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Abstract

This study investigated the effect of crisis communication management on organizational performance at Kenya Pipeline Company, a state-owned enterprise central to Kenya's energy security. Anchored on the Situational Crisis Communication Theory, the research examined how initial response time, recovery time, and update frequency influence key performance indicators such as revenue growth, profitability, and operational efficiency. A descriptive research design with a quantitative orientation was adopted, using stratified random sampling to collect data from 280 respondents directly involved in crisis management and communication. Data were collected through structured questionnaires and analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. The descriptive results indicated that respondents agreed effective communication practices particularly timely responses ($M = 3.37$), frequent updates ($M = 3.36$), and clear messaging ($M = 3.43$) enhance coordination, reduce confusion, and strengthen stakeholder trust. Inferential analysis showed that crisis communication management strongly predicts organizational performance, with regression results indicating $R = .991$, $R^2 = .982$, $F(1,63) = 3535.741$, and a standardized coefficient $\beta = .991$ ($p < .001$). These findings confirm that 98.2% of the variation in performance outcomes is explained by communication practices, underscoring the centrality of structured communication frameworks in driving resilience and efficiency. The study concludes that crisis communication management is a strategic determinant of organizational performance. It recommends that Kenya Pipeline Company institutionalize structured communication protocols, integrate them with business continuity systems, invest in staff training, and adopt digital platforms for real-time updates. Such measures will enhance recovery timelines, protect reputation, and secure stakeholder confidence during crises.

Keywords: *Crisis Communication Management, Organizational Performance, Kenya Pipeline Company, Situational Crisis Communication Theory, State-Owned Enterprises*

1.0 Background to the Study

Crisis communication management has become one of the most decisive competencies for organizations in an era marked by volatility, uncertainty, complexity, and ambiguity (VUCA). Increasingly frequent crises ranging from pandemics and cyber-attacks to climate-induced disruptions and supply chain breakdowns have demonstrated that effective communication can determine whether organizations merely survive or emerge stronger (World Economic Forum, 2023; Coombs, 2020). In the oil and gas sector, where operations are highly visible and risks are

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systemic, poor communication during a crisis often escalates reputational damage, regulatory scrutiny, and financial losses (Krause, 2022; Al-Faraj & Elian, 2022). Scholars note that communication in crisis contexts must go beyond reactive statements to embrace proactive planning, timely dissemination of accurate information, stakeholder engagement, and feedback mechanisms that enable adjustment of strategies in real time (Fearn-Banks, 2021; Thakur & Hale, 2020).

The performance of organizations is equally multi-dimensional, extending beyond financial indicators to encompass operational efficiency, customer satisfaction, employee engagement, and social legitimacy. For state-owned enterprises, particularly in energy, performance also reflects the capacity to deliver national mandates such as energy security and industrialization (Government of Kenya, 2024; Singh & Gupta, 2023). The balanced scorecard approach advanced by Kaplan and Norton (1996) illustrates that sustainable performance requires integrating financial and non-financial outcomes, ensuring that resilience, trust, and innovation are valued alongside profitability. In contexts where crises are recurrent, organizations that embed structured communication strategies demonstrate faster recovery, improved stakeholder confidence, and enhanced long-term competitiveness (Vogus & Sutcliffe, 2020; Ochieng, 2021).

The relationship between crisis communication and organizational performance is widely acknowledged in management literature, as effective communication strategies directly influence operational continuity, stakeholder confidence, and reputational outcomes. Scholars argue that organizations which communicate promptly and transparently during crises reduce uncertainty, restore trust, and minimize the escalation of disruptions, thereby improving efficiency and market stability (Coombs, 2020; Fearn-Banks, 2021).

Empirical studies further demonstrate that communication quality during a crisis is positively associated with customer satisfaction, employee engagement, and regulatory compliance, all of which are integral to organizational performance (Krause, 2022; Ochieng, 2021). Situational Crisis Communication Theory emphasizes that tailored communication aligned with the nature of the crisis enhances legitimacy and protects long-term reputation, which translates into sustainable performance outcomes (Thakur & Hale, 2020; Vogus & Sutcliffe, 2020). In public enterprises, particularly in energy sectors where crises affect national economies and social stability, structured communication frameworks have been linked to improved recovery timelines and stronger stakeholder loyalty (Ndungu, 2022; Singh & Gupta, 2023). Thus, the nexus between crisis communication and performance reflects a strategic alignment where clear, timely, and credible messages act as a lever for resilience and organizational success.

