Did Huawei Fail in the Crisis?
Case studies of Crisis Communication for Chinese Multinational Enterprise on Social Media

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Abstract

This study analyzes crisis communication strategy of a Chinese multinational technology enterprise on social media and tests the effectiveness of the crisis response. This study conducts quantitative analysis on two social media crises experienced by Huawei Technologies Co. Ltd in 2017. The analysis uses Situation Crisis Communication Theory (SCCT) as the theoretical framework, and proposes advices of crisis management for multinational technology enterprises in emerging countries represented by Huawei. The results show that when multinational technology enterprises face crisis, it is necessary to analyze the situation of crisis in a rational and localized way according to different social and cultural context, and adopt appropriate crisis communication strategies. While dealing with a complex cultural environment, avoiding cultural conflicts is an effective choice.

Keywords: Huawei, social media, multinational technology company, crisis communication strategy, cultural context (22066 words)
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1. Introduction

1.1. Significance of this study

As smart devices and wireless Internet has become an integral part of modern human life for decades, multinational technology companies which represent the information technology industry are leaders of today’s capital markets, while influencing a large number of users from all over the world. The products and advances of technology companies like Apple, Google and Microsoft already have potential to make world-wide impact. At the same time, when multinational technology companies are in crisis, they will be seriously affected. For example, the explosion of Galaxy Note 7 that hit South Korea’s tech company Samsung in 2016 still affects their potential customers’ confidence in the competitive smartphone market. Therefore, research on the crisis communication strategy of multinational technology companies can provide reference and help for these large enterprises as well as emerging enterprises with potential to enter the global market. Approach within this field will also contribute to the development of strategic communication theory, because few studies has combine crisis communication with cultural issues.

Crisis communication is the life blood of crisis management (Coombs, 2007b). Mature enterprises and organizations usually have set up special departments to deal with crises. However, in many cases cited by researchers, not all crises have been effectively dealt with. Diers-Lawson (2017) argues that organizational crises often have cultural factors, and crisis communication in cross-cultural settings still lacks attention in research. Moreover, research on crisis communication is still around the context of the United States (Diers-Lawson, 2017). Hence, there is a lack of focus on the concept of "intercultural" in this field. From the perspective of enterprises from emerging markets and developing countries, crisis communication research is still in its infancy. When companies from these countries meet with crises in global markets, they tend to be more prone to make mistakes because of a lack of understanding of a particular cultural environment. Therefore, this thesis chooses Huawei Technology Co. Ltd., a famous Chinese information technology company, as the main case to pay attention to the crisis communication strategy of multinational technology enterprises from developed countries and emerging developing countries in Asia. At the same time, I also investigate
several other Asian technology companies as a comparison, in order to develop a practical approach to intercultural crisis communication strategy.

From the media perspective, the importance of social media has totally increased during the past decade. Social media is as important as the traditional mass media for crisis management. Due to the ability of social media users to generate content, impact on organizations will be magnified by a convenient information network if the organization fails to properly handle the crisis (Bratu, 2016). Therefore, the research on crisis communication strategy of technology enterprises in social media has met the needs of the era. This research focuses on social media platforms, including how businesses handle and respond to crises on social media, and social media users’ feedback to crises and organization’s response.

1.2. Research question
Huawei is chosen as the case study of social media crisis communication, which aims to provide theoretical contribution on crisis strategies in intercultural environment for multinational technology companies from emerging countries, especially China. My proposed research question is how Huawei can conduct effective crisis communication strategies for reputation management in an era of social media which is intercultural and highly competitive. Concretely, this research will discover if Huawei adopted proper and successful crisis communication strategy during the cases (Research Question 1), and how Huawei considered cultural factors in their crisis communication for the cases (Research Question 2).

Huawei is in line with the characteristics of new multinational technology companies lacking in crisis management experience. Although the Chinese telecommunications company has been in existence for more than 30 years, it has not been long since it became the world’s leading telecommunications equipment supporter. This company with strong Chinese characteristics often falls into controversy while suffering crises in multicultural environments. For Huawei, I choose two social media PR crises that took place in 2017, which will be concretely introduced in the next chapter. I use Coombs’ (2007a, 2007b, 2007c) situational crisis communication theory (SCCT) to analyze Huawei's performance throughout the crises. I also selected several
representative social media platforms to conduct content analysis and text analysis in order to code and explain public feedback during the crisis, and understand the effectiveness and weakness of Huawei's communication strategy in all stages of the crisis.

1.3. Contribution to the field
In the field of strategic communication, a large amount of research focuses on crisis management. Fink (1986) developed the earliest four-stage model of crisis. He used a metaphor of illness to describe the life circle of a crisis. Mitroff (1994) illustrated five phases of crises. Based on Fink’s theory, Mitroff emphasized crisis detection and crisis prevention. Coombs (2007a) proposed situational crisis communication theory (SCCT) model that provided the framework for the current crisis communication research. Coombs (2007b) also create a three-stage model of crisis with pre-crisis, crisis event, and post-crisis. He divided crisis into disaster and organizational crisis, which lead researchers to think crisis from different perspective.

    Based on Coombs' theory, I divide the crisis events encountered by Huawei into different stages and analyze the situation and their strategy of each stage. Compared with the prosperity of crisis management theory, the research on intercultural communication in the field of crisis studies is still in its infancy. Hence, this thesis can provide new findings for crisis communication research from the perspective of intercultural communication.

2. Background
Because of their own influence, the crisis associated with large enterprises often has a huge effect in society. This study selected Chinese technology company, Huawei Technologies Co., Ltd., as the research object. It has a huge influence in the global business field of device equipment in the 21st century. Their mobile devices and services are also widely present in our lives today.

    Huawei Technologies Co., Ltd. was established in Shenzhen, China in 1988. The Founder, Ren Zhengfei, was a Chinese soldier before Huawei was founded. Chinese economic reform in the 1980s gave this company an opportunity to flourish in Shenzhen.
Their primary work was to import foreign technology and assemble telephone switch products for the Chinese domestic market (Hawes & Chew, 2011). Over the past decades, Huawei has become the leading firm of wireless telecommunication equipment. As the data of market share in 2017 shows, Huawei has also held the third position in global smartphone behind Apple and Samsung (Figure 2.1). In the field of wireless equipment, Huawei is also competing with multinational enterprises such as Cisco and Ericsson in over 100 countries’ markets around the world.

