CRISIS MANAGEMENT IN SOCIAL MEDIA – MAINTAINING THE ORGANIZATIONAL IMAGE

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ABSTRACT

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Abstract

The field of crisis communication has faced major changes since the expansion of internet and social media platforms. The difficulty of using social media platforms to organizations' own advantage in crisis situations has become a recent topic of discussion amongst professionals. The image of an organization provides them competitive advantage in multiple fields, so it is vital to manage these situations so the image remains positive with stakeholders. This thesis aims to provide insights for organizations on how to utilize social media in their crisis communication. 11 Finnish companies with crisis situations during the year 2016 were identified and the data was retrieved from social media platforms of Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. With Critical Discourse Analysis the utilizing of the platforms and used crisis management strategies were identified and analysed from the stakeholders' point of view. This research first studied the theories that are considered important to the field of crisis management and crisis communication. The research questions were formed according to these theories and considered aspects such as how these organizations utilized these platforms, what crisis management strategies they executed, how the public received these attempts, and if these organizations changed their strategies due to public demand. The analysis was conducted in two ways; first the platform usage was analysed, and second, the used crisis management methods were identified. The analysis revealed that the organizations are still using mostly one-way communication in these platforms, even though they have an excellent chance for real discussion in those. Also the organizations' crisis management strategies did not appear to include differing aspects on how to use each social media channel but rather these were treated as one in most of the cases. Practical information on how to execute crisis communication in selected social media platforms to best maintain organizations image were provided as well as suggestions for management on how to proceed with educating themselves about the possibilities and threats of social media in crisis communication.

Keywords	
Crisis management, crisis communication, organizational image, social media, CDA	
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1   INTRODUCTION

Crisis situations are sudden and unexpected events that hold with them a reputational threat for organizations. Communication has changed remarkably since the rapid growth of internet. Internet has brought a completely new way of communicating especially after the expansion and growing popularity of social media platforms. These platforms offer for their users a chance to be more interactive, publish and consume content more freely (Aula, 2010). Whenever an organization is faced with a crisis, it is facing a major threat towards its operations. During a crisis situation an organization needs to find out the best way to communicate with the public to manage the situation. Nowadays this includes operating in social media platforms, since resent studies have found out that in Finland average person has 2, 3 social medias in current use (Werliin & Kokholm, 2016). Social media comes with possibilities and threats (Branicki & Agyei, 2015). It has given a new tool for fast communication and a possibility for real discussion with the stakeholders. On the other hand it has given crises a new platform to spread, be more unpredictable and the ability to turn on the organization real quickly. (e.g. Austin, Fisher, Liu & Jin, 2012; González-Herrero & Smith, 2008; Ki & Nekmat, 2014) In times of crisis, choosing the right way to communicate in social media in order to maintain organizational image, is vitally important for them. Especially the speed of how things evolve in social media still amazes professionals at times and this brings challenges on how to execute effective crisis management. In social media these crises have also a possibility to grow out of proportion or totally change direction depending on how they are handled. Internet is known for its speed and the world of social media is also constantly evolving in very rapid pace.

From the 1990's the field of crisis management and communication has evolved remarkably, and case studies have been trying to find the best practises for crisis management before, during, and after crises. In recent years there have been a growing number of scholars interested of integrating these practises to the world of social media but still the consensus seems to be that the search for the best practises continues (Austin et al., 2012). There are a lot of crisis communication theories and case studies related on maintaining the image of an organization, which offer a good starting point for anything related to crisis communication. Current crisis communication theories lack somewhat the context of social media, which leaves too much room for interpretation and can lead to wrong kind of communication in this fairly new arena. If things are incorrectly managed, it can be extremely harmful for the image of an organization. Image of an organization, from the economic perspective, is in straight association to their business endeavours, so it can be argued to be very important intangible asset to an organization that needs to be protected (Aula, 2009; Coombs, 1995). The studies covering simply crisis communication and management without the context of social media are considered as work-in-process (Bundy, Pfarrer, Short & Coombs,

2016). It should also be noted that the case studies, which seek practical approaches to these theories, are from many years ago. For example the studies from 10 years ago might not be considered outdated just yet, but when they are referencing another studies also from 10 years ago, you are left with 20 year old data. This means in the context of internet, that we are talking about the importance of chat rooms as communicating tools for organizations (González-Herrero & Smith, 2008). In the social media not just the constant updates happen constantly and new features appear, but also people's own behaviour adapts and changes very fast. Finland is considered one of the leading tech countries in the world, so the need to find best practises for crisis communication in social media environment suitable for this culture, is important

This study aims to give guidelines on how to handle crisis communication in social media environment. It will take a look at how these organization have executed their crisis communication plans during a crisis in different social media platforms and how the public receive their attempts. Social media behaviour is very important and current topic in recent academic research. There can still be seen a shortage on academic discussion in Finnish or Nordic context that would help the organizations modify their social media communication especially in times of crises. One important question that for example Ki & Nekmat (2014) have pointed out is that of how much social media is used in crisis communication. In 2014 only 5, 6 % of the Fortune 500 organizations even used social media, such as Facebook, for their crisis communication. These organizations are considered as the leaders in using the newest communication technologies so the number is relatively small. On the other hand, recent findings indicate that organizations do acknowledge the importance of social media in crisis communication and are motivated to use it, but the challenges in executing the use of it are there (Haataja, Laajalahti, & Hyvärinen, 2016). A lot of opinions flows for example also of the debate which is more reliable source in the end nowadays: social media or traditional media? Some have found that the more credible from the audience's point of view would be social media, some are on the side of traditional media (Austin et al., 2012). The assumption in this thesis is to consider social media as an important source of information due to the findings on how influential it is seen nowadays amongst the citizens and organizations (Shklovski, Sutton, & Palen, 2008).

This study examines 11 Finnish organization which have had a crisis situation during the year 2016. By using critical discourse analysis it studies the methods these organizations have used in their crisis communication in social media and then compares these with the theories and best practises found from literature. Aim of this thesis is to examine these organization's social media usage in crisis communication, investigate its role in maintaining organization's image and reputation and build guidelines for organizations for managing crisis situations in social media. The crisis situations that are included in the study are by the Situational Crisis Communication Theory (SCCT) defined to belong mostly either in accidental cluster (there is some responsibility from the organization also, but these can still be defined as accidents) and the preventable cluster which possess the most reputational threat (these are the situations where stakeholders

assume that these kind of events could be preventable thus should not happen). The accidental cluster holds crises such as claims made to the organization by the stakeholders, technical error accidents or product harms. The preventable cluster holds the most severe reputational threats and these include human error accidents or product harms, and organizational misdeeds with or without accidents or management misconduct. For the purposes of this thesis these crises are limited to include mostly the ones considered to be in the preventable cluster, since the data set is considered to be richer that way. It does, however, exclude the ones described as "total catastrophes" such as major natural disasters or acts of terrorism. (Coombs, 2007)

This thesis is guided by the research question presented below:

I. *How are organizations executing their crisis management in selected social media platforms?*
II. *What kind of image control strategies organizations executed during crises'?*
III. *How effective these selected strategies were from the public point of view?*
IV. *Did the organizations change their crisis management strategies according how the audience responded to them?*

During the research it was found out that unfortunately companies are using these different social media platforms as they are one and the same. This is a mishap from organizations since studies show that they should have different strategical approaches for each platform (Eriksson & Olsson, 2016). Five different strategies were found from the data that these organizations mainly used when they were confronted a different types of crisis situations. Using Critical Discourse Analysis method the underlying reasons to use these were identified and analysed to discover which methods were working and which not from the public point of view. Often these were used as a mix depending on the origin of the crisis. The discussion focuses more deeply on the underlying reasons on which crisis management methods worked in social media and which did not.

This thesis is divided in six chapters. The first chapter introduces the topic and points out the relevance of this thesis. The second chapter will go through the most relevant theories from the field of crisis management, crisis communication and image control. It will also introduce attributes of social media and how it engages with these above mentioned topics. Third chapter will introduce the research methodology and data collection process. In the fourth chapter the findings from this collected data will be discussed. This will continue to deeper consideration of the topic in the fifth chapter and provide practical implications that were found from the data. The sixth, and final chapter, will offer some concluding statements, summarize practical implications, define limitations for this study and offer some future research possibilities in the area. The key concepts most used in this thesis are crisis management, crisis communication, organizational image and social media, these will be defined below.

Crisis management contains the crisis situation that are defined as sudden and unexpected events. Efforts made to prevent or correct these events according to the management literature, are considered effective when with corrective actions from the organization it shall retain its operations, and the key stakeholders are content with the situation (Pearson & Clair, 1998). One management method is correct *crisis communication* during a crisis and examples of these methods will be presented in the theory part in more detail.

Organizational image is part of the reputation of the organization, and is something that every organization holds of themselves from public. The image has been built over time using monetary and social capital and often plays a crucial role in an organizations business endeavours including, but not limited to, marketing or sales activities. (Aula, 2010) Organization image construction process is a social one, where the organization responds to stakeholders and adapts itself to a changing environment (Gilpin, 2010). Organization reputation does not belong to themselves, rather it's defined by stakeholders on who the organizations depend on to survive (McCorkindale & DiStaso, 2013, p. 498) such as customers, suppliers, investors or in the case of social media, opinion leaders. Image is a combination of *intended image* where the organization tries to affect to their stakeholders idea of the organization and *construed image* where the stakeholders hold the idea on how others see the organization (Gilpin, 2010).

Social media or social networking platforms are here defined as *"web-based services that allow individuals to (1) construct a public or semi-public profile within a bounded system, (2) articulate a list of other users with whom they share a connection, and (3) view and traverse their list of connections and those made by others within the system"* (Boyd & Ellison, 2007). They consists of the ideology that people can freely join in the conversation, publish, process and consume information rather loosely with other users (Aula, 2010). By social media in this thesis is meant platforms of Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. These platforms were chosen to represent social media for this research due to their popularity and to highlight how these differ from one another and should be utilized in a crisis communication. All of these platforms enable the organization and the public to create an account and communicate with stakeholders publicly.

2   THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This chapter will go through the relevant theories and definitions of organizational crisis management and crisis communication, organizational image, and social media. The last chapter will implement the social media aspects to these topics. The first part introduces the most relevant crisis management theories in the field. Second part introduces the topic of organizational image and how it is tighten together with the subject of crisis management. It also highlights further the importance of crisis management for organizations. The third part goes into the characteristics of social media and its possibilities and threats for crisis management professionals. It also provides some practical examples of the usage of social media retrieved from the previous case studies.

2.1   Organizational crisis management

Crises from the organizational point of view always possess a threat to its survival (Clair & Pearson, 1998). Crises are defined as sudden and unexpected events that will have a negative impact or a clear threat to organizations operations, image and core values (Olsson, 2014; Coombs, 2007). Even though they are rather rare, when these occur, in the worst case scenario these can lead to a major disturbances in operations. For example they can have an effect on how the public receives the organizations messages and bring financial threats. This means that whenever the organization faces a crisis situation the threats are both direct and indirect of nature, meaning that a crisis can directly have an effect on day-to-day operations (e.g. product malfunction = loss of income) or have an effect on their image (e.g. because of bad reputation the customer chooses another product to purchase). (Aula, 2010.; Clair & Pearson, 1998)

Crisis management is literally managing the ongoing situation. Crisis situations can be divided into three stages which are pre-crisis stage, crisis and the post-crisis stage. For any crisis management the first and most important step is to save lives. In this thesis the focus is not in these kinds of events, so for this purpose, let's take that the first thing to do is damage control and prevent further incidents. Then the other acts will follow that include the aspects of controlling the organizational image during a crisis and post-crisis image recovery actions. Key to any crisis management is to prepare, identify, track and manage the potential crisis situations and manage their path. (Civelek, 2016; Gonzaález - Herrero & Smith, 2008; Haataja et al., 2016)

2.1.1 Current theories

The field of crisis management and communication has received a lot of attention from scholars and there can be found some consensus in the methods concerning

the ways to handle these crisis situations. The differences are there of course, depending on the point of view. The crisis management process consists of multiple elements and the studies include discussions for example what methods should be used in crisis communication (e.g. Coombs, 2007; Seeger, 2006), what should be done when the context includes social media (Jin, Liu & Austin, 2014; Liu, Fraustino & Jin, 2015), what mediums work the best (Schultz, 2011), and how to prepare to a crisis (McConnel & Drennan, 2006). This is not at all a negative thing since all of these theories are able to provide more insight from different perspectives to crisis management also in social media environment. The theories are from the field of crisis management and link the image control to it, since crisis is always a threat to the image of the organization. (Bundy et al., 2016)

Theories of crisis management are multiple and few of them also include the point of view of social media. Attribution theory is very strongly described as influencer for all of the current crisis management theories, which has since its creation been evolved also to a crisis management theory. It has then led to theories such as Situational Crisis Communication Theory (SCCT) (Coombs, 1995; Coombs, 2007). This has been then expanded to include the aspect of social media in Social Mediated Crisis Communication Theory (SMCC). Most of the theories aim to find the best practises to communicate about crises and to the list of well cited crisis communication theories can be also added Networked Crisis Communication theory (NCC) (Utz, Schultz & Glocka, 2013). Both Attribution theory and Image repair theory (Benoit, 1997) are lingering in the background of all of these. All of these five theories will be discussed next.

Attribution theory states that people search for causes especially of unexpected and negative events and will react emotionally to them. People will judge the situation depending on locus, stability and controllability and these attributes will help them to determine the severity of the crisis. If the crisis is seen as internal, stable, and controllable it is seen as the organizations "fault", but if the crisis is seen as external, uncontrollable, and unstable, it might not be seen as the organizations fault rather that they would be the victim instead. (Coombs, 1995) Using the Attribution theory as a guideline Coombs (1995) created a crisis type matrix which determines if the crisis is internal or external and intentional or unintentional for the organization. Internal crises are something that comes from within the organization, and intentional would be a transgression of some kind, and unintentional would be an accident inside the organization. External crises would be an act of terrorism (or perhaps vandalism for our purposes) that is considered as intentional and a faux pas that is seen as unintentional.

Image repair theory was developed by Benoit (1997) and works as a basis for other theories in the field of crisis management and image restoration. It has been suggested that it doesn't really cope with social media context and should be developed further. This is due to the fact that it was created before the use of social media and even internet had yet expanded and with it came more aspects that create image management issues not discussed in the theory. (Liu & Fraustino, 2014) The theory underlines the basic strategies for answering to a crisis which are denial, evasion of responsibility, reducing offensiveness of the event, corrective action, and mortification.

