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A Quantitative Study on SCCT: Examining the Relationships Between Crisis Response Strategy, Crisis History, and Crisis Type on Organisational Reputation: Nigerian Perspective

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Abstract

Organizations are sustained by the strength of their reputations globally and especially in crisis management when the reputations of such organizations are threatened. Thus, effective crisis communications management is indispensable to every organization maintaining its reputation. This research paper used Coombs' Situational Crisis Communication Theory (SCCT) to examine the relationships between crisis response strategy, crisis history, and crisis type on organizational reputation from the lens of the Nigerian perspective. This project was guided by the Situational Crisis Communication Theory (SCCT) since previous research has demonstrated that the variables of the theory might influence organizational reputations. Consequently, the study examined the levels of Nigerian MTN reputation among the 254 respondents. It further evaluated the relationships

between crisis response strategy, crisis history, crisis type, and reputation during crisis management. A quantitative research approach was utilized to offer inferential and descriptive findings. The study showed that more than half of the respondents' reputations for Nigerian MTN were high. The findings further demonstrated positive and significant relationships between crisis response strategy, crisis history, crisis type, and reputation where the $p < .01$. However, the strength of their relationships with reputation differed. Thus, crisis history contributed most to reputation with $t=3.99$, follow by crisis type with $t=2.80$ and crisis response strategy with $t=1.57$. Therefore, the findings of the study recommend that Nigerian MTN organizations should embrace these factors towards enhancing their reputation during crises. The study further contributed the knowledge on how to universally sustain organizational reputations during crises.

Keywords: Crisis Response Strategy, Crisis History, Crisis Type and Organization Reputation

Introduction

Human existence is crisis-based and no organization is immune to crisis. All organizations should have the best possible system and knowledge to manage crises (Coombs, 1999; Meer et al., 2017; Dominic et al., 2021). Crisis communication research mainly concentrates on the relationship between crisis situations, communication strategies, and crisis perceptions (Schultz et al., 2011), including people's perception response strategies (Coombs & Holladay, 2008).

Crises surface in diverse ways: media misconceptions, social media activism, and practices, extortion of staff and the public, product tampering, security problems, natural disasters, accidents, negligence, etc. In organizations, crises are pervasive and destructive, challenging, reputation threatening, and catastrophic to the organization and the public (Diers-Lawson, 2019).

The recent age of information and technology came with a challenging work environment for various organizations. However, these new communications and technologies made it possible for people to be conversant with the issues and risks, related to organizations. Crises have the chance, the possibility of damaging an organization's reputation, and the relationships it has with stakeholders (Cornelissen, 2017, pg.211).

Reputation encompasses an essential ingredient of the organization in corporate communication. A damaged reputation is difficult to ever regain, especially when the crisis results in an organizational reputation shifting from favorable to unfavorable, making the stakeholders and the customers' boycott or change their minds towards the organization (Vidaver-Cohen, 2007). However, the crisis communication impact on the organizational reputation, be it positive or negative, strongly depends on how best or worse the organization handled the crisis (Coombs, 2017).

Corporate reputation is the total of predictable behaviors, relationships and two-way communication undertaken by an organization, as judged by its stakeholders over time (Watson, 2013). In today's world, an organization's reputation is not only a primary reason for stakeholders/customers' confidence in the products but also has a value in sustainability, reputational capital, and promoting the image of the organization.

Organizations have to cope with the complex reality of heightened consumer demands and society's expectations. Corporate reputation does not only remain an image management artifice but is also measured as a central business imperative or importance that needs to be mirrored or envisaged in an organization's ethos and spirit (Chowdhury, 2019).

Crisis disintegrates usual business operations and can sometimes threaten the reality and corporality or existence of the organization. Thus, “Crisis communications is the deliberations, the conversation between the organization and its public(s) before, during, and after the negative occurrence” (Routledge, 2017). However, for any corporate organization to maintain a good standard and positive relationship between its stakeholders/customers, crises should be prepared for and well-handled to avoid the high risk of an organizational boycott by the stakeholders.

However, the penetration of crisis communication research is still low in the Nigerian context. This has generated a lot of concern as to why the crisis keeps posing significant threats in Nigeria. When organizational reputation keeps dwindling in a country, it has a way of contributing to national development retardation (Nwogwugwu, 2018).

The quality of every organization is dependent on its well-established and maintained reputation whenever a crisis incurs reputational damage. Again, Coombs & Holladay (1996) posited that the sustenance of an organization’s reputation from being damaged is derived from the execution and enforcement of crisis response systematic plans or blueprints cited in (Rudwell & Larsson, 2010). A crisis could be internal or external; whichever way it comes affects an organization’s reputation.

Phenomenon of Interest

MTN’s crisis with Nigerian authorities is over an allegation that the organization illegally transferred \$8.1 billion out of the country and still owes \$2 billion in back taxes. Based on this misconduct, MTN battles with fines of \$10 billion in Nigeria over allegations of inapt or inappropriate financial transactions (Business insider SA, 2018). The best choice of most subscribers/stakeholders in the national world of telecommunication is losing high-ranking executives over the next few months, decreasing and inconsistency in service delivery, and losing confidence and trust amongst its stakeholders, which is worth an organizational problem. Compared to only 31 million in South Africa, MTN has over 55 million subscribers in Nigeria. However, that business has been plagued by setbacks (<https://www.businessinsider.co.za/mtn-investors-lost-billions-in-less-than-an-hour-2018-8>).

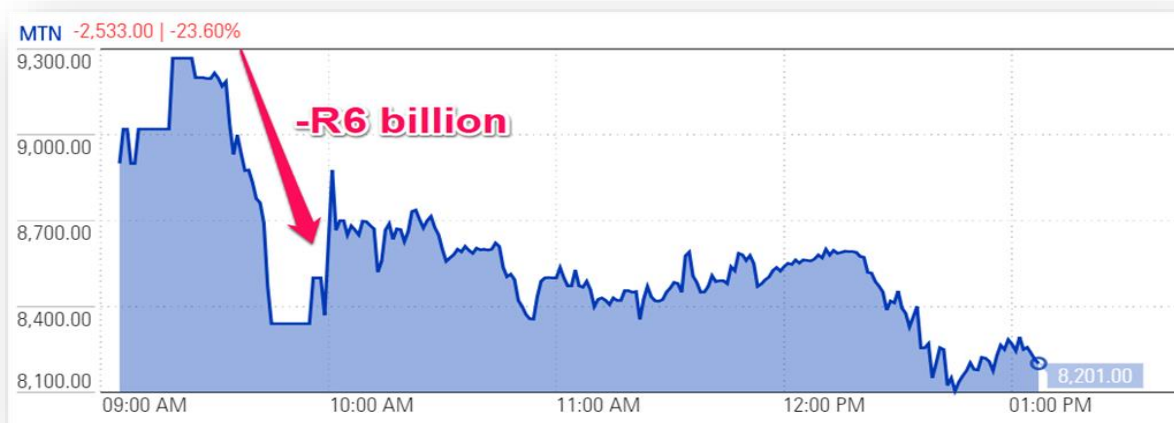


Fig.1. MTN investors lost
BusinessinsiderMTN investors lost

Despite the positive aspect attributed to crisis communication and its response strategies in an organization, not all corporate organizations perceived it as beneficial especially considering its impact on the organization's reputation. Many corporate organizations (in Nigeria) still underestimate crisis communication and its impact on organizational reputation. Many organizations still see it as not important, while others do not see the need to maintain good crisis communication within the organization. Some organizations and staff see a crisis as an opportunity to change jobs or as a sign of an incompetent corporate management system (Cerna, 2016). Nevertheless, some corporate bodies in Nigeria see crisis communication management in the organization as a waste of money, time, and limited resources. These corporate crises negligence and misconceptions have caused a lot of damage to many organizational reputations and images (Jabeen, 2018).

Study shows that reputation enhances organizational market value (Dowling, 2006), and the validity of every organization in times of crisis depends on reputation (Alshami, 2021). However, there are deficiencies in the past literature from the African perspective. In Nigeria, the penetration of crisis communication research is still low. The heavy reliance on crisis communication research data is from Europe, America, and Asia, while very little from the Nigerian perspective (Nwogwugwu, 2018). This current study is necessary to fill this shortcoming and evaluate results consistencies.

Again, scholars found that research using the SCCT has been inconclusive. Thus, resulting in mixed findings regarding the impact of the theory's crisis response strategies on organizational reputation (Ma & Zhan, 2016), and has created a need for additional research to determine consistency.

Most studies in Nigeria concerning crisis communication and organizations' reputations are conducted exclusively through the qualitative research method. In this research, the quantitative method will be used via survey to determine results consistency. Again, only a few studies were carried out to determine how crisis communication response strategies impact organizational reputation and the effects of positive crisis history and effective crisis response strategies, matching with the crisis occurring at a particular time (Lee et al., 2014). Therefore, this current study was conducted to determine the relationships between crisis response strategy, crisis history and crisis type on the reputation of Nigerian multinational mobile telecommunications (MTN).

