How Do We Talk to the Public?

An Experimental Study on the Effects of Emotion, Medium, and
Company Sector in Crisis Communication Strategies

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ABSTRACT

Despite extensive research on crisis communication, companies still face troubles in correctly applying crisis communication strategies in practice. With a business transition where brands are ought to become more personal as well as make use of new media channels, communication managers must develop their strategy accordingly. To give guidance to these developments, the current study aimed to uncover useful handholds for communication managers who are concerned with creating crisis communication strategies. To lead this research, the main question was focused on what the effects of emotion, medium, and company sector used in crisis communication, are on the public response. The study followed an experimental research design, which was executed through a survey. A sample of 299 respondents gave useful insights concerning their preferences on company's communication tactics in times of a crisis. The sample contained a nearly equal gender representation and largely consisted of young adults (19-29 years old) with a Dutch nationality and an education background of a Bachelor's or Master's degree. The outcome of the study revealed that the conditions of (emotional) message framing and industry are intertwined in their effect on secondary crisis communication and secondary crisis reaction: a company that falls within the hospitality industry (emotional-driven sector) benefits from an emotional approach, whereas a company that falls within the financial industry (rational-driven sector) benefits from a rational approach. Thus, we proclaim that a company's industry is an important indicator for what type of message framing is desired in crisis communication. Also, results showed that the public prefers to be approached via an online newspaper rather than via Facebook in times of a crisis. However, as the latter was only an implication based on a weak result, this area could benefit from more extensive investigation. This study expands both on the situational crisis communication theory and social-mediated crisis communication model and gives practical handholds to communication managers predominantly by giving insights on the use of emotion in crisis communication.

Preface

Completing this Master's Thesis with confidence and pride was made possible by my kind supervisor Dr. Yijing Wang. I want to thank her for all her patience and effort in helping me throughout the entire process of writing this thesis. In addition, I want to thank those, varying from family members and friends to peer students, who contributed to this thesis, either by giving me feedback, soothing my concerns, or filling out the survey that enabled me to gather data to complete this research.

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1. Introduction

Over the past decades, crisis communication has been a substantially debated topic among academic researchers (Frandsen & Johansen, 2011). Scholars have been concerned with the different aspects that contribute to 'good' crisis communication, which has led to the creation of elaborate theories (Coombs, 2007; Liu, Austin, & Jin, 2011). Why is it important to investigate and understand the strategies that crisis communication is built upon? What is the effect of a crisis on a company? What are the circumstances that influence the way in which companies should communicate about a crisis? According to Benoit (1997), associate professor of communication at the University of Missouri at the time, a company crisis consists of two main components: responsibility and offensiveness. Hence, a situation can be labelled as a company crisis when a company is held responsible for an act that has offended others. When stakeholders are offended and blame a company for their despair, the concerned business can experience a negative impact (Spillan, 2003). A recent example of a company crisis is the case of Volkswagen, the German car-maker who was accused of using non-environmental friendly emission devices, leading to a direct decline in their car sales (Ephraim, 2016). A (temporary) decrease in sales is only one consequence, but the challenges a crisis can cause to a company's reputation and level of credibility are often seen as more concerning (Utz, Schultz, & Glocka, 2013; Weiner, 2006). According to Spillan (2003), crisis communication plays a crucial role in diminishing the impact that a crisis can have on a company. Therefore, not only scholars, but an increasing amount of companies is starting to investigate and familiarize themselves with the different crisis communication strategies. Correspondingly, the situational crisis communication theory by Coombs (2007; 2015) and the social-mediated crisis communication model by Liu et al. (2011) are developed in crisis communication literature, which both provide managerial implications to companies with respect to crisis management.

A formerly studied component of crisis communication is the way in which companies incorporate emotional expression (Coombs, Frandsen, Holladay, & Johansen, 2010; Utz et al., 2013). The function of emotion is a relevant factor, as businesses are becoming more human than ever. This shows from the fact that consumers can communicate with companies through social media, organisations increasingly rely on storytelling strategies (Gilliam & Flaherty, 2015), and people feel as if they can identify with and be a part of certain brands (Maehle & Shneor, 2010). These human-like characteristics of brands, which contribute to brand personality, are important tools that companies can use to stand out from their competitors

(Maehle et al., 2010). Brand personality can be created through emotional expressions that symbolize characteristics such as cheerfulness or honesty. According to Ramaseshan and Tsao (2007) as well as Siguaw, Mattila, and Austin (1999), a well-established brand personality creates a positive effect on the perceived quality, preference, and loyalty of a brand by its consumers. When emotion proves to contribute to the creation of brand value and the attraction of loyal customers, how well will this work when protecting these values and customer loyalty after they are already established? An example of a moment in which formerly established values and customer loyalty need to be protected are during or directly after a company crisis. Former research suggests that an emotionally-driven communication approach, for example through offering apologies, is in general longed for when handling a business crisis (Coombs, 2015). Moreover, the combination of a company taking responsibility and expressing regret is positively linked to reputation (Coombs et al., 2010). While emotional expression in crisis communication has been researched to some extent, there is still an existing gap in literature. Most crisis communication studies focus on the emotion of the public, who may experience emotions such as anger and anxiety, rather than the emotional expression used by the company strategically (Coombs, 2015; Jin, 2010; Jin, Liu, & Austin, 2014; Jin, Pang, & Cameron, 2012; Utz et al., 2013). Thus, the current study lays emphasis on the effect of companies using emotional or rational expression in their crisis communication.

Intertwined with companies becoming more human-like, is the increase of companies who communicate their brand by being active on social networking sites, such as Facebook (Edosomwan, Prakasan, Kouame, Watson, & Seymour, 2011). Tsimonis and Dimitriadis (2014) emphasize that the importance of companies participating online is created by the expectation of the modern consumer. According to these authors, the audience expects from companies that they respond fast and direct. Such ways of responding become highly relevant during times of crises, as Jin et al. (2014) state that the public is increasingly using social media when searching for information during company crises. Even though Jin et al. (2014) have invested this matter based on a survey with solely student-respondents, this study shows that social media is an important channel to communicate through. Despite the knowledge that social media is a relevant channel to be active on during times of crises, extensive research on the usage of Facebook by Fortune 500 companies has shown that theory is seldom put into practice (Ki & Nekmat, 2014). At oftentimes, as Ki et al. (2014) note, companies are not communicating on social media in reaction to crisis at all. Moreover, the small amount of

companies that does communicate through Facebook, commonly operates inadequately. An example of incorrectly applying social media to one's crisis communication strategy, is incorporating a 'full apology' strategy during a crisis where a company is perceived as being victim more than being the responsible actor (Ki et al., 2014). When learning that companies often insufficiently rely on social media for crisis communication, it becomes interesting to look at what medium they use instead. The development of media over time has led to a recognizable distinction between traditional media and social media, which is why these two are thoroughly compared by Liu et al. (2011). Liu et al. (2011) discovered that the public usually accepts defensive and evasive communication from a traditional medium better than from a social medium. Moreover, despite the increase of the public's use of social media in times of a company crisis, traditional media was still the most accepted source of crisis responses in 2011 (Liu et al., 2011). According to Meyer, Marchionni, and Thorson (2010), this may have to do with the fact that newspapers are considered less personal than other channels, which contributes to the perception of newspapers being more credible and objective. In contrast, Facebook is already more personal due to its base of personal accounts, social networking and unavoidable encountering with emoticons (and thus emotions). By investigating emotional framing of messages in combination with the preferred communication medium, a handhold can be created for companies experiencing a crisis. Ideally, the more definite crisis response strategies are outlined in academic literature, the easier it becomes for companies to put these in to practice. In doing so, the aim is to overcome the problem that is raised by Ki et al. (2014), being that companies often fail to correctly exert proven crisis communication tactics up until now.

Which strategy works best in crisis communication depends on the characteristics that define the crisis or the company. One way of positioning the company is by differentiating between more emotional-driven and more rational-driven sectors, which the current study will do by comparing the hospitality industry and the financial industry to one another. The hospitality industry entails companies that are focused on providing service, such as hotels, restaurants, and bars. Within this industry, the role of emotion is very important. A study by Salazar, Costa, and Rita (2010) found that emotion plays a significant role in the hospitality industry when it comes to quality perceptions. A more personal and emotional service can lead to the attraction of new consumers, as it allows for people to feel more comfortable, respected, and welcomed (Salazar et al., 2010). In addition, scholars state that the hospitality industry encourages its employees to be happy and display (preferably real) positive feelings

towards the client, which in turn leads to higher customer satisfaction (Dimitrov, 2012; Lashley, 2008). Thus, these studies show that the hospitality industry is part of an emotional-driven sector. Contradicting, the role of rationality is much more present in the financial industry, entailing companies such as insurance agencies and banks. Within this industry, the consumer wants sufficient information that allows to make clear comparisons when choosing for a company or service (Beckett, Hewer, & Howcroft, 2000). When it comes to financial matters, consumers generally make a long-term decision and therefore approach their choice with more rationale, making the financial industry part of the rational-driven sector. This is in contrast with the more emotional approach that consumers use when choosing for a hotel or restaurant, which has only short-term effects. In former crisis communication literature, little has been found about differentiating crisis types based on expected emotional or rational attachment. No former research makes statements about the possible moderating effect of a company's sector on the relation between emotional framing and crisis communication. To overcome this gap in literature and provide guidance for businesses in these different industries, the current study incorporates a comparison between the emotional-driven and rational-driven sector.

Bringing together all the upper mentioned conditions that may determine the way in which a crisis should be handled, leads to the following research question:

RQ: How do emotional expression, medium, and company sector affect the public response on an organisation's crisis communication?

2. Theoretical Framework

2.1. Crisis Communication

Organisations need to familiarize themselves with crisis communication strategies to enlarge the chances of keeping or rebuilding their favourable reputation after a crisis has occurred. A considerable amount of research has been done on crisis communication in the last decennia, from which theories such as the situational crisis communication theory (SCCT) and the social-mediated crisis communication model (SMCC) have derived (Coombs, 2007; Coombs, 2015; Liu et al., 2011).

The first one, being the SCCT, focuses on the possible crisis communication strategies that can be relied upon (Coombs, 2007). It divides possible crisis types into three clusters: the victim cluster, the accidental cluster, and the preventable cluster (also known as intentional cluster) (Coombs, 2007; Utz et al., 2013). The first cluster, being the victim cluster, describes a crisis in which a company has no control over the situation and has very low attributions of responsibility. Examples of these are natural disasters, such as earthquakes or hurricanes. The accidental cluster ascribes some more responsibility to the company, yet still speaks of an unintentional or uncontrollable situation. The preventable cluster holds a strong level of crisis responsibility by the company, such as human-error accidents or organisational misdeed (Coombs, 2007). Based on the type of crisis an organisation is undergoing, Coombs (2015) defines four possible crisis response strategies, being denial, reducing offensiveness, bolstering, and redress. Not commonly advised to use is the denial strategy, which entails the denying of a crisis' existence or refusing to take responsibility for it. Companies employ this strategy either by making an excuse or blaming another person or group for the crisis. The second strategy, being the reducing of offensiveness, occurs when an organisation attempts to reduce its accountability for the crisis. This can be enacted through blaming others or emphasising that the company had only little control over the situation. When a company applies the bolstering strategy, it is trying to compensate for the crisis by referring to good works of the past. At last, the strategy of redress is when the organisation takes priority in victim concerns, often put into practice through offering a compensation or apology. When following the SCCT, companies need to remain critical: wrongly incorporating the response strategies may result in negative results. As pointed out by Siomkos and Kurzbard (1994), a company can become overly accommodative when using the redress strategy, which may result in making the crisis bigger and more dramatic in the eyes of the public, thereby

negatively influencing the crisis situation for the company. Despite this recognition, the reliability of SCCT is proven by the reoccurring reliance on this framework over the years by many crisis communication researchers, such as Choi and Lin (2009) and Ki et al. (2014). In analysing the SCCT, Choi et al. (2009) argue that the theory could further improve and become stronger from insights on the way in which the public's emotions influence their action. They find that emotions interact with one another and that they affect the way the public responds to a crisis, making it relevant for companies to include the emotions of the public in their crisis communication strategy.