Perhaps most cited crisis management theory in context of reputation management is Situational Crisis Communication Theory (SCCT). The theory is itself a good starting point, since it is based very strongly on Attribution theory. The main idea of SCCT is that when a crisis manager understands the situation of a crisis they can then choose the best strategy for crisis management. Would this theory be developed from here on using the crisis situation model of SCCT in the context of social media it might become useful to this environment. In SCCT there are three crisis clusters. The crisis at hand should be analysed to fit in one these: victim cluster (weak attributions of crisis responsibility and mild reputational threat); accidental cluster (minimal attributions of crisis responsibility and moderate reputational threat) and preventable cluster (strong attributions of crisis responsibility and severe reputational threat). The offered crisis response strategies include primary or deny crisis response strategies and secondary or bolstering crisis response strategies. It is said that it is impossible to state exactly which crisis management strategy should be used in which crisis but it does make note that for example denial, excuse, justification and apology are the primary response strategies. (Coombs, 2007.; Coombs, 1995; Coombs & Holladay, 1996) This theory has been reviewed and moderated many times since its creation and different aspects of it has been considered. For example the theory argues that the crisis history is vital when determining the situation of the crisis. This will effect on what crisis communication strategies should be used in given situation. If the crisis would be in the accident or victim cluster of SCCT the managers should be aware that if the organization has a history of crises these will increase threat to the reputation. (Coombs, 2004)

SCCT has been supported by previous studies as usable crisis management method but for example Ki & Nekmat (2014) used the theory to investigate its adaptability on social media or how Fortune 500 organizations used it in their Facebook communication in a crisis. Surprisingly they found out in their research that perhaps not adapting the more traditional crisis management theories to social media environment was the best scenario after all. In SCCT it is suggested that in low and mid-level crisis situations organization should apply full responsibility for their actions in order to manage the crisis and organizations image, but the study showed that when accepting more responsibility it got more negative feedback from the audience. (Ki & Nekmat, 2014) The Image repair theory offers a great deal similar crisis response strategies than does the SCCT model but once again both the theory and the model offer more of a one-way street approach to the dealing of a crisis situation which conflicts with the ideology of social media that is thought as an interactive platform where all parties are included in the conversation (Aula, 2009; Aula, 2010).

Theories that include social media are networked crisis communication model (NCC) and social mediated crisis communication model (SMCC). NCC model discuss about the fact that a message distributed via traditional media gets different kind of attention from the public that if distributed via social media, so therefore the medium used matters. Other theories in crisis management tends to neglect the fact that the medium used matters on how the crisis response strategy should be. Trends in the media usage are changing and studies have shown

that in recent year's news shared via Twitter receive more positive outcomes for the organization. (Utz, Schultz & Glocka, 2013)

Where NCC makes contribution that organizations should take note of what kind of medium they use for their crisis communication message the SMCC model is drawn from Situational Crisis Communication Theory (SCCT). SMCC is used to describe one organizations' crisis situation and it defines the crisis type (victim, accident or intentional), origin, organization infrastructure (deciding on how the message of crisis be delivered through, centralized message or spread to other communicators as well), message strategy, and form as the basis point. The people who spread the message can be divided into three groups: social media followers, social media inactive and influential social media creators. In this model the message strategy is important. It indicates that through figuring out the crisis type and then how much the organization has responsibility over it, organization is able to find the best solutions for crisis communication or picking the right strategic approach to it. Crisis response strategies in SMCC model are ranging from defensive strategies (attacking the accuser, denial and excuse) to accommodative strategies (e.g. corrective action and apology) which emphasize image repair. When testing these strategies was found that when the crisis was internal of origin, public was more likely to accept accommodative crisis response strategies. When on the other hand the crisis originated outside of the organization the defensive response strategies were received well. (Jin et al., 2014)

SMCC model also has been investigated further since and one point of view comes from how the people actually see the social media usage in crisis situations. Austin et al. (2012) noted that people use traditional media to find out information and social media for entertainment and relationship building purposes. This might cause the situation that people are aware of the overall crisis situation, but rather spend their time "learning" about the crisis in social media sites that do not represent the actual organization. This happened to PB when their Gulf oil spill crisis was at its high point. At that time their official Twitter account @PB_America had 18,000 followers whereas the satirical phoney account @PBGlobalPR had more than 190,000 followers. (Austin et al., 2012)

In this thesis the word organization is used to mean both public and private ones and those non-profit organizations that deal with crisis situations in an online environment. The theories presented in this thesis are not really stated that they are applicable only for public- or private organizations, thus they are seen as good starting points when researching both. Some scholars have taken the point of view of separating public and private organizations and their crisis management approaches. This is understandable seeing that these companies have different resources to prepare themselves to a crisis situation and also how active altogether they are in these social media platforms. Amongst these scholars, Olsson (2014) and Eriksson et al. (2016) have also noted that often public organizations deal with larger scale crisis situations where they need to for example provide additional information to the public about the crisis situation such as natural disasters or in case of terrorism. Yet also public organizations have a need to find out best practises for communicating in a social media environment to preserve their legitimacy in the eyes of key stakeholders (Gilpin, 2010).

TABLE 1 Summary of the relevant theories

Image repair Theory: Introduces the basic crisis response methods which are denial, evasion of responsibility, reducing offensiveness of the event, corrective action or mortification, basis for rest of the theories introduced		
Attribution Theory: People will judge the situation depending on locus, stability and controllability. These attributes will help them to determine the severity of the crisis. If the crisis is seen as internal, stable and controllable it is seen as the organizations "fault", but if the crisis would be external, uncontrollable and unstable it might not be seen as the organizations fault, rather that they would be the victim instead.		
Situational Crisis Communication Theory (SCCT): A proper crisis management strategy should be chosen by first defining the situation of the crisis. The crisis at hand should be analysed to fit in one of the three clusters: victim cluster, accidental cluster and preventable cluster The offered crisis response strategies include primary or deny crisis response strategies and secondary or bolstering crisis response strategies.	**Social Mediated Crisis Communication Theory (SMCC):** SMCC defines the crisis type (victim, accident or intentional), origin, organization infrastructure, message strategy, and form. The people who spread the message can be divided into three groups: social media followers, social media inactive and influential social media creators. Crisis response strategies are ranging from defensive strategies (attacking the accuser, denial and excuse) to accommodative strategies (e.g. corrective action and apology) which emphasize image repair.	**Networked Crisis Communication Theory (NCC):** NCC focuses on the suggestion that a message distributed via traditional media gets different kind of attention from the public that if distributed via social media so therefore the medium used matters.

2.2 Organizational image

Organizational image is built when organizations interact with their stakeholders and these draw a certain idea of it. By stakeholders in here is meant amongst others, the community members, employees, customers, suppliers, and stockholders. The image has been built over time using monetary and social capital and often plays a crucial role in an organizations business endeavours including, but not limited for, marketing or sales activities. From organizations point of view the discussion of image is often associated with the discussions of competitive advantage and corporate responsibility, since it has been noted that a positive image has a positive effect on these. (Aula, 2009; Coombs, 2007)

Organization image construction process is a social one where the organization responds to stakeholders and adapts itself to a changing environment (Gilpin, 2010). Organization reputation does not belong to themselves, rather it's defined by stakeholders on who the organizations depend on to survive (McCorkindale & DiStaso, 2013 p. 498) such as customers, suppliers, investors or in the case of social media, opinion leaders. Often scholars mix the meaning of

reputation and image when reputation is really the umbrella term for image. Reputation can be described as how the organization is represented by third parties and then the stakeholders draw the idea what is the image of the organization. The organization then is indirectly involved in forming of their reputation that is in the end largely just stakeholders' evaluation on how the organization treats their stakeholders. (Coombs, 2007) Image is a combination of *intended image* where the organization tries to affect to their stakeholders idea of the organization and *construed image* where the stakeholders form their opinion depending on what they think on how others see the organization (Gilpin, 2010). It is an important aspect that helps the organization hold legitimacy in their actions towards stakeholders.

A good image can do a lot when the crises happen. It has a possibility to protect organizations from further damage. This today includes a communicational aspect and a lot of the communication goes on in the social media. If the organization has managed to create prior favourable reputation and image to themselves, they might receive the benefit of the doubt from the audience. Whenever there is a crisis situation this image is still on the line and according to researchers it is not often simply because of the crisis situation but actually because of the poor crisis management. (Aula, 2009; Coombs & Holladay, 2006) Image is in direct association with crisis management and holds within from the economics and finance point of view a risk, that it is a measurable uncertainty and can effectively show whether the actions taken have come to a positive end (Scott & Walsham, 2005).

2.3   Social media

Social media or social networking platforms are defined as "--*web-based services that allow individuals to (1) construct a public or semi-public profile within a bounded system, (2) articulate a list of other users with whom they share a connection, and (3) view and traverse their list of connections and those made by others within the system.*" (Boyd & Ellison, 2007). This definition can be translated also to mean that these platforms have the feature of interactivity amongst everyone in it. The users of these platforms are the ones who create and publish content and follow and comment on each other's actions. From the organization's point of view these are the platforms that have created them an opportunity to open discussion with the stakeholders and also collect data straight from them. Internet and social media are today considered as the most important communication channel. Their influence has made the organizations force to consider their point of views on how to utilize it, since it includes often majority of their customer base that require information in a fast pace, and has a tremendous effect on consumer behaviour altogether. (Aula, 2009; Civelek, 2016; Haataja et al., 2016; Shklovski et al., 2008)

Finland is considered as a technological leader, yet the studies including managing crisis in an online media or social media is very much lacking to fit to its cultural context and social media behaviour. Statistic of Finland gather data

and create statistics of for example use of information and communications technology by Finnish people. This research found that almost everyone under 55 used the internet in 2016. All in all the study showed that from the ages of 16 to 89 up to 88 % of them used the internet. What more the users of social media grew in every age group except for those of 16 to 24. In 2016, 56 percent of people between ages 16 to 89 had followed social media in the past three months (Official Statistics of Finland, (OSF), 2016)

Social media has offered organizations a new channel and tool for building their image and improving it. Social media allows organizations to have one-to-one, one-to-many, and many-to-many conversations with people. Sometimes a single organization can also personalise their appearance in it for example by communicating with a certain tone. Social media has brought multiple opportunities but also challenges for organizations in their image construction process. A great example and learning point for organizations is the crisis management in social media environment.

Scholars of crisis management theories have a challenge to see eye-to-eye on how social media environment behaves. Communication has changed a lot since the expansion of internet and interactive social media. It has already affected remarkably on how all the people communicate with each other so the effect can therefore be seen already at organizational level (Veil, Buehner & Palenchar, 2011). The organizations used to offer information about their operations to the community via traditional media, where they were the only ones providing information, but the ability to share knowledge and discussion has come to say since the expansion of social media (Branicki & Agyei, 2015).

Studies in the field of public relations, closest field for crisis management in organizations, notes that there is a need to find out the best practises for organization's crisis preparation and response in the world of social media in order for these organization to maintain their reputation and image (Liu & Fraustino, 2014). This need for clear guidelines for professionals is increasingly important, since studies in recent years have found out that professionals are still trying to use the one-way communication with stakeholders thus damaging their image and not being effective in their attempts to affect the stakeholder's perceptions of the organization (Macnamara, 2012; Veil et al., 2011). These professionals were also overlooking the fact that they should have education on how to use social media as a communication tool.

2.3.1 Social media platforms

Social media can be used to describe almost any platform found from the internet that is user driven, which many of them are. For example blogs as in "web-diaries" are not considered in here as social media, even though they are often described as one. Social media can be used to describe multiple different digital tools, platforms and applications (Haataja et al., 2016). They are defined with characteristics of low publishing thresholds and fast and broad sharing of information, feedback, and links between users. It also enables dialogue and networking between participants. (Aula, 2010)

The load of information in it is so wide that today these platforms filter the information that the users get. These include various types of deep algorithms that these platforms have in themselves, but also has created a way for people easily search the content they find relevant. This is made possible by enabling the hashtag-function to mark your posts or images to be in certain category. (Yates & Paquette, 2010)

This study will look at the most popular social media platforms used currently and how organizations behave in a crisis situations in those. It shall take a closer look of social media networking platform Facebook and image sharing, discussion platform Instagram and microblogging website Twitter. These are considered amongst the popular social media platforms, each of them reaching varieties of different target groups. Especially since this study takes a closer look on Finnish organizations the study about Nordic countries most popular social media platforms indicate that the topic is very now. Facebook is ruling social media platform in the Nordics and Instagram amongst the popular ones in this area also especially amongst the younger people. Even though Twitter is considered somewhat stagnated it still makes the list and is used by many. (Werliin & Kokholm, 2016) Gilpin (2010) noted that even in one platform an organization might have several stakeholder groups each demanding different kind of communication. By dividing these social media platforms as separate, still public relations practitioners should keep in mind this fact that in one platform there might be several groups waiting for an answer and pleasing them all with just one kind of communication method most likely is not possible.

All of these platforms have common attributes to social media as in commenting, sharing content and liking or reacting to the posts (Branicki & Agyei, 2015). This study eliminates some social media platforms such as video sharing platform YouTube, networking platform Google+, and quick message application Snapchat, even though they might be in the popularity ranking higher than some of the above mentioned, yet their effects as crisis stimulators is considered questionable. Some of the discussions found and analysed for this thesis did contained a link for example to a YouTube video but the discussion was held in the studied platform making YouTube video not the primary data. For example when looking the media posts from these sources, rarely anything makes the news, when it's not very uncommon that it quotes a post from Facebook or Instagram for example. In this thesis, "traditional media" is used to describe the newspapers found also only from the internet that have the tendency to share social media posts as news.

During crises it has been noted that people use social media to find out more about the ongoing situation (Austin et al., 2012). According to Eriksson et al. (2016) who conducted a study about the usage of Twitter and Facebook in crisis situations, Twitter was found more as a preventing tool for crisis' and users used it to find out information about the crisis by using hashtags (search words) and Facebook more of a conversation place for debates and discussing about the crisis at hand. What is surprising most of the scholars seem to have two approaches 1) looking social media as a common phenomenon or 2) looking more closely either Facebook or Twitter as platforms, and not paying more attention to

other social medias. Other social medias sometimes though mentioned briefly in these studies are YouTube or blogs.

Social media platforms such as Facebook can work either in favour or against organization during crisis' depending how they shall manage the flow of information and their own communication efforts (Ki & Nekmat, 2014). When comparing social media channels, Twitter was found as the number one social media channels in crises for "elites" as in seen more quicker way to produce information than traditional press releases. Facebook as a channel is found to reach the more "general public". For general public organizations use Facebook as a channel and Twitter when they wish to receive the attention of the media. (Eriksson et al., 2016) One could argue that the results from this study are most comparable with the situation in Finland because the study was conducted in the neighbouring country, Sweden. At least the Nordic context of social media usage can be drawn from this.

Social media is used in major disasters as an information source to find out what is happening right now. During Queensland floods on 2010/2011 in Australia, the Queensland Police had 1.3 million followers on Twitter during the most intense time of the crisis (Olsson, 2014). Through this they were able to follow the discussion going around the topic and provide answers to frequently asked questions. Development of social media has been a major improvement during crises when assuming that the internet is still up and running, it can reduce uncertainty when people in your network share and link information to each other.

A hashtag is a subject identification method in social media. During a crisis an organization might create a hashtag for the subject in order to be able to follow the conversation more closely. These kind of examples from crises as local as the Queensland floods that lead to creation of hashtag #qldfloods. In order to keep the rumours under control about the ongoing situation, numerous tweets were released from the police under a hashtag of #Mythbuster during the crisis (Olsson, 2014). During large crises these kind of hashtags can be found to be used all over world which happened during the terrorism acts in Paris and Berlin in 2016 that both got the hashtags of #PrayForParis and #PrayForBerlin.

In this study the main focus lies on the platforms of Facebook, Instagram and Twitter. Also the other internet sources or more traditional sources for information such as newspapers and blogs will be discussed on how they interact with these social media platforms and contribute to the communication process. In Table 2 the main characteristics are presented for each of these platforms. These will be discussed further with the analysis part of this thesis.