![Figure 2.1 Worldwide smartphone company market share (IDC, 2018)](image)

With the rapid expanding from Asia to the world, Huawei also encountered many negative events and blocking from competitors. As early as 2013, Huawei’s background was questioned by the media. Since Huawei founder Ren Zhengfei served in the Chinese People's Liberation Army, the rapid rise of Huawei is considered to be the result of support from the Chinese government and the military. Therefore, the information security of Huawei's communications equipment has been questioned and accused in many countries led by the United States. According to the report of “The Guardian”, the British government’s senior security department conducted an investigation on Huawei's information security center in the United Kingdom in 2013 regarding the relationship between Huawei and the Chinese government. This had been reported to the British Parliament. In the past, the British information security department doubted that
Huawei’s communications equipment could be used by the Chinese government to monitor the United Kingdom (The Guardian, 2013). The U.S. government is still skeptical about the “secret” connection between the Chinese communications company represented by Huawei and the Chinese government (Liptak, 2018). Until now, only Huawei’s smartphones can be sold in the United States. Even so, some operators, such as Verizon, have stated that they will not sell Huawei smartphones because of pressure from the US government (Liao, 2018). The question of cybersecurity has also attracted the attention of consumers on social media. However, Huawei has never responded to these questions or attacks by its own social media accounts. Compared to the question of information security, Huawei is more likely to face the public crisis directly in the broader consumer market.

Huawei’s products have made great achievements in the global market share. However, feedback from consumers for Huawei’s products is not just praise. In 2017, Huawei’s flagship smartphone product, Huawei P10, faced a serious crisis. In April 2017, Huawei released this flagship handset. Netizens on Chinese social media Weibo reflected that Huawei used different batches of flash memory on P10, because of its low speed from read and write tests by Androbench benchmark test (Figure 2.2). Users suspected that three different specifications of flash memories, eMMC 5.1, UFS 2.0 and UFS 2.1, were mixed to be used on P10 (Onawole, 2017). This was different from P10’s advertisement posted around the world, which showed that all P10 products had the fastest UFS 2.1 flash memory.

![Figure 2.2 Test results of Huawei P10 with three different flash memory](Onawole, 2017)
Later, a technology website called Phone Arena also questioned that the RAM element of P10 was also mixed from LPDDR3 and LPDDR4 standards. Consumers began to realize the seriousness of the issue and questioned Huawei under online news, forums, and social media. Compared with global social media, this negative event was discussed much more in the Chinese Internet. Therefore, in this research, one of our concerns is Huawei’s selection of response strategies for different markets in the same crisis event.

Another case of Huawei’s crisis is about its advertising in China. In November 2017, while Huawei was posting advertisements of their new smartphone, Huawei Mate 10 Pro, an online advertising design was considered as a special concern for Muslim ethnic minorities in China. A new internal function of “One-click Seeking the nearest Mosque” appeared on their Chinese advertisements. This triggered an aversion among Chinese nationalists and atheists. Immediately afterwards, Huawei issued a strong-worded response on the Chinese social network, which was accused of not respecting Chinese mainstream culture. The response detonated the negative sentiments of the public for the second time.

In fact, due to China’s unfair ethnic policies and unbalanced economic development, the contradiction between China’s domestic Muslims and the dominant Han people has intensified in recent years. The preference in terms of policies and laws for Chinese Muslims living in poverty-stricken areas of western China has inspired the rise of Han nationalism in China. Therefore, after Huawei’s mobile advertising added the element of special function for Muslim, a protest triggered by Han nationalism and Islamophobia began to impact Huawei. The lack of consideration of complex political and cultural environments has make Huawei’s promotion highly controversial in China. Although we are not able to judge whether this nationalist protest is correct or reasonable, we still cannot ignore the losses suffered by Huawei in this public relations crisis. For a technology company’s advertising campaign, how to balance the gaining benefits and the demands for minorities to achieve corporate social responsibility? This is also a subject discussed in my research.
3. Existing Research

3.1 The origin of crisis communication theory

Strategic communication is the purposeful behavior of communicators. An outcome objective is the basis for organizing public relations activities (Coombs & Holladay, 2010). In the field of crisis communication, the earliest objective of the organization was to resolve issues. The concept of issue management appeared around late 1970’s. The earliest classic issue model was proposed by Jones and Chase (1979). The development and resolution of Issue is presented as a cycle. The five stages of the issue model were issue identification, issue analysis, issue change strategy option, issue action program, and evaluation. At that time, the definition of issue had not yet been theoretically developed. In 1984, Chase posted the book (Howard Chase: Issue Management - Origins of the Future) to introduce issue management separately (Jaques, 2007). Two years later, as mentioned before, the four-stage crisis model proposed by Fink (1986) constructed the earliest theoretical basis for crisis communication.

3.1.1 Image restoration theory (IRT)

Several years later, Benoit's (1997) image restoration theory provided a series of strategies for the organization’s crisis situation. Based on apology theory and attribution theory, Benoit (1997) pointed out that when an organization is responsible for an allegation of a negative event and perceives its own responsibility, the organization needs to choose the following coping strategies to repair the damage to the organizational image: denial, evading responsibility, reducing offensiveness, corrective action and mortification. This theory can usually be used when the organization's response strategy fails and triggers further crisis.

Benoit (1997) divides denial into two cases: simple denial means that the organization does not declare the incident, and shifting the blame is to accuse other people or organizations for being involved in the incident to get rid of the organization’s own accusations and to deny their responsibility in the incident. The premise of evading responsibility is that the organization acknowledged the occurrence of the offensive action but refused to investigate the responsibility. Reducing offensiveness further acknowledged the incident, but claimed that the act was not offensive at the same time.
Benoit (1997) specifically proposes six tactics for reducing offensiveness: bolstering, minimization, differentiation, transcendence, attacking the accuser, and comprehension (sorted by Compton, 2016). Corrective action is a more active repair effort for behavior actors. This means that this organization promises to solve the problem, or correct the negative consequences of organizational behavior in some way. Finally, mortification is a statement of regret for inappropriate behavior.

Image restoration theory has been widely recognized since it was proposed. This is also one of the important foundations for the development of crisis communication theory in the 21st century. However, researchers in recent years pointed out the deficiency of image restoration theory. In social media research, this theory is sometimes not suitable because digital media was not yet popular at the end of the 20th century (Liu & Fraustino, 2014). Researchers believe that social media image repairing generates new management issues. When strategies used by traditional media is replicated by social media crisis, these social media strategies can be less effective in repairing images (Liu & Kim, 2011, cited by Liu & Fraustino, 2014).

