

## **Timing and Transparency in Crisis Communication Management: Enhancing Public Perception within Public Institutions in Kenya. A Case Study of Kenya Agricultural and Livestock Research Organization (KALRO)**

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### **Abstract**

*This study presents systematic research findings on the effects of timing and transparency as a crisis communication management strategy employed on enhancing a positive public perception within public institutions focusing on Kenya Agricultural and Livestock Research Organization (KALRO). During a crisis situation it is vital for organization to understand the importance of effective messaging which is timely and transparent. Anchored in the Situational Crisis Communication Theory (SCCT), which provides a theoretical framework for understanding how communication strategies influence public responses, this study aims to fill mainly the methodological gap as well as contribute to contextual gap on studies around crisis communication management strategies on enhancing a positive public perception. In past studies, scholars have capitalized mainly in either qualitative or quantitative research methods hence underuse in mixed research methods. This study uses descriptive research designs. A sample size of 88 CRI staff will be used for quantitative study while content analysis of case studies of crisis experienced in 2025 was analyzed. Quantitative data was analyzed using SPSS, while thematic analysis was applied to qualitative data. Key findings revealed that while mainstream media had a modest influence in messaging, timing and transparency were fundamental, social media emerged as the paramount factor, accounting for 69.7% of the variance in positive public perception. The study concludes that a proactive, timely and transparent communication, is key in safeguarding an organization's reputational capital during crises.*

**Keyword: Crisis, Crisis Communication Management, Reputation Management, Timely and Transparent Communication**

### **1.0 Introduction and Background**

Crises pose substantial risks to institutional reputation and public trust. In such situations, an organization's communication strategy particularly its timeliness and transparency become crucial. Swift, open messaging can mitigate reputational damage and substantially influence stakeholders' perceptions. Despite this recognized importance, many public institutions in Kenya, including the Kenya Agricultural & Livestock Research Organization (KALRO), have historically encountered challenges in deploying crisis communication strategies that are both prompt and transparent. This study examines how timing and transparency in crisis communication affect public perception and seeks to offer an evidence-based foundation for reforming practices in Kenyan public institutions.

## **Definitions and Theory of Crisis**

A crisis is commonly defined as an unexpected or adverse event capable of causing harm to individuals, organizations, or society (Canyon, 2020). Sellnow and Seeger (2021) assert that crises demand rapid, coordinated responses to contain damage. Often, crises stem from early warning signs or emerging risks that are underestimated or ignored, allowing escalation. Blyth (2009) further refines the definition by identifying two types: micro-level crises, which are immediate and relatively contained, and macro-level crises, which are more sustained and complex. Incident management planning lays the groundwork for larger crisis response strategies, it serves as the first line of defense, bridging toward comprehensive business continuity management.

## **Causes and Evolution of Crises**

Crises may arise from a variety of sources: natural disasters, human error, negligence, media controversies, social media backlash, or tampering with products (Diers-Lawson, 2017). Sellnow and Seeger (2021) add that poor decisions, unforeseen circumstances, or operational oversight may also precipitate such events. Since the formal research in crisis communication began around 1953, scholars have emphasized its central role in reputation management (Zhang, 2016). A well-managed reputation, they argue, is not just defensive it is a strategic resource for shaping and sustaining positive stakeholder perceptions.

## **Crisis Communication: Components and Stakeholder Trust**

Crisis communication is defined by Kingori (2024) as a proactive, transparent process of engaging stakeholders to build and preserve credibility. According to Sellnow and Seeger (2021), it is an ongoing dialogue aimed at reducing harm, creating shared meaning, and coordinating collective action in times of crisis. Key elements include cultural awareness, appropriate use of technology, and targeting messages to specific stakeholder groups. Coombs (2013) emphasizes that to choose the right communication strategy, managers must understand the crisis's nature, its antecedents, and the organization's past performance.

## **Reputation Capital and Stakeholder Influence**

Reputation is a critical intangible asset that must be defended before, during, and after a crisis (Cole & Verbinnen, 2022). Fombrun and Van Riel (2004) describe reputation capital as the accumulated perception an organization holds in society, a social asset with tangible operational and financial implications. Both internal stakeholders (employees, shareholders) and external ones (media, community, government) play significant roles in crisis response and recovery. Coombs (2007) argues that organizations should attend to stakeholders' physical and emotional needs before focusing on image repair. Yet, in practice, many organizations prioritize legal and reputational concerns to the detriment of stakeholder welfare, risking long-term damage (Sellnow & Seeger, 2021).