Globally, oil corporations have increasingly institutionalized crisis communication as part of broader risk governance frameworks. U.S. majors like ExxonMobil and Chevron rapidly reconfigured communication channels during COVID-19 to reassure markets, maintain transparency, and sustain stakeholder confidence amid demand fluctuations (Smith & Johnson, 2021; Harris et al., 2020). National oil companies such as Saudi Aramco and Petrobras integrated communication not only as a corporate tool but also as a mechanism for fulfilling state-directed mandates, demonstrating how strategic communication influences both market continuity and national policy outcomes (Al-Faraj & Elian, 2022; European Environment Agency, 2021). In Africa, firms such as Sasol in South Africa and Engen have emphasized communication with regulators and communities as part of crisis strategies, while regional responses to health and

infrastructure crises have underscored the importance of trusted messengers and localized engagement (Sharma et al., 2022; Africa CDC, 2022).

Across Africa, the practice of crisis communication management has gained renewed prominence as organizations confront recurrent challenges ranging from public health emergencies to energy supply disruptions. The Ebola outbreak in West Africa and the COVID-19 pandemic highlighted how timely and transparent communication determines not only organizational continuity but also public trust in institutions (WHO, 2021; Africa CDC, 2022). Scholars argue that in environments where infrastructure and governance systems are fragile, effective communication becomes an indispensable strategy for mitigating misinformation and ensuring coordinated responses (Adamu et al., 2023; Muthoni, 2023).

In the oil and gas sector, African enterprises have faced crises associated with volatile global prices, infrastructural limitations, and socio-political instability. South African companies such as Sasol and Engen responded to supply disruptions and transition pressures by investing in more robust communication frameworks with regulators and communities, recognizing that dialogue and transparency reduce uncertainty and sustain consumer confidence (Sharma et al., 2022). Similarly, in Nigeria and Ghana, national petroleum agencies and major operators have institutionalized crisis briefings and multi-channel advisories as mechanisms for stabilizing markets during price fluctuations, refinery breakdowns, or security-related incidents (Akinyemi & Adejumo, 2018; Ahmed et al., 2022). These measures illustrate how crisis communication functions not only as a corporate safeguard but also as a public service in markets where petroleum products are tied closely to livelihoods and national stability.

Moreover, regional studies emphasize the centrality of community engagement as part of crisis communication in Africa. By leveraging trusted intermediaries such as local leaders, religious figures, and civil society organizations, enterprises enhance the credibility of their messages and bridge gaps caused by limited formal infrastructure (Ochieng, 2021; Ndungu, 2022). This approach aligns with recommendations from the Africa CDC (2022), which underscore the need for context-specific, participatory communication strategies that address local concerns and combat rumor proliferation. As a result, crisis communication management in Africa has evolved into a hybrid of corporate governance practice and grassroots engagement, offering lessons for state-owned enterprises tasked with ensuring energy security in complex environments.

Kenya presents a particularly relevant case, given the pivotal role of the Kenya Pipeline Company (KPC) in ensuring petroleum product transportation and storage across the country and the region. Recurrent crises including fluctuating global oil prices, infrastructural bottlenecks, and operational inefficiencies have repeatedly tested KPC's ability to sustain supply and protect its reputation (Chege, 2024; Njeri, 2022). As a state-owned enterprise under Vision 2030, KPC's performance is not only measured by revenue and efficiency but also by its ability to secure energy stability and uphold public trust (Government of Kenya, 2024). Strengthening crisis communication management within KPC is therefore critical, as timely, transparent, and coordinated messaging has direct implications for organizational performance, stakeholder confidence, and Kenya's broader economic agenda (Ndungu, 2022; Muthoni, 2023).

In Kenya, the oil and petroleum industry is a cornerstone of the economy, underpinning transportation, manufacturing, and energy security. The sector is structured around three major state-owned enterprises: the Kenya Pipeline Company (KPC), responsible for transporting and storing petroleum products; the Kenya Petroleum Refineries Limited (KPRL), which manages

refining capacity; and the National Oil Corporation of Kenya (NOCK), engaged in upstream exploration and downstream distribution (Government of Kenya, 2024; KPC, 2023). KPC, in particular, plays a strategic role by managing a pipeline and depot network that delivers petroleum products from Mombasa to inland markets across East Africa, making it critical for regional integration and trade. Over the past decade, investments in infrastructure such as the Sinendet–Kisumu pipeline and the new Mombasa–Nairobi Line 5 have enhanced throughput and reduced trucking reliance, signaling progress in operational efficiency (Chege, 2024; Njeri, 2022).

