

Literature Review

- Many academic institutions use social media websites, such as Facebook, as a way to keep their stakeholders (students, parents, alumnae, trustees, etc.) informed on current happenings.
 - This is especially true for emergency communication
- Campus alerts are no longer limited to voice calls and email
- Facebook and text message are now likely mediums because they are frequent channels of communication.
 - 73% of people 18 years or older online use social media, with Facebook being the principal social networking site. (Duggan & Smith, 2013)
 - Pew Research Center found that 95% of adults 18 to 29 years old used the text message feature on their cell phones. (Smith, 2011)
- Credibility is essential in crisis communication because it will affect how serious the audience perceives the alert, how it is spread and to whom.
- Lachlan, Spence, Edwards, Reno, and Edwards (2013) argue that if someone repeatedly seeks out particular sources (or mediums) for information, they will grow to trust them.
- Similarly, Lowrey (2004) maintained that constant use of text messaging has resulted in a familiarity that would make it useful during an emergency situation and a favorable channel of communication during a crisis or disaster.

Hypotheses

H1: The medium or channel that an emergency alert is disseminated will not affect the perceived severity of the alert.

H2: The medium or channel used, text message or Facebook, will affect whether the first person notified about an alert is a parent, a friend, or someone near by.

Method

- Survey
- Available sampling
- 112 students (54 males and 58 females)
- Average age: 24

Results

H1: There was a significant difference found “across the four scenarios.”

H2: There was also a significant difference in the first person contacted per medium for each alert type.

Perceived Seriousness of Each Alert Per Medium				
Alert Type	Medium	Scenario	M	SD
Active Shooter	Facebook	A	4.43	.91
Tornado Warning	Text Message	B	3.73	.94
Active Shooter	Text Message	C	4.78	.64
Tornado Warning	Facebook	D	3.60	1.01

Percentages per Scenario of the first person to be notified				
Person	Scenario A	Scenario B	Scenario C	Scenario D
Parents	12%	20%	16%	25%
Friends	15%	20%	14%	18%
Someone Near	68%	49%	66%	48%
Other	5%	11%	4%	8%

Conclusion & Implications

Conclusion

- There are mechanisms in place that alter the reception of the same message across different mediums.
- Face to Face communication is still an important aspect of crisis communication because in all scenarios more participants would inform the person sitting near them first.
- More research is necessary to understand why more parents or more friends are contacted at different rates for the same alert type in a different medium.

Implications

- More attention should be allotted to this area of study to improve crisis communication through multiple mediums.

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