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**THE PERCEPTION OF THE CRISIS COMMUNICATION
MANAGEMENT OF THE TERRORIST ATTACK IN TURKU
THROUGH THE EYES OF FINNISH CITIZENS**

Bachelor's thesis

Programme TVTB, specialisation Marketing

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Tallinn 2019

I hereby declare that I have compiled the paper independently and all works, important standpoints and data by other authors has been properly referenced and the same paper has not been previously presented for grading.
The document length is 9061 words from the introduction to the end of conclusion.

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ABSTRACT

The significance of crisis communication management has become increasingly relevant in terrorism. As terrorism is now occurring more than ever, it is important to have the knowledge as well as the understanding of using crisis communication in a correct manner, at a right time, as timing is everything in situations of crisis.

Through this research one learned about the perspectives of crisis communication management from the point of view of Finnish citizens. More specifically, heard the respondents talk about their reactions towards terrorism as well as received an understanding of their viewpoint on communication during a crisis phase. Finally, came to the realization of the role and effects public media and journalism encompassed, and how surprisingly much the news affected people.

The internationally educated respondents had a realistic standpoint on terrorism's appearance. They felt positive about the security in Finland, and as far as crisis communication and media were concerned, they knew when and how to remove the false truth from the real one. The interviewees put themselves into a vulnerable and honest state, they told us the truth, and did not just give us the benefit of the doubt.

Keywords: crisis communication management, crisis, public media, journalism, press, yellow press, terrorism, terrorist, after-care, post-crisis phase

INTRODUCTION

August 18th 2017 Finland faced its first terrorist attack. It was a shock, a moment of fear, something nobody expected. It awakened Finnish citizens, but most importantly, made us realize we live in a world filled with issues that need to be worked on. Terrorism is an increasing phenomenon, a dilemma, and one needs to comprehend the severity of it. It cannot be controlled or stopped entirely, but the focus needs to be on decreasing and preventing new attacks from occurring. Luckily, hereafter, we are more aware of how to overcome crisis situations.

The aim of this thesis is to learn and understand the perspectives of crisis communication management through the eyes of Finnish citizens. What people think about it, and how everything was managed after the attack in Turku. Could have something been differently? More importantly, this paper's author would want people to understand how much of a challenge and effort is put into dealing with situations of terrorism, and what it takes to recover from it. This research will focus on the tools that crisis communication management practises in order to heal from crisis.

What were Finnish citizens feeling after the attack? Are people more aware of what is happening in the world, and how big of a role terrorism and its communication plays in it? The paper will also show how Europe and Finland have communicated crises to the world, and how important it is to be aware of terror situations.

There will be seven interviews conducted in order to find differing aspects and point of views of the attack and its communication methods.

1. THEORY

There is a broad understanding to both crisis communication management and terrorism. How are they functioning together? What kind of a role crisis communication and its management play in a disastrous situation like terrorism, and what consequences does it have? Discussing these topics, differing aspects need to be taken into account, from the simple meaning of crisis itself to the post-phase it carries. The important matter is the planning of crises situations in general – one needs to be prepared for abrupt incidents and occasions, but also have the knowledge and professionalism to deal with the after-care of the happened incidents.

What is terrorism, and what are the intentions terrorists have? Do they want to accomplish something specific? The answer is, yes. Usually, people do not think about how a terrorist strike is handled by the city or crisis management professionals, individuals are more keen on what happened, and how big of a damage an attack has done. The question of what, why and how arises. Often, we know what happened, and how it happened, but the question why seems to keep on being the mystery.

Next, the author will open up and define these important factors related to the topic, making this thesis, and case study understandable. Several issues will be spoken about and clarified.

1.1. Crisis communication management

Crisis communication management is about dealing with reputation and public image. It is about protecting whatever is happening, whatever has happened, and whatever will happen. (Robertson 2012, 1)

Crisis management can cause difficulties. The idea is to eliminate poor publicity that could threaten the image. With this strategy of communication, the aim is to influence the understanding about the crisis in a way that sheds light on wherever the crisis has occurred. (Ibid.)

Crisis is an issue that creates uncertainty, pressure as well as fear, and there should always be professionals able to handle the situation (Ibid.). The management of crisis communication is a significant chain of events diminishing the harm it causes whether the crisis is occurring in an organization or in our case, in a city towards its people (Coombs 2007, 3).

Image is an important aspect, and is crucial to public relations. There exists differing ways when it comes to handling an individual's image or a corporation's image. Strategies are different. Companies may have a better basis for image building than individuals. The alternatives are similar for everyone, though, it is just about choosing the right one. (Benoit 1997, 177)

Crisis communication management starts with preparation of crisis plans. Before any crisis occurs, planning is essential and important. These plans need to be looked over very carefully, on a regular basis. Of course, some crises can be observed beforehand but others might occur suddenly. If needed, plans should be adapted to possible change. (Ibid., 182)

Secondly, the crisis has to be analyzed. Simply, the crisis needs to be learnt by the crisis communication management team in order to be able to act on it in a proper way. What are the exact questions that need to be taken into account in order to proceed with the situation? (Ibid.)

Next step is to recognize the main target group the crisis is concerning. In this case, one needs to think about who is related to what has happened, and who to talk to. In a situation of terrorism, citizens and the entire society need to be taken into account, and they are the ones needing communication as well as interaction. (Ibid., 183)

The final step is to repair the image. It is necessary for the crisis management team to avoid making untruthful accusations, avoid unnecessary, and give relevant assistance. By speaking the truth, it helps one to gain trust, and being responsible is definitely the right thing to do, and not blame somebody else, especially if the accusations are incorrect. (Ibid., 184)

1.1.1. Crisis response and after-care

Which are the appropriate steps in order to move forward from what has happened? Often, in a crisis phase, the focus is not on the crisis itself, but most importantly, should be on the way it is handled the best possible way.

