Post-crisis communication: towards destination's image repair or destination's resilience creation?

MARÍA DEL PILAR PASCUAL FRAILE[1], PILAR TALÓN BALLESTERO[1], TERESA VILLACÉ MOLINERO[1] & ANTONIO RAMOS RODRÍGUEZ[2]

[1] Rey Juan Carlos University, [2] University of Cádiz
Contacting author: pilar.pascual@urjc.es

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Objectives | This study aims at discovering the impacts of crisis communication on destination's image in the most recent crisis or disasters (from 2017 to 2021, both years included). In these years, several studies analysed diverse crises or disasters that negatively impacted the tourism sector, such as natural disasters- tsunami in Indonesia in 2004, Gurkha earthquake in Nepal in 2015, Hokkaido Eastern Iburi (2018) and Kumamoto (2016) earthquakes in Japan or the eruption of Mount Merapi volcano in Indonesia in 2010-, financial crisis as the Greek economic recession (2005-2015), political-related crisis, like the refugees crisis in 2016, terrorism attacks such as the ones in Barcelona and Cambrils (Spain) in 2017, or the most global recent global health crisis: the COVID-19 pandemic. Those events can have negative effects on destinations' image or reputation (Schroeder et al., 2018) and influence tourists' travel intention (Zenker et al., 2019). Therefore, Destination Marketing Organizations must implement crisis communication strategies focused on diminishing tourists' risk perception-that may affect destination image and reputation- to lessen the impacts of these events on the tourism activity (Yeh, 2021). This research provides the 'research fronts', the most updated themes in a scientific field (Price, 1965), which are useful to obtain a general overview of the crisis communication strategies of the most recent events. This overview is complemented with the emerging themes of future research that result from the analysis. Those topics constitute a research agenda for scholars and a guide for DMOs in their future crisis communication strategies.

Methodology | The study was mainly conducted with a bibliometric methodology, to identify the new issues in a scientific field and their behaviour over time (Fernandez-Alles & Ramos-Rodriguez, 2009). Particularly for this research, a bibliographic coupling was used, since it is considered the best bibliometric technique to obtain emerging themes of future investigation (Zupic & Cater, 2015). The bibliometric analysis was carried out with 129 academic papers extracted from Web of Science database focused on crisis communication for destinations and dated from 2017-2021 (both years included). The bibliographic coupling was complemented with a h-Classic classification, to detect the most relevant academic literature in this field, following the guides of Martinez et al. (2014), and a

thematic analysis. According to Braun & Clarke (2006) this qualitative methodology contributes to the study of the organization and relationship between the most common themes in a certain field.

Main Results and Contributions | The bibliographic coupling provides 4 clusters in which the 'research fronts' (clusters 1 and 2) and the emerging themes of research (clusters 3 and 4) are identified. The results shows that the identified 'research fronts' refer to how crisis communication strategies are based on the concept of 'safety' for destinations' image repair after the outbreak of any kind of crisis or disaster, and how the collaboration among the tourism stakeholders is beneficial in those situations to create destinations' resilience. The emerging themes of research are related to the DMOs' post-crisis communication strategies, and how those models aim at reducing tourists' risk perception and, thus, encouraging travel intention. To the best of the authors' knowledge, this is the first bibliometric study specifically focused on crisis communication for destinations' image. It offers insights about crisis communication models developed in the most recent crises and disasters and practical guides for DMOs' strategies in upcoming events or post-crisis scenarios.

The results in this study showed the relevance of crisis communication strategies for the creation of the image of 'safe destinations', both during a crisis or a disaster or in the post-crisis scenario, coinciding with previous research, such as the one by Mair et al., (2016). In the current post-digital era, those messages of 'safety' should be conveyed using a combination of channels: traditional media and digital environment (Bhati et al., 2021). Beyond repairing destinations' image or reputation, the last global crisis, the COVID-19 pandemic, highlighted the relevance of collaboration between all the stakeholders in tourism sector to create destination's resilience (Zenker & Kock, 2020). In the post-COVID-19 era, the creation of a conceptual and integrative model of destination resilience is considered the most adequate response to ensure destinations' sustainable development (Traskevich & Fontanari, 2021). The emerging themes of research obtained in this study refer to the post-crisis communication strategies, opening new paths of investigation, to discover if those models should include the message of 'safety' to reduce risk perception and boost travel intention, if they should return to 'business as usual' pre-crisis strategies, or if they should potentiate new sustainable tourism practices that contribute to create resilient destinations (Hall et al., 2020).

Limitations | The main limitations of this study are related to the inherent ones of the used methodology to identify 'research fronts', and the analysed period of time (from 2017 to 2021, both years included). The conclusions are based on the most recent global crises and disasters, so they lack the findings in this field from the research conducted prior to 2017.

Conclusions | The last global crisis, the COVID-19 pandemic, was unprecedented compared to the most recent crises or disasters, due to its specific characteristics (eg. globalization, lockdowns, duration, and development in the post-digital era), and that was reflected on DMOs' crisis and post-

pandemic crisis communication strategies. The models focused on the concept of 'safety' to diminish tourists' risk perception and to repair a damaged destination image used in past events resulted useless for this crisis, as the global spread of the disease did not damage destinations' images (Geysi & Yalçinkaya, 2023). With a lack of tourists' risk perception and negative effects on destinations' images, in the post-pandemic scenario the crisis communication strategies were more focused on recovering tourism activity, encouraging tourists to travel again, with a "business as usual" focus (Hall et al., 2020), more than based on creating destinations' resilience.

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