### **Communication Channels, Media, and Effective Messaging**

Throughout the crisis lifecycle, communication processes are indispensable. Coombs et al. (2022) contend that communication is inseparable from every stage of crisis management informing, crafting messages, and managing stakeholder reactions. Effective messaging should be clear, responsible, and solution-oriented (Winick, 2022). Reputation influences stakeholder perception, trust, financial performance, and operational resilience. Grunig and Repper (2019) suggest that during crises, social media engagement allows organizations to shape narratives and reduce reputational harm. Similarly, Zhang and Wei (2019) recommend building reputation via responsible practices, responsiveness to feedback, and sustained digital engagement, while corporate social responsibility strengthens goodwill and trust.

Channels are critical: messages travel through traditional media and digital media alike. Coleman (2022) traces media evolution from print to radio and television, and now to online platforms, social media, bloggers, and hyperlocal news outlets. The shift has significant implications for message distribution and stakeholder reception.

### **Context: Public Institutions, Reputation, and the Kenyan Case**

Globally, reputation capital has become a central dimension of organizational success. In countries such as the United Kingdom and the United States, research and business practice increasingly emphasize proactive reputation management (Gasana, 2024). For example, global statistics show that about 63% of a company's market value can stem from its reputation even before a consumer interacts with its products (Reputation Management Statistics & Facts, 2025). As online reviews

and reputation management software continue to grow (projected annual growth of 16.28% between 2023-2030), proactive communication strategies are more critical than ever.

Across Africa, businesses are investing in measures to safeguard reputation, especially in a context of rising fake news and digital misinformation (Gasana, 2024). Researchers like Heather & Millar (2024), and Zhang & Wei (2019) assert that authenticity, transparency, and decisive action are essential to restoring stakeholder trust after a crisis. Timely dissemination of accurate information, stakeholder engagement, and visible leadership are recurrent themes (Wright, 2024).

In Kenya, scholars such as Kingori (2024), Birya (2020), and Han & Baird (2024) contribute to a growing consensus about the critical importance of crisis communication at all stages; pre-crisis, real-time response, and post-crisis evaluation. Kingori (2024) underscores that successful crisis navigation depends on deliberate communication at each phase, safeguarding institutional reputation while also addressing stakeholders' physical and psychological well-being.

### **The Case of KALRO**

The Kenya Agricultural & Livestock Research Organization (KALRO) was formed in 2013 under the KALR Act No. 17 of 2013. It merged the Kenya Agricultural Research Institute, Tea Research Foundation of Kenya, Coffee Research Foundation, and Kenya Sugar Research Foundation. Its mandate is to generate and disseminate agricultural technologies and innovations in order to enhance productivity, sustainability, and value across agriculture and livestock value chains. The latest Strategic Plan (2023/24-2027/28) positions KALRO in alignment with national development objectives such as Kenya Vision 2030 and the Bottom-Up Economic Transformation Agenda (BETA) and emphasizes responsive service, technological innovation, and stakeholder orientation.

The agricultural sector in Kenya remains a vital component of the economy: contributing over 20% directly to GDP and employing large portions of the rural population. Given the sector's socio-economic importance, effective and proactive crisis communication within institutions like KALRO is essential to minimize disruptions, preserve public trust, and maintain reputational integrity.

### **Research Objective and Study Purpose**

Despite the theoretical recognition and some empirical work in Kenya such as studies on crisis communication in universities (e.g., Daystar University) and government communication during COVID-19, there remains limited documented research on crisis communication practices in government research institutions like KALRO. Existing literature underutilizes mixed methods research in their studies. This study, therefore, aims to fill that gap by investigating how timing and transparency in KALRO's crisis communication influence public perception, in order to inform policy and practice in Kenyan public research institutions by use of both qualitative and quantitative data collection.

## **2.0 Literature Review**

Effective crisis communication is essential for safeguarding an organization's reputation and maintaining public trust. This review examines the theoretical underpinnings and practical applications of crisis communication strategies, with a focus on the Kenya Agricultural and Livestock Research Organization (KALRO).