Research Questions

1. To what extent is the level of organizational reputation of MTN Nigeria?
2. What is the relationship between crisis response strategy and Nigerian MTN organizational reputation during crisis management?
3. What is the relationship between crisis history and Nigerian MTN organizational reputation during crisis management?
4. What is the relationship between crisis type and Nigerian MTN organizational reputation during crisis management?

Research Objectives

General objective

To examine crisis response strategy, crisis history, and crisis type impact on Nigerian MTN organizational reputation during crisis management.

Specific Objective

RO1: To examine the levels of the organizational reputation of Nigerian MTN

RO2: To ascertain the relationship between crisis response strategy and Nigerian MTN Organization reputation

RO3: To evaluate the relationships between crisis history reference and Nigerian MTN Organization reputation during crisis management

RO4. To determine the relationship between crisis types and Nigerian MTN the organizational reputation during crisis management

Significance of the Study

This current research can significantly help raise awareness of effective crisis communication response strategies that can repair reputational threats and maintain a positive reputation as well as a match crisis. More importantly, the study will help identify the possible current type of crisis and best approach/ communication strategies to be used to protect the organizational capital, its relationship with the stakeholders and customers' reliability, as well as repair reputational threat.

The study serves as bedrock of knowledge to other corporate organizations on the impact of the crisis history reference towards increasing or decreasing the organization's reputation and or stakeholder's perception on the organizational reputation when a crisis occurs. However, this study would provide in terms of extension and strengthening the Situational Crisis Communication Theory (SCCT). More so, the researchers believe that the study would further enhance the understanding of the SCCT, which can lead to wider use of this theory in various types of crises.

The Limitations of this Current Study

The researchers of this current study had a limitation to conduct this study with selected MTN subscribers, who are residing in Lekki, Lagos State, and the specific location to conduct this study. The researchers also concentrated specifically on the crisis that occurred in MTN. Nig. Organization. This study was carried out within a short period, emphasizing a particular crisis in MTN. Nig. organization and its impact on reputation, customers' perception.

Definition of Key Words

The definitions of the keywords that make up this current study are whereby discussed. These are: Crisis History, Crisis Type, Organizational Reputation, and Crisis Response Strategy.

Crisis History

Crisis history refers to the level of organizational responses during past crises. Past crisis response strategies and actions, and the prevailing relationships the organization has had with stakeholders in the time past is termed the organization crisis history. More so, SCCT argues that the information about an organization's history is a more relevant key significance that can affect the perception of an organization's more recent crisis (Coombs, 2004; p.266).

Crisis Type

The frame used to interpret crisis is Crisis Type. This framing could be natural, technological, confrontational, organizational misdeeds, smoldering, bankruptcy, and skewed management values. According to (Coombs, 2011; p. 157), the crisis type experienced by an organization

should match with the crisis response strategy used by the organization facing the crisis, for effective results in restoring the organizational reputation.

Organizational Reputation

In practical terms, the ultimate intangible asset is the company's reputation. According to Honey & Garry, it is largely more than how the organization is being valued and thought of by a variety of people: stakeholders, customers, and competitors). Reputation is difficult to stand on, unstable, furtive, uncertain, unpredictable, easily endangered, not possible to control, amorphous, or unstructured: A short guide to reputation risk (Honey & Garry, 2017). Most scholars prefer this definition because it admits that reputation cannot be pinned down by organizations, therefore, there is a need to protect reputation against internal or external damage. Reputation could be favorable or unfavorable. Nothing damages the image and reputation of an organization like a crisis, destroying an established relationship with stakeholders (Cornelissen, 2017). Robert agrees with Honey on the meaning of organizational reputation. He coined that the predominantly cumulative positive know-how that a certain stakeholder group has with an organization is termed organizational reputation (Roberts, 2009).

Crisis Response Strategy

Crisis response strategy includes redefining the issue, questioning the legitimacy and authenticity of an issue, and promoting an alternative policy solution option to the current crisis (Coombs, Holladay & Tachkova, 2019). More so, instructing, adjusting, and internalizing information. However, what tells people how to physically react to the crisis is information construction; the element that implies helping people emotionally code with the crisis is adjusting information; then, the process of formulating a positive image of the organization is internalizing information (Cheng, 2018).

Literature Review

Introduction

This chapter by the researchers seeks to focus on past research works in the field of crisis communication, paying attention to Crisis Communication, Crisis Response Strategies, Crisis Type, Crisis History as well as Organizational Reputation respectively. How negative reactions to a Crisis Situation are protected against by response strategy. The study also reviews relevant literature on the relationship between dependent and independent variables of the study.

Crisis Response Strategy, Crisis Type Affiliation in Relation with Reputation

However, the crisis response strategy type employed by an organization can, to a great extent help in improving or hindering an organization's reputation recovery and reputational threat, showing the corporation and agreement that exist with crisis response strategy concerning organizational crisis type experienced by the organization.

Nonetheless, the crisis response strategy employed by organizations should be related to the crisis and type of existing crisis, when paying attention to managing, maintaining, and repairing a corporate reputation (Coombs, 2007a). Crisis Management Theorists suggested that crisis managers should firstly, form a taxonomy (the study of the general principles of scientific classification) of crisis types, secondly, form a taxonomy of crisis responses, and thirdly, develop and established a systematic strategy to match appropriate crisis responses

to crises/ type in other to understand the necessity for appropriate crisis responses strategy and certain crises situations (Coombs, 2004). However, in terms of matching crisis types to crisis responses, until Coombs (2007b) fully developed his SCCT in the field of crisis communication, limited research had been done in the literature. Consequently, the underlying and major relationship between crisis response strategy and crisis type in Situational Crisis Communications Theory was drawn from the Attribution Theory (Coombs, 2004, 2007a).

Table 1.1
Pairing Crisis Response Strategy with Crisis Type

Crisis type	Crisis Response Strategies
VICTIM CLUSTER	
Natural disaster	Deny strategies
Rumor	Attack the accuser
Workplace violence	Denial
Product tampering/Malevolence	Scapegoat
ACCIDENT CLUSTER	
Challenges	Diminishing strategies
Technical-error accident	Excuse
Technical-error product harm	Justification
PREVENTABLE CLUSTER	
Human-error accidents	Rebuild strategies
Human-error product harm	Compensation
Organizational misdeeds, misconducts(with or without injuries)	Apology

Sources: adopted from: Coombs (2007), p. 168 and 170.

The Protectivness of Crisis Response Strategies Against Negative Percptions To A Crisis Situation

SCCT posited that the choice of words used in connection with the actions displayed by crisis management influences how the public perceives the organization during a crisis. However, owing to the relevance of interactions with the organization, the public's perceptions play a significant role in shaping the rating of the organization's reputation alongside stakeholders' affective response (Nerb & Spada, 1997). SCCT strongly affirmed the impact of communication strength and making meaning with that of the Image Restoration Theory (Benoit, 1995). Crisis response strategies agree with three important objectives in respect of protecting organizational intangible assets. These objectives are: first to shape attributions of the crisis, secondly to change perceptions of the organization in crisis, and lastly to reduce the negative affect generated by the crisis (Coombs, 1995). The major goal of reputational protection and organizational threat eradication, in the Situational Crisis Communication Theory, is mainly supported by these three objectives.

Table 1.2

Crisis response strategies in the SCCT cluster and analysis study.

1. Denial	Crisis managers states that no crisis exit.
2. Scapegoat	Management blames the crisis on outside entity
3. Confront the accuser	Management challenges the individuals that claimed existence of the crisis. A threat to accusers.
4. Excuses	Crisis management reduces the organizations' responsibility for the crisis. Claiming that the organization is not responsible for the crisis.
5. Justification	Crisis management minimizes the perceived damage connected with the crisis. Claiming there is no serious damage caused by the crisis.
6. Ingratiation	Crisis management designs actions to make stakeholders like the organization via praises.
7. Concern	Management shows a level of care for public affected by the crisis.
8. Compassion	Crisis management offers money, gifts, and incentives, to those affected by the crisis.
9. Regrets	Crisis management says the organization feel bad about the crisis situation.
10. Apologia	Crisis management publicly accepts full organizational responsibility for the crisis therefore begs forgiveness for and pay compensations to the affected stakeholders.

