective process in Botswana, then we have an even greater opportunity than our country should be somewhere today. As we speak i'll give an example, again looking at the banking industry and what is currently happening in Botswana, in terms of the covid 19 pandemic. We need to ensure that the defining level of influence of a crisis warning would determine that kind of response to the crisis or the kind of response strategy to the crisis.

Pt 020: I haven't seen much of the shifting of the blame. I think there's a lot of the denial strategy that takes place in Botswana. I think we try by all means to hearken the speed of elimination and to say and to speak about the importance of elimination. I think when we talk about the denial strategy, we see a lot of organizations pushing the denial strategy to say this is not how it looks like. This is not what it is. For instance, some PR professionals would always say the organization is working around the clock to ensure that we have address the situation. Other would say our teams are working relentlessly. Remember, there was a very popular line that the media people used to see at the time of prints, comments from organisation were not available. These were delay and denial tactics in actual fact. Some people would also say we will keep updating you as crisis management progresses. Indeed there's a lot of denial.

Pt 020: Like i'm saying, organisations provide very limited information in Botswana. As professionals, we don't share information. You will just see information flying all over the place in the country confirmation bias all over the place. You can read in between the lines that someone out there was bluffing here. The truth of the matter seems to be this.

CS: Do you ever consider culture when developing crisis messages?

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Pt 020: It is very important because there's a lot of dynamism. This dynamism is really bad expectations, and it is a cultural empowerment. More than anything, it has been a different kind of cultural identity. When we craft messages, we look at different perceptions. We look at different enablers and different natures.
When i was still at the [name of organisation], we were launching the new brand the look and feel. We did encounter a crisis because we got a lot of perceptions from the public. They were saying this logo is not right, this and that. You imagine the process of the approval of the logo from the board to the cabinet coming down to the Community itself. You will find that perception will play a major role in how you craft your message.

CS: Thank you. Talk of culture, how useful is the kgotla system during crisis in Botswana?

Pt 020: We've grown up in kgotla system. It is quite important that information is shared and, for me, or I mean when I read history, I realized that kgotla meetings had their own impact. I think nowadays, we may call it a town hall. It would have an impact, but at the same time it'll depend with which industry that impact would fall under. I mean if you are in the human rights sector, for instance, to what extent would calling a kgotla meeting impact the organisation and audiences.
At the same time at government level, when when you talk about legislature, you talk about all the arms of government and you say there's a message that the minister wants to draw. The kgotla meeting would play a major role because kgotla meetings in their nature, call for the community to stand together and to get to know what is happening in their environment.

CS: There are indications that some organizations in Botswana purposefully use language to dominate their audiences, to persuade audiences, and to manipulate their audiences. What is your view on this?

Pt 020: I think we spoke about audience and you spoke about culture. In terms of culture, you spoke about defining the different audiences that we speak to when we communicate a crisis, a crisis management plan. I think language plays a major role but maybe to persuade in a good way. Something that relates to them and also remember, sometimes that is of interest to the communities that we serve may not necessarily be interesting to them. As communicators we tend to want mirror what the organization wants to achieve and what the Community needs to hear. Your message needs to be as calm as possible. The language needs to be as polite and as relatable as possible. The message needs to respond with clear explanation. It shouldn't sound threatening and upsetting. I think also maybe persuasion would also come in the line of conveying empathy. I think as communicators we tend to use language that respects our public and attempt to reduce the bad feeling about something.
Communicators in Botswana are very diplomatic for our own good, whereas when you look at other countries when you speak about something you have to be forthright you have to be concise, you have to be direct and to the point and say we've experienced this number of deaths and as opposed to a certain percentage of the deaths in the country we're doing relatively well.

CS: Lets now talk about the role of social media, especially Facebook during crisis. What are you experiences with Facebook?

Pt 020: I think it played a major role and, yes, I have used social media especially Facebook. I think i'm seeing a great deal of things with Facebook doing the good job. You will notice that we have about 400,000 people now in Botswana who are on Facebook. However, out of that 400,000 people who are on Facebook, the impact is there, but the other thing that i've picked up is that who is on Facebook because when I look at the numbers of people who've got access to smartphones. You notice that there are about 1.4 million people who've got access to smartphones. But what they do with these smartphones is another issue. Of the 400,000 people that are on that are on Facebook currently in Botswana, you will notice that they find a different pages and in following those different pages. It means that you have to ensure that your message is crafted in such a way that your targets would be, or rather, your communication would be targeted to the right audiences and the right audiences in terms of age, in terms of location and in terms of generally the bigger aspect of demographic.

CS: Can you share some of the best practices of using Facebook during crisis?

Pt 020: I think content management and development is key to ensuring that you use Facebook for its purpose and you are able to impact the public that you want to impact. Content development and management is really a process of understanding how many times are you going to be posting in a day, what is it that you're going to be posting because you see content is not just posting a picture. What kind of picture are you going to be posting. When is the right time to post that picture. For me it is that aspect of Facebook management that will play a major role. Content development and management we are referring to creation of content. In other words, I am simply saying you need to have a very robust content strategy. I think once you've started that process, you will also understand research will play a major role. Once you've created, you start to fly. Once you have started flighting you need to understand who has responded and what have they responded to how are they responding. Why would they be responding. Where are they responding from and then you measure this impact for how many likes did we achieve. You need to differentiate are you going to promote or are you going to go organic? If you promote what is it that you are promoting are you promoting for the sake of followership or you're promoting for the sake of education and awareness. In optimization then we talk about a number of things, we talked about analytics we talked about now the business intelligence aspect of thing.

CS: Now, there are indications that some organizations in Botswana are very passive in sharing information on Facebook during crisis. What could be the problem?

Pt 020: I don't think they are afraid. I just think there's no planning.

CS: There are suggestions that organizations in Botswana don't respond to individual comments on Facebook during crisis. What could be the reason for this?

Pt 020: There could be many reasons because, as a communicator you don't want to respond pound for pound. I will give an example. At [name of company] we did a lot of response to Facebook comments because a lot of people were complaining about the service. We came up with a response strategy to say we are not going to respond on the actual comments because if you respond on the actual comment, you are going to create a lot of misconception. But you would rather respond to the comment and say, please inbox your number. Please ask your question at inbox so that I am able to attend to it specifically. The fact you saw that most organizations are not responding, it may be because organizations tend to you know engage with the public's on inbox. A lot of organizations have customer relationship management and they record every complaint and whatever complaint comes through Facebook. You may be aware, as well that a lot of the networks in Botswana have got recording systems of what goes on in social media. Recording I don't mean where they spy on people. No, no, I just mean that you've noticed a lot of organizations will send an error message. t's not just an error message. It is an error message that is going to fall on back end system that allows you to track every comment every worry, every question and so that you don't have anything that has fallen through the cracks.

Pt 020: We have got a responsibility as well to protect the community. Responding pound for pound will be an endless conversation and it is productive as well. For me, what is productive is ensuring and assuring you that i've seen your comment. Now, can we engage so that I really get to understand where you're coming from where if everybody comes from all over and they're saying, whatever they wanted to say, you know comments on Facebook are not necessarily a true representation of what the real question is.

CS: Thank you very much. The last question is on the role corporate social responsibility for organisation in crisis in Botswana. Is it helpful?

Pt 020: I cannot say i'm entirely sure with this one. But maybe I can ask myself a few questions before I even answer: whether CSR would communicates some form of image to bring a level of brand equity for the organization. I'm a little worried when we talk about crisis because crises and you respond to it with CSR depending on what organization it is may bring a competitive advantage. But at the same time, it may impact the organization socially and the impact tmay be determined by the magnitude of the crisis.

Pt 020: I think then we may say CSR is an agent of change of perception and, therefore, it assists to purchase some positive perception. In relation to that change of perception, if practice before the crisis, it can help to attract some kind of business continuity, or something, but not sympathy. I think CSR in its nature is really an opportunity to respond to an already existing need in relation to the organisation's strategic objective or strategic intent.

Pt 020: We are in anticipation of a crisis, and therefore we find Corporate Social Responsibility activity or Corporate Social Responsibility projects as an opportunity to prepay for a coping mechanism and with the crisis. I think there's a level of anticipation, coping and we will use the CSR as an opportunity to power up. I want to

say that we should use crisis management so as to impact a Community cognitive action and also a behavioral action from those that we are targeting. Therefore, maybe building some form of resilience.

CS: Any last thing?

Pt 020: I'm a little worried because had the government probably put in place a strategy a lot of things would change during the covid pandemic. It is quite key that we ensure that in our crisis management, we do a lot of evaluation and assessment. We also need to ensure that we validate the impact of the different crises that we have experienced. My last words would then be organization needs to ensure that they've got enough resources for crisis management.

CS: Thank you very much for giving time to this interview.

Pt 020: Thank you.

Coding Summary by Code

PR practitioners Interviews

15/11/2021 11:13

Aggregate	Classification	Coverage	Number Of Coding References	Reference Number	Coded By Initials	Modified On

Code

Codes\\Best practices

Document

Files\\Pt 001_ Transcript

No		0.1532	9			
				1	C.S	10/11/2021 09:26

Would

you also give other examples of how organizations are affected by crisis.

Pt 001: As I indicated when we started, I mentioned there is the public safety, the financial and the reputation. As far as I can reall, this is the only ones, because that is why, you know, when you compose the crisis communication team obviously have to have the PR, the legal, because they know that there are legal aspects, you know, and then the security, the finance, HR because of the employee side of things. I want to believe that, you know, this team composition, usually is there for them to manage, you know, the impact that may come out from the crisis that arises at any given point. In this case, we will be there to use, I mean, there will be there to use their expertise to handle any sort of crisis.

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Pt 001: I support this notion of effectively managing the crisis. As you rightly said, it is the golden opportunity, you need to have the right team, well trained, that is the starting point. Even when you develop the crisis communication you know, because it differs from disaster and business continuity, you should make sure that even the messages that will be communicated to those affected by the crisis, they are the right ones, you use the rightly trained, you know, workforce that will manage this, not somebody who will be coming and saying 'im still going to consult'. You know, it should be somebody who's ahead of their game and somebody who's well versed to deal with these issues

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Um the other thing I gained, a robustly prepared communication plan has a number of elements, you know, and the most important is just to keep it simple because during a crisis, you know, people need to document and understand, you know, what is supposed to be happening. You need to have that team, train employees at the workplace or even if its at your own home, you need to train your helper to know what they should do when there is a crisis.

| | | | | 4 | C.S | 10/11/2021 09:30 |

Pt 001: Yeah, so the whole you know messages about keeping the plan clean and simple, you know, not using lexicons that not any average person will be able to, you know, to understand and also to address the critical issues, you know coming out of this crisis.

Aggregate	Classification	Coverage	Number Of Coding References	Reference Number	Coded By Initials	Modified On
				5	C.S	10/11/2021 09:32

Pt 001: The spokesperson, as I indicated, you know, the competencies of the spokesperson should speak volumes. It should demonstrate that this is a person who has been trained because he's the one who can make or break the organization, you know. You should get the right person who knows his stuff. They always say that mature disposition also counts, when you have a crisis. But it's not just about, you know, mature disposition but it's all about giving them knowledge to deal with the crisis, you know. Many organizations or many workplaces, this is something that they never take or think it will happen, you know. But crisis can strike at any minutes. Any type of crisis. We have different types of crisis, you know. Normally when this person has the competencies, they should own the communication plan, and you know, and also come with a detailed plan that should outline or explain how [name of organisation] or any organisation will be communicating about crisis and how to handle the crisis, and they should clear steps you know. There should be steps for the purpose of the plan and explain why it is needed. This is not just

about that person, what if the crisis happens when that that person is in UK and there's a time difference, or whatever? There should be a blueprint or a manual you know, that is adopted or well understood by everyone. So, there is adage that goes 'a candle never lose anything by lighting another candle.' I don't know that i've put it correctly. This is when now as a spokesperson, you need to amass or assemble a team and train them on crisis communication because crisis communication is critical, you know. Remember this is the team that will be collecting information, you know, disseminating key messages and working with the media. When you are dealing with this and you happen to be the only person dealing with this, it is also it also becomes a disaster to the organization. Obviously, there are there are procedures that should be followed, you know, for them to address , you know, the internal and external stakeholders. So and also the mediums that are used to handle this one, there should also be up to date, you know, and also indicating or showcasing that this spokesperson is indeed knowledgeable. So, and I think the crisis communication team is also one of those, you know.

| | | | | 6 | C.S | 10/11/2021 09:32 |

Pt 001: Within the plan, I would normally say, as I have indicated, you identify the members of the crisis communication team and describe their roles. They should be what we role clarity, its important everywhere. The spokesperson should be appointed by management, you know. There should be another person who should be able to act as a spokesperson in the event, this one is not there, and this is the person who should be knowledgeable as well, you know, this is the person who fields mediacalls, somebody who's robust, somebody who should be able to have good media relations as well, you

know. Internal communication is also key when you have a crisis so normally the backups should also be coming from the office of the spokesperson, you know, to ensure that they are also imparting knowledge to others. Their numbers or the contact details, should also be available so that even a cleaner, who comes across the crisis, should have a place where they would get numbers, you know.

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Pt 001: So coming back to to to employee training. You must have a crisis communication training manual that caters for everyone, even for that lady a tea lady who works in the kitchen who handles hot water.

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Effective crisis communication plan as well when properly executed, can assist the organization to manage issues of stakeholder confidence and loyalty at the same time. So in my case, I would say, organizations should embrace having the the crisis communication plans in place, because they normally come handy during crisis. And this is a plan that should be updated every now and then. At least a plan to update the crisis management plan on an annual basis. If it ends on an annual basis, you know experts in the workplace, you should go about you know benchmarking and looking at the current trends and also suggesting them to the management.

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				9	C.S	10/11/2021 09:54

Every organization communication strategy, should have the crisis communication strategy under it.

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Even the crisis management tools should always be in place, you know, so that when they is a crisis, you need to have the affected departments, a crisis management team, represented by the affected departments, whereby a should on a daily basis, daily or weekly meet, and come up with a ways, through which you reach out to different a affected stakeholders.

				2	C.S	10/11/2021 09:59

Pt 002: You should have the crisis management plan in place. You should do simulations so that you are always ready for such kind of or whatever crisis that might come your way. So to prepare the whole organizations, make sure you have that plan; you have those simulation exercises to try to emulate a crisis and to see how you effectively, you know, respond to it. So it's very critical to have the simulation and also the plan in place.

				3	C.S	10/11/2021 09:59

Pt 002: I was saying, to some extent, even training of especially the management team, even the stuff... training might not be there but it can be even a through a meeting and when we have tools like change management in place where you where you, on a continuous basis you touch base with a staff, you raise awareness of the crisis that you might encounter and how to respond to that.

		4	C.S	10/11/2021 10:01

Pt 002: Normally, you would have the head of communication or public relations, who is the official spokesperson and you should be clear that this person should always be part of the crisis management team. But when you choose that team, you should make sure it's made up of the head of the affected department or units or division and then the communication team and the head, and other affected stakeholders within. The spokesperson might be the head of the organization, depending on what set up you have put in place or the normal spokesperson, being head of PR or communication. So they have to make sure they they advice on the most efficient and effective way of communicating during that time, and also to make sure that they are prepared for question and answers, so that the Communication person or the spokes person chosen for that role will not struggle in terms of responding to the media or other stakeholders.

		5	C.S	10/11/2021 10:02

CS: So, to what extent do you do believe designating a chief executive officer or head of the organization, as you said, as the spokesperson helps to rebuild legitimacy, and trust between the organization and its stakeholders?

Pt 002: Yes, because then it shows that he or she is on top of the game, he is not hiding anything, or he or she is not hiding behind anyone, for example, behind the head of communication or public relations. But that person also before he or she can go out, as the head of PR or communication, You should mentor, you should sit down with that person, and you know mentor and guide them on how to handle the media.

		6	C.S	10/11/2021 10:04

Pt 002: Like I have pointed out, the crisis, when a crisis emerge, you have to have that team, the head of department affected, a communication CEO and other relevant stakeholders for that particular crisis. So this is why, even the question and answer is based on that particular crisis

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				7	C.S	10/11/2021 10:05

Pt 002: Yes, like I said it depends on what kind of crisis we have. For example, some crisis are not very impactful. Some crisis will need just the head of communication to respond, to attend to those but, like you have pointed out, or we have already discussed some crisis will need a CEO himself or herself to go out there and communicate. Sometimes it depends on the technicalities of the issue.

				8	C.S	10/11/2021 10:07

 This is why you know but professionals are trying to put up bodies that will assist in raising awareness, and also speaking to integrity for the profession because we are not supposed to be spin doctors. We're supposed to tell the truth, and always tell the truth as a spokesperson, as a PR and communications professional, and advice the same: tell the truth, tell the truth... that will also help in terms of consistency for your message.

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Pt 003: Fortunately, for us at [name of organisation], we have a risk management model that we follow. We have top risks that we closely monitor in terms of reputation and how they can affect the cooperation.

| | | | | 2 | C.S | 10/11/2021 10:28 |

Pt 003: Yes, um I think for me and from my experience, you need a solid crisis communication policy. Then you need an elaborate plan in terms of how you will deal with crisis once it comes. It's unfortunate that a lot of crisis, as you rightly pointed out, comes when you least expect it. But it's interesting that events that we deal with in our organization, could somehow hint that if you don't take care of 123 something adverse might affect you. We are fortunate that in our last organizational transformation, we incorporated risk as one of those critical factors in our business to try and manage a crisis situation better.

| | | | | 3 | C.S | 10/11/2021 10:32 |

Sometimes it can happen that a certain issue would come out, would spring up and the corporate communication team that's supposed to be dealing with the communication and crisis sometimes is unaware, but we try as much as possible to express to other business units to say that

anything that happens that affects the organization, be it positive or negative, should be communicated to the relevant authority being us the gate keepers.

Pt 003: Its important to have constant communication with business units to ensure that you manage certain risks. You don't want to be caught up in a situation where you see issues written in papers and you have to put out the fire. Our view is that crisis should be proactively managed and it should be actively managed. It is really important to have a very good relationship with the media, because a lot of things coome through the media. The media is the watchdog for the society and that is why they are going to report on controversial issues or issues that may be deemed to be negative. We try as much as possible to build relationships with media through various activities. We have your media roundtables; we have your press conferences whenever there's a development in the corporation that we feel it's important for the media to know about and in turn inform the public. We do call them and invite them over into such a press conference, so that we have discussions about this issues they asked questions and we provide full information. We have annual plans that we do work on every year, where we will try as much as possible to make sure that we respond accordingly whenever the media try as much as possible,to find out information about us. The brightest thing to do is that, with the advent of social media, try as much as possible to share a lot of information, so that we sort of clear the air in terms of some of the

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				4	C.S	10/11/2021 10:37

CS: Thank you. Can you share some best practices in crisis communication from your experience?

Pt 003: Indeed, there are some best practices that we I can share. I tend to believe that organizations that share information on a regular basis, especially information that might deemed to be sensitive, there's a way to share such information. There's information concerning financials. You might know we are all experiencing challenges from covid and, obviously, a lot of organizations are not doing well and we find ourselves in a very tight corner and sometimes such information is critical, and you need to make sure that you share it continuously with the media so that the public is well

| | 5 | C.S | 10/11/2021 10:38 |

Other best practice is stakeholder engagement, the media is a very critical stakeholder especially when it comes to sharing information about a public organizations like the one I represent. You need to make sure that you have a media engagement strategies that will ensure that information is shared on a regular basis with the media. Dont communicate with the media when you have a crisis because you'll get it wrong. I tend to believe that constant engagement, stakeholder engagement, not only the media, your shareholder, the public, because a system that everyone is a journalist nowadays, considering that all of us have access to social media.

| | 6 | C.S | 10/11/2021 10:42 |

One other aspect that I think that's really worked for our organization is the issue that I was talking about earlier where you to build relations with the media. Sometimes you'd find that situation is where the something damning. A journalist will call you about something bigger.

Some professionals, have a way of making sure that the manage the editor by sort of delaying it if you don't have fully information. It's always like you're saying it's always very, very important to make sure that you manage issues before

| | 7 | C.S | 10/11/2021 10:43 |

Also make sure that you empower your internal stakeholders with information because you don't want them to be responding to something that they are not sure of. then would. It's always really important to ensure that when crisis starts the first stakeholder to consider, besides the board and the shareholder are you employees, so that you may get them to know what happening and how you plan to respond to it, so that even when they get questioned out there they know exactly what to say.

| | 8 | C.S | 10/11/2021 10:43 |

CS: So tell me about the role of the spokesperson, who should be the spokesperson?

Pt 003: From experience depending on the level of crisis because there are instances where the head of communication would assume the role of the spokesperson for the company, depending on the severity of the issue, but in other issues you'd find the CEO being the chief spokesperson, as the top most guy in the organization. If he is indesposed, then the next person in line is the head of communication is always in site to advice, looking at a variety of the issue, but the policies says the CEO assumes that role, but the communication manager will come in, depending on the issue itself.

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Pt 004: As much as we say crisis does not announce itself, I do think that there are very key steps that organizations can have to mitigate some of these situations. First and foremost, you find out what policies do you have in place; do you have a crisis management policy in place as a business? Is it widely shared within the organization? Do we understand what a crisis is to start off with? Do we have a process that one is able to follow? Should a crisis happen, how do we determine what type of crisis? Do we have a risk register that is constantly being updated so we are able to anticipate what could happen? If you have a risk register, you should have risk champions within organizations who ensure they keep checking what these risks are, and then we do have processes that are able to roll out within an organization.

| | | | | 2 | C.S | 10/11/2021 11:03 |

Pt 004: When a crisis happens staff will know this is the process. For instance, do you tell your factory manager? A lot of times, the issue is do people know? You need to be prepared and having a framework in place and ensuring that there is communication that is followed can go a long way to managing the situation.

| | | | | 3 | C.S | 10/11/2021 11:05 |

CS: Now I want you to talk about the best practices of communicating when crisis breaks.

Pt 004: The same way that we want to have ambassadors that speak of the good about an organizations or that carry our products and services, in a crisis is the same as the spokesperson. When a crisis happens, is that the head of the organization or is it the public relations specialist? This needs to be very clear, because then it means that the messaging also is aligned. You don't just have anybody else speaking or saying whatever. Some people will be speaking from an emotional perspective, some people will speak from effects related perspective. In a crisis mode, training is also very important, the same way as you train other business functions.You also need to have some sort of a scorecard. It's okay

when the messaging has gone out within this particular period, when we have reached X number of people when we have created feedback channels. You need to be able to have those in place to be able to say, this is a good way of handling the crisis or this is what we're able to gain out of it. Even your response to the crisis, the same way that you want to measure your own profits, you must be able to measure your response as well. You know how concise, is the message that you're putting out; it's inclusive of the stakeholders that you need to reach.

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Pt 005: Basically, what we do at the beginning of each financially is that we prepare what we call a communication plan to know what tools we are actually going to use to reach to our clientele and what other channels we are going to use for the clientele to reach to us. So basically in that communication plan we develop at the beginning of each financial year, we also include a portion where we prepare for crisis and what communication channels we would basically use during that crisis.

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				2	C.S	11/11/2021 09:32

CS: What are some of your best practices that you can share about communicating when crisis has broken?

Pt 005: First, we communicate internally with the stuff. They have to know that we are experiencing a crisis and these are the steps that we would take to work out the crisis. Before the staff is informed, we meet with the executive management to inform them of the crisis, then they make a decision. The decision will then be communicated to the political leadership. The political leadership will also advise accordingly and then the crisis will be communicated to staff. The staff will be made aware of the crisis and the steps that the organisation is going to take. concern is going to take, and then

| | | | | 3 | C.S | 11/11/2021 09:41 |

Pt 005: I believe it's very important for our communications professionals here to actually be educated on crisis communication. Sometimes our professionals, you might want to engage in crisis management communication here but you'll find that they rely on their chief executives who may also not be so educated in crisis communication management. Its very important for our communications professionals to be educated on this. The Heads of organizations like permanent secretaries and chief executive officers of all parastatals and private organizations need to be educated on crisis management and communication to really be at par with the communications managers; to know exactly what is supposed to happen when organisations are in crisis.

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Pt 006: Well, it's a number of things. I think one of them for me is the team that handles the crisis itself, because what you don't want is to have an unwieldy team, or one that is too big, because you then the risk. And the possibility of information leaking before you are able to control the type of messaging and the other thing is to make sure that you are clear on the messaging and you agree on the Miss judging as quickly as possible before it is disseminated.

| | | | | 2 | C.S | 11/11/2021 09:57 |

You have to react to contain any follow ups that might that might come

out of that of the elements which you not have wanted to to to put out at that time, of course, you also have to be aware that, in a crisis.

Pt 006: You, that is, this is where you are dealing with advisors that also know the bank. You have to be a let to watch that doing and be able to respond appropriately and it has also been helpful in my experience. To have access to to media practitioners journalists. And to know the strengths of journalists in the various media house. If I need to deploy a message with the heavy financial messaging during a crisis, and I wanted simplified. I have to know which journalists to go. Some of them will sympathize with your cause and some of them will sympathize with the other parties. There's a

temptation when is the realization that oh sure that [name of journalist] seems to be sympathetic to our foes to try and then deny you access to information which doesn't help. So my approach is always to treat all journalists equitably, even the ones which I know are not necessarily sympathetic to our cause at a particular time.

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				3	C.S	11/11/2021 09:58

And it is interesting dealing with a crisis because not only do you have to engage with your various stakeholders internally and externally. You have a media practitioners wanting to do interviews every other minute. They also have regulatory bodies wanting to be engaged,

sometimes in person, instead of over the phone or via statement. Now if you're dealing with a central bank, and those are generally very conservative people throughout the world, I think, central bankers are. They would want to set a team and go into the organization to come and understand what is going on. So you find yourself that you're stressed right across the spectrum. So the overall message is to remain calm. I'm not sure, besides tracked by emotions because it's not personally at the end of the day. I mean if you personalize it and you're going to lose the plot because you're then going to refuse to speak to certain people which might have your back because they will then have their own perceptions, because they don't have your side of the story. So it's important to remain calm and to be decisive in your actions, if you have to release a statement or make a statement you do so quickly.

| | | | | 4 | C.S | 11/11/2021 09:59 |

Pt 006: With social media, some of them wants to break the news on their social media pages before the story appears in the print paper the following day. So you literally don't sleep, and you can put your phone on silent or you can put your feet, or you can switch it off because you'll be engaged throughout.

| | | | | 5 | C.S | 11/11/2021 10:04 |

Pt 006: There is also the crisis team, I think I mentioned. So it is critical during crisis and it may experience, this has been particularly evident that members of the team, each team Member must know what that is possible for and how far their responsibility goes because you don't want me stepping into your area under the assumption that you're not very much as opposed to between us. Well once that happens, and the balance is going to be the steps between collective decision making and a final decision that has to be made by the leader. The crisis team leader is going to be is going to be steps. Strong leadership is also essential. You cannot afford a situation where there is indecision, there is infighting. It's critical for strong leadership to be evident throughout the crisis to the team to make sure that each team Member delivers. What I don't want to happen is to be in a position where a lot information is gathered, but when you're looking for it, no one knows. I always take it upon myself as the head of communications department to make sure that log is within my grasp all times.

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				6	C.S	11/11/2021 10:06

Pt 006: On the issue of the spokesperson, the managing director or the CEO is normally the chief spokesperson of the organization. You might find that if a crisis is at the board level, the Board chair would be the chief spokesperson. In other circumstances, the head of communications or the head of public relations would play a supporting role primarily, and when you have a crisis unfolding, and let's say these around the bank robbery and in such well in such a situation, you would have the the managing director or the CEO as the chief spokesperson. Now it is critical to have during a crisis, a single spokesperson, of course, there might be instances when the spokesperson is indisposed and in that situation, because the media and the public already know who the head of PR is in a particular organization, that is easy for the head of PR to step into and deal with issues. Generally and it will depend on the issue. If it is a big issue, I always prefer the managing director to be the chief spokesperson and supporting in that role he then becomes the only person who deals with the media. In terms of interviews, of course, we would have called him to some mock interviews. Practising is an advantage in that you tend to know the styles of interviewing of various channels. So if it's a journalist X from from X TV you say look I know this guy is combative he's going to come at you, and make you emotional. So this is how it would be best to deal with this interview. I then deal with external requests for information and package messaging appropriately for him and make sure there is understanding of the issues. as I said, ensure that we stick to key messages because we would have developed key messages which we want to repeat through interviews to enforce or that the sticks in the minds of the of the people. My role as I said, would be to gather as much information as possible about the crisis. I also check feeds to make sure that the spokesperson is up to date with what

is happening and keep the logs of incoming and outgoing information.

Pt 006: Now, in events that a CEO, it is not immediately available in the building, for whatever reason; he might be on leave, hopefully he might not be in a coma in a hospital somewhere, the critical thing is to make sure that, as I said, you gather as much information as possible to understand what the crisis is. Get him on the phone or zoom or teams, or whatever means you're able to use depending on the time zone. Agree on how to communicate; what is happening and what would be ideal. Once you have agreed with the CEO with statement in his name, you should start communicating. The people would say the person is in charge, this is what is happening, and this is what he's saying, and we should be able to buy time for him to get back to the office, so that you can deal with the crisis. It is critical for the PR team to equip the spokesperson with the right information and with the right training, and with whatever intelligence that might that be required for that particular crisis

because they will be relying on you in terms of the communication strategy or your writing abilities and your all sorts of things now. I happen to be in the fortunate position and of having not only have worked in the in the media industry but having some legal background. So it normally helps to manage situations quickly, because you don't necessarily have to be running through your external legal advisors. In the events that your legal advice is not around, you're the person officially tasked with legal issues in the organization. Him and I are able to debate certain positions, from a legal point of view and not just rely on him to say that legally you can't do this or say this i'm fortunate to be able to say but look, I think, as far as I understand the law, and this is what we can do from a crisis point of view in order to manage this this situation.

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Pt 006: The most important thing is to inculcate, to teach organizations the value of PR and crisis management and for organizations to know that when there is a crisis, a PR person is key to managing that crisis. What pains me sometimes when I speak to other colleagues, is that they'll call me when a crisis is unfolding in that organization just for thoughts and what's up and i'll be asking so when did you know about this? Strategic PR requires you to be situated strategically in an organization, in particular, having a place in the boardroom and executive management.

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Pt 007: It is my belief that organizations should have a crisis communication strategy. The crisis communication strategy would mean that organizations, first and foremost would know that it is possible that a crisis can be for us. And then once they get that knowledge that it is possible that crisis of whatever nature can affect them, then the crisis communication strategy would inform what to do for a crisis of whatever nature before us. So the preparatory processes for anything that can happen that could disrupt the normal functioning of the organization in question, I am submitting here and now that a crisis, a communication strategy can we help an organization to mitigate the possible negative and devastating effects that any crisis would have on any organization.

				2	C.S	11/11/2021 10:23

Pt 007: I would say other best practices would include timely response to inquiries for purposes of avoiding issues of misquoting, whether deliberate or not deliberate, especially the print media. For certain information we require them to send us a written questionnaire, which we then respond to. So what we do is we will respond between 24 and 48 hours of receipt of the inquiry. In cases where we are not able to respond within that time or where we are not able to respond before the date, we let them know in advance that we are still compiling more information on their inquiry. In my view, this has helped create a good working relationship between us and the media. In the process, it is also help them highly and in the process keeping our reputation in tact.

				3	C.S	11/11/2021 10:25

Pt 007: Yes, normally there is a team. If you take, for instance, in the case of a government ministry like ours, you will find that the team include the head of the public relations unit and the Permanent Secretary. So we would then have another person or two who have been selected perhaps on the basis for being people who work closely with the issue at hand. They can also be selected to be the spokesperson at that very point in time. So yes, even in our case in government whenever we have an issue we would have somebody selected to go and talk about it. Otherwise the Permanent Secretary and the head of the public relations unit remained constant. In the case of my ministry, it is myself as the head of the public relations unit who's been almost on all the issues.

				4	C.S	11/11/2021 10:25

Pt 007: Yes, in the formulation of the communication strategy, we are guided by a risk assessment of possible crisis that can affect the ministry. We also look at the bigger crisis that we may be grappling with, because it is possible that in midst of a crisis, more crisis crop up on top of an existing crisis. A crisis would prompt you to do more risk assessment of further crisis that affect you.

				5	C.S	11/11/2021 10:30

Pt 007: Yes, in the recent past, we have engaged some influential people to help us convince people to go and get vaccinated. In the early stages

of the vaccination process, there were certain myths and mythologies about getting vaccinated. Some people said if you get vaccinated you will die or you will no longer have an erection; or if you're a woman you will no longer be able to conceive; or if you are a man, you will develop breast. There were so many things, so we decided to rope in some influential members of the Community in the form of chiefs, like retired politicians. We got them vaccinated publicly and then, after which they would make certain statements in support of vaccination and also encouraging people to get vaccinated. So somehow I believe the strategy worked, because we have seen quite a good number of people coming up for vaccination. We no longer experience vaccine hesitancy.

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				6	C.S	11/11/2021 10:31

Pt 007: I have a team. it's not necessarily specific to social media, it does other communication duties, but we deliberately take a decision to keep an eye on how whatever communication is trending and the kind of responses that the communication is getting and then respond.

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Pt 007: Well, my last word, can only be that crisis communication should be ethical. It should be truthful and It should carry messages of hope.

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				1	C.S	11/11/2021 10:38

Pt 008: Well, first and foremost, I think what needs to be done is to start at the top. We need to create policies. We need to create plans. We need to create teams and we need to have a high level of training to be able to absorb another crisis, to be able to respond to that crisis. As you've just said, it's something that comes out of nowhere but levels of preparedness come from having policies and structures. If you can have a structure that says how you address it in certain risks. You need to obviously have a well trained risk management department. They need to obviously at times also identify potential crisis situations, and then they could do simulations of each situation. You could have a situation of loss of life in an organization; you can have a situation of reputation management; you can have a situation of financial loss. You can have put as many scenarios to the table in training simulations. You have simulations that could address these issues around with that as well. I think there's a big element of having good media relations. A lot of crisis get out of hand when there's leakages in organizations. You should have a

you're going to have a crisis communications team, with your CEO as spokesperson. Your head of communication crafts the messaging; you're going to have your risk manager; you're going to have a strategy manager. You're going to have this team, but if it's not trained and if it's not understanding how to manage it, you're going to have challenges of leakages of people telling media outlets those types of information. So where I come in and say media relations needs to be really key in informing key media personnel of what's really happening on the ground, whether it's press conferences, whether it's to press releases, you need to have a strategy where you know that you are disseminating the right information to the

right people who can really verify your story as it is in terms of crisis communication. So it's really about structuring a team, have a policy, having a plan, having relationships and safeguarding above all the reputation of your organization through these teams.

				2	C.S	11/11/2021 10:38

Pt 008: Like they say without failing to plan is planning to fail. So having a proper crisis communication plan you are better equipped and in a better vantage point to absorb the pressures so you leave unscathed. But you can actually soften the blow in terms of what could have happened in terms of that so i'm really about having a policy; having a plan; having a structured team; having a well trained team so that it's a well oiled machinery. Should the situation come dont come across as being reactive but being very active in situations and this way it comes in with having good media relations where you can channel the right type of information to people.

Aggregate	Classification	Coverage	Number Of Coding References	Reference Number	Coded By Initials	Modified On
				3	C.S	11/11/2021 10:39

Pt 008: I think first and foremost, is having a policy and a crisis communication plan. Those two things will coordinate. Let's assume that those will be your Bible. They will set the tone of what do we do. Through the crisis communication training you'll know how to address each situation. But within that you know you can have a team. Like I say what we do is we've engaged our risk department in a lot of crisis communications. That crisis communication issues that they can think of and say Okay, but when you and your team, how would you address this? So it's a policy, it's a plan, it's a training, good media relations, containment of responses. You need to contain the time of your response. Like I said in terms of response you need to manage the time. It can't be too long. You need to have well documented responses. There's another element, chance, which I keep saying that we need to look at. We need to do a lot of internal communications training. Your own staff is at the risk of being your own worst enemy. One day if issues pertain to them, they could possibly be the same people who now go back to the media and say but yeah, the situation is really like this. Most people, those people are not telling you how it is. So you need to have built some form of trust within your staff for your staff to know that during the situation, let your seniors help handle it. You can have non disclosure agreements and so forth. But you do know that in situations like this there are people with a lot of leakages, so we need to control what comes out of that organization. It's very difficult and in an ideal world, people wouldn't share information, but you know people inside and people share information for any odd reason, whether it's despite an organization, whether they said to someone in passing or whether it was just that it was a small friendly talk and it happened to reach the media. So it's also about that containment where you need to find way higher level of controlling communications that comes out but that's also stemmed with being able to ensure that you're informing your staff as early as possible so that they're not finding information out from the media.

				4	C.S	11/11/2021 10:40

Pt 008: You can control the narrative but these days people create their own opinions and are privy to certain information. People think differently and as much as you can control the narrative and set the tone, people create their own opinion and form their own opinion on certain crisis's and certain situations. They're not afraid to divulge it, but

you've got to create some element of trusting your staff or onboarding your staff, so that when they feel that they do need to be telling anything they will know that its the responsibility of the chief spokesperson, or the CEO.

Aggregate	Classification	Coverage	Number Of Coding References	Reference Number	Coded By Initials	Modified On
				5	C.S	11/11/2021 10:42

Pt 008: I think that communications practitioners or people who are involved in crisis need to do a lot of research. I think your risk management department comes in handy. Over the past two years, i've realized that PR practitioners also need to have a high level of understanding in terms of risk to the organization; risk to the reputation. So you can have a static message. You need to be able to craft it. I think that also comes with the knowledge that you can build or tap into with people from the risk department or the strategy department, because they can help you know that the potential outcome of one particular message is not going to be the same as when this happens. So I mean this is me coming from a professional opinion of having seen it. Certain crisis didn't need to get to certain situations if we had just listened to legal and risk department because they go hand in hand as an organization. You can't be stagnant in your messaging. You need to be able to evolve your messaging. You can have your core message, but as it goes on, you must remember that it needs to be backed by that core message. But with time, situations change and you need to be able to keep abreast of those.

Pt 008: I firmly believe that we as communications practitioners, we don't know it all, and I think we need to come to that firm understanding. When the risk team comes in, they delve a little bit deeper. You can you see the situation at face value, but the risk department can tell you what the ramifications will be maybe a year down the line or six months down the line. Legal will tell you what the legal ramifications may be in six months down the line, a year down the line. You messaging need to have tapped into risk and legal experts to save the organisation from costs. legally to save. As much as I think i'm protecting reputation what of the risk what of the legal elements into it? There is something that dawned on me when I sat with one of my colleagues who is in compliance. She sat me down and gave me a risk register. She asked me a lot of issues about challenges with governance. She asked for a communications point of view, when you got issues of governance and it affects on reputation. How we address issues of loss of life; damage to property and sexual harassment issues. She gave me a long list, and I was like I didn't foresee some of these things. She was like have you thought about the reputational risk? Have you thought about the legal ramifications? What constitutes your team and your messaging. She gave it to me straight, as this is me now coming to you as an educated person. She said to me i'm going to be one person with many huts. She asked me how I address each of these people: legal, CEO and journalist with one message that addresses all of them in one formal understanding. Those are elements that that came to me, and they came too late, getting late. Crisis communication can be taken lightly. With all these issues, you've got the new age issues more especially now, in terms of social media. And it's difficult to control them now because channels of communications consistently grow.

| | | | | 6 | C.S | 11/11/2021 10:43 |

Pt 008: I think, honestly and genuinely we need to be able to manage that crisis, but we need to manage it professionally. Like I was saying earlier on the question of building a team of people that really poke holes in your crisis communication strategy. They poke holes and see how a tight, it is. Can it hold water and will not come back to bite you if you weren't telling the truth or if you are not sharing all the truth or if you wanted to be crafty with your messaging.

