

## Role of Crisis Communication in Brand Sustainability: A Study of the Covid-19 Crisis of Lafarge, Nigeria

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### Abstract

*The Covid-19 pandemic presented unprecedented challenges for businesses globally. For corporations like Lafarge, Nigeria a major player in the construction and building materials sector effective crisis communication became a critical component of brand sustainability. This study explores how Lafarge Nigeria managed its crisis communication during the Covid-19 pandemic and the impact of their strategies on brand sustainability. By examining the company's response to the pandemic, including its internal and external communication strategies, the study provides insights into the role of crisis communication in navigating long-term brand resilience. This study draws on several communication and management theories, particularly Situational Crisis Communication Theory (SCCT). This study adopted the positivist approach of research design. Positivist or post-positivism beliefs in quantitative method of research design. Based on the choice of positivism, survey method was employed to generate data using questionnaire as a research instrument. The population of this study is 1,300 respondents from the Lafarge, Nigeria, who worked actively with Lafarge and have witnessed crisis. The study utilised a total number of 200 individuals taken from the employees of Lafarge Nigeria as a sample size. Findings reveal that a largest percentage of the respondents are moderately aware that crisis communication strategies are employed Lafarge and are effective. The study concludes that crisis communication is a very essential component every organization should and must implement in order to be sustainable and to remain in business for a long time. This is so because crises are inevitable for any organization and therefore must be catered to before, during and after the happening.*

### Keywords

Brand Sustainability,  
Covid-19, Crisis  
Communication, Crisis,  
Lafarge and Role



### I. Introduction

In the modern corporate world, crises have become a structural issue for organizations, necessitating careful preparation for their avoidance, handling, and resolution with a particular focus on safeguarding the brand of the company. In this setting, crisis communication is extremely important (Bundy et al., 2017). A company's recovery trajectory may be greatly impacted by effective communication management during a crisis, which can affect crucial elements including market capitalization, talent retention, and customer preference. According to IE Insights in Ahmed and Msughter (2022) a company's brand reputation may be preserved or even improved by its capacity to handle a crisis through strategic communication, highlighting the inherent importance of this aspect of crisis management.

Lafarge, the case study firm founded by Joseph-Auguste Pavin de Lafarge in 1833, has a long and distinguished history as a preeminent French industrial enterprise with a focus on concrete, building aggregates, and cement. Its growth as the biggest cement producer in the world is evidence of its adaptability and durability in the market. Important turning points in the company's history include the 2015 merger with Holcim, which became Lafarge Holcim, and the 2021 rebranding to Holcim Group. But the business has not been impervious to catastrophes. One noteworthy example is its conviction by the US Department of Justice for funding terrorism and participating in crimes against humanity. It was found guilty of paying ISIS and al-Nusra Front to keep their cement facility in Syria operational, underscoring a pivotal point in its crisis management history.

In this contestation, the Covid-19 epidemic caused enterprises all over the world to face previously unheard-of difficulties, with the construction sector being in a particularly special position (Aondover, 2020). Notwithstanding the industry's designation as important, which allowed several projects to proceed, the sector was vulnerable to possible slowdowns because of its reliance on government financing as well as the general economic slump. According to the Dodge Construction Network in Aondover et al., (2020) there was a notable decline in the Commercial Construction Index, which gauges the health of the sector, from 74 to 55 during the first and second quarters of 2020. This decline is a reflection of the pandemic's wider effects on market prospects, financial stability, and corporate operations. The adjustments contractors made, such changing staff policies and work processes to improve social distance, highlight the pandemic's extensive effects on the sector (Aondover & Phillips, 2020).

Thus, the purpose of this research is to establish a close connection between the idea of brand sustainability and the function of crisis communication, specifically as it relates to Lafarge during the Covid-19 epidemic. Focusing on Lafarge's crisis communication strategies during this period offers a unique opportunity because of the company's historical global positioning, its prior experience with crisis management, and the significant impact of Covid-19 on the construction industry. The analysis brings a significant perspective to the conversation on crisis management and brand sustainability by providing insights into how successful crisis communication may support a brand's sustainability and resilience in the face of unheard-of difficulties.