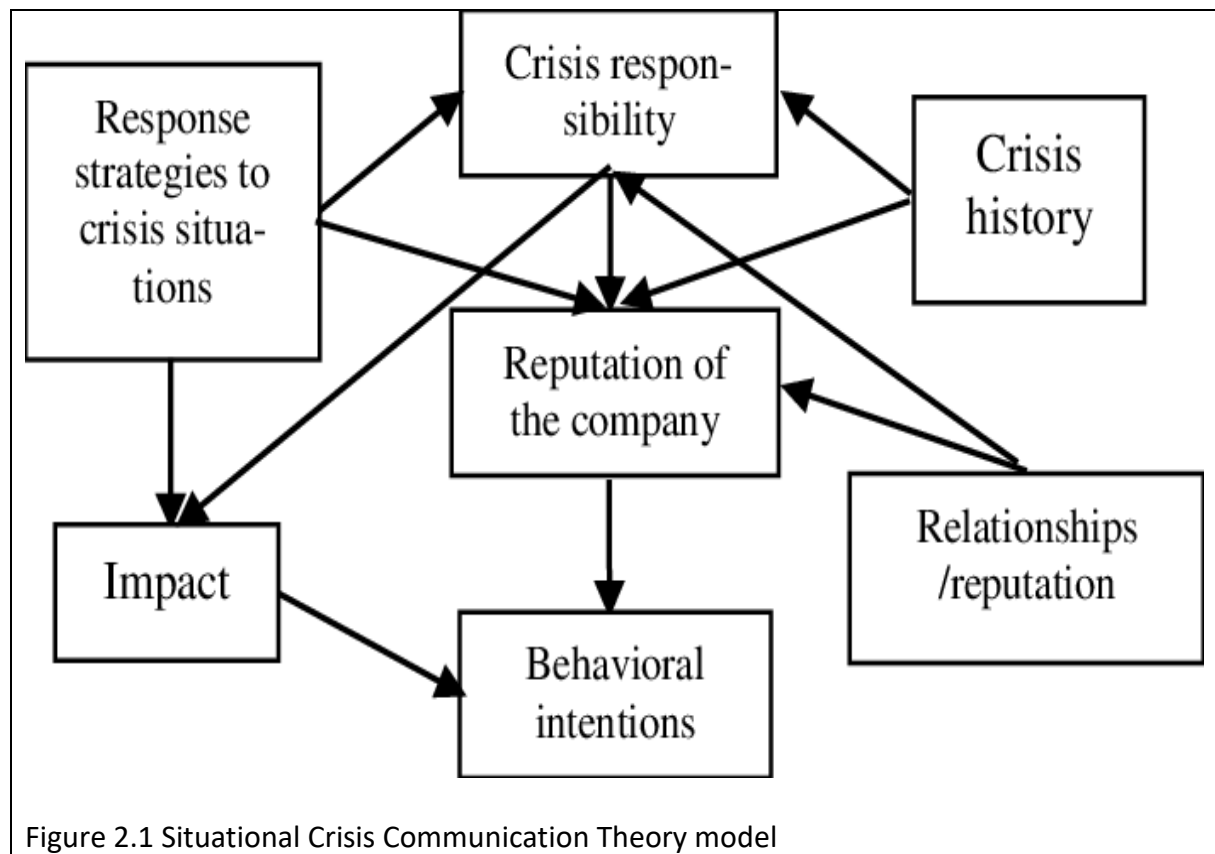
Source: Adapted from Coombs (2007).

Theoretical Framework

Situational Crisis Communication Theory (SCCT), was developed by W. Timothy Coombs in 1995. It explains the use of optimal crisis responses during an organizational crisis to protect and sustain its reputation. SCCT provides a mechanism for anticipating how stakeholders will react to a crisis regarding the reputational threat to an organization. Moreover, SCCT projects how people will respond to the 'crisis response strategies used to manage a challenging situation.

Situational Crisis Communication Theory (SCCT) provides an evidence-based framework for understanding how to maximize the reputational protection afforded by post-crisis communication. SCCT proffers guidelines on how crisis managers can use crisis response strategies to protect a reputation from the ravages of a crisis (Coombs, 2007). Based on the in the SCCT research, reputation has always been a dominant outcome. This accounts for its relevance in an organization (Coombs, 2020).

Researchers believed that one of the best perspectives that consider crisis communication issues in corporate organizations is the use of the Situational Crisis Communication Theory approach. Affirmatively, the major crisis response strategy developed by Coombs is the SCCT's final three propositions. However, the theory shapes attributions of the crisis, changes perceptions for the organization in crisis, and reduces the negative affect generated by the crisis, and these are the three reputational objectives of SCCT. The organizational crisis history in connection with the organization' past reputational relationship affects organizational reputation (Coombs, 2007:p.171).



Conceptual Framework

The skeleton for every research paper is the research framework. It is a systematic model of the researcher’s link to the several variables that have been identified as important to the problem of the study. It helps in the justification of the variables as regards data collection. According to Timothy Coombs’ SCCT (2007), one of the major theory in the field of Crisis Communication, which propose a systematic match of strategic crisis response and reputation is Situational Crisis Communication Theory. The enhancement in the predictions of the level of organizations’ reputational threats and organization’s public perceptions is based on a systematic approach to evaluating crisis response strategy, crisis type, crisis history, and prior relationship, which consists variables of this study (crisis response strategy, crisis type, crisis history, and organization’s reputation respectively).

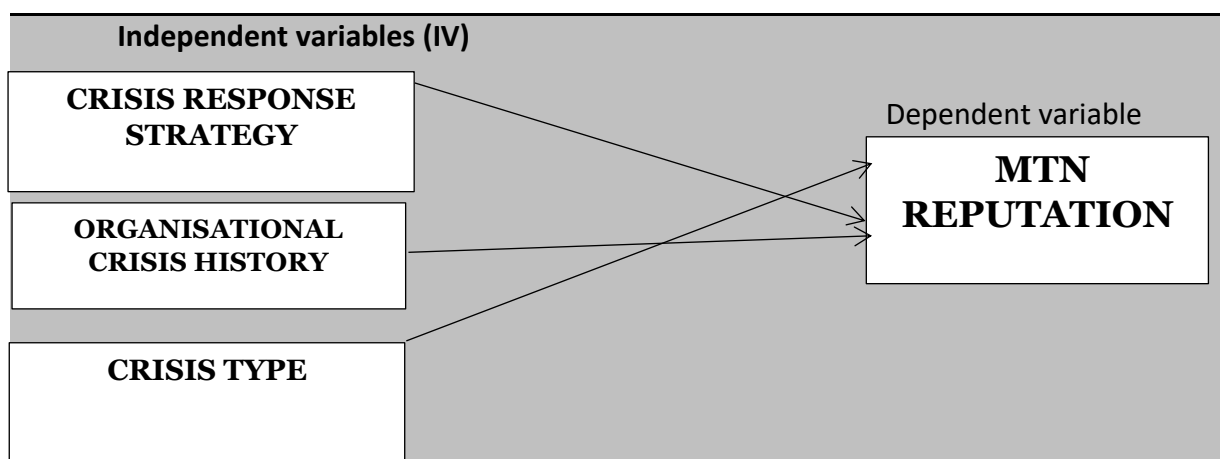


Figure 2.2 Proposed conceptual framework

However, a lot of researchers agree that crisis response strategies, crisis type, and crisis history among others, are relevant in dealing with the restoration of organizational reputation (Brown, Adamson & Park, 2019; Billings, Coombs & Brown, 2019). This aspect has not been given enough attention from the Nigerian perspective.

Hypothesis

H1: There is a positive relationship between response strategies and Nigerian MTN reputation.

H2: There is a positive relationship between crisis history and Nigerian MTN reputation.

H3: There is a positive relationship between crisis types and Nigerian MTN reputation.

Research Methodology

The purpose of this paper is to examine crisis response strategy, crisis history, and crisis type impact on Nigerian MTN organizational reputation during crisis management. This paper used a quantitative method, using SPSS for statistical analysis to achieve this set purpose. A quantitative research approach was utilized to offer inferential and descriptive findings.

The operationalization of variables are shown on the table below

Variables	Number of items	Measurements
Demographics	9	Nominal/Ordinal
Crisis Response Strategies	5	6 point Likert Scale
Crisis History	5	6 point Likert Scale
Crisis Type	5	6 point Likert Scale
Organization's reputation	5	6 point Likert Scale

Research Instrument

The tables below are the questionnaires according to the study variables. 1=Strongly Disagree 2=Disagree 3. Slightly Disagree 4= Slightly Agree 5=Agree 6=Strongly Agree. These were further discussed as the research instrument.

