Media and Crisis Communication After the Boston Marathon Bombing

Posted on October 2, 2019

View this essay online:
https://academic-master.com/media-and-crisis-communication-after-the-boston-marathon-bombing/

Introduction

On April 15, 2013, two bombs detonated near the finish line of the Boston Marathon races that are annually held, killing three individuals and injuring dozens of others. Rescue workers and medics responded and gave aid to the hundreds of casualties. Following emergency plans, police officers turned away arriving runners and directed them to Kenmore Square. Detailed investigations began led by the Federal Bureau of Investigations (Allan 194-195). The United States government indicated that there had been no initial intelligence reports before the attack. In an unfortunate turn of events, news organizations scramble to report on the happenings to update viewers and listeners across the globe. People did not have to wait to receive news from traditional outlets as amateur reporters began publishing unnecessary information online about the bombing, quickly passing unreliable messages to the audience.

The Thread, which is a documentary in Xbox entertainment studios, shows how technological advancement and social media platforms have changed news coverage networks across the world. This transformation has led to both merits and dangers in the spread of news. With all the information running across the media houses surrounding the bombing incident, the media propaganda perpetuated as vigilante justice saw several people receive false accusations regarding the matter.

Sources. The New York Times

Rhetoric content analysis on Boston Marathon bombings as covered by NY Times

New York Times article, “Families and City Mourn as Hunt for the Missing Continues.”

According to research regarding reporting from different sources, such as the CNN newscast and an opinion piece of the New York Times, qualitative analysis explored how major United States newspapers used human emotional interests in their coverage. This came in that month of the Boston bombing event, which represents the first crisis event in an extended period. Different articles in U.S. newspapers were published about the Boston Marathon bombings (Allan 198-199). The research showed how the articles framed runner’s responses because of personal and community dynamics, it also how the media platform used anger and sadness in an emotional strategy to show that the runners were still vulnerable to future terrorist attacks. Firsthand accounts of the unfortunate crisis

and the respective responses were provided during that month as the unfolding event became part of several media reports.

Scholarly articles and other rhetorical theories often point to the influence that the public media has on society. In comparison, media framing theory indicates that the media use frames to control and direct people's attention to some new information. This raises the outlook for some data and often downgrades others. By conducting a detailed rhetoric content analysis of these reports, the article research showed how race directors and media relations officers develop an efficient long-term crisis communication management strategy (Biddinger et al. 100). The purpose of the direction was to ensure that the runner's support and race sponsors fully updated on the safety measures proceedings. The article focused on the running, while the CNN television format addressed the media coverage regarding a public domain participating in a particular event. Consequently, while the article explored the dynamics and internal drive of runners in a general setting event, it failed to discuss how the media frame these motivations across the racing world. Research shows how human emotions in the coverage of news can affect reactions to a specific crisis.

The media plays a significant role during crisis situations in communicating and providing useful information to the public. It is crucial to understand how social media portrayed runners during the Boston Marathon Bombings. It framed individual elements and covered the impacts of human interest on the news.

Individual Emotions Turn Crisis Into A Human News Event

People's interest frames are employed by the media to emphasize human emotions during a disaster such as that of the Boston Marathon Bombing. This makes the public view and face the issue at hand and regard the problem as a serious and dangerous one. The human elements used in the article included human victims and the persons responsible for the attack (Slovic 425). Findings indicate that in cases of massive terrorist attacks, the frames were used in future levels of media coverage and reporting as the expected developments began to slow down. The article conducted a rhetoric content analysis of news coverage from NBC, NY Times and Fox News regarding the Boston attack, evaluating political, criminal, economic and disaster frames. This provided facts, analysis and guidance on how the shooting occurred, the time of occurrence, and the time the media started drawing different conclusions on the matter.

Emotions Affect Media And Public During A Crisis

According to the CNN format, research analysis showed that emotional responses influenced how the audience reacted and coped with a crisis event. The level to which people perceived the crisis to be controlled and predicted by intelligence reports played a crucial role in the emotions victims and

professionals felt towards the crisis.

Regarding the NY Times article, “Anger of Killer was on Exhibit in His Writings”, the analysis shows how expected controllability resulted in anger, sadness, and fright among the victims and other people. The various studies show how crisis perception, as predicted by the news article, affects the emotions of the audience.

Distance running shows victim elements.

The Boston Marathon bombing attack saw several media platforms turn their unreliable news against the participants. The mainstream media coverage comprehended the running’s individual elements during such terrorist activities.

Results

Fantasy Theme Analysis

The content analysis displayed several issues, revealing that the media coverage portrayed runners as a consequence of both personal and societal dynamics. It also uncovered the themes of fear, sadness, anger, and vulnerability as part of the emotional framing. Runners are committed to running and use the activity to cope with life’s problems. They noted how various runners had participated in several Boston marathon races due to personal commitment (Biddinger et al. 103).

Running community included support. Coverage on the media showed those who did not actively participate in the races but provided support to the participants. For example, an article highlighted how a young boy was injured while he waited for his father to approach the finish line. Some of the individuals supported the activity by cheering on their friends and family members.

Visual Analysis

The nature of mainstream media, being both dynamic and multi-lingual, faces significant difficulties in analysis efforts. It empowers analysts with a clear understanding of people’s perceptions of events and crisis situations. Comparing the articles that provide conflicting information regarding the Boston attack, visual analytics was mainly used by some reports to give a high-level overview of the facts. While most media visualization approaches rely on features such as temporary and geographical, some systems uphold evolution for a particular topic. This approach is aimed to ensure that the articles provide the correct information during a crisis event. Different studies have explored how the 2013 Boston bombing influenced security operations at sporting events and venues (Slovic 426).

Conclusion

Future research on articles should explore other media formats, for example, televisions and online websites, to test how they framed runners during a similar crisis. Media studies should analyze how local Boston media platforms depicted runners to compare national and local newspaper publications. This would enable reporters to strategize on the best communication methods during a crisis (Allan 205). The journalists who wrote these articles should be interviewed to understand how they perceive runners and their rationale behind the framing of Boston Marathon runners. The information obtained would be utilized to handle another crisis using a better communication strategy.

Works Cited

Allan, Stuart. “Witnessing in crisis: Photo-reportage of terror attacks in Boston and London.” Media, War & Conflict 7.2 (2014): 133-151.

Biddinger, Paul D., et al. “Be prepared—the Boston Marathon and mass-casualty events.” New England Journal of medicine368.21 (2013): 1958-1960.

Gupta, Aditi, Hemank Lamba, and Ponnurangam Kumaraguru. “$1.00 per rt# bostonmarathon# prayforboston: Analyzing fake content on Twitter.” eCrime Researchers Summit (eCRS), 2013. IEEE, 2013.

Krause, Don, and Mark Smith. “Twitter as mythmaker in storytelling: the emergence of hero status by the Boston police department in the aftermath of the 2013 marathon bombing.” The Journal of Social Media in Society 3.1 (2014).

Slovic, Paul. “Terrorism as a hazard: A new species of trouble.” Risk analysis 22.3 (2002): 425-426.