How publics respond to crisis communication strategies: The interplay of information form and source

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A R T I C L E   I N F O

Article history:
Received 6 April 2011
Received in revised form 28 July 2011
Accepted 5 August 2011

Keywords:
Digital media
Crisis communication
Social media

A B S T R A C T

Through an experiment with 162 college students this study empirically evaluates an emerging communication model: the social-mediated crisis communication model (SMCC). As part of a series of studies testing the SMCC model, this study focuses on two of the SMCC model's components: the effects of crisis information form (traditional media, social media, and word-of-mouth) and source (third party and organization) on publics' acceptance of crisis response strategies and publics' crisis emotions. The findings clearly indicate the importance of strategically matching crisis information form and source when organizations respond to crises. In addition, the selection of crisis information form and source affects publics' attribution independent and dependent emotions.

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Social networks and blogs account for one in every four and half minutes spent online worldwide (“Social networks/blogs,” 2010). During crises, publics spend even more time online (Pew Internet & American Life, 2006; Rainie, 2005), changing how organizations manage crises (Coombs, 2008). Yet, many communicators have reservations about the credibility of social media (Wright & Hinson, 2009) while others do not know how to obtain management support for social media (Hathi, 2009). Therefore, emerging research that empirically documents how and why social media affect successful crisis communication management is extremely valuable for professionals (e.g., Coombs, 2008; Yang, Kang, & Johnson, 2010).

This study tests and refines the only known theoretical model that helps organizations generate desirable crisis outcomes through understanding how publics use social media: the social-mediated crisis communication model (SMCC) (Jin & Liu, 2010; Liu, Jin, Briones, & Kuch, in press). This model proposes that publics use social media during crises for the following three motivations: issue relevance, information seeking/sharing, and emotional venting/support. The model further posits how crisis communication form and source affect how successful organizational crisis response strategies will be. Through an experiment with 162 college students, this study is the first test of the following SMCC model components: audience motivations, organizational crisis response strategies, and the interplay of crisis information form and source.

1. Literature review

In this section, we first define social media, crises, and issues. We then explain the SMCC model and review research associated with the primary SMCC components tested in this study.

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1.1. Definitions

The Pew Internet Research Center defined social media as “an umbrella term that is used to refer to a new era of Web-enabled applications that are built around user-generated or user-manipulated content, such as wikis, blogs, podcasts, and social networking sites” (Pew Internet & American Life, 2010). In this study we operationalize social media broadly as various digital tools and applications that facilitate interactive communication and content exchange among and between publics and organizations.

A crisis is the “perception of an unpredictable event that threatens important expectancies of stakeholders and can seriously impact an organization’s performance and generate negative outcomes” (Coombs, 2012, pp. 2–3). An issue is a “contestable point, a difference of opinion regarding fact, value, or policy, the resolution of which has consequences for the organization’s strategic plan and future success or failure” (Heath & Palenchar, 2009, p. 93). Issues emerging online can be more unpredictable, taking dramatic turns and multiplying more quickly than issues that emerge offline (Coombs, 2008).

1.2. Role of social media in organizational crisis communication

Increasingly, publics consider the Internet to be the most reliable source for news, especially ideal for generating timely communication, unique information, and interactive conversations (Seltzer & Mitrook, 2007; Taylor & Perry, 2005). These positive features that publics associate with online news in general and social media in particular are especially instrumental for organizations experiencing crises (Johnson & Kaye, 2010; Procopio & Procopio, 2007). During crises publics’ social media usage increases (Pew Internet & American Life, 2006), especially during the initial crisis event (Thelwall & Stuart, 2007). In some cases publics assign a higher level of credibility to social media coverage than to traditional mass media crisis coverage (Procopio & Procopio, 2007; Sweetser & Metzgar, 2007). One key factor in predicting the extent to which publics may engage with social media during crises may be how active publics are in offline communities after crises occur (Dutta-Bergman, 2006).

Social media may have a direct and indirect impact on publics during crises. For example, journalists increasingly use social media as sources for news generation (Larissy, Avery, Sweetser, & Howes, 2009; Waters, Tindall, & Morton, 2010). Also, social media provide emotional support for publics after crises occur as well as a way for publics to virtually band together, share information, and demand resolution (Choi & Lin, 2009; Stephens & Malone, 2009).