Social media platforms only from the point of view on how to use them, who are their target groups, and the possibilities they each offer, is something to consider for every organization. Their features are one thing but how things evolve in these platforms and what kind of other possibilities and also threats these have are presented next.

TABLE 2 Attributes of different media platforms

Differences in platforms	Other internet sources	Facebook	Instagram	Twitter
Text type	News, articles, Blog texts, Opinion columns, Websites notifications	Non-limited texts, videos, other links to websites	Photos with captions	140 character messages, can include links to news, websites, videos etc.
Message direction	Organization → Public	Organization→Public→Organization and public	Organization→Public→Organization and public	Organization→Public→Organization and public
Speed of the platform	Slow	Medium	Fast	Fast
How the discussion goes on	One-to-many	Many-to-many, one to many or one-to-one	Many-to-many	Many-to-many
Who is the receiver	Can be anyone with internet access	Followers of the organizations websites and their friends in the platforms	Followers of the organization	Followers of the trending topics

2.3.2 Opportunities and threats

Effective and innovative usage of social media in crisis situations was demonstrated by University in New Zeeland that engaged social media in their crisis management during and after the earthquake. The University had noticed that students were using social media on a daily basis, and when the earthquake hit in September 2010, they created within few hours a plan to cope with the crisis in social media also with the management team. They decided that university's own website was the official information forum about the earthquake, but also Facebook was used as a communication channel and they created earthquake recovery site there the next day. The University also took YouTube and Twitter to their crisis management strategy. In that time there was no clear crisis management policy for social media from the university, and the management team was forced to make up one on the go. Even though now the notion is that not all social media platforms should be treated the same, in this case the information was decided to be on the university own website and from there it was linked to different social media sites. It has been thought that the utilization of the social media

in the crisis management helped people to recover from the crisis when they had access to real time information from the preferred source and also the official Facebook page had also messages of wishing well from others and humorous posts that helped with the shock that had come from the crisis. In this case the social media showed its best features how it can be of help in times of crisis. (Dabner, 2012)

The power of social media could be proved with the restaurant chain Domino's crisis in United States in 2009, when two of its employees posted a prank video of them abusing food products in a work costumes and it went viral in YouTube. The crucial thing for Domino's was time. They immediately after learning about the video put together a response team within the organization and made a game plan. First step was to identify the people behind the video and the store it was filmed in. It soon became clear to Domino's managers that there were no orders at the time and that these employees were just bored. Nevertheless Domino's kept communicating actively with the key stakeholders and took immediate actions and called the local police and health department to sort things out. At some level this was where the Domino's failed a little in their communicating efforts. At the time they weren't really yet presented in social media and were forced to enter it during the crisis. A lot of chatter in the social media was about wondering why isn't Domino's doing something to this video that has spread? Domino's did put up a YouTube video where the president of Domino's Patrick Doyle responses to the crisis, but already two days after the crisis. A lot of discussion by that time was going on in Twitter about it and ultimately this response was a little late. The thing was that Domino's didn't at first think about communicating about the crisis to a wider audience. Tim McIntyre, Vice President of Communications, in the interview about this crisis mentioned few critical things that are important to know during a crisis, first was that after the crisis if you should act normal and things are bound to return to normal much faster, and the second advice from him was not to panic. When it comes to social media the medium matters. During this Domino's crisis they did communicate to major mediums about it, but if the person was aware of the crisis but followed the wrong medium they would have thought that Domino's is just standing by and not taking any action about the crisis. Thankfully Domino's had a social media charts that follow the ongoing chatter in it about them. (Jacques, 2009)

Above mentioned examples of using social media points out the possibilities as well as possible threats with social media. Due to the speed of social media, the crisis can expand rapidly and in worst case scenario harm the organizations' reputation in a matter of minutes, if somehow they fail to communicate properly in it. An organization can use remarkable amount of money to build their reputation but with poor management the same reputation can be tarnished very quickly (McCorkindale & DiStaso, 2013 p. 498-500). This kind of internet based word-of-mouth is sometimes also referenced as going viral. Itself it is not a new innovation but the changes that social media has had on the communication scene makes it much more easier the content to spread within minutes when one is able to communicate both within their own network as well as others even overseas. This bring challenges to organizations once again mentioned very often

habit of executing this one-way communication where they simply share the information with the public and do not follow up with an actual discussion about the matter. To make matters worse, when social media allows its users to be the publishers of content, the possibility of false information spreading or fake accounts can bring organizations a whole new set of difficulties they need to overcome. Take for example the satirical PB account mentioned before, which in the end had more followers during the crisis than the original one. (Aula, 2009; Haataja et al., 2016) Crisis communication and managing it in social media is now more important than ever before because there has never been so much information available to the public than there is now via social media. These people have also the chance to state their opinions more easily via it (González - Herrero & Smith, 2008) and make the issue go viral. Going viral in social media refers that a text from an organization or an individual starts spreading from user to user via liking or sharing reaching more wider audience. Today we receive the news very quickly when they jump to our phones, tablets or our social media sites, but when the news have the opportunity the spread or "go viral" within seconds in the internet, how can the organization manage it? Often professionals still are amazed with the speed of internet and are left to struggle with the problems that arise with this. They are also struggling with the fact that the controlling of it is much harder than it was before when only traditional media (e.g. newspapers) were used, when the internet can act both as a trigger or a facilitator to a crisis. (E.g. Gilpin, 2010; González - Herrero & Smith, 2008; Gonzalez-Herrero & Smith, 2010; Ki & Nekmat, 2014; McCorkindale & DiStaso, 2013 p. 497)

The reality in social media is not the same for each user. Their social media looks are modified by their own actions and they get suggestions depending on the algorithms in that platform that monitor their movement in it. A term "Filter Bubble" has been used to describe this phenomena and these users receive information according to their own ideas and world views indicating, that they might be receiving information from these fake sources realising it or not or they might actually prefer it (Branicki & Agyei, 2015). This brings challenges to organizations and it has been noted that an education before the crisis situations happens is important. It could be argued that maybe the actions taken towards social media communication are scarce due to the fact that the methods used before are so deep in professionals and preferred by many. Press releases are easier to do and then leave the debate and aftermath to the media and perhaps organizations marketing department. These ideas should be turned around and start utilizing social media. There are tremendous tools for monitoring it and even controlling it, but as it has been noted, the technological advancements are constant and for example, just to mention one, perhaps geographical information systems are a part of tomorrows crisis management execution. (Haataja et al., 2016)

2.4 Crisis management and image control in social media

The crisis management in social media is directly linked to the image control of the organization that in the end will effect on organizations overall reputation. With the right kind of communication and crisis management the reputational harm is possibly lowered. What these organizations say during a crisis inflicts their reputation and thus can be very harmful for their image in the long run. (Coombs & Holladay, 1996) These organizations need to bear in mind though that their actions should reflect their ethics and their communicative efforts in link with the audience expectations rather than just communicating towards their own business goals (Aula, 2010).

The most important attributes an organization can have when dealing with their image and reputation control via social media are trust, transparency and engagement. These attributes should be incorporated in their social media behaviour and when their actions create these attributes towards users even before the crisis, using them during one helps manage the crisis situation. The organizations should also monitor and measure social media very closely and be proactive in it. (Kolek, 2009; McCorkindale & DiStaso, 2013 p. 500-503) Marken (2009) put it in short that he thought most important attributes for dealing with social media is to listen, respond and improve. They should also notice the impact of similar events with them in the past, because it might affect to what kind of social media strategy to execute. If the organization has in the past faced a similar crisis situation it might increase their vulnerability and more easily effect negatively to their reputation. (Coombs, 2004) Therefore, while I argue that all crisis situations must be addressed in social media, their life-span is most likely shorter in this rapidly moving social media environment. This note that the organization is more vulnerable to a second crisis could bear a great significance, because it is easy to share in social media old crisis situations amongst the new one and create a snowball effect of it thus making one current crisis bigger than it actually is.

There can be found few alarming trades these organizations possess when talking about behaviour in social media and especially how they tend to manage the negative feedback they receive in social media. For example Dekay (2012) found in his study that almost half of the organization that were studied had the habit of deleting negative comments they received in Facebook. This kind of behaviour is not perceived too well by the audience should they notice it. Also when organizations treat social media platforms as their own marketing channels, they might miss out the chance to actually discuss in it with their customers. An organization might have a habit that they respond to messages in their social media pages with the basic idea of market their products or services where sometimes they should just toss aside the point of view of marketing and maybe take a humorous tone when responding to a negative comment (Dekay, 2012). Rather ironically, some social media experts do encourage organizations in deleting negative comments. For this study there is almost no way to know if something was deleted during the crisis situations regarding for example negative comments

made by the audience. Few deleted posts from organizations themselves were retrieved into to the data set, since the audience thought them important enough to take a screenshot and distribute to others. The data was retrieved and analysed as they were found to be after the crisis had happened. All in all social media is today heavily used in crisis communication and management. The examples vary from situations where usage of social media was proven to be very useful to situations where social media worked against the organization's originally good intentions, thus creating a crisis for them.

The toughness of using social media have been noticed by many. Communication professional have in the past overlooked the fact that these social media platforms weren't built for them to control their messages. Right kind of communication has the effect to guide the customers to the organizations site to learn about services or products but with poor social media management the image of the organization might be at risk. Studies have shown that even when the organizations news releases are good and receive positive attention from stakeholders, if the organizations lacks the ability to listen and respond correctly to the worries of customers, these customers might make a purchase decision based on peers. (Marken, 2009) Thus, the organization must be prepared and be able to adjust their communication in order to protect their image when they are operating in complex environment such as microblogging platform Twitter (Gilpin, 2010). The organizations should bear in mind that with right kind of communication methods they even have a voice in social media, because without right kind of presence in there in times of crisis their voice will drown under other social media users. In order to retrieve the tarnished reputation sometimes the organization might create a new more positive campaign to take people's attention away from the crisis situation.

It is noted that in today's social media environment trust is the most important attribute. Almost all theories that engage social media management in them, take note that the organizations need to build trust and legitimacy via social media and that publics expectations for communication efforts from the organization has changed. People today are seeking actual conversation with the organization about the situations at hand and they are not happy when receiving simple corporate tone notification of the matter. (González - Herrero & Smith, 2008) This was found out to be true during the food chain Domino's crisis situation where a hoax video went viral. In the interview with Domino's vice president Tim McIntyre, he points out that the most important attributes in fact in social media crisis communication is an open discussion about the subject. Also the response time is much shorter nowadays and you need to act on a crisis in social media platforms as fast as possible after it's discovered. McIntyre describes the situations such as when back in the days there was a crisis it was to be put out and let everyone know that this has been done, nowadays there will be someone following you with a video camera and a microphone describing what you're doing as you are doing it. (Jacques, 2009) This is an actual problem and it's called 'sousveillance' where the people witnessing the crisis take photos and videos and a false testimony of the event starts spreading like a wildfire (Veil et al., 2011).

Some of the scholars have noted that the existing crisis management theories encourage organizations to a top-down communication to achieve minimal harm to their business from the crisis. This has been said to lead to forgetting the existence of the stakeholders completely and their engaging to a critical sense-making process that would be more sustainable solution to crisis management in the long run (Olsson, 2014). These point of views gives this thesis a good starting point when trying to combine existing theories to practise.

The boundaries between "traditional" and "new" media are blurring since often it happens that the traditional media picks up stories from the social media (Gilpin, 2010). In the end it really comes down to this: social media is all about people sharing thoughts, ideas and experiences with their network (Marken, 2009). In this environment organizations should be able to deliver their messages and be effective communicators.

In the field of crisis management and communication, there is a great need to search especially the new medias and how to use them in a crisis situations within multiple organizations and crisis situations and not limit the study for a single organization, situation or even platform (Eriksson & Olsson, 2016; Liu & Fraustino, 2014). Eriksson (2012) noted that the social media users skills are developing quickly and the actual theories behind the crisis communication are still very much lacking. This is very concerning when few of the organizations describe themselves as technological leaders in a society, but still these kind of guidelines are missing.

Today social media is used by the public to find information about the ongoing situations and to determine the degree of the crisis situation (Austin et al., 2012). Sometimes a situation may arise where it has been noted that some people are actually keener on finding the information fast rather than actually getting the correct information (Kolek, 2009). Of course the questions of age also rises with this topic and it has been argued that for example younger people might have the attitude that if the information is not on Facebook, it is not relevant (Branicki & Agyei, 2015). However, the trend seems to be that how the target group of young adults do things in the internet, they are setting the trend on larger population of adults on how to behave in it also (Liu et al., 2015). Keeping this detail in mind, it is very important that an organization has effective social media management guidelines for crisis situations. In crisis situations people will turn to the social media for more information and if the organization is not represented in there, the conversation will continue without their own voice being heard. With the proper communication via social media platforms, the organization can either put out the emerging crisis or give it a new speed.

When making overall guidelines for social media management in crisis situations one has to remember the two way street approach. Today people are not only objects that need to be informed about the crisis situation but they are part of the conversation (Veil et al., 2011). Unfortunately there is a great need in education in the matter especially for practitioners, because it seems that they are still quite often using the standard one-to-many approach in their social media communication (Macnamara, 2012; Veil et al., 2011). They are understandably excited about the possibilities that the social media has to offer, but they also face

serious challenge with it. In the end the survival of the organizations might just depend on the speed on how they response to crisis situations (Ki & Nekmat, 2014).

Not just simple theories, but good suggestions for crisis management overall, some even incorporating social media, can be found from the literature. Many of the literature takes notice on the speed of social media and Khang et al. (2012) among others point out that even though social media offers a lot of possibilities, it also comes with threats. Organizations public relations have changed so that these organizations should monitor the conversation in social media and reply very quickly should someone in there make a comment about their products or services. Current social media has no longer the real advantage of the traditional media, which sometimes worked as a "gatekeeper" of news for the public. (Khang et al, 2012) However, now the technology has caught up with the changes of social media and there are several different monitoring systems available that makes it easier for professionals to track chatter of their organization in social media. Due to their detailed technical features, these are not examined more closely here, just noted that these tools are helpful in crisis management planning and execution for professionals.

According to Ki & Nekmat (2014) most commonly used crisis management strategies were "justification" and "full apology" when organizations used social media in their crisis communication. This means that the tone of the messages sent to social media behalf of the organizations when crisis had happened were apologetic in nature or they tried to justify the reasons for the crisis thus trying to win the public to their side in the event. These response methods were used no matter if the crisis had happened in any of the three cluster meaning that the crisis was seen by the public as accidental, intentional or that the organization was the victim in the situation. Other mentioned response methods that these organizations had used were denial, attack for the accuser, scapegoat or excuse. (Ki & Nekmat, 2014)

When talking about crisis management in social media, it has been argued by Gonzáles-Herrero et al. (2010) that the basic guidelines of it should stay even with the expansion of new medias that are in the current tool box for crisis management. There are still some significant changes on how organizations should response to crisis situations as well as make a plan to communicate and monitor the discussion. The basic elements of a communications plan are situation analysis, objectives, audience, strategy, tactics, timing, and budget. These are in some way applicable to social media communications planning but need further investigation from the parts of objective and strategies for example, which are discussed in the findings of this research.