More specifically looking at crisis communication in relation to social media, Liu et al. (2011) demonstrate the SMCC model, a model that explains the relevance of the crisis information source and possible crisis response strategies on social media. As the public shows to spend more time online during crises, it becomes important that organisations play in on this (Austin, Liu, & Jin, 2012). The SMCC model is divided in two parts, of which one explains how the source and form of crisis communication affect the public response, and of which the second part touches upon recommended crisis response strategies on social media (Liu et al., 2011). The model differentiates three types of publics based on their behaviour online. The first public exists out of the *influential social media creators*, being the individuals or organisations who create crisis information. The second type entails the *social media followers*, who consume the crisis information constructed by the first type. At last, there is also a type of public known as the *social media inactives*. This group receives crisis information in a more indirect manner, such as through offline worth-of-mouth with the social media followers or traditional media (Jin et al., 2014; Liu et al., 2011). Furthermore, the SMCC model distinguishes five factors that affect the crisis communication of organisations, being the origin of the crisis, crisis type, infrastructure, message form, and message strategy (Liu et al., 2011). As becomes clear, the SMCC model elaborates on the SCCT by incorporating social media and including additional factors. Both theories prove to be essential: the SCCT comprises of indispensable elements of crisis communication, while the SMCC model plays in on the contemporary demand for online communication tactics and understands the need to consider the complex conjunction of multiple factors that influence the desired crisis communication strategy.

From these theories only, it already shows that the best suitable crisis communication strategy for an organisation depends on many (situational) conditions. While the current research will consider multiple different conditions, the focus throughout this study will be on

solely one type of crisis, being the accidental crisis. As explained by Ki et al. (2014), an accidental crisis is a situation in which "[the organisation did not mean] for the crisis to happen and could do little to prevent it (e.g. confrontations, technological failures)" (p. 144). Whereas the other types of crisis, being a victim crisis or a preventable crisis, are more extreme, the accidental crisis type stays in the middle when it comes to the attributed level of responsibility an organisation has.

2.2. Secondary Crisis Communication and Reaction

Before being able to look at the different conditions that influence the preferred crisis communication strategy, it is important to determine the way in which public response is understood. As suggested by Utz et al. (2013), public response can be determined by looking both at secondary crisis communication and secondary crisis reaction. Secondary crisis communication entails the willingness of the public to share a certain message (Utz et al., 2013). This type of communication can be defined as the Internet's word-of-mouth and involves the intentions of the public to share a message with others or leave comments (Schultz et al., 2011; Zhao et al., 2013). The sharing of messages by Facebook users is extremely helpful to a company's crisis communication as it allows for a wider network reach and forms a starting point for going 'viral' (Bene, 2017). Next to secondary crisis communication, it is important to look at secondary crisis reaction. Secondary crisis reaction involves the intention to behave in a certain way towards or about the organisation and is closely interlinked with a company's reputation (Schultz, Utz, & Göritz, 2011). The term includes the response of the public in terms of their emotions, attitudes, and behaviours (Zhao, Wang, Wei, & Liang, 2013). Examples of secondary crisis reaction are boycotting the organisation or convincing others to do so. The importance of these attitudes lays in its direct relation to the quality of the relationship between organisations and the public. A critical point of secondary crisis communication and reaction is that both ways of looking at public response are rather new established terms. Also, the short amount of questions that serve to measure the public's response may be considered too limited to be depended upon. The three items that the scales consist of are the required minimum, according to Hardesty and Bearden (2004), yet leave little room for unforeseen outcomes of reliability testing. However, the theories are backed up by influential crisis communication scholars like Coombs and Holladay (2009) and relied upon by many other researchers already. Therefore, the current

study has decided to adapt to the usage of these types of public response to find out the effects of the hereafter explained variables of study.

2.3. The Role of Emotion in Crisis Communication

Multiple theories on crisis communication emphasize the importance of companies to use emotion when addressing the public (Claeys, Cauberghe, & Leysen, 2013; Coombs, 2015). Rather than solely informing the audience, companies are often advised to show regret and apologize (Coombs, 2015). The usage of emotions is supported by Claeys et al. (2013), who explain that showing emotions leads the public to think a spokesperson of a company is being sincere. Whereas Coombs (2015) makes implications about using emotion in crisis communication via online channels, Clayest et al. (2013) focus on a situation in which the crisis communication message is transmitted through a (face-to-face) press conference. In other words, companies are advised to include emotion in their crisis communication strategy when using a variety of channels, both on- and offline. A lot of attention is paid to the emotions that the public experiences during crisis communication and how this has a significant relation to their behaviour (Jin et al., 2012; Turner, 2007; Utz et al., 2013). Utz et al. (2013) find that emotions of the public influence both secondary crisis communication and reaction. However, scholars like Turner (2007) and Utz et al. (2013) did not focus on the way in which companies can influence these emotions of the public, and thus the eventual public response. As emotional states are easily transferred between people through emotional contagion via social networks (Kramer, Guillory, & Hancock, 2014), it is expected that emotional framing in crisis communication messages will more positively affect the public's emotion and thus the secondary crisis communication and reaction than rational framing. Thus, based on these former studies, it is predicted that the use of emotion in crisis communication messages is influencing both positive secondary crisis communication and positive secondary crisis reaction. To summarize, the following hypotheses are created:

H1a. In the case of an accidental crisis, emotional framing of crisis communication messages leads to more positive secondary crisis communication than rational framing.

H1b. In the case of an accidental crisis, emotional framing of crisis communication messages leads to more positive secondary crisis response than rational framing.

2.4. The Role of Medium in Crisis Communication

One of the main conditions that the SMCC model takes into consideration is the medium that a company uses during crisis communication (Liu et al., 2011). Schultz et al. (2011) even argue that the medium is more important than the message itself. According to these authors, using social media for crisis communication increases the ease in which content gets shared and, in comparison to using newspaper articles, leads to less negative public responses (Schultz et al., 2011). In contrast, people do consider traditional newspapers to be a more credible and trustworthy source and are thus more willing to talk about it with others, according to Utz et al. (2013). Unfortunately, the authors do not rationalize what causes traditional newspapers to be perceived more credible. Directly contradicting their findings, Johnson and Kaye (2004) claim that blogs, falling under social media, are attributed more credibility than traditional media. A reason for this is that blogs are considered individual and personal (Johnson et al., 2004). Moreover, despite former research on traditional and social media, it remains relevant to keep comparing them to one another due to the ever-changing media landscape. For instance, journalists are nowadays increasingly making use of social media as a source for their newspaper articles (Broersma & Graham, 2013; Paulussen & Harder, 2014). In addition, newspapers seem to prioritize the speed at which they report over the accuracy of their stories (Friend & Singer, 2015; Viner, 2016). These findings raise questions on whether newspapers are, or should be, perceived as credible as proclaimed by Utz et al. (2013). Therefore, the current study counter argues the findings of Utz et al. (2013), by predicting that the use of an online newspaper in crisis communication does not contribute to more positive secondary crisis communication than the use of Facebook. Based on the research by Schultz et al. (2011), as explained in the beginning of this paragraph, it is still expected that the use of Facebook in crisis communication is more positively related to positive secondary crisis reaction than the use of an online newspaper. These predictions are summarized in the following hypotheses:

H2a. In the case of an accidental crisis, using Facebook as the medium in crisis communication leads to more positive secondary crisis communication than using an online newspaper.

H2b. In the case of an accidental crisis, using Facebook as the medium in crisis communication leads to more positive secondary crisis reaction than using an online newspaper.

2.5. The Role of Sector in Crisis Communication

Apart from discovering the general influence of the medium and level of emotion in crisis communication, it is also important to look at how the sector of the company plays a role during this communication process. Some sectors may ask for a disparate approach in crisis communication tactics than others. One way of differentiating between sectors is by taking the emotional-driven sector (e.g. hospitality industry) and the rational-driven sector (e.g. financial industry). Most companies in the hospitality industry emphasize a great level of contact between employees and consumers, making it fall within a sector that is more personal and emotional (Ottenbacher, Gnoth, & Jones, 2006). Opposite to that, the financial industry places lower emphasis on interpersonal attention when compared to the hospitality industry, thereby contrasting the emotional experiences of the two (Johns, 1999; Ottenbacher et al., 2006). Johns (1999) creates a way of differentiating between these industries by touching upon rational assessment, characteristics and attributes, and affective judgement (emotional response). Rational assessment is commonly more recognized in the company-customer relation with a financial company, whereas affective judgements more often reappears within emotional-driven sectors, such as the hospitality industry (Johns, 1999). The emotional differentiation between these sectors leads to the expectation that a fit between the way of framing and the sector will have a positive impact on both secondary crisis communication and secondary crisis reaction. Therefore, it is proposed that the type of sector has a moderating effect on the relation between emotional framing and the public response. Thus, the following hypotheses are formulated:

H3a. In the case of an accidental crisis in the hospitality industry, the positive impact of emotional framing on secondary crisis communication is higher than in the financial industry.

H3b. In the case of an accidental crisis in the hospitality industry, the positive impact of emotional framing on secondary crisis reaction is higher than in the financial industry.

According to the SMCC model, the public looks for crisis information via traditional as well as social media (Austin et al., 2012). The five factors that this model incorporates do not include the influence a company's sector may have, leaving this to be an unexplored field of study in the SMCC model. However, as Facebook is already considered as being more personal and emotionally charged (Meyer et al., 2010), it can be argued that this medium will result in more positive outcomes when used by a company from the emotional-driven sector.

Thus, relying on these ideas, it is expected that the use of Facebook by the public when seeking for crisis communication within the emotional-driven sector leads to more positive secondary crisis communication and reaction. This expectation is summarized in the following hypotheses:

H4a. In the case of an accidental crisis in the hospitality industry, the positive impact of Facebook on secondary crisis communication is higher than in the financial industry.

H4b. In the case of an accidental crisis in the hospitality industry, the positive impact of Facebook on secondary crisis reaction is higher than in the financial industry.

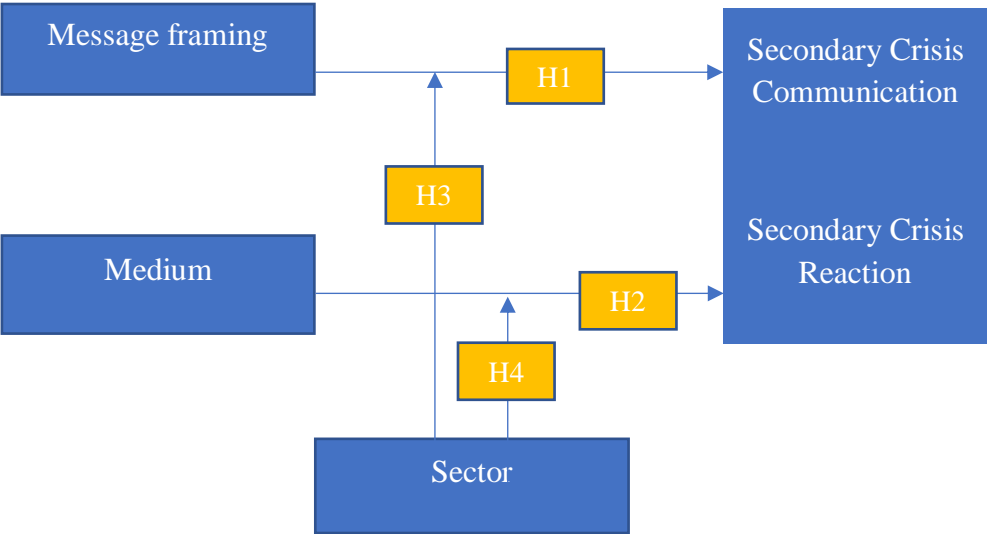The theoretical predictions are summarized and presented in the conceptual model (see Figure 2.1).

Figure 2.1. Conceptual Model

3. Method

To analyse how the public responds to various conditions within crisis communication, an experimental design was used during this study. An experimental design serves to measure the causality between different variables (Seltman, 2015). In other words, it is a design that tests the influence of one variable on the other. The strength of this method lays in the fact that it enables a researcher to manipulate the independent and mediating variables to such an extent that strong interferences can be made about the causal chain of events (Spencer, Zanna, & Fong, 2005). The control over variables and easy determination of the causal relationship within an experimental design, allow for more confident results.

A lot of former research on crisis communication is conducted through experiments (Coombs & Holladay, 1996; Utz et al., 2013). Arguably, the reason for this is that many crisis communication studies lay focus on the response that is triggered by various crisis communication conditions (Coombs & Holladay, 2011). Thus, it is important that crisis communication researchers are able to find reliable response outcomes to different types and aspects of crisis communication. As stated by Kirk (2003), an experiment involves "[the] determination of the treatment levels (independent variable) to be manipulated, the measurement to be recorded (dependent variable), and the extraneous conditions (nuisance variables) that must be controlled (p. 23)". Manipulating the different crisis communication conditions, recording the public response, and controlling equal conditions apart from the measured variables are all important aspects of accurate determination of the public response on crisis communication.