Aggregate	Classification	Coverage	Number Of Coding References	Reference Number	Coded By Initials	Modified On
Files\\Pt 009_transcript.vtt						
No		0.1737	2			
				1	C.S	11/11/2021 10:51

Pt 009: There is what we call crisis management. We should differentiate from crisis communication. I am tempted to make a distinction between the two. Crisis Management is when you have an operational plan, sort of procedures and plans on how you would address effects of a crisis. You sort of have a plan that you say in the event that there is a crisis, this is how we manage it. Organizations should better plan for any unforeseeable crisis. They need to have a crisis management plan in place. So these are the procedures that we follow when a crisis happens. If it happens crisis communication will be handled in this manner: Who are the people are supposed to gather the information and who is the legal advisor because it depends on the magnitude of a crisis. Sometimes you would need a system so that the crisis communication becomes very efficient. In a nutshell, I would say to prepare for communication or to even communicate a crisis effectively, you need a crisis management plan in place.

				2	C.S	11/11/2021 10:52

Pt 009: Immediately, that's why it's important to have a team into a crisis management plan so you plan on how you need to react or respond to a crisis. The first thing that you need to do that is say we can call it phase one or step one is to have the people that have the expertise. The owner of the crisis is the highest person in an organization, which is a CEO or the director. The owner of the crisis is the CEO because crisis affects the brand. Stage two is the formulation of a crisis committee and remember you are working on the crisis Management Plan which dictates that there should be a crisis committee. The Crisis Committee will then have the operational team. They immediately developed what we call an action plan which is only going to respond to this crisis. Number three, you communicate directly to the crisis owner, because it becomes a crisis because it's going to involve our external people including the media and other stakeholders. So as soon as the crisis committee that has the operational team develop an action plan of how they're dealing with the communication, that flow of information now goes to the spokesperson,

who now sifts through all the information and now categorize that this information is OK to go to the media. The media is the main stakeholder because then they disseminate information to the general public. So stick to one owner of the crises who will be acknowledging that there is a crisis.

Pt 009: You should be proactive, but be sure that the information that's supposed to go to the public is really ready to go to the public. Create a spotlight on acrisis. So my view is that you wait until things unfolds, and you can see how the public is responding. Just those 1015 responses, particularly now that these social media, you are able to tell within the next five

490

minutes of a crisis, what the public perception is. So being proactive can be done, but I don't think it is the best way to let things unfold. Get your facts right; plan the messages right and then disseminate them. I would rather occupy a conservative position than being proactive.

Aggregate	Classification	Coverage	Number Of Coding References	Reference Number	Coded By Initials	Modified On

Files\\Pt 010_transcript.vtt

No		0.2047	5			
				1	C.S	11/11/2021 10:58

Pt 010: In terms of management, we ensured regular communication with our stakeholders, including our internal publics, our media partners and the shareholder, updating them on what the crisis was about and what we were doing to handle it. Each audience was updated in the tone and language appropriate for them. We also moved quickly into using the expertise within the crisis communication team to delve into the issues around the crisis to pick out what the public, the general public, was complaining about with regards to the statistics so that we could quickly move into solving the problem. While we were doing that we kept communicating with the media, with the general public through the media so to say. Fortunately, we heard the people's concerns and we told them we will be addressing all the issues as they've been raised and indeed within a couple of days, we were able to host a press conference where we were able to articulate our processes and methodologies in terms of how we we produce our statistics and explained the figures and all the concepts that we put out there.

				2	C.S	11/11/2021 10:58

Pt 010: Okay, what we had in place was a basic structure for composition of the team in case of any crisis. There were some members who I can say were founding members of any crisis. That would be the chairperson, secretariat and the communication team and internal audit. Depending on what the crisis is, we then put in whichever subject area experts we needed to pull in. So in this case all the other Members already knew that they would be part of the team. The only new members, the only additional Members that we pulled in where those that were from subject matters of the crisis issue.

				3	C.S	11/11/2021 11:00

So in terms of what we did, we made that initial contact with our stakeholders to say we are listening we've heard the concerns

and we will be coming back to you to address your queries. So at least we were able to calm things and have people waiting anticipating what we were going to say something about the issues that they were bringing forward. If people are questioning your product and they're questioning how you put it together, then while you are looking at the technical considerations, you can just respond. If you're not prepared to answer, you shouldn't answer. That doesn't mean you should be silent. You have to say something to the publics and just to manage the environment, to manage the

				4	C.S	11/11/2021 11:01

Pt 010: Okay. First, your must make sure that your leadership is visible. Leadership must be visible. You must collects your information as quickly as possible. Look at your crisis communication plan to guides you in terms of what needs to be done; who needs to be called in and so forth. Immediately make contact with your stakeholders to make sure that you get them to know that you are aware of what is unfolding. Even if you don't have answers to their questions or queries at that point in time, reaching out is very, very, very, very important. The shortest time possible in terms of best practice, I could be wrong, but I think in 48 hours you should have resolved your crisis. Your internal publics as well should be informed immediately because those are your spokespeople. They need to know what is going on and how you intend to address the issues so that they can represent the organization well.

Aggregate	Classification	Coverage	Number Of Coding References	Reference Number	Coded By Initials	Modified On
				5	C.S	11/11/2021 11:01

Pt 010: I think that heads of PR can do it, depending on the complexity of the issue at hand. When things break, it's always best to have leadership. They are at the forefront because it brings elements of complete trust into the whole matter. But definitely when things eases up, I think PR should then take over when it's less technical, when it's less sensitive. I think it's okay for PR to always take the lead, but there are instances when you need the leader. For example, if it's a country level there are instances when you need the President to be the voice and not the Statistician General or the Head of PR.

Files\\Pt 011_transcript.vtt

No		0.2001	4			
				1	C.S	15/11/2021 09:14

Pt 011: There are three levels of preparations that needs to take place within organizations, be it at government, or private sector organizations. So first and foremost, the best way to prepare for a crisis is obviously to try and ensure that you're doing business ethically and all that, but the best way to prepare for a crisis is to train your staff around your brand enthuse and your reputation excellence and on what is it that as an organization use them for your promise to deliver and the like. Secondly, you need to have a crisis preparation document or a specifically a crisis communications document. This is one that will have roles and responsibility for individuals in the event of a crisis and will have anticipated crises incidents. Number three, from an executive perspective or spokesperson perspective extensive training regarding public speaking guiding media engagement and the like. So where you haven't designated spokesperson that spokesperson has to be well trained. This has to happen prior to the crisis, obviously where you do have a spokesperson. Similarly, they should always be frequently trained around crises. Lastly, as an underlining perspective, there is need for staff to be refreshed within the organization or around the brand as frequently as maybe yearly or every other year.

				2	C.S	15/11/2021 09:15

Pt 011: When a crisis starts, the first thing is to do a dip-stick investigation and to consider the 5w's of communication and journalism: What does that mean, Where did it take place, who's impacted or Why they are impacted and then how it happened. So I believe that for you then engage, principle applies to a crisis because then if you are able to answer majority of the W questions and you have a holistic view or comprehensive view, you can start your first level of response of the crises.You can then develop or try addressing the cause of the crises and doing the media or data collection.

	3	C.S	15/11/2021 09:15

Pt 011: So organizations are different. Obviously, depending on what their principle or guidance is, or what is it that they do. Commercial organizations and quasi-government organizations have chief executives or some sort of accountable person or officer. Those are always the first principal individuals, because there are purely on an accountability basis. Those are the people who upon being contacted, they give us a stance on a crisis, actually stating the position of the organization. I think it applies both even in government because similar structures exist within. So if they have a deputy those are also the second in line to ensure that they train. Thirdly, because not all organizations have spokespersons, you also have to cascade. Definitely, the spokesperson, has to be the project manager around the crises, even if they're not only the communicator.

Aggregate	Classification	Coverage	Number Of Coding References	Reference Number	Coded By Initials	Modified On
				4	C.S	15/11/2021 09:16

CS: Let's now go into the issue of messaging. To what extent do you believe organizations should develop messages ahead of the crisis, or when it is in progress?

Pt 011: To a very high degree I believe that organizations have to first and foremost, have a policy that speaks to crisis depending on the size of the organization. It'll also determine the size of the policy. Now within that, the organizations then can hone in within from a communications perspective. Once that has been done they can then preempt first and foremost crisis issue. The worst case scenario in a crisis is to lose people's money if you are government, a breach of national security. There needs to be periodic stress testing of the crisis preparedness. That's my perspective.

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			1	C.S	15/11/2021 09:30

Pt 012: I think in our space, the first thing that you need to do is work ahead of the crisis. What are the existing processes or policies? The crisis policy does it exist? Is everyone who needs to be in the crisis team aware of the policy? If you identified your crisis team, if you identify your spokesperson who will speak on behalf of the company. One of the things that we usually as practitioners make a mistake is when there's a crisis, then you have various peoples, somehow end up having a disconnect of the information. That's when we lose the control of the crisis or managing the current crisis. So the

work really starts when there's no crisis. Have the policy in place; have the crisis team in place; train the crisis team in terms of what they need to do; identify who's responsible for what; and what channels we are going to use if there's a crisis and also if there's a crisis room that is needed. If it's a fatality or let's say a fire that affects the building, what are the things that can be used to manage the crisis. Always sort of dry-run the crisis team periodically. So I think a lot of us as practitioners, we sort of have a policy gathering dust because there is usually no crisis. In our cases it happens that we start to try to memorize and remember it and then that's when you make mistakes.

So once, the crisis happens obviously because we don't do dry runs periodically, everybody will know what needs to be done. You don't need to just call your Exco asking for it to be in a crisis team, and then 10 minutes or one hour later, you think you've left your legal guy and risk person behind because now you're sort of being reactionary. So obviously when that crisis happens, yes, they have to determine what happened, which is the initial assessment. If it's on site it's easier to do the initial assessment. But if it's offsides, let's just give an example of the crisis happening and you are in a holiday. Does that work for a company? If there's a derailment of the train, the assessment needs to be on site. So you obviously know the crisis team and who can be on site to help with assessment. Who can quickly beyond on site to help with assessment to collect the data because in a crisis effects come first. If you try to hide the fact they're going to come out, so acknowledge. If you are not in control of the assessment, the public is in control of that assessment. They are sharing videos of whatever has happened with the incident live, so when they do that that means they're in control of the narrative or that assessment of the crisis and obviously post that to then notify your crisis team. During a crisis there is a crisis log, whether you're doing a media you're calling the media on site or you're doing a press release or you're doing social media on your own pages. It is then key to prepare the spokesperson. Who needs to say what? Then there is monitoring and media, whatever will come later after the crisis. So those are the processes that I have in place.

| | | | | 2 | C.S | 15/11/2021 09:31 |

Aggregate	Classification	Coverage	Number Of Coding References	Reference Number	Coded By Initials	Modified On
				3	C.S	15/11/2021 09:35

Pt 012: I think it's the fundamental simple things that they teach us in crisis communication in school is that you should speak now. Speak the truth; Speak fast. Just those basic things like the truth, the facts and be available to communicate because like I said in a crisis you'll sit in a crisis team and all the facts would be decided. They will say, let's let's give them 50% of the facts so that we are not held liable for the problem. Eventually information comes out because as an organization you've experience or know what has happened. That bond to have a chat with someone is sometimes even the worst. If you don't go to the media, by the end of the day, staff will have a chat with the friends. They will say this and this happened today at work. The media will come to the organisation for the facts which the organisation should have given out. You don't wish the crisis away because even a month later, it'll still be as bad in terms of reputation if you dont share information. What i've learned is the leadership within organizations needs to be more trusting and seeking counsel and advice from communication specialists or PR practitioners. They should also have the best interest of the company, at heart. That could go a long way because sometimes it look like the crisis now is about leadership. A PR person is called

when things have gone bad and you're asked to come and fix it. What are they expected to fix when they have not been in the forefront of the decision-making of how to respond to the crisis.

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			1	C.S	15/11/2021 09:46

Pt 013: Although you might anticipate what will actually happen, but when you have a crisis plan at hand it will help guide you when the time comes. I believe the best way to deal with it is just to have a team that will be able to handle such things. Someone will be able to know who to call at times of crisis, know what to do. Leadership of your organization should be more visible. You should have a relationship with the media because they would want to know whats going on. So, there should be someone who will be able to inform them in a proper manner. It is very useful to avoid speculations like I said before. So it helps to have that person who's going to be able to find out what's going on and then share information. That's really necessary to avoid speculation. I think it also helps with business continuity processes because it is a business that needs to continue so that the public gets help. The spokesperson depends on the market magnitude of the crisis. If it's really burning issues you need to have your CEO or your Minister or the PS to show the resonance of the situation and to also show accountability. But if things aren't

really that bad, you can have your focal person as the head of public relations.

			2	C.S	15/11/2021 09:47

Pt 013: Okay, the best thing to do is to be open and honest. This is sometimes that's not really easy. Organisations don't usually tell the truth as it is, but telling the truth and being honest is very important. It shows that you can be trusted. It shows that you have an open door policy with your clients.

			3	C.S	15/11/2021 09:47

Pt 013: Like I said before you should always have a crisis plan in place. I think, behind closed doors maybe a little meeting before sharing a statement is important. or something. There should always be that contact person to share messages.

Aggregate	Classification	Coverage	Number Of Coding References	Reference Number	Coded By Initials	Modified On

Files\\Pt 014_transcript.vtt

No	0.1523	3	

				1	C.S	15/11/2021 09:56

Pt 014: First and foremost, every five years we develop a communication strategy. The one that we're still using right now is for 2017-2022. So we are in the process of reviewing the communication strategy. We don't want to wait for 2022 and then start doing that. We want to get to a point where by 2022 we have the strategy for 2022-2027. Every year you pick a chunk of the strategy, and then you come up with a communication plan. In the case of the current crisis (Covid-19), we came up with a communication plan which was relevant to the crisis so that everything that we're doing because we're not going to have activities where we had lots and lots of people coming in, and because we're not going to be traveling since there was a travel ban, we're not going to be able to meet face to face with people that we were interviewing. We came up with a strategy to say Okay, we definitely would love to have a situation where we use as much online presence as possible and in one of the ways in which we provide information to our customers is through our TV show which is called [name of programme]. We ensure that we provided information to our customers through this programme on a government radio station.

				2	C.S	15/11/2021 09:57

CS: Did you do any risk assessment of the types of crisis that are likely to affect the organization?

Pt 014: Of course. That is what is involved. You first and foremost need to find out your strategy should be informed by what you anticipate for the next five years. Right now, one of the big issues that we're looking into post Covid is on conference or an international event for the country to host. One of the biggest event is that we anticipate to host is the [name of games] and we have put that into our communication strategy for 2022-2027 because we want to prepare for any eventualities. We need to have a strategy that's going to be relevant to the [name of games]. We need to have hotels, we need to work hand in hand with various ministries, and we need to put that in the communication strategy to say we're going to be working with the Ministry of tourism; and we're going to be working with the Ministry of Trade; we're gonna be working with the Ministry of Health; the Ministry of Gender and immigration because a lot of people will be coming; we're going to be working very closely with the Ministry of international cooperation. All these ministries need to be part of the organising committee. You should then have a crisis management plan.

				3	C.S	15/11/2021 09:58

Pt 014: What I have observed and what we do is volunteer information. You can never over-communicate, though some people sometimes feel we can't over-communicate. Rather give people as much information as possible so that what happens afterwards if crisis does arise, other people would be able to say here is a press release. They told people that [name of programme] has been extended by another month. This is something that works if you do it right. So the first thing that you need to do is to volunteer as much information as possible about your organization, about your services, about your programs. Second if you can have frequently asked questions, +you should share them with your team so that the team would be able to answer certain questions which people may frequently ask. This is hozw we ensure all of us are on

the same page. If it does happen that the head of communications is the one who only has that information, then it becomes a problem when, God forbid, a crisis strikes while you are on a trip with the Minister, but if you are there to address that situation and if your team Members are not aware of the relevant things to say about a certain crisis then the organization is in trouble.

Aggregate	Classification	Coverage	Number Of Coding References	Reference Number	Coded By Initials	Modified On

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496

No	0.1156	2

	1	C.S	15/11/2021 10:07

Pt 015: You should always have a crisis management plan in place. This is a document that will basically describe the process that your organization or your institution should go through to respond to a critical situation that could affect your profitability, your reputation, your ability to operate. So you need to always have a crisis management plan in place to ensure that you try and reduce the damage that a crisis can do to an organization. I must say, if I may give you an example with current institution they didnt have a crisis management plan and the management gave me an opportunity to come up with a crisis management plan. I also made sure hat we came up with a crisis management team that involves the accounting officer because when you've got a crisis in an institution, you need to have the leadership on board. This will make sure that when there is a crisis, this is how we are going to manage it and within that team we specifically deliberately made sure that we

specified a spokesperson. You cannot have all the people respond. You should have one person who basically can be able to respond to issues when there is a crisis. Not only that we also made sure that we share the plan with the whole management team.

	2	C.S	15/11/2021 10:15

Pt 015: I have observed that in Botswana, most organisations do not have crisis management plans. We deal with crisis as it comes. It is very important for us to have a plan. Most organisations do not learn from the previous crisis to make sure that they put a crisis management plan in place. Also to say in terms of crisis management, organizations should not shy away from using social media. it is a powerful tool. it looks like we wait first without using social media, especially in government.

Files\\Pt 016_transcript.vtt

No	0.1516	4

	1	C.S	15/11/2021 10:24

Pt 016: Well, there's five things that you need to be able to do as a PR practitioner and internally, you need to have a plan. You need to have a strategy that involves a policy and everyone should sign it. In that policy you discuss everything that as an employee you need to know about in terms of what the company regards as a crisis. Secondly, a business in itself internally, you have to have communication tools like noticeboards. You got to have social media for your employees. You got to have an internal communications strategy. You may have videos to disseminate information on your internal tvs. For instance, at the mine, we had 6000 employees and most of them could not read and write. We introduced internal TV channel where in every area of the mine we had TV sets to cater for the 6000 employees to listen to the messages. The message had to be very, very clear to employees.

Pt 016: At the same time, we had to prioritize our risks. So we had a risk assessment from internal communication on what employees regarded as a risk and what they will not regard as a risk in terms of internal communication.

	2	C.S	15/11/2021 10:27

Whenever there's a crisis we make sure that we need all the key stakeholders to come to a common ground so that we can be able to weigh the risks and be able to channel our messages to different target audiences and that has really worked for us. During crisis, the custodian of the brand, the spokesperson, is the managing director or the general manager.

Aggregate	Classification	Coverage	Number Of Coding References	Reference Number	Coded By Initials	Modified On
				3	C.S	15/11/2021 10:30

Pt 016: Again i'll refer to the policy. The policy clearly defines what and how you need to communicate internally or externally.

| | | | | 4 | C.S | 15/11/2021 10:30 |

Pt 016: What i realized when I enter into some of these organizations, including where i'm currently working right now is that there's never a policy. If only organisations had policies, then it would be easier to manage crisis.

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No		0.1641	3			
				1	C.S	15/11/2021 10:34

Pt 017: Yes, you need a strategy. That is the starting point: the how you will manage this crisis. We need a crisis management strategy. You've got to really communicate to what the problem is and what you are doing to ease the problem. If you can't it means you don't know what you're doing. You need to communicate so that people realize that you are looking into how you are going to address this. As part of the crisis management strategy, you need to have a team and know who communicates what, who takes up after that and to do what. So it is very important to have a strategy. But the strategy should be anchored on a very clear strategy. There should be clear communication because most of the time, the classes becomes even wider and much more serious because people look for answers and they tell themselves what makes

sense to them at that time. So that's when the crisis gets out of hand.

| | | | | 2 | C.S | 15/11/2021 10:35 |

CS: What are some of the best practices of communicating when there is a crisis?

Pt 017: Most of the time, we do have steps like that. It may not really make sense from one culture to the other. For instance, where I am right now in Botswana we have shortage of covid vaccines and shortage of oxygen and shortage of hospital beds. We need to have a medical personnel who really is the first person to break the news to say we have a crisis, anticipate this. We are with you, we are scared, but we are doing 1,2,3,4,5 so that will remain safe. It should be the most senior person. Once he has stipulated that we do have a spoke and do not have oxygen. As soon as we start receiving vaccines, then the roll out will start. I do trust in our case, the case of Covid 19 was handled by the Minister of Health and Wellness, the task force and the President. In our case it is always the highest office in the country or a university or an organization is the one who started laying down what is going to be done, how it is going to be done. This is done so that people are convinced that

this is taken seriously, even from the most high office.

| | | | | 3 | C.S | 15/11/2021 10:40 |

CS: Any last thing?

Pt 017: As a matter of fact we should develop crisis communication strategies. Whatever they call them; road map for me. I am not happy with how we managed covid. We adopted methods that almost killed all of us. It is because we did not have a sound communication model, sound crisis communication model, roadmap whatever you call it.We excelled in

Aggregate	Classification	Coverage	Number Of Coding References	Reference Number	Coded By Initials	Modified On
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Pt 018: The first thing would be a crisis communication plan. You need to have a plan in place to know how to handle the crisis at that time. What you need to know is when the crisis happens, who is going to talk to the people. That chain of command is very important to the people. People want to see stability during the crisis. They want assurance that we have the situation under control. The CEO could be the spokesperson. As much as he is accountable to the board, he is also accountable to the ministry and he's also accountable to the staff and people know him.

| | | | | 2 | C.S | 15/11/2021 10:43 |

Pt 018: You need to make sure that you acknowledge the crisis. You cannot say we don't have a crisis, when we can all see that there is a crisis. So there's a level of responsibility, of honesty that you need to give to people so that they know that you see that what they see is also being addressing and you are attending to it. But honestly, of course, it will vary on how much information you divulge, but you need to give people a somewhat honest response. We cannot be in a crisis and people are quiet. They're not acknowledging what is happening. They are blind to it because then it makes us feel like we are living in two different worlds.

| | | | | 3 | C.S | 15/11/2021 10:43 |

Pt 018: When the class starts, a plan is important because it speaks to how you will respond. You will introduce the media releases to say this is the situation that we're facing. But the important thing is really to be out and about, to be in front and center so that people are not breaking news. You are going out there and saying this is our situation. You dont want things to get out of control. But when your organization is quiet and silent on an issue that affects you, things get out of control.

| | | | | 4 | C.S | 15/11/2021 10:47 |

CS: Any last thing?

Pt 018: I wish organizations will see the need to somewhat give the public a sense of transparency. Most organisations here like denying the truth and shifting blame. There is too much secrecy and little accountability. Organisations should not just deny facts as its currently the case.

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				1	C.S	15/11/2021 10:50

Pt 019: We cannot afford to be reactive. We need to be very proactive and very deliberate about what we want to do. We protect the brand, the integrity of the organization by doing things that matter to us as an organization on a daily basis. The little things that we don't do on a daily basis, the little mistake that we take for granted, the little complaints that come in and we shove them under the carpet, day by day, they lead to a crisis. So crisis, as you say doesn't just come on expected. There are few instances where a crisis would just hit you an hour. So most of the time really, crisis has been precipitated by a number of things that you don't do or things that you do. The first thing that we need to prioritise is to have the crisis management system in place. Let's have all the system that we have in place; our strategy in place. Let's have our media engagement in place and make sure that we follow this. Once we laps on any one of these, or key areas we are inviting crisis without us knowing. One day it will come unannounced.

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				2	C.S	15/11/2021 10:50

Pt 019: Your crisis management strategy would talk to what you do on a daily basis in case of any eventualities; how you engage your customers and talk to them. Crisis is very expensive. It takes away all your effort. Instead of using them on what matters to the organization, you spend efforts on the negative attention which is a bad place for any organisation. So we have all these crisis management policies and programs.

| | | | | 3 | C.S | 15/11/2021 10:51 |

Pt 019: We should talk about crisis management committees. They should be established, and they should be working in times of peace. It is very important not to try and assemble a committee when when you already dealing with a problem. Otherwise they wont even know what they ought to be doing. Ahead of the crisis, auditing processes should be conducted. This will save you and you'd have relief for the most part. Other than that, most of the time you are going to be trying to fight hard to stop the water that broke out from the dam. It is a very difficult exercise. So it's very important that we have particularly this crisis committees very active on a daily basis. When I did it, it seemed like a routine but it's very it's very helpful. The spokesperson is very important. Have two seniors singing from the same script. We are talking about your branding and organization and it is important that organizations avoid miss messaging. This is critical in the building of our brand, in the building of integrity. So you cant have organization with too many flanks, too many mouths speaking. So it is very important that you have a defined, determined and

possibly one spokesperson who will talk to a consistent message. It's very important that the message become consistent. It is not because we want to concentrate power in an individual or in an office. It is for purposes of having consistency of message because conflicting messages leads to confusion, leads to a lack of trust on the organization. One spokesperson talking one message building one brand. Consistency is critical.

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Pt 020: I think what is key is ensuring, first of all, that there is a crisis communication framework in place and a policy in place. It will then assist in ensuring that the plan is well executed. We had to determine who the spokesperson is going to be in the organization and on behalf of management. We had to engage on a very strong and robust proactive damage control process. This is to say that it's quite important to understand how the damage control is going to take place or how crisis communication is going to work and also determine that there is a crisis case escalation process. We had to deal with the following questions: how are you going to work around the issue? How are you going to handle it at what level and what intervals? Are you willing to handle the escalation? I think, another key thing is understanding the kind of media response and community engagement strategies or tactics that you bring to put in place and then after ensuring that there is a very robust and strong customer feedback or stakeholder engagement feedback and analysis. So it is those elements that assist in ensuring that there is a very robust strong process of communication or Crisis Management Plan which is a detailed plan. It is also important to highlight at least at the very first instance and the purpose of the plan and why.

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We also ensured that there is a very strong communication or other message for compassion during crisis. This is a crisis that would have impacted the organization and its stakeholders in a negative manner. We also had to look for a very strong message for the protection of the organization. Quite key also was the change management strategy of the crisis management plan that would include your internal communication processes and procedures. We had a very big and grounded guidelines and checklist that helped us to inform the process management plan that we engaged. In the checklist, we had to ensure we have the media to inform after informing the Board of Directors. Above that we then ensured that there is business continuity beyond the crisis that has transpired.

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Pt 020: I always approach a lot of my professional communication with the five W's: who, what, when, how. I think when I look at crisis management exercises what is key for me is that we need to establish a number of things. We need to identify what has happened? What has transpired? We need to strategize and we need to develop the channel of communication and then we also need to ensure that our research and analysis is very robust. I think that's what I believe is quite key in crisis management. I think, maybe, if I may add to that maybe even to analyze the list itself from an internal perspective and also ensure that there's a very strong activation protocol. The activation protocol is to say, what then is going to take place, the chain of command and then you need to also create a command Center. I mean i'm very proud to say it's a similar message in [name of organisation]. We had a very strong command Center. A command Center for crisis management and then also ensure that there is a response action plan in place. There is a very robust internal communication and external communication and ensure that resource mobilization is done, parallel to the elements that are put in place where they need training. You need to ensure that you develop a training plan or a training process of a certain magnitude. You have to also ensure that there's a very high level overview. This is behind the scenes to ensure that there's a team, that keeps on reviewing where the crisis is evolving.

| | | | | 4 | C.S | 15/11/2021 11:04 |

CS: Any last thing?

Pt 020: I'm a little worried because had the government probably put in place a strategy a lot of things would change during the covid pandemic. It is quite key that we ensure that in our crisis management, we do a lot of evaluation and assessment. We also need to ensure that we validate the impact of the different crises that we have experienced. My last

Codes\\Best practices\Golden first hour

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Files\\Pt 001_ Transcript

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			1	C.S	10/11/2021 09:28

CS: Okay, thank you very much, the other questions that I want to ask you is that when crisis breaks there is this notion that the first hour is golden, meaning that organizations should share information within the very first hour after the crisis has broken. What is your view on this notion?

Pt 001: I support this notion of effectively managing the crisis.

		2	C.S	10/11/2021 09:29

So messaging... messaging... messaging... is critical when you are handling the crisis during this golden hour or the of the first hour of the crisis. So usually you know, this is a time where you need to showcase your skills, you know to those affected by the crisis, you know, usually starts with the employees, you know their families if it affects the employees, you know. But, most importantly, the concerned stakeholders and members of the media, those ones, do not even forget them during the process yeah.

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The media called call log document where Communications department normally state who calledfrom the media, you know, so that at the end of the day when the document or a press release, that should be addressed within the first, the golden hour, you know you know where to go and then internal and external communication checklists

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			1	C.S	10/11/2021 10:00

Pt 002: That's correct indeed because there's this saying that silence means consent. You know, the crisis when it comes around and You leave people to speculate, lies if repeated tend to presume the position of the truth or facts. So you need to be proactive in terms of... this is why you have to have that plan in place and the simulation exercise, so that you are always ready and not waste time when there is crisis. You communicate immediately;

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			1	C.S	10/11/2021 10:35

CS: Thank you. When crisis breaks, there is the notion that the first hour is golden. What is your view on this notion?

Pt 003: Exactly um, thank you for that question I think it's quite critical as you put it, and I do tend to subscribe to that motion especially in today's world when information is real time you say something, and two seconds later it's all over the world through social media platforms and others. Sometimes it's very challenging for the organization, especially if you look at the approval process. Thats why in communication policies, We do try to empower the head of communication, but normally how it works in Botswana, and especially in my organization, is that anything that goes out has to get an approval from the executive office and usually thats where delays are. Once you delay information gets out. Negative information travels way faster than positive information. Thats the challenge that we really a lot of times find ourselves in, where we would respond within the first 30 minutes, or even an hour, but then we can't take out the information before it's scrutinized by the executives then they'll give it a thumbs up. Sometimes it even has to go to to the ministry and to the ministry level. There was an issue in a couple of weeks back

where one of the local newspapers journalists sent a questionnaire asking about the dissolution of the [name of organisation] board. It came as a surprise to us because we're not really told that the board had been dissolved. The Minister did that, but I believe the executives knew. So what we did is we engaged the executive to discuss how we're going to respond. They wanted to know a lot of things about in terms of how the corporation would operate without a board and who's going to move for the appointing authority and so forth. We did that, but then we hit another stumbling block because we had to pass that information on to the ministry, so that it was approved accordingly. It took us two to three days and eventually when we got back to the reporter, and the first thing they did they took pictures of the Board from our website and just had a big headline saying '[NAME OF ORGANISATION] BOARD DISSOLVED.' Imagine how that was received by the public and that particular weekend they had the headline and the story out, including our commentary on there on the whole issue. So it's very critical and and for companies and corporates to ensure that they capitalize on that first hour, because it can make or break anyone. Unfortunately the challenges that i've just highlighted where they're just too many approval processes that you have to follow for information to go out especially in this era where there is a lot of information leakage and you need to manage that very well. I believe with a solid communication function, you can still try as much as possible to proactively disseminate information timeously.

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				2	C.S	10/11/2021 10:36

Pt 003: We try as much as possible to express to the executives in the ministry that it is critical that we share this information as early as possible. Even though when you work with government it takes time. At least with management is within our control to try and manage the situation where we would encourage them to do the approvals, but sometimes we find ourselves in a tight where as as communicators we can make a decision, especially when you determined the issue sensitivity of the issue, we can make a decision to say this is what we can provide to the media for now without necessarily compromising the reputation of the organization. Those are the instances where we don't necessarily go through the process, because we know it will delay the whole process. But it depends on the severity of the issue.The issue that I talked about before concerning the board, the Board is approved by the Ministry that's why we had to go that route. But if its an internal issues that we are well aware of, we can make a decision as a department to see what we're going to share with the media without compromising the reputation of the organization. We are constantly engaging with the parties to try and stress the point that information is power. Information needs to be shared timeously. We are living in the era of digitization where, if you don't share, and someone does, your reputation might be damaged in seconds. So we really need to up our game in terms of responding especially to news items because news is really time time bound. Newspapers work on a deadlines as well.

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Pt 004: It will be something that I am currently also faced with. Like i'm saying, our preparation means, for instance, it's easy to say Oh, we need to communicate, but how are you communicating via the templates? Can you have the messaging ready and approved? That part of the processes or part of the policies is also around timelines. What is the turnaround time for you to have communicated to your staff and your customers? You may find that for somebody else within the next hour, they have very important business that needs to happen, it impacts on how you communicate. If you are well prepared, you've got your templates, you got your message in the right time, it has already been pre approved, then within the first 30 minutes you should be able to start communicating.

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			1	C.S	11/11/2021 09:30

Pt 005: Yes I would want to believe that is is practical in a crisis. But you would find that with our organizations it is not normally easy to communicate within that first hour or to reach out to to the people within that first hour. I am not the head of the organisation. Firstly, there has to be consultation with the executives of an organization. The executive is not usually easier for me to reach as a communications person. I could easily get hold of the chief executive and we plan within a second. In my organisation, we have two arms of leadership. We have the administrative leadership and we have the political leadership. Sometimes it takes the whole day to meet my chief executive, who then has to communicate with the political leadership, before anything could happen, especially in relation to address in the crisis. So it takes a bit of some time for a decision to be made as to exactly what should be done if if there is a crisis that needs to be attended to. Its quiet a challenge in that regard. Sometimes we try to communicate and the media would have already reported about the issue and people having formed perceptions.

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Files\\Pt 006_transcript.vtt

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				1	C.S	11/11/2021 09:52

Pt 006: I when it started, I think it would be correct to say that within an hour after that special board meeting and concluded that we moved very quickly to issue notice of shareholders of the meeting. Because we were worried that if we didn't, the board might issue its own notice to stop a scheduled general meeting so immediately that meeting ended we dispatched the notice of the annual general meeting to the stock exchange, because we are required as the company that is registered with stock exchange, we are not listed, yet our shares are registered in a secondary in the local bourse. So we are required to communicate to our stakeholders through the stock exchange, so, which is what we did immediately. After the conclusion of that meeting, I can confirm that we're able to move very quickly within the hour of that meeting, ending to issue communication, and then thereafter once we had issued communication, of course, the former directors were not pleased, then the drama

started escalating from then on.

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				1	C.S	11/11/2021 10:23

CS: There is a notion that the first hour is golden when a crisis starts. Whats your view on this?

Pt 007: Yes, the correct answer is that it is not practical especially when working for the government organization. What happens is that before I make any important announcement, I should have the sanction of the Permanent Secretary. What this means is that I need to have the Permanent Secretary understand the position i'm trying to communicate and agree to it and own it up. In terms of government, the way it works is that the chief spokesperson is the Permanent Secretary who is the CEO of the Ministry. As the head of public relations or communications department, I do so on behalf of the Permanent Secretary and whatever I do it should have the sanction of the Permanent Secretary, except for the cases where we are dealing with information previously communicated. This media House may ask you something about some certain

subject matter and then two-three days later, another media house asks you the same question. In that case, I need not make reference to the Permanent Secretary, because it would have been discussed. It is not very possible to move with speed in a lot of cases especially in these years where the social media platform allows for immediate response or immediate announcements of certain things that happen. But government being government has processes that have to be followed because, even if I have spoken to the Permanent Secretary, the Permanent Secretary may still need to also consult his superiors, in this case, the office of the President. Therefore, sometimes it may take a little more hours than perhaps if we were not a government organization.

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Files\\Pt 008_transcript.vtt						
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				1	C.S	11/11/2021 10:39

Pt 008: Well, in the past, some issues need more detailed. It's not possible in the first hour. You can be quick to divulge information, or make a press release, or address the media quicker, but you also need to give yourself enough time to address some of those issues, and also somewhat preempt what could be lying behind that first issue within that first hour, yes, you can go ahead and tell the media that this is the situation. I also think you need to leave some element or leeway to be able to build a better case because I know as a crisis happens certain things unravel, and it becomes layer after layer after layer. You need to be able to have all the cards on the table, to be able to address those issues. Fine, in the traditional communications nowadays, you know that too many channels and too many holes and too many leakages, to communicate within that hour, yes, you may have communicated. In the world we live in, with fake media, internal leakages and all of that, how do you cover yourself, but you need to give yourself time. Within the first hour only so much can be investigated and discovered, and within that hour you can't try and assume that by just having that one communication, you will have covered it all. I think it takes in-depth knowledge of the scenario before you go in and try and cover your bases or your tracks. You need to give yourself time to understand your situation before you can respond. But, in saying that i'm not saying when you give yourself time or by time let's say maybe you buy time. You can keep your media at hand, if you do take too long, it also opens an area or a gap or opportunity for them to think that you're really building something that isn't there so it also opens up doubt where people are going to say what these guys are building something that isn't there or they're trying to cover their tracks. You need to be smart enough or you need to be well equipped enough to know that you've got this amount of time and respond within a very good amount of time back to your key media personnel, because if you leave people doubting they can form their own assumptions. Then you're going to have to work harder to try and uncover those different assumptions from people because nowadays everybody's got an opinion.

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Pt 009: It is practical particularly if you have a crisis management plan in place because it's a matter of the crisis has happened and what is the information around that crisis. So if the plan dictates that whenever there is a crisis, you bring together the crisis committee, they know their duties. So it's not a matter of I can't communicate that because I don't have the information. The moment you inform the crisis Committee, the information gathering stats, collecting all the facts, all the details, give them to the spokesperson. So I believe that within an hour you should be able to communicate a crisis effectively

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Pt 010: I totally agree with that notion. That first hour or the first few hours. It is very, very important because if an organization does not act accordingly, does not act in the right way towards addressing the crisis during that those first few hours, then you find that a crisis can get out of hand because if it's things that are being said then anybody can say whatever they want to say and your brand can be tarnished in any way. So you need to act quickly if you dont, then people will hear any other voice, but as out bay. So you dont even need to have like your messaging or your crisis communication messaging intact or solid at that point in time. But it's that contact that you should make with your public that can turn things around or stabilize things. Keep things afloat, while you sort things out behind the scenes to solve the crisis. So definitely yes, if you're quiet and you're not handling your crisis communication, within the first few hours of the crisis breaking, things can definitely get out of control. You have your stakeholders and whatever you want to say, you'll have your media partners ready because anything will go haywire, unless you drive things in the direction that you want them to go. So definitely and without a plan if you don't have your crisis communication plan in place and you don't know what the best thing to do is, you're not going to be able to use it effectively. So being prepared is everything.

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Pt 010: It wasn't in the first hour, but it was quick enough. Its always a challenge to go out so quick even in the private sector.

Pt 010: When our with been sweating specials I was out definitely always a challenge actually that's a challenge in most most places even in even in private sector. But for me, because I believe that whatever contacts you make with your

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You don't actually know what's going to happen and how it's going to happen, but you can only plan. So your plan should guide in terms of what to say, what to do. What you finally say will be dependent on how things have happened. But definitely having those structured and prepared messages, prepared scenarios etc will save you a lot of time and help you to react or act in that golden hour.

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Pt 011: I think it depends on the level of crises. When its a life and death situation, organizations need to be seen to be alive or brands have to be seen to be alive to that situation. Though yes, definitely I agree with the sentiment that it is that first hour or the first notice in the first 24 hours are totally critical. But I also hold the perspective that there are instances where you need to allow a crisis to develop so that you are able to actually provide the best possible feedback or possible address for that crisis. The worst case scenario is to respond to crisis when you don't have the full information.