Despite that research demonstrates clear benefits of incorporating social media into crisis communication, many organizations have not fully embraced social media into their strategic communication. For example, a survey conducted in May 2009 found that only 29% of U.S. companies have formal social media policies (eMarketer, 2010). Likewise, Wright and Hinson (2009) found that most public relations practitioners do not believe social media are as credible or as accurate as mainstream media. One reason for this lagging social media adoption might be that the extant research on social media largely focuses on how practitioners and organizations use social media (e.g., Diga & Kelleher, 2009; Eyrich, Padman, & Sweetser, 2008) as opposed to how and why publics use social media during crises to communicate with and about organizations (e.g., Schultz, Utz, & Görtiz, 2011).

1.3. Social-mediated crisis communication model

Researchers developed the SMCC model as a framework for crisis communication management in the changing media landscape (Jin & Liu, 2010; Liu et al., in press—see Fig. 1). The model is divided into two parts that explain (1) how the source and form of crisis information affect organizations’ response options and (2) recommended social-mediated crisis response strategies. For crisis information source, the model depicts the interaction between a given organization experiencing a given crisis and three types of publics who produce and consume crisis information via social media, traditional media, and offline word-of-mouth communication: (1) influential social media creators, either individuals or other organizations, who create crisis information for others to consume; (2) social media followers who consume the influential social media creators’ crisis information; and (3) social media inactives, who may consume influential social media creators’ crisis information indirectly through offline word-of-mouth communication with social media followers and/or traditional media who follow influential social media creators and/or social media followers, either individuals or other organizations. At the center of the model is the given organization in a given crisis, which also is a source. Therefore crisis information sources can be divided into two categories: from the organization and from a third party outside of the organization. When multiple organizations are involved in a crisis situation, each organization can position itself as the focal organization in the center of this model to evaluate and respond to the crisis.

Within the organization octagon featured in the model are five factors that affect how organizations communicate information before, during, and after crises: crisis origin, crisis type, infrastructure, message strategy, and message form, which emerged from the literature and interviews with 40 crisis managers (Liu et al., in press). Two of these factors are explored in this study: crisis message form and strategy along with the previously discussed crisis information source variable.

Crisis information form is whether the crisis information is transmitted via traditional media, social media, and/or offline word-of-mouth communication (Liu et al., in press). To understand how the organization can best position itself as the preferred source for crisis information, crisis managers need to understand how crisis information form and source affect
Social-mediated Crisis Communication Model

Fig. 1. Social mediated crisis communication model.

publics’ levels of acceptance of different organizational crisis response strategies. The next section discusses crisis message strategies included in the SMCC model, which leads to us asking:

Research Question 1a. What are the effects of crisis information form (i.e., offline word-of-mouth, social media, and traditional media) on publics’ levels of acceptance of different organizational crisis response strategies?

Research Question 1b. What are the effects of crisis information source (i.e., third-party and organization) on publics’ levels of acceptance of different organizational crisis response strategies?

To help answer these questions, the second part of the SMCC model combines situational crisis communication theory (SCCT) and applied social media research to provide suggested organizational response strategies for social-mediated crises.

1.4. Linking the SMCC model to SCCT

Situational crisis communication theory (SCCT) is considered a dominant crisis theory, especially useful for predicting effective crisis communication responses (Avery, Lariscy, Kim, & Hocke, 2010; Fediuk, Coombs, & Botero, 2010). SCCT first advises that organizations prioritize protecting their publics from harm through two strategies: providing instructing and adjusting information (Coombs, 2012). Instructing information informs publics about how they can protect themselves from physical threats while adjusting information helps publics cope with any psychological threats (Coombs, 2012). After providing necessary instructing and adjusting information, organizations select from four response options: deny, diminish, rebuild, and reinforce.

SCCT’s deny response option has three strategies: attack the accuser, denial, and scapegoat (Coombs, 2012). Organizations attack the accuser to confront the person or group that claims a crisis exists. Organizations use denial to state that a crisis does not exist. Scapegoating is used to state that someone else is responsible for the crisis. Liu (2010a) added ignoring as a fourth deny response option, which is used to disregard a crisis.

SCCT’s diminish response option has two strategies: excuse and justification (Coombs, 2012). Organizations excuse through providing a crisis explanation that limits the organizations’ responsibility. Justification is used to explain why the crisis occurred. Several scholars proposed separation, which could be added as a third diminish option (e.g., Benoit & Brinson, 1999; Hearst, 2005). Separation is when organizations disconnect themselves from the responsible parties within their organization.