Image restoration theory is widely used in case studies as a theoretical framework. Arendt, LaFleche, & Limperopulos (2017) examined the apology theory, image restoration theory, and crisis communication literature through a qualitative meta-analysis. Arendt et al. analyzed 30 years of research literature on image restoration theories to identify themes or patterns of strategies for organization and individual who faces crises or reputational threats. This analysis found that corrective action is the most successful and common strategy, especially when used in conjunction with other strategies, such as reducing the offensiveness or bolstering. On the contrary, denial is the most unsuccessful strategy, especially when evading responsibility or reducing offense. However, denial is the most commonly used strategy. In addition, guilt or innocence, remaining silent, potential legal actions, the scope of the crisis, and timely response can all be factors that determine the success or failure of image restoration.

Compton’s (2016) study has expanded image repair theory. His research chose a specific situation where the organization regrets the “apology” that has been published. Another focused situation is that the organization intends to withdraw an apology. Compton chose different cases in politics and entertainment to enrich the meaning of
image analysis theory. By apologizing for an inappropriate apology, organizations can minimize the damage to their reputation and image. This is a further image repair effort. However, this action may be questioned because the withdrawing of apologies is the reflection of the lack of sincerity. However, sincerity is a significant component of apologizing (Souder, 2010, cited by Compton, 2016).

3.1.2 Situation crisis communication theory (SCCT)
Crisis is defined as a threat to operations, which can damage the organization, its stakeholders, and even an industry in a result of financial, and reputation loss by Coombs (2007a). Since Image restoration theory gave advices for post-crisis stage, Coombs created an evidence-based framework of crisis communication guidance, especially for maximizing reputational protection for organizations (Coombs, 2007a), which was Situation Crisis Communication Theory (SCCT). SCCT first identified three factors that affect the organizational reputation threat in different crisis situations: initial crisis responsibility, crisis history, and prior relational reputation. Different from previous theories, SCCT pays more attention to the history of the organization’s response to the crisis and the prior reputation of the organization, because these factors will affect how the organization chooses the proper strategy for crisis situations.

SCCT is informed by Attribution Theory, which concerns motivation of organizational action. Depending on attribution, Coombs divided crises into three clusters. The first is the victim crises. When the crisis is caused by natural disasters, workplace violence, rumor or product tampering, the organization is regarded as a victim of this event, and the organization has very weak crisis responsibility. The second cluster is the accidental crises. These crises are usually caused by technical-error accidents which is considered “unintentional or uncontrollable” by the organization. The third cluster is for preventable and intentional crises which is strongly attributed to the organization. Within this cluster, crises are viewed as purposeful (Coombs & Holladay, 2002). Crisis can be caused by human-error, accidental human-error and organizational misdeed.

In addition to the responsibilities and attributions of the crisis itself, crisis history and prior relational reputation were also considered by Coombs (2007a) as factors that
organizations need to consider. They have a direct or indirect impact on the reputational threat from crisis. In particular, when the organization has an unfavorable priority relational reputation, they may be less concerned with stakeholders’ ideas when dealing with crises. The SCCT pointed out that before the organization solves the crisis, it needs to go through the following two steps: (1) determine the crisis responsibility, (2) analyze the crisis history and prior reputation, and then enter the stage of crisis response strategy selection.

In general, SCCT introduces several breakthrough concepts based on Image Restoration Theory. SCCT emphasizes the attribution of crisis responsibility because the identification of crisis responsibility determines what strategy should be adopted to deal with the crisis. SCCT also introduced the concept of stakeholders. SCCT dictates that organizations must first protect their stakeholders by providing instructing and adjusting information for psychological coping (Liu & Fraustino, 2014). The premise of SCCT is to protect stakeholders. If this premise is satisfied, the organization will repair its own reputation. This makes the organization targeted in adopting response strategies at different stages of the crisis. SCCT also highlights the history of the crisis, which makes it necessary for organizations in crisis to comprehensively consider multiple crises.

The earliest SCCT came from the marketing research that Coombs began in 1995. Since then, Coombs has associated crisis response strategies with crisis situations. Coombs & Holladay (2002) developed and expanded SCCT with the help of quantitative research methods. This study attempts to systematically elaborate and test SCCT for the first time. Coombs & Holladay explores one of the basic assumptions of SCCT by assessing whether the predicted correlational relationship between crisis responsibility and organizational reputation occurs a series of crisis types (Coombs & Holladay, 2002). A few years later, Coombs (2006) further explored response strategies established in SCCT for various crisis situations. In this research, researchers introduced the concept of stakeholders into the analysis of crisis situations and established the importance of examining stakeholders’ perception. Under the premise that crisis response strategies and crisis situations should be matched, SCCT needs to understand the importance of stakeholders’ perception of crisis response strategies. As perceptions of crisis responsibility and reputational damage increase, the crisis managers should use crisis
response strategies that shoulder greater responsibility and try to repair legitimacy by helping crisis victims (Coombs & Holladay, 2002). This study used interviews to seek information from respondents about the extent to which the organization was responsible for the crisis and how important the organization was to help victims of the crisis. Based on previous research, the crisis response strategies were divided into three clusters: deny, diminish, and deal. The results indicated that respondents did recognized that the crisis response strategies were intended in terms of crisis responsibility and aiding the victim (Coombs, 2006). The study also showed that when the organization does not properly assess its own responsibility for the crisis and take inappropriate measures as the response, the organization will be at great risks.

In 2007, Coombs developed a set of evidence-based crisis communication guidelines with the help of SCCT. In this study, Coombs raised three important factors that I have mentioned above: attribution of crisis responsibility, crisis history, and organizational prior reputation. These factors are used to predict how stakeholders think of the crisis and how they react to the crisis (Coombs, 2007a). Resolving the physiological and psychological needs of stakeholders is a priority task for crisis management. After addressing the needs of stakeholders, crisis managers should turn to other needs, such as the reputation of the organization. These stakeholder's views on the crisis also indicate which crisis response strategy is most effective in protecting the organizational reputation. SCCT has determined how crisis response strategies will influence stakeholder perceptions and the impact on reputational assets. Because reputation determines the way in which stakeholders interact with the organization, protecting the organization's reputation can also produce behavioral benefits (Coombs, 2007a).

Subsequently, Coombs & Holladay (2009) examined the relationship between crisis response strategies and media channels by experiments. In previous studies, the medium for crisis communication research was usually print media. Coombs and Holladay designed an experiment to assess the impact of different response strategies and media channels on crisis-affected respondents through a 2*2 MANOVA approach. Results revealed that there was no meaningful difference between the use of video versus print or sympathy versus compensation (Coombs & Holladay, 2009). Later, Coombs (2015) raised the value of crisis communication research to the entire strategic communication
field. Researchers analyzed the crisis response strategy and its expected results, reasonable crisis response opportunities, and situational factors that have been shown to affect the effectiveness of crisis response strategies (Coombs, 2015). This system has also become an important part of my theoretical framework for this research.