The industry operates under a robust regulatory framework overseen by the Ministry of Energy and Petroleum, the Energy and Petroleum Regulatory Authority (EPRA), and the Petroleum Act of 2019, which collectively govern licensing, pricing, safety, and environmental standards (EPRA, 2021). Kenya Vision 2030 emphasizes petroleum infrastructure as central to industrialization and regional competitiveness, while recent reforms have sought to improve transparency and crisis preparedness in state-owned firms (Government of Kenya, 2024). Nonetheless, challenges persist, including fluctuating global oil prices, infrastructural bottlenecks, and reputational risks associated with operational crises, underscoring the need for enhanced crisis communication management as a driver of organizational performance (Ndungu, 2022; Muthoni, 2023).

1.1 Statement of the Problem

Kenya Pipeline Company (KPC) plays a vital role in safeguarding national energy security through the transportation and storage of petroleum products across the country and the region. Its pipeline infrastructure, notably the Mombasa–Nairobi Line 5, currently evacuates petroleum at an estimated rate of 1,300 cubic meters per hour, a significant increase from the previous 950 cubic meters per hour following the 2018 upgrade (Energy and Petroleum Regulatory Authority [EPRA], 2023). Annual throughput volumes now average over 450,000 cubic meters per month, underscoring the company’s pivotal contribution to Kenya’s industrial and transport sectors (EPRA, 2023). Any disruption or miscommunication during a crisis—such as pipeline leaks, supply interruptions, or fuel contamination—therefore carries immediate operational, financial, and reputational consequences, not only for KPC but for the national economy.

Despite ongoing modernization and regulatory oversight, KPC has repeatedly encountered crisis situations characterized by delayed communication, inconsistent public updates, and limited stakeholder engagement (Chege, 2024; Muthoni, 2023). Reports indicate that response timelines often exceed the 48-hour notification requirement stipulated under Kenya’s Energy Act for petroleum incidents (Government of Kenya, 2019; EPRA, 2022). Such lapses erode stakeholder trust, prolong recovery periods, and threaten key performance indicators including operational efficiency, customer satisfaction, and profitability. These communication gaps persist despite recognition that effective crisis communication is central to maintaining public confidence in essential energy services (Ndungu, 2022; Singh & Gupta, 2023).

Empirical research further confirms that organizations which adopt structured and transparent communication frameworks experience up to 30% shorter recovery times and significantly stronger reputational resilience compared to those with reactive communication models (Fritz & Nussbaum, 2021; Tan & Lim, 2021). Yet, in the Kenyan petroleum sector, studies examining the direct link between crisis communication management and organizational performance remain limited, fragmented, and largely descriptive. Most existing studies focus on general crisis management or technical risk mitigation without isolating communication as a measurable strategic driver of performance (Ochieng, 2021; Wambua & Karanja, 2022). Consequently,

managers lack evidence-based guidance on how communication dimensions—such as initial response time, recovery time, and update frequency—translate into quantifiable gains in efficiency, profitability, and stakeholder confidence.

This study therefore addresses a critical knowledge and practice gap by empirically examining how crisis communication management influences the organizational performance of KPC. By developing a composite measure encompassing response speed, recovery duration, and frequency of stakeholder updates, the study provides statistical evidence to inform structured communication protocols that can enhance resilience, safeguard reputation, and reinforce Kenya’s broader energy security objectives (Government of Kenya, 2024; Coombs, 2020).

1.2 Objectives of the Study

The purpose of this study was to examine the influence of crisis communication management on the organizational performance of the Kenya Pipeline Company. Specifically, the study sought:

1.3 Research Hypothesis

H₀₁: Crisis communication management does not significantly influence organizational performance at Kenya Pipeline Company.

1.4 Significance of the Study

The findings of this study will be valuable to multiple stakeholders. For practitioners, particularly managers of state-owned enterprises, the study will highlight how structured communication practices during crises enhance operational continuity, customer confidence, and reputational strength. For policy makers in the Ministry of Energy and Petroleum and regulatory bodies such as the Energy and Petroleum Regulatory Authority (EPRA), the results will provide evidence to support the development of policies and guidelines that institutionalize crisis communication standards in state-owned enterprises. For academia, the study will contribute to the growing body of literature on crisis management by offering empirical insights into how crisis communication influences performance within the African energy sector, and it will provide a foundation for future comparative studies across industries and countries. Finally, for the public and consumers, the study indirectly enhances confidence that organizations tasked with national energy security are equipped to provide reliable, transparent, and effective communication during crises.