In the after-care of crisis, it is important to focus on the future. It is about having confidence of turning the negative situation into a more positive experience. What's to come is important, and those who have been affected by the crisis, need to be looked after, and make sure that everything possible is done to ease the distress and fear caused by it. (Stafford et al. 2002, 29)

Crisis response includes everything that is happening after crisis. In this case, public relations has a crucial role in forming important messages. The message needs to be truthful and easily understandable. A significant part of crisis response is immediate response which focuses on being fast, precise, and logical. One needs to know what to do and have the knowledge to take proper action. (Coombs 2007, 6)

Being fast appears easy but actually requires complex aspects, and the management must have a response in the first minutes. This creates stress which is why a crisis plan needs to be clear to everybody involved. (Ibid.)

Being precise, on the other hand, is crucial when communicating to people. Information needs to be real, because individuals will be affected by the information they are given. This is one of the reasons false communication must be clarified. Maintaining accuracy is all about speaking with, so to speak, same language, and not giving any mixed signals. During a crisis, the management needs to be clear on the central point of issues, and this is when logic comes in. (Ibid.)

In crisis response and after-care, the main points are to quickly manage, precisely communicate, and logically act. Communication should be wisely used, and showing emotion, especially sympathy and concern towards the victims is important. (Ibid., 7)

1.1.2. Reputation repair

There have been several researches conducted to look into reputational damage, and the importance of its repair within a crisis situation (Ibid., 8). Whether the crisis occurs in an

organization or city, the strategies in which these situations are taken care of are very similar (Barnett et al. 2012, 2). All in all, repairing reputation is a key element as reputation is extremely appreciated (Coombs 2007, 11).

Usually, the first thing the crisis management does is deny everything, saying there is nothing to worry about. In the case of terrorism, this literally cannot be done. It is not an organization wise crisis that one can avoid or deny, and what can be kept a secret. Terrorism is strongly visible, and a matter that cannot be left alone. (Ibid., 9)

There is always somebody, a group or a person who will be blamed for what has happened. To the contrary of organizational crisis, in case of terrorism, the terrorist group or a terrorist itself confesses and takes responsibility for the attack. (Ibid.)

In terrorism, the aim in attacking and killing comes through religious, political or financial causes – question of why arises. (Ibid., 10)

At the end of the day, unlike in organizational crisis, terrorism does not include apologies, remorse, empathy, nothing but damage and death. It is a situation more difficult to manage, and way harder to get past. (Ibid.)

As researched, it is examined which reputation repair strategy goes in which situation. Not all of them match, and these strategies cannot be used in every crisis (Ibid.). Sometimes there is one strategy to be used, and other times there is a mixture of several strategies that suit the specific crisis (Barnett et al. 2012, 5). Under these circumstances, well educated and qualified professionals are highly needed (Coombs 2007, 9).

1.1.3. Post-crisis phase

Life starts getting back to normal again in post-crisis phase. The crisis that occurred, doesn't require that much attention, thus it isn't the main focus any longer (Coombs 2007, 11). What are the factors that need to be considered, and how much of an importance communication plays?

In this phase, crisis managers need to provide with relevant updates on the recovery, and information of the occurred crisis. The extent of information that needs to be released has to meet

the requirements of information engaged during the event. If one has promised to give an update, one should then carry it out to whomever the promise has been made. (Ibid.)

Crisis should be an instructive moment, and the quality of crisis management has to be estimated on a regular basis in order to know which aspects to focus on, and what might need refining. These evaluations should be analyzed in the most proper way and use those lessons as learning experiences into future crisis plans and systems. (Ibid., 12)

There is not one specific method to handle post-crisis phase, but there are definitely several aspects needed to be taken into account every step of the way (White 2011). A crisis is part of daily life, it is something we all learn from, and sadly, a matter we will always be facing (Coombs 2008). This is why we need professionals and experts who know the required steps by heart, and most importantly, professionals who are able to teach us and make us feel a little bit safer.

1.2. Terrorism and terrorists

A united non-military group of people who have the same sense in political, financial and religious ideologies. Is this how terrorism is defined? Intentional violence against people and religion. The term terrorism is actually quite difficult to define, and there doesn't exist one specific definition that describes it, but the aim of it is certainly to achieve financial, political or religious cause. Even though, terrorism has been very common today, it has its roots in early resistance and political movements. (Kondrasuk 2005, 646)

Terrorist, on the other hand, is defined as a fighter of freedom, warrior, militant and as a soldier. He or she operates in a threatening and violent way with the intention of harm, and definitely, do not respect rules or other regulations. For example two of the most known terrorist organizations are al-Qaeda, founded by Osama bin Laden as well as ISIS, by the whole name the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria. (Ibid.)

September 11th 2001, the world faced its first tremendous terrorist attack in New York City, which is now known by the name "9/11". Two of the World Trade Center Towers were hit by airplanes full of passengers, and killed thousands of innocent people. What happened in the Big Apple that

day is the starting point of modern terrorism, and is truly a sad memory everybody is touched by, whether one is a New Yorker or not. (Ibid., 647)

9/11 surely represents one of the major crises in the American history, and is now the key element on how terrorism is seen today. It affected people, it hurt people, but more importantly, it taught people, and was a real life lesson to most of us. (Korstanje et al. 2012, 13)

As a conclusion, one may say that terrorism is pure intentional action to harm people through religious matters including racism as well as political or financial violence, but on a positive note, it has brought people together, and has given individuals a feeling of togetherness (Kondrasuk 2005, 654). As terrorism is increasing today, it definitely is a matter that needs to be taken into account, as 9/11 taught us how massively it can be done. Terrorism is a problem of society not individuals', and the future of it is extremely challenging to estimate (Ibid., 652). Nothing can't be taken for granted, because a lot of terrorism as well as recruitment and violent actions are happening in the world without us even noticing. Without social media, and terroristic videos on the Internet, this style of recruitment would not be happening. There are also YouTube videos in which bomb making skills can be improved and even learnt entirely from the beginning, showing every step of the way how it is done, and this is one of the first things to consider when it comes to reducing terrorism (Ibid., 653).