SCCT’s rebuild response option has two strategies: compensation and apology. Organizations use compensation to financially support crisis victims. Through apology, organizations express regret for the crisis. Several scholars proposed transcendence as another response option (e.g., Benoit, 1997; Liu, 2010b), which is when organizations shift the focus away from the immediate crisis to a larger issue such as combating global terrorism or achieving national unity.
Finally, SCCT’s reinforce response has three strategies: bolstering, ingratiation, and victimage (Coombs, 2012). Though bolstering, organizations highlight past good deeds. Organizations use ingratiation to praise stakeholders. When using victimage, organizations claim they are a victim of the crisis. Liu (2010b) added endorsement, which highlights third-party support for organizations experiencing crises.

Given the large number of SCCT response strategies, researchers have started discussing interrelations among the strategies and structural dimensionality to improve the validity, reliability, and parsimony of crisis response measures (e.g., Coombs, 2010; Fediuk et al., 2010). In particular, more research is needed on the how the way in which the crisis message is conveyed affects publics’ responses (Avery, 2010; Coombs & Holladay, 2009; Yang et al., 2010), which we test in research question one through examining crisis information form and source. We now turn to the literature on crises and emotions, which also is linked to SCCT, incorporated into the SMCC model, and tested for the first time in this study.

1.5. SMCC, SCCT, crises, and emotions

Emerging research finds that publics seek out social media because they uniquely provide emotional support during crises (e.g., Choi & Lin, 2009; Macias, Hilyard & Freimuth, 2009). Therefore, the SMCC posited that publics are most likely to turn to social media more generally during crises when they desire emotional support and want to emotionally vent (Jin & Liu, 2010).

The type of emotional support publics receive from all source types can directly impact their perception of crisis response strategies (Coombs & Holladay, 2005) as publics deal with their feelings (Jin, 2009, 2010). Research finds an association between high crisis responsibility and negative audience emotions (Choi & Lin, 2009; McDonald, Sparks, & Glendon, 2010) as well as crisis engagement and all audience emotions (McDonald et al., 2010; Yang et al., 2010). Also, specific emotions have been tied to undesirable crisis outcomes. For example, anger predicts negative purchase intentions and negative word-of-mouth communication (Coombs, 2007). Also, fear leads to negative word-of-mouth communication for crises that have internal causes (McDonald et al., 2010).

Scholars are beginning to incorporate emotions into tests of SCCT (e.g., Choi & Lin, 2009; Coombs & Holladay, 2005), but much more research is needed in this area (Coombs, 2010). The most recently published study on emotions and SCCT concluded that attribution independent and dependent emotions simultaneously affect perceived organizational crisis responsibility and perceived post-crisis organizational reputation (Choi & Lin, 2009). To date, however, scholars have not examined how information form and source affect publics’ crisis emotions, though the SMCC model makes some initial predictions. Therefore, we ask:

Research Question 2a. What are the effects of crisis information form (i.e., offline word-of-mouth, social media, and traditional media) on publics’ crisis emotions?

Research Question 2b. What are the effects of crisis information source (i.e., third-party and organization) on publics’ crisis emotions?

2. Method

The effects of crisis information form and source were examined via a $3 \times 2$ within-subjects design, meaning that each participant received each of the conditions for each of the two variables. The first factor tested was crisis information form: word-of-mouth communication (WOM) vs. social media (SM) vs. traditional media (TM). The second factor tested was crisis information source (third-party vs. organization).

2.1. Participants and procedure

A total of 162 participants completed the study in May 2010 via a participant pool system at a large East Coast university. Adults use social media with increasing frequency, but young adults including college students are more frequent users of social media. In addition, their social media use often sets trends for how the population as a whole views technology (ECAR, 2008; Lenhart, Purcell, Smith, & Zickuhr, 2010).

The crisis situation stimuli were developed through a pre-test that presented in six different orders by using counterbalance to randomly distribute variables. The participants were randomly assigned to one of the orders. Because this experiment used a within-subjects design exposing each participant to all condition combinations of crisis information form and source, the individual served as his or her own control for individual differences, decreasing the need for a larger participant pool and accounting for extraneous variables. Therefore, the design focused on the relative effect of crisis information form and source on the individual. The experiment was administered online and on average took 41 min to complete. Each participant completed the experiment protocol individually and received extra credit.