1.5 Scope of the Study

The study focused on crisis communication management practices at Kenya Pipeline Company, a state-owned enterprise mandated with the storage and transportation of petroleum products in Kenya. The scope was limited to assessing communication strategies such as clarity, timeliness, stakeholder engagement, and feedback mechanisms, and how these influence key performance indicators including operational efficiency, customer satisfaction, and organizational resilience. The study targeted employees and stakeholders directly engaged in the management and communication of crisis events within the company’s headquarters and selected regional depots. Data collection and analysis were restricted to practices and events within the company over the past five years to ensure relevance and accuracy of findings.

1.6 Limitations of the Study

Like other organizational studies, this research encountered several limitations. First, some respondents were reluctant to share candid information regarding communication lapses due to fear of victimization. To mitigate this, the researcher emphasized confidentiality and anonymity,

and presented the NACOSTI research permit to assure participants of the academic purpose of the study. Second, a number of targeted questionnaires were not returned on time, which could have affected the response rate. This was countered by conducting follow-ups through telephone calls, email reminders, and in some cases physical visits. Third, the study focused on a single state-owned enterprise, which may limit the generalizability of findings to other organizations. This limitation was addressed by situating the study within broader theoretical frameworks and comparative literature to ensure external validity. Despite these challenges, the measures taken ensured that the findings remain reliable, credible, and valuable for practice and scholarship.

2 Literature Review

2.1 Theoretical Literature

Situational Crisis Communication Theory (SCCT) was developed by W. Timothy Coombs in the mid-1990s and has since become one of the most influential frameworks in crisis communication research. The theory asserts that organizational responses to crises should be contingent on the type of crisis faced, the degree of responsibility attributed to the organization, and the potential reputational threat posed (Coombs, 2007; Coombs & Holladay, 2010). Unlike generic crisis communication approaches, SCCT emphasizes the fit between the crisis situation and the communication strategy, highlighting that effective responses require alignment with stakeholder expectations and perceptions (Avery et al., 2016). Proponents of the theory argue that communication during crises is not merely about information dissemination but also about shaping perceptions, protecting legitimacy, and safeguarding performance outcomes (Johansen & Frandsen, 2017).

At its core, SCCT rests on a set of assumptions and concepts that define how organizations should respond to crises. One central assumption is that stakeholders make attributions of responsibility when a crisis occurs, and these attributions guide their emotional and behavioral responses toward the organization (Coombs, 2014). The theory categorizes crises into clusters such as victim crises (e.g., natural disasters), accidental crises (e.g., technical failures), and preventable crises (e.g., negligence), each demanding different communication strategies (Bundy et al., 2017). Core concepts include response strategies such as denial, diminishment, rebuilding, and bolstering, which are selected based on perceived responsibility and reputational threat (Claeys & Opgenhaffen, 2016). SCCT assumes that the congruence between the crisis type and the response strategy determines the extent to which stakeholders restore trust and confidence in the organization.

One of the major strengths of SCCT is its empirical grounding and adaptability across sectors. The theory has been validated in studies examining crises in aviation, hospitality, public health, and energy industries (An & Cheng, 2020; Kiambi & Shafer, 2016). Its structured framework provides managers with actionable guidance on which communication strategies are most effective under specific conditions, thereby linking theory to practice. Additionally, SCCT's emphasis on protecting reputation aligns with the strategic priorities of organizations seeking to maintain customer loyalty, market share, and operational stability (Ma & Zhan, 2016). Scholars also highlight its flexibility in integrating modern crisis contexts such as social media, where immediate and transparent communication has become essential for performance outcomes (Liu, Austin, & Jin, 2011).

SCCT is not without critics. Some argue that it overemphasizes reputational concerns while neglecting the operational and ethical dimensions of crises, particularly in industries where public safety is paramount (Frandsen & Johansen, 2017). Others suggest that its typology of crises is too rigid to capture the complexity of hybrid crises that combine elements of technical, reputational, and social threats (Seeger & Griffin Padgett, 2010). Despite these limitations, SCCT remains highly relevant to this study because it provides a clear framework for analyzing how Kenya Pipeline Company communicates with stakeholders during crises. By applying SCCT, the study situates crisis communication management as a decisive factor influencing organizational performance outcomes such as efficiency, customer trust, and stakeholder confidence in the energy sector..