3.1. Research Design

The experiment involved a construction in which respondents were exposed to crisis communication messages by fictional companies. Fictional companies are non-existing companies, that were solely created for this study. The reason for working with fictional companies is that it diminishes existing biases on real-life companies and their crises (Newell & Shanks, 2004). Through fictional companies *Restaurant Jones* and *Jones Insurance*, multiple versions of crisis communication messages were simulated. Following the structure of a factorial design, the experiment gave the ability to test the influence of different variables on the outcome. A between-subjects design was used as companies from two contrasting sectors were compared, namely that of the emotional-driven sector (hospitality industry) and

that of the rational-driven sector (financial industry). More between-subject conditions were generated through the differentiation between message framing and medium. The first, the condition of message framing in crisis communication messages, made a division between emotional and rational framing. Next to this, the condition of medium focused on Facebook and online newspapers as two separate types of media. Combining these conditions led to a 2 (industry: hospitality vs. financial) x 2 (message framing: emotional vs. rational) x 2 (medium: Facebook vs. online newspaper) between-subjects design with an overall of eight conditions. The respondents of the experiment were each randomly assigned to one of the eight conditions through exposure to a crisis communication message. The crisis communication message was created in alliance with the condition that it was supposed to carry out. For example, in the rational framing condition, a message contained only facts about the crisis and left out any form of emotional expression. See appendix A for an overview of the conditions and how they were framed.

3.2. Sample

To carry out the experiment, it was necessary to have respondents that speak and understand English. When searching for these respondents, no specific population was defined, other than the necessary language requirement. Consequently, this allowed for the use of a random sampling method. With this type of sampling, "each and every item in the population has an equal chance of inclusion" (Kothari, 2004, p. 15). As it was relevant to look at the general public's view on crisis communication, it was important to use a sampling method that allowed for a very diverse group of respondents. The way in which this random sample was reached was through Amazon Mechanical Turk, Mturk in short (https://www.mturk.com). This company allowed accessibility to a large number of respondents from all over the world. Moreover, Mturk allowed to reach these respondents at a relatively low cost and short duration of time. A total amount of €25,78 was spent over a period of two days, being from the 17th to the 19th of April 2017. In the end, this method enabled an estimated amount of 270 respondents to be reached.

As the budget for paying respondents was low, it was decided to incorporate a convenience sampling method in addition to the random sampling method carried out by using Mturk. Kothari (2004) explains convenience sampling as a method which aims to include respondents based on their easy accessibility. In contrast with the random sampling method, not all population members have an equal chance of being selected during

convenience sampling (Sedgwick, 2013). As a result, Sedgwick (2013) states, this method may result in a sample that is not representative of the entire population. Despite these limitations, the convenience sampling method was chosen to collect additional data, due to the budget constrain. To connect with the respondents, a link to the survey was shared in a variety of Facebook groups with high student populations from the Erasmus University of Rotterdam. In addition, the personal network of the author of this thesis was relied upon through directly contacting Facebook friends by sending private messages in which they were asked to fill out the survey. Both these proceedings were implanted over a range of two weeks, from the 12th to the 26th of April 2017. Finally, an estimated amount of 165 respondents was reached through this method.

The aim of the research was to find a minimum of 30 useful respondents per condition, which – with eight different conditions – led to a total of 240 respondents. The final number of respondents to the survey was 436. Cleaning of the data was performed to exclude responses that were incomplete, which allowed for a final amount of 299 respondents to be used for the analysis.

3.3. Procedure

The experiment was constructed in the format of a survey from *Qualtrics*. The survey was set up to randomly assign respondents to one of the eight conditions and thus crisis communication messages. With respect to the sector condition, the message was communicated either by a company of the hospitality industry (*Restaurant Jones*) or a company of the financial industry (*Jones Insurance*). The crisis that these companies had faced was a loss of electricity, which caused them to be incapable of performing everyday tasks. For the company in the hospitality industry this meant that they had to close for a day. For the company in the financial industry this meant that they could not make insurance transactions to their customers. For the condition of message framing, the message was either emotionally or rationally framed. For the condition of medium, a distinction was made by creating a message in the format of a Facebook post and a message in the format of an online newspaper article. After the respondent was exposed to the message, he or she was asked to answer several questions and statements in relation to the perceived responsibility of the company, secondary crisis communication, secondary crisis reaction, demographics, and manipulation checks of the stimuli. Before the survey was distributed, it was individually pre-tested on 5 people. The people who partook in this pre-test varied between being students or

adults and all had a Dutch nationality. The communication process with these individuals was face-to-face and per e-mail. As was pointed out by these pre-testers, two main points of improvement were providing the respondent with more information about the company and providing the respondent with a more elaborate explanation of the crisis in the accompanying text to exposing the condition. Also, attention was called to several questions and statements that could benefit from more definite formulations. This feedback was incorporated with the aim to guarantee the quality and validity of the survey for the actual research.

3.4. Measurement

All the survey questions and statements had available answers based on the 5-point Likert scale, unless stated otherwise. The possible answers ranged from "Completely disagree" to "Completely agree".

Responsibility

The perceived crisis responsibility of the company by the public was measured through a combination of questions from the responsibility measure by Griffin, Babin, and Darden (1992) and the (revised) Causal Dimension Scale (CDSII) of McAuley, Duncan, and Russell (1992). Both the responsibility measure and the CDSII were proven to be reliable with the first one having a Cronbach's alpha of .92 and the latter having a Cronbach's alpha ranging from .60 to .92 based on multiple studies (Griffin et al., 1992; McAuley et al., 1992). "The crisis was intentionally caused by company X" is one of the five statements used in this study to measure the condition of responsibility.

Secondary Crisis Communication

To correctly measure the secondary crisis communication (SCC) of the public, the current study followed the scales developed by Schultz et al. (2011) and Utz et al. (2013). No information about the reliability, in the form of a Cronbach's alpha, of these scales was presented in these studies. The three indicators of secondary crisis communication are respondents' willingness to share messages with other people, to tell their friends about the event, and to leave a reaction. Based on these indicators, three statements were constructed regarding a respondent's secondary crisis communication. An example of this is the statement "I would share the message by company X with others".

Secondary Crisis Reaction

The way in which secondary crisis reaction (SCR) was measured, is based on the secondary crisis reaction scale established by Schultz et al. (2011). This scale combines measures of the traditional purchase intention scale by Stockmyer (1996) and the behavioural intentions scale by Coombs and Holladay (2008). The behavioural intentions scale has a Cronbach's alpha of .76, according to Coombs et al. (2008). In the survey of this research, three statements regarding secondary crisis reaction were designed, such as "I would recommend others who ask my advice to go to company X".

Demographics

To gain insights on demographic influences, the survey included questions regarding the respondent's age, gender, nationality, and education. These questions were open or multiple-choice and thus did not follow the 5-point Likert scale.

3.5. Manipulation Check

To check if the manipulations in the experiment were present for the respondent, questions regarding these stimuli needed to be asked. These questions tested if the conditions of responsibility, message framing, medium, and industry were correctly recognized. The available answers to these questions and statements are indicated per condition.

Sector

It is important that the respondent could recognize the industry, and thus the sector, of their condition. The question "What kind of industry does company X belong to?" was created to check if the correct industry was recognized. The answer options were seven different industries, including the hospitality and financial industry, but also industries such as the computer industry and the entertainment industry.

Message Framing

To test if the message framing has been noticed by the respondents, the statement "The message by company X is emotional" was constructed. Possible answers options to this statement followed the 5-point Likert scale, with answers ranging from "Completely disagree" to "Completely agree".

Medium

To ensure that the used medium was clear to the respondent, he or she was asked to answer the question "On what type of medium was the message by company X published?" The answer options consisted of seven different online media channels, including Facebook and online newspapers, but also channels like Twitter and Tumblr.

A complete overview of the survey, following the descriptions in the preceding sections, is presented in Appendix B and C. Appendix B presents the survey with questions that are formulated towards conditions including *Restaurant Jones*, whereas Appendix C presents the survey with questions that are formulated towards conditions including *Jones Insurance*.

3.6. Data Analysis Process

To correctly analyse the research data that came forth from the survey, this study relied on the statistical computer program SPSS. To test the hypotheses, we first conducted a reliability test to examine the internal consistency of each measurement. Then, a factor analysis was conducted to create the common factor as a proximate of the theoretical variables. Afterwards, a two-way ANOVA was conducted to compare the amount of variation between the means of the independent variables message framing, medium, and industry. ANOVA is known as the multifactor analysis-of-variance and aims to find main effects and interactions between factors (Yuan & Lin, 2006). As multiple factors were tested for, the two-way ANOVA became the appropriate technique to use for analysing the data. In addition to the main analysis, a regression analysis was performed on all variables to test for the significance of the control variables. Another two-way ANOVA was performed, including the significant control variables. Finally, a robustness check was done with the respondents who passed the manipulation checks, followed by another reliability test, factor analysis, and two-way ANOVA.

Several preparations had to be made to the data before it was ready to be analysed. To begin with, the data had to be cleaned. Cleaning the data meant discarding respondents that failed to complete the survey or that did not provide all relevant answers that were necessary. For example, respondents who did not answer the manipulation check questions were scraped, whereas respondents that only failed to complete demographic related questions remained to be included. After cleaning, a total amount of 299 respondents remained useful, with a minimal amount of 29 and a maximal amount of 44 per condition. To give structure to some

of the demographic variables, the following changes were made. The variable age was reconstructed by dividing the continuous variable into one with three categories: young adults (19-29 year olds), adults (30-64 year olds), and seniors (65+ year olds). The variable education was cleaned by diminishing the answer "Don't know". The variable nationality was computed into a dummy variable (1 = Dutch, 2 = Other) and the variable gender remained as it was. Within the sample, 10 respondents failed to (completely) answer the questions concerning their demographics, which resulted in a different N for each of the demographic variables as presented in Table 3.1. Based on the respondents who did answer the demographic questions, several insights about the sample were retrieved (Table 3.1). Firstly, a valid 72.9% of respondents fell within the age category of young adults, meaning that they

Table 3.1. Overview of Sample Demographics

	Frequency	Percent	Valid percent
Age			
Young adults (19-29)	215	57.6	72.9
Adults (30-64)	78	20.9	26.4
Seniors (65+)	2	.5	.7
N = 295			
Gender			
Male	140	37.5	47.6
Female	154	41.3	52.4
N = 294			
Nationality			
Dutch	163	43.7	55.4
Other	131	35.1	44.6
N = 294			
Education			
No education	1	.3	.3
High school	29	7.8	10
Associate's degree	18	4.8	6.2
Bachelor's degree	170	45.6	58.4
Master's degree	70	18.8	24.1
PHD	3	.8	1
N = 291			

were between 19 and 29 years old. In comparison to age, the distribution of gender was rather symmetrical, with 47.6% male respondents and 52.4% female respondents. Most respondents were Dutch (55.4%) and had obtained a Bachelor's (58.4%) or a Master's degree (24.1%).

The next step was to check for the reliability of all latent variables, being responsibility, secondary crisis communication, and secondary crisis reaction. To test for the reliability, two 'negative' statements had to be reversed to create a valid outcome. The reversed statements were "Company X was unable to control the crisis" and "I would say negative things about company X and its food/business-doing to other people". For the variable responsibility, it showed that this variable would become more reliable when deleting the statement "Company X was unable to control the crisis", with an increased Cronbach's Alpha from .664 to .742. The items used to create the variable of secondary crisis communication were all leading to a reliable variable, with a Cronbach's alpha of .793. For the variable secondary crisis reaction, the statement "I would say negative things about company X and its food/business-doing to other people" had to be removed. This deletion resulted in secondary crisis reaction becoming a reliable variable with an increased Cronbach's alpha from .381 to .806. Checking for the reliability of these variables gave insights about how the survey questions led to correct measurement of the dependent variables.

After testing for reliability, a factor analysis was performed on these three variables through a principle component analysis. Solely the questions that led to the highest Cronbach's alpha, as illustrated above, where included. The outcome of the factor analysis showed different factor loadings per question as presented in Table 3.2. Based on both the outcome of the reliability test and the factor analysis, new variables were created for responsibility, secondary crisis communication, and secondary crisis reaction. Table 3.3. gives an overview of the mean and standard deviation of the control and dependent variables after these were prepared for the data analysis according to the steps as explained above.