NO	Appropriate Crisis response strategy recognition						
1	Good crisis response strategy always restores the image and reputation of the organization?	1	2	3	4	5	6
2	I feel sympathy is the best response strategy for a preventable crisis?	1	2	3	4	5	6
3	Compensation restores organizational reputation in a preventable crisis situation?	1	2	3	4	5	6
4	I think apology should be the best response strategy in restoring organization's reputation during preventable crisis?	1	2	3	4	5	6

5	I believe information is the best response strategy to restore reputation when organization faces preventable crisis?	1	2	3	4	5	6
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Crisis Response Strategy

Crisis History

NO	Crisis History perception recognition						
1	I believe crisis history reference contributes to a change in perception in organization's reputation during crisis situation.	1	2	3	4	5	6
2	I think positive crisis history reduces the negative affect generated by crisis situation.	1	2	3	4	5	6
3	I feel organization's negative crisis history increases the chances of reputational damage generated by crisis.	1	2	3	4	5	6
4	I am confident that zero crisis history contributes to a change of public's perception of an organization's reputation when crisis occurs.	1	2	3	4	5	6
5	I do not see any point in organization's crisis history contributing to a change in organization's reputation during crisis.	1	2	3	4	5	6

Crisis Type

NO	Information about crisis type						
1	I am pretty sure that organization is helpless when faced with intentional crisis.	1	2	3	4	5	6
2	I believe intentional crisis could be prevented when appropriate strategy is applied to restore reputation.	1	2	3	4	5	6
3	I feel financial crisis is best handled using apology to restore customer's trust and organization's reputation.	1	2	3	4	5	6
4	This company faces financial crisis that could have been avoided.	1	2	3	4	5	6
5	I don't believe financial crisis is intentional but accidental.	1	2	3	4	5	6

Organization's Reputation

NO	Information about MTN Nig. Organization's Reputation.						
1	I feel confident about MTN network service provider.	1	2	3	4	5	6
2	I am pretty sure MTN is the fastest network provider and most people's choice.	1	2	3	4	5	6
3	I think MTN service provider understands the customers need and they are customers oriented.	1	2	3	4	5	6
4	In my opinion, MTN service provider is respectable and trustworthy.	1	2	3	4	5	6
5	I believe MTN service provider is predominant among other service providers in Nigeria and economically sound.	1	2	3	4	5	6

Pilot Study and Reliability

The vital step in developing a survey questionnaire according to Sakaran (2003) is a pre-test or pilot study. Before the distribution of the actual questionnaire, the researchers conducted a pilot test of this study among some selected Nigerian students in the Universiti Putra Malaysia, as a valid step to test for consistency and internal reliability of the research instrument, enhance the clarity and readability of the instrument through the feedback from the respondents and also to determine whether the questionnaire was comprehensive and could be used as a tool or channel to gather meaningful information relating to this research work. It involves 30 Nigerian Students in Universiti Putra Malaysia who are conversant with the MTN network provider. However, these 30 students were not part of the actual 334 respondents of the study. The questionnaire was only conducted upon Cronbach's Alpha Test, in correspondent with the received pilot questionnaire feedback.

Validity consists of accuracy in the research instrument or its genuine truthfulness. Reliability of an instrument and instrument Validity used in any research work results in the authenticity of the study and avoidance of doubts or the research being argued and challenged. According to Jackson (2011), reliability is the consistency of stability in measuring an instrument over time.

The Cronbach Alpha coefficient is an accepted and widely used procedure for estimating and examining the internal consistency and reliability of a measure that is mainly based on the average inter-item correlation (Sekaran, 2003; Numally, 1978; Ravinder & Saraswathi, 2020). Furthermore, the higher the coefficient value, the better reflection of higher reliability. The rule of thumb is that an alpha's coefficient of 0.7 and more is adequate and proves higher reliability. Nevertheless, values of Cronbach's Alpha between '0.70 to 0.90' are considered to be reliable and acceptable. Therefore, the pilot study conducted with 30 respondents pointed to the fact that all the variables in this study were reliable because their values of Cronbach alpha ranged between .816 and .918. Moreover, in the actual study's reliability test, all the four variables evaluated comprising crisis response strategy; crisis history, crisis type, and reputation were reliable because their Cronbach alpha ranged between '.884 to .70' as seen in table 3:1

Table: 3:1

Pilot and Actual Study Cronbach Alpha Coefficients for the 4 Variables Used in the Study

S/N	Variables' Names	Numbers of Items	Cronbach Alpha for the Pilot Study(30)	Cronbach Alpha for the actual Study(n=245)
1	Crisis Response Strategy	5	.890	.718
2	Crisis History	5	.816	.700
3	Crisis Type	5	.839	.708
4	Reputation	5	.918	.884

Normality Test

A normality test was conducted for the 4 variables used in the study to determine if the data would be analyzed via parametric or non-parametric statistics. Consequently, the four variables' data were all normally distributed because their skewness values ranged between .882 and -1.310, whereas, the kurtosis values equally ranged between .441 and 1.305. In other

words, the values for both skewness and kurtosis were not $> \pm 1.96$, which indicated that the assumption of normality was statistically met (Kim, 2013). Consequently, the data are to be normally distributed. Furthermore, the curve of the histograms, normal Q-Q plots, and detrended normal Q-Q plots also helped to prove that the data were normally distributed. Thus, Pearson moment-product correlation parametric statistics were further used for testing the hypotheses of the study.

Data Analysis

Data collected from the field were analyzed via a statistical package for social sciences (SPSS). However, objective 1 on the level of reputation was analyzed through descriptive statistics. Whereas the other (3) hypotheses objectives were analyzed through descriptive statistics and Pearson moment product correlation because they required inferential statistics for testing hypotheses. Data for the descriptive analysis were presented in percentage, frequency, and meanwhile, the inferential statistical outcomes were presented via the P- values and strengths of the correlations

Findings and Discussions

Introduction

This section discussed the respondents' demographic factors and findings of the study. This section further discussed the individual objectives' descriptive statistics and the actual findings. 4.1, discussed the descriptions of the respondent's demographic factors, and 4.2 discussed the statistical description of the variables. However, 4.3 further discussed the individual objective finding and their respective tables.

Descriptions of The Respondents' Demographic Factors

The profile of the respondents in table4:1 reveals that out of the respondents' age, more than half which comprises 53.5% fall between 31-40 years. It also presents that 62.9% greater part of them are male. It further displays that 65.3% more than half of them are married, whereas 40.8% greater part of them, are having master's degrees. With regards to the tribe, it demonstrates that 36.7% greater part of them, are Igbo. While 65.7% more than half of them are Christians. The profile table additionally points out that 40.8% greater part of them monthly receive #51,000-150,000 salaries. In terms of MTN usage frequency, it shows that 63.3% more than half of them always use it. It further illustrates that 42% greater part of them rated MTN service quality as good.

Table 4.1

Demographic Profile of the Respondents

Profile	Frequency	Percentage %
Age		
18-40	54	22.0
31-40	131	53.5
41-50	43	17.6
Above 51	17	6.9
Total	45	100

Gender		
Male	154	62.9
Female	91	37.1
Total	254	100
Marital Status		
Single	74	30.2
Married	160	65.3
Divorced	11	4.5
Total	245	100
Level of Education		
SSCE	10	4.1
Diploma	20	8.2
Bachelor	62	25.3
Masters	100	40.8
PhD	53	21.6
Total	245	100
Tribe		
Hausa	55	22.4
Yoruba	25	10.2
Igbo	90	36.7
Others	75	30.7
Total	245	100
Religion		
Islam	83	33.9
Christianity	161	65.7
Others	1	.4
Total	245	100
Monthly Salary		
#20,000-50,000	33	13.4

#51,000-150,000	100	40.8
#151,000-500,000	56	22.9
Above #500,000	56	22.9
Total	245	100
MTN Usage Frequency		
Never	9	3.7
Sometimes	43	17.6
Always	155	63.3
Rarely	7	2.9
Often	25	10.2
Others	6	2.3
Total	245	100
Comments on MTN Service		
Excellent	29	11.9
Very Good	79	32.2
Good	103	42.0
Average	31	12.7
Poor	3	1.2
Total	245	100

The Statistical Descriptive of the Variables used in the Study

These focus on the measurements of central tendencies, which include the mean, standard deviations of the variables, the items used, and measurement. In this study, four variables of Situational Crisis Communication Theory were evaluated. These include crisis response strategy, crisis type, crisis history, and reputation. The statistical descriptions of the variables would be subsequently taken one after one.

Descriptive Statistics of Crisis Response Strategy

Table 4:2 on crisis response strategy signifies that the CRS1 item, which states that “Good crisis response strategy always restores the image and reputation of the organization” has the highest (mean value = 4.7633) with (standard deviation =1.55536). This implied that it is the item they most believed will enhance organizational crisis response strategy. It was followed by CRS5 which states “I believe information is the best response strategy to restore reputation when an organization faces preventable crisis” which has the second highest (mean value=4.5673) with (a standard deviation= 1.43455). This also indicated that item no.5 was the second item that the respondents believed will improve organizational crisis response strategy. The next with higher (mean value=4.3959) and (standard deviation=1.50763) was CRS3, which states that “Compensation restores organizational reputation in a preventable crisis”. Thus, it suggested that the respondents equally regarded it as very important towards enhancing organizational crisis response strategy. The CRS4, which states “I think the apology should be the best response strategy in restoring organization’s reputation during

preventable crisis” with (mean value=4.0286) and (standard deviation=1.58218) was the fourth item the respondents believed will enhance organizational response strategy. Whereas CSR2, which states that “I feel sympathy is the best response strategy for a preventable crisis” with (mean value=3.2449) and (standard deviation= 1.67590) was the least they believed would improve organizational crisis response strategy. This support the argument of Coombs & Holladay (2008), that sympathy is the best strategy for a preventable crisis and reputational restoration.