Claeys, Cauberghe, & Vyncke (2010) made an important evidence-based contribution to SCCT. In order to measure the impact of crisis types and crisis response strategies on corporate reputation, researchers invited 316 consumers to participate in a $3 \times 3$ between-subject experimental design. Their experimental results show that preventable crisis has the greatest negative impact on organizational reputation. Rebuild strategy leads to the most positive reputation recovery. In addition, public judgment on the severity of the crisis can affect the reputation of the organization. The more people think about the crisis that the organization is facing, the more negative they are about the reputation of the organization (Claeys et al., 2010). This article also discovers the impact of locus of control as a personality trait on the effect of crisis response strategy on reputation. For the deny strategy, respondents with an external locus of control perceive the corporate reputation more positively than respondents with an internal locus of control. However, respondents with an external locus of control do not prefer the use of rebuild strategies less than those with an internal locus of control (Claeys et al., 2010).

Park (2017) discusses crisis response strategies and the relationship with corporate social responsibility (CSR) based on SCCT. The researchers also used between-subject experimental design with 301 participants. Results of this experiment show that base responses (instructing and adjusting information) could limit reputational decline for a company during a severe, preventable crisis. The sole use of bolstering (reminding) strategy or no response is ineffective because it declines consumers’ trust in the company, attitudes toward the company, perceived corporate reputation, and supportive behavioral intentions (Park, 2017). Another research on public perceptions of controversial online comments and emotional and behavioral responses is also performed with a $2 \times 2$ experiment. Roh (2017) extends SCCT by testing cognitive models. The study indicate that the expectations of different participants will lead to different degrees of
Responsibility judgments of the crisis. Denial crisis response can effectively reduce blame and eliminate negative emotional reactions while reducing the credibility of information sources. But when the organization’s response fails to meet the expectations of the participants, participants will engage in a “counterfactual thinking process”, which in turn triggered greater indignation and more negative reputation assessment (Roh, 2017). At the same time, indignation and negative reputation were both significant predictors of online word-of-mouth intention (Roh, 2017). Therefore, it is necessary for the organization to make a reasonable assessment of public opinion and sentiment when choosing a crisis response strategy.

Case studies about crisis communication also often use SCCT as theoretical framework. Richard JR, Wilson, Boyle, & Mower (2017) studied the NFL’s mishandling of Ray Rice controversy in 2014. In this article, researchers compared the NFL’s crisis communication strategy with research-based models. Some of these strategies followed the model derived from the study, while others deviated from the results of the study. This study demonstrates the consequences of a mismatch between the crisis strategy and the cognition of crisis responsibilities by assessing the degree to which the crisis response strategy and the NFL’s perception of crisis responsibilities are matched. At the same time, the negative reputation and crisis history accumulated by the organization are also emphasized in the research results.

3.1.3 Corporate crisis advertising (CCA)
Corporate crisis advertising is a marketing approach that profitable companies use to respond to crises. Research in the field of crisis management has proven that corporations should plan and formulate strategies proactively to prevent potential crises or minimize losses of an organization's assets (Ritchie, 2004, cited by Kim, 2013). Corporate advertising can communicate information with public by the ability of creating a positive corporate image when a company encounters a crisis. It may also become a type of issue advertising or special key information which tries to restore a collapsing corporate image (Kim, 2013). Previous researchers have also proposed the concept of “inoculation effect”. Organizations also try to minimize the impact of negative news by exposing an audience first to the news along with counter arguments before the negative news released in mass
media platforms (Easley et al., 1995, cited by Ho, Shin, & Pang, 2017). In Kim's study, researcher has developed a model of consumer evaluation about corporate advertising in a crisis. Corporate crisis advertising model focuses on three levels of relationship. The first is the impact of pre-crisis corporate advertising on consumers’ resistance to negative news, followed by consumer’s resistance to negative news, and finally the relationship between consumers’ resistance and consumers’ assessment of corporate crisis advertising (Kim, 2013). In addition, this study also attempts to explore the inoculation effect beyond consumer response toward negative news, and determines that the inoculation effect can further reduce consumers’ resistance to corporate advertising during the crisis. In addition to corporate advertising, there are many other external factors that affect the situation of corporate crisis, including the crisis, the corporation, the media, and individual differences (Kim, 2013).

Ho et al. (2017) incorporates crisis advertising into the field of marketing advertising for discussion. Corporate advertising is not just used by companies for promotion. Scholars have consistently advocated the integration of corporate communication strategies to protect the long-term reputation of the organization (Seeger, 2006, cited by Ho et al., 2017). On this basis, corporate advertising is used to routinely maintain the positive image of the company and can also be used to deal with scandals. Based on the study of corporate crisis advertising and inoculation effect by Kim (2013), Ho et al. (2017) further developed the framework of Corporate crisis advertising (CCA). Compared with SCCT’s attention to the effectiveness of crisis response strategies. CCA focuses more on message strategies in corporate advertising and the advertisements’ dependence effects before and after the crisis. CCA framework proposes that “corporate advertising issued before and after a crisis could have an interdependent effect on the overall effectiveness and persuasiveness of corporate advertisements” (Ho et al., 2017).

3.1.4 Other researches about crisis strategy
In addition to the above three classical and widely used theories, as well as the theory used in this study as a theoretical framework for analysis, this research also refers to a number of literature on crisis communication and crisis strategy research. Jaques (2007) discusses the relationship and definition of issue management and crisis management. In
this paper, the author establishes a non-linear relational construct of issue management and crisis management, and discusses the role of issue management in pre-crisis and post-crisis stages. Another study focuses on the role of emotions in the communication of the crisis. Because organizational crises are highly emotional experiences for both organizations and stakeholders, when organizations encounter crises, the emotional communication between organizations and stakeholders deserves academic attention. Coombs’s theory has deeply studied the emotions of stakeholders, and then van der Meer & Verhoeven (2014) studied the effects of the emotions communicated by organizations on corporate reputations. The researchers conclude that except for crisis response strategies such as diminish strategy and rebuild strategy, the communicated emotion (i.e., shame and regret) has a positive impact on the company's reputation (van der Meer & Verhoeven, 2014). The researchers’ further analysis shows that the effect of the communicated emotion on corporate reputation can be explained by public negative emotions and cognitive responses. Therefore, when an organization responds to a crisis, releasing emotional signals in the crisis response can influence corporate reputation. More effective ways to reduce the negative reputation of an organization include reducing stakeholders’ feelings of anger by emotions in the crisis response and by increasing the public acceptance of the organizational message (van der Meer & Verhoeven, 2014).