2.2 Empirical Review

Empirical research consistently shows that crisis communication management is central to sustaining organizational performance, particularly in high-risk industries such as oil and gas. Fritz and Nussbaum (2021) demonstrated across multiple sectors that organizations with effective communication strategies during crises recover faster and maintain stronger performance indicators. Similarly, Sweeney and McCarthy (2022), in their analysis of multinational oil corporations in the North Sea and Gulf of Mexico, found that robust communication practices minimized operational disruptions and safeguarded resilience. These findings underscore the principle that timely, clear, and structured communication enhances recovery capacity, reinforces stakeholder confidence, and preserves organizational legitimacy (Coombs, 2020; Krause, 2022). Yet, the limitation of many cross-sector and IOC-focused studies is that they overlook the specific structural, political, and public accountability dynamics faced by state-owned oil enterprises such as the Kenya Pipeline Company (KPC).

Evidence from Asian contexts further emphasizes the performance benefits of effective crisis communication. Tan and Lim (2021), in their study of Petronas and its partners, found that strong communication strategies reduced recovery time and enhanced operational continuity. Similarly, Yadav and Singh (2023) revealed that effective communication within Indian public-sector oil firms improved supply chain stability and overall crisis management capability. Both studies confirm that performance outcomes are tied to the ability of organizations to deploy communication frameworks that reach multiple stakeholders under pressure (Johansen & Frandsen, 2017; An & Cheng, 2020). However, the critique across these Asian studies is that they often measure recovery time and operational stability without systematically linking communication efforts to broader performance metrics such as employee morale, customer satisfaction, or long-term reputation—all highly relevant dimensions in state-owned enterprises.

Within the African context, communication strategies have also been recognized as a decisive element of performance. Chikanda and Mlambo (2023), examining Zimbabwe's national oil infrastructure company, concluded that effective crisis communication enhanced both employee confidence and organizational stability during crises. Mogaka and Ochieng (2022), focusing on Kenya's oil marketing companies and regulators, similarly found that firms with structured communication approaches were better prepared and delivered stronger performance outcomes. These findings highlight the regional consensus that communication is not merely a support function but a performance determinant, shaping both operational resilience and stakeholder engagement (Sharma et al., 2022; Africa CDC, 2022). Nonetheless, these African studies often

neglect the integration of communication with broader technical and operational crisis management strategies, creating a gap in understanding holistic preparedness.

In Kenya, research has begun to directly interrogate the communication-performance nexus within state-owned oil enterprises. Ng'ang'a and Mwenda (2021) found that effective communication across leading oil firms significantly improved performance, while Wambua and Karanja (2022), focusing on KPC, concluded that organizations with strong crisis communication structures experienced less disruption and higher operational efficiency during crises. Their findings are consistent with the theoretical proposition of the Situational Crisis Communication Theory (Coombs & Holladay, 2010), which asserts that well-matched communication strategies can mitigate reputational threats and secure stakeholder confidence. Yet, limitations remain: these studies often aggregate firms with different crisis types or focus narrowly on internal communication without evaluating cost-effectiveness, accountability, or communication's return on investment in public-sector settings (Ndungu, 2022; Muthoni, 2023).

Taken together, the reviewed literature strongly affirms the principle that crisis communication management is a determinant of organizational performance through its capacity to enhance operational continuity, stakeholder trust, and resilience. The empirical record, spanning global, regional, and Kenyan contexts, underscores that organizations with well-structured crisis communication systems consistently outperform those with reactive or fragmented approaches (Claeys & Opgenhaffen, 2016; Liu, Austin, & Jin, 2011). Nonetheless, gaps persist in linking tailored communication strategies to specific crisis typologies, quantifiable performance metrics, and cost-benefit considerations in state-owned enterprises. This justifies the current study's focus on Kenya Pipeline Company, where effective crisis communication is not only a managerial necessity but also a public accountability imperative given its national energy security mandate (Government of Kenya, 2024; Singh & Gupta, 2023).

2.3 Conceptual Framework

This study is anchored on the proposition that effective crisis communication management significantly influences the performance of state-owned enterprises such as the Kenya Pipeline Company (KPC). The conceptual framework illustrates the relationship between the independent variable, crisis communication management, and the dependent variable, organizational performance.