Table: 4:2

Descriptive Statistics of Crisis Response Strategy

Items	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std Deviation
CRS1	245	1.00	6.00	4.7633	1.55536
CRS2	245	1.00	6.00	3.2449	1.67590
CRS3	245	1.00	6.00	4.3959	1.50763
CRS4	245	1.00	6.00	4.0286	1.58218
CRS5	245	1.00	6.00	4.5673	1.43455

Descriptive Statistics of Crisis Type

Table 4:3 on crisis type represents that the CT2 item, which states that “I believe intentional crisis could be prevented when an appropriate strategy is applied to restore reputation” has the highest (mean value =4.7633) with (standard deviation =1.42327). This implied that it is the item they most believed will enhance organizational crisis type. It was followed by CT4 which states “This company faces a financial crisis that could have been avoided” which has the second highest (mean value=4.1184) with (standard deviation=1.53052). This also specified that item no.4 was the second item that the respondents believed will improve organizational crisis type. The next item with higher (mean value=3.7633) and (standard deviation=1.70374) was CT3, which states that “I feel the financial crisis is best handled using apology to restore customer’s trust and organization’s reputation.” Therefore, it implied that the respondents equally regard it as very important towards augmenting organizational crisis type.

The CT5, which states “I don’t believe a financial crisis is intentional but accidental.” with (mean value=3.7388) and (standard deviation=1.58797) was the fourth item the respondents thought will enhance organizational crisis type. While CT1, which states that “I am pretty sure that organization is helpless when faced with an intentional crisis.” with (mean value=3.5143) and (standard deviation=1.61347) was the least they indicated would improve organizational crisis type.

Table: 4:3

Descriptive Statistics of Crisis Type

Items	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std Deviation
CT1	245	1.00	6.00	3.5143	1.61347
CT2	245	1.00	6.00	4.7633	1.42327
CT3	245	1.00	6.00	3.7633	1.70374
CT4	245	1.00	6.00	4.1184	1.53052
CT5	245	1.00	6.00	3.7388	1.58797

Descriptive Statistics of Crisis History

Table 4:4 on crisis history denotes that the CH2 item, which states that “I think positive crisis history reduces the negative effect generated by crisis” has the highest (mean value =4.5837) with (standard deviation =1.41064). This inferred that it is the item they most believed will enhance organizational crisis history. It was followed by CH1 which states “I believe crisis history reference contributes to a change in perception in organization’s reputation during a crisis” which has the second highest (mean value=4.5429) with (standard deviation=1.46153). This also acknowledged that item no.1 was the second item that the respondents believed will advance organizational crisis history. The next item with higher (mean value=4.5143) and (standard deviation=1.46153) was CH3, which states that “I feel an organization’s negative crisis history increases the chances of reputational damage generated by the crisis.” Consequently, it inferred that the respondents equally regard it as very important towards boosting organizational crisis history. The CH4, states “I am confident that zero crisis history contributes to a change of public’s perception of an organization’s reputation when a crisis occurs” with (mean value=4.2082) and (standard deviation=1.5228) was the fourth item the respondents believed will enrich organizational crisis history. Whereas CH5, states that “I do not see any point in organization’s crisis history contributing to a change in organization’s reputation during a crisis “with (mean value=2.8816) and (standard deviation=1.55970) was the least they illustrated would enhance organizational crisis history.

Table: 4:4

Descriptive Statistics of Crisis History

Items	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std Deviation
CH1	245	1.00	6.00	4.5429	1.37125
CH2	245	1.00	6.00	4.5837	1.41064
CH3	245	1.00	6.00	4.5143	1.46153
CH4	245	1.00	6.00	4.2082	1.5228
CH5	245	1.00	6.00	2.8816	1.55970

Descriptive Statistics of MTN organizational reputation

Table 4:5 on MTN organizational reputation indicates that Reputation no.5 item, which states that “I believe MTN service provider is predominant among other service providers in Nigeria and economically sound ” has the highest (mean value =4.6204) with (standard deviation =1.36360). This denoted that it is the item they most believed will improve MTN's organizational reputation. It was followed by Reputation no.4 item, which states “In my

opinion, MTN service provider is respectable and trustworthy.” has the second highest (mean value=4.6012) with (standard deviation=1.44302). This also pointed out that item no.4 was the second item that the respondents believed will improve MTN's organizational reputation. The next item with higher (mean value=4.3510) and (standard deviation=1.32413) was Reputation no.1 item, which states that “I feel confident about MTN network service provider” Therefore, it implied that the respondents equally regard it very crucial towards enhancing MTN organizational reputation. The Reputation no. 2 item, which states “I am pretty sure MTN is the fastest network provider and most people’s choice” with (mean value=4.3388) and (standard deviation=1.48335) was the fourth item the respondents believed will augment MTN's organizational reputation. Whereas Reputation no. 3 item, which states that “In my opinion, MTN service provider is respectable and trustworthy “with (mean value=4.0122) and (standard deviation=1.42427) was the least they demonstrated would boost MTN organizational reputation.

Table: 4:5

Descriptive Statistics of MTN Organizational Reputation

Items	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std Deviation
Reputation 1	245	1.00	6.00	4.3510	1.32413
Reputation 2	245	1.00	6.00	4.3388	1.48335
Reputation 3	245	1.00	6.00	4.0122	1.42427
Reputation 4	245	1.00	6.00	4.6012	1.44302
Reputation 5	245	1.00	6.00	4.6204	1.36360

Descriptive Statistics for the Four Variables used in the Study

Table: 4:6 shows that the reputation variable has the highest (mean value =21.3837) with this (standard =5.81897). This was followed by crisis response strategy with (mean value=21.0000) and (standard deviation=5.32162). While crisis history was the third rated variable with this (mean value =20.7306) and (standard deviation=4.95811). Whereas crisis type was the least rated variable with the following (mean value=19.8980) and (standard deviation=5.34638). Consequently, it implied that reputation was the most rated variable that influenced organizational crisis management, followed by crisis response strategy, crisis history, and crisis type.

Table: 4:6

Descriptive Statistics for the Four Variables

Variables	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std Deviation
Crisis response strategy	245	5.00	30.00	21.0000	5.32162
Crisis history	245	5.00	30.00	20.7306	4.95811
Crisis type	245	5.00	30.00	19.8980	5.34638
Reputation	245	5.00	30.00	21.3837	5.81897

Individual Objectives Findings

Objective one: Level of Nigerian MTN Organizational Reputation

The findings on the table 4:7 shows that 58.8% more than half of the respondents are having a high reputation for Nigerian MTN. Whereas 29.4% of them are having a moderate reputation for Nigerian MTN. While 11.8% have a low reputation for Nigerian MTN. Thus, this study’s finding similarly supports Zavyalova et al (2016) who also found that a high level of reputation influences organizational crisis management.

Table 4:7
Level of Nigerian MTN Organizational Reputation

Level of Nigerian MTN Reputation	Frequency	Percentage %
Low(5-8)	29	11.8
Moderate(13-20)	72	29.4
High(21 and above)	144	58.8
Total	245	100

Objective Two: Relationship between response strategy and reputation of Nigerian MTN.

For the objective two, the hypothesis stated that

H1: There is relationship between response strategy and Nigerian MTN reputation

Thus, the outcomes from the Pearson correlation in table: 4:8 shows that there is a positive relationship between response strategies and Nigerian MTN reputation ($r=.388$, $p<.01$). Therefore, H1 is supported. The finding further stated the relationship was a significant and low one. Thus, the finding supported Joep Cornelissen (2017) who found that crisis response strategy helps in sustaining organizational reputation. Hence, this study recommends that Nigerian MTN organizations and other organizations should embrace crisis response strategies towards enhancing their reputations.

Table 0.8
Pearson Correlation between Crisis Response Strategy and Reputation

Independent Variables (Crisis response strategy)	Dependent (Reputation)	Variable
	r	P-value
Crisis response strategy	.388**	.000

**Significant at 0.01

Objective Three: Relationship between Crisis history and reputation of Nigerian MTN.

For the objective three, the hypothesis stated that

H2: There is relationship between crisis history and Nigerian MTN reputation

Consequently, the outcomes from the Pearson correlation in the table: 4:9 demonstrates that there is a positive relationship between crisis history and Nigerian MTN reputation ($r=.431$, $p<.01$). The finding also illustrated that the relationship was a significant and moderate one. Therefore, H2 is supported. The study's outcome also supported Ulmer et al. (2015) who found that crisis history is relevant for organizational reputation enhancement. Therefore, this study commends that Nigerian MTN organizations and other organizations should always consider crisis history towards improving their reputations in crisis management.