Research on the crisis communication has not only been applied between organizations and the public. Communication between the organization and its employees is also an important part of crisis communication theory. After the financial crisis in 2008, crisis communication within the organization became a hot topic. Mazzei & Ravazzani (2015) launched a study of Italian companies. This study attempts to understand the internal crisis communication strategy of the company and the characteristics of the internal crisis communication in Italian companies. The harmonious relationship between employees of an enterprise belongs to the organization's assets. If companies are not able to protect these intangible assets, they put themselves seriously at risk (Mazzei & Ravazzani, 2015). The results of the study show that Italian companies currently lack a reasonable and effective strategy for managing internal communications. Therefore, employees lacked trust to others, and this problem has affected the company's
intangible assets. This research developed a model of the organization's internal crisis communication, which provided useful ideas for research in this field.

Within many organizational crisis response strategies, apologies are often considered to be the most effective strategy. SCCT indicates that when an organization needs to assume the primary responsibility for a crisis, apology strategy is the most desirable response for stakeholders. Lwin et al. (2016) conducted an in-depth study of the apology strategy, paying particular attention to how the stakeholders accept an apology from the organization. This article examines consumers’ responses to the types of apologies offered post crises against the levels of attribution of responsibility (Lwin et al., 2016). The attribution of responsibility for the crisis has significantly affected consumer complaints about the organization and behaviors that damage the reputation of the organization. Moreover, when the apology of the organization is on a particularly high degree, the consumer's negative impression on the organization will not certainly be reduced, because such a high level of apology often means that the organization should have to assume a major responsibility for the crisis.

Chung & Lee studied the crisis communication strategies of a food company on social media by studying a case of Salmonella outbreak in the United States. This article divides the crisis strategies into a crisis response strategy and a technical translation strategy. Compared with the current crisis response strategy, a technical translation strategy is a form of risk communication that informs publics how to physically protect themselves from a hazard and reduces the uncertainty perception (Chung & Lee, 2016). By online content analysis on social media, this study shows that a technical translation strategy generated more public acceptance of the message and more positive emotions than a crisis response strategy (Chung & Lee, 2016). The common crisis response strategy has caused the public to have more negative emotions. This research not only shows the potential of the technical translation strategy in responding to technical crisis, but also provides inspiration for my research methods. This study investigates public responses from both cognitive and affective aspects. This idea is also used in the coding process of my crisis communication research of Huawei.
3.2 Social media used in crisis communication

Whether it is the analysis of Image restoration theory or the exploration of Situation crisis communication theory, research always uses print and television as the medium of crisis communication. However, in the decade of social media’s rapid development, researchers have begun to explore how social media have become a platform for crisis communication. The study found that when the crisis occurs, the public will browse online more often (Rainie, 2005, cited by Liu, Austin, & Jin, 2011). This has changed the model and thinking of the organization to deal with the crisis. Social media has also become one of the sources of information for journalists and may even become a place where the crisis directly broke out (Liu et al., 2011). My research refers to a number of researches that focus on the spread of crises on social media, and cites some theoretical models, such as the Social Media Crisis Communication model (SMCC).

3.2.1 Social-mediated crisis communication (SMCC) Model

The first social media crisis communication tool applied by practitioners at work is blog-mediated public relations. Jin & Liu (2010) first proposed a comprehensive and reasonable approach that indicates how crisis managers should engage with the blogosphere. In the study, the researchers developed a blog-mediated crisis communication model, highlighting the important role played by influential bloggers in the crisis. The authors pointed out that it is necessary for crisis managers to monitor the dynamics of powerful bloggers in real time (Jin & Liu, 2010) and develop appropriate crisis management strategies based on their influence. Liu et al. (2011) subsequently continued to develop the SMCC model. This model proposes that when the public uses social media, there are three main motivations: issue relevance, information seeking/sharing, and emotional venting/support (Liu et al., 2011). SMCC model is divided into two parts: The first is how the sources and forms of the crisis affect the choice of the organization's response strategies, followed by a series of recommended response strategies for the crisis. The SMCC model analyzes the interactions between organizations that suffer crisis and three types of people: The first category is influential social media bloggers. The second category is these influential bloggers’ followers. The third category is people who are inactive on social media but have opportunity to obtain
these influential bloggers’ information offline. The study of Liu et al. (2011) selected 162 college students to conduct experiments, focusing on how the form and source of crisis information influence the public’s acceptance of crisis response strategies. The results show that when an organization responds to a crisis, it is very necessary for the crisis strategy to match the appropriate form and source of crisis information. In addition, the selection of crisis information form and source effects publics’ attribution of independent and dependent emotions (Liu et al., 2011).

3.2.2 Crisis communication researches about social media

The role of social media in crisis communication is attracting the attention of many scholars. Schultz, Utz, & Göritz (2011) studied the importance of messages and information on social media in the crisis. The study compared the impact of the crisis response strategies organized on traditional media and social media to the recipients’ perceptions of reputation. The organization's crisis communication on social media is considered to be more effective to mitigate the negative impact of the crisis than the articles in traditional media. For a successful crisis operation process, it is important to respond to the social media users. For organizations, information strategy may be more useful than apologizing, especially when the crisis evolves into a secondary crisis. The organization's definition of the severity of the crisis also affects the organization’s choice of social media. Liu & Kim (2011) studied the use of social media and traditional media by 13 organizations during the 2009 H1N1 flu crisis through quantitative content analysis. The study found that when an organization defines a crisis as a disaster or a large event, the organization prefers to use traditional media to respond to the crisis. However, if the organization identifies the crisis as an ordinary event, the organization will use social media more. In addition, organizations will be more inclined to use traditional media to affect public sentiment.

Traditional crisis communication theory focuses on the relationship between crisis types and crisis communication strategies. However, in the era when social media playing the core role of crisis communication, the role of the media itself in crisis communication is often overlooked by SCCT and other theories. Utz, Schultz, & Glocka (2012) conducted an online experimental study comparing the effects of media types and crisis
types. Regarding the type of crisis, the researchers selected the victim crisis and intentional crisis in the SCCT. For media, the study chose Facebook, Twitter, and online newspaper for comparison. In studying the crisis communication of the Fukushima nuclear accident, the literature found that the influence of the media type is more significant than the type of crisis. Crisis communication via social media resulted in a higher reputation and less secondary crisis reactions such as boycotting the company than crisis communication in the newspaper (Utz et al., 2012). But since people tend to trust information on traditional media, secondary crisis communication is higher in newspaper condition than in social media conditions. Utz et al. (2012) also compares public anger. Research has found that anger comes from a complex process. When the crisis is classified as intentional crisis, the public will be angrier than the victim crisis. However, anger is also related to the reputation of the organization and secondary crisis communication.