1.2.1. Political violence

The term terrorism is most commonly defined as motivation of politics, violence against innocent targets or groups, often with the aim of having an impact on the publics. (Krueger et al. 2002, 3)

In general, there are different types in which ways political violence occurs. For example, riots, armed attack events, political strikes, assassinations, and antigovernment demonstrations. Riots are severe acts or fights of a lot of people. When it comes to riots, it is physical action, and usually involves damaging of property as well as harming individuals. Armed attack events, on the other hand, include similar kind of violence as riots but with differing weapons. These events are often committed by terrorist organizations, and are primarily aimed against the government. Political strikes are manifestations to go against a government, government policies, actions as well as its leaders. Assassinations are attempts of murders of a politician or a government member. Lastly,

antigovernment demonstrations are conventions against government's policies, which do not include violence, and are committed by a significant amount of people. (Douglas 1973, 8-9)

As said above, when it comes to terrorism, politics comes strongly in. The aims and intentions could be, and are different, but political violence occurs in differing ways, and in which the government comes in one way or another. These situations often take place where individuals are around, and are committed by strong, large group of people.

1.3. Threat of terrorism in Finland

Finland is one of the few countries that has been facing terrorism to only some extent throughout the years. This doesn't mean that terrorism cannot be included as a threat to Finnish society. It is a threat, and in fact every country, somehow, is always going to be facing it. How is terrorism considered in Finland, and is it taken as seriously as it should be?

Until the terrorist attack in Finland's third biggest cities, Turku, terrorism had been observed as a distant danger to the country (Jokinen 2018). What changed after the strike? The phenomenon that terrorism introduces, has not been familiar to Finnish citizens, and scarily unfamiliar to the Government, Finnish security as well as the Intelligence Service (Ibid.). Well, obviously, because the threat has always been low. During the past years, there was 80 individuals travelling from Finland to Iraq and Syria, and in January 2018, that same number had been increased by nearly 20 percent (Ibid.). All in all, there were 370 radical Islamists in 2012, and this number has now gone up by approximately 80 percent (Ibid.). On top of this, the number of asylum seekers that have augmented violence risk appears to be 500 (Orell 2018). Because of terrorism's increased amount of threat, Finland's Ministry for internal affairs, has been conducting a research in which the aim is to investigate the threat of radical Islamism, and find solutions to prevent and prepare for situations like these (Ibid.).

As a conclusion, people perceive that the threat of terrorism is growing in Finland, and they feel more cautious and scared about it. The fear of terrorism is a serious matter that needs to be taken into account, and partially why several researches have been conducted in order to prepare citizens, cities, countries etc. for being able to handle crisis situations, and prevent terrorist attacks from happening (Orell 2018). People need to know the facts, as cruel and awful as it might be. When

one has more knowledge, one is smarter, stronger, and the country will be saved. Luckily, at the end of the day, Finland is far away from the power centres of the world, in other words, far away from the roots of terrorism.

1.3.1. The light history of terrorism in Finland

Finland has been extremely lucky when it comes to terrorism. Finns haven't experienced terrorism in the country before the horrific attack in Turku. Of course, we have lived to see it happen in many other countries, and for example thinking about the Scandinavia, Sweden, unfortunately faced it before the others.

The city of Turku experienced a terrorist attack in August 18th 2017, and is the country's first terroristic event so far. A young Moroccan adult named Abderrahman Bouanane was a rejected assulym seeker who first was using the name Abderrahman Mechkah, but later on, turned out to be a false identity (Mansikkamäki et al. 2017).

Bouanane was born in 1994, and committed the attack with a knife, killing two women, and injuring eight other individuals. In the end, it was found out that Bouanane was a soldier of the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria, but operated seperately from the organization. (Jokinen 2018)

As obvious as it is, everybody is hoping this attack would be the last one in Finland. On the other hand, we need to consider the increasing phenomenon of terrorism in general, and try to prevent it the best possible way. Gladly, we do have operations and team projects, and there is continuous investigations and practises on improving Finnish society in these types of crisis situations. At the end of the day, terrorism cannot be stopped entirely, but we can all try to realize the severity of it, and that way minimize attacks from occurring.

1.3.2. Finland's justice system – moving towards better prevention

How is terrorism prevented in Finland? What are the important legislations provided to fight terrorism? These are important questions to consider. Finland's Police department has listed matters that could be helpful in the prevention process of terrorism in Finland (Ryhänen 2018).

The Finnish Police has created strong operations round-the-clock with a quality to recognize and react to the threat terrorism encompasses in Finland. The Finnish Intelligence and National Bureau of Investigation have strengthened their cooperative public relations and operational activities. (Ibid.)

In June 2017, the Finnish Intelligence Service increased the level of terrorism's threat in Finland. It also decided to prioritize the information giving to the government and authorities, and are constantly keeping it updated. They now, arrange tasks and practises on a regular basis in order to improve in reaction, completeness and coordination. (Ibid.)

Finland's Ministry for internal affairs has started a team project in which the aim is to establish a civilian intelligence law. For example, there will be a larger amount of people for the fight of terrorism, because unfortunately, the possibilities of training and recruiting terrorism is highly criminalized. (Ibid.)

Another project was started in 2017 in which the goal is to minimize violence concerning the individuals coming back from the conflict zones and enhance their level of adaptation into Finland. This project has been operated by internal security and administration of justice. Moreover, a great amount of effort has been put into communication between professionals and possibly radicalized immigrants for enabling the possibility to discuss important and severe issues. (Ibid.)