### **1.1 Problem Statement**

Scholarly and professional ideologies of today highlight a serious study vacuum in crisis communication, especially when it comes to the building industry during the Covid-19 outbreak. There is a significant amount of literature on crisis communication in general, but there are relatively few studies that concentrate on the use of crisis communication and its consequences in the construction sector during a global health crisis of this magnitude (Kurfi et al., 2021; Usman et al., 2022; Aondover et al., 2022). Our comprehension of efficient crisis management techniques adapted to the particular requirements and difficulties of this industry is restricted by the dearth of thorough research. It is specifically niched in crisis communication because of the significance of crisis communication. The broader picture is that it was borne out of the dire need for brands to be sustainable as an alternative to boost the economic sector of the nation.

The state of the economy calls for more private industries and organizations to surface. This development would bring about an increase in the employment rate in the country and also be a source of revenue to the government. However, it is not enough to

just set up organizations, for them to make significant impact and for their purpose to be established then they must first be sustainable. They must last long enough to make tangible impact. Organizations like Julius Berger Nigeria, Rockwell constructions, Wade Nigeria and other construction companies in Nigeria who looked promising all either crumbled or scaled down significantly due to one crisis or the other (Msughter et al., 2022). ‘A crisis is like a disease, and every disease is curable when it finds the cure tailored specifically to it’.

Coming down to our study, Leading the building materials sector, Lafarge faced unique difficulties as a result of the Covid-19 epidemic. In addition to upending international supply chains and changing market dynamics, the pandemic brought up important issues with stakeholder participation, worker safety, and operational continuity, even worse because the first individual to officially bring the virus into the country, Nigeria was a staff of Lafarge and this caused a huge smear on the brand’s reputation. The necessity for Lafarge to uphold its reputation particularly in the wake of previous problems, including its conviction for funding terrorism made these difficulties much more difficult. In this regard, an appreciation of Lafarge’s handling of these turbulent times is essential to understanding the wider effects of crisis communication tactics on the sustainability of a brand. The pandemic’s effects on Lafarge offer a singular example of how a significant participant in the building sector modified its marketing tactics to preserve its brand image and guarantee sustainability in the face of a global crisis.

This research gap signifies the need for a thorough investigation into the crisis communication approaches adopted by construction firms like Lafarge during the Covid-19 pandemic. Analysing such strategies can provide invaluable insights into the role of effective communication in sustaining a brand’s reputation and operational stability in crisis situations. Thus, this study seeks to contribute to the limited but growing discourse on crisis communication in the construction sector, which is a largely neglected sector, with a specific focus on Lafarge’s response to the Covid-19 pandemic.

This research gap highlights the necessity for a comprehensive study of the crisis communication strategies used by building companies such as Lafarge in the context of the Covid-19 epidemic (Pate et al., 2020). Examining these tactics can yield priceless insights into how crucial good communication is to maintaining a brand’s standing and continuity of operations during difficult times. Consequently, this research aims to add to the scant but expanding literature on crisis communication in the building industry, concentrating on Lafarge’s reaction to the Covid-19 outbreak.

## **1.2 Objectives of the Study**

The following are the objectives for this study:

1. To investigate and assess the specific crisis communication strategies employed by Lafarge Nigeria during the Covid-19 pandemic.
2. To examine how various stakeholders, including customers, employees, and investors, responded to Lafarge’s communication efforts during the pandemic.
3. To determine the effectiveness of Lafarge’s crisis communication in maintaining its brand reputation and market position during the crisis.
4. To identify key lessons and best practices from Lafarge’s crisis communication approach that can be applied to future crisis management in the construction industry.

## II. Review of Literature

Numerous studies have demonstrated the significance of crisis communication in preserving brand reputation and sustainability. In this study, we explore the intricate relationship between crisis communication and brand sustainability. According to Coombs (2007) effective crisis communication enables organizations to mitigate reputational damage maintain stakeholder trust and minimize the long-term negative impact of crises. Additionally, Ulmer et al., in Maikaba and Msughter (2019) emphasize the importance of timely and transparent communication during crises to build credibility and enhance brand resilience. This study proposes the notion of the enormous power wielded by communication and its channels in averting, mitigating and overcoming crisis in corporate organizations specifically. We observe how communication principles when effectively utilized have successfully led to organisations sustainability.

Communication is the process of delivering messages by someone to other people to tell, change attitudes, opinions or behavior either directly orally or indirectly through the media. In this communication requires a reciprocal relationship between the delivery of messages and recipients namely communicators and communicants (Hasbullah, et al: 2018).

A historically prominent example is the Tylenol crisis of 1982 which has been explained previously and will be dissected further in the course of this study, however inferring from the circumstances of this crisis, save for the very efficient work of crisis communication, the organization, Johnson & Johnson could have easily folded up from lack of consumer trust ardently leading to lack of sales thereby resulting in bankruptcy. They employed crisis communication strategies like, constant communication by establishing a hotline to respond to inquiries, organizing several national press conferences through which the also communicated their new triple safety seal packaging which was a first for any product in the industry.