The correlation matrix of all variables, as presented in Table 3.4., shows multiple significant relations between variables. Moderate positive correlations are found between variables nationality and age as well as between variables secondary crisis communication and secondary crisis reaction. Weak positive correlations are found between variables secondary crisis communication and responsibility, secondary crisis communication and nationality, secondary crisis communication and age, and secondary crisis reaction and

nationality. Possible positive correlations are present between variables age and message framing, age and secondary crisis reaction, responsibility and education, responsibility and nationality, and responsibility and secondary crisis reaction. Possible negative correlations are found between responsibility and industry, gender and age, nationality and gender, responsibility and gender, secondary crisis communication and gender, and secondary crisis reaction and gender.

Table 3.2. Item Loadings on Variables Responsibility, SCC and SCR

Items	Responsibility	SCC	SCR
Company X was unable to control the crisis	.631		
The crisis was intentionally caused by company X	.803		
Company X could have prepared for the crisis	.839		
The crisis is the fault of company X	.718		
I would			
… share the message by company X with others		.872	
… respond to the message by company X in a comment		.847	
… tell my friends and family about the crisis of company X		.805	
I would			
… encourage my friends or relatives to eat at/become insured by company X			.915
… say negative things about company X and its food/business-doing to other people			.915
Cronbach's alpha	.742	.793	.806
% of Explained Variance	56.574	70.854	83.778
Eigenvalue	2.263	2.126	1.676

Table 3.3. Mean and Standard Deviation of the Independent and Control Variables

	Mean	SD
Responsibility	1.930	.697
SCC	2.345	.936
SCR	3.326	.807
Age	1.278	.464
Education	3.990	.881
Gender	1.52	.500
Nationality	1.45	.498

Table 3.4. Correlation Matrix of the Variables

	Responsibility	SCC	SCR	Age	Education	Gender	Nationality
Responsibility	1.000						
SCC	.412***	1.000					
SCR	.149***	.568***	1.000				
Age	.038	.297***	.147**	1.000			
Education	.148**	.079	-.046	-.044	1.000		
Gender	-.245***	-.189***	-.117**	-.176***	.028	1.000	
Nationality	.203***	.476***	.312***	.509***	-.029	-.198***	1.000

Significance: ***$p < .01$, **$p < .05$, *$p < 0.1$

The success of the manipulation was assessed by asking respondents to correctly identify each of the conditions through answering the manipulation check questions as presented in section 3.5. A chi-square test confirmed that the manipulation of message framing was successful [X^2 (4, $N = 299$) = 28.455, $p < .001$]. The medium manipulation proved to be successful as well [X^2 (6, $N = 299$) = 204.841, $p < .001$]. Finally, a third chi-square test showed that the industry manipulation was successful too [X^2 (6, $N = 299$) = 188.961, $p < .001$].

4. Results

4.1. The Role of Message Framing in Crisis Communication

To compare the emotional and rational conditions, a general linear model was conducted in SPSS. All outputs were checked for equality of variances by relying on the Levene's test. This test showed no significant values and thus allowed for the assumption of valid equal variances at all times. Emotional framing ($M = 2.412$, $SD = 1.924$) of crisis communication messages corresponded to more positive secondary crisis communication than rational framing ($M = 2.287$, $SD = .946$). However, the statistical test of the difference of the mean of emotional and rational framing suggested no significant results [$F(1, 291) = 1.504$, $MS_e = .855$, $p = .221$]. Therefore, despite the difference of the message framings as predicted, we cannot confirm H1a that in the case of an accidental crisis, emotional framing of crisis communication messages leads to more positive secondary crisis communication than rational framing.

Emotional framing ($M = 3.350$, $SD = .815$) of crisis communication messages corresponded to more positive secondary crisis reaction than rational framing ($M = 3.305$, $SD = .801$). Despite this, the statistical test of the difference of the mean of emotional and rational framing suggested no significant results [$F(1, 291) = .529$, $MS_e = .630$, $p = .468$]. Therefore, despite the difference of the message framings as predicted, we cannot confirm our prediction in H1b that in the case of an accidental crisis, emotional framing of crisis communication messages leads to more positive secondary crisis response than rational framing. Table 4.1. gives an overview of the means for message framing on both secondary crisis communication and secondary crisis reaction.

Table 4.1. Means of SCC and SCR for Message Framing

	Secondary Crisis Communication	Secondary Crisis Reaction
Emotional Framing	2.412 (1.924)	3.350 (.815)
Rational Framing	2.287 (.946)	3.305 (.801)

Note: between brackets Standard Deviation. Significance: ***$p < .01$, **$p < .05$, *$p < 0.1$

4.2. The Role of Medium in Crisis Communication

Using an online newspaper ($M = 2.447$, $SD = .863$) as the medium of crisis communication

messages led to more positive secondary crisis communication than using Facebook (M = 2.255, SD = .991) as the medium. The statistical test of the difference of the medium being used suggested a weak significant result [$F(1, 291) = 3.3.034$, $MS_e = .855$, $p = .083$]. This result contradicts our prediction in H2a that using Facebook as the medium would lead to more positive secondary crisis communication than using an online newspaper as the medium in the case of an accidental crisis.

The impact of using Facebook (M = 3.332, SD = .791) and online newspaper (M = 3.319, SD = .827) as the medium of crisis communication messages on secondary crisis reaction was nearly indifferent. Also, no significant result was found when measuring the effect of the medium being used in crisis communication on secondary crisis reaction [$F(1, 291) = .000$, $MS_e = .630$, $p = .986$]. For that reason, we fail to confirm our prediction in H2b that using Facebook as the medium would lead to more positive secondary crisis reaction than using an online newspaper as the medium in the case of an accidental crisis. Table 4.2. gives an overview of means for medium on both secondary crisis communication and secondary crisis reaction.

Table 4.2. Means of SCC and SCR for Medium

	Secondary Crisis Communication	Secondary Crisis Reaction
Facebook	2.255 (.991)	3.332 (.791)
Online Newspaper	2.447 (.863)*	3.319 (.827)

Note: between brackets Standard Deviation. Significance: ***$p < .01$, **$p < .05$, *$p < 0.1$

4.3. The Role of Sector in Crisis Communication

Emotional framing of crisis communication messages from a company that falls within the hospitality industry (M = 2.534, SD = .882) led to more positive secondary crisis communication than emotional framing of crisis communication messages from a company that falls within the financial industry (M = 2.309, SD = .951). A strong significant interaction between the effects of emotional framing and industry on secondary crisis communication [$F(1, 291) = 7.810$, $MS_e = .855$, $p = .006$] was observed. Thus, we accept the prediction in H3a that in the case of an accidental crisis in the hospitality industry, the positive impact of emotional framing on secondary crisis communication is higher than in the financial industry.

Emotional framing of crisis communication messages from a company that falls

within the hospitality industry ($M = 3.586$, $SD = .779$) led to more positive secondary crisis reaction than emotional framing of crisis communication messages from a company that falls within the financial industry ($M = 3.151$, $SD = .796$). There was a strong significant interaction between the effects of emotional framing and industry on secondary crisis reaction [$F(1, 291) = 8.790$, $MS_e = .630$, $p = .003$]. Therefore, we also accept the prediction in H3b that in the case of an accidental crisis in the hospitality industry, the positive impact of emotional framing on secondary crisis reaction is higher than in the financial industry. Table 4.3. gives an overview of means for the interaction effect of emotional framing and industry on both secondary crisis communication and secondary crisis reaction. Additionally, plots of the means of secondary crisis communication and secondary crisis reaction for the interaction between message framing and industry are presented in Figure 4.2 and Figure 4.3.

Table 4.3 Mean of SCC and SCR for Interaction of Emotional Framing and Industry

	Secondary Crisis Communication	Secondary Crisis Reaction
Emotional Framing x Hospitality Industry	2.534 (.882)***	3.586 (.779)***
Emotional Framing x Financial Industry	2.309 (.951)	3.151 (.796)

Note: between brackets Standard Deviation. Significance: ***$p < .01$, **$p < .05$, *$p < 0.1$

Using Facebook as the medium of crisis communication messages from a company that falls within the financial industry ($M = 2.297$, $SD = 1.060$) led to more positive secondary crisis communication than using Facebook as the medium of crisis communication messages from a company that falls within the hospitality industry ($M = 2.212$, $SD = .919$). However, no significant interaction was found between the effects of using Facebook as the medium and industry on secondary crisis communication [$F(1, 291) = .001$, $MS_e = .855$, $p = .970$]. Because of this, we reject our prediction in H4a that in the case of an accidental crisis in the hospitality industry, the positive impact of Facebook on secondary crisis communication is higher than in the financial industry.

Using Facebook as the medium of crisis communication messages from a company that falls within the hospitality industry ($M = 3.372$, $SD = .804$) led to more positive secondary crisis reaction than using Facebook as the medium of crisis communication messages from a company that falls within the financial industry ($M = 3.294$, $SD = .782$). However, no significant interaction was found between the effects of using Facebook as the
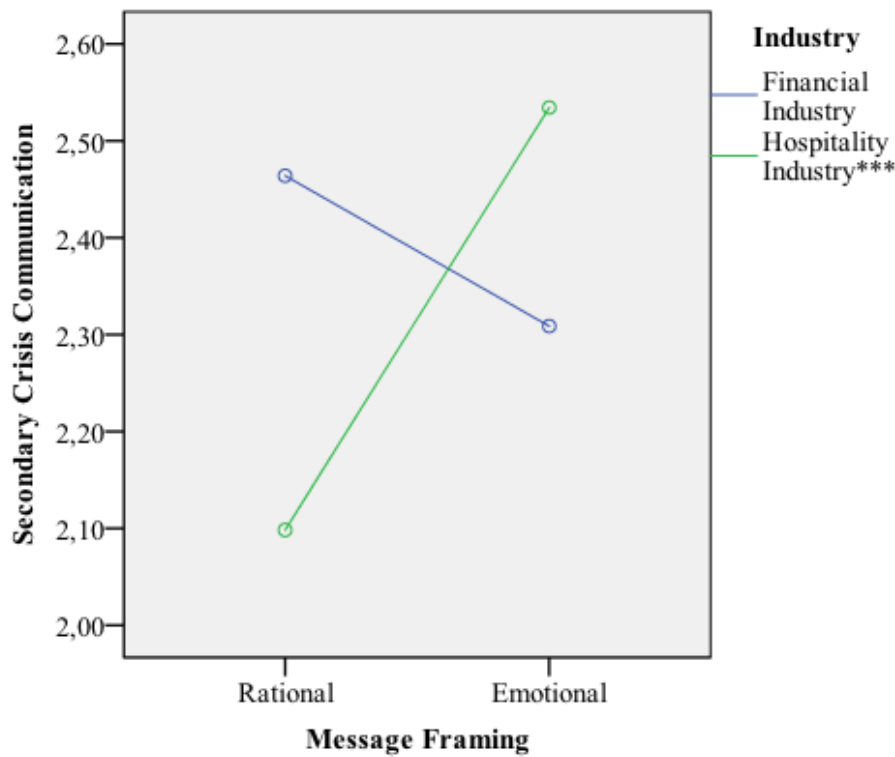
Figure 4.2. Plot of Means of SCC for Interaction Effect Message Framing and Industry
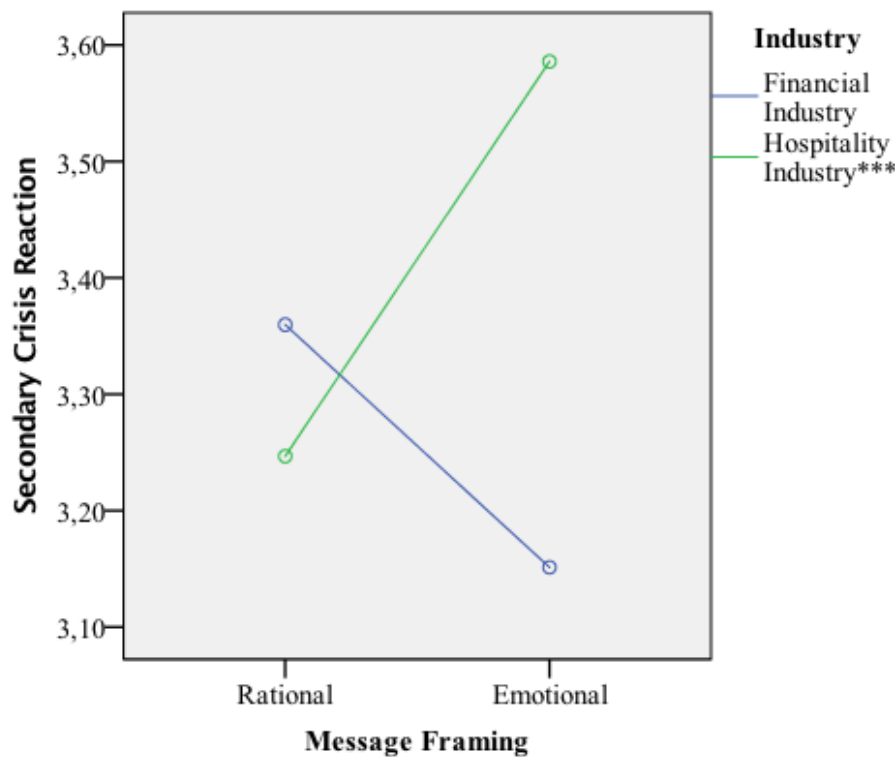
Significance: ***$p < .01$, **$p < .05$, *$p < 0.1$

Figure 4.3. Plot of Means of SCR for Interaction Effect Message Framing and Industry

Significance: ***$p < .01$, **$p < .05$, *$p < 0.1$

medium and industry on secondary crisis reaction [$F(1, 291) = .496$, $MS_e = .630$, $p = .482$]. Therefore, despite the difference of the media as predicted, we cannot confirm our prediction in H4b that in the case of an accidental crisis, the positive impact of Facebook on secondary crisis reaction is higher than in the financial industry. Table 4.4. gives an overview of means for the interaction effect of Facebook and industry on both secondary crisis communication and secondary crisis reaction.