As seen, several aspects have been taken into account, and are constantly being observed. The Finnish Police, the Finnish Intelligence Service as well as the National Bureau of Investigation have all put a great effort into diminishing terrorism in Finland. They are focusing both on people returning from the conflict zones and more importantly, considered the fact that training needs to be provided in order to prevent terrorist attacks. The knowledge must be out there. It needs to be taught and assimilated.

2. RESEARCH

2.1. Planning the research

This Bachelor's thesis studies the crisis communication management of the terrorist attack in Turku from the point of view of Finnish citizens. How the attack has affected them and how the crisis communication was handled by the media and Finland in general?

The author will conduct seven interviews with different aged people, from the author's relatives to close friends, some originally from Turku. This is the best way to study the topic, because the author wants to gather differing opinions and thoughts. It is an excellent method to receive the most natural answers and point of views, because the aim is not to have professionals' ideas on the crisis but real, spontaneous as well as honest conversations. Usually, the information one reads about a crisis is from the newspaper and comes to know the details by watching television, so on the contrary, it is interesting to hear the vulnerable side of the story, and find out what Finnish citizens think and feel like.

The author is going to use qualitative research method with seven oral interviews. In this research, it is important for the author to receive opinions from Finnish people, because Turku's attack has so far been the only one in Finland, and is a shocking experience to whomever. When it comes to crisis communication management, it is usually referred to a job of professionals, but the author's aim is to learn what communication about crises means to Finns personally, and how the crisis communication management has been handled from their standpoint. The author wants to find out what impact the communications had on the level of their fear and shock, especially after the attack.

The author will analyse the data with the help of systematic qualitative content analysis, creating different categories, and forming them into subchapters, trying to find aspects connecting one interviewee to the other. This is the way to get the best possible outcome of the research, and see

the similarities as well as the differences of the interviewees' opinions and point of views. What connects them to each other and what doesn't.

In the theory, the way the author was able to know if a source is reliable, was always represented on the article itself, meaning that it needed to include the year of publication, author and in addition, the page number. Researching and reading through the data, the author made sure all of these were included, otherwise it couldn't be used as reliable source. When it comes to the interviews, it was the most reliable way to gather information, being face to face with the interviewee, thus being able to open up the person. In addition, a bonus was the fact that the author really saw good reactions and feelings through every individual's face. The interviewees were honest, straight forward as well as very interested in talking about the topic. The whole idea of this thesis was to receive the most natural opinions and honest answers from the point of view of regular people, and that is exactly what the author managed to do.

The interviews were carried out in Finnish in order to create more trust and avoid any losses in translation.

The interviews were very interesting to compute. First, the author was slightly nervous on how it will go, but it turned out great. To the author, this topic is extremely interesting and intriguing, which made it fun to do.

This paper's author had seven interviewees, and all of them were quite different, from different cities, universities and occupations. It was nice to see how the respondents actually reacted to the questions, and even more interesting to hear their opinions. The author wanted the research to be personal and honest, and gladly, everybody had the courage to set themselves in a vulnerable state. Furthermore, the greatest part was the fact that everybody answered as thoroughly as they did and gave a reason to actually stop and think about the topic even more.

The hardest part was arranging the time for all interviews as everybody has their own lives and whereabouts. Luckily, the respondents and the author made the effort to take the time off of busy schedules in order for the interviewees to help out with the study. Everybody seemed interested and had answers wider than expected.

2.2. Case of crisis communication management during and after the terrorist attack in Turku, Finland – What Finnish citizens think?

Finland faced its first terrorist attack in August 18th 2017. It was a terrifying moment to all Finnish citizens, and it caused shock within the most of us.

It was a nice Friday afternoon in Turku, a Southern city in Finland where the attack occurred. A young Moroccan adult named Abderrahman Bouanane was the one responsible, born in 1994. Bouanane had arrived in Finland as an asylum seeker in 2016, and by this attack, he injured eight individuals, two of whom died. The young man used a kitchen knife. (Mansikkamäki et al. 2017)

Gladly, the police got Bouanane on time by shooting straight to his leg. The terrorist operated as a soldier of Isis for the organization. Isis never took responsibility of this specific attack though. In the end, Bouanane acted on his own with the aim of martyr death, and unfortunately committed the stabbings while being totally in his senses. Finland has never suspected any asylum seeker of such a severe crime before. (Ibid.)

2.2.1. Data collection

In this research, the author aims to respond and focus on the questions of the crisis communication management of this particular terrorist strike, and second, to learn the vulnerable and the honest side of every interviewees point of views as well as thoughts. In order to have received perspective on this, seven different aged Finnish citizens were interviewed.

This paper's author used qualitative research method. First, interviewing and then, transcribing each interview in order to have made the categorizing process easier and clear. The author used systematic qualitative content analysis, and by systematic reading of the interview texts, created seven different categories from which the subchapters were formed. The headlines were created from the theory part, as it constantly supported the writing process. Finally, the author brought out the connections, similarities and differences of opinions and thoughts of each respondent.

2.2.2. Sampling

As the aim of this research was to find out what Finnish citizens personally think about the crisis communication management of the terrorist attack in Turku, the author chose seven different aged individuals from different cities, two originally from Turku. These seven citizens all had a connection to the attack as it has so far been the only one in Finland. They had a very personal and vulnerable standpoint of the case.

For this reason, purposive sampling technique was chosen. Meaning that the author selected certain respondents being close to the case, and also this technique being commonly used in qualitative research (Etikan et al. 2016). To the author, the process of gathering data was one of the most important tasks of the research, and found it effective as it reaches the aim of the study, and gives clarity for the theory of the thesis (Tongco 2007). The author knew exactly what was required to reach the aim of the research as well as solve the research problem.