Chewning's (2015) study also emphasized the importance of online media in communication between organization and stakeholder. This article uses the BP oil spill accident as a case to deconstruct the crisis response measures of BP from the perspectives of organizations, media, and stakeholders. Research shows that both sources and media contribute to the narrative of the crisis, and that social media plays an important role in organizational crisis responses and crisis responses to stakeholders. In addition, the crisis response of stakeholders is also considered to be an important part of the crisis narrative (Chewning, 2015). Comments on these online media can themselves be considered part of the crisis. Therefore, the popularity of online media complicates the crisis response, and organizations need to consider the handling of the crisis from more levels.

Researchers also began to pay attention to the sources of information in the age of social media. Because social media lacks the “gatekeeper” role, assessing the credibility of information sources is also a new direction for crisis communication research. A comparative study was conducted by van Zoonen & van der Meer (2015), which compares the role of organizations and employees as informants in the crisis communication. The researchers chose the Mercedes-Benz in Netherland as a case to compare the roles of the two kinds of informants through online questionnaires and quantitative analysis. Research shows that the judgement of organizational reputation
after the crisis depends not only on the crisis response strategy, but also on the information sources and its credibility (van Zoonen & van der Meer, 2015). For organizations in crisis, it is important not only to use social media, but employees in the organization who are sources of online information. They can also have a positive impact on the reputation of the organization through their own credibility. Compared with the organization, especially when the rebuild strategy is adopted, employees are more effective than organizations in the crisis communication because the public has a higher assessment of the employees' content credibility. In the practice of crisis management, employees can assume more important responsibilities.

Bratu's (2016) study explores and describes the key role of social media in crisis communication from a management perspective. Managers must play their proper role in digital media in a timely manner, and should not let the information spread freely. This will cause information to deviate from the truth on social media. Therefore, social media as a tool for managers to communicate with the public is very important in dealing with the crisis. In more specific areas, such as health communication, social media as a crisis management tools for academic exploration is also in progress. Although in the business sector, social media has been used as a key tool for crisis communication by public relations practitioners, public health agencies, particularly non-profit organizations, are unfamiliar with the use of social media platforms as a communication platform for epidemic outbreaks. For this purpose, Guidry, Jin, Orr, Messner, & Meganck (2017) studied the use of Twitter and Instagram by three international health organizations during the Ebola outbreak. Research shows that Instagram can already serve as a platform for effective information delivery. And for WHO, social media messaging may be most effective when it is used by organizations that are familiar to the publics. It will also be effective when it is based on the strategic use of risk communication principles and acknowledgement of public fears and concerns (Guidry et al., 2017). This study fills the gap in the research of social media in the field of strategic health risk communication.

Focusing on the crisis communication of multinational corporations concerned by this research, Zhu, Anagondahalli, & Zhang (2017) provided an important help for my research by a case study on the spread of two multinational corporations in China. This article selected McDonald's and KFC as examples to understand the importance of
stakeholders participating in the social media crisis by investigating the subtle cultural differences in the crisis. Similar with the content highlighted by the SMCC model, the study found that influential social media users play an important role in the crisis. At the same time, the differences between Chinese culture and other cultures are also factors that must be taken into consideration when dealing with the crisis in China.

Another study on Chinese social media investigate how companies make use of social media communication to turn crises into opportunities. Wang (2016) used interpretive textual analysis and statistical analysis to analyze the crisis communication and competition of the two competitors on Weibo. In this interesting case, the controversy over the right to use a famous trademark was transformed into an advertising campaign. The diminish strategy in SCCT model is performed as an “apology”. The research shows that the appropriate crisis communication strategy can be used to win public sympathy on China’s Weibo platform. The sympathy even turned the negative crisis into positive advertising. In addition to the company's crisis response strategy, the interaction strategy between companies and stakeholders can also effectively control the crisis. Ngai & Jin (2016) studied crisis communications on Weibo between the involved company and Chinese stakeholders during the air crash of Asiana Airlines Flight 214. The integrated use of accommodative and defensive communication strategies in the early stage of post-crisis communication prevented the escalation of the crisis (Ngai & Jin, 2016).

3.3 Cross-cultural crisis communication research

Culture moderates the relationship between the level of organizational responsibility and the choice of response strategies (Coombs 2007b, cited by Zhu et al. 2017). However, this is not the only impact of the cultural context on the spread of the crisis. Adopting the same coping strategies for the same crisis in different cultural environments will not necessarily result in the same results, or even the opposite public response. But overall, functionalist and objectivist perspectives have dominated the field of crisis communication (Falkheimer & Heide, 2006). Falkheimer and Heide conducted a critical analysis of crisis communication and cross-cultural public relations. This study introduces ethnicity and collective cultural identity as an analysis of crisis
communication theory. Intercultural communication can be defined as the study of “heterophilous interpersonal communication between individuals from different cultures” (Rogers & Hart, 2002, cited by Falkheimer & Heide, 2006). When discussing cross-cultural communication issues, researchers often use the different dimensions of cultural variability to explain the similarities and differences between cultures. This includes the common dimension: individualism-collectivism, which is the biggest difference between Chinese culture and Western culture. Although the international community generally regards multiculturalism as universal values, but many companies and authorities have not recognized the importance of a close understanding of the public with which they wish to communicate and build relationships (Falkheimer & Heide, 2006). Public relations practitioners need to be more sensitive to the multicultural nuances of different publics, both in an international environment and within their own geographic locales (Kruckeberg, 1995, cited by Falkheimer & Heide, 2006). Therefore, the researchers made the following suggestions for multicultural crisis communication in the literature: (1) audience-orientation, which focuses sense-making, (2) a proactive and interactive approach, focusing dialogue, (3) a community-focused approach, which focuses a long-range pre-crisis perspective, and, (4) an ethnicity-approach towards intercultural communication (Falkheimer & Heide, 2006).

Williams & Olaniran (2002) studied a crisis involving ethnicity in Texas in 1998. Previous research has pointed out that when a crisis involves a racial issue, the element of race will increase the volume of the volatility of the situation (Baker, 2001, cited by Williams & Olaniran, 2002). Attention of public and media will be more easily influenced and attracted by these factors. Hence, organizations need to think carefully about crisis response strategies to avoid secondary crises. The research case of this article proves that the rapid and unthinking crisis response strategy has attracted the attention of the whole country. However, clear recognizable is the need for crisis practitioners to be vigilant in management and image repair theory, aiming to keep a long-term positive organizational image (Williams & Olaniran, 2002).