With the growing trends of misinformation, organizations and brands need to be proactive in timely and transparent communication in their daily reputation management. Scholars such as Heather and Millar (2024), along with Zhang and Wei (2019), asserted that authenticity and transparency are vital in restoring stakeholder trust and organizational credibility following a crisis. This is achievable through timely dissemination of accurate information, proactive stakeholder engagement, and decisive leadership actions (Wright, 2024).

On the bright side, the news media platforms have made it easy for exchange of information across the globe. However, modern technology has allowed anyone to take up the role of a journalist, leading to the emergence of citizen journalism (Masaviru, 2019). Citizen journalism runs on unregulated journalist conventions therefore; potential misinformation may arise. This has made it challenging to pin point which outlet is news media worthy, Coleman (2022) making it hard for businesses and organizations to build a relationship with these communicators before and during a crisis situation.

### **Crisis Management Phases**

Crisis management encompasses three distinct phases: pre-crisis, crisis response, and post-crisis (Kingori, 2024). The pre-crisis phase involves activities such as signal detection, prevention, and preparedness. The crisis response phase begins with a triggering incident and continues through to

resolution, encompassing crisis recognition and containment. The final stage is the post-crisis phase, which involves evaluation and learning.

### **Theoretical Framework: Situational Crisis Communication Theory (SCCT)**

Situational Crisis Communication Theory (SCCT), developed by Coombs (2007), posits that the effectiveness of a crisis response strategy is contingent upon the level of crisis responsibility attributed to the organization, which is influenced by the crisis type, the organization's prior reputation, and its history of similar incidents. SCCT categorizes crises into three main clusters: victim, accidental, and preventable, each associated with varying degrees of perceived organizational responsibility. These perceptions influence stakeholders' emotional responses, which in turn shape behavioral intentions such as purchase decisions, advocacy, and loyalty. Crisis response teams must select response strategies denial, diminishment, or rebuilding based on the organization's prior crisis history and reputation (Coombs & Holladay, 2006).

### **Conceptual Framework**

The conceptual framework guiding this study has been anchored in the understanding that effective crisis communication management strategies have been essential in safeguarding an organization's reputation and public trust during crisis situations (Coleman, 2023). Mainstream media has played a critical role by framing and amplifying narratives that have shaped how the public has perceived institutional responses (Coleman, 2022). The tone, frequency, and narrative used by traditional media outlets have influenced the public and has interpreted the organization's response as credible, evasive, or transparent. Timeliness and transparency have remained critical communication variables. When KALRO has communicated promptly and openly, it has minimized uncertainty and reinforced trust. Conversely, delays or lack of transparency have created information vacuums, which have often been filled by speculation or misinformation especially in the era of citizen journalism (Githaiga & Shifare, 2024).

social media, on the other hand, has introduced a two-way communication dynamic. When KALRO has actively engaged with its audience on platforms like X and Facebook, particularly during crises, it has fostered inclusivity and public participation in meaning-making. This approach

has proven particularly impactful among digitally literate stakeholders. Ultimately, public perception has been shaped not only by what has been communicated, but also by how, when, and through which channels the information has been disseminated. Given that reputation capital is a vital organizational asset (Fombrun & Van Riel, 2004), this study has positioned communication strategy as a critical determinant of institutional resilience in the face of crisis.

### **Importance of Timeliness and Transparency**

Timeliness and transparency are critical communication variables. When KALRO communicates promptly and openly, it minimizes uncertainty and reinforces trust. Conversely, delays or lack of transparency create information vacuums, often filled by speculation or misinformation, especially in the era of citizen journalism (Githaiga & Shifare, 2024).

### **Role of Social Media in Crisis Communication**

Social media introduces a two-way communication dynamic. Active engagement with audiences on platforms like X and Facebook fosters inclusivity and public participation in meaning-making. This approach is particularly impactful among digitally literate stakeholders.

### **Strategic Messaging and Narrative Framing**

The content, structure, format, and specific wording of crisis messages significantly affect their effectiveness. Message framing should incorporate the “5W+H” elements what, where, when, why, and how during message development (Autila, 2024). Coombs (2007) argues that crisis managers shape narrative frames to guide stakeholder thinking using strategic cues. These narratives should convey authenticity and concern for affected parties and use persuasive strategies. Two-sided messages presenting both benefits and drawbacks are more credible and effective with informed audiences, whereas one-sided messages may work better for audiences with limited prior understanding (Wright, 2024).

