

Book Review

**Crisis Communication Case Studies on
COVID-19: Multidimensional Perspectives and
Applications**

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The authors effectively illustrate the multifaceted nature of crisis communication and responses in relation to the COVID-19 pandemic, encompassing various phases and complexities across all societal levels. Recognizing that traditional crisis communication literature may not fully capture the intricacies of such events, this book provides a comprehensive examination of the challenges and practices associated with pandemic-related crisis communication. Organized into four major categories, individual, organizational, community/regional, and national/international, the book utilizes a case study format to explore these complexities. Each chapter presents essential background information, including theoretical concepts and/or contextual information, before detailing a case study and concluding with discussion questions. This structure ensures readers gain a holistic understanding of crisis communication, moving beyond isolated examples to grasp the broader context and relevant background information.

Structure and Content

Chapter 1 offers a roadmap for readers, outlining the core arguments and contributions of each chapter.

Chapters 2-5 explore individual-level responses to the COVID-19 pandemic, exploring how people navigated the challenges of uncertainty, isolation, and loss. Chapter 2 analyzes how individuals sought and evaluated information during the pandemic, drawing on uncertainty management theory to examine the influence of different sources like social media, traditional media, and interpersonal communication. The chapter reveals that social media users often demonstrated lower levels of knowledge and trust compared to those relying on other sources. Chapter 3 examines the #AloneTogether hashtag campaign, illustrating how social media can be a powerful tool for fostering connection and combating social isolation during times of crisis. The chapter analyzes the types of support offered through the campaign and its impact on mitigating the

challenges of loneliness. Chapter 4 explores the impact of the pandemic on working parents, focusing on the challenges of maintaining work-life balance amid the rise of remote work. The chapter investigates the phenomenon of blurred boundaries between professional and personal spheres and highlights the disproportionate burden faced by women. Chapter 5 investigates how individuals and communities utilized social media to grieve and cope with loss in the context of COVID-19 deaths. Grounded in social mourning theory, the chapter showcases diverse expressions of mourning and emphasizes the role of social media in facilitating collective grieving.

Chapters 6-9 focus on organizational crisis communication, examining how entities navigated the complexities of the pandemic. Chapter 6 examines the challenges faced by higher education institutions in communicating with stakeholders during the pandemic. The chapter analyzes university response messaging and critiques the lack of spaces for communal grieving and dialogue. Chapter 7 analyzes how companies in the restaurant and airline industries adapted their communication strategies to address the disruptions. The chapter explores the use of integrated marketing communication, social listening, and digital adaptations. Chapter 8 investigates the “It’s Up to You” vaccination awareness campaign through a critical lens, analyzing how advertising was used to disseminate public health messages and encourage vaccination across various communication channels. Chapter 9 examines fan reactions to the NFL’s COVID-19 protocols, using situational crisis communication theory and image repair theory to analyze social media conversations. The chapter finds that social media served primarily as a channel for fan complaints rather than relationship building.

Chapters 10-14 examines the pandemic’s impact on specific groups, communities, and regional areas. Chapter 10 presents a

meta-analysis of early research on journalism during the COVID-19 pandemic. Drawing upon Bourdieu's Field Theory, it examines how the pandemic affected journalists, audiences, and the role of social media in disseminating news. The authors call for a shift in journalistic practices to better respond to the challenges of crises like the pandemic. Chapter 11 examines rural health practices and communication efforts in Tennessee, focusing on how hospitals used social media to communicate with the public about COVID-19 preventative measures. The chapter analyzes both institutional and individual provider communication patterns, employing the Crisis and Emergency Risk Communication (CERC) model and a grounded theory approach to identify key themes and challenges. Chapter 12 investigates how different generations perceive COVID-19 risks and how their media consumption habits influence these perceptions. The study found high-risk perception across all generations and analyzes how reliance on various media sources affects individuals' perceived susceptibility to the virus, its severity, and the efficacy of preventive measures. Chapter 13 provides an in-depth analysis of how Indigenous communities responded to COVID-19. Focusing on Native female politicians, the chapter examines how these leaders managed community information and addressed crises within the pandemic context. It also explores the ongoing challenges of preserving Indigenous heritage amidst external pressures and the alarming rise of missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls during this period. Chapter 14 examines how US nurses utilized TikTok to cope with burnout and increased job risks during the COVID-19 pandemic. the chapter identifies key themes of individual and community resilience, highlighting the use of storytelling, peer support, public education, and dark humor.