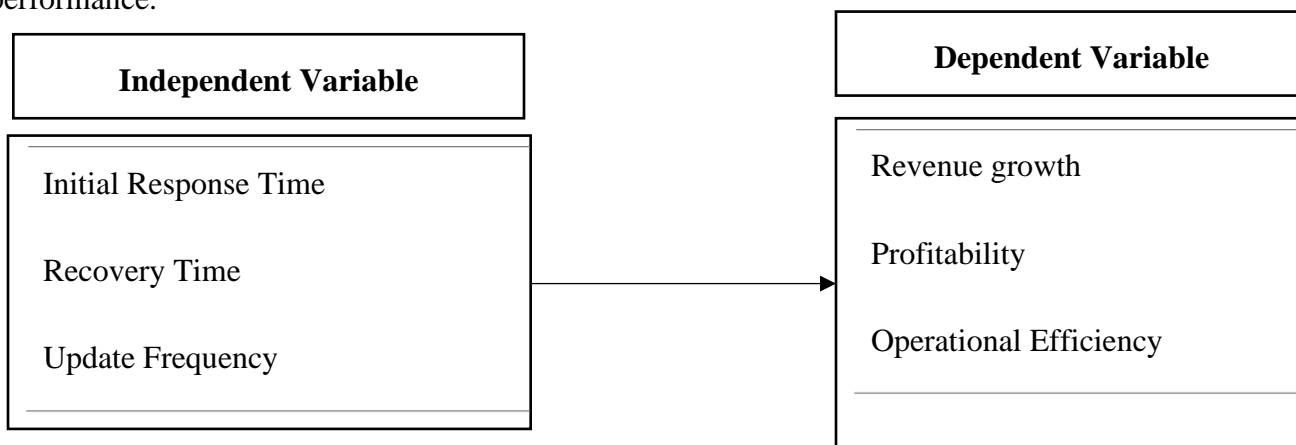


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

Crisis communication management is operationalized through three key dimensions: initial response time, recovery time, and update frequency. Initial response time refers to how quickly the organization acknowledges and responds to a crisis. Research demonstrates that organizations that communicate promptly during crises are more likely to retain stakeholder trust and reduce reputational damage (Coombs, 2014; Fritz & Nussbaum, 2021). Recovery time captures the duration within which the organization restores normal operations following a crisis. Effective communication has been shown to shorten recovery periods by providing stakeholders with clear expectations and reducing uncertainty (Tan & Lim, 2021; Yadav & Singh, 2023). Update frequency relates to the regularity and consistency of information shared during the crisis. Frequent and transparent updates reassure stakeholders, manage expectations, and enhance overall confidence in the organization's capacity to manage the crisis (Sweeney & McCarthy, 2022; Chikanda & Mlambo, 2023).

Organizational performance, the dependent variable, is measured through revenue growth, profitability, and operational efficiency. Revenue growth reflects the company's ability to sustain financial stability despite crisis disruptions. Profitability measures the capacity of the organization to maintain or recover financial gains in turbulent contexts, while operational efficiency highlights the extent to which resources are effectively utilized to minimize disruptions and maintain service delivery (Singh & Gupta, 2023; Government of Kenya, 2024). These indicators collectively provide a comprehensive assessment of KPC's performance outcomes in relation to its crisis communication strategies.

The framework posits a direct relationship between crisis communication management and organizational performance. The underlying principle is that well-executed communication practices reduce uncertainty, improve stakeholder confidence, and enable faster recovery, which translates into measurable gains in revenue growth, profitability, and efficiency (Johansen & Frandsen, 2017; Wambua & Karanja, 2022). Conversely, delayed or inconsistent communication exacerbates stakeholder mistrust, prolongs recovery periods, and diminishes organizational performance. This conceptual framework therefore provides a structured basis for examining how specific elements of crisis communication management impact performance outcomes at KPC, highlighting the critical role of communication as both a managerial function and a strategic determinant of organizational resilience.

3.0 Research Methodology

The study employed a descriptive research design with a quantitative orientation to investigate the influence of crisis communication management on the organizational performance of Kenya Pipeline Company (KPC). The population consisted of staff members across management, operations, and communication units who are directly engaged in crisis response and reporting. Stratified random sampling ensured adequate representation from each unit, while the final sample size was determined using Yamane's formula for finite populations at 95% confidence. Data were collected through structured questionnaires with Likert-scale items. Crisis communication management was measured through three indicators—initial response time, recovery time, and update frequency—while organizational performance was assessed using revenue growth, profitability, and operational efficiency. To capture the independent construct more robustly, a composite index was developed by averaging the standardized scores of the three crisis

communication indicators. Reliability of the scale was confirmed using Cronbach’s Alpha (≥ 0.7 threshold), and content validity was established through expert review.

Data analysis was conducted using descriptive statistics to summarize respondent characteristics and mean scores, while inferential statistics established the relationship between crisis communication management and organizational performance. A simple linear regression model was estimated using the composite index of crisis communication management as the predictor variable. The model was specified as:

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_c + \varepsilon$$

Where:

Y = Organizational Performance (measured through revenue growth, profitability, and efficiency indicators),

X_c = Composite Index of Crisis Communication Management (average of standardized scores for initial response time, recovery time, and update frequency),

β_0 = constant,

β_1 = regression coefficient,

ε = error term.