### **Misinformation in Crisis Communication**

Misinformation flourishes during crises when evidence is unclear and deceptive content spreads (Wright, 2024). Social media accelerates this spread, especially in contexts of citizen journalism (Masaviru, 2019). Misinformation distorts perceptions, leading to poor public decisions. Organizations must provide timely, clear updates to prevent rumors, using proactive

communication and active stakeholder engagement to challenge misleading narratives strategically (Coombs, 2007; Coleman, 2022).

### **Visibility of Responses**

Visibility of response is critical; stakeholders must sense genuine engagement. Empathy in messaging enhances credibility. Accepting accountability fully or partially is essential for resolving crises effectively and maintaining reputation. Responsiveness should derive from data, informing both current and future decisions. The ultimate aim of crisis communication is to resolve issues before they escalate into reputation-eroding events.

### **Application to KALRO**

At KALRO, a science-based institution, messages should be simple, clear, and free of jargon when communicating crisis-related information to farmers and other stakeholders. This study supports the value of plain language in science-based crisis communication. Humor may uplift stakeholder morale if used sparingly. Photography and videography can enhance message impact (Wright, 2024), an area underexplored in previous research.

### **3.0 Methods**

This study employed a descriptive research design. According to Siedlecki (2020), descriptive research design involves portraying events, individuals, or conditions as they are in reality, without manipulating variables. The researcher solely describes phenomena in their natural state. In addition, the study utilized a mixed-methods approach. As Dawadi, Shrestha, and Giri (2021) explain, mixed-methods research is underpinned by its own philosophical assumptions and offers methodological flexibility, making it particularly suitable for studies that aim to capture both quantifiable outcomes and the nuanced human experiences behind them. Quantitative data were collected from 88 staff members of the Kenya Agricultural & Livestock Research Organization (KALRO) and the Crop Research Institute (CRI). These participants received questionnaires distributed via Google Forms through their institutional email addresses. The quantitative instrument consisted of structured questionnaires, which were pretested through expert review to assess clarity, relevance, and completeness. For qualitative data, a case-study approach was adopted. Social media content published via official KALRO platforms specifically, the X handle (formerly Twitter) and Facebook pages was subjected to thematic analysis. Quantitative data were analyzed using SPSS software. Descriptive statistics were generated to summarize variables across the sample, regression and correlation analysis was used to analyzed data that was presented in



form of graphs, tables and figures. To ensure validity, questionnaire items underwent expert review in communication and organizational crisis management and provided feedback that led to minor revisions aligning the questionnaire more closely with research objectives, enhancing content validity.

Ethical approval was obtained from multiple bodies prior to data collection. Authorization was granted by KALRO management to study crisis communication strategies and their impact on public perception. The proposal was rigorously reviewed by St. Paul's Institution Scientific Ethical Review Committee and received an approval. Further, the study acquired certification from the National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation (NACOSTI). Only after fulfilling these ethical prerequisites did data collection commence. The findings of this research are to be presented to the three involved organizations for their use in policy development, academic reference, and guidance for future researcher.

## 4.0 Findings

### Timing and Transparency in Crisis Communication

The timing analysis reveals mixed perceptions of KALRO's crisis response speed. While 28.4% report KALRO responds "immediately" during crises, 26.1% are "not sure" about response timing, and 19.3% perceive responses as delayed. This uncertainty suggests inconsistent communication patterns or varying stakeholder awareness levels, which contradicts Reynolds and Seeger's (2005) crisis communication principle that organizations must establish clear timelines and communicate them consistently to all stakeholders to maintain credibility during crises. Qualitative data shows that social media posts are timestamped, demonstrating communication happening in real-time.