The communication in social media also is no longer a one-way that it was with the traditional media but it's now more two-way when people can communicate back to the organization. What is also noted that organizations should engage to "their side" some effective social media influencers that when a crisis hits they have someone to speak on behalf of them. (Gonzalez-Herrero & Smith, 2010) For the organization to be successful in their crisis communication one could argue that they should have a spokesperson for the organization in crisis

events. Olsson (2014) noted in her research by giving an example that even in situations that can be called catastrophes, a spokesperson can calm people retrieving information from the social media and be a helpful distributor of information to public. Austin et al. (2012) also found out in their study that people were more likely to receive the information that the organization distributed if it came from a key stakeholder rather than just the organization. In cases where the main information provider would have been a political party, a genuine spokesperson was what the social media followers needed to learn about the crisis (Olsson, 2014). Where these spokespersons were seen legit, their actions were transparent and dialogue open. The organization should consider carefully using any kind of other means for example to create a spokesperson for them in forms of a fake customers to complement them, because should this be noted by the users it would create yet another possible crisis situation and tarnish the image severely (Aula, 2010). These points offer a good starting point for the search of the "best practises" in social media crisis management but still lack especially strategic approaches to how to handle these crisis situations.

All in all crisis communication theories have some features in common and for example Veil et al. (2011) amongst other have written lists about the best practises incorporating social media in crisis communication. These are reviews from the practises drawn from theories and case studies but the search continues on how organizations should handle their crisis in social media environment and how are they executing these guidelines. Questions still lingers if we can rely on these theories and strategies to be the best to handle crisis situations?

Only few of the studies mentioned that the users are nowadays more "net savvy" as in they know how to best utilize the internet for their own purposes. These studies then describe these "net savvy" people to be mostly the customer of gaming sites. What none of the articles mentioned is that nowadays most the customers and future employees have grown up using the internet and social media platforms and they are already this "net savvy" most likely by nature. This means that these people are capable of more than just opening the browser and reading their emails. They are aware of the social media usage and recognize scam amongst other things (Lorenzo, Oblinger, & Dziuban, , 2011). They can notice if the organizations are using some obvious strategy if not executed properly during a crisis situation and they will react to this. The internet also offers new crisis opportunities in forms of hackers, rumour spreading and shadow- and copycat websites which could be either created by these "net savvy" people or utilized by them. McConnell & Drennan (2006) wrote a paper where they examine the best and ideal practises for preparing for a crisis and argue that even though it would be best that the organization would have "high preparedness" to a crisis situation, this kind of preparation will take some resources and getting this by from the upper level managers will be difficult with all the bureaucracy. Thus my aim is, that if the preparing for a crisis is difficult, I intend to find good practises for managers in organizations to help them to prepare and deal with the crisis at hand especially in social media arena.

3 DATA COLLECTION AND RESEARCH METHOD

3.1 Data collection

The data collection was started by identifying Finnish organizations that have had a crisis situation during the year 2016. This was done by searching articles and identifying trending topics for example in Twitter. Since these happened only last year, the author already had in mind few cases before starting that guided the decision to choose the topic and the research at hand. The crisis situations found were searched for making sure their news coverage was sufficient and also that they had at least two of the selected social media platforms in use. The existence of these platforms was vital for the study, but the actions taken in them were retrieved later. The data for this thesis was retrieved from the pointed social media sources using search words and manually going through the public profiles of the organizations and it included posts and tweets from the organization and the public about the topic as well as some pictures. Also additional traditional media sources were searched and analysed. The data was retrieved and analysed in four steps:

1. The data for this thesis was collected by searching content from social media platforms of Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. For each organization a certain crisis situation was identified and most of the messages found relevant for this analysis from a certain timeline was retrieved into Microsoft Excel spreadsheet. For each organization and situation a relevant search words were identified and used during the data collection. To be accurate about the intense of the crisis, some other media sources were also retrieved for each organization, some news articles from the internet were found for almost each organization and situation.
2. The preliminary analysis was made of each situation including the making a summary of each organization and crisis situation and finding the elements that formed a pattern to be able to continue with the analysis.
3. The common factors between the situations were found and underlying causes and effects of the situations analysed.
4. Critical discourse analysis requires that the data is gone through multiple times, so this was done few more times again and then written as a whole analysis.

Critical discourse analysis was chosen as the best way to approach the analysis process. As Eriksson & Kovalainen (2008) noted the discourse analysis is increasingly used in qualitative research as an analysis method because it focuses on social and cultural meanings and actions communicated through language. For this study the discourse analysis was found to be the best method for studying the underlying meanings of the discourse rather than for example conversation

analysis that examines the conversation plainly, while forgetting the context in where the discussion is held. A common belief with discourse analysis method is that there can be no direct guidelines on how to conduct the research. Therefore the author had to find out the patterns from the data collected by using methods suitable directly for this study this time (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008). This kind of analysis method requires multiple rounds of analysis to receive best outcomes.

3.2   Case organizations

All together 11 companies were identified as cases for this study and three of them were categorized as public companies. Of the remaining eight companies, six were categorized as large corporations and remaining two as small and medium sized enterprises using the definition made by the European Commission that the total amount of employees should be less than 250 in a SME (European Comission, 2012). This gave the analysis a good starting point to be able to point out similarities these organizations use despite their profile and thus showing how the communication in social media is subject driven rather than based on organizational type. Table 3 offers the summary of the case organization's profiles.

TABLE 3 Case organizations profiles

Type of the organizations	No of organizations	% of the total
Public or non-profit	3	27,27 %
Large corporations	6	54,55 %
SME's	2	18,18 %
Total	11	100 %

Table 4 presented last, shows the overall number of the gathered data. The data set included 11 case organizations. All of them were represented at least in two of the selected social media platforms during their crisis. Some organizations official representation was not that direct in the ongoing discussion but a lot of social media influencers were involved and thus this data was seen relevant for the discussion that was going around the topic. This also showed the misjudgements from the organizations side, since these inactions in this particular social media platform were found to be harmful for their image.

Even though the data set shows Twitter as the most highly used in numbers, even in one post made in Facebook about the crisis situation might have been hundreds of comments and made them comparable also between each other. In Instagram as it is a community where the posts include always photos, these were also taken to include in the data set. The crisis situations of these case organizations are presented below and summary provided last in Table 5.

Case 1. SME – Public response

The advertising campaign of a small meat producer from Western Finland received the attention of one citizen, who was so offended by it that they made a public complaint to the Finnish Council of Ethics in Advertising. It argued that the slogan of the campaign was offensive towards women. The discussion started in the social media where it spread to the mainstream media. The organization replied by sharing the news in their Facebook and Twitter accounts and due to the grown interest, also made an Instagram account for them. The organization was not that apologetic in nature in either of the three platforms to overall audience. In Facebook they did not take part in the conversation but on the other hand there were not negative comments in their posts about the campaign. They did, however, publish the news about their apology to the person who complaint and their response to the ethical board of advertising, and offered free products as a good gesture to the one who complained. They then stated the issue to overall public and kept informing others about the situation. This turned their crisis situation around and the public's response was positive and the crisis situation considered to be handled successfully. This organization actually received in the end more positive publicity due to the crisis and ended up with more orders than before.

Case 2. SME – Ethical crisis

This well-known small company was known for their quality products they offered, and held a very good image of them in their community. They made a mistake when they accidentally bought forbidden products from their supplier. They started advertising this product and the public noticed the mistake before the company. Therefore, the public considered the crisis as ethical of nature but the origin of it was internal when the mistake was made within the organization. They quickly removed the campaign and made a public formal apology letter they then shared in their social media channels. In the apology they promised that all the proceeds that were gotten from selling the forbidden product would go to charity. They reacted fast and this got the attention of communication professionals who made an example of them in Twitter saying that this was well handled crisis situation. This situation turned negative comments and critique into positive words of encouragement when public noticed these quick efforts they made. This situation was considered to be handled successfully when no permanent harm was made that would affect remarkably on future endeavours of this company and their image as a good quality place seemed to remain intact.

Case 3. Public organization – Internal crisis

This organization was faced with an internal crisis when during a large camp a camper died from natural causes. The event happened in the night and in the morning of the next day the public statements of the situation was handed to media to publish. The comment section of Facebook and Instagram were filled with sympathetic comments. To people outside the camp was assured and told how the organizations will pay their respects and honour the deceased. They also

noted that the camp organization will offer grief counselling to those in need. The comments regarding this incident weren't at all hostile in either of the three social media platforms. This crisis was considered successfully handled because of the open communication about the issue to the public that stated their condolences about the event and provided information on how they would continue with the matter.

Case 4. Public organization – Ethical crisis
This public organization was faced with an ethical crisis where the employee made a critical error in a work that effected customer's well-being. The employee was properly trained but neglected to check carefully the items before continuing with the procedures. This escalated to a situation where people's health was on the line and this created an outburst both in traditional and social media. The organization in this case was not that involved in social media communication about the situation itself and this lead to a few negative comments to appear in their Facebook page which were not acknowledged or answered. It is not known if the writers of the post received any other perhaps more personal feedback from the organization. This organization offered mild explanations on the matter, but still the public thought that the company did not offer them enough information of it. This crisis was considered as unsuccessfully managed since it was thought to have very negative effects on the company's image afterword mostly due to the lack of communication efforts.

Case 5. Large Corporation – Ethical issues
The crisis began when the company's CEO admitted that they had cheated with their products in international tests and that these products were altered for those. They made a public announcement in Facebook and the text included an apology. Even more the text were full of explanations starting with words such as *"the differences between products were small"*, *"with cheating only small things were altered with already great product to get a few percent advantage in the test environment"*. They tried to put the blame a little for the industry telling that the *"the testing environment in the industry has been getting more complex and thus the need for alterations"*. They told in the end of their post that they wanted to be open and honest about the situation but it still sounded more an explanation than an actual apology. The company did not response to individual messages as the researcher is aware of. The comments were mostly negative about the matter. The public replied approximately in two ways where some were still very happy with their products quality and thought that this did not alter their purchase decisions, and other though that they were considered as fools and been cheated that way. The public really came together about the situation and gave each other pointers on how to found about the truth behind these kind of things. This crisis was considered to be unsuccessfully managed and the company ended up with really bad reputation from this all.

Case 6. Large Corporation – Ethical issues

This company faced a situation where leaked documents proved their involvement in technically legal things that happened outside of Finland but involved Finnish people. In Finland the actions are illegal. No clear apology was written in anywhere, only explanations. In their announcement they firmly denied their aim to do such illegal things that were to harm Finnish economy. They tried to put the blame on the media in their announcement and deny their part of the matter. Regardless of this attempt the company had very much tarnished their reputation in the eyes of the stakeholders. They used phrases such as *"this company does not accept this kind of behaviour" "the publications about the matter have formed an image, that this company is involved in this matter"*. The company's own "social media team" was active during the crisis in Facebook and Twitter answering to peoples comments. Their responses did not vary that much and this was noticed by the social media users. Finland is known for its law abiding ways and this kind actions made happen by a Finnish company was unheard of. The organization tried to normalize the situation afterwards providing other social media content so the topic would fade away from the trending topics of discussion but this event was considered unsuccessfully handled because of the lack of information and proper discussion between the organization and the public.

Case 7. Large Corporation – Negative feedback

This organization made an advertising campaign that insulted the gay community. The company is known from their current topics in advertising and their attempts to provoke people with their campaigns. Due to the negative chatter that started around the campaign the organization was forced to pull the advertising campaign and they even deleted the original ad they had put on the social media channels. Even though it was good to pull the campaign to avoid more possible decrease in sales, it was not certain that it was good to delete the original post altogether. The public felt for a long time that they did not receive an apology from the organization and this lead for the chatter continue for quite a while. The comments were mostly negative criticising the campaign and the message of it even after the campaign was deleted, because the apologies of the company were not considered sufficient. The discussion was heated between the people in social media platforms so there were some supportive comments also. All in all still due to the lack of efforts made from the company and their insufficient communication with the public, this case was considered unsuccessfully handled and considered very harmful for their image.

Case 8. Large Corporation – Ethical issues / internal crisis

In this case the organizations employee made a Twitter post where he made a raging post targeted to a customer because of his/her political stand. The public saw this post, figured out the identity of the writer and reported it to back to the company. Due to this the company fired the employee and this lead to a major news scandal. The company only mildly explained their actions towards this employee when the public felt that this company had overreacted and illegally fired the employee when a warning would have been sufficient. This lead to a situation

where even a labour union demanded a clarification to the matter from the organization. Even though the situation was internal, it already had the stakeholders' interest but the company neglected to be open about the situation towards them. Their attempts to control the social media chatter involved strict messages saying they won't comment the situation any more. The goal of the organization was to first protect the reputation but it backfired when the public first thought was that this organization then is supportive of the hate campaign that was going on at the time in overall public discussion, and second, that this organization does not show support to their employee.

Case 9. Large Corporation - Negative feedback

This crisis situation raises its head from time to time and once again it did so about a year ago when it was celebrating its one year "anniversary". This included a campaign where the prices of the products were cut. This campaign was thought to cut the profits of the original producers and lead for example a public protest conducted by these producers. In here the comments retrieved form the social media about the matter deal with this injustice towards these producers. The campaign still continues and is widely used, but the negative chatter has really not come to an end and the organization still doesn't answer straight to the questions presented. This case is considered mildly unsuccessful when there was excellent chance of it getting major support had they replied to these accusations properly or modified their actions somehow.

Case 10. Non-profit organization – Negative feedback

This political party made a campaign saying that gender should be recognized and that there is no in between. Nowadays when people are trying to be more open minded about things this campaign really struck for many people and they started to protest against it. This campaign had a rather effective use of social media and they also utilized different social media influencers. Regardless of the fact that these infuencers had ties with the organization, they still made the effort to state an opinion for example in Facebook and Twitter. The target group of this organization was mostly younger people. This case was considered successful when they actively and in various platforms explained their campaign and due to their activity their campaign did get some negative feedback but still had the support of social media users. Their image did not suffer major consequences but did strengthen their image as a political party (which of course they were) that stood behind their opinions.

Case 11. Large Corporation – Negative feedback

This company started a campaign underlying the idea that beauty belongs to everyone but in the campaign video there was very stereotypic model and this got people's attention. They received a lot of negative comments about the situation and this company answered to those. The campaign is still going on and with open communication between stakeholders this crisis was managed to be able to put out. This case then was considered successful.