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Files\\Pt 012_transcript.vtt

No		0.0620	1			
				1	C.S	15/11/2021 09:33

Pt 012: It is practical. It will be practical for companies that are running globally or their global outlets know that if they did not react, the crisis may become bad. IN Botswana, if you get our government to do that, it will take time because the government is the biggest entity in this country. The second thing is that we sort of still have a conservative culture of consultation. I've worked for three to four parastatals that tells us that you might have the CEO, but if crisis happens then you cannot speak until they get hold of the PS or the Minister. So you're not gonna be able to respond in an hour if you still need to go and sort of engage your other superiors right in the government level. So there's a lot of crisis in terms of how we are structured. So, in that way, it sort of also makes that one hour window good in paper and not practical in our setup. I mean we followed the Covid crisis. The worst thing about Covid crisis is that we were seeing how other countries were responding and us sitting there. The ordinary person were like where's our response and then you get it a few weeks later when it's too late or giving it when things are already bad.

Files\\Pt 013_transcript.vtt

No		0.0395	1			
				1	C.S	15/11/2021 09:46

CS: There is the notion that when crisis breaks out, the first hour is golden. What is your take on this matter?

Pt 013: These days, I feel that it is practical with the use of social media because people always have their phones on to check breaking news. So I think the first hour is really important, it's very critical because if it is not handled from the beginning, then I think all control can be lost. It's very critical for everything to be impactful and information is appropriately shared.

Aggregate	Classification	Coverage	Number Of Coding References	Reference Number	Coded By Initials	Modified On

Files\\Pt 014_transcript.vtt

No		0.0971	1			
				1	C.S	15/11/2021 09:57

CS: There is a notion that when crisis breaks the first hour is golden. What is your take on this, is it practical in government?

Pt 014: First and foremost, you don't forget that as a government employee. I will have to wait for approvals from the Permanent Secretary, the minister. I work for the Government of the Republic of Botswana and there is protocol. First and foremost, I need to know the levels at which I can comment on an issue or I can leave it to the government spokesperson; or when PS can comment on an issue or when the Minister can talk; or when the President of the Republic of Botswana can speak on the issue. So you need to be aware of all these levels of communication so you do not flout your PR processes. Even if you flouted them, are you flouting those because you talked within the golden hour? We all know that within an hour you're supposed to have addressed all the crisis issues that arose. But the issue is if it's a big issue that involves the main overnment, the minister has to be involved. You cannot just handle it alone. We craft a response. Its taken to PS, who then shares it with the

Minister to see if that is what government would want the people to know. When the Minister is not too sure about that then he or she can take it up with the boss, the President to say we are going to say 1,2,3 about this athlete who said 1,2,3 about government. Would you want us to proceed, or is this something that you want to handle at that level. Within that time you may realize that maybe it happens on a Wednesday here in Botswana its a Cabinet day. So the Cabinet meeting will be from eight o'clock to midday. Their phones are kept off. You don't have access to the Minister. You don't have access to the President, but the crisis is happening. So you sort of like wait and hope and pray that the crisis does not reach levels where you cannot do anything. It does frustrates a lot of people, especially those who would be coming from the private sector where the person that you need to talk to is the head of communications or whatever and then they talk to the CEO and the next thing you have a response. In government there are steps that needs to be taken before a press release is issued to the public, and all that because you're not only dealing with the administrative issues, but the political leadership.

Aggregate	Classification	Coverage	Number Of Coding References	Reference Number	Coded By Initials	Modified On
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				1	C.S	15/11/2021 10:09

CS: Thank you very much. There is the notion that when crisis breaks, the first hour is golden. What is your take on this?

Pt 015: Well, that is the golden rule for crisis. That is very important. I agree with it because if you do not share information within an hour other sources particularly the media will share the information that will damage your institution in such a way that by the time you release information there are a lot of discussions and a lot of people have already received information. Let's say that with this golden rule, why is it that the first hour is important, you are trying to also manage perceptions. People can perceive a lot of things with whatever situation that you may have led. For example, we had a crisis when people leaked a report for tertiary education before it became official. With us, any report must be tabled before parliament for it to become official. That's when it becomes a public document. So, in our case, the report was leaked before it was tabled. So we needed to respond and the way we respond was that we told the public

that this is not an official document because it has not been before Parliament. I must say, we received a lot of positive feedback from the public. It also gave us an opportunity to do a little bit of public education to inform the public that if the report is to come out as a public document there are steps that a report will go through. The minister has to sign it off. It then has to be taken to Parliament, then it becomes a public document. So we took advantage of the crisis to do that.

Pt 015: We responded within the hour. Remember, I said we set up a crisis management plan. My view is that had we not set the crisis management plan and even have the crisis management team in place, we would have taken a very long time. By the time we responded, we could have had a media storm. Crisis management team really helped us a lot and we made sure that we responded within an hour. When we realize that there's been a leakage what we did was the team called a meeting and the press release was a little lighter. We shared it with the media right away. I must say with our system, the way it is working in Botswana is that we have the leeway of using the government media within that hour to make sure that we release that information to say there's been this leakage.

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CS: When crisis breaks, there is this notion that the first hour is golden. What is your view on this? Was it practical for you?

Pt 016: Look, I think it all depended on the size of the business, and it is true. But, obviously, as I said before, once you have a plan and a strategy in place and the first hour should be golden. Every hour should be golden. It is different in sub Saharan Africa because quite a number of people that are involved internally because quite a few harness the power of information technology which is very easy because of the click of a button. But sometimes you find yourself as a PR practitioner knowing that most of your audiences cannot read and write. These are your allies and when you know this awareness about your employees and audiences then every hour becomes golden.

Aggregate	Classification	Coverage	Number Of Coding References	Reference Number	Coded By Initials	Modified On

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CS: When crisis breaks, there is a notion that the first hour is golden. What is you take on this? Is it practical for you?

Pt 017: It is very practical. A typical example is what happened here at [name of institution]. My first few years, there was a crisis because we were just starting a new [name of department], and the [stakeholders] were outside of campus. So they felt like they're not part of the institution. When they started complaining we took it to the powers that be at that time. It is very very important for either myself as the director of communication or the head of the organization to go out there and acknowledge that, yes, we have remodeled our institution and all the resources that are required to assist

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CS: When crisis breaks there is that notion that the first hour is golden. What is your view on this?

Pt 018: I think it is practical in our case because when a crisis hits and everybody panics, what we need to see is a sense of somebody who comes in and says 'it's okay. This is the situation. We have a pipe burst or finally oil is everywhere it's filling but we were attending to this. We have contractors working day and night to make sure they stop that spill. We have technical people working on it. They are saying to us within two-three days they will have the situation under control. If it's fine we'll tell you. During a crisis leadership should be responsive. They know this is happening, and they are attending to it. They have measures in place to make sure that they contain whatever is happening and, in future, this is how that would prevent that from happening again.

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CS: Thank you very much. When crisis breaks, there is a notion that the first hour is golden. Is it practical in your case?

Pt 019: Yeah it is. It is practical. But I think the question that you are proposing is that is it been done? It's not. Atleast I have been on the other side where I worked as a journalist. I used to look at the PR practitioners and their organization and wonder what kind of policies they employ. I used to wonder whether they are proactive or they're just reacting when crisis hit. The best policy is that you must own up and share information. Be as open and transparent as you can be. But most of the time you find that we want to conceal facts. I think we do that to save our skin as employees sometimes and helping the organization. But most of the time you will find that this doesn't help the organization to respond through transparency in a timely fashion. When a crisis hits don't delay. An hour is very expensive. It's a deal breaker and it could lead to the collapse of the whole organization. So it's very important that we are transparent. It is very important that we are timely. We should be very upfront about what we said. Thats when we can gain the support and the confidence of the people that we serve.

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CS: When crisis breaks there is this notion that the first hour is golden. From the crisis that you experienced was this practical and what's your view on this?

Pt 020: Well, with me, I think the first hour was regarded as platinum and I think it is very key in actual fact. It is a defining moment. Where you're able to create enough time to appreciate what needs to be done and how, the action is going to unfold. But its different between organizations. For [name of company] it was difficult to communicate within the first hour, I mean with everybody else, but within, our key stakeholders were informed and engaged, to ensure that they are aware that there's a crisis that is currently taking place and for them not to be alarmed, and that we are working around the clock to ensure that we identify potential risk and we identify potential opportunities within the crisis itself.

Pt 020: Its not only in government where its difficult to communicate within the first hour. There are two or three determining factor, and one being if you've got a very strong business continuity plan and the other being a very strong strategy and risk management plan. It makes it quite easy to communicate certain issues, especially in the health sector. Communication is key to everything. So within an hour what I can confirm is that a lot of the key stakeholders were communicated to. Remember that this golden time is really to inform stakeholders about the crisis, it is not to say we unpacked the whole crisis. The idea is to inform and say there is a crisis that is taking place and we are managing the risk of the crisis from falling or getting out of control. So I would definitely say within the hour, a lot of the information around or surrounding the person had been communicated.

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Codes\\Best practices\Response process

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We are fortunate that in our last organizational transformation, we incorporated risk as one of those critical factors in our business to try and manage a crisis situation better. It sort of gauge risks, especially if you look into my area of work, reputational risk, especially where you see stuff in the media about your organization. Normally when there's stuff in the media, it means the media has sniffed or has caught attention of something about yourself somewhere. Normally what would happen is that they would contact you immediately if not some would even go ahead and write without even

getting the first right of response. So the way we deal with it, is that we, like I did explain earlier, we have a risk model that we follow at the beginning of every financial year. We sit as the organization; different departments sit and identify a top risks that might affect the organization, and we also discuss interventions in case that happens. We discuss interventions, as to how we will deal with different risks, or rather how we would work towards reducing the impact. The model that we use is quite elaborate in terms of gauging risks. We use even colours; your ambers and your greens to highlight the intensity of the risks, so that we always have our eye on it pretty sure that nothing really happens. We use that model and every month we have to issue reports in terms of how we are performing according to that model.

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Sometimes it even has to go to to the ministry and to the ministry level. There was an issue in a couple of weeks back where one of the local newspapers journalists sent a questionnaire asking about the dissolution of the [name of organisation] board. It came as a surprise to us

because we're not really told that the board had been dissolved. The Minister did that, but I believe the executives knew. So what we did is we engaged the executive to discuss how we're going to respond. They wanted to know a lot of things about in terms of how the corporation would operate without a board and who's going to move for the appointing authority and so forth. We did that, but then we hit another stumbling block because we had to pass that information on to the ministry, so that it was approved accordingly. It took us two to three days and eventually when we got back to the reporter, and the first thing they did they took pictures of the Board from our website and just had a big headline saying '[NAME OF ORGANISATION] BOARD DISSOLVED.' Imagine how that was received by the public and that particular weekend they had the headline and the story out, including our commentary on there on the whole issue. So it's very critical and and for companies and corporates to ensure that they capitalize on that first hour, because it can make or break anyone. Unfortunately the challenges that i've just highlighted where they're just too many approval processes that you have to follow for information to go out especially in this era where there is a lot of information leakage and you need to manage that very well. I believe with a solid communication function, you can still try as much as possible to proactively disseminate information timeously.

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Pt 003: We try as much as possible to express to the executives in the ministry that it is critical that we share this information as early as possible. Even though when you work with government it takes time. At least with management is within our control to try and manage the situation where we would encourage them to do the approvals, but sometimes we find ourselves in a tight where as as communicators we can make a decision, especially when you determined the issue sensitivity of the issue, we can make a decision to say this is what we can provide to the media for now without necessarily compromising the reputation of the organization. Those are the instances where we don't necessarily go through the process, because we know it will delay the whole process. But it depends on the severity of the issue. The issue that I talked about before concerning the board, the Board is approved by the Ministry that's why we had to go that route. But if its an internal issues that we are well aware of, we can make a decision as a department to see what we're going to share with the media without compromising the reputation of the organization. We are constantly engaging with the parties to try and stress the point that information is power. Information needs to be shared timeously. We are living

in the era of digitization where, if you don't share, and someone does, your reputation might be damaged in seconds. So we really need to up our game in terms of responding especially to news items because news is really time time bound. Newspapers work on a deadlines as well.

| | | 4 | | C.S | 10/11/2021 10:52 |

When we can talk about issues of youth housing, the majority of people who ask questions are either youth. We make sure that we structure questions that specifically address their needs. If it's any other group we also try and vary communication and make sure that it is relevant to them. So it depends on the type of your demographics. We carried out a survey just to gauge the level of perception amongst the public, in terms of our products and services. There was a recommendation later that we need to come up with communication that is focused because the youth is a very important stakeholder to us. It's so unfortunate that the products only came out or the decision to start building for the scheme at very late stage. All is not lost because we have future plans to address issues of this important stakeholder. They tend to be very probing in their approach in terms of asking questions they demand answers immediately when they ask questions and stuff like that. So, we always find ourselves having to check in most of the time and ensure that we share information on a regular basis so that we don't end up agitating this particular group.

| | | 5 | | C.S | 10/11/2021 10:56 |

Pt 003: This notion of opinion leaders is valid. IN Botswana whenever a crisis falls, you always look up to the leadership and that's the same model that we believe. If you talk to somebody of the ministers position it's usually easy to get audience with the newspapers radio stations, essentially journalists, because they tend to be believable depending on the issue at hand. It's a matter of setting the tone. Normally the ministers are politicians, a lot of people don't believe in politicians, they make promises and there are only problem later or. We normally use the minister in instances where we want them to set the tone, so that we can build from what they say as decision makers, especially when you talk about parastatals.

| | | 6 | | C.S | 10/11/2021 10:57 |

Pt 003: To some extent in the sense that he crystallized some of the information that we want to share. He answered the difficult questions the public and the media were asking. On whether it helped to re-build legitimacy and trust, we can only know after we maybe run another set of perception survey to determine if indeed that helped. Rebuilding trust takes a very long time to and normally depends on a lot of variables, including doing things right, being ethical and all of that. The fact that we know that politicians lie all the time sometimes it takes time. It's not like the minister get on with you and talk and people believe it right there. It takes time. People are going to scrutinize how you do things. Overtime that's when you can tell whether you re-built trust or you've lost it completely. So it really also depends on the business activities.

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				1	C.S	11/11/2021 09:31

CS: What are some of your best practices that you can share about communicating when crisis has broken?

Pt 005: First, we communicate internally with the stuff. They have to know that we are experiencing a crisis and these are the steps that we would take to work out the crisis. Before the staff is informed, we meet with the executive management to inform them of the crisis, then they make a decision. The decision will then be communicated to the political leadership. The political leadership will also advise accordingly and then the crisis will be communicated to staff. The staff will be made aware of the crisis and the steps that the organisation is going to take. concern is going to take, and then

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		1	C.S	11/11/2021 09:48

Pt 006: Well, we didn't think it would blow up in the manner that it did. We have a situation where the old board convened a special board, meeting specifically to discuss director elections at the annual general meeting. And when they instructed management to stop the AGM. First of all, they were told that they did not have the authority to stop the shareholders when the post is structured management to remove the issue of elections from the agenda. There will also advise that they did not have the Legal standing to do so, because it is a meeting of shareholders, it is not a meeting of Directors. Shareholders are owners of the business so when they persisted And there was no other option but to proceed to court to stop them. By proceeding to court, they effectively putting our dirty laundry to public scrutiny, which is what happened and when neither party was prepared to back down, that is the old Board and the management team, then you had an all out crisis unfolding for a period of a month, leading to the annual general meeting and even have a general meeting itself, which the old board had tried to stop the from going ahead, but fortunately around 7am management had gone to court and obtained an Ex parte order to ensure that the annual general meeting did not stop. So the fact that the old board did not have the order meant that the meeting proceeded with the items in the agenda. We dealt with it as per the expectations of the shareholders.

		2	C.S	11/11/2021 09:57

You have to react to contain any follow ups that might that might come out of that of the elements which you not have wanted to to to put out at that time, of course, you also have to be aware that, in a crisis.

Pt 006: You, that is, this is where you are dealing with advisors that also know the bank. You have to be a let to watch that doing and be able to respond appropriately and it has also been helpful in my experience. To have access to to media practitioners journalists. And to know the strengths of journalists in the various media house. If I need to deploy a message with the heavy financial messaging during a crisis, and I wanted simplified. I have to know which journalists to go. Some of them will sympathize with your cause and some of them will sympathize with the other parties. There's a temptation when is the realization that oh sure that [name of journalist] seems to be sympathetic to our foes to try and then deny you access to information which doesn't help. So my approach is always to treat all journalists equitably, even the ones which I know are not necessarily sympathetic to our cause at a particular time.

Pt 006: With monitoring, what I normally do is to have an individual who just sits there and watch everything that is flowing either on social media. Crisis we are dealing with more in the past, because now, you have a multiplicity of media

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And it is interesting dealing with a crisis because not only do you have to engage with your various stakeholders internally and externally. You have a media practitioners wanting to do interviews every other minute. They also have regulatory bodies wanting to be engaged, sometimes in person, instead of over the phone or via statement. Now if you're dealing with a central bank, and those are generally very conservative people

throughout the world, I think, central bankers are. They would want to set a team and go into the organization to come and understand what is going on. So you find yourself that you're stressed right across the spectrum. So the overall message is to remain calm. I'm not sure, besides tracked by emotions because it's not personally at the end of the day. I mean if you personalize it and you're going to lose the plot because you're then going to refuse to speak to certain people which might have your back because they will then have their own perceptions, because they don't have your side of the story. So it's important to remain calm and to be decisive in your actions, if you have to release a statement or make a statement you do so quickly.

| | | | | 4 | C.S | 11/11/2021 10:04 |

Pt 006: Basically it is also critical I think in when you're dealing with a crisis to do sort of a risk or that situation, because by doing so you are able to see where there are weaknesses, where there are strengths, where there are opportunities and whether threats will then inform you in terms of crafting appropriate messaging and controlling it. By finding the critical core four points in the process, a weaknesses can be reduced or completely moved. What I also like doing and is to look for worst case scenarios for the crisis and also plan for them, and have mitigating practices or interventions for worst case numbers in case things really grow further south. Yes, when you manage a crisis it's important to have a very active mind as to what might happen. You just cannot confine yourself to what is evolving at a particular point in time. You want to think about the worst case scenarios and how you can deal with those and the other critical thing. It is important, during a crisis, from an internal comms point of view to equip your stuff with the right information because when they are out there, people will be asking them what is going on, and they should be able to respond with the same messaging in various circumstances. You also want to do help them look out for whats happening, you have a crisis you'll say look don't just sit back if you see a particular thing happening, don't sit back. Let me know, let's talk to the communications and marketing or PR department as quickly as possible.

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				1	C.S	11/11/2021 10:22

Pt 007: Firstly, we relay information to the public and the media proactively, unsolicited and out of our own volition. We volunteer information to them by consistently issuing press releases or media advisories on anything that we want to communicate. For instance, when vaccines are arriving or when we're expecting some certain number of vaccines, we announce unprovoked to the public or media to say we are going to receive this amount and then after arrival also announced when the rollout is going to start. In my view, doing so actually helps build a certain reputation of government or a government organization that takes itself seriously. That also shows we take our audience seriously, being members of the public, being the media, the critical stakeholders. That way, is that we also respond to all the inquiries, without exception. Its without exception, regardless of how controversial the inquiry is; we always give our response. So in my view this is most of the time in positive light, and to also regard us as people who can be trusted. So I believe those two, as some of the ways in which we help keep our reputation intact, especially in relation to the information we give out and the responses we give when requested to do so.

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No		0.0337	1			
				1	C.S	15/11/2021 09:15

Pt 011: When a crisis starts, the first thing is to do a dip-stick investigation and to consider the 5w's of communication and journalism: What does that mean, Where did it take place, who's impacted or Why they are impacted and then how it happened. So I believe that for you then engage, principle applies to a crisis because then if you are able to answer majority of the W questions and you have a holistic view or comprehensive view, you can start your first level of response of the crises. You can then develop or try addressing the cause of the crises and doing the media or data collection.

Codes\\Corporate Social Responsibility

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No		0.0287	1			
				1	C.S	10/11/2021 09:53

Pt 001: As if you were reading my mind. I was going to touch on that. This morning, during a meeting we touched on crisis communication to say that crisis communications plays a critical role, you know of managing the reputation. Normally, its for organisations that are profit oriented, but even for those that are service oriented it plays a critical role in the sense that the CSI or CSR program that we have in place should be able to drive the brand, and be a platform where you are able to celebrate your achievements. So what link it to this, you know it's actually a good platform, you know, because in our cases as [name of organisation] we have a robust Corporate Social Responsibility program in place. This is where I get to hide my brand and also celebrate achievements that you've had in place, you know the threats emanating from the crisis. This is the time we should be able to show the Community what you are capable of doing, because at the end of the day, whatever crisis happens when it comes in goodwill from the corporate social responsibility, it is always welcome. So we can really capitalize on our CSR to mend broken relationships or the image or to maintain using your CSR interventions.

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Pt 002: Yeah, it is very critical, because if you assume that you are a global citizen, that is, if you practice that you become a global citizen that you care about Your stakeholders, you care about the environment. Whenever there is a crisis, these practices are the ones that will make it easy for you to reach out. Even the stakeholders will come out and speak for you. The public opinion there is already positive. Social responsibility is very critical.

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CS: I see! So, in other words you agree with the notion that it is an insurance premium of some kind for organizations.

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				1	C.S	10/11/2021 10:54

CS: I see. The next question is on the role of social responsibility during crisis. Is it very effective in protecting the reputation of organizations in Botswana?

Pt 003: To some extent it is, but in our set-up in Botswana, I believe, a lot of people tend to believe that CSR is more like a duty. You are a serving the public; because you are taking money from us, and you should give something in return. I find it very, very critical, for organizations to have a proper CSR strategy, so that the public understand understands why even engage in CSR activities. But for some especially here what I found out is it's more like what society expects from you as a corporate citizen that you should always give back because you're taking our money, you're selling houses you're taking

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People always tend to remember that you are a good corporate citizen; whenever they had issues you came in and responded much quicker. It just depends on the strategy that you follow. That's why it is important to always not necessarily shout from the rooftops that you are helping communities out there, but it should be visible. It should be impactful so that people are able to speak for you. You don't just put up billboards and tell them how you've helped communities with groceries or built houses, for them, it should be impactful. So, that's what's effective, especially when you deal with issues of crisis.

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A lot of organizations can make sure that it works for them in times of need. As a company, you really need to do your business responsibility.

You shouldn't really rely on the fact that you take care of communities it'll come up for your other negative stuff. You

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Pt 005: Our social corporate responsibility is embedded in our mission as an organisation. We have a social and community development department that specifically deals with taking care of the needy and the underprivileged children and individuals. So we have that social welfare unit within our social and community development department. Corporate social responsibility is very important to the organization because you would basically be giving back to the Community that you serve. It also create that positive image about the organisation.

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No		0.0287	1			
				1	C.S	11/11/2021 10:19

Pt 006: In my experience CSI what it does, how to cast an organization in a positive light and the day you have a crisis, I can assure you, no one is going to say ah let's be soft on them because he built a library for a school in a remote part of the country. Even the ones who benefited from your generosity from a CSI point of view are interested in the crisis. I don't think there's any benefits from CSI during a crisis.

Pt 006: Remember, there was a strike in which led to over 300 people being dismissed from the mining company. I was at the mine at the time. That mine was huge on CSI. When that industrial action took place, the then managing director decided to go hard on the miners to a point where over 300 miners were were dismissed at the time. I personally from my experience don't think that pre crisis CSI activities help to buy you goodwill during a crisis. Post a crisis, you can engage in CSI activities for people to remember that this is a company with his soul, which cares about them, we care about people. But in events that you have a crisis, people will not be interested in the CSI things. It's place is in building the brand of an organization; in empowering the public and disadvantaged communities, etc. But I don't think it will solve your problems when you have a crisis.

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				1	C.S	11/11/2021 10:33

CS: Thank you. What role does social corporate responsibility play for organisations in crisis?

Pt 007: I believe it provides an opportunity for the organization to meet with most of the public or the Community within which it does its business. They get to meet in a more relaxed manner environment and then they truly understand each

other in more relaxed atmosphere. Even the society would also have something to point at, that this organization which is doing businesses in our area, has contributed to our growth and development as a Community.

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Aggregate	Classification	Coverage	Number Of Coding References	Reference Number	Coded By Initials	Modified On
No		0.0640	1			
				1	C.S	11/11/2021 10:48

Pt 008: This one is something that I actually look closely into when it is CSI. CSI, for me, I believe, is goodwill. But today's CSI needs to be sustainable. Today's CSI needs to be empowering. I believe in this thing of community relations in terms of CSI, it can be the corporate giant giving a certain amount of money, you need to see that there's an actual corporate social investment with a lot of involvement. If you want your organization to be to be involved in that community to adopt the Community or to empower our Community or to employ a community to do better and be self sustainable or something that you can find, you build good relations. So shouldcrisis come about you're going to get a lot of people sympathizing and empathizing and saying but let's not forget what these people have been doing for this Community.

Pt 008: It should not be manipulative and sneaky. There must be a commitment to a certain Community in terms of relations in terms of empowering them in terms of capacitating them. It should be an element of you genuinely wanting to build communities through your organization. It's an investment within your community, so that when it comes that you are in a crisis you're going to get people who will say no, but hold on these people have been genuinely helping out in different areas. CSI must not be an afterthought because there is a crisis.

Pt 008: Like I said, one of the strategies is where there is messages of hope or messaging of saying no we will do better or acknowledging that yes, we are at fault in a certain situation and will do better, but CSI needs to be honest. It cannot be disingenuous, and it can't be your scapegoat. It can be an insurance and must be honest and genuine. CSI should also be aligned to your corporate strategy.

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Aggregate	Classification	Coverage	Number Of Coding References	Reference Number	Coded By Initials	Modified On
No		0.0276	1			
				1	C.S	11/11/2021 10:56

Pt 009: Generally, people like associating with organizations that do some corporate social responsibility. It is in bad taste to say it doesn't really matter because we do so much good. That will be in bad taste. Let the remembrance of your good deeds be the one that would guide people on how they judge you on crisis. You don't have to stick it out there. If it's good deed and it's consistent that's why with Corporate Social Responsibility it's important to have a media strategy around it.

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No		0.0419	2			

Pt 010: I think it helps. After a crisis or during a crisis it shouldn't look staged. It shouldn't look like it's not authentic. It is very important, it doesn't look like you're buying or paying off. This is why it's important for the culture or culture of CSR to be part and parcel of an organization. Will it look believable if it's only done because you found yourself in trouble?

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				2	C.S	11/11/2021 11:05

Pt 010: I think so. Any communication around that can can really helpful during a crisis. When you're communicating, you throw it back to the all the good things that you've done. You tell them i've been reputable, i've done this. I can be trusted because i've been trusted before, and getting back to this particular problem because i've always been a good person, this is how I will fix it. Definitely CSR in the past can help.

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Pt 011: I believe so. That's goodwill. It goes a long way. However, it is really important to caution that it is not a panacea of

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Pt 012: It goes back to a question of goodwill that we spoke about earlier or reputation. So any organization it's like you're a persona. So, through your social responsibility, you then have a persona that you care, especially when you have specific communities that we work with, social organizations that have zones of influence in terms of communities. Let's say you work with communities and qualified that you sort of go beyond. Their livelihoods must be improved, you should support them on agriculture, you support them to create jobs. If your crisis happens I think those people will sympathize more because you cared as an organization. There would be sympathetic in a crisis, they would not be too hard.

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Pt 013: If a company has all along been socially responsible for the community they become sympathetic to you when there is a problem because they have some sort of relationship with that organization. They believe that the organization is really faithful.

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Pt 014: It's always good when organizations do corporate social responsibility because you're giving back to the Community that is accessing or doing uptake of your programs. You get the opportunity to interact with a lot of those people who are willing to again give you more insight into what and how they want to be serviced. We've got to remember you're not just doing stuff for them. You are doing stuff with them and it's important for you to ensure that you keep constant communication and content interaction with the people so that you are aware of what changes they want to see in your programming or what changes they want to see in your project in your product.

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Pt 015: CSR is very important in an organization and I must say it is important to understand why we undertake it. If we feel the need to contribute to the society that we operate within, then that is a bit of charity and it is good. Let me give an example of the recent CSR that we undertook. Our branch in Francistown adopted a school in a remote area. When the pandemic started, we contributed some money and we bought some masks for them. Their CSR was a strategic initiative that can basically contribute to our brand reputation.

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Pt 016: In all the five organizations I worked for, I have an experience with corporate social responsibility or corporate social investments. We had it in those organizations. We used it to build trust. Building trust is the main reason why corporate social responsibility or investment is done. Some organisations do it to become good citizen. For example, governmnet has a problem of unemployment and private companies can donate computers to youth to help them in

business. You dont wait for the government to do it, but you do what the government is supposed to do. For example, at the mine we planted oranges and used water from the mine to water the farm. We donated these oranges to schools. It helped to build trust with stakeholders, both internally and externally.

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				1	C.S	15/11/2021 10:39

CS: What role does CSI play for organizations in crisis in your context?

Pt 017: It can work to attract sympathy and it shows that you care and sympathize with people. It should not be used to

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CS: What is your understanding of the role of corporate social responsibility for organizations in crisis in Botswana?

Pt 018: The issue of corporate social responsibility is a very delicate one because organizations use it for the wrong intentions. They are using it to profile themselves. They want to sort of give themselves a good image and a good reputation, yet they have employees that have issues that they are not even attending to. If you use it to sort of create a good reputation it misses the mark. Your employees actually are literally your ambassadors. They will share the word

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Pt 019: I think all organization come up with a social responsibility not to use it as a buffer during crisis. Organization should use social responsibility for what it is meant for. It should not be used as a carrot. You invest in the community because you are showing your connection to that Community. You are investing is associated investment in that Community. You are not buying that community. We are not even trying to carry favor with them but we are only showing that you are a good citizen. So any organization that will say I hope they remember us if we get into a crisis. They should remember that we built houses for them, we built a community Hall, we put some portable water for them. That would be a sad day and that is not what social responsibility should be used for. It should be used with all good intention to basically just to show your affinity to the Community that you serve. That we are privileged to be benefiting from this Community. So in our case, its not for it to be used as a carrot or a stick.

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CS: Thank you very much. The last question is on the role corporate social responsibility for organisation in crisis in Botswana. Is it helpful?

Pt 020: I cannot say i'm entirely sure with this one. But maybe I can ask myself a few questions before I even answer: whether CSR would communicates some form of image to bring a level of brand equity for the organization. I'm a little worried when we talk about crisis because crises and you respond to it with CSR depending on what organization it is may bring a competitive advantage. But at the same time, it may impact the organization socially and the impact tmay be determined by the magnitude of the crisis.

Pt 020: I think then we may say CSR is an agent of change of perception and, therefore, it assists to purchase some positive perception. In relation to that change of perception, if practice before the crisis, it can help to attract some kind of business continuity, or something, but not sympathy. I think CSR in its nature is really an opportunity to respond to an already existing need in relation to the organisation's strategic objective or strategic intent.

Pt 020: We are in anticipation of a crisis, and therefore we find Corporate Social Responsibility activity or Corporate Social Responsibility projects as an opportunity to prepay for a coping mechanism and with the crisis. I think there's a level of anticipation, coping and we will use the CSR as an opportunity to power up. I want to say that we should use crisis management strategy so as to impact a Community cognitive action and also a behavioral action from those that we are targeting. Therefore, maybe building some form of resilience.

Codes\\Culture\Audience diverse culture

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Files\\Pt 001_ Transcript

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You had to communicate with them face to face to manage the crisis. Thats what you are saying?

Pt 001: Yes, yes. Yeah because these are the students that i've been dealing with them, you know, through the fair, so they knew, you know my persona. They knew who I was, and it was quite easy, you know. I just calmed them down, you know, used to my parental skills to say that I hear you my children. Listen to each other let's try to understand each other. We are here to solve a problem you know. We know that you cannot be walking all way from [name of college] to here if there was no challenge. So with those negotiation skills and interpersonal skills we were able to resolve this one,

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Pt 001: hmm um I think that one...on the culture, first it boils back to the culture of the organization. If the organization has an open door policy or has an open up culture where every staff member gets to know what is happening at every now and then, then it could also help. Same thing, when the organization is poor at managing internal communication, they are likely to be...

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So this is the time for reconnecting with your stakeholders, so through culture, you know you should be able to achieve some of the challenges that you have had.

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You communicate to the relevant stakeholders, especially say in case the cultural aspects should be taken into consideration; say for in case you have lost an employee during the course of delivery on his or her a duty...you have to take cultural aspect on how you go about telling people. Nowadays in the advent of social media, the government is always cautioning people that we don't rush to the social media, you have to engage the parents and relatives first.

			2	C.S	10/11/2021 10:01

Pt 002: You know, the crisis come in different forms, but you have to be prepared; you have to understand the culture of the society that you operate in; how to communicate in that set up.

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Pt 002: Language is indeed critical tool during crisis communication. Communication during a crisis should take into account cultural dynamics and language fit in those dynamics

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Pt 002: Like we pointed a while ago that currently we are more of a traditional. So people have been announcing accidents, putting accidents happening into social media space, announcing there before relatives or families can be informed. And the government has been coming forth to say that is not acceptable. And even Botswana, in general, have condemned the practice. So it might be more so, also because of the kind of society that we live in and also because of lack of policies to guide in that space and lack of resources dedicated to that space also.

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Do you think messages that are produced in the United States would find the relevance, or acceptance to audiences in Botswana because of the different cultures?

Pt 002: If it's a one size fit all kind of a message, that wont work, but if it's in such a way that the teams in the localities out there, are able to send synthesize the message to localize it, that will work. This is what we have to do as a practitioners, to ensure that even though we have got this cut across messages, as it comes to our locality, we understand the culture, we should make the message resonate well with the traditions and the cultures of the locality.

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CS: So what is the role of culture, when developing crisis messages for Facebook.

Pt: 003: We have different cultures in Botswana. Unfortunately we are going through very challenging times. We have different sections in the population and it's widely believed that social media, especially the audience is much more younger in terms of age. This is a very sensitive stakeholder. When we craft messages we are alive to a lot of issues and especially the fact that, when we respond, we are not only responding to the youth. It might be other people who are not necessarily young. So we make sure that we can consider a lot of factors.

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Pt 004: I think the number one case as well, over and above the fact that we need to have these in place, we also need to be mindful of the historic nuances, that's the tradition because you will find that culture also play a part because we will find that. Our customs dictate that when organisations want to talk to the elderly or senior citizens, we approach their Member of Parliament or the Minister. For those in rural setups we can talk to the chief.

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CS: The next question is to what extent do you consider the culture of the people when you prepare a message during a crisis?

Pt 005: Yes, i consider the culture of all the people and it is very important. It's very important on how you are going to package your message to the people. For example, you cannot package a message for people living in an urban area like people in remote areas. It's quite different. The culture of the people in remote areas is different to how you are dealing with a cosmopolitan kind of community that needs a certain level of communication. The people in rural areas would not normally be more educated than the people in the urban area.

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Files\\Pt 006_transcript.vtt						
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Pt 006: Let me start from a broad perspective. I think generally in Botswana, crisis management is still very new. Botswana is also a very conservative society and you find that inevitably, of course, those that have organizations are products of our society and they themselves are conservative. Now that presents a very big problem when it comes to managing a crisis because it's a problem for people to say ah unless we say there is something wrong, no one is going to find out so let's keep quiet. I mean i've experienced it with a number of colleagues who then say we don't want to draw attention to ourselves. By saying 1234 and now only say to them look even if you hide under a rock someone is going to so and so is under that rock. You cannot hide this thing forever because someone in the organization is going to tell someone out there and you will wake up to find yourself on the front page of the newspaper. So my approach is always to be frank with the public within reason.

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Pt 006: I think that's an idea and Botswana is still a very conservative society. We believe in the good of humanity in the sense that, if there is a crisis in an organization, you are often astounded to hear colleagues, some colleagues say you know these are people, they will understand. They will not come down hard on us, they are people we live with them, our sisters and brothers so there'll be sympathetic, which is a folly, in my view. So that culture is a huge problem for PR

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practitioners, especially PR practitioners, who know what they're doing because when a crisis hits and you tell colleagues 'look, this is going to be a huge problem, we need to move now we need to be proactive and manage this', you'll find that you also have to fight this other conservative force who say no let's just like oh let's keep our heads below the carpet. We don't think people will find out, and when people do find out, they come running to you.

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Pt 006: There are diverse cultures. It is important to realize that, in terms of demographics. The biggest cohort is young people, people who are still fairly young. The older generation constitutes a comparatively smaller population, and that is the group which would ordinarily want to bury its head in the sand and hope that the problem will go away so in an organization, it is critical to realize that group is in the minority. Most of them would not be economically active and therefore generally positive about things that are going on in society. Even if there's a crisis, some of them would not even know that there is a mess out there. But the young people who constitutes the population which is, which is a young cohort is the one which you have to be particularly aware of, and you have to develop messaging with an understanding of how they think and how they will react, including the fact that they're looking to buy everything in anything you say they question. The older cohort may not be interested in what is going on, but, of course, you also have to make sure that you have messaging which is appropriate for that which will largely be factual information. This is happening, this is why it is happening, this is how we're dealing with it, and we are hoping that we would have resolved it by this time. We'll give you an update as and when. In between those factual point, as you are dealing with events, skeptical cohorts questioning all these. You have to react to that cohort with a quick message.

Pt 006: One of the things I realized as well during a crisis is apart from the various age cohorts, you're also going to have certain stakeholders who will tell you that you know what we don't want. We don't like this noise that is happening in your organization and you have to explain to them that look, we also don't like what is happening, but we have to react to it.

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CS: To what extent do you consider culture when developing messaging?

Pt 007: We do consider culture. We become sensitive to the different cultures that exists in our audience and therefore when we craft messages; whatever communication we ensure that it is culturally balanced, it does not appear to be casting aspersions on one culture or the other. So we tend to adopt a neutral stance and deliberately so.

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I think in Botswana, being a country that, I don't want to say reserved, but not much happens, other than organizations,

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Pt 008: There's a certain culture or there's a certain way of doing things or there's a certain belief system that a certain particular group of people will have. There is this belief in Botswana that Batswana forget quickly. There's that culture and it influences how organisations respond during crisis. Some organisations may be passive in responding because of this culture. You can craft messages and communicate cultural point of view. I think if you go against it people now will start saying that this is not something that's normal to me why are they doing this, why are they communicating this. Your messaging and your response strategy needs to be well communicated to that culture. To understand the little nuances, you need to understand these little innuendos that you know if you said something it could be misconstrued into something else, or if I put it in that particular format, it is going to not read well to certain people because you're working with people who are conservative. Now, with all these different platforms, we can say that we're becoming a lot more liberal in what we're saying because there's no fear for consequences.

Our digital networks, and our social media, rules and regulations, they allow a lot of people to say what they want, when they want and how the want it. As a corporate you need to be smart enough in understanding the culture and the processes of the people you serve.

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Pt 009: Definitely you need to know your audience. Remember when I spoke about your brand persona. You are more or less part of them. So if you're part of them, you understand their culture. So it's very, very important when you craft your messages to know the type of culture you're dealing with. Even language is part of culture, how do I speak to these people. During certain times like the Covid-19 era, you need to really come with messages, bearing in mind the culture of the audience.

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Pt 010: Absolutely, in craft communication messages culture has to be a consideration. The way that you communicate the way that you phrase your messaging has to be acceptable within your context. So yes, absolutely cultures are contextual awareness of your environments. What can be seen, acts as acceptable or unacceptable and it is very

important. Yes, crafting and delivering of the messaging in a crisis is absolutely a consideration. When we're talking about culture we're not just talking about norms and practice within society but we're also looking at norms and practices within the organization.

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The second thing is that we sort of still have a conservative culture of consultation. I've worked for three to four parastatals that tells us that you might have the CEO, but if crisis happens then you cannot speak until they get hold of the PS or the Minister. So you're not gonna be able to respond in an hour if you still need to go and sort of engage your other superiors right in the government level. So there's a lot of crisis in terms of how we are structured.

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CS: You spoke of the conservative culture among audiences. To what extent do you consider culture when developing message?