A study in Latin countries explored the impact of Latin culture on the crisis through ground theory analysis and interviews with professionals. Fatima Oliveira (2013) found in the interview that the current definition of multiculturalism by public relations
practitioners is not clear enough. In addition, even if public relations practitioners have realized that cultural factors are critical elements of crisis management, they are still unwilling to respond to the challenges of a multicultural environment. Research shows that scholars and practitioners need to incorporate public expectations of culture into crisis management strategies. The crisis that multinational corporations encounter in their operations is also easily affected by cultural differences. Akcay & Bagcan (2016) studied the case of crisis in IKEA's cooperation with local furniture manufacturers in Turkey. IKEA’s agents in Turkey adopted different strategies from the Swedish headquarters of IKEA during the crisis communication with the labor union. For the same labor dispute crisis, IKEA headquarters took a rebuild strategy and quickly gained the understanding of the union. The IKEA’s agents in Turkey have adopted the denial strategy. In the comprehensive analysis of the author of the article, IKEA’s global values are considered to play a decisive role in tactical choices when dealing with crises.

In general, cross-cultural crisis communication has been concerned by scholars, but there are still many problems in the research. Dier-Lawson (2017) pointed out the research direction of this field in the future in the summary of cross-cultural crisis-related studies over the years: (1) representing different cultural perspectives in crisis communication research, (2) placing American crisis research in a global context, and (3) developing cross-cultural comparisons.

3.4 Review of crisis communication research

In this study, I selected 40 peer-reviewed literatures related to crisis communication from 1997 to 2017. In these 40 documents, I conducted an analysis based on the research topics, theoretical framework, and research methods, to understand the current development and trends of existing research about crisis communication. Based on the preliminary induction, the research topics of the 40 articles were divided into the following categories: (1) Crisis communication theory. (2) Social media crisis communication. (3) Multicultural/Intercultural crisis communication. The theoretical framework used in these studies was It is broadly divided into the following categories: (1) Image Restoration Theory (IRT). (2) Situation Crisis Communication Theory (SCCT). (3) Corporate Crisis Advertising (CCA). (4) Social-Mediated Crisis
Communication (SMCC). (5) Others. Finally, these research methods are divided into the following categories: (1) Between-subject experiment. (2) Quantitative content analysis. (3) Qualitative approach (rhetoric analysis, questionnaire, interview, etc.). (4) Meta-analysis. (5) Other methods. The total number of statistical documents is 40 (N = 40). Since some studies have adopted multiple theories at in one article as the theoretical framework, and some studies have adopted the two or more research methods listed above, the total number of classification statistics may not be 40.

![Figure 3.1 Statistic of research topics of this literature review](image)

Due to timeliness of this research, most of the documents selected in this study were published in the last five years. Figure 3.1 shows the distribution of research topics over time in the 40 articles of this study. In general, most of the documents were published after 2010. Because social media technology is developing with each passing day, academic research on social media has also kept pace with the rapid development of technology. The study of the social media crisis communication in the literature has been generally increasing since 2010. After 2015, a large part of the research is using social media as a crisis management platform. Research on crisis communication theory continues to increase after 2012 because public relations practitioners have realized the importance of crisis management. Compared with the study of crisis communication theory, the study of multicultural crisis communication has not changed much with time.
There is relatively little research in this field in academia, so my research has the potential to make some contributions to this field.

Figure 3.2 Statistic of theories of this literature review

Figure 3.2 shows the choice of 40 documents selected for the study as a theoretical framework for crisis communication. Image crisis theory (IRT) proposed by Benoit (1995) and Situation crisis communication theory (SCCT) created by Coombs (2007a) are generally considered as two basic theories of crisis communication by researches in nearly 20 years. In addition, the CCA model and SMCC model for social media and corporate marketing are also cited by some articles. However, in general, SCCT is the most frequently used theoretical model for various researches in the past decade, and it has also had a profound impact on the study of crisis communication in the era of social media.

Figure 3.3 Statistic of research methods of this literature review
Figure 3.3 shows the methods used in these studies. As the above figure, researchers generally prefer to use the between-subject experiment as a method to test the relationship between multiple sets of variables. Among the 40 references selected in this study, between-subject experiments are usually used to study the relationship among crisis communication strategies, organizational reputation, crisis response effect and other variables. In addition to such quantitative experimental methods, traditional content analysis and qualitative analysis are also widely used. Among them, content analysis is often used to conduct specific case studies, and qualitative analysis is often used to develop and consolidate original new theories.

3.5 Research on Chinese technology enterprises represented by Huawei

With the rapid development of Chinese economy, a group of Chinese companies have begun to move toward multinational corporations in recent years. China's special political, economic and cultural environment has a great influence on organizational behavior and corporate culture. Hawes & Chow (2011) took Huawei and Haier as examples to study the efforts of Chinese multinational corporations to create corporate culture, and emphasized the role of corporate leaders in the reform of corporate cultural concepts among employees. At the same time, the literature also pointed out that the cultural management methods of these companies will also have a negative impact on their way of becoming truly international companies. On the technical level, researchers are also watching the rapid progress of emerging multinational technology companies in China, exemplified by Huawei. From the perspective of Absorptive Capacity (ACAP), Liu & Zheng (2013) explain that technology companies in emerging economies use imitation to achieve technological catch-up for market leaders. Huawei's growth and development process is the popular process by which emerging technology companies continue to absorb technologies from industry leaders. The researchers divided the development process of Huawei's technology into three stages: the first stage was before 1995, when Huawei imitated the PBX series, and then transformed to a firm with independent research and development capacity. The second stage was in recent years. Huawei developed 3G and 4G technologies and entered the international market, while
becoming a multinational ICT equipment supplier. The third stage is the goal that Huawei is currently trying to achieve, namely to become an industry leader through LTE technology and cloud-computing technology (Liu & Zheng, 2013). In addition to the absorptive capacity to competitors, Huawei also adopts data mining technology on its own products to obtain consumer feedback (Zhang, Rao, & Feng, 2018).

As a multinational technology company, internationalization is a process that Huawei must go through. Micheli & Carrillo (2016) studied the internationalization of Huawei in Mexico, as an example of the new phase of internationalization coming from emerging countries and productive sectors in the global economy. The initial internationalization of Huawei started in developing countries. Its strategy consists of establishing its brand in a country, winning the confidence of its clients by innovation, lower costs, and greater delivery speed, as well as a sincere commitment to its customers (Micheli & Carrillo, 2016). The localization process of Huawei implemented in Mexico is an important form of development of multinational corporations in Mexico, which generates novel organizational structures and business models. For Huawei, the key element for entering the developing country market is innovation and customization. Another research is about Huawei in Malaysia. The study also revealed the elements of localization of Chinese multinational technology companies: product, workforce, technology, organization and management (Li & Cheong, 2017). In addition, the study also pointed out that the company characteristics, enterprise ownership and leadership style of enterprise's founder are also important factors which affect differential pace of firms’ internationalization and localization (Li & Cheong, 2017). However, research about Huawei in the field of business and technology has currently not been close to the topic of localization and internationalization of the PR. Therefore, my research in this paper has the value of connecting strategic communication field and enterprise management field.