TABLE4 Summary of the data collected

Case organiza-tions	No of Facebook posts	% Facebook of all	No of Instagram posts	% Instagram of all	No of Twit-ter discus-sions	% Twitter from all	All together	Social media plat-forms used in the crisis	Other media sources
1. SME	4	33,33 %	3	25,00 %	5	41,67 %	12	3	5
2. SME	2	2,94 %	0	0,00 %	66	97,06 %	68	2	4
3. Public or non-profit	1	33,33 %	1	33,33 %	1	33,33 %	3	3	1
4. Public or non-profit	4	66,67 %	0	0,00 %	2	33,33 %	6	2	2
5. Large corporation	2	20,00 %	0	0,00 %	8	80,00 %	10	2	2
6. Large corporation	2	40,00 %	0	0,00 %	3	60,00 %	5	2	0
7. Large corporation	1	1,25 %	0	0,00 %	79	98,75 %	80	2	3
8. Large corporation	2	1,92 %	1	0,96 %	101	97,12 %	104	3	5
9. Large corporation	3	4,76 %	2	3,17 %	58	92,06 %	63	3	4
10. Public or non-profit	7	21,21 %	6	18,18 %	20	60,61 %	33	3	1
11. Large corporation	3	13,64 %	8	36,36 %	11	50,00 %	22	3	0
Summary	**31**	**7,64 %**	**21**	**5,17 %**	**354**	**87,19 %**	**406**		**27**

Table 5 Summary of the cases

Organization	Crisis type	Origin of the crisis situation	How did the crisis spread	Response method	Public response	Successful
1. SME	Negative feedback	Public/media response	Public noticed and it went viral	State the issue / Apology	POSITIVE	YES
2. SME	Ethical crisis	Internal	Public noticed and it went viral	Apology / Delete	NEGATIVE TO POSITIVE	YES
3. Public or non-profit	Internal crisis	Internal	Press release sent to media	Normalization	NEUTRAL, SYM-PATHETIC	YES
4. Public or non-profit	Ethical crisis / Internal crisis	Internal	News articles went viral in social media	Explanation	NEGATIVE	NO
5. Large corporation	Ethical crisis	Internal	News articles went viral in social media	Normalization / Explanation	NEGATIVE	NO
6. Large corporation	Ethical crisis	Internal	News articles went viral in social media	Normalization / Explanation	NEGATIVE	NO
7. Large corporation	Negative feedback	Public/media response	Public noticed and it went viral	Apology / Delete	MOSTLY NEGA-TIVE	NO
8. Large corporation	Ethical crisis / Internal crisis	Internal	Public noticed, informed the company, company took actions and it went viral	Normalization / Explanation	NEGATIVE	NO
9. Large corporation	Negative feedback	Public/media response	Public noticed and it went viral	Normalization	NEGATIVE	NO
10. Public or non-profit	Negative feedback	Public/media response	Public noticed and it went viral	Normalization / State the issue	NEGATIVE, SOME SUPPORT	YES
11. Large corporation	Negative feedback	Public/media response	Public noticed and it went viral	Normalization / State the issue	NEGATIVE TO POSITIVE	YES

3.3 Qualitative research method

This thesis is qualitative and used the non-participant observation of the results. In qualitative research the researcher makes observations either of people or in this case of the data collected by other means. In this case the non-participation means that the researcher was not trying to be a part of the situation but find out the causes and effects studying the material as an outsider. (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008) The answers to the presented research questions were found from the data collected and analysed using a critical discourse analysis (CDA) method that will be presented in the following chapter. The aim of this study, while keeping in mind the previous crisis management theories, was to find out patterns that are specific to the cases and organizations at hand and find out what methods of communication in the social media platforms during a crisis seemed to be most effective so that the organizations image was preserved. It included a thorough investigation of the current crisis management theories to find out whether these methods were still applicable and more importantly how these went with the Finnish context. Data from social media sources was the primary data and other media for example blog posts or news articles were retrieved to support the data set from these platforms.

In this thesis the CDA methodology was used to investigate the texts of and about organizations when they were confronted a crisis situation that developed discussion in social media platforms and how companies used their communicative efforts to preserve their image.

In this thesis the research questions were used to guide this research and find out the best practises in social media in certain crisis situations. The researcher was not able to see the people behind the messages which lead to critical thinking of what was the underlying reasons that made people respond to one crisis in certain way and differently in another. The research questions presented make notice on the actions that these case organizations take in communication remembering, that not taking an action was also communicating. Using only qualitative approach helped this study to find out the underlying causes for why some communication was noted as successful and others caused widely mainly negative discussion amongst stakeholders.

3.4 Critical discourse analysis

Critical discourse analysis (CDA) is originated from critical social analysis. Critical social analysis was used to investigate the realities of social events. This approach was used as normative and explanatory method that seeks to explain how the realities match up to different social events and the truths of what explains these events. Critical social analysis approach was used more inter-disciplinary

and needed also a more trans-disciplinary approach. It also neglected to find out the underlying causes for the situations and therefore more trans-disciplinary critical discourse analysis was presented that offered a point of entry and emphasis on semiotic approach (Fairclough, 2012; Fairclough, 2013). CDA contributes to the traditional discourse analysis with its more social analysis aspect. It focuses more closely to the social aspects of the discourse and can help determine for example the underlying power relationships between the communicators and groups (Fairclough, 2012). CDA helps critically investigate not only the discourse happening and the reality it presents but underlying causes the situation has and what has lead up to this kind of discourse to happen.

Discourses are different kinds of representations of social events. The whole process of critical discourse analysis includes the understanding of social events and how these work and what things are underlying influencers to trigger a certain behaviour in people. Semiosis as a term describes the meanings and signs of a certain thing that can have an effect to a situation. Semiosis is an important part of the whole discourse. Semiosis can be seen as a part of social activity or action like a part of being an employee of an organization and thus using a language in a certain way. Semiosis is also part of representation as in how a person is positioning themselves towards the organization for example. This differs still from the last part of the semiosis and where it constructs from and that is identity. From these aspects can be continued to the note on what becomes of social events that lead to discourse. Social events are construed of semiosis or in other words meanings and signs on how the event is. These are then divided into genres which tell on what semiosis belongs in this particular situation. These semiosis are also a part of the way of being for people that tell them what style they themselves are representing. Semiosis as a part of society can be presented in three ways: first as a part of doing a job to use language in certain way (companies' representatives in social media) second a representation (which social media site) and third, the way of being, how they execute their being in social media. Much as in any social situations in the social media people and organizations position themselves to a certain role when they engage in a discussion. CDA helps determine these places and the tones of conversations and how these genres, discourses and styles are represented together. (Fairclough, 2013)

CDA is described as a tool *"where the aim is to map three separate forms of analysis onto one another: analysis of (spoken or written) language texts, analysis of discourse practice (processes of text production, distribution and consumption) and analysis of discursive events as instances of socio-cultural practice."* (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008). In this thesis these three different approaches were taken into account when conducting the analysis. In practise it meant searching the actual texts, photos and videos that were distributed in these three social media platforms, analysing the senders and receivers of these texts and considering the timeline of these events and discussion and how the ongoing for example political situation currently then in Finland might have caused this kind of response. The third part of this analysis emerged also from the text since from sentences there could be found

the current situation but also the overall socially accepted behaviour in said platform. This type of analysis required multiple rounds of interpreting the data so that the most relevant content was found.

Critical discourse analysis helped with defining the strategies these organizations have used in crisis situations. It also helped with identifying social media influencers amongst the crisis situations, whether the crisis escalated or diminished by the involvement of these people and how organizations responded not just overall public but also to these influencers needs. (Albert & Salam, 2013) Doing a discourse analysis is a challenge, but the most important part of it is to keep in mind to actually conduct the analysis of the original text and conclude the used crisis management methods through a careful analysis. As others, this study also had limitations and did not offer a complete truth of the handling of crisis situations. It did, however, offer valuable guidelines for management and for them to take note on most often found methods for crisis communication and which of them seemed to work and which did not in a crisis situation bearing in mind that the organization wanted a positive outcome of the situation.

The CDA method for social media research has been found to be useful method for building theories and guidelines in the social media environment. For example transferring power in social media from a party to another to be able to influence the outcome could be done. By using these theories it can help the "underdog" for example a person who was bullied in social media become eventually the one who is in control of the situation and guides the discussion. Whereas topic of this thesis was not in the nature of online bullying it was, however, so that this research wished to build theories using CDA that can lead to desired outcomes. (Albert & Salam, 2013) Social media influencers and opinion leaders have risen to be often a very powerful asset if an organization is engaged with one. These people are individuals who, for example because of their network or other social skills, are regarded to be more influential than others by the community in a certain platform. (Berger & Milkman, 2012)

With this analysis method I was able to clearly see how the power structures were in each organization and how engaged they were with their stakeholders in the social media. I was able to identify from the data with this analysis method on how the organization has tried to legitimize their actions towards stakeholders and also interpret whether they had hold the power over the situation or were they overruled by the public in social media. (Shirazi, 2012)

3.4.1 Analysis process

All the data collected was put in an excel sheet and put into categories. First sheet included data from social media platforms, posts from Instagram, Twitter and Facebook. All together 406 cells came from the social media sources, each Instagram photo and Twitter discussion was counted separately and Facebook posts were considered as one. In some of the Facebook posts might have been hundreds of comments, so these were retrieved next to original post and then read and analysed. This was due to the fact that these comments discussed both the overall situation, but also were reactions to the post itself, thus dividing the comments

would have deleted the continuum of the conversation. Second sheet was to collect some traditional articles to support the analysis. To start the analysis these data objects were first coded in numerical charts to get the big picture of the data set. Then it was coded again in summaries of the organizations from where the analysis continued to find common features and how the organizations had responded to the comments or tweets in these social media platforms.

This research was conducted from the public's point of view. A lot of discussion is found around the topic on how the crisis management should be and what professional thoughts are of incorporating social media aspect to crisis communication and management. This research helped gain knowledge on how these organizations, especially Finnish organizations have adopted these lessons and was there still room for improvements. All organizations were studied both separately and together to be able to give a satisfactory analysis on how these platforms were utilized and the communication strategies executed. These companies were divided into categories by their profiles and whenever quoting them these were analysed based on their actions and how these are comparable with others. Anonymity of the organizations per se is not intended here but, rather to turn the focus examples on how organizations should or should not behave in social media during a crisis.

The crisis management strategies were found and analysed from the perspective of an actual stakeholder that only saw the efforts made in the social media by the organizations. The data was found mostly in Finnish but included some English posts as well. Most of the quotations found from the data are translated to preserve the meaning behind the post rather than the actual straight word-for-word translation. Some of the quotations might include a rather harsh language that are censored, so the idea of the feelings that were going around the topic and discussion is kept. This will help the critical discourse analysis process and can be interpreted easily. Severity and ultimate results of the crisis situations were defined using research questions to guide the analysis. The origin of the crisis was determined and also the method on how it started to spread in the social media platforms. The differences between the public reactions and communicative efforts were analysed in three different social media platforms of Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. The organizations in the data set were all involved in at least in two different social media platforms out of the three that were studied. When data was retrieved for each organization the Twitter seemed to be the place where the discussion was most heated. Due to the fact that all of these platforms are very different in function from one another, for the purposes of the analysis, they were all analysed both separately and together to get also the overall idea on how the crisis spread during the time of it. In Facebook even though it seemed there was only few posts made about the situation the discussion continued in the comment sections and thus is very comparable with Twitter and Instagram. Instagram was found to be for most of the companies a platform where the companies tried to save their image after the crisis. Only few mentioned the crisis in their posts in Instagram and then it was mainly for condolence, apology or boost the campaign after critical feedback from the audience.

During the data collection the underlying themes emerged from the data set. It majored in two themes that needed deeper analysis on the actions that these organizations took in the selected social media platforms. First it was analysed how these organizations use these social media platforms against on how they should be used according to experts. Second theme that arise was the notion of how organizations communicated their crisis messages to public in these channels. It was also determined on how the public responded to these efforts. Lastly, a deeper analysis was concluded about the social media as a communication tool, as in how the organizations were using it versus the public expectations. This also lead to suggestions to what crisis management mix would be the most effective one in given situations.

4 RESEARCH FINDINGS

Role of social media in today's communication is remarkable. The case organizations varied with their size, target group, market segment and operations, but all were somehow involved in social media and apparently were considering on some level their actions or inactions in it. The consequences of these decisions are discussed further in detail in the later chapters.

This chapter will start by stating what was from the public's point of view social medias role in crisis communication. Also two major themes emerged from the data set guiding the analysis process, first one being on how organizations were actually using these platforms in their crisis communication and second part was the strategies they chose when they confronted a certain type of crisis. These alone were not sufficient forms of information but it was thought useful to add discussion whether the organization responded to the audience and changed their strategy to calm and manage the crisis situation. These themes were interesting starting points and first the findings part will discuss the do's and don'ts gathered from the data and these will be followed up in the discussion section and further thought what kind of implications these results have to offer for managerial purposes.

4.1 Role of social media in a crisis

Social media was observed to be a critical information source in crisis. It was noticed in the differences between the organizations habits to communicate with media, and their own social media channels. Sometimes the cooperation towards those writing the news articles was non-existent and often also the most shared publications were somehow linked to the organization, perhaps a notification they made in their own website or a blog text. The lack of information in social media platforms about the ongoing situation was noticed by the users. One of the main attributes of social media was that the users have become the producers of information and if this information is not available, some other user will be guiding the information to you.

> Case 8, Large corporation, social media user in Twitter:
> *"The whole truth about the situation can be read here: <u>a link to a blog text.</u> #racism #racist #hatetalk –"*

The link provided was directing to somebody's blog that was containing the "truth" about the situation. It could be argued that due to the silence of the case organization in social media, people were forced to get their information from somewhere else than the corporation. The situation itself went on to be nationwide incident and very harmful to the organizations image in the long run, so perhaps the staying silent was not the best move for the organization. Sometimes

this lack of communication efforts in these platforms by the companies could have been noted to be because they did not have the legitimacy built in these platforms yet. This meant that they had not been that active in these social media platforms and had not met the expectations of the users. The professionals using social media in their organization's crisis communication should also note the speed of social media and how quickly things evolve in there. Even the users find this sometimes impossible which was noticed for example from the comment presented below.

> Case 2, SME, Social media user
> *"I was gone from Twitter for two hours and in that time new trending topic is #[orgniazation]. The world is not slowing down apparently."*

In social media there are some users that have the ability to influence to the topic at hand. An organization should follow some social media influencers to be on top of the situation and to know how the people are expecting this organizations to communicate to them. Some of the case organizations did have this kind of influencer speaking for them and this was seen in the results. These do not have to be those traditional spokespersons to advertise your organization, but for example an organization with right action gets them to their side. During crises these kind of influencers might be able to soften the fall a little. For example where an organization made almost by the book crisis management protocol this was noticed by some communication professionals and they became on the organizations side during the crisis.

> Case 2, SME: Communication professional on Twitter:
> *"#[The organization] gave a model example of #crisiscommunication. @blogger will open the case: <u>link to the site</u>"*

This Case 1, SME, with right actions during the crisis had won even the professionals on their side in the discussion and when these were saying positive things about the organization the public quickly followed this tone and the possible critique about the situation was not towards the organization but the original producer.

All in all social media in crisis communication is here to stay. There are multiple challenges it brings to organizations but it is always useful to follow the ongoing discussion to be able to participate in it. Social media has the ability to calm the crisis situation or with a poor crisis management it can turn to negative really fast. The next chapter will discuss the using of different social media platforms and also present the crisis management strategies organizations used during their crises.

4.2 How organizations use social media platforms

Amongst professionals the debate of what actually is considered as social media is going on actively. In this thesis the platforms of Facebook, Instagram and Twitter were chosen to represent social media platforms. These three are actively used by organizations, both public and private ones. All of these three differ in nature of course, and it were important to analyse how for example their audience differs from one another and how these organizations took into consideration these differences.