Scholars like Mojaye and Msughter (2022) have come to recognize Johnson & Johnson's handling of the Tylenol crisis as the example of success. Berge. 1990 says 'the Tylenol crisis is without a doubt the most exemplary case ever known in the history of crisis communication.' They used strategies such as the Forgiveness & sympathy strategy, Remediation, which means offering some form of compensation to the families of affected individuals & Rectification, which means prevention of any similar occurrence, strategy, honesty & integrity and fast and decisive actions. As a result of the strategies employed, they were able to have a strong bounce back. On the other hand, a firm that failed to employ effective crisis communication and as a result, lost a lot is the BP Deepwater Horizon.

In 2010, the BP'S Deepwater horizon rig in the Gulf of Mexico exploded killing 11 employees and causing an oil-leak that lasted for almost three months, the biggest oil-spill in U.S history. After the spill, proper communication with its publics was not carried out, which did not show transparency, accountability and sympathy. As a result of this, the company paid about \$70 billion in clean-up costs, legal settlements and fines, the company's shareholders lost \$105 billion due to stock prices plummeting, its bonds crashed in value, its station sales dropped by a large percent and it dropped in ranking. All of this can be accrued to poor crisis management efforts. Studies have attributed the accident to a series of human mistakes and technical failure. Operators and managers grew accustomed to normalizing signs of potential trouble and ignored weak signs of looming disaster, alarm systems on the rig were suppressed and crucial equipment were not maintained. The Centre for catastrophic Risk Management at the University of California

Berkely blamed the absence of a safety culture and short-sighted prioritization of the bottom-line (Obada et al., 2021).

Another case is Facebook. In 2018, a whistle-blower exposed that a firm had bought data from 87 million users and their friends without consent. The episode sparked a scandal over user privacy at Facebook. There were huge financial repercussions such as a \$5 billion fine, a 20% drop in their engagement affecting their ad revenue, the company lost \$130 billion in stock valuation and a 6.2% brand value drop. A crisis management lesson derived from this is to ‘apologize quickly when you are wrong’. Following the breakout of the scandal, the CEO, Mark Zuckerberg stayed silent for five days before issuing a statement acknowledging the mistakes, he had made which was heavily criticized by users which afterward prompted him to say simply say he was sorry. Although, the company later placed full-page newspaper ads, made changes to data-handling policies and implemented other reforms, consumer trust remained damaged. The goal of crisis communication is to ensure the publics of the affected organization that you are truly sorry and sympathetic and aim to take rectification and remediation measures. It is also for them to know you are not excluding yourself as an organization but are fully present and committed (Obada et al., 2023).

This particular example was important because crisis communication does not begin when the crisis starts, it starts even in the face of seemingly no impending danger. Crisis communication works hand-in-hand with crisis management and negating one for the other or the two will result in negative results. Inferring from the cases above, we can conclude that crisis communication is the anchor for a brand that is looking to be sustainable and to stand in the face of crisis.

While the existing literature provides a solid theoretical and empirical framework for understanding the role of crisis communication in brand sustainability, there are still gaps that need to be addressed. For instance, more research is needed on the specific strategies and tactics that organizations can use to effectively manage crisis communication and maintain brand sustainability (Coombs in Obada et al., 2021). Additionally, SCCT theory, though effective, neglects the long-term impact of crisis communication on brand reputation, it also does not emphasize on pre-crisis preparedness. The instance of reverse agenda-setting is also not put into consideration. Consumer trust is an area that also requires further exploration. There is also a limited inter-disciplinary approach.

## **2.1 Theoretical Framework**

To understand the role of crisis communication in brand sustainability this study was guided by Situational Crisis Communication Theory (SCCT). SCCT proposed by Timothy Coombs (2007) focuses on the appropriate communication strategies based on the crisis type. The theory suggests that organizations should match their crisis response strategies with the perceived crisis responsibility and reputational threat. By employing the appropriate response strategy organizations can effectively address public concerns mitigate reputational damage and maintain brand sustainability. Lafarge Africa, during the crisis put out timely and transparent press releases, constantly sending updates to the public, baring it all out to the public and keeping them informed at every point of progress, via various media platforms. The company via its Public Relation agency, WNT Capitals also properly publicized its donation of three facilities as isolation centres, product donations of products for infrastructural support such as generators, ambulances and critical Personal Protection Equipment (PPE), ambulances and thousands of testing kits,

this particular means were effective because the situation required constant and consistent reassurance from the company to its stakeholders (Onyejelem & Aondover, 2024a).