Table 4.4. Mean of SCC and SCR for Interaction of Facebook and Industry

	Secondary Crisis Communication	Secondary Crisis Reaction
Facebook x Hospitality Industry	2.212 (.919)	3.372 (.804)
Facebook x Financial Industry	2.297 (1.060)	3.294 (.782)

Note: between brackets Standard Deviation. Significance: ***$p < .01$, **$p < .05$, *$p < 0.1$

4.4. Additional Results

The results of the regression analysis, including all variables and their effect on secondary crisis communication, are presented in Table 4.5. [$R^2 = .362$, $F(11, 289) = 14.313$, $p = .000$]. It was found that responsibility ($b = .437$, $p = .000$), age ($b = .211$, $p = .070$), nationality ($b = .635$, $p = .000$), and the interaction of message framing and industry ($b = .424$, $p = .021$) significantly predicted secondary crisis communication.

The results of the regression analysis, including all variables and their effect on secondary crisis reaction are presented in Table 4.6. [$R^2 = .142$, $F(11, 289) = 4.178$, $p = .000$]. It was found that responsibility ($b = .123$, $p = .078$), nationality ($b = .469$, $p = .000$), and the interaction of message framing and industry ($b = .402$, $p = .029$) significantly predicted secondary crisis reaction.

The significant control variables for both secondary crisis communication and secondary crisis reaction or either one of them, being responsibility, age, and nationality, were included in the following two-way ANOVA testing. Thus, control variables education and gender were excluded.

Table 4.5. Regression Analysis of SCC for IV's and Control Variables

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients
	B	SE	Beta
Constant	.308	.356	
Message Framing	-.178	.157	-.095
Medium	-.240	.151	-.128
Industry	-.227	.158	-.121
Message Framing X Industry	.424**	.183	.186**
Medium x Industry	.178	.181	.084
Message Framing x Medium	.080	.182	.036
Responsibility	.437***	.069	.326***
Age	.211*	.116	.104*
Education	.061	.052	.057
Gender	-.050	.095	-.027
Nationality	.635***	.110	.338***
R^2	.362		
F-test	14.313		

Note: dependent variable is Secondary Crisis Communication.

Significance: ***$p < .01$, **$p < .05$, *$p < 0.1$

Table 4.6. Regression Analysis of SCR for IV's and Control Variables

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients
	B	SE	Beta
Constant	2.704	.355	
Message Framing	-.246	.157	-.152
Medium	-.051	.151	-.032
Industry	.006	.158	.004
Message Framing x Industry	.402**	.183	.204**
Medium x Industry	-.018	.181	-.010
Message Framing x Medium	.192	.182	.101
Responsibility	.128*	.069	.111*
Age	-.003	.116	-.002
Education	-.026	.052	-.028
Gender	-.077	.095	-.047
Nationality	.421***	.110	.260***
R^2	.142		
F-test	4.178		

Note: dependent variable is Secondary Crisis Communication.

Significance: ***$p < .01$, **$p < .05$, *$p < 0.1$

4.5. The Role of Responsibility, Age, and Nationality in Crisis Communication

Secondary Crisis Communication

When testing for all independent variables, responsibility, age, and nationality, the effect of the latter three on secondary crisis communication became clear. Responsibility showed to have no significant effect on secondary crisis communication [$F(1, 239) = 2.098$, $MS_e = .618$, $p = .149$]. Despite its insignificance, a difference in means was recognized, where responsibility ($M = 2.674$, $SD = .076$) led to more positive secondary crisis communication than having no responsibility ($M = 2.390$, $SD = .100$). Age had a weak significant effect on secondary crisis communication [$F(2, 239) = 2.350$, $MS_e = .618$, $p = .098$], where being an adult ($M = 2.785$, $SD = .112$) or a young adult ($M = 2.406$, $SD = .074$) led to more positive secondary crisis communication than being a senior ($M = 1.672$, $SD = .556$). Nationality showed to have a strong significant effect on secondary crisis communication [$F(1, 239) = 7.375$, $MS_e = .618$, $p = .007$], where having another nationality than Dutch ($M = 2.811$, $SD = .084$) led to more positive secondary crisis communication than having a Dutch nationality ($M = 2.125$, $SD = .098$).

In addition, a significant interaction was recognized between the prior hypothesized effects of message framing and industry [$F(1, 239) = 4.952$, $MS_e = .618$, $p = .027$], where emotional framing of a crisis communication message from a company in the hospitality industry ($M = 2.782$, $SD = .137$) led to more positive secondary crisis communication than emotional framing of a crisis communication message from a company in the financial industry ($M = 2.460$, $SD = .123$). Moreover, rational framing of a crisis message from a company in the financial industry ($M = 2.524$, $SD = .112$) led to more positive secondary crisis communication than rational framing of a crisis message from a company in the hospitality industry ($M = 2.344$, $SD = .126$). These results indicate that even with the inclusion of the control variables, the predictions on the effect of message framing and industry on secondary crisis communication still hold.

Secondary Crisis Reaction

When testing for all independent variables, responsibility, age, and nationality, the effect of the latter three on secondary crisis reaction became clear. Responsibility showed to have no significant effect on secondary crisis reaction [$F(1, 239) = 1.674$, $MS_e = .550$, $p = .197$]. Despite its insignificance, a variance in means was recognized where no responsibility ($M =$

3.468, SD = .094) led to more positive secondary crisis reaction than having responsibility (M = 3.330, SD = .072). Likewise, age showed to have no significant effect on secondary crisis reaction [$F(2, 239)$ = .441, MS_e = .550, p = .644], with a small difference in which being a senior (M = 3.500, SD = .524) and being a young adult (M = 3.405, SD = .069) led to more positive secondary crisis reaction than being an adult (M = 3.389, SD = .106). Nationality showed to have a significant effect on secondary crisis reaction [$F(1, 239)$ = 5.596, MS_e = .550, p = .019], where having another nationality than Dutch (M = 3.641, SD = .080) led to more positive secondary crisis reaction than having a Dutch nationality (M = 3.071, SD = .092).

In addition, there was a significant interaction between the prior hypothesized effects of message framing and industry [$F(1, 239)$ = 9.893, MS_e = .550, p = .002], where emotional framing of a crisis communication message from a company in the hospitality industry (M = 2.780, SD = .130) led to more positive secondary crisis reaction than emotional framing of a crisis communication message from a company in the financial industry (M = 3.283, SD = .116). Moreover, rational framing of a crisis message from a company in the financial industry (M = 3.347, SD = .106) led to more positive secondary crisis reaction than rational framing of a crisis message from a company in the hospitality industry (M = 3.228, SD = .128). These results indicate that even with the inclusion of the control variables, the predictions on the effect of message framing and industry on secondary crisis reaction still hold.

Table 4.7. and Table 4.8. give an overview of the results of the variables responsibility, age, and nationality on secondary crisis communication and secondary crisis reaction.

Table 4.7. Additional Results (SCC)

Panel A: Responsibility			
	Mean	SD	F
Responsibility			2.098
Responsible	2.674	.076	
Not responsible	2.390	.100	
Panel B: Age			
	Mean	SD	F
Age			2.350*
Young adults (19-29)	2.406	.074	
Adults (30-64)	2.785	.112	
Seniors (65+)	1.672	.556	
Panel C: Nationality			
	Mean	SD	F
Nationality			7.375***
Dutch	2.125	.098	
Other	2.811	.084	

Significance: ***$p < .01$, **$p < .05$, *$p < 0.1$

Table 4.8. Additional Results (SCR)

Panel A: Responsibility			
	Mean	SD	F
Responsibility			1.674
Responsible	3.330	.072	
Not responsible	3.468	.094	
Panel B: Age			
	Mean	SD	F
Age			.441
Young adults (19-29)	3.405	.069	
Adults (30-64)	3.389	.106	
Seniors (65+)	3.500	.524	
Panel C: Nationality			
	Mean	SD	F
Nationality			5.596**
Dutch	3.071	.092	
Other	3.641	.080	

Significance: ***$p < .01$, **$p < .05$, *$p < 0.1$

4.6. Robustness Check

A robustness check was conducted for the respondents who answered the manipulation check questions correctly. After new variables were constructed, based on new factor loadings, the two-way ANOVA was conducted once more.

From this analysis, a significant interaction was found between the effects of message framing and industry [$F(1, 179) = 4.869$, $MS_e = .595$, $p = .029$] on secondary crisis communication, where emotional framing of a crisis communication message by a company in the hospitality industry ($M = 2.051$, $SD = .867$) led to more positive secondary crisis communication than rational framing ($M = 1.687$, $SD = .640$). Also, rational framing of a crisis communication message by a company in the financial industry ($M = 2.026$, $SD = .833$) led to more positive secondary crisis communication than emotional framing ($M = 1.890$, $SD = .885$).

Moreover, a significant interaction was found between the effects of message framing and industry [$F(1, 179) = 8.309$, $MS_e = .179$, $p = .004$] on secondary crisis reaction. It showed that emotional framing of a crisis communication message by a company in the hospitality industry ($M = 3.571$, $SD = .601$) led to more positive secondary crisis reaction than rational framing ($M = 3.123$, $SD = .680$). Also, rational framing of a crisis communication message by a company in the financial industry ($M = 3.256$, $SD = .809$) led to more positive secondary crisis reaction than emotional framing ($M = 3.064$, $SD = .832$).

5. Discussion

The current research was concerned with discovering the influence of a variety of conditions in crisis communication on the public's response. With a focus on analysing message framing, medium, and industry, the aspiration was to find beneficial qualifications of crisis communication that result in positive secondary crisis communication and secondary crisis reaction. In this chapter, a discussion of the results will be presented in relation to the hypotheses that form the bases of this study. All findings and implications are made in regard to an accidental crisis, as this crisis type was subject of this study.

5.1. Main Findings

The most important finding of this research is the clear interaction that was found between message framing and industry. The results showed that emotional framing of crisis communication messages is more positively received by the public in terms of secondary crisis communication and reaction when it concerns a company that falls under the hospitality industry, whereas rational framing of crisis communication messages is more positively received when it concerns a company that falls under the financial industry. Although this outcome accounts for both secondary crisis communication and secondary crisis reaction, the latter scored notably higher for a correct combination of message framing and industry. Additionally, these findings remained similar when checking it for respondents who had passed the manipulation checks. Therefore, especially with the goal of creating positive secondary crisis reaction, a company should reassure to pay attention to a correct application of emotionality for the way in which crisis communication messages are framed within a company falling within a certain industry. This finding revises the claim by Coombs (2015), who states that an emotional approach is in general always wished for in crisis communication. An explanation for this phenomenon may be, as follows the definition by Zhao et al. (2013), that secondary crisis reaction is focused on the emotions and attitudes of the public. With a focus on emotions and attitudes, it is logical that secondary crisis reaction has a higher sensitivity for message framing that concerns a differentiation between emotionality and rationality.

