Framing crisis response messages on Facebook: a second level agenda analysis of MH370

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Abstract. A crisis can certainly bring great threats to an organisation. In time of crisis, what the organisation says and does may impose significant effect on the organisation's effort to survive its reputational damages. Although crisis responses are considered a common topic, this rapidly growing field of research is however vital to be critically explored. In light of Situational Crisis Communication Theory (SCCT) [1] and the Second-level Agenda Setting approach [2], this study seeks to analyse the message frames used by Malaysia Airlines System (MAS) in the formation of MH370 crisis response messages that that were disseminated directly to the organisation's stakeholders on Facebook. The convergence of framing and second level agenda setting has made this study significant as it advances the explication of potential crisis communication effects by underscoring the distinct importance held by certain attributes and frames, in the content of a crisis response message. This paper also includes discussion on the directions for future research on crisis response strategies particularly in the local context.

1 Introduction

Crises are taken as threat to every organisation's reputation. When a crisis strikes, the organisation's reputation can, to a great extent, be lost. Crisis that is sudden and unexpected can, in any form, powerfully disrupts an organisation's operations and poses both economic and reputational threat. In Malaysia, there were few notable organisational crises that can be reviewed throughout the first half to end of 2014 alone. Among Malaysia's most high profiled ones was the tragedy of Malaysia Airlines' flight MH370. Malaysian Airline System (MAS) Berhad or currently known as Malaysia Airlines Berhad (MAB) is a major airline, operating flights domestically and internationally. Malaysia Airlines is the flag carrier of Malaysia and a member of the Oneworld airline alliance. For the purpose of this paper, the studied organisation is still referred to by its previous name – MAS, taking into consideration that it was how the organisation was known and addressed as, during the hit

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