The SCCT, developed by W. Timothy Coombs (2007), offers a framework for understanding how organizations should respond to crises based on the level of responsibility attributed to the organization. In the case of Lafarge's Covid-19 crisis in Nigeria, the company was not directly responsible for the pandemic, but its actions and decisions during the crisis could have significantly impacted its stakeholders and reputation. Lafarge's initial response to the Covid-19 crisis in Nigeria involved implementing strict safety protocols, such as mandatory face masks, temperature checks, and social distancing measures, at its production facilities (Lafarge Africa, 2020). The company also provided personal protective equipment (PPE) and hand sanitizers to its employees and surrounding communities (Lafarge Africa, 2020). These actions align with the SCCT's recommendation of utilizing "instructing information" to provide stakeholders with the necessary information to protect themselves (Coombs, 2015).

Furthermore, Lafarge engaged in "adjusting information" by communicating its efforts to support the local community and ensure the continuous supply of cement during the pandemic (Lafarge Africa, 2020). This approach, as suggested by the SCCT, helps to rebuild the organization's reputation and reduce the perceived crisis responsibility (Coombs, 2015). However, Lafarge's crisis communication efforts were not without their challenges. The company faced criticism for its perceived lack of transparency and delayed response to the crisis (Nwezeh, 2020). This criticism could have been addressed more effectively by utilizing the SCCT's recommendation of "rebuilding" strategies, such as acknowledging the crisis, taking responsibility, and offering an apology (Coombs, 2015).

Within this context, Lafarge's crisis management response in Nigeria during the Covid-19 pandemic demonstrates a partial application of the Situational Crisis Communication Theory. While the company implemented some effective crisis communication strategies, such as providing instructing and adjusting information, it could have further strengthened its response by incorporating additional SCCT recommendations, particularly in the area of rebuilding strategies (Onyejelem & Aondover, 2024b). This case study highlights the importance of a comprehensive and well-planned crisis communication approach, which can be crucial in mitigating the impact of a crisis and preserving an organization's reputation.

### **III. Research Methods**

A research design serves as the blueprint for how the data is collected and analyzed while ensuring consistency, reliability and validity throughout the study (Jansen, 2023). Thus, this study adopted the positivist approach of research design. Positivist or post-positivism beliefs in quantitative method of research design. Based on the choice of positivism, survey method was employed to generate data using questionnaire as a research instrument. The population of this study is 1,300 respondents from the Lafarge, Nigeria, who worked actively with Lafarge and have witnessed crisis. The population is pertinent to the research owing to the fact that these are the only individuals in the most suitable position to satisfactorily answer the research questions.

The study utilised a total number of 200 individuals taken from the employees of Lafarge Nigeria as a sample size. The respondents were clustered based on the levels of experiences working in the firm. 50 individuals were chosen from employees with 1-3 years of work experience, 50 employees with 4-6 years working experience, 50 employees with 7-9 years working experience and 50 employees with 9 years and above working



experience. The study adopted content validity and the method of data presentation was based on tables, frequency, and percentages using descriptive analysis.

#### IV. Results and Discussion

**Table 1.** Awareness of Lafarge Nigeria on Crisis Communication during the Pandemic

RESPONSE	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Not aware at all	15	7.5%
Slightly aware	34	17%
Moderately aware	110	55%
Very aware	32	16%
Extremely aware	9	4.5%
<b>Total</b>	200	100%

Source: (field work, 2024)

The table above examines the awareness of the respondents to the crisis communication strategies of Lafarge Nigeria during the Covid-19 crisis, 7.5% of the respondents were not aware at all, 17% were slightly aware, 55% were moderately aware, 16% were very aware and 4.5% were extremely aware of the organization's crisis communication strategies. The largest percentage being moderately aware is a good pointer in proving that crisis communication strategies employed was effective to a good extent. This corroborates the position of Ulmer et al., in Maikaba and Msughter (2019) emphasize the importance of timely and transparent communication during crises to build credibility and enhance brand resilience. This study proposes the notion of the enormous power wielded by communication and its channels in averting, mitigating and overcoming crisis in corporate organizations specifically.