A small difference is recognized between using Facebook or an online newspaper as the medium in crisis communication. The results suggest that using an online newspaper as the medium in the case of an accidental crisis is preferred over using a Facebook as the

medium, when it comes to the goal of establishing more positive secondary crisis communication. This means that the findings of Utz et al. (2013), are rather supported than contradicted, while the latter was an objective of this study. Utz et al. (2013) argue that relying on an online newspaper as the medium in crisis communication is more effective than using Twitter or Facebook, in terms of reputation, secondary crisis communication, and secondary crisis reaction. However, the influence on secondary crisis reaction is not equal to the findings of Utz et al. (2013), as not only a non-significant outcome came forth from this study, but also the average responses appeared to be nearly indifferent from each other. Moreover, the earlier explained effect of Facebook on secondary crisis communication was only weakly significant. Thus, we cannot conclude that using Facebook is a more successful medium to use in crisis communication strategies, yet we do find that the studied media are coming closer to each other in terms of their impact on the public and their secondary crisis communication and reaction, in comparison to the findings of Utz et al. (2013). We suggest that the development of media usage should remain to be watched as the media landscape that surrounds us is changing in a fast pace (Ohlsson, Lindell, & Arkhede, 2016). The outcomes of the hypotheses are summarized in the tested conceptual model (Figure 5.1.), where significant tested hypotheses are indicated with the colour green and insignificant tested hypotheses are indicated with the colour red.
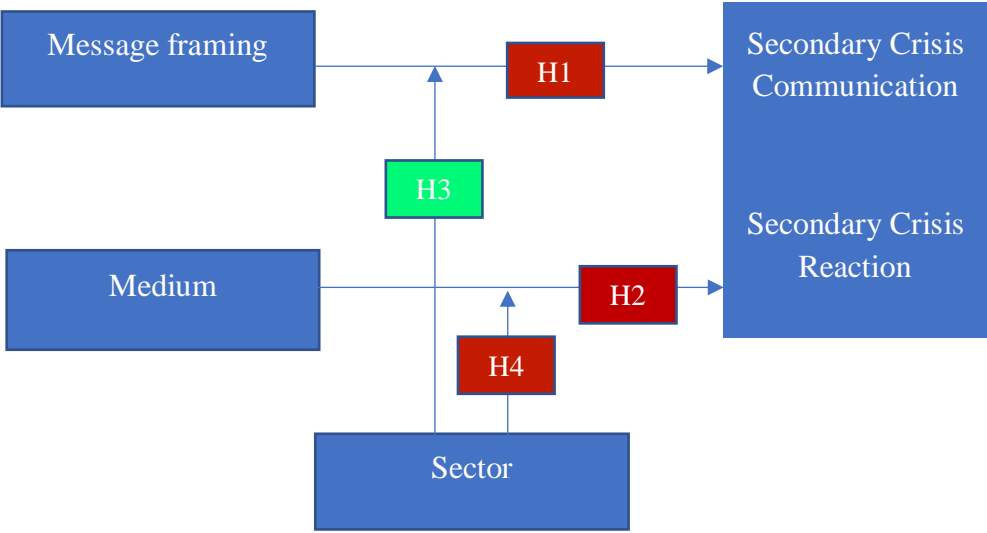
Figure 5.1. Tested Conceptual Model

Not only the pre-defined conditions were of influence on the crisis communication responses, but also responsibility, age, and nationality determined the response of the public. The regression analysis revealed that responsibility predicted secondary crisis communication

and reaction, yet the ANOVA test showed no direct significant effect of responsibility on these responses, respectively. An explanation for this could be that the ascribed level of responsibility by the public does not have a direct effect, but only contributes to a more positive secondary crisis response in combination with other conditions, such as message framing, medium, and industry. A person's age showed to affect secondary crisis communication, where adults, in comparison to young adults, generally responded more positive towards a crisis communication message. Due to little reliability, caused by a high standard deviation in combination with a weak significant result, no implications are derived from the results of seniors. A reason for these weak results may be that sufficient respondents for the age group were lacking at this point. Next, nationality can be of influence on the outcome of a crisis communication message. Having another nationality than Dutch led to more positive secondary crisis communication and secondary crisis reaction. Arguably, a reason for this is that the experiment was more difficult to understand for Dutch natives in comparison to respondents who had another nationality, mostly consisting of people with an American or Indian nationality. A second possible explanation is that the fictional companies that were used in this study were framed as located in the U.S., thereby causing non-American respondents to feel less involved with these companies (Claeys et al., 2013). Overall, we find that responsibility, age, and nationality influence the response of the public, yet it is difficult to clearly present implications as well as reasoning behind these. Thus, we acknowledge that a stronger theory is necessary to explain the findings. Either way, because of researching the effects of these conditions, we find that even with age and nationality included, the significant results of our prediction on the effect of message framing and industry are robust.

One comment pattern was recognized, regardless of significant or insignificant results, with respect to secondary crisis communication and secondary crisis reaction. At nearly all times, it became noticeable that secondary crisis reaction scored higher than secondary crisis communication. One way in which this can be interpreted is that crisis communication messages are more able to generate a response in terms of secondary crisis reaction than in secondary crisis communication. This explanation is supported by results of former studies on both these types of crisis communication response, in which similar patterns occur (Hardel-Illgen, 2015; Utz et al., 2013). However, this pattern can also be the result of unclear measures for both secondary crisis responses. The collected data of the current study contained complaints about the experiment that looked as follows. A selection of respondents raised concerns on how to answer certain questions without having enough background

information of or knowing the company. In addition, respondents acknowledged to not solely base their answers on the condition that was presented, but also on their regular behavioural patterns. For example, some respondents indicated that they rarely shared messages via Facebook in the past and would therefore not share the message of the condition either. In other words, the questions that were meant to measure secondary crisis communication and secondary crisis reaction may not have been appropriate.

5.2. Theoretical Implications

In the current digital transformation of communication, companies should be cautious about being subjected to a crisis. With people expecting more personal and quick communication online, it is important that crisis communication research remains updated on communication trends and become acknowledged of the wishes of the public.

Firstly, this research adds value to academic research concerning the use of emotions and sector of a company in crisis communication. It reveals that the way in which emotions can be used dependents on the emotional level of the sector that a company is in. In the case of a more emotional-driven sector, such as the hospitality industry, the correct fit is to communicate with emotion as well. The opposite is true for a company within a more rational-driven sector, such as the financial industry, which is an industry that benefits from a more rational approach in crisis communication. Hence, the research adds value to studies by, among others, Claeys et al. (2013) and Coombs (2015), who underline the importance of emotion in crisis communication in disregard of the emotional level of the company, which is determined by its industry. Following the outcomes of the current study, the assumption that always using emotion is beneficial to be incorporated in a crisis communication strategy has been undermined, thereby adding value to the way in which Coombs (2015) explains how to make use of emotion.

Secondly, and building on to the above, the current research adds value to existing crisis communication theories on the micro level, as patterns of the public's behaviour in response to interaction between conditions are investigated. This indicates that the SCCT by Coombs (2007) can be further developed by not only incorporating the level of responsibility that is ascribed to a company when deciding on a response strategy, but also including the impact of how emotionally-driven the company's sector is. Considering the emotional level of a company's sector, means that the four response strategies of this theory can be expanded by

taking emotional and rational framing into account. These implications align with the suggestions of Choi et al (2009), who argue that the SCCT could improve from incorporating the effects of emotion pointed towards and coming from the public. Next to this, the factors message form and message strategy that are incorporated in the SMCC model are contributed to. During this research, the influence of message form and strategy are explored through investigation of the effects of message framing and the insights on medium, where a 'traditional' online newspaper seems to be preferred over a social medium like Facebook. The latter supports the findings by Liu et al. (2011), who explain that the SMCC model outlines different crisis stages and suitable communication channels per stage. According to the SMCC model, the stage in which the crisis is initially revealed, likewise to how the crisis was presented in this study, traditional media are more important than social media. On their turn, social media play a relevant role in a later stage. However, the current study cannot make any claims about the suitability of different media channels in distinct crisis stages, as no longitudinal research was performed.

Thirdly, the current study allows for questions to be raised about the validity of measurement of both secondary crisis communication and secondary crisis reaction. Critical thoughts should be given to the way in which both secondary crisis responses are measured. A first reason is the earlier explained reoccurring pattern in which the public often seems to answer secondary crisis reaction related questions more positively than secondary crisis communication related questions. Next, criticism of the respondents showed that some questions did not seem logically enough formulated to be answered by influence of the conditions. Thus, the measurement of secondary crisis communication and secondary crisis reaction could benefit from evaluative research and a reconsideration of measurement scales.

5.3. Managerial Implications

From the current research, several practical implications have come forth concerning crisis situations. Since inappropriate crisis communication can be detrimental for the reputation of a company, it remains important for crisis communication mangers to be familiar with the correct method of handling in times of crisis, thereby playing in on the needs of the public to reassure a desirable outcome. The following paragraphs will elaborate on practical and managerial implications that serve to defeat the problem as raised by Ki et al. (2014), namely that companies are often unable to exert correct crisis communication tactics.

Firstly, it is important to consider the level of emotionality attached to the industry that a company is in. As has been elaborately discussed during this study, a company from within the hospitality industry is considered to belong to an emotional-driven sector, whereas a company from within the financial industry is considered to belong to a more rational-driven sector. To determine the company's strategy on how to frame crisis communication messages, the emotionality level of the company should be kept in mind. In other words, the more emotional the company is, the better it is to communicate crisis messages in an emotional manner. Relying on the conditions portrayed in this study, emotional framing would consist of expressing feelings and emotions while giving all necessary information as well as using emoticons if applicable (e.g. in a Facebook post). The other type of message framing, being rational framing, is constructed by leaving feelings, emotions, and emoticons out and focusing on presenting facts and providing information.

Secondly, this research refutes the primary thought of companies that not claiming responsibility for a crisis takes away perceived blame. Although no direct effect of responsibility on secondary crisis communication and reaction became visible, the results of the regression analysis were significant. Thus, it seems that when the public recognizes a situation to be an accidental crisis, as was the design of the presented crisis cases in this experiment, the conditions that influence the public become strengthened. It should be taken into account that all conditions in this experiment presented crisis communication messages in which apologies were presented. Thus, an explanation for the positive responses from people who ascribed responsibility to the company may be a result of the correct fit between an accidental crisis and offering apologies (Coombs, 2015). Considering the above, crisis communication managers are advised to accept responsibility when it applies to the crisis.

Lastly, it is recommended that communication managers establish their crisis communication strategy based on their target group, specifically looking at age and nationality. A difference is recognized between age groups, as adults scored more positive for secondary crisis communication overall in comparison to young adults. This indicates that the conditions in the survey of this research were variously interpreted by respondents, based on how old they were. Crisis communication managers should keep this in mind when reaching out to their audience. Also, the given that Dutch respondents responded less positive to the crisis messages may be due to a language barrier, where they were less capable of completely understand English in comparison to the respondents with different nationalities than Dutch. Therefore, the need to communicate in the most suitable language needs to be recognized.

6. Conclusion

6.1. Summary

To further expand the academic knowledge that is available on crisis communication, the current research was concerned with exploring which conditions should be considered when the goal is to reach the most favourable secondary crisis responses on a crisis communication message. To lead this research, a main research question was formulated which asked how emotional expression, medium, and sector of the company during crisis communication affect the public response towards an organisation. To answer this research question, an experiment was conducted in the format of a survey. Through this survey, respondents were randomly assigned to one of eight conditions, in which the conditions of message framing, medium, and industry were presented. The experiment gave significant results for the interaction effect of message framing and industry, which showed that the level of emotion in message framing should fit the emotionality of the industry in order to reach more positive secondary crisis communication and secondary crisis reaction. Thus, the expectation that emotional framing of a crisis communication message from a company within the hospitality industry leads to more positive secondary crisis responses was confirmed. This outcome adds value to both the SCCT and SMCC model, as it gives a perspective on the use of emotion in crisis communication strategies and thereby gives room for these theories to further improve and specify their recommended strategies. Also, the opposite of one of our predictions concerning the effect of medium was true, being that using an online newspaper as the medium in a crisis communication message leads to more positive secondary crisis communication as opposed to using Facebook. This finding supports reasoning in the SMCC model that traditional media are preferred crisis communication channels in the stage where the crisis is revealed. In addition to the influence of the three conditions of subject to this study, responsibility and the demographic features age and nationality proved to be influential. However, to better understand the way in which these conditions are effective, further exploration and more extensive theoretical research in necessary.

6.2. Limitations

Several restraints can be recognized when evaluating the current study. These limitations are important to be contemplated as they have influenced the research to a smaller or greater extent. Naturally, the following limitations should be considered and, if possible, corrected in

future research that follows the research design used in this study.