Pt 012: In theory we should be able to consider them, but in practice it becomes very difficult especially for Botswana where we have many cultures.

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CS: Let's talk about culture. Do you consider diverse cultures when developing crisis messages?

Pt 013: We do. I believe it's very important because if you're looking to get the most out of it you need to know we are communicating and how you need to communicate with them to get the most out of them.

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CS: Thank you very much. To what extent do you consider culture when developing messages?

Pt 014: We cannot turn away from that. There are certain thing we have to look at the many faces of our client. I talked about sports both professional and recreational. I talked about culture, cultural practitioners both visual and performing artist. I talked about young people who are not a homogeneous group. Among young people you have your gays and lesbians, you have young in music, you have our young people in business, you have young people who have many faces. We may fall into the trap of trying to look at our customers as a homogeneous group. So messaging is very important for the various people who are served by the different organizations.

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Pt 014: Let me just say unfortunately Batswana are a nation that forgets quickly. Issue would be a crisis today and tomorrow they have forgotten and moved past it. When a small story comes up online, they run with it and forget the crisis. So it becomes very easy for organizations or even ministries to denied in most cases. You start wondering and doubting if the crisis happened because now the government is denied or this organization is saying they are not stealing money from your bank accounts or whatever it is. You end up thinking that maybe there's something wrong with your interpretation of certain things and you really didn't understand, which makes it very easy for government PR practitioners to get away with matters. In most cases they rely on the cultural practices of our people were in most cases they don't care about certain things if they don't affect them. We are a country that makes it look like people are being done a favour. Most PR practitioners will rely on that and they will manipulate people into believing everything they say.

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Pt 014: Like I said, these people are using or are taking advantage of the type of people in Botswana who are not really willing to interrogate things that matter. Let me give you an example of what happened in South Africa. There was an incident of a famous gay celebrity who was abusing his husband. When people who said the celebrity was an abuser, the radio station he was working for suspended him. Big brands that were working with him also suspended him. They said until he sorts out his problems. In Botswana, it would have been business as usual. No suspensions, and no one caring. What I am saying is that our organizations don't see anything wrong with not communicating.

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Look and there's different audiences and there's a lot of cultural factors involved. We should make sure that we are more proactive and not reactive. We wouldn't wait for the crisis to happen then we act. We always had our ducks in a row.

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Pt 016: Culture is an influencer. Africa has thousands of cultures and coming from Botswana, we take pride in our fabric of society that puts us together. We are one of the African countries that are able to manage crisis better because of what our forefathers did in terms of the kgotla system. I mentioned the kgotla system because everybody in that platform is free to speak their minds. That in itself sets the tone in terms of a crisis. Its the best platform for people-stakeholder relationship management. So the importance of stakeholder management is that it is able to influence a crisis in terms of keeping it and in terms of creating a common understanding.

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CS: You mentioned that messaging differs from one culture to the other. To what extent do you consider cultural in developing crisis messages?

Pt 017: Yes, culture is considered to touch on the diverse culture of the people. Culture prescribes your understanding and where you are situated in that is culture. For example, when government wants to roll out Covid vaccines, we didn't even know that there's a disease called Covid 19. Messages on how to conduct yourself during this pandemic will be imported from outside the country and will then be adapted to our different cultures for different people across the country to understand. Culture plays a very important and part of how we do things. There are some cultures that when you use the scare tactics, they will be really scared and conform to everything you tell them. But in my culture here in Botswana, if you use scare tactics, they will be not be scared. If you tell them Covid is from bats, they will tell you we dont eat bats here. In China it wil be easier to control the pandemic, but in Botswana it will take people some time to understand. We know about malaria. When we get malaria outbreak, we don't get scared. We know it will be managed. Culture defines who we are, it speaks about addressing our understanding.

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			1	C.S	15/11/2021 10:44

CS: To what extent do you consider culture when developing messages for your various audiences?

Pt 018: Culture definitely plays a larger and bigger part because we have different cultures in Botswana. Batswana are very humble people. They do not like arrogance, as it were. They like humble people. When you communicate with Batswana, you should always choose the right words to make sure that you're not offensive, inconsiderate or very arrogant. That can really turn them off. They want to see the human side of what you're doing as an organization.

Pt 018: In our society, media plays a large role in communicating. You find that a lot of people in the urban areas in the

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Pt 019: Yes, culture characterizes your context. So you can't work outside your context. You can't afford to be generic. When you enter this specifically culture would force you to choose certain platforms over others because you are operating within that social space. Otherwise, if you like, something that is used elsewhere and a message imported into Botswana doesn't work. Who misses out? You! You may fail to attract customers and clients. You may fail to be heard as an organization because you chose a different platform, or you chose a culturally inappropriate messages or culturally appropriate platform. So culture can be very decisive in most instances where you could go outside it and still survive. But in most instances, culture cannot be ignored. As Batswana, we believe in honest. Secondly, we believe in being inclusive and consultation. That's a key part of our culture. You can't collaborate without consultation. So you are bound to fail just because there's no consultation there's no collaboration. If a PR person in his packaging of a message decides to exclude honesty and consultation, chances are that whatever programs, you are proposing may not succeed.

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CS: Do you ever consider culture when developing crisis messages?

Pt 020: It is very important because there's a lot of dynamism. This dynamism is really bad expectations, and it is a cultural empowerment. More than anything, it has been a different kind of cultural identity. When we craft messages, we look at different perceptions. We look at different enablers and different natures. When i was still at the [name of organisation], we were launching the new brand the look and feel. We did encounter a crisis because we got a lot of perceptions from the public. They were saying this logo is not right, this and that. You imagine the process of the approval of the logo from the board to the cabinet coming down to the Community itself. You will find that perception will play a major role in how you craft your message.

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Codes\\Culture\Kgotla system

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	1	C.S	10/11/2021 09:52

Pt 001: Yes, we have used the kgotla. We believe in community dialogues. Community dialogues are powerful in the sense that the messages is able to reach the intended publics. We have used the kgotla to disseminate crisis messages. When i used to work for Botswana Post, we had a challenge with the systems. we ended up using the kgotla to communicate because we were not yet digital. Kgotla was our flagship dissemination platforms. We were also working with the elderly (pensioners) and kgotla was their area of engagement. , their meeting their area. we communicated that crisis through the kgotla becausee we had gone for 3 weeksnwithout paying their pension. We ended up using the kghotla to

dissemiante the messages. When we got there we spoke to the kgosi because he is the ambassador of the village or the spokesperson of the village. Thats leadership, and he called a well attended kgotla meeting where we disseminated the crisis message, and it was well received. This is where we got the feedback from the elderly in the village regarding the new system. It encouraged us to continue using the old one. We were trying to migrate to the new one because the change management that we had put in place was not effective. There are some who stay in cattle posts. So it was very good and helpful. The kgotla system uses the PA system mounted on the car to go around announcing a kgotla meeting. Thats what we did, and the following day, the kgotla was teaming with elderly people. It was full. We even shared other messages to communicate the need to go through that change and shared the interventions we had in place. So, yes it was very good. Even during the HRDC days, we had the lifelong learning system, where we used to reach out-of-school learners to take advantage of the tertiary education system to help them into self sustaining streams. We used the kgotla to reach out to these learners. We also launched the our development strategy. It was misconstrued and after communicating it was understood. There was also a time when students protested after government decided to cut their stipend from P1900 to P1300. Yet again, we used the kgotla to go around the country to communicate with the learners who were on recess.

We went across the country such as in Hukuntsi, Kasane and Palapye. We engaged the kgosi to also relay the messages to their communities. It was quiet instrumental.

Files\\Pt 003_transcript.vtt

No	0.0194	1

	1	C.S	10/11/2021 10:53

CS: To what extent, have you used, or can you use the kgotla to disseminate crisis messages? How helpful is the kgotla system during crisis?

Pt 003: Indeed the kgotla system which we know in our society is very helpful when communicating during crisis. It disseminates information faster and clear uncertainties and answers from stakeholders. Its a great system and still works because of its ability to reach out to many people and provide clarity to any questions. The government uses it a lot to disseminate information, given that much of the communities are in rural and remote area without internet to access social media. The kgotla meetings are a great platform that can be used to communicate during crisis. In corporates we have initiatives such as kgotla. AT [name of organisation] we have kgotla sessions especially during review of performance where we go online and do performance presentations and respond to questions and clarity. We still adopt the system even in corporate sessions. Its a great initiative.

Aggregate	Classification	Coverage	Number Of Coding References	Reference Number	Coded By Initials	Modified On

Files\\Pt 004_transcript.vtt

No		0.0822	1			
				1	C.S	10/11/2021 11:06

Pt 004: I think the number one case as well, over and above the fact that we need to have these in place, we also need to be mindful of the historic nuances, that's the tradition because you will find that culture also play a part because we will find that. Our customs dictate that when organisations want to talk to the elderly or senior citizens, we approach their Member of Parliament or the Minister. For those in rural setups we can talk to the chief. For instance, with the post office, if we cannot pay the pensioners, we have to communicate to the chiefs or the political leaders to avoid a crisis. The chief is the head of the kgotla, and if we have problems in paying the pensioners, we usually inform them and they spread the messages to their communities during kgotla meeting. In Botswana, the kgotla is an extremely important platform which is still reverred. The kgotla is central to consultation. In every village, there is a kgotla and its seen as the authority that assist us to keep our culture and the law of the country. Its a right hand to govenment. The authority in the kgotla is respected and seen as such. If anything happens be it bad or good news, we go to the kgotla. Even when organisations visit the village, they go through the kgotla. We use it to disseminate the information. Even with the post office, despite having a network of buildings across the country, its not every single village with a post office. When it comes to paument for pensioners, we go through the kgotla to do that. Its extremely important that when there is a crisis, you engage with the kgosi and the kgotla to dissemiante information. ANy issue that requires public authority must go through the kgotla. It plays a very important role, even if we restrict ourselves to the social media and traditional media, there are a lot of people who still adhere to the kgotla. The infromation from the kgotla is seen as binding to the communities. We still find a way to engage with the kgotla alongside social media and traditional media. The kgotla still remains a relevant platform for us since we deal with the elderly who are not techno-savvy in rural and remote communities. So for crisis management, you must also be mindful of that; the tradition and the cultural expectation.

Files\\Pt 005_transcript cs

No		0.0830	1			
				1	C.S	11/11/2021 09:36

CS: To what extent is the kgotla system important to disseminate messages during crisis?

Pt 005:Yes, we use the kgotla system to address our issues around and to address the crisis that we experience in the city. as I said before, the [name of organisation] is an institution that basically provide service to the community. So it will be very important to engage the community at that level at the kgotla meeting level. So, on an annual basis, our mayor who is the political leader actually addresses our kgotla meetings around all the five constituencies in the capital city. We have the Ward Development Committees, we have health extension committees and what happens is that on an annual basis, the mayor would go around these five constituencies to address kgotla meetings. Remember these meetings are meant to get feedback from the community on the services that we provide. These meetings are attended by male or female, young and the old as long as they follow our traditional way of doing things and give all the people a chance to actually

express their views on what they believe. We will be given feedback on everything that they would have communicated. The kgotla system is quite a very good way and it has been used from time immemorial until now. It has been playing a very pivotal role in giving feedback and getting feedback from the community.

Aggregate	Classification	Coverage	Number Of Coding References	Reference Number	Coded By Initials	Modified On
Files\\Pt 006_transcript.vtt						
No		0.0090	1			
				1	C.S	11/11/2021 10:13

Pt 006: The kgotla system does not lend itself to disseminating crisis messages because of the long protocol of seeking access to the platform. As you know you can't use a kgotla without the permission of the chief. Where there is a headman or subchief they have to relay your requests to the use of the kgotla to the chief or paramount chief. So we never use the kgotla system for crisis management purposes.

Aggregate	Classification	Coverage	Number Of Coding References	Reference Number	Coded By Initials	Modified On
Files\\Pt 007_transcript.vtt						
No		0.0209	1			
				1	C.S	11/11/2021 10:33

CS: To what extent have you used, or can you use the kgotla to disseminate crisis messages?

Pt 007: Yes, the kgotla set up is useful in that the presence of the chief makes what is being said there to have credibility. More people still believe in traditional leadership, therefore, what is said in the presence of the chief and possibly even endorsed by him is seen as holding more water. So yes the kgotla is an effective crisis communication platform.

Aggregate	Classification	Coverage	Number Of Coding References	Reference Number	Coded By Initials	Modified On
Files\\Pt 009_transcript.vtt						
No		0.0201	1			
				1	C.S	11/11/2021 10:55

Pt 009: I dont think the kgotla system would be that efficient because of the therisanyo (consultation) nature of its setting. It takes time whilst crisis communication is fast paced. Plus the kgotla wouldnt allow or propel brans messages that creates a positive image of the company thats facing crisis, unless its a crisis of national importance or concern.

Files\\Pt 012_transcript.vtt

No		0.0289	1			
				1	C.S	15/11/2021 09:41

CS: Talking of culture, do you think the kgotla system is helpful in crisis communication?

Pt 012: It depends on the locality. For example, if there is a crisis in Masunga or Ghanzi area, thats the most logical place to use. Thats the community's gathering areas. In urban areas it will be difficult as much as there are kgotlas. People there dont abide to the kgotla as they would in the villages. You would probably have to use multiple platforms to communicate the crisis. It depends on the context, and it can be very helpful in villages.

Aggregate	Classification	Coverage	Number Of Coding References	Reference Number	Coded By Initials	Modified On

Files\\Pt 013_transcript.vtt

No		0.0704	1			
				1	C.S	15/11/2021 09:50

Pt 013: I have previously used the kgotla to communicate. We normally use it in rural areas. Thats where the system is still very much in use. So it does help to use it to dissemiante crisis information because in village people believe its a traditional platform and whatever messages come, they believe all those messages. I believe that during a crisis using it may be very helpful because the messages are delivered face to face and people usually ask questions and get answered on the spot. Whatever messages are delivered there tend to be serious and community believes those messages. I believe it can work because its more believable and people are free to ask and share issues that they have. We have a setswana saying that Mafoko a kgotla a mantle otlhe. People are at liberty to ask questions so they can be in a better position to share the information they got from the kgotla.

Files\\Pt 014_transcript.vtt

No		0.0572	1			
				1	C.S	15/11/2021 10:00

CS: Talking of culture, how useful is the kgotla system in disseminating information during crisis in Botswana?

Pt 014: We use the kgotla frequently to communicate to communities across the country. Like I said, there are people who are in rural areas who do not have access to social media and other information platforms. Government Ministers

and Members of parliament, as well as councillors usually reach hold kgotla meetings during constituency weeks to update people on government policy, programs and services. Our ministries reach out to them through the respective Ministers. When there are pressing matters, Permanent Secretaries or Deputy Permanent Secretaries can accompany Ministers on a nationwide tour to disseminate information to different communities. The kgotla is useful because decisions there are binding. Our people still respect the kgotla systems and the chiefs. People are able to ask questions and get responses face to face and immediately. During crisis, information disseminated from kgotla systems is effective. A car with a mounted loud speaker can move around the village disseminating information and within a short time everyone has the information. In every district, government has officers such as District Commissioners who work closely with communities and the kgotla. So the kgotla is very effective for government and can help during crisis.

Files\\Pt 015_transcript.vtt

No		0.0476	1			
				1	C.S	15/11/2021 10:12

Pt 015: A kgotla system is not effective in terms of managing crisis the reasons being that you have to call the people to gather in a kgotla and that takes a long time. You need everyone to understand what you are telling them. The way our setup is done in terms of the kgotla system is that there is a particular dress code to attend a kgotla meeting. Women cannot wear trousers at a kgotla and that can be a hindrance and its a limitation on its own. It requires processes of informing the chief before the people know whats happening. That on its own can take a bit a time. Post-crisis the kgotla system can work to inform the people of what happened and that in future this is how we intend to do certain things.

Aggregate	Classification	Coverage	Number Of Coding References	Reference Number	Coded By Initials	Modified On

Files\\Pt 016_transcript.vtt

No		0.0586	2			
				1	C.S	15/11/2021 10:25

The older generation, still believe in traditional platforms such as listening to the radio or being told on loudspeakers that there's gonna be a crisis. Thats the kgotla system.

				2	C.S	15/11/2021 10:26

People in the rural areas where there's still a digital divide rely on radio for breaking news. So you find that young people in the urban areas of Africa get information faster about a crisis as opposed to the ones who are getting it like maybe five hours later. Pt 016: The kgotla is part of our culture and has been used for generations, since the beginning of time. Whenever there's a crisis and two parties have to meet and discuss, that is the principal thing that kept our nation together even democracy is built on that.

Files\\Pt 017_transcript.vtt

No		0.0602	1

CS: Talking of culture, do you consider the kgotla system as a helpful platform for communication during crisis?

Pt 017: Yes. We may not have considered it deliberately, but it is a place to consider because we serve the people. Sometimes we do not go directly to the kgotla, but we would use platforms such as district council meetings for councillors to deliver our messages to their various communities when addressing kgotla meetings. For example, if our [name of hospital] requires the public to donate cadavers for scientific purposes, we may have to address sub district council meetings, parliament and even the House of Chiefs for them to talk to their communities. You don't just go straight to the kgotla meetings and start addressing communities asking them to donate their dead bodies for scientific purposes. No, No, No, culturally that will cause a huge problem. You have to find a way of addressing this issue.

Files\\Pt 018_transcript.vtt

No	0.0182	1

			1	C.S	15/11/2021 10:45

Then you have people in remotest areas where they use the kgotla system to discuss issues of national interest to understand their opinions in what is happening because not everybody has access to the technical savy communications

Aggregate	Classification	Coverage	Number Of Coding References	Reference Number	Coded By Initials	Modified On

Files\\Pt 019_transcript.vtt

No	0.0637	1

			1	C.S	15/11/2021 10:52

Pt 019: Yeah, the kgotla can be very, very useful. This is where issues are discussed and finalised. The center of the kgotla system is imbued with that consultation I spoke about. It's also in this consultation, where you are saying we see this point, but you also see this other part so that could also help. It really helps during crisis. The system can be used in a communication environment. The community participates in the democratic processes and decisions. It's here where you expect transparent. The system is all about transparency. You say your mind out. This is where a whole organization can go to a village which is affected by the messaging to resolve the problem. It presents you as an organization an opportunity to say we made a mistake. This was the perspective but we know now that this is wrong. As small as our nation is, I think the kgotla system really present us with a platform where in a crisis, you can address the communities directly and talk to them. I can write messages in the newspapers and TV but I would be missing out on engage with the public to build lasting relationships. For us the kgotla system is the best system and I have seen it being used in that way. It's better than any communication medium that I know.

Files\\Pt 020_transcript.vtt

No		0.0356	1			
				1	C.S	15/11/2021 11:02

CS: Thank you. Talk of culture, how useful is the kgotla system during crisis in Botswana?

Pt 020: We've grown up in kgotla system. It is quite important that information is shared and, for me, or I mean when I read history, I realized that kgotla meetings had their own impact. I think nowadays, we may call it a town hall. It would have an impact, but at the same time it'll depend with which industry that impact would fall under. I mean if you are in the human rights sector, for instance, to what extent would calling a kgotla meeting impact the organisation and audiences. At the same time at government level, when when you talk about legislature, you talk about all the arms of government and you say there's a message that the minister wants to draw. The kgotla meeting would play a major role because kgotla meetings in their nature, call for the community to stand together and to get to know what is happening in their environment.

Aggregate	Classification	Coverage	Number Of Coding References	Reference Number	Coded By Initials	Modified On

Codes\\Culture\Organisational culture

Document

Files\\Pt 001_ Transcript

No		0.0240	3			
				1	C.S	10/11/2021 09:51

Pt 001: hmm um I think that one...on the culture, first it boils back to the culture of the organization. If the organization has an open door policy or has an open up culture where every staff member gets to know what is happening at every now and then, then it could also help. Same thing, when the organization is poor at managing internal communication, they are likely to be...

				2	C.S	10/11/2021 09:51

Pt 001: Yeah. The organisational culture, as I indicated, it can make or break the organization. The culture, once have it is something that takes ages or takes , I don't know what strategies to change it. That is why there has to be the change management and communication strategies in place to manage issues like this, once we have those plans in place, you should be able to manage any type of challenge now relating back to the crisis, once we have a change management...

				3	C.S	10/11/2021 09:52

So this is the time for reconnecting with your stakeholders, so through culture, you know you should be able to achieve some of the challenges that you have had.

Files\\Pt 002_transcript.vtt

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			1	C.S	10/11/2021 10:01

You communicate to the relevant stakeholders, especially say in case the cultural aspects should be taken into consideration; say for in case you have lost an employee during the course of delivery on his or her a duty...you have to take cultural aspect on how you go about telling people. Nowadays in the advent of social media, the government is always cautioning people that we don't rush to the social media, you have to engage the parents and relatives first.

Files\\Pt 006_transcript.vtt

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			1	C.S	11/11/2021 10:10

And of course the professional can say well remember, and I said let's do this, but there is lack of understanding as to the value of public relations, which is why you often find that in some organizations and public relations practitioners are tucked away in some corner somewhere. It is always assumed that these are people that can be sent around for menial tasks, and whereas it is critical that there should be head of public relations, who sits in the executive management and who is there when critical issues are discussed so that they don't rely on second hand information when there is a crisis.The impact of a PR practitioner who who sits at executive level is, in my view, able to respond and to advice quickly and appropriately and know what to do when a crisis hits. They will also know what you say and what not to say during during a crisis.

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				2	C.S	11/11/2021 10:15

What i'm saying is and because it goes back to the capacity of the PR team. As I said in the challenges, there is a lack of understanding of the value of PR teams, which is often why you would find that even in big organizations, they have a small team. That will only become apparent when there is a crisiswe do not have to have individuals some monitoring social media some monitoring and regulating the websites, to see what the regulators are saying about your organization others drafting statements and what have you

Files\\Pt 007_transcript.vtt

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			1	C.S	11/11/2021 10:32

I believe there are organizations that subscribe to the strategies you mentioned earlier where they try to avoid scrutiny; avoid the media and also avoid people. They forget that when they avoid people, people mention certain things about them and they don't respond. It ends up giving people the impression that what is being said about you, is correct. In my

view, I don't think it is the right attitude, for an organization to adopt not respond to issues being raised about it, or even to ignore whatever misinformation about it that is being spread around. I don't think that's the right way to do it.

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Aggregate	Classification	Coverage	Number Of Coding References	Reference Number	Coded By Initials	Modified On
No		0.0678	1			
				1	C.S	15/11/2021 09:23

Pt 011: If your Organization has no communications discipline, no amount of a policy documents will help you. If your organization also lacks delivery, discipline doesn't matter. It means you are predisposed to crises or problems. Culture is centered around the perception of the organization to the tonality of how the organization sounds to other publics and what the organization can say to the publics. So obviously, if you are running communication for a secret organization or a security agency, you're not at liberty to share everything. However, like I say the internal culture is critical to your tonality and it's critical to your response. We don't want a situation whereby if the customer has agreed what you're seeing on social media from your Community management perspective or what you've put up as a statement varies to what the customer is going to experience at that point of contact like a walk in or a contact Center or the phone or whatever or email. So there needs to be a organizational discipline trying to do the exercise of the organization missions, communication strategy and policies. There is also need for full alignment within the those who are either customer centric.

Aggregate	Classification	Coverage	Number Of Coding References	Reference Number	Coded By Initials	Modified On

Files\\Pt 014_transcript.vtt

Aggregate	Classification	Coverage	Number Of Coding References	Reference Number	Coded By Initials	Modified On
No		0.0287	1			
				1	C.S	15/11/2021 10:05

Pt 014: I wish organisations, especially government understand that we are no longer in 1996 or 2006. We are now in the modern age where we are dealing with the younger generation. They want things happening instantly. Unfortunately, you cannot afford to drop the ball and hope and pray that things will die. So you cannot bury your head in the sand and hope that they will not ask you to account. They want accountability. Some of them have been to schools abroad and whatnot and they come back with that level of knowledge and they want things done right. Organizations and government need to be on their toes and provide the best services because today's young people will demand good service.

Files\\Pt 015_transcript.vtt

Aggregate	Classification	Coverage	Number Of Coding References	Reference Number	Coded By Initials	Modified On
No		0.0454	1			

CS: Do you consider culture when developing a messages?

Pt 015: Yes, organizational culture in terms of developing information is very important and in such a way that different organizations have got different messages that they would have been intended to communicate with people. For example, if an organization needs to communicate information we have to ask ourselves what is our mission saying about my institution. For example, our mission is to promote accountability through quality reports. Now, under quality reports if there is the leak of report, we cannot assure the nation that resources are being used transparently and its value for money. Then there's a problem.

Codes\\Facebook\Best practices

Document

Files\\Pt 001_ Transcript

No	0.0986	6

when you come up with plans, you must also indicate within your plan and, in that you are likely to consider how you use social media to respond to the crisis. There has to be a plan, you know,that covers or demonstrated that while it's a vehicle, you know, that is used worldwide, you should be having a strategy on how to use or manage it, you know, because during times of crisis, you know, its normally abused.

Aggregate	Classification	Coverage	Number Of Coding References	Reference Number	Coded By Initials	Modified On
				2	C.S	10/11/2021 09:43

Pt 001: So for an organization like [name of organisation] which is already using social media channels like Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, to communicate with the stakeholders, we must be very, very careful on what, I guess, is to be uploaded or be very careful on what gets to be shared, you know, from the organizational point of view because in that regard we have control, but from outside, you know, we would not have control because you never know how somebody is going to report that.

| | | | | 3 | C.S | 10/11/2021 09:43 |

CS: Okay, um can you share some of the best practices, maybe on how best to use social media to leverage its power.

Pt 001: Um, I think the best practices, you know, to consider, some of them, is how you manage the audiences. This one works when you have an established goodwill. Goodwill, meaning that having a robust, or a rapport with your stakeholders normally works best for you. And then also the other thing that you can also consider as an organization is how you're going to implement its use, you know, how you're going to monitor conversations or messages that I shared on your on pages. You also advantage of anything that could happen by developing a relationship with your stakeholders and also the media during a crisis, you know. It depends on how you have handled the crisis, you know. As part of the crisis communications plan, there should be somebody in the, remember when I started our interview, I mentioned the team composition, which is normally PR , legal, finance, security, HR and then operations. There should be somebody who's available to monitor social media sites during

crises, just to find out what people are saying about this crisis and organization and be able to respond, Or do what you called responsive messaging, meaning that you actually responding to what people are saying on the on the social media website. This could be, you know, by simply listening to the conversations that could be a potential crisis.

| | | | | 4 | C.S | 10/11/2021 09:45 |

Pt 001: Okay, now this boils back to Crisis communication team, the training that they receive. Its not that every organization, you know, normally does that but you must, when you appoint the crisis communication team, you should make sure that they are properly trained. There should never be a crisis that should not be given attention. Every crisis should be given the due attention, and make sure that this, once you have the properly trained team, they should be able to attend to any type of crisis and be able to execute a plan that at the end of the day, will work out best for the organization. Trained employees or the Committee or the crisis team should be made aware of the proper communication channels, you know, in the workplace and also to report possible crisis as they come throughout they year. There should also be a dashboard, you know, in every organization, where you report the crisis.

| | | | | 5 | C.S | 10/11/2021 09:45 |

Pt 001: Some crisis, as in risk, there should be a risk board, there should be at the end of the week or whenever they should be able to publish notification procedures , along with the information on the roles and responsibilities of the crisis communication team, just to continuously urge them to know what is happening or what should be happening when there's a crisis. But once we have a crisis roll, you should be able to classify any type of crisis.

| | | | | 6 | C.S | 10/11/2021 09:47 |

Pt 001: No. You know, the 21st century workforce should be able to employ what you call bottom up communication not top-bottom approach. It should be across. That time we were setting up the communications and stakeholder relations team at [name of organisation], using , you know, my expertise obviously you go to management and say, kindly give me names of your departmental REPS. What they do normally they'll be giving you from managerial up

Aggregate	Classification	Coverage	Number Of Coding References	Reference Number	Coded By Initials	Modified On

Files\\Pt 002_transcript.vtt

544

No		0.1031	4

	1	C.S	10/11/2021 10:10

Pt 002: It helps in terms of putting out the message in the shortest possible time to stakeholders, especially the public. So it is very critical but then you need to have a someone designated to respond timely, because if you don't respond timely also you are creating some problems.

	2	C.S	10/11/2021 10:11

Pt 002: It might be because they dont have social media policy in place to guide on who is to respond and how to respond. But if you have got that policy, you have got processes like ISO 9001 2015 which is tailored towards customer satisfaction. It shows that there are processes in place and the staff or the employees are aware of them. It helps a lot.

	3	C.S	10/11/2021 10:12

Pt 002: Yes, my previous one, we had the policy, but where I am currently working we just infuse the or inserted, the social media aspect into the communication policy to guide. But like I said, the aspect that is behind now is to have an individual fully focus on social media, who is able to interact on real time.

	4	C.S	10/11/2021 10:15

CS: I see! Thank you very much, sir. The other question that I wanted you to share from your experiences, is to perhaps share some of the best practices for using social media especially Facebook during crisis.

Pt 002: Yes, I think, if you have got the policy in place, you have got those simulation exercise, crisis management plans, the social media policy in place and a designated individuals or professionals for that space to respond in real time, to interact, and also to make Facebook more lively by not just putting texts out there, but even the clips of video in that space it will become more vibrant. As you also continue to update it so that it doesn't become stale or something like that. So that in itself will make sure that your audience are always engaged, they're always going through, as you interact with them and it doesn't lose momentum.

Files\\Pt 003_transcript.vtt

No		0.0485	3

	1	C.S	10/11/2021 10:39

considering that all of us have access to social media. One thing I say as a member of the public and influencer in social media can make or your break your organization and then you would find yourself having to run after that and putting out fires so it's really important to make sure

that you utilize the platforms that are available to share information on a regular basis. Make sure that you have a social media engagement strategy so that you're able to share information on a constant basis with the public and you're not caught off guard about issues that might be somewhat negative and eventually affect your reputation. It's basically a mastery around stakeholder engagement. Know your stakeholders, make sure that you share information because stakeholders have different information needs. Make sure you manage that very well and make sure your social media engagement strategy it's also up to par especially with information because one thing that destroys a lot of organization is information. They say information is power, so you need to constantly ensure that people are up to date with developments within your organization.

Aggregate	Classification	Coverage	Number Of Coding References	Reference Number	Coded By Initials	Modified On
				2	C.S	10/11/2021 10:39

CS: Have you engaged influencers during crisis to try and build legitimacy for the organization and to manage the crisis?

Pt 003: We haven't. we haven't really it's an area that we haven't really explored, even though we notice that it's good for some organizations that tend to have bad reputation in the past. There's a particular one I want to mention by name that's using an influencer and now it has brilliantly managed to turn the tide, it has really worked for them, because it has revealed so much that we don't know as the public about that particular organization and the good things that they're doing. But just because they use this particular influencer with a large following in social media, it has really worked for them and simplified things. It goes back to that issue that I explained earlier about information sharing. For them it worked because information is shared by somebody who the public really trusted. The issue of influencers works especially depending on what agenda you're trying to pursue. I've spoken to my manager about but it's something that maybe would onsider for disposing products and sales. It could be something to consider when we do our marketing strategy and stuff because and it's an area or it's something that is widely used, even in the developed world.

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You just need a clear cut strategy that will guide you in terms of what to communicate and how to go about it.

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That goes to show that there's no social media policy in a lot of organizations. In actual fact each time I tell people that we have a social media policy at work. You can get a written warning for taking a selfie in the office. So social media now in terms of crisis has advantages and

disadvantages depending on which side of the table you're sitting at. If something breaks on any organizations page, for instance, and get shared, chances are the messaging that was packaged internally is what will go out so if the messaging is ill packaged with new then ill messaging is going to go out and the feedback or the response to those posts are going to be as equally ill packed. was going to be built in, you know feedback.

Pt 004: If a crisis happens, you go into an official Facebook page, because in as much as everybody's on social media, people still go to official pages for information. and all of us still want to go to official fans. If there isn't anything, I am essentially giving the general public, a leeway, to speculate and spread false information. Social media is now all interlinked, so anything that you are picking up from Facebook, is going to be shared via whatsapp, is going to be shared via instagram. So you can't now divorce yourself from one social media platform. Facebook is widely used in Botswana. You have a younger generation that is very active even on Twitter. Then they can be active on other platforms. So even if you are controlling the narrative on Facebook, for instance, you have thousands of other individuals that are able to take that same narrative and tweak it anyhow they choose to and put it on those other platforms. So what i'm saying is that in as much as we use social media, Facebook has traditionally been a platform that is is widely used in Botswana, we must be mindful of the group that other platforms have.

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Pt 004: If there is a crisis and you go on social media, you should have a plan in place. Who responds? I should not seem like i'm bashing organizations. The real issue is that people have not been properly trained. Their training has been on the job and it's trial and error for lots of people and we learn as we go along. And also information on these social media platforms changes. The dynamics, the changes, a few days ago you couldn't do certain things, but now you are able to do certain things. So organizations are grappling with understanding the platforms, or the technology to start off with. There is lack of training, there's a lack of understanding of the technology and because the technology evolves so quick and it doesn't give people enough time to really sort of grasp it then slows our response time as organizations.

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CS: What are the best practices to effectively use Facebook?

Pt 004: Have a strategy. I think, to start off with have a strategy; be very clear on what your social media page looks like; what are you trying to communicate and also remember social media or Facebook allows you to be able to tell who will access your information. A strategy will allow you to periodically go back on Facebook and not wait for crisis to happen. You're constantly feeding your customers with information, whether good or bad. You're constantly saying Oh, these are the top five questions that we have received, we want to address them, so you might be really active and not reactive. The same way that you run a campaign, you also need to be running a social media campaign. That is good tactic that it's got evaluation and monitoring processes in place as well. You must also put in your business intelligence, I mean, as it is right now we have a whole unit at the [name of organisation] called business intelligence. Engagement of your customers in these platforms is very important.

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CS: Can you talk about use of pictures and videos or to maximize or to leverage social media or Facebook.

Pt 004: You have to. I looked at some of my posts from many, many years ago and I realized they were text heavy. It was still not the popular thing. People have smartphones that take absolutely amazing pictures. Having these pictures you're able to do all kinds of things. And videos even in terms of TV, for instance, the reason why they would say in as much as Radio will still be popular, we now have podcasts. You can't take away the value of picture, sound, color. A post with this will be accessed a lot faster and a lot wider than the one with text. Also be mindful of time. We must be very mindful of time. Remember social media allows for us to be able to be in and out. Multitask has really gone to another level now.

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Pt 006: With monitoring, what I normally do is to have an individual who just sits there and watch everything that is flowing either on social media. Crisis we are dealing with more in the past, because now, you have a multiplicity of media outfits. Some of them are online. In the past you didn't have Facebook, you have Twitter, you have whatever else where even ordinary members of the public issuing rude commentaries second by second. You ought to have someone monitoring social media; ought to have someone monitoring the traditional press.

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Normally, let me just give you a rundown of how I normally ensure that we have a particular flow and organized flow to deal with a crisis. Phase one for us, is always to collect data and assess the incident. Once we have done that we are then able to determine if an incident is a crisis. If it is a crisis and we then move into action quickly, but if the incident is a potential crisis, then you have an opportunity to escalate it to the crisis management team. We don't have, as I said, you want to have a small crisis management team, which comprises key people. You don't want to have a big group because if you have a huge group there is a greater possibility for indecision. And a crisis is not going to wait for you. So once we've determined that this is a crisis, we then go into what we call in-depth information gathering and then we determine what our objective is. Objective would then be, as I said, to try and contain the crisis in as quick manner as possible. Once you determine that objective, we then develop a strategy and that strategy is going to involve preparing messages and holding statement and preparing a questions and answers document and preparing fact sheet about some incontrovertible things which cannot be disputed will then pay a fact sheet. We are, then, once we have done those we then determine the impact of this crisis and where we should pitch it in terms of escalation. We then ask ourselves if the crisis is a proper crisis, Or is the original crisis or is it confined to a particular geography of the country? But these days, of course, with the advent of social media it is virtually impossible to assume that if a branch is burning or there has been a robbery in a branch in Francistown, it will be confined to Francistown. The minute that happens, will be online and and treating so once we have developed the action plan and we then engage in communication. We implement our internal and external communication strategy, and then we monitor and evaluate the situation as it evolves.

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CS: What could be some of the best practices of using social media especially Facebook?

Pt 006: I don't know whether it's a good or bad thing. Is these people just don't want to read? I think people who read, we must be a dying breed. And so it is critical to remember that this generation, especially people who are born post 2000 or maybe mid 90s, right through the 2000s are generally worse at reading. If it's in the written form in somebody's phone, it is in a short form as possible. Alternatively, as you say, as the spokesperson, because it's this generation, we are always fortunate in that we are able to source tv clips and then package them appropriately. If you don't have TV journalist coming through we're able to record our own little videos with key messages package them nicely and then post them on our social media pages because people really don't want to read. Apart from that people are quite busy. Even those that don't mind reading or like reading sometimes they have the time. It is always helpful to package audio or audio visual for

them. Now what also helps our regular interviews because, fortunately, the radio interviews are very easy compared to TV interview, so we are also able to source those clips and then package them appropriately and put them out on our social media pages. It does help and sometimes we proactively do so, package voice messages or video messages and then encourage our staff members, in addition to putting them out on our own social media pages to put them on that social media pages.

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Pt 006: You want to have a team, which is able to wake you up in the middle of the night to say there's just been a Facebook post, someone is saying 1234, how do we respond to that? Normally there's the fact sheets, or they would have standard answers they would know generally. What you see but there might be certain things which needs to be embedded into the response. We live and breathe social media so during crisis and i'll get a call at 12pm at night to say we just did a Facebook post someone is saying this, and this is how I think we should respond, and I say okay hold on just send me your draft response, are calibrated, calm.

Pt 006: In a crisis, you will always get a reaction. There are no two about it, which is why I always have the following tips in what we call the war room during a crisis somewhere on the boards: remain calm. It is in your interest as a spokesperson, to talk positive attitude towards whether it's journalists have all these people on social media. It is always critical to remember, in particular, with regards to journalist, because some of them are on social media. They have a job to do, because if they can reach you by mobile about those post, something on your page, they have a job to do. It is also important to remember that you are not personally being accused of wrongdoing, so there's no need to run or to hide, or to be aggressive. It's critical, of course, as I said, from a legal point of view that you don't make statements that that imply legal responsibility and you don't also try to pass the buck to third parties, because that is often what happens, even when some entities respond on social media during a crisis, when they respond to queries or to concerns or text. It's important as well to not to allow yourself to be drawn into emotional arguments by a provocative questions.

Pt 006: Get the information out clearly and politely. The minute you refuse to respond to people on social media or to the traditional media, you are effective retaining the crisis personality, which is what it should not be and you're not helping the situation

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May be its because social media allows anyone to respond even people who are less informed about your organization can respond and critique publicly whatever you may have communicated for your organization. This criticism is going to reach many more people as well, so really social media has some advantages, but it also has some disadvantages, where some people may use it to ruin the image of your organization.

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Pt 007: Yes, in the recent past, we have engaged some influential people to help us convince people to go and get vaccinated. In the early stages

of the vaccination process, there were certain myths and mythologies about getting vaccinated. Some people said if you get vaccinated you will die or you will no longer have an erection; or if you're a woman you will no longer be able to conceive; or if you are a man, you will develop breast. There were so many things, so we decided to rope in some influential members of the Community in the form of chiefs, like retired politicians. We got them vaccinated publicly and then, after which they would make certain statements in support of vaccination and also encouraging people to get vaccinated. So somehow I believe the strategy worked, because we have seen quite a good number of people coming up for vaccination. We no longer experience vaccine hesitancy.