2.2. Stimuli development

To develop the stimuli reflecting crisis situations involving our participants, we interviewed 22 college students from the same university about their social media use before, during, and after crises. Based on the interview results and the ranking of crisis situations the interviewees mentioned as most relevant and important for college students, six crisis situations were
selected, which were then incorporated into six fictitious crisis situation scenarios. All scenarios were about the university where the participants attended school and each scenario was about a different crisis situation the university faced. To ensure that each scenario was clearly and consistently written, a pre-test of 128 college students was conducted. The pre-test results suggested the written scenarios successfully incorporated experimental conditions.

2.3. Measures

After reading each crisis scenario, the dependent variables for discrete negative emotions and acceptance of a number of different organizational crisis responses were measured by using a series of indexes in the questionnaire instrument.

Acceptance of organization’s crisis response strategies. Eighteen organizational crisis communication responses taken from SCCT research (e.g., Coombs, 2012) were presented for the participants to respond to by indicating “how acceptable each of the actions taken by the University could be”, measured on a 7-point Likert-type scale where “1 = Not Acceptable at All and 7 = Totally Acceptable.” Principal components analyses with Varimax rotation rendered four different kinds of crisis responses, explaining 62.83% variance: 1. Defensive responses (alpha = .81); 2. Supportive responses (alpha = .82); 3. Evasive responses (alpha = .81); and 4. Accommodative responses (alpha = .78).

Emotional responses to crisis situations. Nine negative emotions, selected based on crisis emotions literature (e.g., Choi & Lin, 2009; Jin, 2009, 2010), were listed for the participants to provide their likelihood of feeling each of these emotions by asking “what happened in the situation made me feel,” measured on a 7-point Likert-type scale where “1 = Very Unlikely and 7 = Very Likely.” Principal axis factoring analyses with Promax rotation suggested three different types of crisis emotions felt by the participants, explaining variance 2.91, 2.84, and 2.82, accordingly. First, attribution independent emotions (alpha = .89): anxiety, apprehension, and fear. Second, external attribution dependent emotions (alpha = .84): disgust, contempt, and anger. Third, internal attribution dependent emotions (alpha = .91): embarrassment, guilt, and shame. The structural dimensions of crisis emotions validated and further expanded Choi and Lin’s (2009) argument of group crisis emotions as attribution dependent and independent ones by further differentiating attribution dependent emotions based on the attribution direction. This is especially meaningful when the primary publics of a given crisis are internal publics (college students, for instance, in this study as related to university crises).

2.4. Manipulation checks and order effects

To validly manipulate the two independent variables, two manipulation check items were included to determine whether the participants perceived the crisis information form and source in the same direction as the stimuli being manipulated. A MANOVA found significant differences between every pair of the three crisis information forms (WOM condition: WOM 5.50, SM 4.77, TM 4.39, F[2,959] = 26.63, p < .001, par. \( \eta^2 = .053 \); SM condition: WOM 3.88, SM 5.62, TM 3.95, F[2,959] = 78.44, p < .001, par. \( \eta^2 = .141 \); OM condition: WOM 3.89, SM 3.99, TM 5.39, F[2,959] = 54.03, p < .001, par. \( \eta^2 = .101 \)). An ANOVA found a significant difference between the third-party source and university source in the tests (third party condition: third party 4.01, organization 5.42, F[1,964] = 127.413, p < .001, par. \( \eta^2 = .117 \)). Therefore, the manipulations were successful.

A series of \( t \)-test statistics were run to determine if there were any problematic order effects on all the dependent measures and manipulation check measures. Significant differences were found in only 35 instances, in spite of the high likelihood of more instances due to listwise error when 390 \( t \)-tests were conducted. With the overall possibility of significant difference in each of the 390 \( t \)-tests run for the order effects, the fact that only 35 were found suggests no problematic order effects for the measures.

3. Results

3.1. Effects of crisis information form and source on crisis responses

Research question one investigated the effects of crisis information form (i.e., offline word-of-mouth, social media, and traditional media) and source (i.e., third-party and organization) on publics’ levels of acceptance of different organizational crisis response strategies. Interaction effects of crisis information form and source were evident across the findings.