This composite index approach allowed the study to treat crisis communication management as a unified construct while still capturing its multidimensional nature, providing a clearer estimation of its overall effect on performance outcomes at KPC.

4. Research Findings and Discussion

4.1 Descriptive Analysis

Effective crisis communication management is a cornerstone of organizational resilience and performance, particularly in high-stakes environments such as Kenya Pipeline Company (KPC). The ability to communicate effectively with stakeholders during crises can significantly influence operational outcomes and stakeholder trust. Respondents evaluated various aspects of crisis communication management, providing insights into how these strategies impact organizational performance. The findings were presented in Table 8.

Table 1: Crisis Communication Management and Organization Performance

Crisis Communication Management	N	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Deviation
The metrics used by KPC to assess the effectiveness of crisis communication are effective in measuring improvements in organizational performance.	280	1.00	5.00	3.5385	1.46924
Improved crisis communication fosters better resource allocation and operational	280	1.00	5.00	3.4000	1.49792

coordination, leading to enhanced overall performance at KPC.						
The frequency of updates during a crisis positively impacts stakeholder trust and organizational performance at KPC.	280	1.00	5.00	3.3692	1.49551	
Timely response time messaging enhances KPC's ability to manage crises effectively and maintain stakeholder confidence.	280	1.00	5.00	3.3692	1.52653	
KPC's communication strategies include clear messaging that improves understanding and reduces confusion during crises.	280	1.00	5.00	3.4308	1.51006	
Regular evaluation of communication effectiveness helps KPC adapt its strategies for better crisis management outcomes.	280	1.00	5.00	3.4308	1.55090	
Aggregate				3.4231	1.50836	
Valid N (listwise)	280					

Source: Field Data 2025

The findings reveal that crisis communication management plays a significant role in shaping the organizational performance of Kenya Pipeline Company (KPC). Respondents consistently acknowledged that the metrics used by KPC to evaluate its crisis communication strategies are effective in tracking improvements in performance, with a strong indication that these tools support the company's ability to respond to crises. This reflects the recognition that systematic evaluation mechanisms are central to strengthening resilience and operational continuity (Coombs, 2019).

Equally important is the perception that effective crisis communication enhances resource allocation and coordination of operations. Respondents agreed that well-structured communication frameworks help streamline decision-making and facilitate a more coherent organizational response during crises. This aligns with arguments in the literature that communication is not only about information dissemination but also about enabling coordination and efficiency across teams and processes (Ulmer, Sellnow, & Seeger, 2020).

The results also highlight the importance of frequency and timeliness of communication. Respondents noted that regular updates during crises foster stakeholder trust and reduce uncertainty, thereby supporting both short-term recovery and long-term performance. Although some divergence of opinion was observed, the prevailing view underscores that stakeholders expect consistent, transparent updates, a finding echoed in global studies which show that trust is closely tied to communication credibility during emergencies (Fearn-Banks, 2021; Krause, 2022).

Clarity of messaging emerged as another critical factor influencing performance outcomes. Respondents emphasized that communication strategies which reduce confusion and provide

straightforward information enable stakeholders to make informed decisions and sustain confidence in the organization. This resonates with the propositions of Situational Crisis Communication Theory, which stresses the alignment of message clarity and appropriateness with the type of crisis encountered (Coombs & Holladay, 2010). Furthermore, respondents valued the company’s efforts to regularly evaluate its communication effectiveness, suggesting that adaptive learning and refinement of strategies are key to long-term resilience.

Overall, the descriptive findings underscore that effective crisis communication management—through clear metrics, timely updates, stakeholder-oriented messaging, and continuous evaluation—enhances the organizational performance of KPC. These results reinforce theoretical perspectives that position communication as a cornerstone of crisis management and demonstrate that in practice, communication is not peripheral but central to safeguarding efficiency, profitability, and trust in state-owned enterprises.

4.2 Inferential Analysis

The study conducted regression analysis to establish the influence of crisis communication management on organizational performance at Kenya Pipeline Company (KPC). Crisis communication management was operationalized through a composite index comprising response time, recovery time, and update frequency, while performance was measured through revenue growth, profitability, and operational efficiency. This inferential test sought to determine whether improvements in communication practices significantly predict changes in organizational outcomes. Model Summary results (Table 2) show that the predictor variable explains nearly all the variation in performance, with a multiple correlation of $R = .991$ and an $R^2 = .982$.