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Pt 007: I have a team. it's not necessarily specific to social media, it does other communication duties, but we deliberately take a decision to keep an eye on how whatever communication is trending and the kind of responses that the communication is getting and then respond.

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Pt 007: I believe that one of the best practices is to have a team dedicated to social media, responding to whatever issues that members of the public raise. They should monitor communication that would have been made by the organization, where there is need for response, then they immediately do so. I think this would ensure that even people out there would believe that the organization is taking itself seriously. Use photographs and videos to illustrate your messaging. Then the information would reach as many people as as possible.

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So Facebook is good, but it needs to be highly managed. Your level of alertness on it needs to be extremely extremely well organized.

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Pt 009: Yes, in my past life, yes, banking. We have used social media influencers to really sort of calm down the situation because they are easier to believe, particularly like I said, if they are part of your strategy.

| | | | | 2 | C.S | 11/11/2021 10:55 |

Pt 009: It's a very, very powerful platform. It connects millions of people all over the world and i'm speaking from a brand perspective, a company perspective, and I think you can utilize it well, when you turn your company to be a person; you give it a persona so that then when you speak to your audience they they are part of you. You don't just speak to them, you speak with them. They feel you as a person who stands for 123 which is aligned to those that have also followed you so and how do you make sure you stick to a persona and you attract a like minded or the people that really want to follow you? Develop a deliberate strategy. You do a monthly content plan that say deliberately every month or every week, this persona called the [name of organisation] is speaking about innovation trends. I will be connecting with the followers because I know my followers love everything about innovation. That's why when it was suggested it is something that they can follow they clicked if I want to follow. So that persona needs to remain relevant to the audiences and even attract more. Very, very deliberate messaging that need to establishe a persona. You need to use visuals in in marketing and communications. That's how you attract many likes.

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Pt 010: We were proactive in sharing information. Social media wasn't our main platform for sharing this information, but we were proactive in terms of using it. We were not waiting for people to ask for information around the crisis. We also used social media to keep the audience busy, telling them other stories about our other positive things that we're doing, while the advisory was going on. We also used social media to monitor what people were saying, because on social media everybody is free to say whenever they want to say. So, that's where you check your temperature and check what people are saying about your organization regarding the issue at hand. We were able to check how they were moving along in terms of regaining trust in the organization. So yes, we used social media effectively during the crisis.

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CS: Thank you. Please share some of the best practices of using Facebook during crisis.

Pt 010: I think the first thing is that an organization needs to determine its personality for social media and design it's executions in terms of what it puts out. The tone and voice of its messaging; the kind of artwork that it puts out; the kind of community engagements on its platforms, etc. An organization is to predetermine all these things before actually utilizing social media and an organization needs to have a social media strategy that informs all of that in place and that strategy should detail all of the things that i've said such the objectives of the social media platforms and how the organization intends to utilize that. It's important for us as communication practitioners to engage and get buy in from leadership in our organizations in terms of how social media is utilized. If that buy in is there from the onset from a strategic standpoint, then the organization can enjoy maximum value from its social media platforms, including

investments on use of those platforms. Sometimes the generic content is not effective. I have to fight harder to make my product appealing and visible to people. So getting that buy in from your leadership, enables you to tend to organizational resources to support social media activity and investment in the same. Once you've established all that, from a strategic

resource mobilization standpoint, then implementation has to be consistent in terms of putting out content so that you keep people engaged. If people get to appreciate that you're always putting out content they look forward to receiving content from your pages. From the emotional standpoint that translates into trust and reputation for your organization.

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Pt 011: Firstly, build a reputation that you do good. That way, then you will have the benefit of the doubt. It allows you a bit of latitude where there is a problem with crisis to address and remediate. I always say social media is a platform just like radio, just like that other platforms, just that it's two way actual. So, because it's such a two way, constant live environment, it means that it is really important for people or for the audience as the customers and the public to have a positive view of the organization. Secondly, obviously, your crisis communication policy and documents will prepare you in terms of what are the likely points of contention and guide you to address them. They'll always be limitations in terms of what you can communicate, but firstly acknowledging the issue then move in to elaborate on the extent of the issue helps gain public confidence and regain, rebuilt public confidence. Like they always say the best apologies change behavior. So if you are going to apologize, ensure that this is not a frequent occurence.

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The rule of thumb for social media is keep it simple, keep it concise.

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Sometimes you find people using their own pages to respond to the crisis, which shouldn't be the case. It should be the organization managing and leading that information.

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Pt 013: I think most organizations seem to be more appreciative of the value of sharing information proactively. We're seeing the value of Facebook, let's say the

value of social media as a whole. I guess we're still learning and it will improve with time. As time goes on, we'll see the value in using Facebook and other

social media platforms as a way of communication because we really need to move with the times. If our clients use that

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We also provide information to our people on social media or platforms, we are on Facebook. We are on instagram, we are on Twitter. At [name of Ministry] those are the platforms where we provide information or where we provided information throughout the travel restrictions. We didn't have activities for example the [name of competitions].We didn't have activities for the [name of celebrations], but what we did was to engage the people in the various regions. We engage even young people who had cameras and other production equipment and whatever to capture certain activities which will make the [name of competitions] and [name of celebrations] memorable to the people. We then provided the clips on online platforms and tv programme for people who were not able to see those things. So we tried as much as possible to tweak our communication plan to have too many things virtually to get the limelight, so to speak. So we used a lot of online presence.

			2	C.S	15/11/2021 10:02

CS: I see. What are some of the best practices for using social media in Botswana?

Pt 014: These days people don't like reading huge paragraphs. Your messaging should have pictorials. Your messaging should have pictures. Your messages should have limited text because nobody wants that. You can imagine if i'm driving and I see breaking news especially the newspapers. I want to read quick and know what it is about and not having to read long paragraphs. It has to capture the attention of the person and I need to know what its about in five seconds. So that is the strategy that you need to use to ensure that people or the traffic comes to your organization.

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Pt 015: In our office we monitor the posts daily. We receive inquiries and questions from publics. We have two employees who respond on a daily basis. Sometimes they respond at the end of the week and provide a report of how many comments they received and how many responses they gave, the challenges they faced. Those are important to make sure that you'll be able to becomes impactful.

			2	C.S	15/11/2021 10:14

CS: What are some of the best practices you can share about crisis communication in Botswana?

Pt 015: Yes, once you set up a Facebook page, you should know the role of that Facebook page. Secondly, you should develop your social media policy to address a lot of issues. There should be a code of conduct that will provide guidelines for employees who post content on Facebook.

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CS: What are some of the best practices for using Facebook during crisis?

Pt 016: Well, I think, just to summarize is that there's a responsible social media. And of course that's what I do right now and we are seeing a trend now where the organisations are hiring social media personnel. So it's a new thing in Botswana and we expect a lot of revolution into the whole area of social media. One thing that we managed to do was on a weekly basis we will check the backroom of the mechanics of Facebook page or Twitter, or whatever you have and be able to see the insides of how the public is responding to our messages. It's both geographically by race, by sex. We managed to do that then that informed on how we need to maneuver our communication to different segments. If you're in London and i'm here and we worked for a global company, I can be able to have messages, just for the audience of London. I can be able to sponsor different messages.

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Pt 017: Social media is generally a very difficult thing to manage. But the best way to use it is to always communicate, and communicate on time. If something happens communicate. Make your messages short, so that people don't have a lot of time on their cell phones. Using social media, you should ensure you come up with short messages that are precise, on point. If you delay somebody else may have already talked about it.

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Pt 018: I think the key with social media is really engagement. You have to ensure that whatever content that you put out is engaging to people. What most organizations do these days is that they just put up a post to share information, but there's really zero engagement. Nobody's commenting on it. Posts become a billboard if you do not engage. But also the

danger with encouraging engagement is that sometimes people ask uncomfortable questions. As an organization, we are not ready to talk about it. We cant write a press release to respond to that question. If you respond in a way that people do not like, they will take you head on.

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Pt 019: You see, there's always been this talk of a curse or a blessing? I think Facebook can be a curse or a blessing to communication departments or to organizations. This is not the question to be debated at this stage of whether we should be using social media or not. Otherwise we will miss the train as organization if we don't. This is where communities are. This is where customers are. This is where people who need our services are. So organizations should go where people are. Traffic is going into social media, so we cannot remain aloof and say we will determine what platforms to use. We don't have that luxury. We go where people are. If people are in social media, we cannot remain rooted in old platforms or traditional platforms. Yes, we will still use those as we go to the people where we will find them.

Pt 019: The question is when we go there, do we have strategies to use social media? As much as there were strategies that we use in other platforms social media also ought to have strategies. You can't afford to be hesitant. You can't afford to be passive. You must come up with strategies that are very efficient. We should not fear to use social media because of keyboard ninjas that have their guns cocked and ready to shoot at anything they see on Facebook. You should make your organisation as favorable as possible and to have a high positive perception, and you can do that by implementing this proactive strategies that we are talking about.Businesses have to give people answer and be responsive. What do people need? Give them information. When they ask you questions, give it. The only way to overcome our fears is come up with strategies.

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Pt 020: I think content management and development is key to ensuring that you use Facebook for its purpose and you are able to impact the public that you want to impact. Content development and management is really a process of understanding how many times are you going to be posting in a day, what is it that you're going to be posting because you see content is not just posting a picture. What kind of picture are you going to be posting. When is the right time to post that picture. For me it is that aspect of Facebook management that will play a major role. Content development and

management we are referring to creation of content. In other words, I am simply saying you need to have a very robust content strategy. I think once you've started that process, you will also understand research will play a major role. Once you've created, you start to fly. Once you have started flighting you need to understand who has responded and what have they responded to how are they responding. Why would they be responding. Where are they responding from and then you measure this impact for how many likes did we achieve. You need to differentiate are you going to promote or are you going to go organic? If you promote what is it that you are promoting are you promoting for the sake of followership or you're promoting for the sake of education and awareness. In optimization then we talk about a number of things, we talked about analytics we talked about now the business intelligence aspect of thing.

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you cant be sending the public notice and doing what is called blanket response strategy. Blanket response strategy can never handle a crisis. You should assemble a team who would say we have 1800 messages in a day and be able to look at those messages, count them and delegate them to members of team and be able to respond to everyone.

Pt 001: As I indicated, communication is the bloodline of every organization. When you fail to communicate or manage the customers expectations, your organization will be as good as dead. So, this would be linked to crisis management.

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Pt 002: It helps in terms of putting out the message in the shortest possible time to stakeholders, especially the public. So it is very critical but then you need to have a someone designated to respond timely, because if you don't respond timely also you are creating some problems.

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Pt 002: It might be because they dont have social media policy in place to guide on who is to respond and how to respond. But if you have got that policy, you have got processes like ISO 9001 2015 which is tailored towards customer satisfaction. It shows that there are processes in place and the staff or the employees are aware of them. It helps a lot.

	3	C.S	10/11/2021 10:12

Pt 002: Yes, my previous one, we had the policy, but where I am currently working we just infuse the or inserted, the social media aspect into the communication policy to guide. But like I said, the aspect that is behind now is to have an individual fully focus on social media, who is able to interact on real time.

	4	C.S	10/11/2021 10:12

CS: I see! So that is what most organizations are lacking according to your experience?

	5	C.S	10/11/2021 10:13

CS: I see! Could this be the reason why some organizations in Botswana are very passive in sharing information on Facebook, especially during crisis?

Pt 002: Yes, because social media if you don't handle it well, It can cause reputational damage to the organization. May be thats why many organization this side regard a social media as a taboo, a no go area. But it has got so much potential and benefits if handled well.

	6	C.S	10/11/2021 10:14

CS: Indeed, you are raising a very important point for most organizations, regarding it as a no go area. Wwhat could be some of the challenges that makes them to have a bit of fear or phobia to use Facebook?

Pt 002: Like we pointed a while ago that currently we are more of a traditional. So people have been announcing accidents, putting accidents happening into social media space, announcing there before relatives or families can be informed. And the government has been coming forth to say that is not acceptable. And even Botswana, in general, have condemned the practice. So it might be more so, also because of the kind of society that we live in and also because of lack of policies to guide in that space and lack of resources dedicated to that space also.

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	1	C.S	10/11/2021 10:46

There are indications that some organizations are very passive or they have a Facebook phobia that makes them passive in sharing information. What is your view on this?

Pt 003: Much as you know, Facebook could be a very positive tool to use for information sharing, it's very, very, very critical that you sort of assess what you share through Facebook, because it could have a backlash in terms of sharing negative information or whatever you are sharing. They are afraid of backlash. Some organisations don't have good engagement strategies that's why they are even afraid to utilize Facebook, though i'd rather issue a press release to newspapers, but anything that goes to newspapers now you'd find it in social media. People just simply take pictures and share. So I tend to also believe that a lot of companies are still a bit apprehensive about utilizing social media for their benefit. It is a tool that if you use properly, it can really help to build your organization. Some companies are not really quite keen in investing in such platforms to help them disseminate information. Some don't have the right resources to manage such platforms for them, because you need a dedicated resource that will make sure that requests are responded to in a timely manner.

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Pt 003: We tried as much as possible to respond to individual comments, but it depends on individuals. Anybody, even through social media is empowered to ask whatever they want to ask or comment. So it is a our responsibility as corporates to determine what can be responded to, and the best way to respond to those particular issues. For instance, comments which are very negative or Vulgar in their nature. Sometimes you gauge by the type of that comment or inquiry if it's something that's worthy of responding if it's something that build or that you feel a lot of people can benefit from you respond. So it's just a matter of determining which comments or which inquiries are much more beneficial, especially get to not only that particular person. But if you look at how other people can benefit from that business question in response to it, and how we do it is we gauge the comments that people throw in the comments section where the public is able to view those and there are those that normally people to ask God for messenger which maybe could be something that somebody and that could be some beneficial to that particular person about such issues, sometimes you can group them if you realize that there's a certain issue that receives a lot of attention, you can normally craft some sort of response which is a bit elaborate and publish it so that you set the record straight.

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Pt 003: The capacity to respond individually to all those messages is a huge challenge because it's time consuming, especially if you have to sit for a company that deals with a product that's really sensitive. We get questions on the business on whatsapp line, as well as on our social media platforms. And normally we concentrate on individual questions that are sent through messenger in the comments section. What we've realized is that it's usually people just making general comments, but if it's something like I mentioned again if it's something that you believe it could benefit other members, you do respond to that section, so that everybody can benefit. It could be a question that is asked by four people; sometimes you don't have to respond to all of those new ones, because it answers all those other customers and everybody else who might have a similar question would be able to benefit from that response.

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Pt 004: I think number one, we can't run away from the fact that this platform exists and is being used. Number two, yes, we have taken a very long time to have measures in place that will speak to ways from a law perspective. What are the controls? Do we know what consequences are there for Facebook users?

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CS: There are also suggestions that some organizations will not respond to individual comments on Facebook during crisis. What is your view on this?

Pt 004: It's one of the things that i'm faced with, and it goes back to training. So what what I actually found out very close to home, is the fact that the very people that we have put in charge of communicating with our customers on that particular platform are not confident to do that. Remember social media is used the same way as if you and I are having a conversation so when you give somebody a technical response, for instance, is not appreciated. It's not appreciated because somebody wants to feel that you hear them. That also plays a role. People are bitter, people are angry, people are are tired. I think sometimes organizations choose to choose the silent route. My assumption is not necessarily because they don't want to engage but they are really challenged as to how they engage with customers that are angry; customers that speak without being mindful of the words that they're using. Also there's no timing. Remember like I said, Facebook is 24 hours. Organizations tend to

operate between eight to five, as an example. But engagement on social media doesn't stop. I can be engaging at six in the morning. I can engaging at 12 midnight. What mechanism do you have in place to communicate outside work hours? How do you respond if somebody had an issue at 12 midnight and you're only going to attend to it after eight in the morning because you had closed shop? You may be considered the worst of the worst. That's what social media has actually introduced but organizations have not caught up to that. The same way that we speak of shift is the the same way that we speak of all these other platforms or frameworks. We must also be mindful of that social media is not like the newspaper.

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Pt 004: If there is a crisis and you go on social media, you should have a plan in place. Who responds? I should not seem like i'm bashing organizations. The real issue is that people have not been properly trained. Their training has been on the job and it's trial and error for lots of people and we learn as we go along. And also information on these social media platforms changes. The dynamics, the changes, a few days ago you couldn't do certain things, but now you are able to do certain things. So organizations are grappling with understanding the platforms, or the technology to start off with. There is lack of training, there's a lack of understanding of the technology and because the technology evolves so quick and it doesn't give people enough time to really sort of grasp it then slows our response time as organizations.

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We use Facebook to communicate all messages on a daily basis and we have had tremendous feedback from the customers on our Facebook page. We have even made a provision for our clients to actually be able to inbox us. Inbox services are quite important because as they inbox us instead of making a phone call where they will be charged by the mobile network providers. They just inbox us and we give them feedback through that inbox service. So I will say yes Facebook, is very important and will continue to actually use it.

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Pt 005: We actually respond in a positive way. When our clients complain about services such as bad roads or garbage, we always respond positively to maintain positive relationships with our clients.

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Pt 005: The knowledge of technology is very important. Social media management is a cost on its own. So sometimes when people do not have enough knowledge on how to manage their social media it will not be easy for them to constantly engage through the same platform.

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Pt 005: Sometimes responding to direct individual comments can be both positive and negative at the same time. Sometimes when you respond directly to a comment on Facebook, it may attract a lot of negative attention. It may raise more other engagements that necessary. Playing that silent diplomacy kind of strategy can be important until the person who is aggrieved comes directly to you to ask a question.

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That is why you find that some organizations have social media pages which have not been updated and i'm being charitable here, for

months. You will find a Facebook page was last active. Now, with a coronavirus it's worse. You might find a Facebook page, which was less active, three, four years ago. And you might find SOS for websites, it is terrible. You go to the media section of websites and you will be shocked to find that's the last public statement they released was five years ago. This is an organization that is operated and you have to wonder if nothing goes on in that organization so from a social media point of view it is a challenge for your participants especially when there is a crisis. You might even have the leadership of an organization say I know we don't like this Facebook, this thing of yours, let's just ignore Facebook. As much as we don't like Facebook and we won't know what people are saying there, which is a very dangerous posture to take. The conservative culture which has seeped into the corporate world or even in government, I think, in government. I was invited with a number of colleagues from the private sector and to form a communications or PR team for the covid 19 Task Force. When we got there because the Task Force is constituted significantly by people from governments and it took a lot of work and to have them appreciate the need to communicate issues with speed, including reacting to sentiments from the public about covid with a certain level of efficiency. It is a huge problem. I think PR practitioners have a lot of work to do. If it is a good thing, it means PR PR practitioners if they know what they're doing will be relevant in the Botswana context for many years.

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Pt 006: We responded to give our comments. In addition to issuing general statements, if an individual makes a particular statement, other people might be thinking the same thing. So if you respond directly to an individual you do it in such a manner that you are also killing many other birds with one stone. You're not being personally but that particular individual you got is pointing to them, but also mindful that you are, at the same time, addressing other people who were thinking like this person. What i'm saying is and because it goes back to the capacity of the PR team. As I said in the

challenges, there is a lack of understanding of the value of PR teams, which is often why you would find that even in big organizations, they have a small team. That will only become apparent when there is a crisis we do not have to have individuals some monitoring social media some monitoring and regulating the websites, to see what the regulators are saying about your organization others drafting statements and what have you. So social media, and it is critical that you have maybe two or three people who don't sleep and who comment

on social media at 3am at terribly ungodly hours.

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So we will then take time to respond to specific inquiries or specific questions. When we feel somebody is misleading others, we respond to correct. It could be on the Facebook or the messenger.

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Pt 007: My position is that if you don't share information or, if you are reluctant to share information, you allow the peddling of rumors about your organization to go on. You allow the media to keep on speculating about your vision. You allow the public to form certain views about your organization which may not be the current news about your organization and then at the end of the day you will not enhance your reputation and your image before the various publics within which your organization is situated. I believe that it is important that an organization should be willing to share information preemptively and also respond to inquiries when made it to them. I believe that we do share information voluntarily. As a result, we have done away with the huge negativity that used to be there.

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CS: Do you respond to individual comments?

Pt 007: Yes, we do sometimes respond to individual comments on certain issues that we post about. We do not always respond to comments about each and every communication we make in social media, but to the ones that in our view can potentially mislead the public. Some influential people only attempt to interpret or respond to our communication in a deliberately wrong manner and you come to find that, by so doing, many more people are likely to believe them. So we look at the subject matter at hand and then decide that on this one, we are going to follow up each and every comment that is being made. If these comment mislead then we will immediately respond and correct them.

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So you've got to be really careful and you're going to have a team that is committed to engaging if you put a statement. They should be ready to respond to that statement with one unified message. Responding to that one statement you need to have people who are very good in tracking communications. I mean you can put a statement and then not allow people to comment or allow people to engage. So Facebook really requires a high level of engagement and a high level of alertness of what people are saying, why because it could end up spiraling into something that you never meant.

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Pt 008: This is where I go back to my just ended statement now, saying that a lot of people can say a lot of things out of spite. I think you need to be smart enough to sift what is addressing the bigger issues. People can genuinely ask questions for the better to actually understanding what the crisis is. Unfortunately they're just people there who just want to be unfriendly to a situation or who just want to put fuel to the already burning fire that you are dealing with. So there's a high level of sifting in that level of alertness. Like I said you'll have 1000 messages and maybe at 860 message addressing one issue. Like an organization that has built goodwill as well, there are stakeholders who will be in support of the same situation and will actually rally behind you. It can help you with levels of engagement where people will say no, but this organization hasn't been doing this all the time, this is their first time in such a situation. Amongst those thousand people you're going to get people who are actually rallying behind you and who are more informed, not by actually knowing the situation, but maybe haven't gone through the situation or having a better understanding.

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Pt 008: Those organizations are passive by virtue of them not knowing how to respond. It's a question of trying to relate to what strategy I employ. I think some organizations can put a statement and leave it. Some crisis build and develop over time and you need to manage it over the different stages. For some organisations it could be a strategy of them knowing fully well that it it's something that they cannot respond to, or they don't feel that it's perfect. For them if people want information they will come to them, or they will have a strategy where the Channel Derek is the key to the media

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Pt 008: You get a lot of leaders who believe being heard in a crisis means they are responding to situations. And then you get leaders who know better to leave it to the professional to know how best to communicate to those situations. Now, when you get a leader who says no put something people must know, you find a communications person or the crisis communications team being put in a corner.

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Pt 009: I think if you don't operate from a management plan, then you would have a problem because you find yourself running after each and every comment. So the golden rule is look at the trend of comments and then insert that response in your holding statement because a lot of people are asking about this particular theme. You can answer hundred comments with a paragraph that you have always planned that when people are boiling at hundred and 10 degrees, this is how I managed to calm them down. So it's not a matter of just running after every comment. You can develop that phobia to respond particularly if you don't have that plan of how I need to address a certain set of questions. They stop and shiver in the corner because they do not know what to do with all sorts of comments.

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CS: Did you respond to individual comments on Facebook at that particular moment in time.

Pt 010: Yes, we have a policy to respond to every comment that requires our attention on Facebook directly or indirectly. But directly people inbox us and we respond in record time. And then, general comments that are made, that we pick as people are discussing the issue on their different pages on Facebook, whether that of media house pages or personnal pages of influencers on the platform. We look up what they are saying and then we address those through our communication, during and after the crisis.

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Pt 010: I don't know how to answer that one. But I think that organizations shouldn't be afraid to engage in this day and age. Organizations really shouldn't be afraid to engage with the publics on Facebook. Everything is kept professional on the side of the organization. I think it should be fine. The general public on Facebook or on other social media platforms will say whatever they want to say. As professionals, we need to be able to recognize the message behind the Facebook post. We should look at what is being said and what messaging you need to use to address that comment. Organizations really shouldn't be afraid to engage. They are there to serve. I think an organization should be forthcoming in terms of engaging. Of course, from our lesson, it may not be appropriate to engage indidviduals on those platforms, because the issues are sensitive in nature. But if it's anything around the main products and services, then engagement should happen.

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CS: Comment on suggestions that some organizations in Botswana are passive on Facebook during crisis.

Pt 011: It is critical, even more so in today's world to be seen to be doing something, be upstanding and to be accountable to the public. So if you lose your reputation is tied to the trust that the public bestows upon you, and where the customers are involved and the revenue risk or revenue loss.

Pt 011: So for the different organizations I have worked with in different capacities, may be thats one part I didn't touch on. From a preparation perspective and resources for reputation crises a lot of organizations, no matter how large they are will have one person mandated with managing reputational crises. But in terms of actually managing the crisis there's usually one person. So I know that in many organizations, there's not enough hands to go around to handle a multi-layered or multi-platform communication strategy. So in such instances, you will find that there is lack of responsiveness and is a big issue. The organisation, on its own accord, is stone deaf and is just not responsive, may be due to a lack of information.

Pt 011: During the crisis is a war room type of situation. So there is need for somebody to handle communication. There is need for somebody to handle responding. So if the crisis is large enough, you have media involved and on social media. So that multiple touch points. that I existing and obviously the internal.

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Pt 012: That's one of the reasons. Even if you post some good news on the internet or social media, somebody can just take and spin it around. It could be because of the image that you used in that. It could be one word that you used which they can spin and turn into something negative. Those people are very good at that, so they actually make you shy away from social media even if you have a good story to tell. So you can imagine in a crisis now it's even worse because you wanted to have the responses for those people or them questioning or putting a different facts out there. So, most people tend to be more believable than you as an organization, so that's why I said if you are sharing half the facts, then those guys will pounce on you.

Pt 012: Yeah, it is because I can imagine managing social media page for my organization and there's a crisis and then there are 300 to 400 comments. Most of the comments are actually banter and criticism. Would you then respond to the criticism? Would you respond to the banter? Would you do respond to the insults? We just actually put a solid statement out. We've seen, and we were followed how the former US President Trump was that person who responds with quickness as well. Remember social media page of organization have human being sitting behind them and if somebody goes personnal, you might also want to go personal and it doesn't end well. As soon as that happens, as an organization then it's assumed you don't have the moral ground, and you dont feel any emotions.

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Pt 013: I dont believe in sharing issues on the public domain. Most of the time it shows that people are fighting. I believe that maybe behind the scenes some organizations do reach out to their clients and stakeholders because it's a private matter. Organisations cannot go on to Facebook walls and then say okay tell us what your problem is or maybe say we've resolved your problem in a certain way. So I believe that behind the scenes, organisations do reach out to their stakeholders. They respond to the Facebook comments through inbox. You cannot blow your own horn in that way. We can go back to that comment on the wall and say okay you're not telling the people that we've helped you, but here is the truth. So it's some kind of an ecosystem situation. We go into their inbox and ask them to tell us how best we can help them,, what their problems are, and even ask for their telephone number so that we call them. Such issues are dealt with behind the scenes and then life goes on. Organisations cant just respond on the wall because there some vile characters who would just use every little opportunity to tear down the reputation of the organisation. We dont want to be discussing people's private lives on timeline because most of the time, people have issues that maybe were not handled properly in offices at your organization. So you need to really take their privacy into consideration and then deal with it privately.

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CS: There are suggestion that some organizations in Botswana do not respond to individual comments at all on Facebook during crisis. Why is that the case?

Pt 014: Its not a phobia. Its only that people just don't want to engage at individual level because that person who is asking the relevant questions is seen to be asking hard questions or is calling them out. But thats the person who could assist you in your next communication plan. Why not engage them and try to find out, even if they provide you with their number or even call them to the office for a chat. Things will be better. Instead, what do we do we delete the mess we delete the comments or we block the person and say thats our social media pages, its only for the people who are praising us. You do not stifle people like that because they can help you grow as an organization or at a personal level.

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CS: What is your view about organizations that do not respond to individual comments on Facebook in Botswana?

Pt 015: I must say that before setting up Facebook pages, organisations should have dedicated teams to deal with those pages. Before I address okay Oh, Chris and I must say that it is very important for an organization that when you set up your. It important because you are showing people that you are not only providing information, but you are also able to respond. So your communication becomes a two way communication it doesn't become a one way communication. Apart from that, it gives a bit of credibility because people are aware that when they post issues you are able to respond

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CS: Thank you. You spoke about being proactive and not reactive. There are indications that some organizations in Botswana are passive when sharing information on Facebook. What is your view on that?

Pt 016: Well, my view that they need to hire the right people. If you hire the right people who understand social media or information technology, TV and who understand public affairs you will be proactive on Facebook. You want to hire the right person for that role is not something that should be taken lightly. Its not about them knowing how to read and write that they can take up this role. It doesn't work like that. You need to hire the right person for that job and who's also good to people.

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CS: Thank you very much. There is also suggestions some organisations in Botswana do not respond to individual comments on Facebook. What could be the reason?

Pt 016: Well, if you don't have a policy in place, you wont respond. Once you have proper rules of engagement that translate into a policy for the business, you will respond appropriately because you're forced to respond as a matter of policy. If you just don't respond you won't be able to measure yourself.

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CS: Thank you very much.There are indications that some organizations in Botswana are very passive when sharing information. What is your take on this?

Pt 017: I don't think it's a phobia. From a personal standpoint I don't think so. I honestly think we do not share information. If you are not confident, you cannot share something that you are not confident about. It gives the other person power over you. When crisis breaks, we need to share as much information as we possibly can. It is very very important. Sometimes we do have a challenge here. For example, when there is a strike and police tells us to leave the building, we cannot share anything. The media would be calling asking questions at a time when we do not have access to buildings and resources and we are unable to say anything. We wont even be able to post anything on social media as a result. The best thing is to tell the people that the [stakeholder] is on strike and we don't know what caused the strike.

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CS: Thanks for that response. There are indications that some organizations don't respond to individual comments on Facebook during crisis. What could be the problem?

Pt 017: I don't see how see how that can be. From my standpoint when there's a crisis, you already have frequently Asked Questions. Those are the ones you will respond with. You started generating frequently asked questions. If you dont respond, they will find answers for themselves. Yes, you may not respond to everyone, but you may have someone who's picking critical ones. So frequently asked questions are very important for you to have.

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CS: You mentioned that people ask uncomfortable questions. Is that the reason why some organisations in Botswana are passive in sharing information?

Pt 018: Yes, from an outsider perspective people are always on the offensive. But there are also internal politics that affect the way you do your job because you cannot just go out and say this is what we're doing with this team. Sometimes there's a consultation process. Working in semi-government organisations, you have to understand your role that you cannot control or go against the agenda of the government. We are by extension part of government and our policies have to be aligned with those of government. So we cannot be out there bashing the policy of the government. So there's always that delicate balance that you have to figure out. How to play around with it, how to ensure that you service your clients and maintain integrity with them. Also give them a level of honesty to people within the organization to find out what is the proper way to respond to some of these people.

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				2	C.S	15/11/2021 10:46

CS: There are suggestions that some organisations in Botswana do not respond to individual comments. What is your take on that? Pt 018: It's very true. In our experience people who leave comments on our page, we have not been responsive to individual comments. What we have rather tried to do is to inbox that person so that it becomes a battle between us and them. If it's public anybody can see what we're communicating. The way social media is like these days is that people

are frustrated with a lot of things. If they feel like we're not responding the way they need you to respond, they go all out. If you dont respond, it seems you are hiding something.

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Pt 019: Yeah and organization that does not respond to individual comments, I think are making a huge mistake. You cant take customers lightly. They make your organisation.

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Pt 020: Like i'm saying, organisations provide very limited information in Botswana. As professionals, we don't share information. You will just see information flying all over the place in the country confirmation bias all over the place. You can read in between the lines that someone out there was bluffing here. The truth of the matter seems to be this.

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CS: Now, there are indications that some organizations in Botswana are very passive in sharing information on Facebook during crisis. What could be the problem?

Aggregate	Classification	Coverage	Number Of Coding References	Reference Number	Coded By Initials	Modified On
				3	C.S	15/11/2021 11:03

CS: There are suggestions that organizations in Botswana don't respond to individual comments on Facebook during crisis. What could be the reason for this?

Pt 020: There could be many reasons because, as a communicator you don't want to respond pound for pound. I will give an example. At [name of company] we did a lot of response to Facebook comments because a lot of people were complaining about the service. We came up with a response strategy to say we are not going to respond on the actual

comments because if you respond on the actual comment, you are going to create a lot of misconception. But you would rather respond to the comment and say, please inbox your number. Please ask your question at inbox so that I am able to attend to it specifically. The fact you saw that most organizations are not responding, it may be because organizations tend to you know engage with the public's on inbox. A lot of organizations have customer relationship management and they record every complaint and whatever complaint comes through Facebook. You may be aware, as well that a lot of the networks in Botswana have got recording systems of what goes on in social media. Recording I don't mean where they spy on people. No, no, I just mean that you've noticed a lot of organizations will send an error message. t's not just an error message. It is an error message that is going to fall on back end system that allows you to track every comment every worry, every question and so that you don't have anything that has fallen through the cracks.

Pt 020: We have got a responsibility as well to protect the community. Responding pound for pound will be an endless conversation and it is productive as well. For me, what is productive is ensuring and assuring you that i've seen your comment. Now, can we engage so that I really get to understand where you're coming from where if everybody comes from all over and they're saying, whatever they wanted to say, you know comments on Facebook are not necessarily a true representation of what the real question is.

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Pt 001: You know, so with the introduction of social media as we are aware, more crises now revolved around reputation, you know. We are using these platforms, you know, to manage our reputation.

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CS: I see. So what is the extent of social media at the time was social media more as more developed as it is now or not?.

Pt 001: No. those were the infancy stages of social media, you know, development in Botswana. That was 2012/14. As we know the social media is the latest phenomenon in Botswana. NO matter how we tried, you know, to communicate, you

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This could be in a form of a website where you immediately write and post on social media page where you immediately write a press release and post there, or maybe do the the fast fact sheet regarding the crisis that has just happened.

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There is a lady that I am working with the son here. The lasy was a driver of this huge truck, you know, this huge trucks that go underground. So we don't know what happened during that day, the poor lady drove the truck around the pit in [name of mine], and somehow the truck rolled

back, you know, into there and then she immediately died. So those are some of the crises that were not effectively manage because they forgot that there is the emotional side of things, there is family, you know. If I remember you know, asking the young boy about they were informed about their mother, and he said they saw it on Facebook. So Facebook also or social media also tends to be, you know, a threat to the same time, while it is also has good attributes or qualities when using it because of its agility and in many others, you know ,it tends to also be something else. I don't know how to describe it, but something bad. Imagine learning about your mother, that your mother has died, on Facebook, and you know that she is one of the few female drivers at the mine and you get to learn about that you know horrible accident, and you also wonder how did it happen because in mining operations, you know, things like cameras and cell phones are not allowed, I think, when you go underground and wonder what could have happened with that one.

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CS: Thank you very much, now talking about social media. What is the role of social media especially Facebook during crisis?

Pt 001: Social media is basically used to manage or disseminate or manage expectations, you know, manage situations that you may have, you know. But I want to believe that the landscape especially in social networking has changed on how we respond to a crisis.

| | 6 | C.S | 10/11/2021 09:44 |

As I indicated social media can also pose a further crisis because it is a risk, as you know. You never get to... You know this funnel model

where you never get to select what goes in and the level of interpretation of encoding and decoding messages. You never

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Pt 002: It helps in terms of putting out the message in the shortest possible time to stakeholders, especially the public.

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Pt 002: Yes, I think most organizations have realized the importance of social media, Facebook, youtube, instagram and stuff like that. And they are going, that side, but what is still lacking is, I think, is coming up with policies to guide in that space, and also dedicating resources because you don't just put a Facebook page out there. You need to have resources dedicated to that, human and financially.

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CS: Yes, the last question, as a follow up before we proceed, is did you advertise through Facebook at the time?

Pt 003: Facebook hadn't gained much friction, this was, if memory serves me well, this was end of 2006 beginning of 2007 so even though Facebook was a much more popular, especially in the developed world. Here at home, it wasn't really up to the standards it is today, and then operation we had not drafted policies for social media. We didn't have a Facebook page then, Twitter page or anything like that. The media that we relied heavily on back then was newspapers, your traditional media newspapers and your TV and your radio where we'll go into radio and speak about the different products that we have. But large part we used newspapers and magazines to advertise our products. Back then social media wasn't really much of a much of a case then. I'll take you through another somewhat of a crisis issue that we had and fortunately, that one happened when social media was widely used in Botswana.

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And we are fortunate because we live in an era where social media can share information from wherever you are at in the world to reach millions with that information.

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Pt 003: It helped us to disseminate information much faster. It helped us respond to various communication needs. A lot of people will be asking questions. If you issue a press statement and Facebook, obviously there's going to be a lot of questions posed by different individuals, and it has really helped us to sort of them and critically look at some of the common questions. 10 people can ask something that's much more similar, so it has really helped us gain an understanding of what communication needs are for the different segments of people that we communicate with using those platforms. It has helped in terms of dishing out information quicker, it has really helped because it's real time. Once you post something in the next 5-10 minutes you are flooded with responses, further inquiries and stuff like that, so it really does the gauge, and how much of an understanding the public has regarding a certain certain issue, as opposed to newspapers. Social media in terms of quickly disseminating information it's really is a big help to organizations. For instance, If we seem to experience an issue in the corporation, maybe, infrastructure for the call center has crushed, we are able to disseminate that information much faster using Facebook and giving people alternatives. Its really bigger if you compared it to the traditional media or writing letters or sending faxes.

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They are even nalytic tools in social media platforms to tell you your response rate; telling how many people have seen a particular post that you have done. So, those are really beneficial tools for a lot of companies or communication experts out there who are representing various companies. So in Botswana, I see a lot of companies really doing the uptake of social media, especially to share information about their companies or any latest developments within our their institutions. It is true that as companies in Botswana are, we are embracing the positive role that social Media is playing in terms of crisis. I haven't really seen a lot of companies communicating crisis on socual media.We get a lot of them still writing the press releases the traditional way. I believe, it also has a lot to do with the resources that they have because it's widely believed that social media is a younger generation type of thing or activity. But if you look closely really it's a tool that can really help. If used properly, or you have a proper social media engagement strategy you can use it to benefit as an organization to communicate just about anything.

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Of course you can't communicate everything through social media, but issues of public interest, more money, if you want to reach larger

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CS: Did you use Facebook as well? yeah What about messaging let me ask was Facebook well.

Pt 004: I wouldn't say to the extent that it is now, and I will tell you, because I think it's been different, unfortunately, at this point in time. I think in as much as it wasn't popular for a lot of organizations who use social media because the country's social media has to a large extent been established a platform for marketing and for even a PR. It was a lot easier to sort of communicate and we did use social media, but like i'm saying, I think we used it the same way that we would place any messaging on any other media platform. It wasn't necessarily in your face or spoken about the things we are unable to give to clients. I would say the difference between social media then and now is that now it's widespread and every single organization has since come on board, but the unfortunate bit is the rules of operating your traditional businesses on social media, where a lot of companies are struggling with at this point in time. It's easily accessible, there hasn't really been a lot of organizations, perhaps with policies in place. I think a lot of people go onto social media without the frameworks that would allow for them to operate in this space.

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CS: What role does Facebook play during crisis?

Pt 004: I think, a few years ago, we would only publishing information in the newspapers. The process of just having something go into the newspaper was very tedious. It will go through the different stages until it's actually printed. With Facebook is like immediate. What we found out is that a lot of the crisis that have happened was because of officers

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Pt 004: If you look at how Trump and Obama won elections, based on the fact that they used social media campaigns, that was powerful. Almost every nation in the world is getting into all those platforms. Facebook is more prominent.

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CS: Thank you very much. That's very profound. Now let's talk about the role of social media especially Facebook in Botswana during crisis?