Table 0.9

Pearson Correlation between Crisis History and Reputation

Independent Variables (Crisis History)	Dependent (Reputation)	Variable
	r	P-value
Crisis history	.431**	.000

**Significant at 0.01

Objective Four: Relationship between Crisis type and reputation of Nigerian MTN

For the objective 4, the hypothesis stated that

H3: There a is relationship between the crisis type and Nigerian MTN reputation

Thus, the outcomes from the Pearson correlation in the table: 4:10 demonstrates that there is a positive relationship between crisis history and Nigerian MTN reputation ($r=.362$, $p<.01$). Furthermore, the relationship was significant and low. Hence, H3 is supported. The study's findings also supported Brown and Billings (2013) who demonstrated that crisis type is essential for improving organizational reputation. Therefore, this study recommends that Nigerian MTN organizations and other organizations should always put crisis type into consideration when managing crises for an improved organizational reputation.

Table 0.10

Pearson Correlation between Crisis Type and Reputation

Independent Variables (Crisis Type)	Dependent (Reputation)	Variable
	r	P-value
Crisis type	.362**	0.000

**Significant at 0.01

Pilot and Actual Study Cronbach Alpha Coefficients For The 4 Variables

Table: 4:11

Pilot and Actual Study Cronbach Alpha Coefficients for the 4 Variables Used in the Study

S/N	Variables' Names	Numbers of Items	Cronbach Alpha for the Pilot Study(30)	Cronbach Alpha for the actual Study(n=245)
1	Crisis Response Strategy	5	.890	.718
2	Crisis History	5	.816	.700
3	Crisis Type	5	.839	.708
4	Reputation	5	.918	.884

Multiple Regression Analysis

From the validation of the proposed model below, the IV Crisis History with $t=3.986$ contributes most to the DV Reputation. This is followed by Crisis Type with $t=2.796$ and lastly Crisis Response Strategy with $t=1.572$. This is used to validate the proposed conceptual framework as shown below

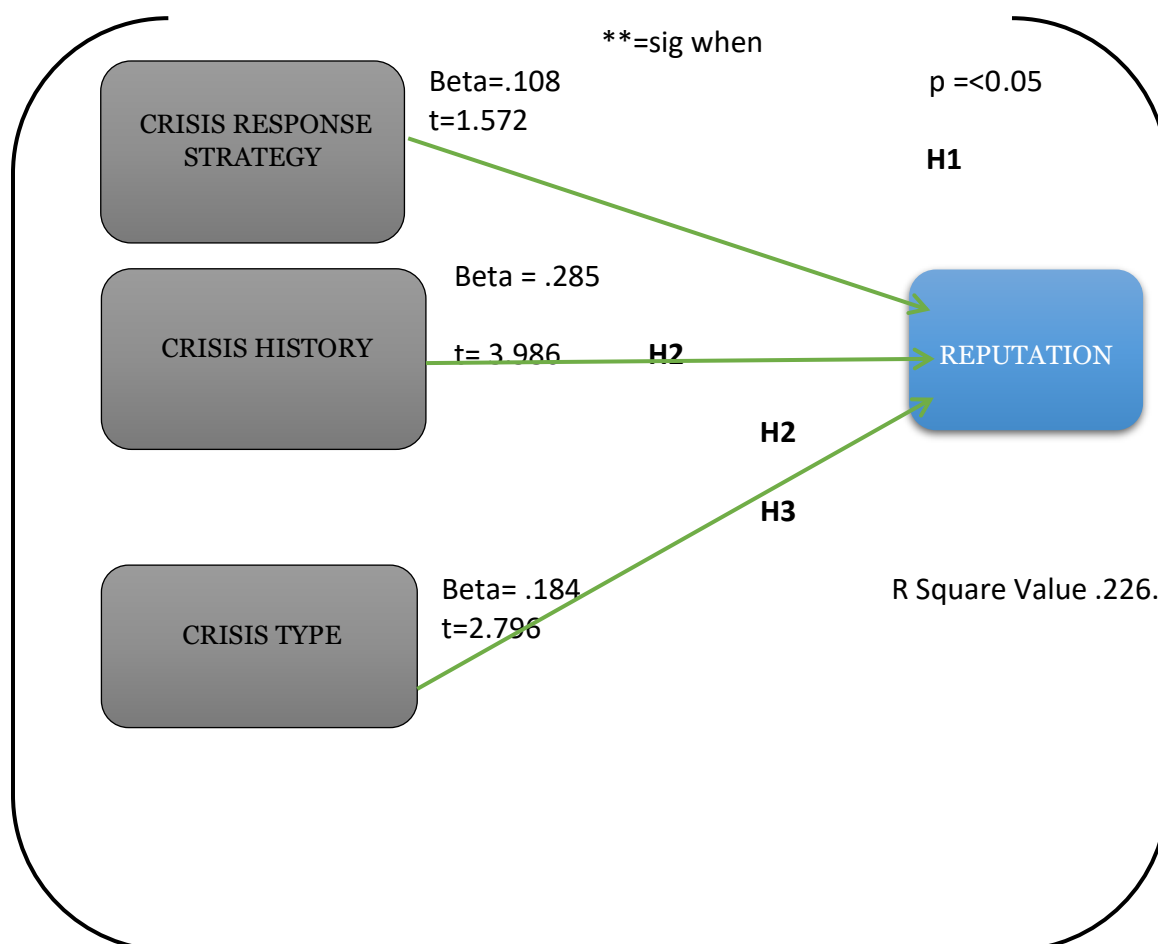


Figure 4.0 Validation of the proposed model hypotheses

Summary and Conclusions

Introduction

This chapter presents the summaries of the project's findings, the conclusions, research and theoretical implications, methodological implications, policy implications, and limitations of the study. However, 5.2, discussed the summary of the findings, and 5.3 emphasized the conclusion. 5.5 discussed the research and theoretical implication, followed by 5.6, methodological implication, and 5.7 discussed the policy/practical implication. Finally, 5.8, discussed the limitations and recommendations for further study.

Summary of the Findings

The profile of the respondents showed that the age of more than half of the respondents falls between 31-40 years. While the age of less than half of them fall between 41-50 years. This was followed by those within 18-40 years, whereas the least of them are those who are above 50 years. In terms of the respondents' gender, it showed that more than half of them are male while less than half of them are female.

The respondents' marital status also presented that more than half of them are married. While less than half of them are single, whereas the least of them are divorced.

With regards to the level of their education, it showed that less than half of them are having master's degrees. This was followed by those that have bachelor's degrees. The next are those that have Ph.D. and diploma degrees while the least are those with senior secondary school certificate examination (SSCE).

In terms of the respondents' tribe, it illustrated that the Igbo tribe outnumbered others. This was followed by other tribes and the Hausa tribes, While Yoruba are the least tribe among the respondents.

The respondents' religion demonstrated that more than half of them are Christians. Whereas less than half of them are Islam and the least are those in other religions.

Regarding the respondents' monthly salary, it depicted that less than half of them are receiving between #51,000-150,000 monthly. This was followed by those that receive between #151,000-500,000 and those that receive above #500, 000 monthly. The last are those that monthly receive between #20, 0000-#50,000.

About the respondents' MTN usage frequency, it showed that more than half of them are always using MTN. This was followed by the percentages of those that sometimes use it and those that often use it, whereas, the least are those that never use it.

Finally, the respondents' rating of MTN services displayed that less than half of them rated it "good". This was followed by those that rated it "very good" and "average". While the least are those that rated it "excellent and poor".

With regards to the individual objective findings, the first objective on the level of the respondents' reputations for Nigerian MTN demonstrated that more than half of the respondents are having a high reputation for Nigerian MTN, Whereas, less than half of them are having a moderate reputation for Nigerian MTN. The least of them are having a low reputation for Nigerian MTN. Thus, the finding that most of them are having reputations for Nigerian MTN is equally supported Zavyalova et al (2016) who previously identified that a high reputation influences organizational crisis management.

The second objective on the hypothesis between crisis response strategy and Nigerian MTN reputation demonstrates a positive relationship between crisis response and Nigerian MTN reputation. However, the strength of the relationship was a low and significant one. Nonetheless, this study's finding is also incongruent with Cornelissen (2017) who

demonstrated that crisis response strategies have an impact on organizational reputation. Thus, it is commended that organizations should target crisis response strategies in managing crises. Furthermore, the third objective on the hypothesis between crisis history and Nigerian MTN reputation established a positive relationship between crisis history and Nigerian MTN reputation. Moreover, the strength of the relationship was moderate and significant. Therefore, this study's finding is in line with Ulmer et al (2015) who earlier demonstrated that crisis history has an impact on organizational reputation. Thus, crisis history is deemed relevant for improving organizational reputation.

Finally, the finding in the fourth objective on the hypothesis between crisis type and Nigerian MTN established a positive relationship between crisis type and Nigerian MTN reputation. Additionally, the strength of the relationship was a low and significant one. Nevertheless, the findings of the study also supported Brown and Brown (2013) who previously demonstrated that crisis type has a positive influence on the organizational reputation. Therefore, crisis type is indispensable for enhancing organizational reputation.