Table 2: Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.991	.982	.982	.20404

a. Predictors: (Constant), Crisis Communication Management

This implies that 98.2% of the variance in organizational performance is explained by crisis communication management, leaving only 1.8% to other factors not included in the model. Such explanatory power is exceptionally high in behavioral and management research, underscoring the centrality of communication to performance in high-stakes environments (Field, 2018). The near-identical values of R^2 and Adjusted R^2 further suggest model stability without evidence of overfitting (Hair et al., 2019). The ANOVA results (Table 3) confirm the model’s statistical significance, with $F(1, 63) = 3535.741, p < .001$.

Table 3: ANOVA

Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	147.201	1	147.201	3535.741	.000 b
Residual	2.623	63	0.042		
Total	149.824	64			

a. Dependent Variable: Organizational Performance
b. Predictors: (Constant), Crisis Communication Management

This large F-value indicates that the regression equation provides a better fit to the data than a null model with no predictors. In other words, there is overwhelming evidence that crisis communication management has a real and systematic effect on organizational performance. This result reinforces theoretical expectations that communication is not simply a support function but a strategic determinant of resilience and effectiveness during crises (Coombs, 2019; Ulmer, Sellnow, & Seeger, 2020). Turning to the regression coefficients (Table 4), the unstandardized coefficient for crisis communication management is $b = 1.019$ ($SE = 0.017$), with a t-value of 59.462 and $p < .001$.

Table 4: Regression Coefficients

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients	Std. Error	Standardized Coefficients (Beta)	t	Sig.
(Constant)	0.037	0.064		0.569	.572
Crisis Communication	1.019	0.017	0.991	59.462	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Organizational Performance

This indicates that a one-unit increase in the communication index produces an almost proportional increase in the performance index, while the standardized coefficient ($\beta = .991$) highlights the very strong predictive power of communication. The intercept term is not statistically significant ($p = .572$), which is expected, as performance cannot meaningfully be explained in the absence of communication practices. The results collectively suggest that effective messaging, timely updates, and regular evaluation of communication efforts translate directly into financial and operational improvements.

These findings are strongly corroborated by empirical studies. Fritz and Nussbaum (2021) showed that firms with structured communication during crises recover faster and report higher performance levels. Tan and Lim (2021) found similar results in Malaysia's oil sector, where crisis communication reduced recovery time and improved continuity. Yadav and Singh (2023) confirmed in Indian oil firms that effective communication enhances supply chain stability and operational efficiency. Within Africa, Chikanda and Mlambo (2023) demonstrated that effective communication improved employee confidence and overall performance in Zimbabwe's oil sector, while Wambua and Karanja (2022) established that robust communication practices at KPC itself minimized disruption and safeguarded efficiency. Together, these studies reinforce the current findings: crisis communication management is a critical performance driver, especially in state-owned oil enterprises where public trust, operational stability, and accountability are paramount

5.0 Conclusion

The study established that crisis communication management plays a decisive role in shaping the performance of Kenya Pipeline Company. The results show that effective communication practices particularly timely responses, regular updates, and clear messaging are directly linked to improvements in operational efficiency, stakeholder trust, and overall resilience. Respondents emphasized that communication is not just about disseminating information but also about coordinating resources, reducing uncertainty, and safeguarding reputation during times of disruption. These findings affirm that when communication is structured and proactive, it enhances both the company's ability to recover quickly and its long-term performance stability. The study therefore concludes that Kenya Pipeline Company can significantly strengthen its mandate of ensuring energy security and public trust by embedding crisis communication management as a strategic function of organizational performance.

6.0 Recommendations

Based on these findings, the study recommends that Kenya Pipeline Company institutionalize a comprehensive crisis communication framework that clearly defines roles, responsibilities, and escalation procedures during crises. This framework should be closely aligned with operational and business continuity systems to ensure seamless coordination across departments. The company should also prioritize transparency and consistency in its messaging, using multiple channels to reach regulators, customers, employees, and the public.

Regular evaluation and updating of communication strategies is necessary to ensure they remain effective and responsive to emerging risks. Training and capacity building for staff involved in communication should be strengthened through simulations, drills, and spokesperson training, ensuring readiness for a wide range of crisis scenarios. Additionally, KPC should invest in modern digital platforms and monitoring systems that enable real-time updates and rapid countering of misinformation.

Beyond internal improvements, the company should deepen its engagement with external stakeholders, including regulators, county governments, and local communities, to build trust and foster collaboration during emergencies. By embedding these practices into its governance and operational culture, Kenya Pipeline Company will not only improve its crisis response capacity but also enhance its reputation, operational continuity, and contribution to Kenya's broader economic agenda.

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