First, significant interaction effects of crisis information form and source were evident in publics’ acceptance of the organization’s defensive crisis responses (F[2,282] = 3.94, p < .05, par. \( \eta^2 = .03 \)). Publics were most likely to accept the organization’s defensive crisis responses when they heard about the crisis from the organization via TM (M = 3.52, SE = .08, p < .05), while they were least likely to accept those responses when the crisis information came through the organization’s WOM communication.

Second, significant interaction effects of crisis information form and source were evident in publics’ acceptance of the organization’s supportive crisis responses (F[2,272] = 18.14, p < .001, par. \( \eta^2 = .12 \)). Publics were most likely to accept the organization’s supportive crisis responses when they heard about the crisis from a third party via TM (M = 5.30, SE = .11, p < .001), while they were least likely to accept those responses when the crisis information came through the organization’s WOM communication.

Third, significant interaction effects of crisis information form and source were evident in publics’ acceptance of the organization’s evasive crisis responses (F[2,308] = 5.25, p < .01, par. \( \eta^2 = .03 \)). Publics were most likely to accept the organization’s
evasive crisis responses when they heard the crisis from the organization via TM ($M = 3.88, SE = .11$), while evasive responses were least likely to be accepted when delivered through WOM by the organization ($M = 3.13, SE = .12$) ($p < .05$).

Fourth, significant interaction effects of crisis information form and source were evident in publics’ acceptance of the organization’s accommodative crisis responses ($F[2,302] = 16.54, p < .001, \text{par. } \eta^2 = .10$). Publics were most likely to accept the organization’s accommodative crisis responses when they heard the crisis from the organization via WOM ($M = 4.96, SE = .11$), while they were least likely to accept these responses when the crisis information was from the organization via TM ($M = 3.82, SE = .09$) ($p < .001$).

### 3.2. Effects of crisis information form and source on crisis emotions

Research question two was about the effects of crisis information form (i.e., offline word of mouth, social media, and traditional media) and source (i.e., third-party and organization) on publics’ different crisis emotions. Interaction effects of crisis information form and source were prominent across the findings.

First, significant interaction effects of crisis information form and source were evident in publics’ attribution independent crisis emotions such as anxiety, apprehension, and fear ($F[2,290] = 111.65, p < .001, \text{par. } \eta^2 = .44$). When the crisis information was disseminated via TM, publics reported the most attribution independent crisis emotions if the information came from a third party ($M = 5.22, SE = .13$), but they also reported the least attribution independent crisis emotions if the information came from the organizational source ($M = 3.00, SE = .13$) ($p < .001$).

Second, significant interaction effects of crisis information form and source were evident in publics’ external attribution dependent crisis emotions such as anger, contempt, and disgust ($F[2,288] = 76.59, p < .001, \text{par. } \eta^2 = .35$). When publics heard about the crisis through the organization’s WOM, they were most likely to feel external attribution dependent crisis emotions ($M = 5.43, SE = .12$). When publics heard about the crisis through TM and from the organizational source, they were least likely to feel external attribution dependent crisis emotions ($M = 3.44, SE = .13$) ($p < .001$).

Third, significant interaction effects of crisis information form and source were evident in publics’ internal attribution dependent crisis emotions such as embarrassment, guilt, and shame ($F[2,298] = 9.68, p < .001, \text{par. } \eta^2 = .06$). When publics heard about the crisis through TM from the organizational source they were most likely to feel internal attribution dependent crisis emotions ($M = 2.83, SE = .13$). When publics heard about the crisis through WOM and from a third-party, they were least likely to feel internal attribution dependent crisis emotions ($M = 2.18, SE = .12$) ($p < .001$).

### 4. Discussion

The results indicate the complex nature of crisis communication in the new era of socially mediated communication (see Table 1). These findings clearly indicate the importance of strategically matching crisis information form and source when organizations respond to crises, which currently are not considered in dominant crisis theories such as situational crisis communication theory.

### 4.1. Joint function of crisis information form and source

For crisis information form, the results reveal that publics are more likely to accept defensive, supportive, and evasive crisis responses via traditional media than via social media and word-of-mouth. However, to more precisely examine when and how crisis information form affects publics’ acceptance of crisis messages, crisis information source needs to be taken into consideration, which has not been addressed by previous studies. For example, this study found publics are more likely to accept organization’s defensive and evasive crisis responses when they learn about crisis information from the organization experiencing the crisis. However, publics are most likely to accept organization’s supportive responses when they learn about crisis information from a third party. Also, publics are most likely to accept the organization’s accommodative crisis
responses when they learn about the crisis from the organization experiencing the crisis via word-of-mouth, while they are least likely to accept these responses when the crisis information is delivered from the organization via traditional media.