**Table 1: KALRO's Public Response to Crises**

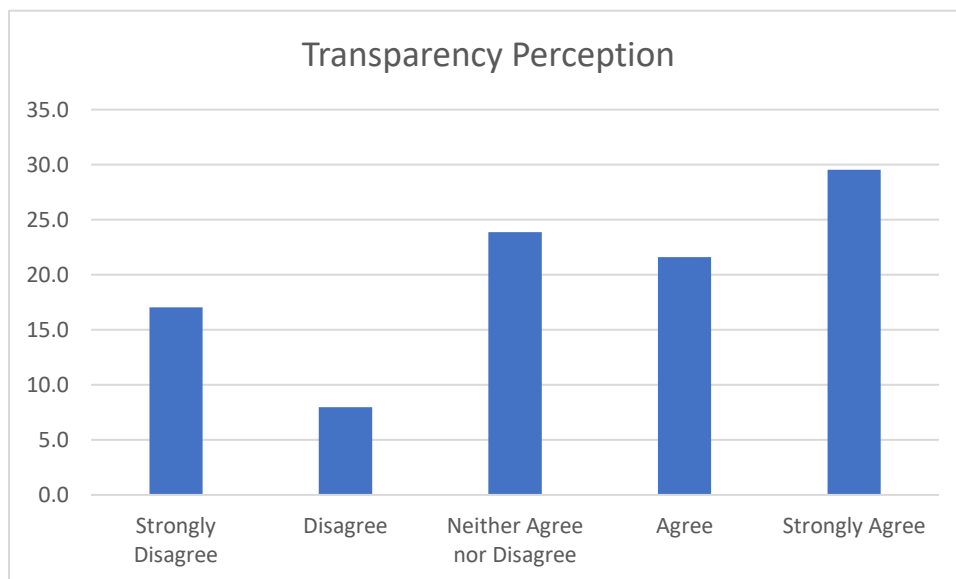
*Table 1: Speed of Public Response to Crises*

<b>How quickly does KALRO respond publicly during a crisis, in your experience?</b>		
	Frequency	Percent
Not Sure	23	26.1
After a long delay	18	19.3
Within a few days	22	25.0
Immediately	25	28.4
Total	88	100.0

Transparency perceptions show a more positive trend, with 51.1% of respondents agreeing or strongly agreeing that KALRO maintains transparency during crisis communication, compared to 25.0% who disagree. Qualitative data shows that KALRO's communication about fake fertilizer in the market is a proactive and timely response to an emerging crisis that protects farmers and demonstrates organizational vigilance. Other KALRO posts go beyond simple statements by announcing tangible solutions: "New drought-tolerant crops" and "fertilizer subsidies" show action, not just words. Thirdly, KALRO Posts include photos of officials inspecting facilities (e.g., the fertilizer re-bagging plant), making their actions visible and verifiable. Lastly, they warn against fake products and guide farmers on where to find legitimate ones. This "instructing information" is a cornerstone of effective crisis response, reducing ambiguity and building trust.

However, the 23.9% neutral responses indicate room for improvement in transparency and clarity. These findings align with Rawlins' (2009) transparency framework, which emphasizes that organizational transparency during crises requires not only information disclosure but also stakeholder perception of that disclosure as adequate and truthful.

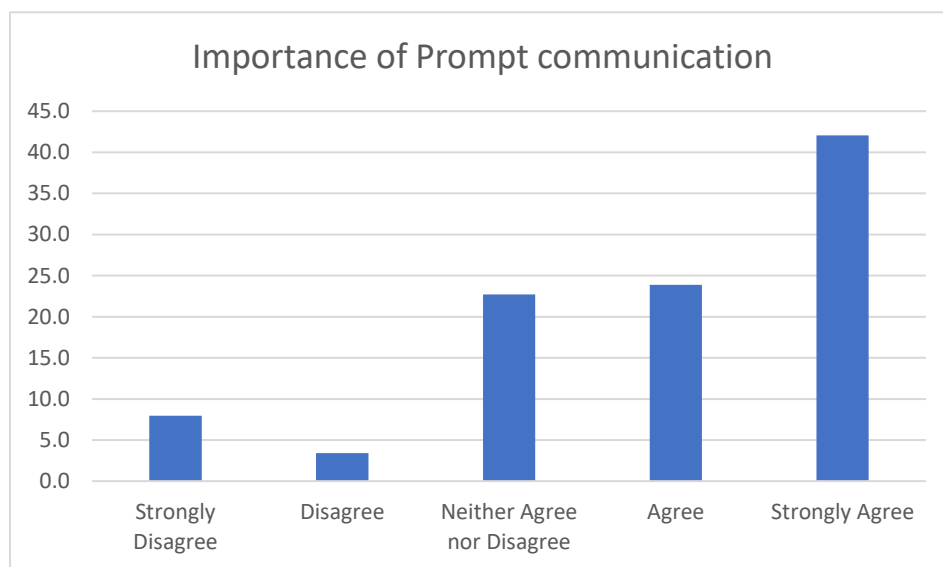
*Figure 1: Transparency Perception*



The importance of prompt communication receives strong validation, with 65.9% of respondents agreeing or strongly agreeing that prompt communication improves trust. This is reinforced by the overwhelming agreement (69.3%) that lack of timely communication creates suspicion or mistrust,

with a notably high mean score of 3.94. These findings strongly support Sturges' (1994) three-stage model of crisis communication, where immediate response (instructing information) forms the foundation for subsequent reputation management efforts.