Conclusion

The study showed that more than half of the respondents' reputations for Nigerian MTN were high. The findings further demonstrated positive and significant relationships between crisis response strategy, crisis history, crisis type, and reputation where the $p < .01$. However, the strength of their relationships with reputation differed. Thus, crisis history contributed most to reputation with $t=3.99$, follow by crisis type with $t=2.80$ and crisis response strategy with $t=1.57$. Therefore, the findings of the study recommend that Nigerian MTN organizations should embrace these factors towards enhancing their reputation during crises.

The first objective on the level of the respondents' reputation for Nigerian MTN organization showed that more than half of the respondents are having a high reputation for Nigerian MTN, while the rest are having moderate and low levels of a reputation for Nigerian MTN. Therefore, it is suggested that the level of reputation for those who have moderate and low ones need to be enhanced a little. Hence, the Nigerian MTN organization needs to improve a bit towards managing its crisis to earn more reputation from its subscribers.

The second objective on the hypothesis between crisis response strategy and Nigerian MTN reputation demonstrated a positive relationship between crisis response strategy and the Nigerian MTN reputation. Therefore, it is recommended that Nigerian MTN should embrace a crisis response strategy towards improving its reputation in crises.

The third objective on the hypothesis between crisis history and Nigerian MTN reputation also established that crisis history has a positive relationship with the Nigerian MTN reputation. Hence, the finding of this study commends that the Nigerian MTN organization should consider crisis history towards enhancing its reputation during the crisis management periods.

Finally, the last objective on the hypothesis between crisis type and Nigerian MTN reputation, demonstrated a positive relationship between crisis type and Nigerian MTN reputation. Consequently, it is also recommended that Nigerian MTN should deliberate on crisis type towards earning reputation while facing crisis scenarios.

Research and Theoretical Implications

This project paper has contributed the knowledge on how to sustain organizational reputation during crisis management in Nigerian multinational mobile telecommunications organizations

(MTN) and other organizations that might find themselves in crises. This was because the project paper has established that crisis response strategy, crisis history, and crisis type have an impact on organizational reputation during crisis management. However, the relationship between crisis history and organizational reputation was a moderate and significant one, whereas crisis response strategy and crisis type have low and significant relationships with organizational reputation. Nonetheless, the three independent variables have an impact on organizational reputation. Therefore, it is recommended that other organizations should consider them during crises towards sustaining their reputations.

The findings of this project paper equally have some theoretical implications for expanding the situational crisis communication theory (SSCT). This was done by establishing that the theory's variables comprising crisis response strategy, crisis history, and crisis type have an impact on Nigerian MTN organizational reputation. Thus, applying the SSCT in a study related to organizational reputation's sustenance during crisis management has helped and expanded the theory. Therefore, the theory has served as an indispensable remedy for organizational reputation enhancement during crises. Consequently, it is recommended that subsequent related studies should adopt this theory for studies that are related to organizational reputation sustenance during a crisis. The project study further helped and filled the theoretical gap since it is one of the studies that has been applied in Nigerian MTN organizational reputation enhancement towards resolving situational crisis management.

Methodological Implication

The study equally has methodological implications via applying a quantitative approach in it. This was done via engaging inferential studies to infer the findings of the project from the sample size to the targeted population. It further used descriptive statistics to quantify data and the findings. Moreover, the use of a 245 sample size has made the study adequate for generalizing the findings to other similar organizations. Therefore, conducting the study via a quantitative approach has enhanced the methodological implication of the generalizability of the findings.

Policy/Practical Implications

The findings of this study have some practical implications. One of them is serving as a subsequent reference point for Nigerian MTN organizations and other Nigerian organizations on how the reputation would be best sustained during situational crisis management. Consequently, the findings of this study have established that making references to crisis response strategies, crisis histories, and crisis types would enable organizations to firmly retain their reputations during crisis periods.

It would also globally help other corporate organizations by applying the findings of this study towards enhancing their reputations and sustaining their existing clients during crisis periods. It would further help various organizations' boards of management towards making policies on how to enhance and maintain their reputations with their stakeholders, especially in situational crises times. Moreover, the findings may serve as a guideline to other companies in emerging societies on how to resolve situational crises and sustain their reputations without losing their customers since the findings of this study equally came from Nigeria, as an emerging society.

Limitations/ Recommendation for Future Studies

One of the limitations of this study was that more than half of the respondents are young people whose ages fall between 31-40 years. Therefore, it might not have entirely represented the Nigerian MTN adult subscribers and staff. Therefore, it is suggested that subsequent similar studies should endeavor to fully involve significant numbers of elderly Nigerian MTN subscribers for validating the findings.

The second limitation of this study was that more than half of the respondents are male Nigerian MTN subscribers. Thus, prospective scholars for similar studies should try and engage more female subscribers to avoid having biased outcomes.

Additionally, this study was limited to only four variables of situational crisis communication theory (SSCT). Therefore, they may be other factors of the theory that might influence organizational reputation in crisis periods. Hence, future scholars should consider other variables capable of influencing organizational reputations in similar studies.

Furthermore, since this study is limited to a quantitative study, it is recommended that other prospective scholars should consider conducting qualitative studies or mixed method studies towards exploring how organizational reputations might be enhanced and sustained during situational crisis management.

Finally, since the study was conducted using SPSS for data analysis, future studies should consider using structural equation modeling (SEM) to check results consistencies.