The interviewees were all interested in the topic even though it is not their speciality, and being professionals at answering to the questions wasn't even the author's point. In general, the respondents are well educated, and know the basics of crisis communication management, journalism as well as international terrorism and its threats. In the end, that was all the author needed to receive proper data.

2.2.3. Data analysis

Achieving political cause?

Terrorism is an aspect very difficult to define, and there doesn't exist one specific definition for it. It encompasses a broad understanding, and definitely is a relevant topic that goes through people's minds a lot, especially today. *"In my opinion, it's about an attempt to control people with violence"*, person C said.

Seven interviewees, seven different responses and seven interesting point of views. The two main points that came up in the interviews concerning terrorism and its definition, were both violence as well as fear. These were the adjectives most commonly used by every single respondent, and

these adjectives were mentioned always in the beginning of the response, being obviously, the first thought in their minds. *“Terrorism is about keeping people under a state of fear”*, person E said. *“It is all about scaring people”*, person G added. All interviewees started explaining their aspect about terrorism by either it being a violent act or simply an intent of causing fear. As seen, this is the top point how terrorism makes the respondents feel like.

As seven people were interviewed, three of them, person A, person B as well as person G, thought terrorists have always something to say, and by committing a terroristic act, they bring up their message. *“At the end of the day, terrorists honestly don’t ever get their message out, they just cause a tremendous amount of damage, which is completely pointless”*, person G said. In the end, what is it that terrorists want to say?

Terrorism is also defined to be intentional violence through political, financial or religious cause, and the attack in Turku was actually intended to be political violence. Abderrahman Bouanane, the terrorist who committed the stabbings, wasn’t happy with Government’s decision of declining his requisition of being an asylum seeker, and by Turku’s attack he wanted to manifest against it.

Most of the respondents said terrorism is usually caused by a bigger organization such as al-Qaeda or Isis for example, and rarely by just one person. *“Terrorism is a group, ideology or a single person wanting to hurt a certain group of people”*, person F said cautiously. This is one of the reasons the interviewees were taken back by the attack in Turku. They were obviously shocked, but had the understanding of the fact that terrorism is dominating the world right now, and could occur anywhere. *“What happened that day still feels unpleasant”*, person B pondered.

The respondents didn’t want to believe Turku had faced a terrorist attack, even though they knew deep inside that it could happen in Finland as well. *“Why Finland though, it is such a tiny place”*, person D thought. Mostly, the interviewees didn’t quite want to admit it, and were confused that it was done by one individual, separately from any organization. Person A and person E who are originally from Turku, were simply devastated that the attack occurred so close to home. Their first reaction was to call loved ones back home. *“I immediately called my family”*, person A said.

Person B, person D, person E as well as person G felt anger after some time had passed from the attack. These were exactly the same respondents who were also wondering if the terrorists will attack Helsinki next, all responses coming to the conclusion of why such a petite country as

Finland, and even smaller Turku was the target. *“Turku, unfortunately, just happened to be the place”*, person C said.

Moving towards better prevention

Finland is constantly moving towards better prevention, the country is managing terrorism, and creating projects and exercises to minimize terrorism and the threat of it. The respondents couldn't professionally say any specific details for the prevention, but rather honest, citizen-like opinions from the angle of regular individuals. *“I am not sure what Turku has done to prevent terrorism, but the authorities are more prepared, and reaction to such causes is quicker”*, person B said.

The question arised of what the Finnish Government could do to decrease the amount and threat terrorism is causing. *“Nowadays, there is a lot more conversation about immigration policy, and about who to let into the country and why”*, person D mentioned the importance of immigration policy, which in the end, encapsulated several other respondents' opinions. For example, three of the interviewees talked about the necessity of investigating all immigrants or asylum seekers' backgrounds, because it truly affects the country, and opens up the possibility for terrorism, as they are let in the country. Person A was very critical about Finland not having investigated Bouanane's background carefully enough in the first place, and the attack being partly the outcome of it. *“They should have checked it more properly”*, she said.

Most thought that after Turku's attack, Finland has made an effort to minimize terrorism, for example, roadblocks made of concrete were mentioned as well as the enhanced security systems at Helsinki-Vantaa airport. *“It's not that I don't feel safe, it's about what the world is facing today, and that's what makes it overwhelming”*, person C pondered. The authorities have taken more serious action than before, and powerful people, such as politicians, have talked publicly about the actions of terrorism, which has lead to nationwide conversation about terrorism and its prevention. Person A who is from Turku, mentioned the significance of mental health work, *“The backgrounds should be checked, but most importantly, the focus should be on mental health work”*. On the other hand, person E from Turku as well, highlighted that stopping one separate crazy terrorist is nearly impossible, and preventing terrorism caused by one individual is extremely difficult. Once a person is radicalized and manipulated into believing the ideologies terrorism covers, mental health work is quite challenging to carry out. *“We cannot stop one loonatic”*. Of course, the point is to succeed in it way before possible radicalization.

As seen, the interviewees had knowledge about how Finland has particularly handled these types of crises, but the ones who knew about Turku's actions towards terrorism, were the two respondents from the city. They both mentioned the fact that after the stabbings, increased action towards better security is clearly seen in the street scenery. *"Police is moving a lot, especially in the city center, but not necessarily at the location everything occurred"*, person E thought. Incremental security system is seen also at the airport in Turku, the same way as it is at Helsinki-Vantaa airport. *"In the end, the presence of terrorism is unfortunately all over"*, the citizen of Turku wondered.

The role of crisis communication management – Is public media the Devil or the Hero?

News are always speculated. In the media, in the morning papers, within people, everywhere. Are crisis situations handled the same way? The answer is yes. The speculation is the juice of it all.