*Figure 2: Importance of Prompt Communication*



The critical importance of transparency is universally recognized, with 96.6% rating it as "important" or "extremely important" (mean = 3.68). This overwhelming consensus reflects what Christensen and Langer (2009) identified as the "transparency imperative" in contemporary organizational communication, where stakeholders increasingly expect open and honest communication, particularly during crisis periods.

*Table 2: Transparency of public institutions during a crisis*

How important is transparency from public institutions during a crisis to you?		
	Frequency	Percent
Not Very Important	1	1.1
Neutral	2	2.3
Important	21	23.9

Extremely Important	64	72.7
Total	88	100.0

These findings suggest that while KALRO demonstrates reasonable transparency levels, improvements in communication speed and consistency could significantly enhance public trust and perception management during crises, supporting Liu et al. (2011) who found that timing and transparency work synergistically to influence stakeholder trust during organizational crises.

### **Timing and Transparency in Crisis Communication: An Analytical Perspective**

The analysis of KALRO's crisis communication reveals nuanced stakeholder perceptions regarding response timing and transparency. Approximately 28.4% of respondents perceive KALRO's crisis responses as "immediate," while 19.3% consider them "delayed," and 26.1% remain uncertain about the response timing. This variability suggests inconsistencies in communication practices, potentially undermining organizational credibility, as emphasized by Reynolds and Seeger (2005), who advocate for clear and consistent communication timelines to maintain trust.

In contrast, transparency in KALRO's communication is viewed more favorably. Over half of the respondents (51.1%) agree that KALRO maintains transparency during crises, with only 25.0% disagreeing. The significance of transparency is underscored by Christensen and Langer (2009), who highlight its critical role in contemporary organizational communication, with 96.6% of respondents rating it as "important" or "extremely important" (mean = 3.68).

Quantitative analysis further supports the importance of timing and transparency. A simple regression analysis indicates that these factors account for 30.7% of the variance in public perception ( $R^2 = 0.307$ ), aligning with the principles of Situational Crisis Communication Theory (SCCT). Coombs (2007) posits that stakeholder perceptions of organizational responsibility and response strategies significantly influence public perception during crises.

Qualitative data shows that KALRO's communication about fake TikTok accounts masquerading as KALRO TikTok accounts and embezzling funds from farmers are rampant. Proactive and timely response to such emerging crisis that protects farmers and demonstrates organizational vigilance is required. Other KALRO posts go beyond simple statements by announcing tangible

solutions such as availing the official KALRO accounts which are Facebook, X, Instagram, YouTube LinkedIn. Thirdly, KALRO posts include photos of officials inspecting facilities such as official functions happening in institutes under KALRO making their actions visible and verifiable. Lastly, they warn against fake products and guide farmers on where to find legitimate ones such as the use of KALRO Mkulima shops distributed across the country to sell KALRO products. This "instructing information" is a cornerstone of effective crisis response, reducing ambiguity and building trust.

KALRO's crisis communication practices exhibit a complex interplay between timing and transparency. While transparency is generally perceived positively, inconsistencies in response timing may detract from organizational credibility. Adhering to the tenets of SCCT and implementing proactive, clear, and timely communication strategies are essential for enhancing public perception and maintaining stakeholder trust during crises.

## **5.0 Discussions**

### **Timing and Transparency as Foundational Elements**

Timing and transparency demonstrate substantial influence, explaining 30.7% of variance in public perception when analyzed independently. The overwhelming recognition of transparency's importance (96.6% rating it as important or extremely important) and strong agreement that prompt communication improves trust (65.9%) establish these as foundational elements of effective crisis communication.

This study offers robust empirical validation for a foundational tenet of Situational Crisis Communication Theory (SCCT) (Coombs, 2007), which posits that an organization's reputation is protected when its crisis response is perceived as both timely and appropriate. The delivery of instructing and adjusting information through prompt and transparent communication is essential to alleviating uncertainty and fostering trust.