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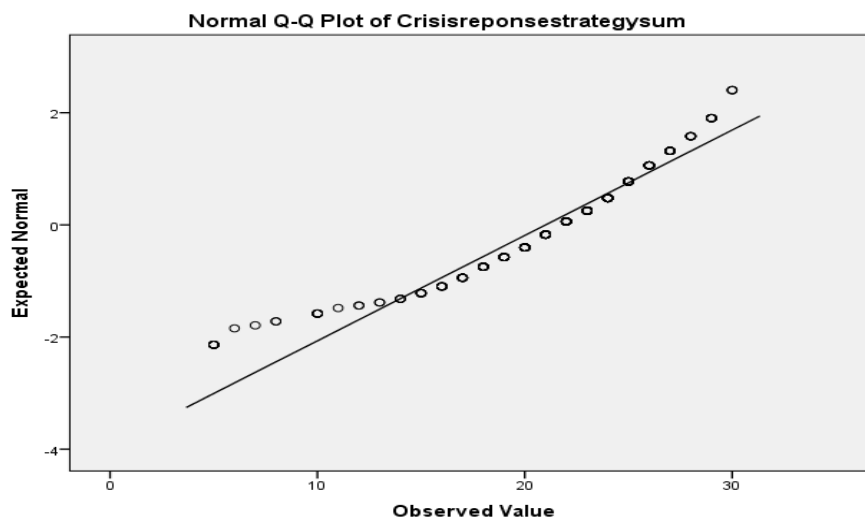
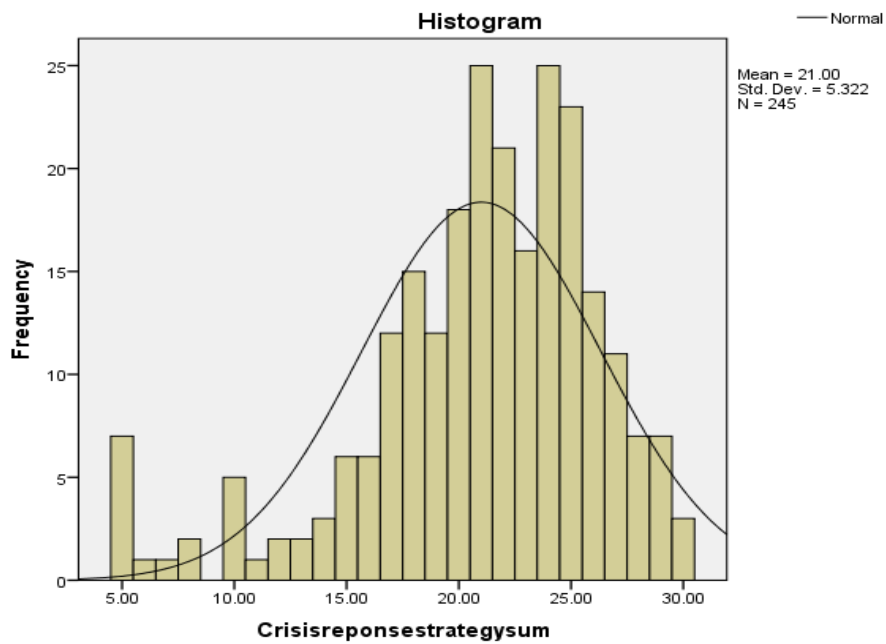
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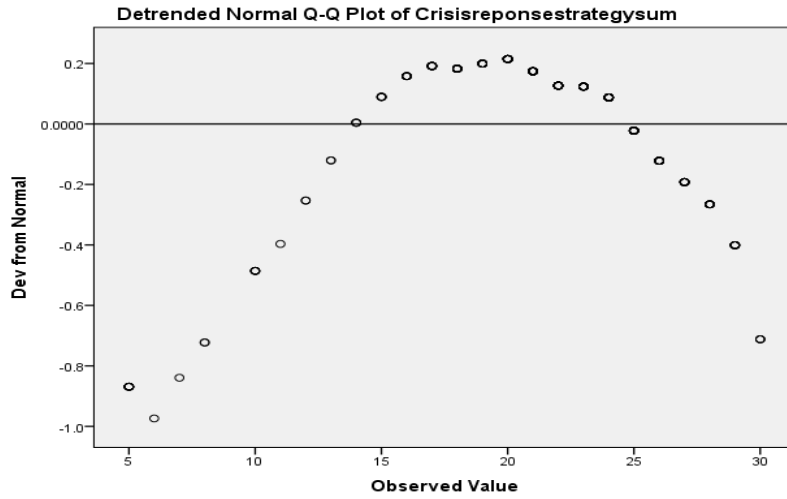
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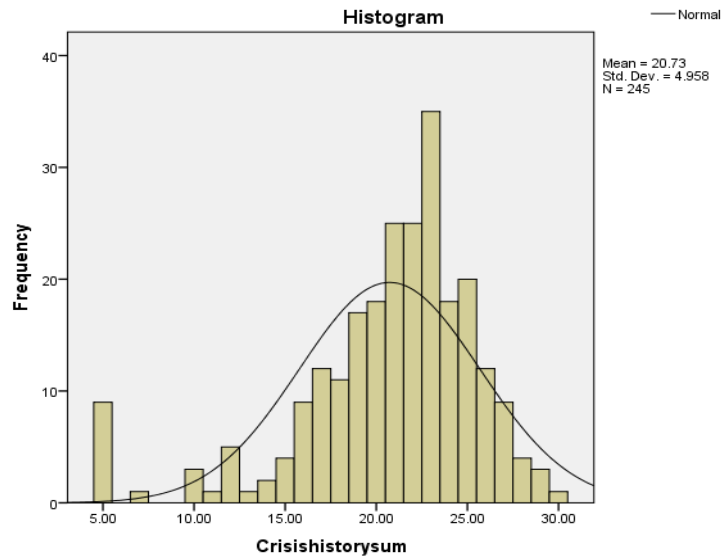
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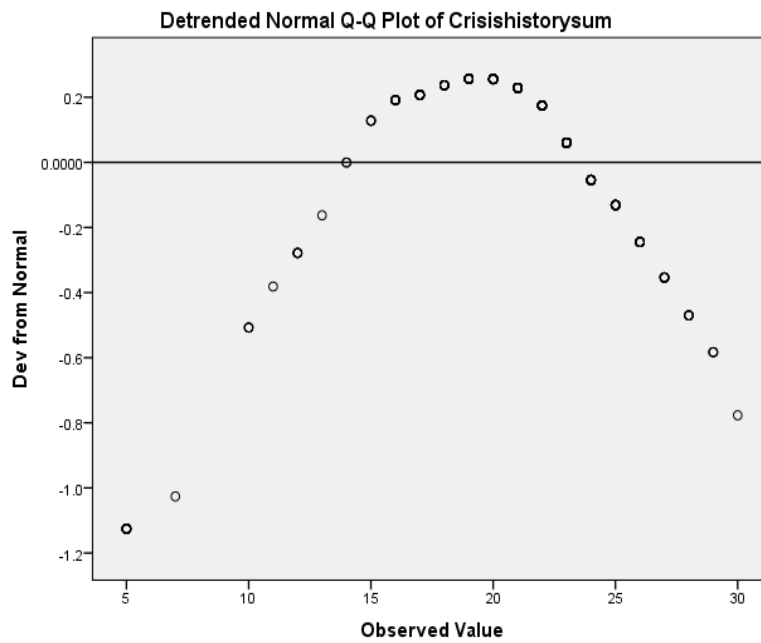
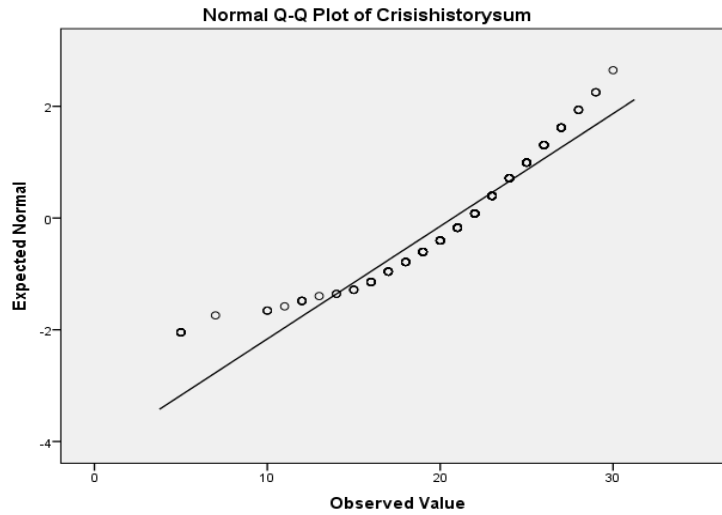
Appendices



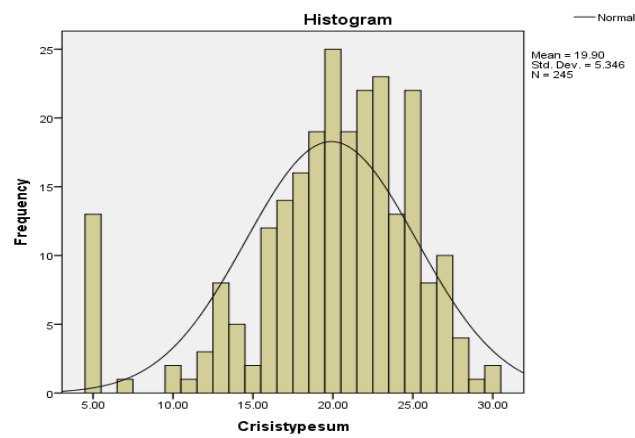


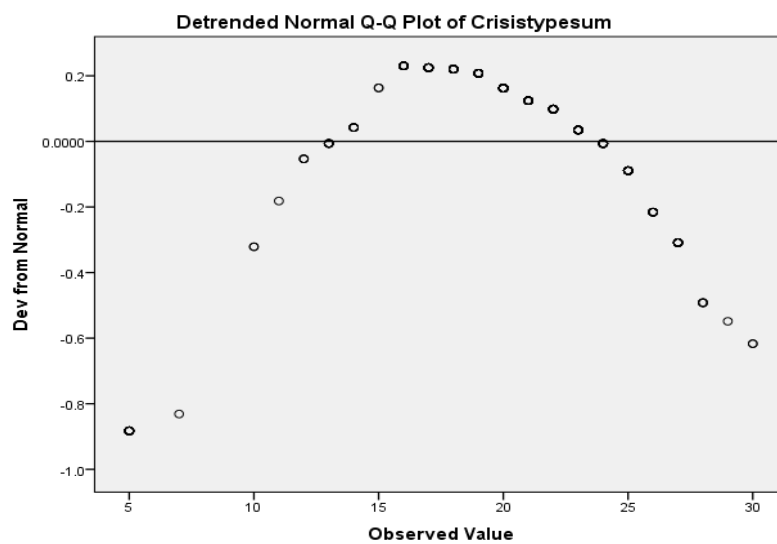
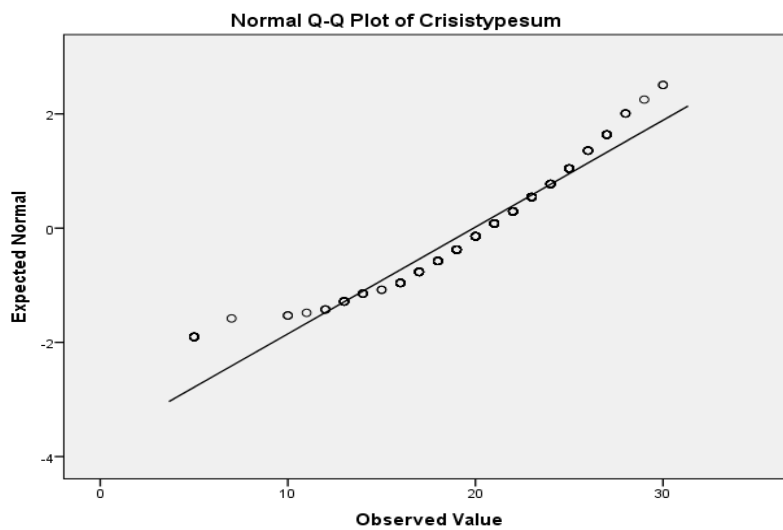
Crisis History Normality Test Outputs





Crisis Type Normality outputs





Reputation Normality Outputs