The first limitation is recognized to be a part of the research design and thus the composition of the survey. Despite the implemented pre-tests that served to take out inaccuracies, it is suggested that the design of the survey could have benefitted from several adjustments. The advised adjustments are based upon input by the respondents as well as considerations of the researchers. As is already mentioned in the discussion of Chapter 5, some of the questions that were measuring the secondary crisis responses could be answered based on respondent's personal behaviour, rather than on the presented condition. An example of this is the question that asks if the respondent would share the crisis communication message on Facebook. The reliability of the given answer could be improved by an added question that asks about a person's regular sharing behaviour on Facebook. Moreover, the answers to the survey questions could have been more accurate when the respondents were instructed beforehand to pretend as if they were involved with the company and its crisis. Feedback from one respondent was "Why would I recommend company X if I have never made use of their service?", which substantiates the reasoning for adjusting the survey so that respondents feel as if they are more connected to the crisis. Another solution to the latter would be to incorporate existing companies in the survey, rather than fictional companies, and ask the respondents if they are familiar with the company on forehand. However, this would increase the possibility of bias due to former experiences with the existing companies, which is a problem that the fictional companies served to diminish.

A second limitation of this study comes forth from observing the demographics of the sample. The demographic conditions of age and nationality seem to influence secondary crisis response, yet these conditions are not equally represented in the sample. The age groups of young adults, adults, and seniors are disproportionate in comparison to one another, with 72.9% of young adults and only 26.4% adults and .7% seniors present in the sample. These percentages allow for difficulties in correctly comparing the age groups to each other. Likewise, the demographic condition nationality does not present a clear overview of nationalities that are present in the sample. A little over half of all respondents were Dutch, whereas this research revealed mostly positive effects on secondary crisis responses for respondents with another nationality than Dutch. The respondents that make up the 'other' group are estimated to largely exist out of Indian and American people, yet the data does not allow for a precise overview. The current study could have improved its findings on the effect of age and nationality by having defined a specific target population prior to the execution of

the research accompanied with a more directed way of sampling, such as laying focus on sampling people from a specific age category.

Third, the current study had to delete one of the questions of the measurement scale of secondary crisis reaction, leading to a measurement scale with only two items. This deletion worsened the prior raised concern that the amount of questions to measure the public's response was too limited. As three items are the generally required minimum to form a valid measurement scale (Hardesty et al., 2004), this small amount contributes to uncertainty about the accurateness of secondary crisis reaction. Churchill Jr (1979) and Jacoby (1978), both scholars that are specialized in marketing related consumer research, question how a little number of only one or two items can measure the complex concepts that academic research revolves around. In other words, due to a limited amount of questions, the way in which secondary crisis reaction is measured can lead to its validity and reliability to be questioned.

Lastly, the convenience sampling that was used to collect respondents is considered a limitation. While being aware of the constraints of incorporating this method, it was decided to use it to enlarge the sample for this study. This decision may have contributed to a less divergent sample, as it consisted of a disproportionate percentage of young adults as well as a dominant number of Dutch respondents. Due to this given, generalising the outcomes of this study is problematic.

6.3. Future Recommendations

Many of the future recommendations are constructed with the aim of overcoming limitations of the current research or extending the research findings as presented.

Building on to the main findings of the interaction between message framing and industry, it is suggested that future research explores more industries and their effect on secondary crisis communication and secondary crisis reaction. The current research touches upon two industries that are evidently contrary to one another, yet it might be interesting to investigate and compare other, less disparate, industries. The goal could be to invent a spectrum on which industries can be placed according to their level of emotionality. Ranking different industries based on their level of emotionality can serve as a guideline to communication managers who need to construct a crisis communication strategy.

Another recommendation which is derived from the main results, is to repeat the

experiment with different types of crises. The current research relies on an accidental crisis, which is a type of crisis that seems to befall companies most often (Ki et al., 2014). Nevertheless, victim and preventable crises are recognizably present among companies as well. As explained by Ki et al. (2014), victim and preventable crises differ from an accidental crisis in how much responsibility can be attributed to the company, where a victim crisis reflects extremely little responsibility and the preventable crisis accuses a company of having a lot of responsibility for the crisis. Therefore, following the SCCT model of Coombs (2007), these types of crises may benefit from a different approach than an accidental crisis. Researching the effect of emotion and industry on different types of crises will serve to further enhance the knowledge we have of crisis communication and allow for appropriate strategies per situation.

Despite the clear effects of message framing and industry that came forth from this study, the effect of medium remains rather unclear. Although the current study reveals that the usage of online newspapers is slightly preferred over the usage of Facebook as the medium regarding positive secondary crisis communication, the difference between online newspapers and Facebook was much greater in former research (Utz et al., 20213). This result is, although not following the hypothesis that was formulated prior to the execution of this experiment, showing that a change in medium preference seems to occur. To investigate the change of the media landscape and what this means for crisis communication strategies, it is suggested that the influence of different types of media needs to be further explored to reach more convincing implications.

At last, an important suggestion for future research is that academics re-evaluate and study the accuracy of the measurement scales for secondary crisis communication and secondary crisis reaction by Utz et al. (2013). After having evaluated the way in which these responses were measured during this study, several hesitations were raised in concern of their validity. We presume that the way in which these are measured can be improved and that future research can benefit from guidelines as to what circumstances should accompany the secondary crisis response measurements to reach a valid outcome.

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Appendix A: Conditions

Condition 1

Message framing = emotional

Medium = Facebook

Industry = hospitality industry
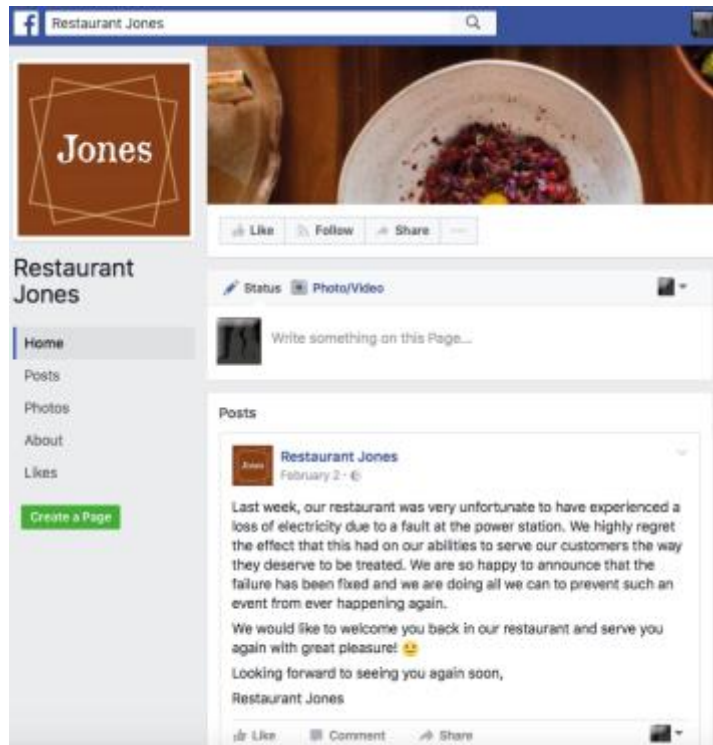
Condition 2

Message framing = rational

Medium: Facebook

Industry = hospitality industry
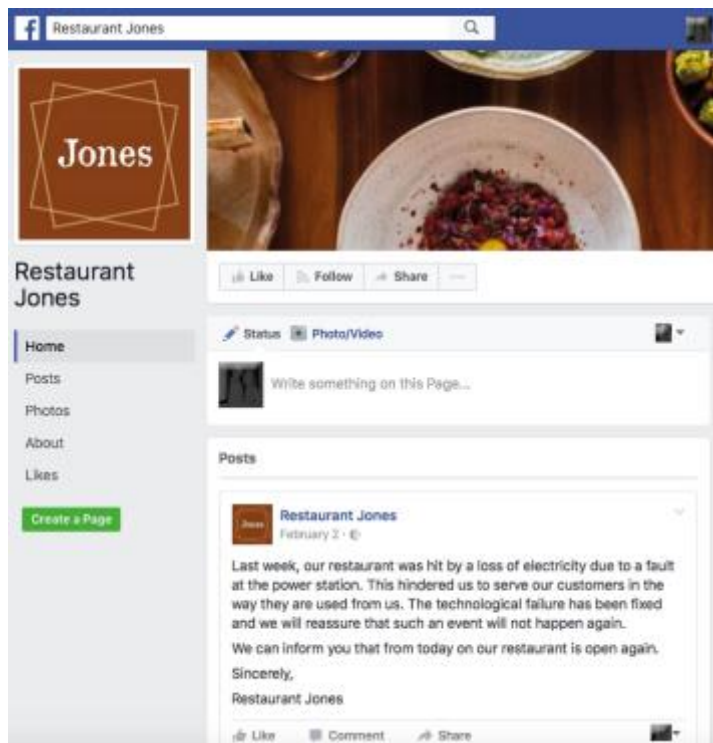
Condition 3

Message framing = emotional

Medium = online newspaper

Industry = hospitality industry

Condition 4

Message framing = rational

Medium = online newspaper

Industry = hospitality industry

Condition 5

Message framing = emotional

Medium = Facebook

Industry = financial industry

Condition 6

Message framing = rational

Medium = Facebook

Industry = financial industry

Condition 7

Message framing = emotional

Medium = online newspaper

Industry = financial industry

The Newsroom
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SPORTS   NEWS   ENTERTAINMENT   HOROSCOPES   LIFESTYLE   OPINION

By Amanda Sanders - January 26, 2017

Electricity Failure Strikes Jones Insurance

Last week, the unthinkable happened for David Jones, the owner of Jones Insurance. A fault at the power station led the insurance company to lose electricity, thereby hindering important money transactions. We gave him a call and asked about the status of the company:

"Our company was very unfortunate to have experienced a loss of electricity due to a fault at the power station. We highly regret the effect this had on our abilities of fulfilling ongoing transactions. We are so glad to announce that the failure has been fixed and we are doing all what we can to prevent such an event from ever happening again! We will reassure that all of the transactions that could not be performed in these last couple of days, will be transferred to you within 7 days. Thank you for your patience and we hope that your trust in our company is still the same." - David Jones

Condition 8

Message framing = rational

Medium = online newspaper

Industry = financial industry

The Newsroom
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SPORTS   NEWS   ENTERTAINMENT   HOROSCOPES   LIFESTYLE   OPINION

By Amanda Sanders - January 26, 2017

Electricity Failure Strikes Jones Insurance

Last week, the unthinkable happened for David Jones, the owner of Jones Insurance. A fault at the power station led the insurance company to lose electricity, thereby hindering important money transactions. We gave him a call and asked about the status of the company:

"Our company was struck by a loss of electricity due to a fault at the power station. This hindered us to serve our customers in the way they are used from us. The technological failure has been fixed and we will reassure that such an event will not happen again. All of the transactions that could not be performed in these last couple of days, will still be transferred to you within 7 days." - David Jones

Appendix B: Survey Restaurant Jones

Page 1.

Dear respondent,

Please take as much time as you need to fill out the questionnaire. It should take you approximately 5 minutes. If you need more time or want to pause midway, this is perfectly fine and you can feel free to do so. Personal information that you give will be treated 100% confidently and will not be distributed or shared with others. The results of the research will be revealed anonymously.

Page 2.

The questions throughout the questionnaire are mostly formatted as follows. Please indicate your opinion on each statement by ticking the box of your answer.

	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
I understand that all personal information in this questionnaire will be treated confidently and anonymously.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
I understand that I can pause at any point in time.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

Page 3.

First, a couple of questions will be asked regarding your experience and opinion on eating at restaurants.

How often do you go out to have dinner at a restaurant?

○ Every day
○ Every week
○ A few times a month
○ Once a month
○ Less than once a month
○ Never

What type of cuisine do you enjoy? Multiple answers are possible.

❑ Chinese
❑ French
❑ Greek
❑ Indian
❑ Italian
❑ Japanese
❑ Mediterranean
❑ Mexican
❑ Moroccan
❑ Spanish
❑ Thai
❑ Turkish
❑ Vietnamese
❑ Other

Please indicate the order of importance of these statements to you, where 1 is most important and 5 is least important. When I go out to eat at a restaurant, I find it important that...

_____ There is free Wi-Fi available

_____ I have enough menu choices

_____ There are vegetarian menu options

_____ The price of the food is low

_____ The servants pay enough attention to me

Please indicate the order of annoyance of these statements to you, where 1 is most annoying and 5 is least annoying. When I go out to eat at a restaurant, I would be annoyed when...