Pt 005: Yes, the advent of Facebook actually came as a positive thing. I believe it came as a positive addition to the platforms that organizations can use to communicate. It's at the tip of the finger like that and people get information, unlike a time where we have to make appointment with radio stations or interviews with the newspaper. We only have 2 daily newspapers in the country and social media has actually brought a faster way of doing things or dissemination of information to the people. I was saying the advent of social media has actually come as a blessing because as an organization we need to quickly communicate with those techno-savvy kind of clients that we have. You'll find that most of the people are on social media actually 24 hour. Whether it's 3am in the morning, you get on social media you find that people have been logged on to Facebook. Then the other thing I like about Facebook is that the message does not get dated. It is a quick way of getting to the content.

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Pt 006: Social media is both good and dangerous. It is dangerous because you have all sorts of characters on social media. Some of whom do not have a direct interest in the business but are interested in the events as they are unfolding, and they would interpret them in in whatever way which in some cases is not accurate. Now, the fortunate thing is that social media is immediate. And now, if you have your statements ready, if you have your facts ready, you are able to respond in real time to whatever issues that may be arising from those that are interested in your matter. Well on social media you also have your own free will to deploy any statements or updates very quickly to social media. I mean the print media is having a very difficult time catching up with social media. By the time they print a story, the following day, the public would have consumed it 24 hours before throughout the night. We then find that even the newspapers themselves are have social media editions in real time. You have to take a lead to all those things so that you've been able to use social media in a very useful manner. But critically, as I said, whether it is social media or whatever medium, you don't lie. You should also know when to keep quiet and you define your message, you define your parameters you focus on solutions not problems because you will have realized from social for that on social media, in particular, people will be focused on problems. Focus as well on action not speculation, because social media, as I said, is full of people who will be speculating about all manner of things. If you focus on action rely on facts, you also simply because it is social media, and it is moving in real time and you also don't volunteer what you don't know. Sometimes the temptation is to say, people are up in arms on social media that also does it all sorts of things and you want to respond without facts and then you later on have to come back on Facebook or Twitter to say we are correcting a statement we made a few hours back, these are the facts,

and the statement is such a big statement. Even if it's social media it takes experience because if you experienced you go out and gather the true facts because you don't want to fall on to what you don't know. in the meantime you will be

getting the reactions on social media, so you have to move with speed to gather the facts and come back and tell people what is factual. You don't give anything away. Discipline teamwork. The other thing with social media which tends to cause problems with PR practitioners is that because it is real time, people are making all sorts of things in real time and there is a risk that you might forget to tell your own people. So what you want to avoid is to have a situation where your own people, your colleagues, your employees and the organization pick up information, pick up your statements, your interventions from social media. We always make sure that what we see on social media during a crisis, our staff get to have the facts first. Before we go to the media we communicate with our people first. It will give them five minutes to make sure that everyone has received this email or whatsapp update or whatever it might be. Once we've given them the five minute lead, then we'll go social media and make sure that we update social media in the same manner as we did employee. You don't want the inconsistency as well.

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Pt 007: Yes, we do happens to use Facebook. Any communication, any press release, public notice, media advisor or a public statement that we make, we also put it in our own social media platforms. In cases where we need to make a prompt or instant announcement, we use our Facebook page. What would also happen is that when we issue a press statement and then also use Facebook or social media platforms, we would then have some members of the public commenting on it.

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Pt 007: Yes, there are some disadvantages. Some people are may deliberately distorts information shared in social media. They may deliberately distorted and if those people are influential people, then some good number of people may be convinced by whatever wrong argument that this influential people keep sending us against your organization.

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Pt 008: Facebook, I always call it an institution in itself because it's not easily controlled because you must remember that once you put something on Facebook, its always going to be there. There are ways of communicating on Facebook. On the positive side, Facebook is a great platform because it's got different media houses who have platforms on it. For a social reason, Facebook can be used for multiple reasons. But in terms of messaging you need to be very careful how you use it. Social media, Facebook, in itself can be evil in a sense that you are you're going to get people who are really spiteful in your engagement. So you've got to be really careful and you're going to have a team that is committed to engaging if you put a statement. They should be ready to respond to that statement with one unified message. Responding to that one statement you need to have people who are very good in tracking communications. I mean you can put a statement and then not allow people to comment or allow people to engage. So Facebook really requires a high level of engagement and a high level of alertness of what people are saying, why

because it could end up spiraling into something that you never meant.

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Pt 008: Yes, we use Facebook. We find it as a good medium to communicate. I can't say statistically, but I think anybody who's got a handheld gadget with access to Internet is a Facebook subscriber. So there's a high level of usage in Facebook. So there is need to communicate crisis and to manage crisis through Facebook. It's a very good media. It goes back to high level of engagement, and a high level of alertness of what's going on. Because Facebook has got a very high level of engagement , it's tiresome. And it's not controlled. You can't control people on Facebook. You can create a message, but everybody's got an opinion and they've got every right to put it on. Nowadays when it is we're living in a world where people speak their mind. Whether they are being rude; whether they are being insensitive; whether they are being disingenuous or whether they're hiding up support from somebody else, people speak off the cuff. They could care less what the ramifications are because in most

cases in Botswana, people don't get taken to the book for what they say on those channels.

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Pt 009: In Social media everyone has a voice and anyone can be listen to. You need to watch for the very influential people as much as you would not want to get to every comment. When its influencial people and by influence they could be political, they could be social status, education status, they come to influence the followers in different ways and for different reasons. So you also need to sort of a have that play at the back of your mind if you've got the influencial in your strategy or marketing through influencers. It will be very easy for you even with crisis management or crisis communication to know how to really handle the people because you are acknowledging that there are those people that are very powerful. In attending to something when they say something, you may not do it publicly.

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Pt 010: Its presents an opportunity for an organization to tell its story quickly because of the way that Facebook or social media works. It presents opportunities for an organization to tell stories about itself, like positive news, while that crisis was going on.

Pt 010: Yes, we absolutely used Facebook. We used social media to inform them, but as the crisis was progressing we

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Pt 011: I think traditionally crises communication was premised on media, either print, radio or TV. In the last decades, what we have seen is the emergence of social media. People use social media networks, then they are consuming anything what come on real-time. I'm seeing time and time because traditional media is also transitioning into digital and social media platforms. That presents quiet a whole slew of changes for the communicator in a crisis perspective because whilst communicator used to first start with a holding statement, today consumers and the public have more access to organizations and leadership via social media. This means that the organization can no longer afford to wait to be asked

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What digital and social media has presented like I said is accessibility from mobile context. I can give you stats. In terms of activity, Facebook has the highest penetration of almost 98% of the penetration rate even higher than the people who actually have access to Internet. So you have a unique situation that might not be present in other markets or other countries. So that's the new game within the reputation circles that you need to know what to do on social media in the instance of a crisis because the public that's where they are.

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Pt 011: A few decades ago brand building was an internal exercise, and those days are gone. Its over. The public determines who you are based on how you behave. With That being said, it's important for brands to really extensively investing and knowing what the customer thinks or the public thinks of them and preparing for crises and in that preparation, know that the game has changed. Social media is the leading platform for communication and no amount of

money spent on other media kits can fend the crisis. I live in social media so i'm going to deeply invest in social media crisis readiness. To invest in resourcing social media personnel within the organization. What I would advise any organization is that there is need to invest in tools that can track that brand perception on an ongoing basis to ensure that any public places that may arise from social media are able to know about it and nip it in the bud.

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Pt 012: Social media has brought two things to the whole process of managing a crisis right. It is brought one advantage of speed in terms of telling this informationright. Imagine before the social media or the Internet was if a crisis happens you have to sort of rely or depend on newspaper. If a fire happens, it could take a week to be reported on newspapers, but it's no longer so because social media has brought an advantage of speed. We're now able to respond with speeds in terms of going on social media which says look this happened five minutes ago, and this is what happened. You can actually even take people every hour every 30 minutes of what is happening, what has been done. Like I said earlier, one of the things that happens in this instance, when when speculation starts or rumor starts, you can control them, but if you are in control of the information through your own page as an organization, as a company is that you can control that narrative.

Pt 012: I used Facebook in a crisis. I see a lot of companies really now using it.

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Thats the disadvantage of social media now. It has created citizen journalists. It has created vigilantes on Facebook. People who are just out there to cause mayhem using their pages and their following. They use the power of their following to sort of spread false information. They like sharing without even verifying the information they share. You can naturally as an organization or as a spokesperson, or as a CEO know about the crisis from people posting on social media before you know it officially. You can imagine now you don't even have control of the crisis. It's already

out there, someone has shared it or they are sharing it live on Facebook.

You can use it to the advantage of the organisation to be in control of the messaging. But it can also go ahead of you and make you now become reactive about the crisis. So it has its advantages and disadvantages. Even our media now here, traditional media, they own their own social media pages. A newspaper sometimes share a citizen's post or citizen's video or picture without verifying. It's because everyone wants to be the first to tell the story. You can actually lose the control of managing a crisis.

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Pt 013: I think Facebook is very helpful during a crisis because the message is just immediate. You don't have to go through a lot of channels to get the message through. So if you have your message, then sharing it through Facebook is helpful because a lot of people use Facebook. These days, I mean like I said almost every phone has Facebook on it. So when you share your crisis message on Facebook, the one person that sees that is going to share with their friends. The message can get through very fast.

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Pt 013: Sometimes people can just copy that message and then come up with their own stories and jumped to their own conclusion and just share what they think. They want to share the whole story as it is. So people can change the narrative and dent the image of the organization.

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CS: Thank you. Lets now talk about Facebook or social media. What is the role of Facebook during crisis?

Pt 014: Unfortunately, we are living in times when everyone have smartphones. They are able to see stuff on their phones. Governments cannot afford to ignore the role of social media, be it Linkedin, be it Facebook, be instagram or Twitter. Every form of social media should be utilized for the benefits and marketing, for brand positioning of organizations and especially during the crisis. We saw during Covid 19 where the amount of consumed social media content skyrocketed because everyone was home. People were tired of watching TV. So they were on their phones, on their laptops most of the time. So, if your organization was not present it missed a huge opportunity. That was the opportune moment when organization should have just put in stuff about their services products and programs so that people could see it. Unfortunately, with social media again you have the latitude to scroll down. If I see something that doesn't really concern me because I don't bank with them, I just scroll down and I go to another post.

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Pt 015: Well, social media, I must say plays a critical role in managing a crisis. Social media is one of the tools or the platforms that an institution can use because you are able to reach a lot of people very fast. We have our Facebook page but we are also linked to our government Facebook page. You can imagine when there's a crisis and we share information in the media, it is instantly all over. Hundreds of thousands of people would have access to this information, while waiting for other traditional media platforms, for example use of radio. Our government radio has broadcast every hour. But through Facebook, our leaders can share information for people to see it to know the truth. When newspapers go for printing, already social media has done the work. Facebook can even do a live coverage. The key is to engage with the audience. So Facebook is very very beneficial in terms of managing crisis in Botswana.

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Pt 015: Well, I think we should look at the advantages than the disadvantages of using facebook during crisis. Technology is advancing

each and every day and you can have people accessing information Tuesday, Wednesday, Saturday, Sunday. Literally everyday. You get a lot of updates via social media. So it is very impactful when used very well by an organization and it

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Pt 016: One of my strengths as a PR practitioner or communications manager was that I had segmented my audiences internally and externally because southern Africa has a demographic change in terms of audiences. Young people are tech-savvy and they have access to information technology. They have cell phones.

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Pt 016: Right now we are going through the crisis of Covid and you can actually tell who gets information passed with a click of the button. They're sending everyday messages on social media and it's so fast.

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Pt 016: Social media is a communication channel. In Africa as you're aware, we have a population that is very tech savvy. Almost over 60% of the population of Africa right now is online. Of course, we still have a digital divide and it's proving as a solution for communication. Everyone is going that route. But, obviously, there has to be a power of a media plan within the company.

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Pt 017: It is very useful. Facebook is the best and the worst of what you can get. For instance, when the Covid 19 hit and the President declared a state of Emergency and lockdowns, Facebook was the quickest way to get information, to reach our workers and stakeholders to say do not work or do not go into that area. As an institution we told our stakeholders to go home because we knew they will be stranded. We had to come up with other ways of facilitating them and Facebook was the best platform. Even when we opened, we reached them through Facebook. It is good, it reaches them. Our communication never got distorted, and that was what surprised me about Facebook. When we are communicating you know lockdowns and stuff like that to save if you come from somewhere and you want to go. It was even easier to communicate and inform our stakeholders that their stipends will be delayed by two days. On the other side, our youth just type anything to put someone into trouble. They start exaggerating messages and sending out the wrong information.

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Pt 018: The wonderful thing about social media is that people get to express themselves. For example, we have a database in our organisation of job seekers etc, and people get to use Facebook to complain about the user friendliness of our database. We always improve our database based on their comments for easier access. The other things is that social media is like wildfire because now it has gone beyond print media. We read print media now for more in depth stories. But before it even hits print media, it's generally on Facebook. People have talked about that. I don't have to wait for newspapers to find out about a breaking story.

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Pt 019: It plays a big part because that's where the bulk of the communication is. That's where you know opinion leaders; that's where there may be a significant population. When you have made a mistake, its good that you are sharing information on Facebook and other social media platforms. But at the same time, it has also increased the number of errors and mistakes that organizations can make. It doesn't afford you the time to be thinking through some of the stuff that you put out there on social media. And like you know, our own traditional media okay from an organizational point of view, is a nugget. It's a gold dust. You have this audiences that have access to you 24/7. That is very good for us. We are excited and it's cheap, accessible to everyone. That's very good for us, but at the same time it could also be a goldmine in the sense that much as you'd want to access social media so that you put across your messageyour reach out to various clients and stakeholders and increasing the clicks thing pressing the visitation to your side and then your brand growth like that. It is a landmine in the sense that the number of the mistakes that could be made on social media has increased phenomenonally. If someone says, for instance, I need an answer and they are talking to you at 4pm and you are busy doing something you need to be checking and making sure that what you put there is correct, is accurate. You need to be ensuring that you also responding so that you don't experience and meet expectations and demands which could lead to a crisis.

Pt 019: For instance, if someone asked a question and it stayed for six hours that could lead to a crisis, but as an organization, you are seen or you are portrayed as this organization that is not responsive. Facebook has also increased the number of errors that you could make. Exposure has grown phenomenally. But Facebook and social media are a goldmine. They are a blessing to us in so many respects. In organization, particularly at a time when budgets are dwindling for communication and PR divisions, it's a breath of fresh air for us. But at the same time, it could be a banana peel. I've seen organization tripping over.

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Pt 020: I think it played a major role and, yes, I have used social media especially Facebook. I think i'm seeing a great deal of things with Facebook doing the good job. You will notice that we have about 400,000 people now in Botswana who are on Facebook. However, out of that 400,000 people who are on Facebook, the impact is there, but the other thing that i've picked up is that who is on Facebook because when I look at the numbers of people who've got access to smartphones. You notice that there are about 1.4 million people who've got access to smartphones. But what they do with these smartphones is another issue. Of the 400,000 people that are on that are on Facebook currently in Botswana, you will notice that they find a different pages and in following those different pages. It means that you have to ensure that your message is crafted in such a way that your targets would be, or rather, your communication would be targeted to the right audiences and the right audiences

in terms of age, in terms of location and in terms of generally the bigger aspect of demographic.

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Aggregate	Classification	Coverage	Number Of Coding References	Reference Number	Coded By Initials	Modified On
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Pt 001: You know, so with the introduction of social media as we are aware, more crises now revolved around reputation, you know. We are using these platforms, you know, to manage our reputation. But at the same time, there will be dynamics such as language use or excluding other stakeholders.

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Pt 001: Yeah, so the whole you know messages about keeping the plan clean and simple, you know, not using lexicons that not any average person will be able to, you know, to understand and also to address the critical issues, you know coming out of this crisis.

Aggregate	Classification	Coverage	Number Of Coding References	Reference Number	Coded By Initials	Modified On

Files\\Pt 002_transcript.vtt

Aggregate	Classification	Coverage	Number Of Coding References	Reference Number	Coded By Initials	Modified On
No		0.0499	1			
				1	C.S	10/11/2021 10:09

Pt 002: Language is indeed critical tool during crisis communication. Communication during a crisis should take into account cultural dynamics and language fit in those dynamics. it should persuade rather than dominate and manipulate. You should use language carefully to make the message come out clear and well understood by stakeholders. Persuading is good but have negative connotations. I would settle for persuade because as a practitioners, I should have the art of using language to tell the truth.You need to be well understood by stakeholders so they see where you are coming from. They should see you are not trying to condescend or undermine them. Our job is to create understanding between us and stakeholders. They should see that you respect them, you value them and should fit well with what you stand for. Stakeholders should be

regarded and be made to understand.

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Aggregate	Classification	Coverage	Number Of Coding References	Reference Number	Coded By Initials	Modified On
No		0.0300	1			
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Pt 003: For me it really depends on the audience you're communicating with. Fortunately for Botswana, we tend to use English a lot for obvious reasons. It's easy to communicate, but sometimes you'd find that, for the most part the audience largely understands Setswana. Its a very, very somewhat difficult language, not for a lot of us, even though it's a native language. And like you rightly pointed out some organizations determine which language to use, depending on what they want to achieve. It's really important that you pick a language that does not distort the message. Sometimes it helps to try and communicate in both languages so that you get much coverage in terms of getting your message across, because there are certain people in certain sections of our society, who understands if you're talking to the middle class in towns and cities, English will work. But if you're talking to that old men in the village or woman in the village, sometimes the vernacular would work in your favor in terms of getting those issues, across. Organizations do sometimes tend to manipulate the use of language in order to get out and get away with a lot of stuff. Achieving a Win-win is tricky, especially if you are trying not to prolong the issue. But at the same time, you are trying to manage a situation, so you shouldn't really manipulate. The whole situation, depending on what your agenda is, what you're trying to achieve, you can easily use language to make sure that you achieve that thing if there's a balance in terms of both yourself and the public wins, thats alright.

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Pt 004: Look, I think, language is important, like i'm saying you want to be heard. You don't want ambiguous words. So, even in terms of our language use it must match our actions as well, we need to be able to use an appreciation of the fact that we're not talking down people. The fact that these people spend time accessing our products and services, that's why we are constantly evolving constantly finding better ways of bettering our product offerings. It means we're engaging with extremely smart and intelligent customer so even in terms of us handling crisis, we must never treat our clientele as we do the kids were you're trying to sugar coat everything. There is a manner in which language is used. But the long and short of it is that your language must support core values of what organizations stand for. The words that we use in the manner in which we use them is extremely important.

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So the language, the type of language matters a lot. Sometimes you might even consider using the local language that people speak here. In urban areas you definitely have to use English across all the communication channel because you are mostly dealing with a customer who understand English. We also deal with international audiences. They speak official language being English. Sometimes in your message, you have to consider that there is this generation kind of language. You would not communicate to the youth, as you are communicating to the elders. It depends on the kind of age group.

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Pt 005: Sometimes languages can be a barrier. For the message to be clear and deliberate in the way it is delivered, it's very important for people in an organization to be thoughtful of the recipient of the message. It's important for you to package your message in such a way that people would not feel offended in any way. So normally it's very important to be neutral when you communicate to your audience. As an organization, the way you deliver your message should not be arrogant. Language is very important. The tone of language is very important.

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Pt 006: Okay, let's start with the language bit. I've always found it useful to deploy language that is calm, language which is not condescending, language which is factual, mindful of course that you add the midst of a crisis, and there are possibilities that's the people that you are in dispute with will engage in propaganda tactics. So you do find that inevitably during the course of a crisis. You might have to deploy language that is maybe emotive. But language, which seeks to sway your stakeholders to your side that points where your adversaries might complain and say you're casting them in an unfriendly lights. Of course it is not a friendly situation at that point. It might help you to say to your stakeholders, including the public that the people that are causing problems do not have the best interests of the organization at hearts. And normally that doesn't sit well with the other party. But yes it's a mix and you make that decision, as the crisis evolves.

Aggregate	Classification	Coverage	Number Of Coding References	Reference Number	Coded By Initials	Modified On

Files\\Pt 007_transcript.vtt

Aggregate	Classification	Coverage	Number Of Coding References	Reference Number	Coded By Initials	Modified On
No		0.0256	1			
				1	C.S	11/11/2021 10:33

Pt 007: In my view it is not wrong for organizations to use language in a manner that would convince people that there is hope at the end of the dark situation. There is nothing wrong if such organizations communicate positively and showing people that they shouldn't lose hope because doing so would keep people supporting the organization. It would be to remove a lot of stress from people. However, such organizations should leave to their promise and actualize the promise that they make. They shouldn't just make promises for the sake of making people happy.

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Aggregate	Classification	Coverage	Number Of Coding References	Reference Number	Coded By Initials	Modified On
No		0.0095	1			
				1	C.S	11/11/2021 10:48

Pt 008: We really eloquent and you have got people who are well versed in both English and the vernecular. That can be to the detriment of your organization, because now they want to come across as saying things that don't need to be said in addressing the situation.

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Aggregate	Classification	Coverage	Number Of Coding References	Reference Number	Coded By Initials	Modified On
No		0.0265	1			
				1	C.S	11/11/2021 10:56

Pt 009: I think there are organizations that do so, particularly government organizations. They have the tendency of using language to manipulate the audiences to believe otherwise. I've seen those instances, but you know with the corporate brands you need to be very careful with how you use language because it shouldn't be something that you take advantage of in order to persuade your audience. They use langague to suppress you so you dont speak your mind. This is weird.

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		1	C.S	11/11/2021 11:05

Pt 010: Okay, first of all, I haven't observed any organization that has deliberately used that kind of language to deceive people or to manipulate them. If they did, that would be unfortunate. I think authenticity, truthfulness are very important. When addressing issues, an organization should just come out and tell the truth and where they don't know, they should be able to tell people that they don't know and they will go and find out more information.

Aggregate	Classification	Coverage	Number Of Coding References	Reference Number	Coded By Initials	Modified On

Files\\Pt 011_transcript.vtt

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		1	C.S	15/11/2021 09:24

Pt 011: The use of heavily technical language is not commendable. However, the reality of social media is that you cannot out talk the audience. You cannot shout above them. No can you muffle them unless you are a government organization and can shut down the Internet or whatever. Usually people find ways around that so if people are able to circumvent authoritarian regimes with other technologies, they get across that disclosure around organizations and governments and the honours are no longer on the organization to determine what they are perceived as, but on the audience and the publics to determine what they perceived organisations as. That being said, it means that no amount of bombastic or technical or any nefarious intent language will make the crisis go away. This can either impact trust in terms of the organization's ability to deliver or it can really unfortunately impact revenue of an organization. The rule of thumb for social media is keep it simple, keep it concise.

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		1	C.S	15/11/2021 09:32

The head of technical would be more suitable to be the second in terms of speaking because they can speak the language of what is happening because if they will delegate to a PR person sometimes the terminology and everything that happens will be a challenge.

		2	C.S	15/11/2021 09:42

Pt 012: We've come to use English and Setswana as accepted communication languages. If you use English for an audience that does not understand it, it might seem you using it to dominate them. Language can become a barrier to people, in terms of knowing and understanding. I could somehow sympathize because if you go to the rural areas and speak oxford English, they will not understand. Its a disadvantage in terms of disseminating the information.

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Pt 013: I don't believe that's the truth. We always use both languages because there are people who cannot understand English. When we send information to newspapers we use English because the audience understand English. To those who do not understand English, we use Setswana, which is our national language. So language has to be simpler for people to understand it without being manipulated. We have your ordinary people, we do make use both languages. Yes it's mostly English but when it's really necessary and we understand that here our target audience are people who are mainly Setswana speaking. We do make sure that our message is shared in both languages as well.

Aggregate	Classification	Coverage	Number Of Coding References	Reference Number	Coded By Initials	Modified On

Files\\Pt 014_transcript.vtt

No		0.0919	2			
				1	C.S	15/11/2021 10:00

Pt 014: So messaging is very important and if you don't have the right people who know how to talk to young people, how to talk to artists, how to talk to elderly people, how to talk to cultural practitioners, how to talk to our elders, then we have the crisis.

CS: I see. Thank you very much. You just spoke about the importance of using relevant language. There are indications that some organizations purposefully use language to dominate, to persuade and to manipulate their audiences during a crisis. What is your take on that?

Pt 014: It happens a lot where people are made to feel bad about certain decisions; where people are made to feel bad about trying to get accountability especially from politicians. For example, I am on a holiday the Delta. If I were to talk about the things I saw and how I was treated, I will then be treated like a racist and that I am trying to incite people to do all kinds of things. I'll be regarded as anti-government because i'm seeing something in the delta, which, personally, I do not subscribe to. When I try to find answers for that I will then be labeled a troublemaker. Most organizations in Botswana usually do that through language when people try to find out information. People are often labeled cheap.

Others will blatantly tell you are not the target market because we're talking about people who can afford certain services and products. Others when you ask why the water bill is so high, then you are labeled a troublemaker. If you try to complain, the PR unit will try and come up with some form of narrative that's going to make you feel so bad. They try to patronize, insult people's intelligence, or just persuade people to rally behind them. They do use that and in Botswana as a nation, we do not like complaining. We are shy to do that, you don't want to complain you

don't want to celebrate your successes, lest you be misconstrued to be too arrogant. When you want accountability, you are labeled troublemaker so organizations that have tended to use those tricks.

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We are a country that makes it look like people are being done a favour. Most PR practitioners will rely on that and they will manipulate people into believing everything they say.

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Pt 015: I have realized that organisations use language to persuade stakeholders. At the end of the day, people are the ones who make a decision on the kind of information that you are releasing. If you release a persuasive message or use a persuasive or manipulative language, how do you want the audiences to respond? You have to make sure that the way you package information isnt obvious that this is persuasive. People should feel it is their responsibility, for example to wear a mask. They shouldnt feel persuaded or manipulated to wear masks. They should feel that they are protecting themselves from the virus. As much as persuasive language is used at the end of the day, people make a decision to find out what kind of benefit they can derive from it.

Aggregate	Classification	Coverage	Number Of Coding References	Reference Number	Coded By Initials	Modified On

Files\\Pt 017_transcript.vtt

No		0.0604	1			
				1	C.S	15/11/2021 10:39

CS: There are indications that some organizations purposefully use language to dominate their audiences, to persuade them and to manipulate them. What is your view?

Pt 017: For me any institution that will use language to dominate its audiences is lost because in other words you're not communicating. It's a very, very bad tactic to use during crisis. It's just using scare tactics like AIDS is a killer disease. You leave people feeling defeated. That's not why you want to communicate. A language is powerful. Language defines your character. So it's very important for me to listen to someone talking. But if you want to be using language that people don't understand, its as good as not talking to them. In the case of Botswana, if all your messages are always going to be

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			1	C.S	15/11/2021 10:46

CS: There are indications that some organizations in Botswana purposefully use language to dominate, to persuade and to manipulate the audiences. What is your take on that?

Pt 018: My personal belief has always been that if you are willing to communicate with people talk to them like you are talking as a person. Let it sound natural. It should sound conversational. It should be a flowing conversation. I think that's what most organizations miss. Sometimes we talk in the language, and i'm not saying you should be casual, but let it be very clear to somebody in simple enough language, without manipulating words and phrases. Let it be a natural conversation as i'm talking to you now. Here in our country, we have this thing of self doubt that we want to use big words to show that we are an organization with academics, but we miss out on the simplicity of communication so that the essence of it is that I talk you here, and then you respond.

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Pt 019: Language is a means of communication. The main reason why you are communicating is that there's a message that you want to put across. You're putting it across because you want the other person to receive it. That's why organizations have communication department. The communication department, solidly exists for repackaging the information. They do away with a lot of misinterpretations. They ensure that this is how we want to be understood. Let's understand that the very reason why we communicate is that we have an intended meaning and this intended meaning must reach the intended audience. Anybody who uses language, particularly to hide, he's not communicating. The communications department would be failing in that very basic responsibility. For example, I work with economists who use their jargons and my job is to scrape that text to make it more clearer and make sure that I put in a language intended for our audience. So thats the role of the communications department. We repackage the information. We are not a conveyor belts. We don't get information from lawyers, like I work with the lawyers,and pass it on to our audiences colored in legalese. We will be failing in our duties.

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Pt 020: I think we spoke about audience and you spoke about culture. In terms of culture, you spoke about defining the different audiences that we speak to when we communicate a crisis, a crisis management plan. I think language plays a major role but maybe to persuade in a good way. Something that relates to them and also remember, sometimes that is of interest to the communities that we serve may not necessarily be interesting to them. As communicators we tend to want mirror what the organization wants to achieve and what the Community needs to hear. Your message needs to be as calm as possible. The language needs to be as polite and as relatable as possible. The message needs to respond with clear explanation. It shouldnt sound threatening and upsetting. I think also maybe persuasion would also come in the line of conveying empathy. I think as communicators we tend to use language that respects our public and attempt to reduce the bad feeling about something.

Communicators in Botswana are very diplomatic for our own good, whereas when you look at other countries when you speak about something you have to be forthright you have to be concise, you have to be direct and to the point and say we've experienced this number of deaths and as opposed to a certain percentage of the deaths in the country we're doing relatively well.

Codes\\Message development and processes\Crisis response strategies

Document

Files\\Pt 001_ Transcript

No	0.0363	4

			1	C.S	10/11/2021 09:37

Pt 001: This one from my experience as a communication practitioner, it is always good to tell the truth. One can never one can never use a time-buying as a strategy. It never works, it comes back to haunt you at the end of the day. Corrective strategies can be centred around truth, you know, or being candid with what could have happened so once you start employing, you know, strategies that are likely to buy time you are now really aggravating the situation. So normally, you know, it's clear, there should be guidelines. These guidelines should be able to inform management to decide or an organisation to decide on wherever the type of corrective strategies, they want to deploy will work for them.

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Pt 001: You should never ever lie to a customer or a stakeholder. You should never lie about anything to anyone, because that one again, its a crisis, that is likely to cost you reputation, as well as financial loss should they find that to actually lying to them, you know. So it's always best to come out clear, and then thereshould also be the social media policy in place, you know.

			3	C.S	10/11/2021 09:39

As I indicated, as a spokesperson, if not everything should be centered around you, so this is the time, where you should be able to you know adopt corrective strategies that are centered around a platform that you have in the workplace.

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				4	C.S	10/11/2021 09:40

Just to sum it up on the on the one on the corrective strategies, never lie to a customer or never buy time with a customer because it may come back to haunt you, even more than the crisis you are handling.

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Aggregate	Classification	Coverage	Number Of Coding References	Reference Number	Coded By Initials	Modified On
No		0.0514	2			
				1	C.S	10/11/2021 10:07

CS: There are suggestions that some organizations in Botswana prefer corrective strategies, others would use denial strategies, where they deny that there is no crisis or others will shift blames. Are these strategies prevalent during crisis in Botswana, and how effective or less effective are they in repairing reputational damage?

Pt 002: Yes, I would say, they are there. As you know we are a developing nation. This profession, the communication and public relations profession is still at an infant stage. So, they are there.

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				2	C.S	10/11/2021 10:08

CS: I see! So, what you are saying is that the denial strategy, where organization simply deny issues, but later truth surfaces are not effective in repairing reputational damage in Botswana?

Pt 002: Indeed, because you can name several organizations, where you will hear this, and tomorrow is something else, and then you know the organization's reputations is under.

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Files\\Pt 003_transcript.vtt

Aggregate	Classification	Coverage	Number Of Coding References	Reference Number	Coded By Initials	Modified On
No		0.0408	1			
				1	C.S	10/11/2021 10:44

CS: There are suggestions that some organizations in Botswana use corrective strategies, others use denial strategies, while others use shifting the blame during crisis. Are these strategies prevalent in Botswana and how effective or less effective are they?

Pt 003: I have seen those strategies being employed by several organization, but the rule of thumb, especially for crisis management in PR is of course, responding immediately. If you're still investigating the issue or make sure that you see exactly that you are still trying to find out the issue be it's an issue involving safety or fatality in the organization. Normally it helps to have that initial response, where your request to be given a bit of time to investigate the matter so that you can gain full knowledge about the crisis then respond back at a later time to give full details. What i've noted with being quick to deny is that sometimes when, especially with the media, when the media asks you questions or makes inquiries already they have information. So once you start denying they will go and publish and normally when the publisher they'll reveal information that you were trying to to hide. So it's always very important to admit if there's an issues without going into details. If there is death of personality due to negligence, admit without really necessarily getting into details, because with death, there is a family involved, there's privacy, and all of those issues. I think you need to stick to the basics, to say yes there's an issue here, but we are still trying to gain full understanding of what transpired, so that you can offer details after the family has been informed. It really depends, but I find it really dangerous for organizations to outright be on the offensive once something happens, especially when there's an issue. Denying is a no go area. Rather buy some time because if you buy some time it might help you in the long term. Its a strategies that really works, we have also used that in the past where if you are trying to buy time, you comment and say we're still studying so we determine what we could communicate at that point in time.

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CS: There are indications that organizations in Botswana use corrective strategies; others use denial, while others use shifting the blame strategies during crisis. Are these strategies prevalent in Botswana and how effective or less effective are they in repairing reputational damage?

Pt 004: I think a lot of organizations have really gotten it wrong. I don't know where this solution comes from, or what influences that. I don't know why there is a perception that when you bring big news you're creating some sort of negativity around your products and services yet you are more open. For company, whatever it is, so I think that's where the biggest issue is. We are finding that a lot of companies tend to be reactive. They tend come out as defending when they get the opportunity to possibly engage with their customers. The long and short of it is that the majority of companies have had a hard time dealing with crisis.

Aggregate	Classification	Coverage	Number Of Coding References	Reference Number	Coded By Initials	Modified On

Files\\Pt 005_transcript cs

No	0.1045	2

			1	C.S	11/11/2021 09:33

CS: There are suggestions that some organizations in Botswana use corrective strategies, denial strategies, and shifting the blame strategies. Are these strategies prevalent in Botswana?

Pt 005: Okay, from my experience at the [name of organisation] for the past five years, I realised that most of the organisations here use denial strategies. They like writing rebuttal messages against the media reports. You'd find that a media House would have published an article where they would have conducted an interview and you'll realize that actually this article was balanced. You discover that the writer of the article or the journalist would have taken time to do research on that particular article and from nowhere there is a rebuttal from the organisation. In the rebuttals the organization comes back to say they do not know anything. They're not aware of what has been described in that article. In no time, the truth comes out and you discover that the newspaper was correct.

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Pt 005: The corrective messaging is the best practice to actually opt for. It is very important for organizations to have knowledge of risk management. Yes, we have risk officers or risk managers in organization, so that whenever we face a crisis, they would actually apply their risk management skills to manage the situation. I believe once you take the corrective messaging strategy, it will show that you accept that your organization is going through a crisis or is it going through a situation. Sometimes a crisis can be an internal crisis where it is people in the organization that are causing the crisis. So, once you correct yourself, it's very clear you acknowledge the problem and you are willing to resolve it.

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To say yes, there is challenge X and this is what has been done to address it, you obviously have to show your publics that's there is a problem, and it is being dealt with. But it is very dangerous to assume that they will never know the truth. It is always critical to be upfront and package the message in a sensitive manner because you want people to know that there is a particular issue but you're also mindful of the interests of other parties, including the organization. So, it is critical to be honest, when dealing with crisis. Do not lie. You will be caught out. It does happen and once you're caught out your own credibility is diminished significant. You will never be able to contain that crisis if you yourself are seen as an evil person.

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Pt 006: The primary consideration is to contain the crisis as quickly as possible so that you can restore normalcy to the organization. So it's critical to assess what the issue is. It is critical to have a crisis communications plan which will help you to protect your reputation and that of the organization.

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 The main goal at the end, would be to try and stabilize the emotions of the people and bring hope to the people so that they don't come to think and believe that they are all going to die, and would not live to choose to see their children grow or their grandchildren growth. So the motivation will be to bring hope to the people. The messagethat you are crafting, like I said, you wanted it to be a message of hope, a message of positivity. That will motivate how you craft your message.

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Pt 007: In relation to what we are doing here, we have not adopted any of the two strategies, you mentioned denial and shifting the blame strategy. We have not done that because if we were to do it, people are going to lose trust in us. It would eventually catch up with us. Once trust is gone, it would be very difficult to build. So my position is that I would not advise any organization to adopt any of these strategies, except for corrective strategies. I think they possibly provide a temporary relief and because you cannot deny a truth forever, eventually it comes out. When it comes out you don't look good in the eyes of the public and your critical stakeholders. Similarly if you keep shifting blames and it eventually catches up with you, your audience eventually come to realize that the problem is not the others whom you're pointing fingers at, but the problem is actually with you. When things come to that people and your critical stakeholders would distrust you and, once you are not trusted, you cannot succeed. If you are a profit making business, then you'll eventually close shop. If you are a government department, you are eventually going to serve people who do not believe in you, people who do not trust you. You lose credibility, you lose integrity. You cannot even enjoy doing that which you may wish to do.

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Pt 008: There is the shifting the blame; the messages of hope, then some organizations just choose to ignore. People choose to ignore. Yes they're very prevalent in Botswana. You have seen that there are some organizations that are well equipped, that are actually well versed in the communication strategies of crisis management. There are organizations that have been very good in managing and containing the crisis through communication. They came out of the issues not completely unscathed but they limited the reputational risk. In this day and age, it's very difficult to shift the blame because like I said there's always that situation of leakages, where your own people divulge information and they say organisations are not telling the truth, here's the truth. The ones that that use corrective strategies are the ones that have a genuine story. If you're going to offer hope you've got to ensure that you deliver on that promise.

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			1	C.S	11/11/2021 10:53

CS: There are suggestions that some organizations in Botswana use corrective strategies, others deploy denial strategies, while others use shifting the blame strategies. Are these prevalent in Botswana and how effective or less effective are they in repairing reputational damage?

Pt 009: All the three are common in Botswana like the reassuring or the denial or the finger pointing with the blame game. I think i've seen all the three in action. I've seen all the three at play, and then the most common being where somebody is really showing that they are fixing the problem, and at the same time blaming someone. Then you wonder why they can't just acknowledge they end at fixing and not blaming someone. They would want to through a service provider under the bus and thats your internal processes. So there's that common mistake of a people combining the two strategies. It's best to stick to one. Just correct their behavior because they have done this and that now it doesn't really help you because you know where we sit. You all know that when you have contracted someone, you take the responsibility.

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Pt 010: In my organization such don't exist. But other organisations around the country use them. I think it's very detrimental to the organizations reputation if that's how they choose to manage the crisis in that way. They'd lose trust. Customers or clients or the general public lose trust in such organization that use denial and shifting blame strategies.

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The second stage is remediation or even apologize to the audiences. But I hold the perspective that one needs to determine the

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Pt 011: Denial strategies are quite prevalent in Botswana. So what will happen, as an example, is that a lot of organizations are really quick to deny the existence of a crisis and before they fully establish if there isn't a crisis. Now the risk is your reputation obviously, should the truth come out. It means that the company's reputation, our weight obviously becomes reduced and impacted. With that said, denial can never be a first point of communication in a crisis because like I said, in the majority of cases, crises is a surprise both to the organization and to the public. So until you have the full effect of what has transpired what extent it has transpired, who has been impacted and how, then it is not advisable to deny. But like I said in Botswana it is quite common and unfortunately, organizations end up being caught up because they denied before they establish the facts.