4.2.1 Other internet sources contribute social media

Other internet sources is used here to describe newspapers in the internet, blogs, and organizations own websites, where they put content of recent events. These are accessible to all who have internet access and who go seeking information from these platforms. It is considered then to be the slowest form of information for the public, excluding those, who have some kind of push service for the most trending news articles for example in their mobile devices. Some of the news sites offer the chance people for commenting to the articles, but organizations do not normally reply to these. The writers of these publications are either organization representatives, opinion leaders or journalists.

News articles should be generally written from neutral point of view. These are diverse information sources and give the reader the whole picture of the events. In these the organizations are not the one doing the writing but they might have been interviewed for these articles and their responses were presented so that they speak to the whole audience. Often in these news articles it seemed that the papers took the common opinion as a starting point. They might have given counter arguments to defend the organization or its actions. If however, the common opinion was that this kind of hateful talk about the matter was pointless, the papers took the comments from the organizations representatives also.

Few organizations was noticed that they did not comment on the mainstream news articles at all and they only spread their message through social media channels. This lead to a situation where the traditional news was only taking examples and comments made either in the organizations own notifications or in social media platforms. The comments quoted were almost exclusively apologetic in nature or giving an explanation on the matter. To try and calm the ongoing crisis these organizations gave comments seeking a quick end to it saying things like *"the matter is closed"* or giving either a full apology.

> Case 7, Large organization, news article quoted the marketing manager from their own notification: *"Our intent was never to joke with [these matters] or people and we did not see that these phrases would hurt anyone. We have made a misjudgement on the matter. We apologize to anyone who was offended by the campaign"*

Case 1, SME, news article quoted the owners of from their public notification: *"We are truly sorry about the situation and the harm this campaign has caused people. [We wish to make amends and offer the complaint our products as an apology],"*

Case 8, Large corporation, news article quoted the communication officer from their Twitter account: *"We have discussed the issue with the person in question. We have come to a conclusion that he/she will not continue working in [the organization]. We will not give further information about the matter to protect the person in question and wish that others will respect his / her privacy as well"*

Sometimes the news articles were directing their news noticing the chatter in social media channels and included their news statements such as *"[The organization] commented the news on their Twitter account on Sunday"*.

One information source that was considered to be more on the traditional side was the notifications that these organizations made in their own websites. For the public announcements these organizations used a language that was made towards the people who had been offended or otherwise involved by the matter. This differed the common news articles with the little more directed message tones. Regarding a nature of the internal crisis, one organization made an announcement that was intent to put an end to all rumours and give necessary information to outsiders, and give information on how they shall proceed in the matter. This kind of information sharing seemed to calm people and offer them a chance to be also sympathetic towards the organization rather than at all opinionated. It seemed as the traditional news were trying to emphasize on how this crisis had spread by taking the comments from social media platforms or saying that this crisis had gotten really much attention there. Some organizations did respond to the inquiries of reporters' representatives and gave comments. These were all very common in nature and offered either an apology or explanation on the situation.

Case 1, SME owner to a reporter:
"One cannot be an entrepreneur if they are afraid of everything"

Some articles even dug up old comments from the former CEO of a large corporation in Case 5, as an explanation on the crisis that was going on right now

"The corporation did not want to hear any explanations if the testing results weren't good enough – "

Whenever it was about the blog texts these were made naturally with an agenda, or stating some opinion on the matter. These seemed to follow the common discussion going on in the social media platforms. In case 9 for example one blogger was extremely concerned about the campaigns effects on the suppliers and this was then made into a blog text that used sentences that might be considered as opinions.

> Opinion blogger about the crisis in his/her blog: " – *the logic is understandable as long as none of the members of the supply chain is hurt by these actions. – The weakest link right now is the first suppliers. – The common responsibilities are a complex word, easy to say but tough to live through.*"

From these comments the role of other internet sources in the crisis communication was determined. The speed is rather slow but the audience is wider than sometimes with the social media. These medias are important opinion leaders that are then quoted to support arguments in the social media channels. In these cases it was worrying to see that these organizations tended to ignore that they should be commenting also these articles, to be able to influence on them. The direction of the messages was rather traditional one-to-many approach. This can be concerning if the organizations stop communicating with the media such as mainstream news especially, then these are forced to quote only social media content. These comments, when taken from the context, can change the whole meaning of the intended message. As a research objects these gave an overall picture of the crisis situations and helped determine the severity of them.

Media plays a very meaningful role with the social media crisis communication since the information about organization apologies should be available to everyone those also who do not have the access to social media platforms. These articles in various forms also shape the conversation going on in the social media that is why even though it could be argued that the medium used matters, still it is extremely important that during a crisis situation an organization takes into consideration the aspect of media with their social media strategies. Even though the discussion is held in the social media platforms the subject can be found from the news articles, blog texts or from the organizations own website.

4.2.2 Facebook as a discussion forum

Facebook as a social media platform gives an organization the ability to create their own page where they are able to put content in forms of text posts, photos, upload short videos, give live presentations and also allows all people to comment these. People are also able to post on their pages using their own profile and most often send direct messages to organization representatives via Facebook messenger. Some companies use nowadays this as their feedback channel. All in all it is very interactive platform that has a basis on the networking aspect. For example how messages spread in this platform should be noted. The posts the organization makes can be seen by their followers, those who seek out the organization via this platform or when a "fan" is active and for example likes, shares or comments these posts that organizations have made, their friends in the platform might see it too. Thus the organization might have as little as 200 followers but if their post is liked by 10 people and each of them have 200 friends this post might be seen over 2000 people.

Whenever there was a crisis situation with the organization all of the 11 cases studied here reacted in these somehow in this platform. They posted either

public apologies or replied to people's comments or posts made about the crisis thus engaging themselves in a conversation with these people. Not all did this, but the organizations that were deemed to make the most of the crisis situation and surviving it with the least damage were the ones engaging in this. In social media, some personalization should be in place even when talking about organizations. Openness and honesty are the cornerstones in social media platforms and those that succeeded in the matter, were the examples on how should this be from the organizations points of view.

The speed of this platform is considered medium, since these posts are seen by the followers and then it spreads possibly by their actions. The people following the organization are not always sure to receive the post either, that depends solely on the deep algorithms that takes place in each person social media sites but if they see it, and most importantly act on it, then they are receiving notifications and can react in real time to the information. This raises the question have these organizations made their posts so, that it will increase the likeliness of acting upon it by the followers? This might raise an assumption that then the organizations' posts would include an ordering tone but as it turned out, most of them tried to increase interest by silently linking a blog text saying it was interesting or addressing false rumours. In case 1 the SME received a citizen outburst of their campaign material and humorously addressed with a winking emoticon at the end of the link to the news article regarding it. They were able to make the humorous act upon the matter because they did apologize for the inconvenience, made a public announcement on the matter but first and foremost, had already personalized their social media image and talked to their followers through their posts very "human" way meaning, that their tone in their posts was friendly, informative and something you would see on your normal friends Facebook profile. Especially in this case, their followers also consisted of people that had apparently a relationship with the organization or otherwise were supportive because the origin of it. The comments this camping received from the social media fans were all positive or made with humorous tone in every post made in Facebook when the crisis was ongoing.

> Facebook follower: *"This ad is crazy good! A little extreme and rude as a good ad is supposed to be!"*

> Facebook follower: *"Excellent advertising! Thumbs up that you have the guts to do something like this when there are so many disapproving people around that will complain just about anything!"*

> Facebook follower: *"People in the city apparently have no sense of humour! :D"*

The underlying causes for these encouragements sometimes can be the slightly tight Finnish laws and rules from all kinds of boards that Finland has and the overall idea might be that whatever you might do, you are still doing it somehow wrong.

The organizations that were considered as successful ones in their image management, had posts that were filled with information on the ongoing crisis such as links to news, public apologies or addressed the issue but continued with their campaign. In case 12, that for example addressed the issue but continued with the campaign, the organization stayed true to their advertising campaign but answered people's comments with a tone that was apologetic in nature, but also suggested the other side of the events that could be categorized as a subtle counter argument. They used a polite tone in the discussion, promised to take actions and give the feedback further to their marketing department and even the replies to the next comments weren't hostile in nature, but encouraging towards the organization and suggested some mild alterations to the next campaign.

> Facebook follower: *"We were just yesterday laughing on [this campaigns message and the idea it gives about beauty], you should take things a bit further and take a model that is more diverse--"*

> Case 12, Large organization: *"Thank you [name] for your message and critical feedback! We appreciate the feedback coming from our customers – we are sorry to hear that our campaign message did not appeal to you. -- our model in the ads represents from our point of view very beautifully [the message of the campaign and encourages women everywhere to not to be anything but themselves!]--"*

The organizations that failed to do this, did not address the issue but a request later for people to not to spread false rumours going around the topic. They made excuses around the subject not actually apologizing their actions but giving a statement such as *"we regret the harm that this has caused to people who were offended"* circling around the subject.

As a crisis management platform Facebook appeared to be the primary choice for information spreading for organizations. The direction of discussion can be either many-to-many, one-to-many or even one-to-one. The organizations should strive for the direction where their intended target group feels the message was directed to them. All of the researched organizations addressed their crisis situation in one form or another. They often offered links to different sites that gave more information on the matter. The tone of the conversations were much more "corporate" in many cases, even though the people were sometimes actually asking or even demanding a straight answer from the organizations representatives. From the data was found at least one organization that had managed to personalize clearly their image in their Facebook page and one could argue that this helped them to survive through their situation that could have turned very much against them should they had let the conversation go on freely. Their personalized account was humorous and the language used was very much

"down to earth" which meant that their posts could have just as easily be considered to be ones normal Facebook friend's. People also commented this crisis situation with humour and in the end this organization ended up with more orders for their products due to this negative feedback that they managed to turn around.

When the tone of the organizations does not meet the peoples, it can turn on the organization extremely fast. There are always different people with different backgrounds behind the comments. Sometimes the discussion even turns to the people commenting rather than the organizations posts. A common insult for example in these kind of situations for users is to call somebody a "social justice warrior" which in Finnish is called "kukkahattutäti". These people are defined by the urban dictionary as *an individual who repeatedly and vehemently engages in arguments on social justice on the Internet, often in a shallow or not well-thought-out way*" (Ohlheiser, 2015). These people are not always to be taken as social media influencers especially if they are referred as one. They would wish to be these "opinion leaders" but unfortunately their points of views are somehow rather strict and cannot be taken as shaping the public opinion. The involvement of these people is not to be taken lightly still, because it often shows the organizations that they need to be taken some kind of actions in the matter in order to avoid a multiple this kind of negativity towards them. Following the ongoing discussion is important.

4.2.3 Twitter as a platform for opinion statements

Twitter as a social media platform is a place where people can take part of the conversation by using a hashtag (#) created for the topic to enter a discussion and target their comments by marking them to the comment with @username – symbol. The receivers of these messages are people or topics marked in the discussion and everyone following "trending" topics. Most people entering a discussion of a topic then continue following what others are saying about the matter by searching the topic or giving a comment directly to the one they want to discuss with. Sometimes people just want to say their peace about the topic, thus it was rather easy to pick up from the data the tone, as if people were for or against the subject. This also helped to identify the opinion leaders in the platforms, usually they were in Finland well known people that were active in the social media or other users that have made themselves known in the world of internet in Finland. For people, this was the channel where they would find the information should they need it but really, it was still mainly used to enter a discussion that was going around the topic with the overall public or pointing the comment to certain user or the organization itself.

For all of these case organizations it was almost mandatory to be represented and answer to the comments that were targeted to them because few notices were made from the data that really gave these things a basis. First, if the organization was not represented in this platform still was as sure as the sun will

rise that the discussion would continue on it and if this organization wasn't involved in it, it had no way to defend itself. One organization had a Twitter account but no activity towards the public discussion thus they were not able to do any crowd control. Most of the organizations had no visible representation of active Twitter users meaning people speaking for them when the events went down. Those who had, the discussion was buried much faster than the ones who did not act upon it. New topics of discussion come every day but it was noted that the topics changed much faster if the organizations were involved in the discussion. This alone is not sufficient, a proper other management methods should be in use also, but in cases 2, a SME and case 5, a large corporation, both companies were faced with an ethical crisis and in the case 1 they managed to get the people on their side with proper actions and the discussion was heated around the topic for a day whereas in case 5 they did not engage even in Twitter anyone else but their own CEO who made excuses around the topic, resulting that hostile comments were retrieved from over a month long period from this platform. Some comments are presented below.

> Twitter user response on case 5, Large corporation: *"You are probably admitting this because you would have gotten caught anyway. You are just trying to minimize the harm by "exposing" yourselves. You should consider incentives of the management should you continue with hiring managers with such low morale. Money is more important to you than customers trust towards you."*

And still with no proper response either from the organization or any opinion leaders support a week later the topic continues…

> Twitter users response on case 5, Large corporation*: "This is not a proper apology. You are just stating that too bad, we did the same as everyone else corrupted enough in this business and just a little anyway and in theory no harm was done to anyone. – "*

It was noticed also from other cases that in some crisis scenarios the discussion tone changed within hours in one day when the organization acted upon the matter that reached social media followers but in some cases the search words resulted discussion going on for days or even weeks which lead to that the data needed to be limited to cover the crucial time when the discussion was most heated and data plentiful and most versatile. Successful Twitter usage from the organizations included almost in every case that they had some social media persona talking on their behalf. There is really no telling if these people were somehow connected with the organization or talking only because they felt like saying these positive things. But also in the latter case it shows these organization have built legitimacy for them in the eyes of these social media users, so that people are willing to speak on behalf of them without other compensation other than possibly a social status as the "opinion leader" for example.

Social media influencer on Case 2, SME: *"#[The organization] is a model example. Sincere apology is the best way to kill #socialmediahype."*

Social media influencer on Case 2, SME: *"Am I sensing a disappointment in social media when the #[organization] was smart and apologized properly? Would people have wanted to rage about it some more still"?*

What can be considered as failed involvement in Twitter from organizations, was that the conversation seemed to continue without any effort from the organizations themselves. They did not engage themselves in the conversation and information was not available through their own accounts so people following trending topics couldn't see any comments that would have been supportive of the organization. If the situation was so, that public demanded an apology from the organization, even if they had done so, but not that visibly that it was recognized in Twitter, the discussion quickly heated towards very negative. These are just a few examples below on the comments that couple case organizations received the other one only lightly apologized or actually was saying that *"they regret the harm this has caused to people"* and also in the last one the organization thought they kind of apologized but mostly just try to make excuses to their mishaps. This shows, that even when you are represented in Twitter, you need to make your message clear in order to avoid "a storm in social media".

"Hey @[organization] your advertisement – is offensive and tactless. Now would be a good time to pull the ad and apologize."

"Has no one taught you (the organization) that it is offensive to pretend to apologize but not really doing so."

*"How hard is it to say one_f*n_word. Eight letters [in Finnish], very simple. Try at least."*

"I noticed that in the latter bulletins the apologizing was turned to feeling sorry about the situation, which is a totally different thing."