_____ I have to wait for my order

_____ There is too much noise around me

_____ Employees are rude to me

_____ My food is not of the quality that I expected

_____ I feel like I am being rushed out by the employees

Page 4.

Restaurant Jones is a family-owned business located in Washington County, Ohio. David Jones started the business in 2002 and has tried to provide better service to his customers ever since. The company serves a wide variety of dishes and has been working on offering both vegetarian as well as vegan dishes since a couple of years. According to David, it is important to play in on the needs of the customer as they are the ones that keep your business going - or not. Recently, Restaurant Jones faced a company crisis when they lost electricity for a couple of hours. Customers had to be sent home, most of them without their food. The company was able to fix the problem and reached out to their customers about the crisis. On the next page, you will see how and what they communicated about the crisis situation.

Page 5.

Please carefully observe and read the following message by Restaurant Jones. After you have read the message by Restaurant Jones, you will be asked to answer a couple of questions regarding its content. Please make sure to carefully read the message, as it will not be shown to you later on.

The situation of Restaurant Jones will hereafter be described as 'the crisis'.

Page 6.

Please indicate to what extent you agree with the following statements:

	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
Restaurant Jones was unable to control the crisis.	○	○	○	○	○
Restaurant Jones would have been able to prevent the crisis from happening.	○	○	○	○	○
The crisis was intentionally caused by Restaurant Jones.	○	○	○	○	○
Restaurant Jones could have prepared for the crisis.	○	○	○	○	○
The crisis is the fault of Restaurant Jones.	○	○	○	○	○

Page 7.

Please indicate to what extent you agree with the following statements:

	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
I would share the message by Restaurant Jones with others.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
I would respond to the message by Restaurant Jones in a comment.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
I would tell my friends and family about the crisis of Restaurant Jones.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

Page 8.

Please indicate to what extent you agree or disagree with the following statements:

	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
I would encourage my friends or relatives to eat at Restaurant Jones.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
I would say negative things about Restaurant Jones and its food to other people.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
I would recommend others, who ask my advice, to go to Restaurant Jones.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

Page 9.

What kind of industry does Restaurant Jones belong to?

❍ Chemical industry

❍ Computer industry

❍ Education industry

❍ Entertainment industry

❍ Financial industry

❍ Film industry

❍ Hospitality industry

Please indicate to what extent you agree or disagree with the following statement:

	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
The message by Restaurant Jones is emotional	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

On what type of medium was the message by Restaurant Jones published?

❍ Facebook

❍ Twitter

❍ Instagram

❍ Pinterest

❍ Tumblr

❍ Blog

❍ Online Newspaper

Page 10.

Restaurant Jones is not the only company that has experienced a crisis. Multiple instances have experienced crises in the past. At this moment, two different crisis situations will be presented to you accompanied with a few questions.

In 2016, Samsung encountered a crisis when the batteries of their Note 7 phones started exploding. Many people had already bought the phone, which is why Samsung had to recall over 2 million devices and had to stop selling the product.

Please indicate to what extent you agree with the following statement:

	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
Samsung was responsible for the failure of their product.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

At the end of 2016, a large part of Italy was hit by floods coming forth from heavy rainfall. Buildings were left destructed and some people even went missing.

Please indicate to what extent you agree with the following statement:

	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
Italy was responsible for the damage of the floods in their country.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

Page 11.

To end, there are four questions regarding some basic information about you.

What is your age? _____

What is your gender?

○ Male
○ Female

Please specify your nationality:

○ Dutch
○ Other _____

What is the highest level of education you have obtained?

○ No education
○ High school
○ Associate's degree
○ Bachelor's degree
○ Master's degree
○ PHD
○ I don't know
○ Other _____

Do you have anything you would like to say about the questionnaire (e.g. feedback or comments about parts that were unclear)? If yes, please write them down below:

_____

Page 12.

This is the end of the questionnaire. I want to thank you very much for completing it as your contribution is extremely helpful to this research. If you are interested in the results of the study, feel free to contact me at the following e-mail address: 374277jl@student.eur.nl.

Kind regards,

Juliette

Appendix C: Survey Jones Insurance

Page 1.

Dear respondent,

Please take as much time as you need to fill out the questionnaire. It should take you approximately 5 minutes. If you need more time or want to pause midway, this is perfectly fine and you can feel free to do so. Personal information that you give will be treated 100% confidently and will not be distributed or shared with others. The results of the research will be revealed anonymously.

Page 2.

The questions throughout the questionnaire are mostly formatted as follows. Please indicate your opinion on each statement by ticking the box of your answer.

	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
I understand that all personal information in this questionnaire will be treated confidently and anonymously.	○	○	○	○	○
I understand that I can pause at any point in time.	○	○	○	○	○

Page 3.

First, a couple of questions will be asked regarding your experience with and opinion on insurance companies.

How often do you rely on your insurance?

○ Every month
○ A few times a year
○ Once a year
○ Rarely
○ Never

What type of insurances do you have? Multiple answers are possible.

❑ Health insurance
❑ Car insurance
❑ Life insurance
❑ Dental insurance
❑ Travel insurance
❑ Pet insurance
❑ Homeowners insurance
❑ Unemployment insurance
❑ Business insurance
❑ Don't know
❑ Other

Please indicate the order of importance of these statements to you, where 1 is most important and 5 is least important. When I choose for an insurance company, I find it important that...

_____ They offer cheap deals
_____ They require little paperwork
_____ They offer good customer service
_____ They have personalized deals for me
_____ They are well-known
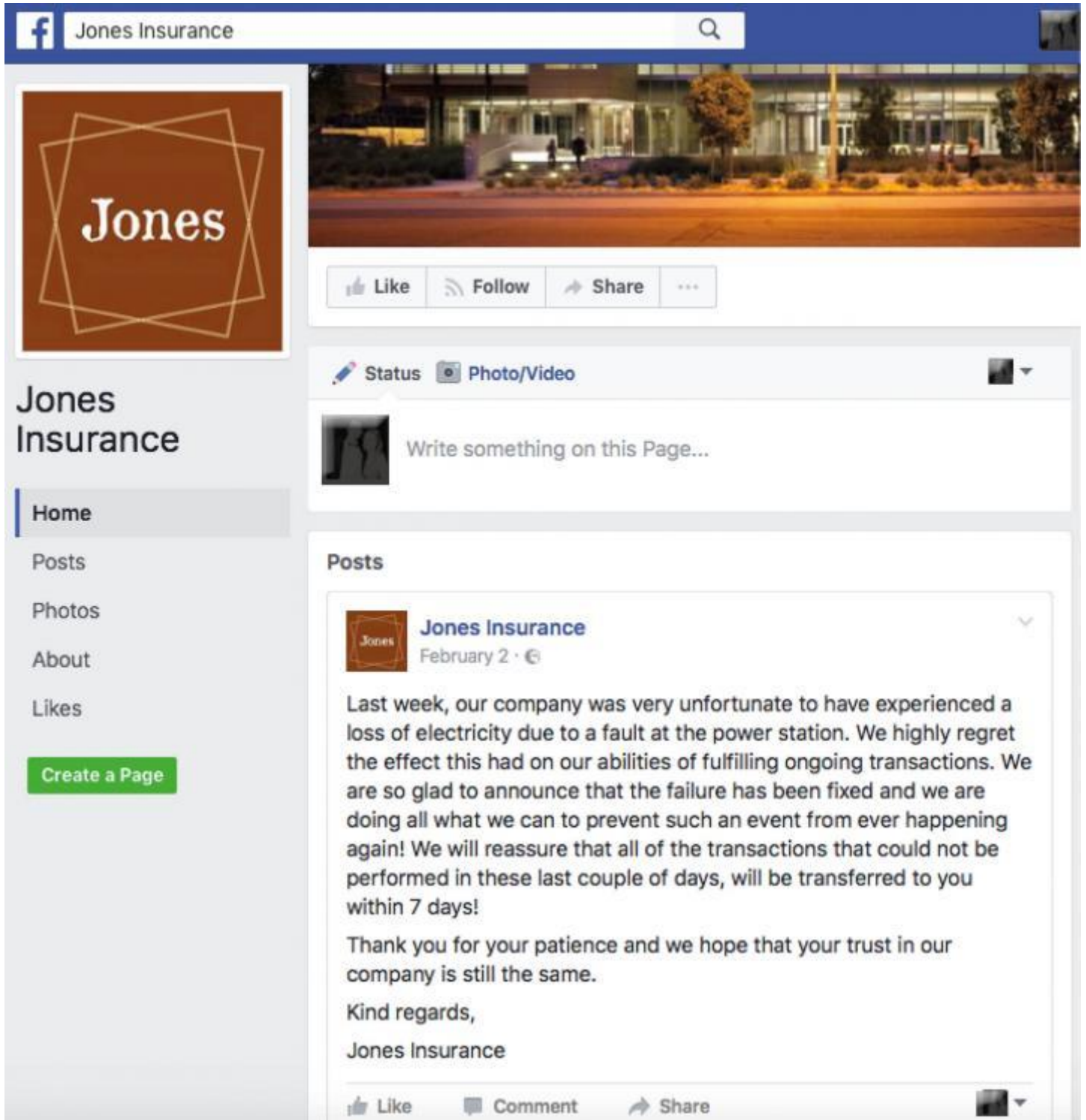
Page 4.

Jones Insurance is a family-owned business located in Washington County, Ohio. David Jones started the business in 2002 and has tried to provide better service to his customers ever since. The company offers a variety of insurances and has been working on developing their customer service. According to David, it is important to play in on the needs of the customer as they are the ones that keep your business going - or not. Recently, Jones Insurance faced a company crisis when they lost electricity for a couple of hours. The main problem was the inability of the company to make financial transactions for a while. Eventually, Jones Insurance was able to fix the problem and reached out to their customers about the crisis. On the next page, you will see how and what they communicated about the crisis situation.

Page 5.

Please carefully observe and read the following message by Jones Insurance. After you have read the message by Jones Insurance, you will be asked to answer a couple of questions regarding its content. Please make sure to carefully read the message, as it will not be shown to you later on.

The situation of Jones Insurance will hereafter be described as 'the crisis'.

Page 6.

Please indicate to what extent you agree with the following statements:

	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
Jones Insurance was unable to control the crisis.	○	○	○	○	○
Jones Insurance would have been able to prevent the crisis from happening.	○	○	○	○	○
The crisis was intentionally caused by Jones Insurance.	○	○	○	○	○
Jones Insurance could have prepared for the crisis.	○	○	○	○	○
The crisis is the fault of Jones Insurance.	○	○	○	○	○

Page 7.

Please indicate to what extent you agree with the following statements:

	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
I would share the message by Jones Insurance with others.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
I would respond to the message by Jones Insurance in a comment.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
I would tell my friends and family about the crisis of Jones Insurance.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

Page 8.

Please indicate to what extent you agree or disagree with the following statements:

	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
I would encourage my friends or relatives to become insured by Jones Insurance.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
I would say negative things about Jones Insurance and its business-doing to other people.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
I would recommend others, who ask my advice, to go to Jones Insurance.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

Page 9.

What kind of industry does Jones Insurance belong to?

❍ Chemical industry
❍ Computer industry
❍ Education industry
❍ Entertainment industry
❍ Financial industry
❍ Film industry
❍ Hospitality industry

Please indicate to what extent you agree or disagree with the following statement:

	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
The message by Jones Insurance is emotional	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

On what type of medium was the message by Jones Insurance published?

❍ Facebook
❍ Twitter
❍ Instagram
❍ Pinterest
❍ Tumblr
❍ Blog
❍ Online Newspaper

Page 10.

Jones Insurance is not the only company that has experienced a crisis. Multiple instances have experienced crises in the past. At this moment, two different crisis situations will be presented to you accompanied with a few questions.

In 2016, Samsung encountered a crisis when the batteries of their Note 7 phones started exploding. Many people had already bought the phone, which is why Samsung had to recall over 2 million devices and had to stop selling the product. Please indicate to what extent you agree with the following statement:

	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
Samsung was responsible for the failure of their product.	○	○	○	○	○

At the end of 2016, a large part of Italy was hit by floods coming forth from heavy rainfall. Buildings were left destructed and some people even went missing. Please indicate to what extent you agree with the following statement:

	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
Italy was responsible for the damage of the floods in their country.	○	○	○	○	○

Page 11.

To end, there are four questions regarding some basic information about you.

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○ No education
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○ Bachelor's degree
○ Master's degree
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○ Other _____

Do you have anything you would like to say about the questionnaire (e.g. feedback or comments about parts that were unclear)? If yes, please write them down below:

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Kind regards,

Juliette