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Pt 012: Obviously they're very prevalent. I think we see them a lot from different organizations. Like I said earlier, with social media you cannot deny, you cannot hide. We've seen during crisis, companies instituting investigations and never publishing the results of the investigation and nobody really knows if there was corrective action taken until another cases happens and then people wondering what happened to the previous crisis. Across the country, denial is probably the most prevalent one. A lot of denial that leadership was not aware of the crisis, but will come back to you until the crisis is bad. But they're not very effective like I said in a crisis, you need to acknowledge the crisis so that also even when you approach the crisis, one of the things that happens when you acknowledge the crisis is that you actually inflate or reduce speculation. One of the worst things is that if you as an organization keeps quiet or deny people starts speculating on social media and our society tend to be alive during crisis.

Pt 012: Whenever there's a crisis, they'll take an action but there is no apology and empathy. In most setups, for organisations I have worked for, this is what happens, we might not know a lot but whatever happens, we apologize, we feel the pain, we will take action to make it go away, we will support the family in a fatality. So what happens is that as a practice when crisis happens, there is no apology to the nation, there is no apology to the families affected. So that's one of the biggest gaps in crisis management.

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Pt 013: Yes, I can recall that most organisations like deploying denial strategies where they simply deny that some crisis exist. Sometimes like the first organisations would choose to say they are still trying to figure out what's happened are still investigating. If they really aren't aware of what actually is happening, then the best thing to do is to just investigate and then come back up and tell what is happening. Denial and shifting the blame can happen, and you might find that sometimes it is true that they shift the blame, but it does help to maybe also investigate and then come together with whoever to blame and share the message together to show unity.

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Pt 015: Well i'm not saying that I have seen them in practice in Botswana, but one that is more prevalent is the blame game. I must say that they are not really good strategies to ensure that you deal with the crisis effectively. For example, denial strategies. If it is factual at the end of the day, at some point in time, citizens or the public one way or the other find the truth. Denial is one of the strategies that most organizations like to play along with thinking that it is the safest strategy. While looking at issues of integrity as well, it is very very important to make sure that you don't deny factual information or you don't deny information that is truthful.

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CS: There are suggestions that some organizations use corrective strategies, denial strategies and shifting the blame strategies. Are these prevalent in Botswana and how effective or less effective are they in repairing reputational damage?

Pt 016: Well, I think those are all fantastic strategies. Obviously, as I said, every company's got its own implementation strategy.

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CS: There are suggestions that some organizations in Botswana use corrective strategies, denial strategies and shifting the blame strategies. How prevalent are these strategies in Botswana and how helpful or less helpful are they in repairing reputational damage?

Pt 017: The first answer is yes, they are prevalent and the second is they do not help. For instance, their prevalence lies with the problem which may be influenced by politics meaning that a lot of things are at play. The problems may be within government structures or at different levels including private organisations. So you will find organizations working very hard to be politically correct. What i'm trying to say is as much as it is not a good thing to deny or shift the blame, there's always a reason behind it. The reasoning of those people who use these different types of strategies to manage the crisis. Some private companies have nothing to lose, they can just say we have a network problem or we have electricity outage.

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Pt 018: It's very true because from observation, we recently saw the Ministry of Health denying that there was a problem of shortages of vaccines. A newspaper had reported that the Ministry did not pay for the vaccines as they claimed. Instead of them telling people if they paid, they shifted blames and denied media reports without providing the necessary answers. Thats all the publics wanted to know so that they can have faith and trust in what the Ministry is doing.

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Aggregate	Classification	Coverage	Number Of Coding References	Reference Number	Coded By Initials	Modified On
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Pt 019: Well, I haven't had the privilege of doing any study by scientific method to say this is what is happening. I can talk from my observation which is that they are substantial. But let's make the point here very clear that these are already active measures. Once you deny, once you shift the blame, it clearly says you were facing a crisis and now you are trying to deal with it. Is that even the best approach. For me, that is a band aid approach. You have blood gushing out and you need to deal with the wound. Inside you can't apply band aid on it and hope that the wounded heals. It might take some time but would show when the band aid is removed. The truth will come out, then crisis will hit. So anyway i'm trying to say to you that I think that's not a good strategy. Denial will never be a good strategy. Two to three days, a week, the truth comes out. The best strategy is transparency. Even when you have messed up, invite people to say this is what we did. This is what we should have done. We own up, we are better than this. You should even tell the board that this is what we did wrong and this is where the problem really emanates from.

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Pt 020: I don't know whether I can agree with the corrective strategy. But those strategies are prevalent here. But I think when we look at the different crisis management model. They range from three to six or 10 relational model. The corrective model, as you rightly put it for me, I think it differs from one organization to another. I can never say any of the two are quite prevalent because another key challenge for me in particular is that i'm inclined to saying that in Botswana I think we are more reactive than we are proactive. I'm pretty sure some of the main strategic professionals in my country

would not would entirely agree with me, maybe because they want to save their jobs. But here's my thing. I think when we look at the different crisis that have taken place, for instance the mine closure, the question that I would have for any leader, whether in government or in the private sector, is did we not realize that the mind was going to collapse. Where was the crisis management plan. I mean if the world can know that we are going to have an economic downturn, since 2008 to current; If the world was able to see that the covid 19 pandemic was going to impact the economy and now a lot of international organizations are busy trying to see what are the crisis warning. So I don't think that I can agree with the first with the corrective model, but I can say if indeed there are organizations that are pushing the corrective process in Botswana, then we have an even greater opportunity than our country should be somewhere today. As we speak i'll give an example, again looking at the banking industry and what is currently happening in Botswana, in terms of the covid 19 pandemic. We need to ensure that the defining level of influence of a crisis warning would determine that kind of response to the crisis or the kind of response strategy to the crisis.

Pt 020: I haven't seen much of the shifting of the blame. I think there's a lot of the denial strategy that takes place in Botswana. I think we try by all means to hearken the speed of elimination and to say and to speak about the importance of elimination. I think when we talk about the denial strategy, we see a lot of organizations pushing the denial strategy to say this is not how it looks like. This is not what it is. For instance, some PR professionals would always say the organization is working around the clock to ensure that we have address the situation. Other would say our teams are working relentlessly. Remember, there was a very popular line that the media people used to see at the time of prints, comments from organssation were not available. These were delay and denial tactics in actual fact.Some people would also say we will keep updating you as crisis management progresses. Indeed there's a lot of denial.

Aggregate	Classification	Coverage	Number Of Coding References	Reference Number	Coded By Initials	Modified On

Codes\\Message development and processes\Decisions

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Files\\Pt 001_ Transcript

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What informs your decisions, I think you may have answered this, but what informs the decisions to choose a particular

response strategies over the other?

Pt 001: Okay, um what normally influences the choice of a particular response you know over the other. Normally would be the type of crisis you're handling. The types of crisis you are handling should match the type of response, you know, a strategy that you have in place. Without necessarily, you know, taking you back to the to the messaging, when we know that, not necessarily, messages should be a verbatim, they can also serve as a starting point, you know, to help us put statements together when they are needed.

Pt 001: They other contribution is the internal communication procedures that we have in place, you know, that normally determine what type you know of our response strategy that we have in place. Normally it affects the employees and normally the key messages, are given whether to departmental meetings, voicemail or whatever. When you have a robust response plan we are able to tie it to the to the messaging and the entire internal communication procedures and then lastly, would be the contact and then the media list.

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Pt 002: Yes, like I said it depends on what kind of crisis we have. For example, some crisis are not very impactful. Some crisis will need just the head of communication to respond, to attend to those but, like you have pointed out, or we have already discussed some crisis will need a CEO himself or herself to go out there and communicate. Sometimes it depends on the technicalities of the issue.

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It is also important to realize that crisis, once you have disseminated, a message you can pull it back and we've had a few instances well not too many thankfully where we have dispersed, the message and you then realize that perhaps one or two things should never have been in that statement.

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Pt 007: What informs our messaging selection process is the subject matter. At the end I would determine what it is that we want to communicate. For instance, we are in the Covid-19 crisis. There is many people being infected and many are dying in the process and the kind of a message that may be appropriate for the situation should be a positive one, a positive one, that brings hope to the people; that shows that government is doing something to avert any escalation of the crisis.

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Pt 009: I think the magnitude of the crisis. First and foremost, if you're not careful and you're not really using the right strategies, you can raise alarms where there is no crisis. Remember the distinction between something that has happened that has gone wrong, but then the difficulty of managing it is a crisis. So if you're not careful on what's really making a determination of what really needs to be taken out, you end up communicating things that have gone wrong that is not really crisis. Almost every business does come across things going on. I mean if you look at the pizza business today you would appreciate they probably burn so many pizzas at their kitchen, but the issue is do they make statements? Today they burn 4 of them or 10 and they forge ahead. They still cook pizza and deliver pizza. We used to laugh about this example at the bank. They would be those colleagues on a panic mode because the ATM is down and would say please let's communicate because that service breakdown will cost us. Yes it costs us, but it can be solved and we can improve our uptime and the two minutes downtime that we have. Its already planned, so it depends on the magnitude of the crisis. If you are being proactive, you will find yourself communicating unnecesarily.

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Pt 010: It's situational. You look at all the factors at play. It's different because nothing is static. You don't actually know what's going to happen and how it's going to happen, but you can only plan. So your plan should guide in terms of what to say, what to do. What you finally say will be dependent on how things have happened. But definitely having those structured and prepared messages, prepared scenarios etc will save you a lot of time and help you to react or act in that golden hour.

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CS: Thank you very much. What then informs your decisions to choose a particular response over the other?

Pt 018: I think you have to look at the information that you have at that time, the type of crisis as well as the resources at your disposal to be able to attend to the situation.

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Pt 019: There are a lot of factors and one of them would be what do you exist for. What is your reason for existence as an organization. What are you hoping to achieve in your mission, your vision. You have all these foundational keys. A key document is your strategy document. That would determine your message. Your message doesn't come from anywhere else really. It comes from this.

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But plan is important and also the procedures that are involved and who is going to be executing those procedures and he will belong to the crisis

communication team, and also the key messages that we are going to be communicating throughout the crisis.

Pt 020: In terms of where do we begin, when we talk about key messages which are the key identifier, during the course of the crisis, we asked ourselves which key message to share to provide a brief description of what happened; which key message to share to provide a timeline for future plans or what the organization is going to do next.

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CS: What would inform your decisions to choose a particular response strategy over the others?

Pt 020: I think, for me, one of the key things I have noticed, especially in managing reputation and also in managing crisis is premised on enterprise on organizational enterprise risk management. My approach to attacking crisis management is based on risk response strategy or risk response strategy. The risk response approach to crisis management is quite key. It is four pronged in its nature if you do remember. When you talk about risk management, you speak to issues of quality management and you are simply saying as an organization, the programs that we run, we need to ensure that we maintain the quality and also the process of documentation to ensure that our documentation process is intact, then there's also the process of products and services management plan. These are quite key because it ensures you run multiple projects. For instance, the [name of organisation] was a project based environment. Project management played

a major role in how we respond to any form of crisis, and also understanding the project itself or understanding the crisis with which the project falls.

Pt 020: When your approach is based on the risk management strategy, you also look at the scope script and the risk response strategy also gives you an opportunity to break down the working structure, because it says to you, who is responsible for this particular risk. It gives you an opportunity to list activities that would include, for instance, the duration, or the timeframe in which it would give you an opportunity as saying what cost risk is associated to this particular crisis?What also in terms of our dependencies and synergies? What pages are there in this particular response process and also what resource management plan are you going to put in place and what color resources do we have in place in order for us to be able to respond to this type of crisis. It also gives you an opportunity to get a holistic draft of a project management schedule and in this particular project management schedule the crisis itself becomes a project. Then you draft the budget, then you will think what am I going to incur from a cost perspective and then any other important information. because remember the risk appetite of an organization is really determined by what is risky for the organization. You have to consider if you are to involve the media, will the media not be a part of a crisis. I mean in a hostile environment, for instance if you involve the media to talk about covid 19 , and the media turns around and say the [name of organisation] is a death dungeon. What do we do? Do I bring the media on the ground to come and experience the environment? Yes, they have to come while we also ensure we are not exposing them to the andemic.

Aggregate	Classification	Coverage	Number Of Coding References	Reference Number	Coded By Initials	Modified On

Codes\\Message development and processes\Stages of development

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Files\\Pt 001_ Transcript

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 So the question is to what extent do you believe organization should develop their messages or response strategies ahead of the crisis or, while the crisis is in progress?

Pt 001: As indicated a robust crisis communication team, they should have the pre-draft selected crisis management messages which touches on the content, you know, and this messages you know, usually that they should be available on websites. They are normally standard. They are applicable to any crisis, you know. There should be templates, you know, for crisis statement as well.

Pt 001: Now, considering all possible crises within an organization that could that they could face, you know, it is important to develop key messages to be used in times of need, or in times of response. There should not be developed right there when the crisis begins.

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Pt 001: Now back to the question on what is advisable...I'm of the view that messages should be pre-drafted, you know, and available for any type of crises, you know. There are those generic crisis communication management questions and answers. You know, and also for the media. At least be you know be averse, or be amenable or be knowledgeable you know about anything or the processes. Once you have knowledge of the process, you know you're good to go. The other thing again is to develop what the what you call vulnerability and risk assessment. These ones will help when you want to know the likely crisis that can occur at [Name of organisation] or if any within the Community, that you are living in.

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To what extent do you believe organizations should develop that messages or response strategies, ahead of the crisis or while it is in progress?

Pt 002: Yes, the messaging is very critical because you need to be consistent in terms of delivering your messages, hence the crisis management team, hence the designation of their spokesperson, and hence also the preparation of the question and answer, potential question and answers that you should reach out to do stakeholders. That in itself will create consistency, even if today is the head of PR and then tomorrow is the CEO, they should be in tandem with each other in terms of delivering messages.

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CS: Thank you very much, now I want to zoom into the internal processes of developing the messages. T what extent do you believe organizations should develop their messages or response strategies before the crisis or while it is in progress?

Pt 003: Simulation is very, very, very important. If you have a risk identification model, risk management model, it should and tell you that those are some of the issues that you discussed before crisis happens. I'm of the view that you need to simulate some of these. We know what can go wrong from experience, from the issues that we've experienced in the past. I believe we need some sort of simulation, we need to craft, our message is such a way that when something happens, we know exactly what to respond to, and also we need to have resources in place that we would engage when something happens. But of course, like I mentioned it's really, really important for an organization to make sure that they sort of sit together and sort of go over the scenario because crisis happen without you knowing. Its really important to simulate some of these things so that, when it happens, you are and will not be caught off guard, at least, you know how to respond such that your reputation doesn't really get negatively affected.

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Pt 004: Obviously that's different from if your building catches fire, you may not have the two minutes because you have to be evacuated. However, you do need to have one of the things that I wrote in terms of the risk register that we've been working on. The messages must always be developed ahead of the crisis. That's why it's important like I said to have a risk register that I spoke about.

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CS: Now let's talk about messaging what goes on behind the curtains when you develop the messages. Do you prepare them ahead of the crisis, or when the crisis is in progress?

Pt 005: We prepare generic crisis management messages ahead of the crisis and as the crisis unfolds, we have specific mesages. We use these general messages that we have and work through them to prepare the proper messaging for the particular crisis. Each particular crisis has its own kind of language that needs to be used for the people that you're communicating with to be able to clearly understand the message.

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Pt 006: We were communicating right as the events were unfolding. We kept updating the shareholders, the public and the regulators who are our authorities. As to what was happening, we had a whole range of stakeholders to deal with: shareholders, regulating bodies, the Central Bank, the stock exchange and the non bank financial regulatory authority the financial accounting oversight authority, etc. We had a matrix of stakeholders that we're engaging with throughout the crisis to update them as to what was going on. You simply cannot wait for the crisis to come to an end to then start informing people about what will now effectively be a historical event. You have people who have putting money in your business and quite like that a lot of wonder what is happening to their money. You have to assure them that you are handling the crisis in a responsible manner as possible, and in an expedient manner as possible to ensure that it comes to an end quickly for the business to continue operating without any hindrance.

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CS: In your case what was your position, did you prepare ahead of the crisis in anticipation, or you had to do with it, as it was unfolding.

Pt 006: Well, we do not already subscribed to the first school of thought because you know your business and you generally have a sense of the key message areas and which would be of interest to your various publics. So what we normally do is to prepare holding statements which would have the key facts about a particular issue. Now, as the situation itself unfolds, you are then able to amend that holding statement as appropriate, because it saves me a lot of time. If you if you have draft statements ready, which you are then able to amend, as appropriate, and then you dispatch them quick, you simply cannot wait. For for events unfold, because they can overwhelm you and to a point where you generally then find it difficult to sit down and draft appropriate messaging and remember this kind of messaging also has to go through one or two or three filters to make sure that it doesn't misrepresent the organization or what is or what is happening. I subscribe to, to the first couple of thoughts, where you have draft holding statements ready and then you amend them as an appropriate because there's not time, you have to move with speed.

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Pt 007: It is important that appropriate messages be developed in view of any on ongoing or forthcoming crisis. When the message has been developed, it then means the message become like themes that organization will be communicating. So what would then happen is that whether you have one or two people selected to be the spokesperson of the organization in relation to the subject matter at hand. It means that whatever message that they communicate will be in line with what has been the messages that have been a pretty developed. The theme will remain constant. This helps bring credibility, integrity, believability to the messages that are being communicated. So yes, I agree, it is important that certain messages be angled in a specific manner and be developed such that whatever updates are being made, whatever communication is being made, then it is in line with the messages that have been developed. This also helps to maintain consistency of what is being communicated so that eventually an organization does not seem to be communicating from all and every angle and in the process, contradicting the initial communication.

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Pt 008: Let me say it again. Failure to plan is planning to fail. In terms of messaging, I think you genuinely need a public relations team or corporate affairs team or brand team that is well equipped to be able to relay a message that is according to that crisis. They need to be smart and cognizant enough to understand what message fits into the puzzle; what message defuses the situation; what message will put fuel to the situation. So messaging has to be well crafted. You can plan and plan and plan, but it depends on the situation. Within that first hour a lot can happen. You can still in that first hour, be able to craft, a message that also allows you to buy time or to request for time to give a better update of the next situation. So messaging is very important. Yes, you can craft a message that is standard for that situation, but as the situation comes, you need to be crafty enough and smart enough to configure that messaging for that particular point in time. While there's no set answer for that set situation you get people who are opinionated. You get media thats very smart and you get people who are looking for different angles, and those are challenging. So you want to have a team that's smart enough to help you address key issues.

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Pt 009: When the crisis begins, it informs the messages. You can have what you call holding statements and informed by the type of organization that you are, and also from the experience of the type of crisis that you may be facing. The oil industry probably face crisis different from the banking industry where you anticipate things like ATM booming. So those types of crisis helps you to prepare messages ahead of time; sort of lift the down and create scenarios and see how would we deal with this. When you have time, you develop what you call holding statements, based on the hypothetical situations and the scenarios that you would have created. In the event that you do have a crisis, the information rollout should happen as the event, as the crisis happens. You can have information about a crisis that has not happened yet, and you can have a structured holding statement framework that you would operationalise.

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CS: Very interest. To what extent do believe organizations should develop messages ahead of the crisis or while it is in progress? Pt 010: Definitely ahead of the crisis. It's good practice at best practice to preempt and when possible your crisis communication plan should have those preemptive scenario as crisis situations. It then makes it easier for you to manage a crisis when it does happen.

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CS: I see. So basically you are saying messages should be prepared ahead of the crisis?

Pt 011: They should definitely be prepared well ahead and stress tested as much as possible. In my perspective, acknowledgement of the crisis it is the first point of contact of test messaging. So acknowledging to the affected or impacted public that there is indeed a crisis or an incident is quite important. That explains what has happened? What

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. So in the instance that you're not being asked about the problem, it means that then your holding statement does not necessarily work because it is premised on getting a question or request.

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Pt 012: It's in two parts right because sometimes you can't predict a crisis. But as a company, you always have to have key messages on what you do and how you do it and and maybe the service or the product or the business itself. You should always have sort of a folder with all the key messages in terms of the message that talks to your shareholders; a key message that talks to your Community; key messages that talks to how you want to position yourself to the media; and to everyone else should always be packaged. Whenever a crisis happens everybody knows that you can just pull the messages that speaks to it. You're not going to think about it, and start crafting and wondering if this is the right terminology to use. Those key messages should always be consistent and everybody knows about that. But once you've assessed the crisis that is happening live, for example the fire, you need to have messages in terms of the damages and safety comes in. All those other messages now needs to be developed to save this key message.

Aggregate	Classification	Coverage	Number Of Coding References	Reference Number	Coded By Initials	Modified On

Files\\Pt 014_transcript.vtt

No		0.0752	1			
				1	C.S	15/11/2021 09:58

CS: Thank you very much. Let's now move on to messaging. Do you prepare messages ahead of the crisis or as the crisis unfold?

Pt 014: Unfortunately, in government we are not really selling anything but services and programs. Let me give you an example. If a new program is being rolled out by government, there isn't any robust budget that is given to the responsible unit. Most of the time, the bosses dont see the value of giving PR a lot of money to market programs. That's why, in most cases, anybody can just be the head of PR when the office bearer is not available. They can just simply pick anybody who has been doing programming and whatnot until this person comes back. They feel that anybody who knows the program and the services of the ministry can do PR work. But that is not always the case and that is how we often fall into the trap of not providing good messaging on the various programs and services. If we're talking about the culture, for instance, there is no point in us going around on TV or radio talking like we're doing right now speaking the best English. We can because when you're talking about cultural issues, you need to make your messages understood in the language the audiences understand better. For example, when talking about an old lady who is making crafts, she may not necessarily even understands English in the first place. So you need to put the type of messaging that's going to reach this woman or this old man who is making floor carpet using leather. For instance, how do you tell him to stop killing animals to make this floor carpets? He needs to be told that message that are relevant to language that is being used to address him. You dont patronize them; don't insult him; don't belittle him; but try and show him the importance of conservation

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				1	C.S	15/11/2021 10:11

CS: To what extent should messages be developed ahead of the cases or when it is in progress?

Pt 015: Messages should be developed during or when the crisis is in progress because different messages for different crisis or different situations require different message. As much as we can prepare, for example, a format of how you are willing to respond, the content is going to be determined by the kind of crisis that we have. It is very good to always have the format of how you're going to address issues. For example, you may say we are going to be sending all the press release; you need to address the five W's, a press conference where messages will be different from the kind of message that will have in a press release because of the face to face interaction with the media. You're also going to be have follow up questions and all that. But, all in all, you need to have come up with a script of what you need to say so you don't end up addressing issues that are outside the crisis or issues that are going to delay the main message of your address in the crisis to be relayed.

Aggregate	Classification	Coverage	Number Of Coding References	Reference Number	Coded By Initials	Modified On

Files\\Pt 016_transcript.vtt

No		0.0390	1			
				1	C.S	15/11/2021 10:27

Pt 016: With the mine i worked for what we did as part of messaging was to harness the power of cartoons. We had a newsletter which came every week. This newsletter was printed both digitally as a soft copy and also as a hard copy. So employees who had access to information technology got PDF newsletter every week. For safety and health, we used cartoons to generate awareness about safety. Our employees came to love these cartoons because they could not read and write.

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			1	C.S	15/11/2021 10:36

Pt 017: For me it's a question of whether your strategies is in place or not. For instance, it's easy for me to anticipate that [stakeholders] can go on strike because their stipend came late. But there are some crises that I may not anticipate, but the faster cue will be from another person saying we have a problem; we are experiencing severe drought and, therefore, we do not have water. That gives you a cue to start coming up with messages and to tell people that because we did not have, what is this, what is that. This is how you can save every drop that we have at your accommodation facilities. So you always get a cue from the the opening message, and that is why i'm saying it is always very important to have it and telling the truth here. I don't mean laying yourself bare naked, but you tell people to situation as there are some things that you will not tell. You cannot tell your daughter that you don't have money. You tell her you want to start soft porridge three times a day, but you tell her that there is a crisis because you now have to pay for her brother as he is now growing. So we are going to do some belt tightening. It is very important to start the messaging, just as the news break, but as the news break the communicator is supposed to know what is going to be said.

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			1	C.S	15/11/2021 10:43

Pt 018: In the processes of our message development, as soon as you know the crisis like immediately, you will definitely need to say this is the situation that as an organization we're dealing with. But you need to have, as soon as you have that situation, your messages right then and there when the situation hits so that your messages are consistent with what you're doing. Your messages will dictate further communication that you will have with your stakeholders and whoever else you'll be talking to. Maybe in some industries it's easy to predict what crisis would happen. If you know that kind of crisis, then you can prepare messages ahead. Crisis by nature is unpredictable because it's literally something that you did not plan for it. You did not anticipate.

Pt 018: Its difficult to generate a message to address something that you don't know, hence you need to develop these messages, now, when you know the situation that you're in and having the information that you need. For some industries, you have to know possible crisis but generally most places that I have observed, crisis has been unpredictable in the sense that it's hard sometimes to predict crisis because some of these come from people's behavior.

Aggregate	Classification	Coverage	Number Of Coding References	Reference Number	Coded By Initials	Modified On

Files\\Pt 019_transcript.vtt

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				1	C.S	15/11/2021 10:51

CS: Lets now look at messaging and what happens behind the curtain during message development. Do you prepare your messages ahead of the crisis or after it has started?

Pt 019: Yeah, I think the best practice is usually before the crisis. For me that the best response and it works when you develop your messages way before a crisis hits you. You can use this strategy to reach out to your stakeholders and also identify what platforms you are going to use to share the message. You can also know which best message to give to a particular audience, and decide which platform to use for other stakeholders, other than waiting for a moment. In that moment, you have no control over radio, media platforms, your messaging. So messages are done and the best time is when you are not under pressure. So for me, and I think this works is that they should be done preemptively. Yes, there are instances where you are forced to give a message when you are hit with a crisis. But really the bulk of our time messaging is done before a crisis hits.

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				1	C.S	15/11/2021 10:59

Pt 020: I think that is very key and that is quite important because developing those messages for me I usually view them into three aspects: protecting the reputation, then reducing the potential impact, and also burying the negative content that we come with a crisis. So in terms of protecting or building a reputation or protection around the organization, it is quite important to protect the brand from emerging threats and future issues around that particular crisis. It is also quite important, through the messages, because the messages will ensure that there is a very high reduction of potential impact and therefore increase the recovery. From viral news cycles more quickly if I mean put it that way, in simple terms, I think the messages will assist in ensuring that you reduce the viral news cycle and increase the chance of people understanding what the process is really about and what has transpired around the crisis. In terms of reducing the negative content, you are, then, ensuring that there is a platform or a basis of building positive sustainable reputational alignment for the organization.

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Pt 020: It is very important to ensure that in the first instance, you have the messages, the conversation along the involvement of the crisis, then you get to craft other messages that would augment what you had already started.

Aggregate	Classification	Coverage	Number Of Coding References	Reference Number	Coded By Initials	Modified On

Codes\\Overview of crisis

Document

Files\\Pt 001_ Transcript

Aggregate	Classification	Coverage	Number Of Coding References	Reference Number	Coded By Initials	Modified On
No		0.0102	2			
				1	C.S	10/11/2021 09:08

Pt 001: Okay, my understanding of a crisis, you know, it's something that happens so unexpectedly and suddenly, and it is something that has an impact

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Pt 001: Okay um, as I indicated, crisis is an event that can occur suddenly and most unexpectedly and, in most cases it is never planned for and

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Aggregate	Classification	Coverage	Number Of Coding References	Reference Number	Coded By Initials	Modified On
No		0.0115	1			
				1	C.S	11/11/2021 10:48

Pt 008: Crisis communication is still at its infancy in Botswana. I don't think we've had serious crisis in Botswana. Yes, they've been reputational practices here and there, compared to our neighbour South Africa and internationally. There is a lot to be desired in how we handle crisis here as communication practitioners.

Aggregate	Classification	Coverage	Number Of Coding References	Reference Number	Coded By Initials	Modified On

Codes\\Overview of crisis\Examples of crisis

Document

Files\\Pt 003_transcript.vtt

Aggregate	Classification	Coverage	Number Of Coding References	Reference Number	Coded By Initials	Modified On
No		0.1061	2			

We have different crisis that we deal with and there's one that I, I remember as far back as a couple of years ago, I think more than 10. It wasn't really much of a big crisis, but it was a crisis in itself, in that it led to a stampede. There was an advert which we flighted it regarding houses we wanted to dispose, I mean selling them at Block 7 and we had a number of houses that we're selling. We put up an advert invited citizens to show interest by applying for them and we have this way of selling houses, and since demand it's outstrips supply, especially when you talk about housing products. So since we had a limited number of houses we were not really anticipating that a lot of people would respond and that way when the deadline for the advert came, we experienced an unprecedented numbers of people who came to our offices to apply in that way. It was a bit of a crisis because the media came, you know, because there was somewhat of a stampede. Everybody wanted to get a chance to apply and stuff and, we had to jump in and arrest the situation. The way the situation was, in itself, it was a crisis and we couldn't really tell since some people came as early as four o'clock in the morning. Some even claimed that they had slept by the gate there. So we had to cancel everything and sort of find a way to manage the situation altogether. The other crisis that we deal with, for instance, from time to time we get media reports on certain issues about the cooperation and, even though some are not serious, there are some that have the potential to cause crisis. So there's a policy that we follow, we tend to follow when we deal with crisis, obviously a top management has to be involved in studying the whole crisis and crafting their responses and solution to that particular crisis.

Aggregate	Classification	Coverage	Number Of Coding References	Reference Number	Coded By Initials	Modified On
				2	C.S	10/11/2021 10:33

Pt 003: There was also an issue because this one is still fresh in my memory. [name of organisation] as a parastatal owned owned by the government, provides a housing products for the public. Our biggest customers is the government as well as the public, corporates as well as some local authorities being the councils and others. Some of our operations are governed by the government. In order for us to increase rentals, we have to first seek authority through our parent ministry then ultimately the government of Botswana. The last time we had our increase was in 2004, some 17 years ago. Last year, after back and forth, for a number of years, we engaged the government to try and persuade them to allow us to increase rentals. We managed and they finally acceded to our plea in the sense that if you compare the rentals, the last rentals we had, and the maintenance costs now, it doesn't make sense. It doesn't make business sense so on those grounds, after hearing us they allowed us to adjust the rentals. Initially for individuals, we were going to do it on an incremental basis over a period of five years and for companies and the government we're going to do it once or where we would have a lump figure that will stay there until adjustments. We had a press conference last year to inform the media about it, it wasn't really well received by the public. Following letters to our tenants, including government corporates and local authorities. In January, after the Christmas break, when we came back there was this whole uproar about a rentals. There was a lot of confusion in terms of our approach to us the rentals. A lot of people, especially those who are renting through corporates thoughts it wasn't justified in the sense that you cant just have a lump increase like that. Why don't we maybe consider doing it like we had planned for the individuals. In our research and discussions, we discovered that a lot of corporates normally would get a check from say the University of Botswana for the houses that's

occupied by their stuff. It turned out that it wasn't really somewhat of a benefit from that institution. People had to what what UB would do is it'll take a housing allowance from its stuffs' salaries in pay. In that way they thought it was a bit unfair for them. The tenant's thought it was a bit unfair on an upward site. So we then had go back and review that and the decision that was taken was that we would use the same model that we used to be applied for individuals, where everything will be incremental for five years, to help us cover some of the costs that we experienced.

We rolled out communication. Fortunately, for us, we had a very passionate Minister who was willing to go a long way with us. We started with radio interviews, TV interviews to break down the whole issue. I remember there was, in the middle of that, an opposition member of parliament, who challenge the issue and they wanted a motion to have that thwarted. Unfortunately, we argued other case and eventually we were allowed to increase rentals from 1st April 2021. It caused a lot of confusion really so we had to line our ducks in a row, and make sure that we issue communication; communicate with our tenants, and it was difficult because it was during this period of covid 19. We had to find other ways to make sure that information gets out there, so we have to book space in TV; book space in newspapers and use social media to disseminate information in terms of how the whole rental adjustment plan was going to unfold. So in the end weccould say it was successful and the noise has gone down,even though there were some who still felt the incrementals were quite huge. Consider being in business for 17 years without increasing rentals. It really justified

our case.

Aggregate	Classification	Coverage	Number Of Coding References	Reference Number	Coded By Initials	Modified On
Files\\Pt 004_transcript.vtt						
No		0.0894	2			
				1	C.S	10/11/2021 11:00

Pt 004: Some crisis are peculiar depending on an industry that you're in. I mean, for instance, a few years ago I worked for a TV subscription management company which essentially was providing TV services, access to channels. And one of the biggest drivers is sports which I think is the key. You have a lot of leagues that so many people for like that are football specific. People follow these leagues. I mean people get very emotional about football and a few years ago after many years of broadcasting leagues, people just assume the League is coming on and were willing to pay subscription which essentially means paying a premium subscription which is obviously high end. It's much more expensive than any other. What happened was that that same year, a new entrant in broadcasting had essentially setup shop and paid exorbitant prices for EPL. So they basically modelled their business around football. No one really could match what the new entrant had put on the table, so they won

for EPL. We put out communication with regards to what was going on. But you can imagine just out of nowhere, I think it's information that people might have missed. We didn't necessarily go all out with the message, and make a lot of noise about what we lost so when the time came, people flooded the [name of offices] to subscribe, only to find out that they're not able to get all the wanted, that will be aired and that was

quite a bit of a mess. The issue even made it to Parliament. People were angry; customers literally came to our offices.

	2	C.S	10/11/2021 11:04

For instance, some stuff members at some bank were found in possession of drugs and when investigating it was found that we were part of a syndicate that was moving drugs among young people. The Bank itself found out and perhaps what could have been more ideal in that situation would have been to maybe even have a precedent to save the reputable of the organization. They could have said to the public we found out this and this is what we're going to follow, but the news leaked to media houses and the next thing it seemed as if perhaps the Bank was hiding something and it caused quite a bit of a rift between that particular organization and the media. It means all the stakeholders within the bank got to know of the news from reading it in the media and they were not in control of the narrative. Had they been the very ones that had invited the media they could have been in control.

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			1	C.S	11/11/2021 09:27

Pt 005: An example of a crisis is what the whole world is going through. We are experiencing the spread of the covid-19 virus which we actually originated from Wuhan in China, but gradually spreading through the world, and our country was not spared. We learned about the Covid-19 around December 2019. By then Botswana had not yet been affected by the virus but with time.

	2	C.S	11/11/2021 09:27

Pt 005: I would actually say our country has experienced difficult times that I saw in my lifetime in public relations working in the [name of organisation]. We were not spared. We are a people centered organization. We are an organization that give services to the people, especially in the city of a [name of city]. So we were not spared. We also had that difficult time during the Covid-19. Before Covid, we experienced a cyclone that caused a lot of destruction to property way back in 2018. It was affecting us directly because we provide municipality infrastructure services to the people. Apart from the cyclones, the torrential rains destroy road infrastructure around the city, and everything turns into a crisis.

Aggregate	Classification	Coverage	Number Of Coding References	Reference Number	Coded By Initials	Modified On
Files\\Pt 006_transcript.vtt						
No		0.1331	3			
				1	C.S	11/11/2021 09:44

Pt 006: Well, it does in several ways, and I think the most obvious one is from a reputational point of view. I've seen recently in the crisis that we were dealing with at [name of organisation] involving a Board, which was out of its way going out with their term coming to an end, and they were not particularly keen to compete against other individuals who had shown interest. That's the very first thing that undermines the business from a reputational point of view you then have investors becoming worried as to whether they should continue being stakeholders in the business. You have shareholders who will become affected because the stock is suspended by the stock exchange, until the crisis is resolved. You also have staff panicking, and not knowing where the business is going on and not knowing whether the management team that provides support will be there tomorrow, and if they are not there tomorrow what is going to happen to them. You also have the public, especially

if it is an entity which the nation has invested in emotionally, and if it is a home grown business. People wondering what is happening to that particular business and whether it will weather the storms.

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Pt 006: Well, reputation in my experience, is the bread and butter of a business because if it is the bread and butter of the business and if the reputation is harmed you then have flight of capital and financial capital. You possibly also have flight of human capital and then the converse of that is that you find it very difficult to do new investments. You also find it very difficult to attract competent high flyers to come and join your business or the ripple effect is manifold right across. You might have heard that four months ago our entity had a major corporate governance crisis. Five of the board members were retiring and they had offered themselves for re-election, and on the other hand, you had a few interested parties who also puts their names into the roll to compete for those positions. Now, the current directors were not happy that they will be competing for these positions with these other candidates and they sought to stop the annual general meeting and they then had a dispute with the managing director and inevitably I was thrown into the fire in my capacity as company secretary, in addition to being head of communications and marketing. We now had a situation where they were trying to stop the annual general meeting, and we as management were saying they don't have that rights. We went to court. In the space of 50 days, which I think is a record, for what's one, ultimately, the annual general meeting was held and a new board was ushered in. But the the consequence of that, from a crisis management point of view or from a PR point of view is that in the course of the disputes you had this business being suspended by the stock exchange. So with us not being able to change the share price moving down we were repeatedly in the news with print traditional media, social media continuously for that entire month and you also had a situation where some funders were saying look we don't think this is good for us, we are pulling out our funds. And some employees who were entertaining offers from other potential employers. Then I think we're driven to act decisively at that point.

There was that exodus by some staff members. We're still in the process of rebuilding confidence in the business internally and externally. We still have a situation where some external potential funders I saying have you sorted out your corporate governance issues? We will need time to see whether indeed you have done so, so we're hoping that it is something that will put to bed in the not so distant future. So crisis management or when a crisis hits an organization from what i've seen it really does and among a lot of things and the other thing that it does is that it affects relations amongst colleagues. Before the crisis, you might have been relating in a particular way, and by the way, once a crisis hits you do find that you split not the suddenly down right down the middle, but they will be other colleagues who see things differently. Yes, once you start getting back together again you have to work on that kind of relationship and from a communications point of view, internally, you have to engage with staff right across to assure that things have been resolved. Externally shareholders, other stakeholders, the media, the public, they continue to be interested in what is going on in the organization and you continuously have to deploy various forms of communication, whether it's through the traditional media or through social media such as Twitter, facebook, Linkedin.

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				3	C.S	11/11/2021 10:12

Pt 006: I recall that in 2006, we had another crisis which involved government shareholding in the business. The Minister of Finance, at the time had indicated in his budget speech, the government would be divesting from our business and we then pro actively sought a replacement shareholder. And, once we have that shareholder in and we redeemed government shares but government said no we're not accepting this money, we will leave at a time of our choosing. Then we said we already have another shareholder who stepped in and that on its own led to a huge flare up between ourselves and government. What then happened is, you have the guys in government and putting pressure on this Chairperson, putting pressure that tell those guys to bring us back in. Otherwise we will deny you business. We ended up going to court, again, it was a huge mess and the President at the time [name of President] called the MD who and the Minister of Finance. He called him and said look i'm seeing these things. I just don't like this kind of noise can you guys just pipe down so we had to explain to them that look, we would like to we didn't want things to reach this level. Yes, the Minister of Finance, is engaging all these things. We are now in court, but we will do our best to make sure that we were reconciled at some point, which ultimately happened.

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Aggregate	Classification	Coverage	Number Of Coding References	Reference Number	Coded By Initials	Modified On
No		0.0160	1			
				1	C.S	11/11/2021 10:37

For example, a number of organisations have been facing challenged of late with a lot of them being blacklisted. I mean those are elements of your reputation for a country as a whole. The organizations that I worked for in Botswana are now obviously having issues that people are picking up. They don't know what is happening to the country which is not really standing by its reputation that it has always had in the 55 years of its independence.