The usage of hashtags in this platform was interesting. These were used as to guide the readers about the content. It was noted from most of the Twitter discussions the international aspects people assume from the social media channels. Even though the comments were written in Finnish, the hashtags created were in English even though the discussion most likely did not continue outside of Finland in most of the cases. People also tend to use rather harsh language if they have strong opinions about the matter probably in the name of anonymity that goes around the internet. They also made other statements with these hashtags one example was for example where a public figure in Finland says that this complaint was not of any importance and literally used a hashtag #getalife in the end of the tweet. Also a common manner was to add hashtag of #xxx_gate in the end the "xxx" part meaning the word used in the said crisis. Often this #xxx_gate was used somewhat humorously intending that there is something comical about the

outbursts of this topic. These were created by the users to represent that this was now the heated conversation topic and one in need of an opinion. From the literature discussed in earlier chapters it was noticed that in large scale crises the law enforcement officials for example created these hashtags for people to follow the discussion. Nowadays it is very common for television shows for example to use these. If the organization is not able to create one that catches the public agenda they need to be monitoring the discussion and the nature of the hashtags can show some signs of the severity of the case.

4.2.4 Instagram for image improvement

Instagram is a social media platform where an organization is able to create an account and post pictures with title that their followers can then comment on. It consists of images, videos and texts that were the objects of this analysis. Most commonly the people following the said organization have some kind of connection with the organization, their brand or products. This platform then should be moderated keeping in mind that these people are most likely to see their posts limiting the paid advertisement that the platform offers to organizations also. These paid advertisements were not included in the analysis, so the object of analysis was the organization account and in one case the posts people had made that had association with this ongoing crisis situation, because the organization itself consisted of multiple subsidiaries.

Instagram as a social media platform was used in all of the cases as platform where the organization was able to enhance their image. There were only two organizations that directly appointed in their pictures that a crisis had happened, but used images to remind their followers that the brand is still alive and well. Those organizations that were able to turn around the negative image that had come from the crisis used Instagram as a platform to help their organization to stay in the minds of their followers. One of the case organizations opened an Instagram account after the crisis had been managed in other platforms. The people had posted pictures of their campaign but the discussion did not go that far in this platform. The organization's owner said afterward that *"Instagram really is an awesome platform. Too bad we only opened it just now"*. For crisis management purposes it is good to be in that platform to be able to follow the publications, and when the crisis has passed, it is a good place to remind followers on the organizations core activities.

4.3   Crisis management and image control strategies

These strategies were analysed from the stakeholders perspective on what actions did these organizations take when they were confronted a different type of crises. From the data three different categories for crises emerged. First genre for

crisis situations were that public responded to the actions that the organization had taken. This concerned for example too controversial advertising campaign that insulted some target group or was in other ways politically incorrect. In some of the cases the negative feedback grew so strong, that the organization was forced to take down the campaign and apologize. Even though some campaigns did cause negative feedback from public, these organizations had an edge in social media platforms and were able to basically ignore the public opinion and continue with the campaign anyway. This then turned to normalization of the situation. Second crisis genre identified different ethical crises and response methods in those. These ethical crises considered organizations own mishaps or mistakes towards their stakeholders in forms of product tampering, illegal suppliers or employee mistakes. These kind of crises were the most severe in this categorization, so in these situations all of the response methods were found to be in use. Trying to use normalization in these situations might go extremely wrong if not done absolutely right and examples of both situations will be provided, as in where it is suitable to try to go back to normal as soon as possible and where should the organization absolutely be involved in the discussion. Last category that was identified was internal crisis situation. In these cases, sometimes they were at the same time ethical as well as internal crises but when the internal crisis was made to concern also someone from the outside of the organization people reacted more negative than when the organization was confronted an internal crisis that was harming only people in the organization and publics feedback was mostly supportive. According to the SCCT crisis clusters, all of the three crisis situations mentioned here belonged to the third and most severe crisis cluster. These are always seen as the organization's fault by the stakeholders and thus they hold extreme reputational threat to organizations image. The purpose of this thesis was to found out how the organizations handle social media in crisis situations, so I argue that the data is richer when the crisis situations have received a lot of attention from the stakeholders. Some of the crisis situations might have partly belonged to some other crisis cluster mentioned in the SCCT thus they were less severe in the eyes of the stakeholders. (Coombs, 2007.) Using critical discourse analysis as a tool the context can be revealed.

These case organizations had a mix of crisis types and also multiple different response methods for the public and in the next three chapters I will take a closer look on each of these and provide examples on how and why these organizations were able to choose a certain method and still manage to keep the positive image of their organizations and others failed to do so. These are all collected in the Table 5 but explained further in the sections below.

TABLE6 Crisis management strategies executed in social media

Communi-cative effort / Crisis situa-tion	Apology	Delete the campaign	Explanation	Move the re-sponsibility to someone else	Normaliza-tion
Negative feedback from the audience regarding an issue	x	x			x
Ethical crisis	x	x	x	x	x
Internal crisis			x		x

4.3.1 Negative feedback from public regarding an issue

There could be found three approaches in these kind of situations where the crisis had emerged because the organization had done something that caused the public to respond to these actions. The used methods were apology, deleting the campaign or trying to normalize the situation as fast as possible. In the latter the issue was stated always on some level in each case, but neglected to refer afterword. These three approaches were used in crises that emerged in other crisis categories also, but there can be found differences in approaches even though they are named the same. In these situations crises were seen as something that was the organizations fault and needed to be corrected. The level of a crisis in these situations varied of course from the severe image maintaining issues to situations where the situations or mishaps were more easily rectified. It seemed though that whenever the crisis included negative feedback from the stakeholders, no explanations were met with positive feedback but actions were that counted in these situations. These also included that the organizations should not try to move the blame but admit their wrongdoings and try to keep the open and honest discussion about the subject open.

Whenever the situation was that the organization received negative feedback, public demanded an apology in some form from the organization. This should have been done openly and in multiple platforms to make clear to everyone that the issue has been handled and apologized by the organization. Some organizations failed to apologize visibly enough or at all and this caused a few uproars for example in Twitter where people were asking for the apology and why hadn't the organizations done so yet. If not done right also brought up arguments.

Twitter user: *"Hey, would you for the love of god just apologize straight up. You messed up, it's no use talking about the internet etiquette in this sh**strom"*

Twitter user: *"You can be sure I am no longer purchasing your products in the future. Casual "sorry about that…" does not change the fact that you have lied knowingly! My trust for your company is gone."*

This had also a benefit when these claims were made in Twitter, since the etiquette also gives people the chance to correct one another. Even though these people were then corrected and proved that the organization had indeed apologized, these kinds of comments highlight the fact that something had gone a tad wrong in the way of proceeding with the social media communication with these organizations, since the information had not received all stakeholders apparently interested in the matter.

In few of the situations was that an ad campaign was found offensive and this caused major amount of negative feedback. Besides apologizing their mishaps, few organizations chose to the pull their campaign altogether. Not just that these organizations pull their campaigns, but they also deleted all their posts about the subject in social media channels. This approach is justified but also is a matter of discussion topic for the public. The note that once something is on the internet it will stay is likely very true since it was rather easy to retrieve the deleted posts from the comments because someone had already screenshotted the post and was sharing it with others.

The public opinion amongst professionals about the actions taken in social media was that in the very fast moving environment the situation should be normalized as fast as possible and continue using the social media in their original purposes for organizations. This meant actions such as involving people in competitions in these platforms or for advertising purposes. What some of the organizations neglected to notice, was that the issue was still discussed even though they tried to move the conversation to other topics. This approach was rather two way street and on the other hand trying to return to normal was a good thing but if they neglected to keep the open and honest discussion about the crisis going between stakeholders it most likely did not giving them a very "human" picture of the organization.

4.3.2 Ethical crisis

Ethical crises were the most severe in these three crisis type categories. These included situations where a target group was insulted by the organization, the organizations had deliberately done something ethically wrong or that some key stakeholder that had direct link to the organization was the origin of the crisis. In these crisis situations was noticed, that all of the response strategies were used either alone or as a mix, but most used were explanations. Again people demanded apologies but also explanations from these organizations about how and why this thing could have happened.

Most severe mistake that emerged from the data was whenever the organization did not take responsibility from their actions and tried to move the blame to a third party. In these cases the publics respond was mostly negative. This

could be seen from the light apologies in their formal apology letters that were distributed in their social media channels which were then followed by a very long explanation that basically tried to move the blame of what happened saying that they were forced to do so because of for example *"demanding industry standards"*. These were tightly together with the before said explanations. The data in this set pointed that people wanted explanations after the apology and only when they would ask for it. Moving the blame to a third party did not go well with the public but explanations were accepted after corrective actions such as apology that had with it for example a promise of donation to a charity.

Whenever the crisis was ethical of nature, apology was the first and foremost thing to do. One organization failed to do this altogether and their image ended up suffering almost irreparable damage in the eyes of the stakeholders. In Facebook an organization took rather neutral stand on things even though people were commenting very aggressively on their posts about the situation. The organization simply share the news as info in their social media channels and people started answering to them. To some of the comments the organization did answer. They shared the public notification they made in their Facebook page and people started answering this post resulting in hundreds of comments. Their publication said that they wanted to correct the rumours going around about the topic.

Case 6, Large corporation's post in Facebook: *"Our briefing regarding these news: link to their own website."*

Facebook user commented on this: *"You should be at least ashamed of yourselves, but I assume you don't know how to do that… You are in line telling everyone how to rob the poor of their money but not taking the responsibility of your sayings at all. Do you realize that your actions are part illegal or is it just your goal anyway in this industry?"*

In their announcement they firmly denied their aim to do such illegal they were accused of. They tried to put the blame on the media in their announcement and deny their part of the matter. Regardless of this attempt, the organization had very much tarnished their reputation in the eyes of the stakeholders. They used phrases such as *"this organization does not accept this kind of behaviour"* or *"the publications about the matter have formed an image that this organization is involved in this matter"*. The organizations' own "social media team" was active during the crisis in Facebook commenting about the situation to the people. The hardest part thinking about the discussion was for example that the topic in Finnish context is very much forbidden. Finland is known for its law abiding ways and this kind of legal but illegal actions made happen by a Finnish organization was unheard of.

One organization used deleting their campaign as a crisis management method. This was used together with apologizing and a corrective action. They managed to control the crisis in multiple fronts so this time the deletion of the campaign was successful and they were able to also normalize the situation after

their own mishap that included ethical issues. This was only one of the five ethical crises that managed to push through the crisis situation and save their image after the crisis situation. The comments turned from negative to positive and few people were mentioning in their comments that this kind of handling the situation gave them a very positive image of the organization regardless of the ethical crisis they had confronted.

> *"-- The information distribution and aftermath is once properly managed. Mistakes happen and people learn from them. Good for you! Points to Turku and you got at least one fan more."*

4.3.3 Internal crisis

There could be found three crisis situations where the issues were considered internal of nature. In case 3 the issue itself did not concern stakeholders outside the organization but needed to be openly communicated to the outsiders. Should the issue been kept inside the organization the aftermath could have arguably done some serious harm to the organizations image and reputation. Due to their actions in social media, the discussion between stakeholders was considered only positive of nature when the organization received a lot of sympathy and approval of their actions from the public telling the how great of a job they are doing and keep up the good spirit within the organization. Also the people who had experience about the organization wanted to express themselves as those people so for example few people commented for example *"I have gone home. The last mark on the orienteering checkpoint •"*.

> Case 3 Facebook user commented their post about the matter: *"I think also that the picture in this article is beautiful and perfect for this kind of sad news. – The creator of graphic designer has succeeded in their work."*

Case 4 and 8 had a mix of internal crisis and ethical that were considered to involve also stakeholders. In an internal crisis the communication to the mainstream media and social media is important. This then helps people to be informed about the subject and kills rumours that could start to spread. This happened in case 8 where the organization neglected to inform about their internal issues to the public in a proper way and they got the public and also for example one labour union demanding clearance to the matter. In these crisis situations these organizations used explanations and tried to normalize the situation as soon as possible after the crisis had happened. This only was successful with the case 3 that was considered not to have any stakeholders involved in the matter from the outside of the organization.

> Labor union's headline that started to spread in the social media channels by users: *"They had no right to fire their employee in this Twitter case. The human rights deal ensures the freedom of opinion also in social media."*

In the other situations these organizations neglected to answer to the publics demands for explanations stating that this discussion is now over. This heated up the conversations going on in these social media platforms. In internal crises even when it does not involve outsiders from the organization the briefing on the matter should be done properly. The public needs to hear that the organization has taken actions to repair this mishap and they will judge even based on these. As clearly stated by the labor union, everyone has a freedom of opinion even in social media but it is very much also up to the organizations how they are seen by the public.

4.4   Using different crisis management methods in a mix

Often crisis situations can be categorized in multiple sectors involving a number of stakeholders. The traditional way from way back of doing one crisis management guidelines only works probably when you are required to call to emergency number and the steps are always the same. But in the case when an organization is facing a possible uproar in social media due to their crisis, they need to be able to implement the correct crisis management methods in correct channels and be involved in the discussion. One organization for example used only one method of responding to people commenting their actions both in Facebook and Instagram and this did not go well with people following the discussion. To almost every comment this organization received in their Facebook post the organizations social media team members' answered with the almost exact same message back:

> The organization: *"We regret the news about this matter, and that it has then caused resentment in our customer towards us. The things covered in the news have not been executed in Finland."* – Social media team member

> The organization: *"Hey. This matter has caused us very much sorrow and we are truly sorry about the resentment this has caused with our customers. We want to be clear that we do not approve [this illegality]--.* - Social media team member

> Follower: *"Can't you do anything else but copy and paste your replies? Do you even read the comments? Just simply copying and pasting your messages you show that you still don't care at all."*

> Follower: *"Typical jargon, you can't even stand behind your comments. If you really want to clear the situation, at least be honest. Those explanatory cliché sentences only makes you look like a fool. People are not stupid, don't underestimate them…--"*

And even after that the organization replied to one commentator: *"Hi. This matter causes us also very much sorrow and we are deeply sorry about the resentment this has caused with our customers. We're sorry to hear that you decided to change from our services. Thank you anyway of your time with us.* – Social media team member

The above comments both from the organization and the followers demonstrate further that some kind of explanations and apologies would have been needed in the situation and the organization as large as they are, should not rely on their already built reputation or the idea of that the storm will pass. This organizations mishap was also that they did in some time send an apology that seemed as it had done quickly with a word document and not at all by the standards that an organization any organization should have. This was noticed by the public since even a right kind of template for the announcements creates legitimacy towards the attempts. See the Figure 1 as an example of a quickly done announcement (left side) and one made to proper template (right side) highlighting the company official graphics.

A follower commented the left side bulletin in social media: *"Really professional looking leaflet. Is it a screenshot from a word-document?"*

FIGURE 1 Model examples of bad and good formal apologies or explanations from organizations

5 DISCUSSION

The role of social media in crisis situations as information source is increasing as the usage of social media and internet grows. Findings show that the importance of social media for people is high, and if the information is not available there it creates feedback, often negative. In different stakeholder groups different channels are more important than others and if the organization is not represented in the given platform, their stakeholders in that channel or platform are not receiving the relevant information about the on-going situation. First the nature of these platforms and how they were used was analysed together with the crisis communication methods these organizations used. In the discussion I go through the ideologies, politics behind these methods and discuss the most usable crisis management methods in social media in the eyes of the stakeholders. I shall also take a look at the original research questions to figure out what kind of solutions to these was found.