"Everything spread extremely quickly in social media", person A begun her response about the communication and information of the attack. *"It was mainly broken down as a terrorist attack"*. All the others felt the same way. Many of them noticed the enormous amount of news breaking down literally all over the place, and to most, it was quite overwhelming. Person B, person D, and person F thought the communication was proper and correct enough to believe what the news had informed. Accurate information was regularly given, and most of it was clear. *"I thought the communication was proper"*, person B said. The rest of the interviewees struggled with the amount of information given, and thought there were too much of it. One thing they knew for a fact, that part of all of it was definitely pure speculation as well as exaggeration. *"I didn't really know what to believe. There were simply too much speculation"*, person D mentioned.

At the end of the day, all respondents want the media and the press sticking to the facts, despite what they felt right in the beginning. Trusting the news is sometimes very difficult, but one needs to choose what to believe in. On a general level, Finnish newspapers are very reliable.

To trust or not to trust?

Right after the attack, a press conference was held. According to the interviewees, and to those who watched it, it removed the fear as well as the shock that were felt in the beginning. The press

conference allowed the respondents to trust the given information again, and the feeling of relief was strongly present.

“In my opinion, real and honest communication, under any circumstances, would be important in order to maintain the trust towards the authorities and media”, person F wondered. When the question about the honesty of media was asked, the respondents had a very similar point of view. In a situation of terrorism, public media cannot lie, and this is the reason a lot of information was held back at the time, because the real truth of the attack wasn't yet investigated.

People need to be able to separate speculation from the truth, and that is up to oneself. Person E as well as person C both mentioned the yellow press. *“It speculates, it exaggerates, and it drives people crazy”*. The roots of individuals' speculation starts mostly from those kinds of magazines, and the only reason behind their speculation is the goal of making the big bucks. *“The disappointing aspect is, that it only harms people's minds, and the exaggeration of it all inspires terrorists to do something as horrible as the stabbings in Turku”*, person B added. The speculation is exactly what terrorists want, and is one way to get their message out. In this case, it always is a win win situation for both the yellow press as well as terrorism.

Even though, differing news arised during the attack, in the end, after some time had passed, the communication was good and understandable. *“Mostly, especially in the end, the communication was fine”*, person D mentioned. People were able to trust the media again, and the speculation was bypassed. The respondents felt that Police's statements were advisable, and they made it easier to move on. *“Every time the police said something, I felt that I can trust the information again”*, person A thought. Person E and person C felt like it was crucial to read what was in the background in order to make sense of the event. Others thought the media was quite trustworthy, and wasn't trying to avoid the truth.

Importance of after-care and crisis response

The importance of crisis communication management is strongly visible in situations of terrorism, because it affects people's level of fear and whereabouts, as we heard the respondents say. They strongly believe, from their own experience, that the crisis communication is a must.

The terrorist attack in Turku has been the only one in Finland so far, and this had an effect on how much of an importance the interviewees saw the communication to be. *“The communication in this situation was truly important, because nothing like this had ever happened in this country before”*, person B said strictly. What the media was saying, was also the way citizens thought in their heads. If the publics were calm, so were the Finns as well.

Most respondents thought Finland wasn't prepared enough for terrorism to occur, and this is also the reason why the event felt as unreal as it did. *“It honestly made every single person think”*, person D said. *“With the right kind of communication methods, the public media is able to affect people, either in a calming or scary way”*, person E pondered. Person F thought very similarly, that with communication a lot can be done, and more importantly, it could minimize the level of panic people might have. *“Finland being such a democratic country, good communication can be easily executed, and enough platforms to do it, are out there, it shouldn't be a problem”*, person A stated.

In the post-crisis phase, all respondents mentioned having serious conversations with loved ones. It eased the stress they had at the time, and calmed their nerves. The interviewees also said that the attack changed their thinking. *“Sometimes I wonder if I should walk in the streets without my headphones on in order to hear what's happening”*, person A said. *“This attack really changed how people are reacting to crises nowadays”*, person D added.

Here, for example person E as well as person F made an interesting point, both being in the aviation industry, that as they have seen and travelled the world throughout the years, it has changed and especially enhanced their knowledge towards these types of situations. *“Years of travelling abroad have calmed my attitude towards terrorism. I am not scared of walking in the streets, whether it's Finland or some other country”*, person E said. They know terrorism could occur wherever, and doesn't depend on culture, behaviour or anything such. *“Finland is a safe country, we shouldn't be afraid”*, person F stated.

It is necessary for the crisis communication management team to avoid untruthful accusations

Communication and information are two of the most important aspects in a crisis situation, and this wasn't entirely perfect in our situation. A few grievances were mentioned by the respondents, and good improvement ideas found.

All interviewees thought the most essential aspect was to receive some kind of communication about the stabbings. *"It was better to receive some communication than no communication at all"*, person G said. They weren't professionally aware if some things, on any level, could have been done differently, but sure knew personally.

They all mentioned the excess amount of information that was given during and after the attack. There were simply too much of it, giving an overwhelming feeling of what to believe. *"It would be important for journalists to eliminate the pointless news and know to publish the important ones"*, person A thought it is important for the public media to tolerate the communication, and know about what to inform more and what to inform less. Plenty information was both repeated as well as magnified once the legal proceedings and the trial begun.

Person B stated that it is crucial to concretely bring up the facts how prevention of terrorism is done in the cities in Finland. *"Is it just about not letting immigrants come here?"*, she confusedly thought, and added that it is very important for Finland to know what are the general activities done in terroristic situations. *"Finnish citizens should be informed on how the country is handling these types of crises. It would probably calm our nerves a bit"*.