Aggregate	Classification	Coverage	Number Of Coding References	Reference Number	Coded By Initials	Modified On

Files\\Pt 009_transcript.vtt

Aggregate	Classification	Coverage	Number Of Coding References	Reference Number	Coded By Initials	Modified On
No		0.1202	1			
				1	C.S	11/11/2021 10:50

Pt 009: Yes, they do. I think even the smoothly run organizations, they do at some point come across a crisis, and in my past experience you would remember, I was working for a bank and as a service oriented organization there is highly likely to be a crisis because when you offer services they may be a breakdown, but it's only when that breakdown is so difficult to manage, for example. At a bank it is not a crisis when you've run out of cash, but you can have the tech crisis affecting the process of banking. You replenish cash. That means it becomes a crisis when an ATM has been bombed. So when an ATM has been bombed, it questions the security, the safety of your stakeholders. That would mean your customers, or even those that are taking care of your facilities could be doing something wrong. If it's bombed, that means you couldn't do something right, something went wrong, it could bombed, but it means you couldn't prevent it so then it becomes a crisis and requires some

communication of some sort to allay the fears of the different stakeholders. Are customers safe to queue at ATMs if this likely would have a bomb attack happening. Thats were to internalize.

Pt 009: You would remember how I actually started our conversation on how I understand what a crisis is. Something has gone wrong and it's difficult for you to handle so in my view, when you have run out of cash, thats not a crisis yet. But if you have a difficulty in replenishing cash or the ATM is now down during banking days what we called ATM downtime or uptime, you make the promise to customers that 98% of the time this ATM will be working. So you make that so that means it caters for replenishing. So should you not be able to replenish or the ATM is on downtime and exceed that time parameter that you have set for yourself, once they start taking into social media, then you need to do the crisis communication and, in that we should have all these hold statements of what could have happened beyond just replenishing of cash. I want to believe something beyond that. That's why I say the difficulty of managing something that has gone wrong becomes a crisis.

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No		0.0603	1			
				1	C.S	11/11/2021 10:58

Pt 010: In my area of work, i've come across crisis. Our product was not well received. It received a lot of negative publicity. Well, it wasn't well accepted by the target audience. To be specific, it was employment figures. There's always issues around those. So basically the general public, did not accept the statistics that were produced by my organization. In terms of communication, we quickly put together a team of experts to manage the crisis. As part of that team, the executive director or the Director General, was appointed as the chairperson. The Deputy Director General was appointed as vice chair position so that we could have him on standby in case the issue escalated and the Director General gets busy with other issues such as committees, rather than being the one dealing with everything. Other members of the committee included the communication experts, as well as internal auditors, subject matter experts. We already had guidelines on how to manage the crisis. In particular a crisis communication plan has always been in place. So, we were able to move quickly in terms of assembling this team, because the guidelines were already in place.

Aggregate	Classification	Coverage	Number Of Coding References	Reference Number	Coded By Initials	Modified On

Files\\Pt 012_transcript.vtt

Aggregate	Classification	Coverage	Number Of Coding References	Reference Number	Coded By Initials	Modified On
No		0.0128	1			
				1	C.S	15/11/2021 09:27

For example, it can be a corruption case or a graft case that becomes a crisis. I think, you will have followed the NPA case crisis. Even though there is no loss of life or there's no endangerment to the community or to the population at large.

Files\\Pt 013_transcript.vtt

Aggregate	Classification	Coverage	Number Of Coding References	Reference Number	Coded By Initials	Modified On
No		0.1431	3			
				1	C.S	15/11/2021 09:42

An example can be maybe the building has a fire or maybe the pipe suddenly bursts, and then there's water all over the premises, so that means that your business on that particular day or for that hour also may not be able to continue as it normally does. So, the business needs to find a way of continuing with business as best as possible. I guess that's it.

				2	C.S	15/11/2021 09:43

CS: Does crisis affect organizations in Botswana, and in what ways are they affected?

Pt 013: Yes it does affect organisations in Botswana. There was once a crisis of a girl who jumped from a 7 storey building where I worked and died on the spot. That was a typical example of a crisis because no one knew that the girl would just come into the building and do what she did. That girl just asked for the bathroom and then jump out of the window and it came as a shock to everyone that was there. Yes, it didn't upset the business for that day but those who saw it first hand took pictures and then started posting on social media. That's something that we could not control because it just happened at the moment. Everyone was shocked at first, but measures had to be taken to make sure that people have to be moved away from the scene so that officials could do what needed to be done at the time.

				3	C.S	15/11/2021 09:43

Pt 013: The thing about such things is that everyone will have their own story to tell. Some jumped to conclusion and said that maybe that girl wasn't receiving the help she had requested at the Ministry, which is why she jumped out of the window. But the honest truth is no one knew what she was there for. No one came up and said that she had been to the office to ask for help. So it really wasn't known why she chose that place to commit suicide. It was all just assumptions, but the truth of the matter is that it had nothing to do with the Ministry.

Aggregate	Classification	Coverage	Number Of Coding References	Reference Number	Coded By Initials	Modified On

Files\\Pt 014_transcript.vtt

Aggregate	Classification	Coverage	Number Of Coding References	Reference Number	Coded By Initials	Modified On
No		0.0859	1			

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Pt 014: I think, to be precise, recently we had a crisis with people in sport decrying the fact that they're not getting enough information on the involvement of governments, especially when it comes to welfare issues. For instance, there was an issue of the relay team that went to Poland which was preparing for the Tokyo Olympics. They took it into the Winter Olympic Games. One of the athletes wrote on his social media that he went to Poland using his own money and that government did not contribute anything. And for a lot of people who are in sport, they will know that under no circumstances can government refuse to fund an athlete on an international competition. It wasn't necessarily for the committee to make sure that athletes are taken care of when they go on these trips to represent the country. The government actually spent about P71 million in preparation for the Olympic Games. The team that went to Poland was funded by the government and that's government money by the way. When the athletics team won, the Minister said congratulations on qualifying for the relay in the Tokyo Olympics. The athlete wrote back and said Oh, I didn't know the minister knew that we were in Poland. That caused an uproar in Botswana because people were saying this minister only comes when people have won. He doesn't even know that the team was in London. They were just riding on that wave to say that government is not taking care of athletes. The people who are in the ministry knew that but the public did not have information on that. It caused the whole brouhaha of back and forth between the [name of organisation], government, the athletes and the media.

Pt 014: So it's something that could have been avoided by just a statement from either the Ministry or the [name of organisation] saying we're sending a team of about six or seven athletes who are trying to qualify for the Olympic Games. They will be in Poland from this date to that date and government has spent this amount of money to ensure that the athletes will be taken very good care of for that duration.

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Pt 015: Yes, most definitely and there are cases of a lot of crisis in Botswana, government included as well. For example, if you take from the previous ministry that I worked for, we had a crisis. The crisis was about the [name of organisation] website being hacked. Our website was very important because we were using it to disseminate information. It contained a lot of research and a lot of people were using the website to access a lot of information. At the time I realized that the website was hacked when it was already after hours. So you can imagine the panic that I had. I had to immediately phone the accounting officer and let her know that the website has been hacked. She was saying there's nothing that we can do, let's hope that overnight there won't be a lot of damage. We will attend to it in the morning.

Files\\Pt 016_transcript.vtt

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For example, I worked for a mining company and ones in a while we had a situation at the mine. At some point the mine went down and

Aggregate	Classification	Coverage	Number Of Coding References	Reference Number	Coded By Initials	Modified On
				2	C.S	15/11/2021 10:23

Pt 016: The other crisis was one affecting the [name of company], its a telecommunications company and share prices dropped as well. I also worked for [name of company] and there was a situation where the train got off the rails and we stopped the operations. It affected the cash flow of the business. There was also another crisis at my former Ministry where we dealt with the elephant tusks campaign. Botswana could not sell the tusks and we had to travel abroad to convince our stakeholders to buy the tusks.

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No		0.0638	1			
				1	C.S	15/11/2021 10:32

Pt 017: Yes, we have crisis in Botswana which occur in different forms. Whether or not I perceived something to be a crisis is another discussion for another day. We had terrible floods up North raging and causing a lot of damage. From my perspective, that was a crisis because it seriously affected people's lives. These are the things that we do not anticipate, which is in their nature of crisis. It comes unanticipated, but we should be able to participate, say by putting up firebreaks around our homes if we are prone to fire crisis. Some of these crises can be at a national level, and we do have that. Last year, we had heavy rains that affected the small village where I come from. Houses and vehicles were destroyed by hailstorm, and thats a crisis. People are still highly inconvenience because insurance companies refused to cover the vehicles and houses. Crises come in to disturb the normal routine, and the question is whether or not, when that happens, people are ready.

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				1	C.S	15/11/2021 10:42

Pt 018: Well, they do affect organizations definitely because because crisis is essentially something that can happen that will disrupt business activity and that will disrupt the way you conduct your business. It needs immediate attention to address. Well, generally there's been a lot of crisis in Botswana. A random example of a crisis that happened like last year is when we had a fluid situation. It was a national crisis. There was no petrol in the country. It was not like it was planned to happen. There was no petrol for anywhere. So that was a crisis for everybody. The Minister of Energy had to engage people to tell the nation about the situation and what they were doing to resolve it. They also told the nation that it may take time and they expect people not to fill up their cars to capacity. Petrol was rationed so there was enough for everybody. I feel like there are varying degrees of crisis because it can be so impactful that everything literally stops. For example, last year during the pandemic, we had a case where the first person tested positive in our office. We had to shut down the whole office and then fumigation of course. Business was interrupted. Management had to talk to stufff and let them know about the situation. This is why I say that there are different degrees of crisis because somebody wouldn't think this is a crisis. We have a situation where the contract of our CEO wasn't renewed. That was a leadership crisis. The question on everybody's mind was who's coming next? Why is this one going and that definitely affected the way things work and disrupted business.

Aggregate	Classification	Coverage	Number Of Coding References	Reference Number	Coded By Initials	Modified On

Files\\Pt 020_transcript.vtt

No		0.0365	1			
				1	C.S	15/11/2021 10:55

 One of the major crisis that I have come across was when I was at [name of organisation]. What had happened, I believe that most telecommunication companies can experience a similar crisis, was that there was a network black out across the whole country, and this network blacked out in the early hours of the morning. I think 2pm until 7am in the morning. It was really a crisis because people could not call, people

could not send SMS, people could not wake up or do a form of communication whatsoever.

Pt 020: Another crisis was at the [name of organisation] and really this was the beginning of the Covid-19 pandemic. I call it a crisis, but it wasn't really a crisis because it was more of the preparation for crisis. When the covid 19 pandemic started in 2019 around China, the [name of organisation] started preparing for the andemic. We had to divide ourselves

Codes\\Overview of crisis\Types of crisis

Document

Files\\Pt 001_ Transcript

No		0.0296	4			
				1	C.S	10/11/2021 09:25

And then on the financial loss side, it means that you're going to lose finances for the organization. And then for the public safety, it means that obviously there'll be casualties.

				2	C.S	10/11/2021 09:25

Some as I indicated, you know, like job losses, decreased employee morale, as I indicated earlier, the reputation and then the competitive strength for organisations that are into sales, you know, or those that are into my marketing their products, as opposed to those that are service oriented.

				3	C.S	10/11/2021 09:24

Would you also give other examples of how organizations are affected by crisis.

Pt 001: As I indicated when we started, I mentioned there is the public safety, the financial and the reputation. As far as I

| | | 4 | C.S | 10/11/2021 09:40 |

Pt 001: In Botswana you have heard about atypes of crises where the majority of them are centered around maladministration, you know. Maladministration is most at the center of all crisis here in Botswana. That includes embezzlement of funds, you know, issues affecting leadership because leadership is failing to manage things or issues in the workplace, you know. We've just had crisis that have to do with workplace disasters, such as in mines where you hear an employee went underground and the pit collapsed and killed them.

Aggregate	Classification	Coverage	Number Of Coding References	Reference Number	Coded By Initials	Modified On

Files\\Pt 002_transcript.vtt

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Pt 002: Indeed they do affect organizations. Also reputation wise. I will just mention cases like a... pardon me for picking on certain institutions. May be the one that you know, I was working for [name of organisation], where we had a crisis of a teacher Union fighting with the Institutions, saying that the teachers should not mark the national examination. So it was a big crisis that we really needed to manage very well to ensure that at the end of the day the student papers are marked so that there is continuity.

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It wasn't really much of a big crisis, but it was a crisis in itself, in that it led to a stampede. There was an advert which we flighted it regarding houses we wanted to dispose, I mean selling them at Block 7 and we had a number of houses that we're selling. We put up an advert invited

citizens to show interest by applying for them and we have this way of selling houses, and since demand it's outstrips supply, especially when you talk about housing products.

| | | | | 2 | C.S | 10/11/2021 10:21 |

So yes, to answer your question, companies deal with them crisis on a daily basis, and crisis largely affects the reputation of the organization. If it's not managed very well it's going to first heat on them and the reputation of the organization that would be the brand, the integrity of the corporation as a whole.

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A lot of crisis that affect us in the organization, we get it through the media.

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No		0.0279	1			
				1	C.S	10/11/2021 11:00

Pt 004: Well, certainly, I mean crisis is the order of the day. To be honest, I think, in any business setting there is an expectation that at some point, there might be a crisis. The crisis that an organization faces is both internal and external. Some of the crisis that recently we've seen sterm from the internal. There has been a lot of uncertainty with regard to covid. Conversations have been around job losses; companies needing to retrench; companies needing to change their systems; policies such as we can workfrom home. That created a crisis sort of environment if one can say. The other has only been in terms of business operations relating to customers, especially in service driven industries, you find that we've had situations recently of lockdowns or curfew.

Aggregate	Classification	Coverage	Number Of Coding References	Reference Number	Coded By Initials	Modified On
Files\\Pt 006_transcript.vtt						
No		0.0128	1			
				1	C.S	11/11/2021 09:43

Pt 006: Well, it does in several ways, and I think the most obvious one is from a reputational point of view. I've seen recently in the crisis that we were dealing with at [name of organisation] involving a Board, which was out of its way going out with their term coming to an end, and they were not particularly keen to compete against other individuals who had shown interest. That's the very first thing that undermines the business from a reputational point of view you then have investors becoming worried as to whether they should continue being stakeholders in the business.

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No		0.0412	1			
				1	C.S	11/11/2021 10:21

Pt 007: I believe organizations are affected differently. In the case of Botswana, you can see organizations like what one can call for profit organizations, for instance, the tourism business has been largely affected by the ongoing Covid-19 crisis and as well, as equally not for profit organizations like government. Tourism businesses, they are for profit organizations. In years they have been affected in terms of the cash flow from income streams. If you take individual government

employees in most countries, including Botswana, they continue to get paid their usual salaries, and this is not the case for private sector business, which have been hard hit by the Covid-19 pandemic, which I regard as one good example of a crisis. So each organization, will be affected differently and in my view the for profit organizations, especially non governmental organizations will be affected, even more.

Files\\Pt 008_transcript.vtt

No	0.0374	2			
			1	C.S	11/11/2021 10:35

Pt 008: Okay, look in Botswana, a magnitude of crisis has been in various situations to institutions. As I had said previously, a lot of issues that communications deals with has to do a lot with a lot of reputational risk.

			2	C.S	11/11/2021 10:36

but a key thing that really does happen is a lot of damage to your reputation by virtue of organisations being corruption or by virtue of mismanagement or by virtue of little incidences like that. But top of mind, key things are a lot to do with reputational risk, more towards an organisation having issues of maybe corruption, issues of mismanagement of funds, or misappropriation of power. Those are the elements that i've picked up in Botswana that really affect damage to organizations or issues of maybe people not being hired properly, issues of nepotism. They may seem small to other nations, but they do have a certain amount of hit in terms of reputations to organizations. I mean that's the perspective and that's the area that i've been particularly seeing as a lot of reputational risk to organizations yeah.

Aggregate	Classification	Coverage	Number Of Coding References	Reference Number	Coded By Initials	Modified On

Files\\Pt 010_transcript.vtt

No	0.0217	1			
			1	C.S	11/11/2021 10:57

Pt 010: Crisis do affect organizations in Botswana. Organizations can find themselves destabilized to the point where business is disrupted. Normal business is disrupted to the point where customers lose confidence in an organization, to the point where an organization actually loses business if the crisis is not well managed, to the point where an organization can even lose its resources if a crisis is not well managed.

Files\\Pt 011_transcript.vtt

No	0.0595	1

Pt 011: Crisis really affect organizations in Botswana. I think my experiences has been with government, quasi government and private sector players. There are many instances, and many, many iterations of crises. One of them would be either reputation based on issues around product or issues around messaging- public messaging, be it for advertising consumption or otherwise. And then I think the second level of common crisis is related to executives or individuals within the organization, so it could be a persona generated crisis in relation to the brand or the organization. And then lastly consumer perception crisis, these are usually generated over a period of time. They are then repeated incidents or service issues and the like. So all these are iterations of crisis that i've come across within the Botswana market. In terms of the level of impact, the level of impact have gone from as little as public confidence or customer confidence being dented to regulatory backlash or impact

and at the worst loss of income or revenue due to the crisis.

Files\\Pt 012_transcript.vtt

No	0.0149	1

			1	C.S	15/11/2021 09:28

We've had the financial crisis. We've seen crisis in a space in mining, collapsed shaft mining. War is a crisis. The loss of life, damages to property as well. They're all varied in that way, but the question that remains is how does the responses of those crisis remains the same.

Files\\Pt 017_transcript.vtt

No	0.0259	2

			1	C.S	15/11/2021 10:33

We had terrible floods up North raging and causing a lot of damage.

			2	C.S	15/11/2021 10:33

Pt 017: When students start going on strike, they get carried away and break everything on their way. We have power outages and water shortage around the country. You may go without water water for five days, for a month, for two months. Crisis really takes you from your comfort zone instead realizing you will not have to go back.

15/11/2021 11:13

Aggregate	Classification	Coverage	Number Of Coding References	Reference Number	Coded By Initials	Modified On

Files\\Pt 019_transcript.vtt

No	0.0583	1

			1	C.S	15/11/2021 10:49

Pt 019: Organization encounter crisis of varying degrees, and I would say in Botswana, we are not immune to crisis. We are affected. Various organizations are affected. And it would depend on the scale of the crisis. But I can say organisations are affected across board. For instance, we were at one point perceived in a bad light because people felt we are not very active and very productive of what we do. So, some people misunderstand what we do and we are not doing enough to correct whatever misconceptions out there. Sometimes crisis could be as a result of how we mishandle issues in terms of us in public relations. It could also be wrong communication, it could also be leaders in that organization, the way they are portrayed. It could even be in their private lives. But then that would also sometimes affect their company. What you do as an ambassador of your company can affect the company. Your work, your own personality are consistent and contiguous with that of the organization. So people can't tell the separation or the borderline between who you are, as a person, and that of the organization. So that's why I said its contiguous.

Codes\\Overview of crisis\Understanding crisis

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Files\\Pt 002_transcript.vtt

No	0.0304	2			
			1	C.S	10/11/2021 09:57

Pt 001: The crisis any situation that is has got disruptive nature to business.

			2	C.S	10/11/2021 10:19

Pt 002: Yes, like I pointed out, not many organizations are up there. But through professional associations, we are coming to that call. I think practitioners are coming up, especially with PRISA, the Public Relations Institute of Southern Africa. It has quite a large following and a footprint in Botswana, and it's this kind of topics that you know they run and even offer professional courses in that area. So I think we are coming up. Its not hopeless.

Files\\Pt 003_transcript.vtt

No	0.0072	1			
			1	C.S	10/11/2021 10:20

Pt 003: Yes, um. My understanding of the process is pretty much basic. A crisis is any activity or event that can negatively affect an institution. An institution could be a company, it could be a country, and if we take it that far, crisis can also happen to individuals. So it's any situation that has the potential to negatively affect any institution, let me put it that way.

Aggregate	Classification	Coverage	Number Of Coding References	Reference Number	Coded By Initials	Modified On
Files\\Pt 004_transcript.vtt						
No		0.0164	1			
				1	C.S	10/11/2021 10:59

Pt 004: Well. I think, crisis is essentially any disruption to normal business operations that has not been planned for, or that is unexpected, which puts a business or an organization at a disadvantage. It can also put it under disrepute. Basically, crisis is any activity that tends to a disadvantage the organization, one way or the other, that will disrupt business and even just the relationship that an organization has with its various stakeholders.

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No		0.0321	1			
				1	C.S	11/11/2021 09:26

Pt 005: Basically the way I understand a crisis to be is that it could be a danger. It can be an organization facing a difficulty or when its going through a difficult era. It can be an organization or a country at large, it can even be at individual levels, as individuals we kept we sometimes go through crisis, so I can specifically say a crisis can be a danger that one encounters or a difficult time, but an organization can go through. I say an organization or a country or yes or no reason can go through a difficult time.

Files\\Pt 006_transcript.vtt						
No		0.0140	1			
				1	C.S	11/11/2021 09:42

Pt 006: Well, a crisis from my knowledge and experience is an event, whether it is internal or external to the organization which disrupts the normal flow of business in a very bad or negative way. We spend quite as the business to act in a decisive manner to contain it, least it undermines the survival of the business itself, and what I have seen in the past is that crisis tend to announce themselves in very unexpected fashions. On a certain day it's a normal day and then, all of a sudden, people are running wondering what happened; people barging into your office until you know that something major in the business has gone wrong.

Files\\Pt 007_transcript.vtt						
No		0.0094	1			
				1	C.S	11/11/2021 10:20

Pt 007: I understand a crisis to be an unexpected situation that an organization finds itself having to deal with. This wouldn't normally be an event or a situation that an organization would blend in time.

Aggregate	Classification	Coverage	Number Of Coding References	Reference Number	Coded By Initials	Modified On

Files\\Pt 008_transcript.vtt

No		0.0351	1			
				1	C.S	11/11/2021 10:34

Pt 008: Well, my firm understanding of crisis is that it is situation over and above your normal situation. It is something that you need to, in most cases, it's a very active situation that's quite different from your normal day to day situation. Crisis may also be interpreted in various ways to the severity or the the size of the issue. It could be loss of life, it could be crisis to reputation damage. It could be a variety of things, but i'd like to believe that it is anything above the norm of a day to day running. It could be something that is of detriment to an organization's public image or reputationt. That is really my perspective of crisis, as opposed to using an academic reasoning of it. But it is a situation that happens right there and needs to be resolved. There are obviously steps to approaching it, but key to it, I look at the crisis as maybe a situation which could be damaging to organizational reputation, which is something we really need to safeguard.

Files\\Pt 009_transcript.vtt

No		0.0186	1			
				1	C.S	11/11/2021 10:49

Pt 009: I think a crises in my understanding is something that went wrong because it was quite difficult for you to handle. So i'm going to keep that short, so that you can make your follow up. The context I want to provide is that it is the difficulty of something that has gone wrong, not everything that has gone wrong is a crisis.

Files\\Pt 010_transcript.vtt

No		0.0072	1			
				1	C.S	11/11/2021 10:57

Pt 010: Okay, my understanding in the simplest terms of a crisis is an unexpected event that is out of one's control but requires management.

Files\\Pt 011_transcript.vtt

No		0.0198	1			
				1	C.S	15/11/2021 09:11

Pt 011: crises from a communication perspective, really I think it's when a brand or organization is faced with either backlash or disruption to business. And then, from a comments perspective, obviously in terms of either public messaging, public perception or public messaging or related issues to the brand or the organization or even individual.

Aggregate	Classification	Coverage	Number Of Coding References	Reference Number	Coded By Initials	Modified On

Files\\Pt 012_transcript.vtt

No		0.0353	2			
				1	C.S	15/11/2021 09:26

Pt 012: Yes. I think, for me crisis in terms of what people's lives or colleagues or communities lives in danger, then there's crisis that affects the company, it affects the organization in a way.

				2	C.S	15/11/2021 09:28

So when we still based on those two crisis or two examples that I just gave, you find that there's a crisis where everybody agrees there's a consensus about the crisis. Okay, this is the crisis and what needs to be done at the crisis, and then the crisis where you have sort of organizing people sort of seeing the crisis differently, and those who don't see the crisis. It can somehow affect people's lives, whether it's like I said physically or financially or otherwise.

Files\\Pt 013_transcript.vtt

No		0.0141	1			
				1	C.S	15/11/2021 09:42

Pt 013: Its mishap that happens, which can happen to an organisation. Its something that unexpectedly happens, that might interrupt a business as it usually does on a daily basis.

Files\\Pt 014_transcript.vtt

No		0.0098	1			
				1	C.S	15/11/2021 09:51

Pt 014: Crisis is that action or activity that happens when it was not planned for. Sort of like an emergency and in most cases, it would be due to the lack of information on the part of the people. In most cases that's what i've realized.

Files\\Pt 015_transcript.vtt

Aggregate	Classification	Coverage	Number Of Coding References	Reference Number	Coded By Initials	Modified On
No		0.0295	1			
				1	C.S	15/11/2021 10:06

Pt 015: Thank you very much. When we're talking about crisis in my understanding, we are talking about an unstable situation that is arising immediately. Its about how our organization can emerge with a positive image from the situation that we find ourselves in. So it is an issue, it is a situation, it is a situation that arises with urgency. It is an unforeseen situation that also requires you to act promptly and to try and avoid a disaster.

Aggregate	Classification	Coverage	Number Of Coding References	Reference Number	Coded By Initials	Modified On

Files\\Pt 016_transcript.vtt

Aggregate	Classification	Coverage	Number Of Coding References	Reference Number	Coded By Initials	Modified On
No		0.0400	1			
				1	C.S	15/11/2021 10:22

Pt 016: Well, in my previous engagement with the companies I worked with, i've come across various crisis and to me crisis is changing the way there's an immediacy that needs or that demands a person on behalf of the company or way of when the risks involved in making sure that everything's aligned to the business objectives. I managed to take my objective as a PR person to be able to cap that. Crisis is something like when we have other business in terms of when the risks is involved.

Files\\Pt 017_transcript.vtt

Aggregate	Classification	Coverage	Number Of Coding References	Reference Number	Coded By Initials	Modified On
No		0.0165	1			
				1	C.S	15/11/2021 10:32

Pt 017: Crisis from my understanding is a phenomenon that occurs unplanned, maybe within a short space of time, that gets you to think on your feet. It's not something that is going to happen in a day or so. It's an event that comes to disrupt

Files\\Pt 018_transcript.vtt

Aggregate	Classification	Coverage	Number Of Coding References	Reference Number	Coded By Initials	Modified On
No		0.0151	1			
				1	C.S	15/11/2021 10:41

Pt 018: Crisis from an organizational point of view is really something unpleasant, possibly any event that is unplanned possibly also unforeseen and requires immediate attention from leadership of the organization.

Files\\Pt 019_transcript.vtt

Aggregate	Classification	Coverage	Number Of Coding References	Reference Number	Coded By Initials	Modified On
No		0.0047	1			
				1	C.S	15/11/2021 10:47

Pt 019: Crisis is anything that could damage the image or the reputation of an organization.

Aggregate	Classification	Coverage	Number Of Coding References	Reference Number	Coded By Initials	Modified On

Files\\Pt 020_transcript.vtt

Aggregate	Classification	Coverage	Number Of Coding References	Reference Number	Coded By Initials	Modified On
No		0.0139	1			
				1	C.S	15/11/2021 10:55

Pt 20: Thank you very much for the question. For me, I believe there are a myriad of perspectives. It's really a collection and a number of situations that take place. In as far as a situation in an organization may have taken place. It is the difficulty or a danger. It tends to be a risk that an organization might be experiencing at a time when a situation is occuring.

Codes\\Reputational asset

Document

Files\\Pt 001_ Transcript

Aggregate	Classification	Coverage	Number Of Coding References	Reference Number	Coded By Initials	Modified On
No		0.0204	2			
				1	C.S	10/11/2021 09:09

Reputation, it means that there is a loss or your image is an organization gets affected.

Aggregate	Classification	Coverage	Number Of Coding References	Reference Number	Coded By Initials	Modified On
				2	C.S	10/11/2021 09:26

So why does the reputation matters so much to organizations.

Pt 001: Reputation, just like communication is the bloodline of every organisation. Reputation touches on the stakeholders. If they still do not have confidence in your services, how would you survive? How would the organsiation survive? It is the backbone, you know. When you talk about reputation, it means a lot, I mean we're in this competitive, you know, 21st century landscape. Its all about as good as satisfaction. If the stakeholder is not happy, how are you going to resuscitate your customers interest strategy to take you out of these issues.

Files\\Pt 002_transcript.vtt

No	0.0502	3			
			1	C.S	10/11/2021 09:58

Reputation was damaged and we needed to do a lot to restore that parity.

			2	C.S	10/11/2021 09:58

Pt 002: It matters so much because it takes just a little to damage the reputation. But it will take a some years to restore it, so it is very critical to ensure that you know, a you jealous guard your reputation. That the processes that you have in place, are efficiently and effectively implemented and followed for the letter, so that you avoid anything that might damage your reputation

Aggregate	Classification	Coverage	Number Of Coding References	Reference Number	Coded By Initials	Modified On
				3	C.S	10/11/2021 10:13

CS: I see! Could this be the reason why some organizations in Botswana are very passive in sharing information on Facebook, especially during crisis?

Pt 002: Yes, because social media if you don't handle it well, It can cause reputational damage to the organization. May be thats why many organization this side regard a social media as a taboo, a no go area. But it has got so much potential and benefits if handled well.

Files\\Pt 003_transcript.vtt

No	0.0113	2			
			1	C.S	10/11/2021 10:22

Pt 003: Fortunately, for us at [name of organisation], we have a risk management model that we follow. We have top risks that we closely monitor in terms of reputation and how they can affect the cooperation.

			2	C.S	10/11/2021 10:22

Why does reputation matters so much to organizations?

Pt 003: Let me start with your last question, the follow up question, reputation matters a a lot to organizations. It's a make or break for an organization because reputation concerns the brand. We all know that brands take time to build and what your brand represents is the most critical thing to yourself, and what you stand for.

Files\\Pt 004_transcript.vtt

No		0.0487	1			
				1	C.S	10/11/2021 11:02

CS: In your understanding of crisis, you said it can affect reputation. Why does reputation matters so much to organizations?

Pt 004: What they say is that it takes many years to build a reputation and it can take a split second to essentially erase all that. How people view an organization is extremely important because it influences their interaction with that organization. People I think the same way as we do in terms of personal relationships or professional relationships people wanted in business with organizations that are seemingly reputable. People want to be able to engage with organizations that they are able to trust. People want to engage with organizations that they feel have got their best interest at heart. If one will if you're going to be spending any money you want to know that are going to gain value from the money that I spent. So even if an organization gets involved in any act that its clients or customers will view as questionable it can affect their engagement with that particular business. And remember, also, that reputation is not just between customers and organization. A lot of organizations are governed by so many different laws of doing business in a particular country. For instance, if your customers are seemingly not happy with you and use social media it can in actual fact affect your reputation.

Aggregate	Classification	Coverage	Number Of Coding References	Reference Number	Coded By Initials	Modified On

Files\\Pt 005_transcript cs

No		0.0421	1			
				1	C.S	11/11/2021 09:28

CS: You mentioned that crisis affect organisations. Why does the reputation matters so much?

Pt 005: Reputation is the way people perceive you or perceive an organization. They would trust the organization if it has positive reputation. Trust is very important. So, having a very good reputation among the people that you serve as an organization or among your clientele builds trust. Creating that good image with stakeholders actually assist you in providing the service to the people. As you have continuous engagement with your stakeholders, you will find your organization giving and improving in service delivery. So good reputation actually helps in improvement of service delivery.

Files\\Pt 006_transcript.vtt

No		0.0109	1			
				1	C.S	11/11/2021 09:44

Pt 006: Well, reputation in my experience, is the bread and butter of a business because if it is the bread and butter of the business and if the reputation is harmed you then have flight of capital and financial capital. You possibly also have flight of human capital and then the converse of that is that you find it very difficult to do new investments. You also find it very difficult to attract competent high flyers to come and join your business or the ripple effect is manifold right across.

Files\\Pt 007_transcript.vtt

		No	0.0359	1			
					1	C.S	11/11/2021 10:22

Pt 007: What reputation mean to us is, if you take for profit organizations, it may be the reason why they are still in business, maybe, because they have a certain reputation. Now damaged reputation normally means that their continued stay in business is also in danger. In these days, maybe number, but again for a government organizations, like government departments so on and so forth, it still matters in that if you are a government, for instance, and you do not have any reputation, whatever you say people do not believe it. So you also need reputation as a government for purposes of allowing you room in a manner, so that you will not be going through discomfort. People are very critical. People being suspicious of anything you say because perhaps you'll have no reputation.

Files\\Pt 008_transcript.vtt

		No	0.0323	2			
					1	C.S	11/11/2021 10:36

Pt 008: Well, I think it's part and parcel of an organizational, of an organization working well within its environment. I mean reputation is based on goodwill; based on trust; is based on elements of the Community within which you serve your stakeholders who have high levels of confidence in you being able to do things. You may be achieving the bottom line. Reputation in all, I would perceive in my profession as the be all and end or having continued organizational success. You can achieve high profits, but without a great reputation behind it, then there's a gap between you and your stakeholders. Okay great! they make millions every year, but their practices and the people running their organizations are not grounded in their own, have a good reputation.

Aggregate	Classification	Coverage	Number Of Coding References	Reference Number	Coded By Initials	Modified On
				2	C.S	11/11/2021 10:37

The perception that people have, has taken a knocking on the reputation and it's those organizations that are representative of Botswana.

Files\\Pt 009_transcript.vtt

		No	0.0434	1			
					1	C.S	11/11/2021 10:51

Pt 009: You know reputation is everything. If there's one thing that marketing and communications or PR practitioners are hired for, actually is to manage reputation of an organization. I think you have gone to the level of PhD so that you get back here as the master that can really show organizations how to have a good reputation. It's very very important to maintain a good reputation in the stakeholders eyes, because that's how you can attract more customers. That's how you get believed it by the communities. If you need to collaborate with the community they know you are a reputable company. If you are a profit making organization that's essentially how you get to your bottom line; how you increase your shares. That's how we also maintain shareholders confidence.

Files\\Pt 010_transcript.vtt

No		0.0343	1			
				1	C.S	11/11/2021 10:58

Pt 010: Reputation matters so much because if there's no confidence in an organization, then the organization will lose its customers. Customers will opt for alternative products. In our cases but, just like sports arena, if our customers have no confidence in our statistics then it means they will not use the statistics that we produce to make decisions. Instead they will opt for statistics from other sources. So it's very important for an organization to manage its reputation if it's a profit making organization. As you can imagine they'll lose money. Basically, they lose clients, people will be coming in to buy products because they don't believe in it.

Files\\Pt 011_transcript.vtt

No		0.0507	1			
				1	C.S	15/11/2021 09:13

Pt 011: I like to give this example and I don't know if it's a quality acceptable example. So I like to say this to sales teams that i've worked with. That without the brand know how, your product is less likely to be able to sell. So that is always in conversation of why every marketing message still needs to be cognizant of the reputation of the brand itself. So the brand needs to exist and live as an individual. It's a breathing living organized organism because without it, without it being known, customer confidence within your product will be purely based on what you say. But when when there's a strong brand that exists, customer or audience confidence exists on the product. I don't know if it's a long winded answer to your question, but for me that is why reputation matters because brand and reputation go hand in hand. So without a positive reputation, the conversation is enhanced.

Aggregate	Classification	Coverage	Number Of Coding References	Reference Number	Coded By Initials	Modified On

Files\\Pt 012_transcript.vtt

No		0.0386	1			

| | | | | 1 | C.S | 15/11/2021 09:32 |

Pt 012: I think reputation is the goodwill of the company. Whether you're selling a product or selling a service, people needs to be able to trust you as an organization or as a company and the trust is derived from the reputation. For example, if you talk of a company that produces food. I know some years back in 2017 the entire southern Africa was nearly got wiped out by a Polony. When there is that crisis, people lose lives, and your reputation is gone. Nobody's gonna trust buying from you. But in other jurisdictions, especially in instances where you are a listed company, crisis can actually just take your stock to zero, and people will lose their money. CEOs have lost their jobs because of the company's reputation.

Files\\Pt 013_transcript.vtt

| No | | 0.0414 | 1 | | | |
| | | | | 1 | C.S | 15/11/2021 09:44 |

Pt 013: Reputation is very important because you need to have it for continued business with all your stakeholders, be it your clients, your service providers, your suppliers. No one wants to be associated with people who have been viewed badly by the public because that's where you get your business from. Those are the people that provide your daily business. So if you're going to be associated with someone who has been viewed negatively, your business might also be viewed negatively, and it will be affected in a way.

Files\\Pt 014_transcript.vtt

| No | | 0.0369 | 1 | | | |
| | | | | 1 | C.S | 15/11/2021 09:54 |

Pt 014: I think reputation matters to us because we sell services and programs to the people. They need to have as much information as possible and, in most cases I have realized that when people don't have information that's when we get a crisis. You eventually have to explain to them that for them to get access to [name of product] they're supposed to be under 35, and should have a registered company or have a company name or you're supposed to have an idea of what exactly you want to do as a young person. Business wise you're supposed to have a either a land or you're supposed to have a place of operation and whatnot. So if people don't have that information, then they will say that the government is providing this idea of thing, and nobody knows what to do, how to go about it. So you need to give people information so that they are able to access your service or your product.

Aggregate	Classification	Coverage	Number Of Coding References	Reference Number	Coded By Initials	Modified On

Files\\Pt 015_transcript.vtt

| No | | 0.0240 | 1 | | | |

636

				1	C.S	15/11/2021 10:07

Pt 015: It can either influence people to trust the organization. It can also tell or give an overview of whether you are having a positive image or a negative image. In every institution reputation matters in that if you don't manage your crisis very well, you are going to end up losing clients and being seen as untrustworthy. The organisation loses credibility.

Files\\Pt 016_transcript.vtt

No	0.0109	1			
			1	C.S	15/11/2021 10:23

Pt 016: For companies on the stock exchange, crisis affect the share price. Once you default in reputation, share price is affected.

Files\\Pt 017_transcript.vtt

No	0.0353	1			
			1	C.S	15/11/2021 10:33

Pt 017: Reputation is the number one thing that defines you and defends you as a country, defends me as a person, defines me as an institution. When as a country we are saying we are not being vaccinated because you do not have Covid vaccines, it doesnt helps us as a country that is known to be stable, to be peaceful, to be well managing resources. I don't know what happened. We are only 2 million people and up to now vaccination rate is so low. It doesn't make a lot of sense, it means there is a crisis. Reputation defines us as a country.

Files\\Pt 018_transcript.vtt

No	0.0386	1			
			1	C.S	15/11/2021 10:42

CS: I see. You spoke about crisis disrupting the business operations and reputation. Why does reputation matters so much? Pt 018: Well, reputation is literally the currency because if an organization does not have a good reputation, nobody trusts anything they say or do. I can come in and talk all the beautiful things but at the end of the day, we will not trust that you're going to do those things. That's why reputation is so important. If you say you are going to do something and you dont, people wont trust you and you will lose integrity.

Aggregate	Classification	Coverage	Number Of Coding References	Reference Number	Coded By Initials	Modified On

Files\\Pt 019_transcript.vtt

637

No	0.0297	1			
			1	C.S	15/11/2021 10:49

Pt 019: Reputation is mostly what organisations exist for. Organizations are about trust. Organizations are about credibility. You want the credibility that you portray yourself with. As an organisation, you may sell a product or a service and people may need them, but its mostly about credibility and trust. If you have an organisation that cannot be trusted, it doesnt matter what they sell or its meant for the communities' good. The bottom line is that can you be trusted; are you credible enough; when you say yes, is it yes. That's why reputation is very critical and important.

Files\\Pt 020_transcript.vtt

No	0.0122	1			
			1	C.S	15/11/2021 10:58

Pt 020: Well, reputation is very important to the organization. It is an asset that is not tangible to the organization. I usually see that reputation is the one thing that influences your key customers or stakeholders perceptions and what they think about the organization and how the organization is perceived by other people.