**Table 2.** Specific Communication Channels or Platforms Lafarge Nigeria Used to Communicate during the Pandemic

RESPONSE	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
No channels or platforms observed	14	7%
Few channels or platforms observed	48	24%
Some channels or platforms observed	114	57%
Many channels or platforms observed	17	8.5%
All channels or platforms observed	7	3.5%
<b>Total</b>	200	100%

Source: (field work, 2024)

The table above examines the specific communication channels or platforms employed by Lafarge Nigeria to communicate during the pandemic. 7% of the respondents did not observe any channels employed, 24% observed few channels employed, 57% observed some channels employed, 8.5 % observed many channels employed and 3.5% of the respondents observed all the channels employed.

**Table 3.** Effectiveness of Crisis Communication Strategies Employed by Lafarge Nigeria in addressing the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic

RESPONSE	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Not effective at all	2	1%

Slightly effective	51	25.5%
Moderately effective	104	52%
Very effective	33	16.5%
Extremely effective	10	5%
<b>Total</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: (field work, 2024)

The table above attempts to gauge the effectiveness of the crisis communication efforts of Lafarge Nigeria during the pandemic. 1% of the respondents thought it was not effective at all, 25.5% thought it was slightly effective, 52% thought it was moderately effective, 16.5% thought it was very effective and 5% thought it was extremely effective.

On the contrary, Obada et al., (2023) observed that although, the company later placed full-page newspaper ads, made changes to data-handling policies and implemented other reforms, consumer trust remained damaged. The goal of crisis communication is to ensure the publics of the affected organization that you are truly sorry and sympathetic and aim to take rectification and remediation measures. It is also for them to know you are not excluding yourself as an organization but are fully present and committed.

**Table 4.** Perception of Lafarge Nigeria’s Communication Efforts during the COVID-19 Pandemic

<b>RESPONSE</b>	<b>FREQUENCY</b>	<b>PERCENTAGE</b>
Very negative	3	1.5%
Somewhat negative	26	13%
Neutral	121	60.5%
Somewhat positive	38	19%
Very positive	12	6%
<b>Total</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: (field work, 2024)

This table presents the perception of the crisis communication efforts by Lafarge Nigeria to the respondents. 1.5% thought it was very negative, 13% thought it was somewhat negative, 60.5% perceived it to be neutral, 19% thought it to be somewhat positive and 6% perceived it to be very positive.

**Table 5.** Adequately informed and Supported by Lafarge Nigeria’s Communication during the Pandemic

<b>RESPONSE</b>	<b>FREQUENCY</b>	<b>PERCENTAGE</b>
Not at all	23	11.5%
Slightly	28	14%
Moderately	109	54.5%
Very	34	17%
Extremely	6	3%
<b>Total</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: (field work, 2024)

The table above examines if the respondents felt adequately informed and supported by the crisis communication efforts by the organization. 11.5% of the respondents felt they were not adequately informed, 14% felt they were slightly informed,



54.5% felt they were moderately informed, 17% felt they were very informed and 3% felt they were extremely informed. Bundy et al., (2017) maintained that this particular example was important because crisis communication does not begin when the crisis starts, it starts even in the face of seemingly no impending danger. Crisis communication works hand-in-hand with crisis management and negating one for the other or the two will result in negative results.

**Table 6.** Communication during the pandemic by Lafarge Nigeria Influence Perception and Trust

RESPONSE	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Very negatively	5	2.5%
Somewhat negatively	22	11%
Neutral	118	59%
Somewhat positively	45	22.5%
Very positively	10	5%
<b>Total</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: (field work, 2024)

The table above explains how the crisis communication efforts of Lafarge influenced the perception of the respondents' trust in the organization. 2.5% of the respondents said it influenced their perception of the organization very negatively, 11% of the respondents said it was somewhat negative, 59% said it influenced their perception of the organization neutrally, 22.5% said it influenced their perception of the organization somewhat positively, and 5% said it influenced their perception of the organization very positively.

**Table 7.** Lafarge Nigeria's Crisis Communication Efforts during the Pandemic Positively Impact Perception of the company's Brand Reputation

RESPONSE	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Not at all	18	9%
Slightly	28	14%
Moderately	115	57.5%
Very	36	18%
Extremely	3	1.5%
<b>Total</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: (field work, 2024)

The table above shows the answers of the respondents about the crisis communication efforts of Lafarge during the pandemic as regards to positive impact of the company's brand reputation. 9% of the respondents said it did not positively influence their perception of the brand's reputation, 14% said it positively influenced the perception of the brand's reputation slightly, 57.5% said it positively influenced their perception towards the brand image moderately, 18% answered 'very' while 1.5% answered 'extremely'. From the theoretical perspective, Coombs (2015) observed that by employing the appropriate response strategy organizations can effectively address public concerns mitigate reputational damage and maintain brand sustainability. Lafarge Africa, during the crisis put out timely and transparent press releases, constantly sending updates to the public, baring it all out to the public and keeping them informed at every point of progress, via various media platforms.