Lastly, chapters 15-19 focus on national and international levels of cases studies including each nation or government approaches. Chapter 15 analyzes US political rhetoric, linking the pandemic to existing political

crises and examining the challenges faced by communicators when public health crises collide. This chapter explores pandemic response through a dynamic crisis communication lens, reviewing existing literature and offering a rhetorical critique. It concludes with practical applications such as avoiding false dichotomies, preventing politicization, and clearly communicating risks to affected publics. Chapter 16 explores how journalists navigated reporting on climate change and natural disasters during the COVID-19 pandemic. By analyzing coverage of various natural disasters in national newspapers across several countries, this chapter investigates how disaster response systems were potentially weakened or strengthened while operating alongside COVID-19 responses. Chapter 17 examines the Black Lives Matter movement through the lens of critical race theory, exploring how the pandemic exposed deep-rooted health inequities and systemic racism in America. It analyzes messages emerging from memes, X (formerly Twitter), and Reddit posts, identifying key themes emphasizing BLM and COVID-19, and discussing their implications for critical race theory. Chapter 18 analyzes how COVID-19 fueled anti-Asian racism through #chinesevirus messages on Facebook. It examines which messages garnered the most engagement and how this hashtag correlated with different emotional reactions, revealing social media's potential for both combating and fueling prejudice. Chapter 19 analyzes COVID-19 responses in the US, Sweden, and Italy to understand how these governments communicated to reduce public uncertainty. Using tweets and press releases from public health organizations in each country, the study compares communication strategies, objectives, styles, and leadership approaches. It offers recommendations for navigating future pandemics.

In the concluding Chapter 20, the editors summarize key contributions and outline future research directions, offering practical implications and a thoughtful closing to the volume.

Contributions and Audience

Current crisis communication literature may fall short of capturing the complexities of the COVID-19 pandemic's profound and enduring global impact, including its associated crisis management and communication practices. This book, however, offers helpful insights into the diverse landscape of crisis communication practices during the pandemic, providing a comprehensive understanding of its challenges and applications. It features extensive case studies spanning various societal layers and perspectives on crisis communication in both traditional and new media, encompassing regional and international contexts and diverse professions. These studies offer practical insights for professionals and students alike, presenting real-life scenarios that facilitate discussions and bridge the gap between theoretical concepts and practical applications. This book offers an important supplementary resource for courses in both crisis and health communication, enriching academic exploration with real-world case studies. While the text proves valuable for both undergraduate and graduate curricula, its utility varies considerably between the two levels. For undergraduate students, the case studies offer practical, introductory insights. However, the book's depth and applicability are particularly noteworthy for graduate-level courses focused on crisis communication. Therefore, I recommend this text as a supplementary reading for undergraduates and a more central, though not necessarily required, resource for graduate students specializing in crisis communication.

Critique and Conclusion

While this book presents a valuable collection of case studies, there's room to enhance consistency and reader experience. Currently, chapters vary significantly in their approach: some employ descriptive quantitative research, even including hypotheses; others offer in-depth analyses of a case without a specified research method; and others

utilize rhetorical, critical, or other forms of analysis. While this variety showcases the diverse applications of case studies, clearer guidelines for chapter structure would create a more cohesive reading experience. For instance, beginning each chapter with clear objectives, a concise abstract or summary, and key highlights or takeaways would help readers quickly grasp the chapter's purpose and main points. Similarly, consistent presentation of theoretical frameworks and key terms across all chapters would aid reader comprehension. Each chapter could also benefit from explicitly stated research questions to enhance clarity and focus. Currently, the inclusion of these elements varies across chapters. Finally, the discussion questions could be further developed. Strengthening the connections between the case studies and existing research and theory would help practitioners and students connect these real-world examples to broader academic understanding, fostering more meaningful reflection.

The COVID-19 pandemic, an unprecedented crisis in both scale and impact, demands a deeper understanding of crisis communication and response strategies tailored to such events. This book answers that call, providing rich case studies for researchers and students to explore the complexities of pandemic-related communication.