Person E thought there were too many false articles and news published even before anyone knew the actual truth. *"First, one needs to understand the seriousness of the event and prove right before writing stories about them as facts. In crisis communication, the authenticity is more important than anything, and something that shouldn't be mixed up with marketing of yellow press"*.

On the other hand, person C, person D and person G thought the communication was enough for them, and they were able to somehow separate right from wrong. Person F did not know at all how to respond.

Global communication

Most of the respondents have always thought the communication has been good, and that it is very important to inform people about crises occurring in the world. It is better to know than be unaware in order to prepare ourselves personally. Some thought, as mentioned before, that there are way too much information floating around. *“Communication is important, let there rather be too much of it than too little”*, person A said.

“Before the stabbings in Turku, other countries’ terrorist attacks were communicated as any other piece of news, which was good, but now it’s communicated as a phenomenon”, person B wondered. Person C thought all attacks are very well communicated, and more conversation arises if more people have died. *“It is awful to think that when more people have been killed, the news become very media attractive, even though every attack, small or big, is equally tremendous. Every attack is one too many”*, she stated. Finnish media usually focuses on the bigger attacks, and if some attacks are not well enough communicated, one can use an international website such as CNN. *“If only the big attacks are communicated, those are the attacks terrorists are tempted to commit”*.

Person D thought the crisis communication has been good enough in Europe, and information is available nearly everywhere. *“The information about possible threat needs to immediately be available to citizens close to the location terrorism has occurred, so that people are able to protect themselves”*, person F said. Person F’s opinion encapsulated the point of view of person E, as she said that *“Travelling has become one of the most common hobbies for individuals, and more and more people are crossing borders”*. Whether it is Europe, The United States or our small Finland, information needs to be out there.

When it comes to Finland, all the respondents thought communication has always been fine, and one can always trust it. The most important issues are always highlighted. *“It is great that in Finland we communicate about causes that matter”*, person B said. If Finnish citizens have been part of an attack, it is informed every time as well.

“Professionals are needed when it comes to crisis communication management, the government is not a master in it. This is why we need qualified people to handle terroristic situations, whether

it is Finland or any other country”, person E said. These are exactly the situations where professionalism affects the level of fear and shock. *“Smartphones should be used as an advantage. Ideal situation would be that an alarming message would be sent into people’s phones if a dangerous situation is occurring somewhere near”*, person F pondered.

Person G knew that some politicians use the media in order to get their political party’s message out. In Finland, for example the Finns Party could say that every immigrant is a terrorist, and every one of them should be exiled. *“In the end, this is probably not the right way to do politics, right?”*, he wondered.

At the end of the day, all communication, information, conversation, and discussion have an effect on how we feel, what we think and how we’ll react. Now that Finland is more prepared, with more knowledge on preventing terrorism, the respondents feel safer. *“Terrorism is our reality, and we cannot let it affect us too much”*, person C said.

Most interviewees were not afraid when the question of the future’s terrorism was brought up. *“We just need to keep our eyes open and our mind straight”*. One always wonders when the next attack will occur, but the feeling of safety was strongly present. *“If I had children of my own, I would probably be more scared”*, person B mentioned.

On the contrary to other Europe, Finland has faced such little terrorism, and this was why most respondents felt secure. *“Anything can happen, but thank god we are smart enough to know better”*, person F said. Person G thought the precautionary control is much more strict than before, and Finland surely knows what to do, if threat of terrorism arises. *“We should all be realistic, and understand that terrorism can occur anywhere, that’s just how it is. The important aspect is to have the right kind of communication for it”*.

2.2.4. Presenting the results

The respondents felt anger, fear and shock after the terrorist attack in Turku. It was an issue difficult to comprehend. As most of the interviewees thought terrorism is usually committed by an organization, they were confused by the fact that in their home country it was done by one person, separately from Isis, who was first blamed to be behind the stabbings. The Internet opens up quite

a huge platform for radicalization, and this leads to increasing terrorism. It is easier for terrorists to operate alone nowadays, and that is simply a result of the Internet.

Gladly, Finland is moving towards better prevention, and that could be seen in the interviewees' feeling of comfort. Now that Finland has faced a terrorist attack, the respondents feel that the country knows precisely how to handle that type of situations. Feeling secure and alright showed definitely dominance. Although, immigration policy was brought up by nearly every respondent, it is clear that that is an issue Finland needs to take into account and think about who to let into the country. Immigrants as well as asylum seekers' backgrounds should be very well investigated in the future in order to prevent terrorism.

The public media speculates and jumps into conclusions. People speculate, that's never going to end, but the most important thing is to know what information to believe in. It is rather important to stick to the facts and speak the truth, because what is exaggerated by the media, becomes individuals' truth as well. Honest communication is everything when it comes to maintaining trust towards the authorities and media. It is people's own responsibility, whether one wants to trust the yellow press or the nine o'clock news, and, as unfortunate as it is, the comments people write on social media become the news for a majority of people.

The crisis communication was dominantly one of the most important issues at the time of the event as the attack was the first one in Finland. Without it, it would have been harder to adapt to the situation. With the right kinds of communication tools, the crisis communication specialists were able to affect people's feelings, which turned out to be very important in the post-crisis phase.

As far as knowing about the crisis is concerned, it was considered very important. A common opinion was the fact that it is better to know more than less, no matter the severity of the particular crisis. The more damage an attack has caused, the more media attractive it is. The more innocent people have died, the more it is magnified in the press. Is this our problem then? Why do media want to carry out bad journalism? Or is it just about what newspapers or websites people actually read?

At the end of the day, the world needs global as well as national crisis communication management in order to give decent information and repair the damage the best way possible. No yellow press or even the proper nine o'clock news is enough. According to the respondents, crisis

communication management is strongly felt as a need when it comes to crises and is a supporting element for disaster. It should be practised more today in terrorism in order to maintain and improve high-class journalism and communication in the future.