Crisis management in online environment especially in the social media platforms has become a struggle for organizations. Researchers have made a notion of the fact that the internet or social media users' skills are developing quickly and could be already or at least in the future be called "net savvy", meaning they have more knowledge on how social media behaves and can spot how, when and why something was published in it (Eriksson, 2012; Lorenzo et al., 2007). It was seen also in this study how people were able to track down the original sources such as post the organization had deleted and they still wanted to know what the original trigger for the matter was. They also were sharing the information between one another during the crisis. Social media is much harder to control than the traditional media because the internet can act both as trigger and as facilitator to a crisis. Social media platforms also are a very fast paced environment that have given crises a new way to spread and be more unpredictable. According to Gonzáles-Herrero & Smith (2008) key to any issues management is to prepare, identify, track and manage the potential crisis situations and manage their path. In this case study both of these situations were represented where the origin of the crisis was in the online environment and those where the discussion about the situation continued after the crisis in the social media platforms.

It has been argued that the public organizations do not have the resources to properly prepare for crisis situations, let alone to be able to then execute a proper social media crisis management when they are in one, but in this case study these are considered as equals with the private organizations (Eriksson & Olsson, 2016). From the data set it was noticed that public- or non-profit organizations actually tended to be more active in these social media platforms. Other organizations posts in Facebook ranged during the crisis from one to four, but one public organization made up to 7 posts during their crisis. Even though to the actual analysis from the other public organization was taken only one post, they were extremely active in social media platforms otherwise. This can be said

to be about the easiness of social media and how it is perhaps a cheaper alternative to other communication but it still requires a lot of attention from these organizations and resources to manage it properly.

Using different social media platforms

The first research question was asking how the organizations are executing their crisis management strategies in selected social media platforms. Unfortunately it seems that the organizations are using these platforms as one and the same. In some cases where the information is the primary thing to give further to people and the discussion second, this might be an efficient management method as was demonstrated in the Dabner's study (2012) of the university's earthquake recovery social media usage. They decided that university's own website was the official information forum about the earthquake, but also Facebook was used as a communication channel and they created earthquake recovery site there the next day where the discussion went on about the matter. The idea that all the information is available together in one source is well but the differences between platforms should not be neglected. From the data set it seemed that organizations treated all the platforms as the same and were not really modifying their messages to each of them. Most commonly used method was to provide a link to for example in the news articles about the subject or should they have made one, to an apology leaflet.

Differences that needed to be taken into account with all of the three platforms was the audience, tone of discussion, and how informative should be in the given platform (see table 2 of the differences between platforms). The receivers of the messages distributed in the social media channels were slightly different. In Facebook the followers tended to be the stakeholders who held some kind of relationship with the organizations either they were for the organizations standards or perhaps customers. They took it rather personally if the organizations were in a crisis and if the crisis was really intense, announced that they would not buy their products or services anymore. This differ from Twitter in that sense that the messages were more as opinions about the matter and these people wanted to take part to the conversation because of the topic rather than the organization. Audience in the Instagram were again more like fans of the organization. Some or even a majority might have been current customers, but Instagram as a platform was used to image enhancing purposes with trending photos and to show of the organizations message, products, and what they were doing, so these people might also only like the organization's social media content and thus be for example future customers. One important note especially on Facebook was the receivers of the message. The amounts shared and otherwise acted towards the post in Facebook helps the organization to get their message spread to people who are not actively following their social media content. This was noticed then that not only should the posts in Facebook be made informative, but also so, that it would increase the actions taken from the followers.

Tone of discussion in Facebook should have been more two-sided with these crisis situations. The organizations had the habit of just using Facebook as

information channel rather than discussion. This goes along with the findings of Eriksson et al. (2016) with the notion of that users are using the platform for discussion about the matter but organizations have trouble of engaging themselves in one. This is something the organizations should be trying to do more to be more effective in their social media management. It was noticed that Twitter is mostly used to really discuss about the subject and for targeted questions for the organization about the ongoing situations. Facebook then is used to comment and state the opinion more freely and aggressively. As an information channel these platforms also differ from one another. These findings partly fit together with findings of Ki & Nekmat (2014) with the notion of that both channels, Facebook and Twitter, were used as information channels and people were extremely upset if they did not find it from these channels.

Other media sources played a role in the social media platforms but as Gilpin (2010) noticed, the boundaries have greatly been blurred. In social media platforms the "gatekeeper" advantage of the traditional news has been lost and actions needs to be rather quick in order to survive the fast moving environment of the internet. Often it also showed that outside media sources was somehow neglected by the organizations and they rather commented in social media of their actions and the media picked up their comments from there. Still some common features was noticed with the organizations crisis communication strategies. As Macnamara (2012) and Veil et al. (2011) noted already in their studies same could be detected here that these organizations often used kind of one-way communication with the stakeholders even in social media.

When using social media platform as a crisis management tool and implementing crisis communication strategies in it, the organizations must pay attention to the discussion aspect of things. This means also following of the conversation of the stakeholders and getting the tone from them. If the organizations try to answer to the people in social media, they need a clear voice and personality. They simply cannot answer to each comment as an automatic *we are sorry for the regret this has caused to our customers* tone. The platform etiquettes must be taken also into a consideration and for example organizations should be aware of the context of emoticons if they intend to use them in their communication. In one case the discussion about the topic towards the end consisted only of emoticons rather than actual words but these are considered nowadays as statements also and it could be that in the future their meaning is more important than it is now, for example Facebook allows people nowadays "react" to a post with emoticons that indicate emotions rather than the traditional "like" reaction only. In the same category the meanings of hashtags used in the crisis situation or even when talking about the organization, should be taken into account.

Effective image control strategies in crises

The second research question aimed to identify the different strategies these organizations used in the crisis situation in social media environment. These strategies were identified as apologizing, excuse, deleting the campaign, moving of

the responsibility to a third party and normalization of the situation. These strategies were often used in a combination and also in the theory mentioned corrective move was sometimes used. This was put together with the apologizing strategy since it always included one. In the Situational Crisis Communication Theory, that was used to determine the severity of a crisis it also introduces the most commonly used response strategies which are denial, excuse, justification and apology (Coombs, 2007; Coombs, 1995; Coombs & Holladay, 1996). Of these, it was noticed that denial was sometimes in the beginning used in a crisis situation, but the demand of the social media users grew so strong that the organizations were forced to give some kind of answer to the situation in the end. Most of the crises were thought to be at some level the organizations own fault so an apology was almost always demanded from the organization. If it managed to do that without the public demand the results turned up to be a lot better. The SCCT theory has been tested in the social media environment and was found out that accepting full responsibility in low level crises were met negatively by the public. But in this case study even if the organizations for example had made a campaign that got negative feedback from the public but decided to continue with it anyhow, the public was asking for apology and sometimes gotten one. This is still accepting the responsibility in that case and collapses with the findings of the other studies. These can be the cultural aspects this study has shown how crisis management in social media should be executed in Finland. Apologizing seemed as the first and foremost thing to do whenever an organization was faced with a potential crisis situation. This alone did not do, but the organizations should have been involved in the ongoing conversation, killing rumours and giving explanations. The situations are always different from each other and crisis response strategies should be decided accordingly.

The effectiveness towards crisis management attempts in social media were defined taking note on the tone of the discussion, changes in it, and using the changes in the strategies as turning points. Organizations need to build trust and legitimacy in the social media in the eyes of the stakeholders to be able to execute effective crisis management strategies. People are seeking actual conversation with the organization rather than cold corporate tone notifications on the matter (Gonzáles-Herrero & Smith, 2008). The social media platforms were also used as information sources so this kind of notifications were in place during the crisis and people reacted to them. They also wanted a discussion between the organizations, if they felt that the explanations weren't good enough they reacted to that. Some organizations neglected to address all the stakeholders interested in the matter.

Changing a strategy based on public response

Every crisis situation is original but nevertheless it is always threat to the image of the organization. Overall strategies should include the note of the political situation in the country or target group, basically meaning that organizations should be aware of the environment outside the organization and between the people. The year 2016 was highlighted with sexual orientation talk due to the

marriage equality laws coming through and still these organizations felt that it was okay to include these aspects somehow in their campaigns. Response strategies should then be decided based on the type of the crisis and surrounding atmosphere amongst people. The severity in these studied crisis situations was so that with apologizing an organization was able to do some damage control only if they were acting before the public started loudly asking where the apology they wanted was. The public wanted honest and real discussion between the organization and explanations after the apology on how this situation could have happened. The organization should be careful though to not to blame a third party if the fault was considered their own. With inactions in the social media the organizations was bound to do more harm than good for their reputation and image.

My last research question was asking did the organizations seem to change their crisis management responses due to audience response. This was rarely the case seen in these crisis situations. They might have offered some sort of apology or explanation after the public loudly demanded one. The organization should however be prepared to change and adjust their crisis communication strategies based on how the public reacts. As Gilpin (2010) noted, this is important when the platforms are as complex as the microblogging site Twitter for example and considers of multiple stakeholder groups all with their own opinion on the matter.

Suggestions for effective crisis management in social media

It was already Veil et al. (2011) who noted that the public is no longer simply object that need information about the ongoing situations but that they are part of the conversation. This is one thing that the professional using social media in the crisis situations need to remember. Social media has given the organizations a tremendous tool for communication but as in all tools you need to be able to use them correctly to get the best results. It has also come with threats in forms of hackers, rumour spreading and shadow- and copycat websites.

Crisis management during a crisis does need preparing oneself to this situation. Moreover in social media, if the organization is active only during the crisis it has more difficulties managing its path toward positive outcomes. Being absent from this arena in most cases can be very harmful for the organizations operations and overall image. If the organizations is not on the platform controlling and effecting to the tone of discussion, the conversation about this "trending topic" will continue without their participation, counter-arguments, or justifications.

For effective crisis management the reacting time is essential. Marken (2009) said it short that when dealing with social media it is essential to listen, respond and improve. There are already good technologies available for organizations on following social media and the chatter going on in it about them. This helps with the time management aspect and gives the organizations a chance to spot situations before they are starting go viral and react before this happens. Those organizations that were quick to react and anticipated the coming crisis

were found to be more successful in their crisis management in social media environment. When it comes to executing crisis management methods in the social media platforms it is also essential to make it sound a little more natural but at the same time polite. People are really smart to spot very corporate tone notifications, which does not give them any real feelings about the situation and they start possibly reacting hostile towards the crisis management attempts. This goes best with organizations when they follow the ongoing discussion between their followers to get the idea of the natural tone their audience is willing to listen. This can be done for example using or creating proper hashtags that people then can use when talking about the matter. On the other hand, should the organization actually wish that their information goes viral amongst stakeholders, they need to be able to properly modify it to catch the wanted audience. For example in Facebook sharing, reacting and commenting makes the post be seen to other people not in your network also.

Openness and honesty and a real discussion between the stakeholders helps to calm the situation in the social media. This shows the public that the organizations cares about their opinions and are willing to change if the situations demands it. Sometimes a spokesperson or social media influencer can help to calm things down and it was seen in the social media that when a person with legitimacy was speaking for the organization this received a lot less hostile comments from the public.

Even though the actual strategy used matters there is still a lingering questions which is more important, the medium or the message? The findings of this research suggest that both medium and the message content needs to be considered together and a part especially in the case of social media. When planning crisis management strategies the organization can't put all social media platforms as one and the same. They also need to start thinking the social media platforms as what they are intended and actually used by the stakeholders and start dropping the idea that it was built for them as an advertising space. The organizations are in clear need for some serious reality check on how these platforms behave if they wish to successfully prepare and control their crisis situations.

6   CONCLUSION

Organizations still need to give a little more attention to their actions in social media. The aim was to figure out how effective their actions towards social media were in times of crises. It turns out that the apparently organizations have the will of being involved in it, but they still need to pay attention to the word "social" in social media that indicates the interactive attributes this type of communication requires. When examining the use of social media platforms and chosen crisis management strategies, few suggestions emerged from this analysis. First and foremost these organizations need to be represented in social media platforms in the first place. Not including social media in organizations operations is not an option anymore (Branicki & Agyei, 2015; Haataja et al., 2016). Second, the actual usage of these platforms should be noted by these organizations as mentioned in the beginning the need for an education on the matter is vital. Third they need to consider the fact that the conversations are between the public and them, and get out of the idea that these platforms were made for their advertising purposes. The one-way communication method simply does not work in these platforms anymore where the need for open and honest discussion is needed.

Critical discourse analysis helped identifying reasons for the discussions as well as the choices behind the words said or written. I could have taken the point of view of only looking the content and not thinking about the reasons or consequences of these and simply share results of that this is crisis management in 2016. This thesis was intended to as well for management of organizations so they are able to pick up tips, methods and ways for crisis communication and operating on social media platforms during one, as well as give them something to think about and point out aspects where they should still be educated on the matter. Much like is impossible to give exact guidelines for people on what to do in business meetings, it is possible to give them the vocabulary of the field, guides on what is considered polite and tactics on how to keep the presentation interesting. Crisis management is very much this but that in social media the aspect of "social" should be taken into account strongly. In communication there are always two parties at least involved.

There are a lot of crisis communication theories and case studies related on maintaining the image of an organization. In times of crisis, choosing the right way to communicate in social media in order to maintain this is vitally important for an organization. Especially the speed of how things evolve in social media still amazes professionals at times. In social media these crises have also a possibility to grow out of proportion or totally change directions depending on how they are handled. In 2017 we are still not 100 % in the situation where crisis communication overall works only on the internet and social media environment. There are still people who do not own internet and need the information from traditional sources, especially when talking about large scale crises such as natural disasters or terrorism (Olsson, 2014). Organizations nowadays whether a public or private ones should still be involved in the social media especially if they

consider that their target group considers current age group of internet users. Whenever they are facing crisis situations, they hold always some sort of threat to an organizations image that can be linked to their overall operations and success. It is important that the professionals address the need to handle crises in social media environment in a correct way. In the end it will help the organization to preserve its image and possibly save its business. Social media is one of the largest changes in communication scenes ever, but in the end the problem may just not be as bad as it seems (Kolek, 2009). We just need to find out how to utilize the new technology to our advantage and this thesis provides some guidelines for this.

Current crisis communication theories lacks somewhat the context of social media which leaves too much room for interpretation and can lead to wrong kind of communication. If things are incorrectly interpreted, it can be extremely harmful for the image of an organization. Finland is considered one of the leading tech countries in the world, and the usage of social media is growing constantly amongst all citizens so the need to utilize it right in the context of this nation's net etiquette is important. A lot of alternative theory according to crisis management can be found from the field of public relations but some of it was not included in the study since it was found not relevant when considering the study at hand.

This thesis has limitations and for example it could include also discussion and more research about how for example prior exposure to a crisis affects the outcomes of messages delivered in social media by organizations and does it have an effect on what media the messages are from (Liu et al., 2015). It was not also determined in numbers or any other means exactly how much the public expected actions from the organizations during these crises. Also the real effects of this crises could be studied more, this study implicated that some harm was done to the image in some cases but not how much.

In the future, a deeper analysis of the actual need for social media usage from the organizations could be investigated. Also this case could be continued with a study that investigates in the longer run the effects of these executed crisis management strategies had for the organizations image. The topic of crisis management and executing crisis communication strategies in the social media environment continues engaging researchers. As noted the internet and social media especially is a fast moving environment and all the time there are new platforms to investigate for researchers. Some public figures for example use Snapchat (a video, photo and text sharing quick-messaging application) to answer people's comments. All these new applications give a rich opportunities for future researchers to look through if these have an effect on organizations crisis management strategies.

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