**Table 8.** Lafarge Nigeria’s Crisis Communication during the Pandemic help Maintain its Market Position Compared to its Competitors

RESPONSE	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Not at all	5	2.5%
Slightly	29	14.5%
Moderately	124	62%
Very	32	16%
Extremely	10	5%
<b>Total</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: (field work, 2024)

The table above examines respondents’ opinion on Lafarge’s Efforts during the Covid-19 crisis in terms of market position compared to its competitors. 2.5% of the respondents chose ‘not at all’, 14.5% chose the option ‘slightly’, 62% of the respondents chose the option ‘moderately’, 16% chose the option ‘very’ while 5% chose the option ‘extremely’.

**Table 9.** Lafarge Nigeria’s Approach during Crisis Communication of the COVID-19 Pandemic were particularly effective

RESPONSE	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
None were effective	3	1.5%
A few were effective	27	13.5%
Some were effective	92	46%
Many were effective	60	30%
All were effective	18	9%
<b>Total</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: (field work, 2024)

This table analyses the answers of the respondents when asked what aspects of the organization’s crisis communication efforts were particularly effective. 1.5% thought none were particularly effective, 13.5% thought a few were particularly effective, 46% thought some of the efforts were particularly effective, 30% thought many of the efforts were particularly effective while 9% of the respondents thought that all were effective.

**Table 10.** Lafarge Nigeria’s Crisis Communication Approach needs Improvement for Future Crisis Management in the Construction Industry

RESPONSE	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
No improvements needed	10	5%
Minor improvements needed	24	12%
Some improvements needed	117	58.5%
Significant improvements needed	46	23%
Major improvements needed	3	1.5%
<b>Total</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: (field work, 2024)

This table shows the answers of the respondents when asked if Lafarge Nigeria’s crisis communication approach needs improvements for future crisis management in the construction industry. 5% of the respondents said no improvements was needed, 12% said

minor improvements was needed, 58.5% said some improvements was needed, 23% thought that significant improvement was needed, while 1.5% of the respondents thought major improvements was needed.

**Table 11.** Key Lessons and Best Practices that Can be Learned from Lafarge Nigeria's Crisis Communication Approach during the Pandemic

RESPONSE	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
No lessons or best practices	3	1.5%
A few lessons or best practices	20	10%
Some lessons or best practices	102	51%
Many lessons or best practices	65	32.5%
Numerous lessons or best practices	10	5%
<b>Total</b>	200	100%

Source: (field work, 2024)

The table above examines the opinion of the respondents on if there were key lessons and practices that could be learned from Lafarge Nigeria's crisis communication approach. 1.5% of the respondents thought no lessons or best practices could be learnt from Lafarge's crisis communication strategies, 10% thought a few lessons or best practices could be learnt, 51% thought some lessons or best practices could be learnt, 32.5% thought many lessons and practices could be learnt while 5% thought numerous lessons or practices could be learnt. From the theoretical perspective, Coombs (2015) established that the Situational Crisis Communication Theory offers a framework for understanding how organizations should respond to crises based on the level of responsibility attributed to the organization. In the case of Lafarge's Covid-19 crisis in Nigeria, the company was not directly responsible for the pandemic, but its actions and decisions during the crisis could have significantly impacted its stakeholders and reputation.

## V. Conclusion

Going by the findings of this study, it is safe to say that crisis communication is a very essential component every organization should and must implement in order to be sustainable and to remain in business for a long time. This is so because crises are inevitable for any organization and therefore must be catered to before, during and after the happening. Crisis communication is so essential that it can make or mar any organization depending on how well it is managed. For a brand to be sustainable, it must have efficiently passed through the hurdles of crisis and proved itself to be trustworthy and worthy of their customer's continuous patronage. Unarguably, there are much more components that hold up a brand, however, crisis communication strategies which encompasses most of the PR tactics (pre-crisis, on-the- crisis and post-crisis measures), are an excellent way to build sustainability. Therefore, organizations should religiously keep the laws of crisis communication and implement its strategies efficiently.

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