2.2.5. Discussion

Media wasn't the devil, it simply did what it always does. Everything starts from speculation like it did in this case as well. Gladly, most people know that, and know what to believe in. In the end, this is quite understandable, because Turku's attack has been the first one in Finland, and got everybody, both the citizens and the media extremely confused and overwhelmed. No wonder, the entire country exploded.

Studying through the theory of crisis communication management and afterwards researching it from the point of view of regular people, proved just how important of a role it plays in the world. Every crisis needs the support of crisis communication, and is something that should be practiced more seriously worldwide.

After gathering data from the respondents, several articles and the public media, the author understood how closely together crisis communication and terrorism need to work with each other. It is important not to have false facts out there, because it truly affects how people behave. From the point of view of these seven Finnish citizens, crisis communication and its leadership was redefined, and still, a lot can be done to enhance it and make a difference in the culture of journalism.

Even though, the attack was a tragedy to Finnish citizens, it brought us closer together and made us put things to perspective. It made us understand the severity of the phenomenon terrorism represents, and learn that our country is not that insignificant as we may have thought even if it has faced less terrorism comparing to other European countries. In the end, we need to remain realistic.

CONCLUSION

There is a broad understanding to both crisis communication management and terrorism. Crisis communication management, in our case, refers to repairing and understanding the role of both media as well as journalism, and the extent to which it can affect people. Terrorism, on the other hand, is a phenomenon that encompasses a wide range of differing issues from religion and ideologies to political as well as financial causes.

In this thesis both the necessity and importance of crisis communication management in a situation of terrorism was researched by interviewing Finnish citizens. The data was collected by carrying out both face-to-face interviews as well as phone interviews with seven different aged individuals. The respondents were interviewed concerning the topics the theory covers, and the questions were formed by reading and studying through the theory.

By all means, the crisis communication management during and after the terrorist attack in Turku was extremely important to all interviewees. The crisis communication management was a tool to recover from the crisis, and it helped individuals ease their level of stress in a chaotic situation. It turned out, that the professional field of crisis communication management should be practised more intensely, and should be focused on more deeply. The importance of communicating terrorism both in Europe as well as in Finland continues to be one of the most determinant aspects when it comes to well being.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1. Interview guide

1. How would you define terrorism in your own words?
 2. How did you feel after hearing about the attack in Turku?
 3. In general, how have the city of Turku and Finland reacted to terrorism?
 4. Has any effort been shown in preventing it or rather not? Why do you think so?
 5. How was the attack communicated and informed by the media?
 6. Do you think it was honest or was the media rather avoiding the truth?
 7. When thinking back to the stabbing and what it caused to Finnish society – Do you think communicating about the attack was important or rather not? Why do you think so?
 8. After the attack, did the crisis communication affect your level of fear and shock or rather not? If yes, in which ways?
 9. Do you think some things could have been handled differently by the media and Finland or rather not? In which ways differently? Why do you think so?
 10. How do you think terrorist attacks are communicated in Europe? Do you think the communication has been good or rather not? Why so? Do you think it is rather important to be informed about them or not? Why do you think so?
 11. How about the communication in Finland? Are the attacks usually well communicated by the Government and media or rather not? Why do you think so?
 12. Are you scared of what might happen in the future or are you feeling safe? Why do you think so? Do you think it is safer since Finland is now more prepared and aware of the threat it is facing today, or it has in your opinion no effect on safety? Why do you think so?
-
1. Miten omin sanoin määrittelisit terrorismin?
 2. Mitä Turun terrori-isku sai sinussa ajattelemaan/tuntemaan?

3. Miten yleisesti ottaen Turku ja Suomi ovat reagoineet terrorismiin?
4. Onko terrorismia yritetty mielestäsi estää hyvin? Miksi näin?
5. Miten media viesti ja kertoi Turun terrori-iskusta?
6. Oliko viestintä mielestäsi rehellistä ja todenmukaista vai välttelikö media totuutta?
7. Kun pohdit Turun iskua ja sitä, miten se vaikutti suomalaiseen yhteiskuntaan – Oliko viestiminen siitä tärkeää vai ei? Miksi näin?
8. Vaikuttiko iskusta viestiminen sinun pelko- ja shokkitilaan? Jos vaikutti, millä tavoin?
9. Luuletko, että joitakin asioita olisi voitu tehdä toisella tavalla vai ei? Miten ja miksi asioita olisi voitu tehdä eri tavoin?
10. Miten terrori-iskuista yleisesti viestitään Euroopassa? Onko niistä kommunikointi tärkeää vai ei? Miksi näin?
11. Entä viestiminen Suomessa? Onko terrori-iskuista yleensä viestitty hyvin vai huonosti? Voiko jotain tehdä toisin?
12. Pelottaako sinua se, mitä tulevaisuudessa saattaa tapahtua vai onko sinulla turvallinen olo? Miksi näin? Tunnetko enemmän turvallisuuden tunnetta nyt, kun Suomi on valmiimpi Turun iskun kaltaisiin tilanteisiin, vai onko sillä mitään vaikutusta turvallisuuden tunteeseesi? Miksi näin?

Appendix 2. Respondents

Person A. Executive and Marketing Assistant at Inwido Finland Oy. Interview. 17 March 2019.

Person B. Student at Hanken School of Economics. Interview. 19 March 2019.

Person C. Student at Tallinn University of Technology. Interview. 18 March 2019.

Person D. Retiree. Interview. 20 March 2019.

Person E. Flight Attendant at Finnair. Interview. 22 March 2019.

Person F. Co-Pilot at City Jet. Interview. 22 March 2019.

Person G. CEO at Oy Framexa Optics Ab. Interview. 17 March 2019.

Appendix 3. Transcribed interviews

[Link to the transcribed interviews](#)