These findings support some organizations’ reticence to fully embrace social media when responding to crises given that publics in this study are most likely to accept crisis responses distributed via traditional media, followed by social media, and then word-of-mouth. However, the significant interaction effects of crisis information form and source indicate that the source of the crisis response (organization or third-party) moderates publics’ acceptance of crisis messages distributed via traditional media, social media, and word-of-mouth. This means that, all else being equal, selected information form and source must be considered in tandem with the crisis response strategy as distributing information via traditional media might not be as effective for all crises. These findings are particularly relevant given recent calls for more research on how the way in which the crisis message is conveyed affects publics’ responses, given that current dominant crisis communication theories do not consider information form and source (e.g., Avery, 2010; Coombs & Holladay, 2008; Fediuk et al., 2010; Schultz et al., 2011).

4.2. Crisis emotions as a joint function of crisis information form and source

Selecting the most appropriate crisis information form and source also affects publics’ emotional responses to crises with all other factors being equal and controlling out individual differences. For example, when crisis information is disseminated via traditional media, publics reported the most attribution independent crisis emotions such as anxiety, apprehension, and fear if the information source is a third party. Conversely, publics reported the least attribution independent emotions if information comes from the organization experiencing the crisis. When publics heard about the crisis through traditional media and from the organization, they were least likely to feel external attribution dependent crisis emotions. Finally, when publics heard about the crisis from the organization experiencing the crisis and traditional media, they were most likely to feel internal attribution dependent crisis emotions such as embarrassment, guilt, and shame. When publics heard about the crisis through word-of-mouth and from a third-party, they were least likely to feel internal attribution dependent crisis emotions such as embarrassment, guilt, and shame.

Therefore, the findings indicate that more traditional forms of disseminating crisis information such as traditional media and word-of-mouth communication can still significantly affect how publics respond to crisis information and what kind of emotions are likely to be felt. However, our study did not detect significant differential effects social media might have on publics’ reported crisis emotions regardless of crisis information source. These findings are surprising given extant research that concludes publics seek out social media because they uniquely provide emotional support as one coping strategy to help deal with negative emotions during crises (e.g., Choi & Lin, 2009; Jin, 2010). This might be explained by how different media play different roles at different crisis stages. First, when crises are initially revealed, which was the focus of our study, traditional media and word-of-mouth communication are the most important crisis information forms for an organization to focus on given their source credibility is built on journalistic practice and interpersonal familiarity. Second, previous research on social media providing crisis emotional support has focused on what publics do or feel after a crisis is already well-known and widely spread. As such, it seems that social media might play a more important role at later crisis stages.

5. Limitations and future research

Through a content analysis of the extant crisis communication research, Avery et al. (2010) concluded that: “Overall, it seems that the body of work could be less descriptive and more prescriptive through richer scholarly commentary and criticism in the support for the model [SCCT and the theory of image restoration]” (p. 192). This study takes a first step in refining the SMCC’s model components that predict how crisis information form and source affect how publics respond to crisis communication strategies. As an initial step, however, the study is limited in several aspects.

First, the experiment included only one public, college students, in a series of university crisis situations. Additional experiments are needed with different publics and different crisis situations that highly involve these publics, so as to test whether the causal effects of crisis information form and source hold valid and reliable across different publics. Second, the study only examined the effects of crisis information form and source during the crisis response phase. Additional research is needed for the pre-crisis and crisis recovery phases to provide a more thorough and comprehensive picture of how various crisis forms and sources function throughout the crisis cycle.

Third, the current study focused on comparing the differential effects different forms and sources exert on individuals’ responses. It would be important for future research to also explore the synergistic impact of multiple forms and sources of crisis information dissemination. A series of field experiments using ongoing real crisis situations would be most appropriate. Finally, to triangulate and extend the study’s findings we propose conducting experiments with national populations that cover all three crisis phases and surveys with organizations that frequently experience crises. Through additional research on the SMCC model we can provide theoretically grounded recommendations to help crisis managers successfully navigate the changing media landscape.
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