The overwhelming importance placed on transparency by respondents, 96.6% rating it as important or extremely important reflects what Christensen and Langer (2009) describe as the "transparency imperative" in contemporary organizational communication. Stakeholders today not only expect but demand openness and honesty, especially in times of crisis. Qualitative findings reinforce this expectation, revealing KALRO's proactive communication efforts. These include

disseminating tangible solutions, such as providing official KALRO accounts on platforms like Facebook, X, Instagram, YouTube, and LinkedIn. Additionally, KALRO's posts feature photographs of officials inspecting facilities and participating in official functions across its institutes, enhancing visibility and verifiability. Furthermore, warnings against counterfeit products and guidance on purchasing genuine items through KALRO Mkulima shops nationwide demonstrate the use of instructing information a critical element in effective crisis response that reduces ambiguity and builds stakeholder confidence. This aligns closely with Rawlins' (2009) transparency framework, which emphasizes that genuine transparency involves not only disclosure but also ensuring information is accurate, timely, and comprehensible.

Nevertheless, the perceived inconsistency in KALRO's response timing highlighted by 26.1% of respondents being uncertain and 19.3% perceiving delays exposes a potential vulnerability. This inconsistency runs counter to SCCT's recommendation for clear and consistent communication timelines (Reynolds & Seeger, 2005). The findings suggest that while KALRO's transparency is generally valued, its timely communication is not uniformly experienced by all stakeholders, leaving a gap susceptible to misinformation.

## **7.0 Conclusions**

The study concludes that proactive, timely, and transparent communication is fundamental to safeguarding institutional reputation during crises. In the context of KALRO and similar public institutions, adopting these communication practices is not only strategic but necessary for maintaining stakeholder trust and organizational resilience.

Institutions that communicate early and openly experience more favorable stakeholder responses. While mainstream media has a modest effect, in this research social media emerged as the most impactful channel, accounting for 69.7% of the variance in positive public perception. Delays in internal communication and inconsistent messaging contributed to reduced credibility and slower crisis recovery.

## **6.0 Recommendations**

### **Policy Recommendations**

- i. Establish Comprehensive Crisis Communication Protocols: Public institutions should develop and institutionalize clear guidelines that prioritize timeliness and transparency in all crisis scenarios to ensure consistent and credible communication.

- ii. Strategic Utilization of social media: Public institutions must enhance their capacity to employ social media as a central communication platform during crises, leveraging its immediacy and broad reach effectively.
- iii. Continuous Training and Capacity Building: Communication teams should engage in ongoing professional development focused on crisis management frameworks, such as Situational Crisis Communication Theory (SCCT), to refine strategic response capabilities.

### **Practical Recommendations for KALRO**

- i. Prioritize social media as the Primary Crisis Communication Channel: KALRO should allocate dedicated personnel and resources to actively monitor, manage, and respond on key platforms including Facebook, Twitter/X, and WhatsApp while establishing clear social media crisis protocols that mandate immediate acknowledgment of emerging crises.
- ii. Develop Content that Enhances Transparency and Trust: Communication efforts should emphasize not only timeliness but also the provision of verifiable and instructing information to mitigate ambiguity and reinforce stakeholder confidence.
- iii. Standardize Messaging for Consistency and Clarity: To address existing uncertainties around response timing, KALRO should implement an internal alert system and utilize social media platforms to publicly communicate precise response timelines.

### **Recommendations for Future Research**

- i. Broaden Stakeholder Perception Analysis: Future studies should explore perceptions among external stakeholders such as farmers, partners, and the general public to capture a comprehensive assessment of KALRO's crisis communication effectiveness.
- ii. Conduct Longitudinal Studies on Crisis Communication Impact: Investigating changes in public perception across different stages of a crisis will yield deeper insights into the evolving effectiveness of diverse communication strategies.
- iii. Examine Platform-Specific Effectiveness: Research should analyze the relative impact of various social media platforms within the Kenyan agricultural context to optimize crisis communication strategies.
- iv. Integrate SCCT with Complementary Theoretical Frameworks: Future research could combine SCCT with models like the Discourse of Renewal theory to explore how KALRO

might leverage crises not only to safeguard its reputation but also to foster organizational growth and strengthen stakeholder relationships.

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