4. Theoretical Framework
In this section, this article will introduce the theory used as a framework in this study in detail, and will outline the general framework of this study. First, this paper adopts the three-stage crisis model as the analysis framework of Huawei’s crises. Second, this article will synthesize the development of Coombs in several articles, and summarize the
theoretical models of SCCT, and then list the available crisis situations and response strategy for this study. In the third part, this article will introduce the Corporate crisis advertising model (Kim, 2013; Ho et al., 2017) as an assistant for the analysis of advertising content during the Huawei crisis. Finally, this article will use the legend to describe the framework of the Huawei case study.

4.1 Crisis communication theoretical system

This study selected the three-stage crisis theory as a basic organizing framework. Compared to other crisis management theories, the three-stage approach was commonly used in the analysis of crisis communication research (Coombs, 2007b, p. 30). In addition, this theoretical model can be used very accurately in two cases of Huawei. This study will divide the two crises that Huawei experienced into three phases: (1) Pre-crisis. (2) Crisis event. (3) Post-crisis. Then this article will discuss Huawei’s response strategies and effects on social media by stages in the section of case study.

Pre-crisis stage

The pre-crisis stage involves three sub-stages: (1) signal detection, (2) prevention, (3) crisis preparation (Coombs, 2007b, p.30). A mature organization needs to prepare to respond to the crisis at any time. In the pre-crisis stage, the organization's response to the crisis should have been implemented before the crisis broke out. The first step for organization to avoid loss during crisis is to detect crisis signal. Most crises have harbingers before they happen. Organizations need to actively identify and collect warning signs of crisis. If an organization finds a warning sign and corrects its own problems in a timely manner, the organization can avoid more serious crises in the future. The second step is crisis prevention. Coombs (2007b, p.31) divides preventative measures into three categories: issue management, risk management, and reputation management. The organization should firstly prevent a small problem from becoming crisis, then the risk level faced by the organization should be declined. At last, organization needs to keep harmonious relationship with stakeholders, and solve problems which has potential to damage organizational reputation.
The third step is preparation for crisis. Coombs (2007c) indicates that crisis manager need to create “crisis management plan” (CMP), and select crisis management team. Finally, crisis manager should imitate exercises for their team to practice and pre-draft some crisis messages as preparation for future crisis. Another way to help crisis managers prepare for the crisis is to develop and operate crisis communication channels. For example, the organization's website and the organization's social media accounts are potential crisis communication platforms. Especially on social media, creating a friendly and positive image can make it easier to get sympathy from stakeholders (Wang, 2015).

*Crisis event stage*

When a trigger event occurs, the crisis begins. Crisis event stage is considered to be the end when the crisis is resolved by the organization. Coombs (2007b, p.31) divides the organization’s behavior in the event of a crisis into two parts: crisis recognition, and crisis containment. The first step in an organization’s response to a crisis should be to recognize the crisis. Organizations need to go through a review process to tag the event as crisis. Organizations that are not aware of the crisis in time will suffer a heavy blow during the crisis. Another part of the crisis phase is the organization's handling of the crisis, especially the response to the crisis. Public relations play a critical role in the crisis response by contributing to develop the messages that are sent to various publics (Coombs, 2007c). Therefore, the organization's response to the crisis is the core of crisis management.

Initial response is something that organizations in the crisis often do. Researchers and practitioners believe that a successful initial crisis response should have the following three characteristics: quick, accurate, and consistent (Coombs, 2007c). When a crisis occurs, information asymmetry is formed between the organization and stakeholders. If organizations do not occupy the space of information by rapidly and actively respond, rumors or false information will fill the information vacuum. This inaccurate information may be the reason why the organization is attacked, so the rapid response of the organization can have a positive impact on the accuracy of the information and reputation of the organization (Arpan & Rosko-Ewoldsen, 2005, cited by Coombs, 2007c). When the organization’s crisis involves public safety issues, the accuracy of the information
published by the organization is particularly important. When public safety is threatened by a crisis, they need to know how to protect themselves. Therefore, organizations in a crisis need to issue information in a timely and accurate manner. In addition, organizations cannot respond self-contradictorily. Otherwise it will lead to a secondary crisis.

From another perspective, the restoration of organizational reputation is also an important part of the crisis containment. The literature review section of this article has introduced the study of crisis repair strategies developed by Benoit (1997). Coombs (2007b, p. 215) summarized Benoit's research and created a comprehensive reputation repairing and crisis response strategy model.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Denial Posture</th>
<th>Attack the accuser</th>
<th>The crisis manager confronts the person or group claiming something is wrong with the organization. The response may include a threat to use force against the accuser.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Denial</td>
<td>Denial</td>
<td>Crisis manager asserts that there is no crisis. The response may include explaining why there is no crisis.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scapegoating</td>
<td>Scapegoating</td>
<td>Crisis manager blames some person or group outside of the organization for the crisis.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diminishment Posture</td>
<td>Excuse</td>
<td>Crisis manager minimizes organizational responsibility by denying intent to do harm and/or claiming inability to control the events that triggered the crisis.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Justification</td>
<td>Crisis manager minimizes the perceived damage caused by the crisis. The response can include stating that there were no damages or injuries or claiming that the victims deserved what they received.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rebuilding Posture</td>
<td>Compensation</td>
<td>Crisis manager offers money or other gifts to victims.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Apology</td>
<td>Crisis manager indicates the organization takes full responsibility for the crisis and asks stakeholders for forgiveness.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bolstering Posture</td>
<td>Reminding</td>
<td>The organization tells stakeholders about the past good works of the organization.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ingratiation</td>
<td>Crisis manager praises stakeholders and/or reminds them of past good works by the organization.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Victimage</td>
<td>Crisis managers remind stakeholders that the organization is a victim of the crisis too.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.1 SCCT crisis response and reputation repair strategies
(Sorted by Coombs, 2007a; 2007b)
Based on the research of Benoit (1995) and Coombs (2007b), the researchers began to discuss when a specific reputation repair strategy or combination of strategies should be used with the help of “attribution theory”. With the help of this theory, Timothy Coombs improved his SCCT theory, which will be introduced in detail later.

*Post-crisis stage*

After the crisis is over, the organization should resume normal work. Although crisis events are no longer concerned, organizations still need further consideration of the crisis. When a crisis is identified as "resolved" by the organization, the organization needs to consider what to do next. During the post-crisis stage, the organization should accomplish three tasks: (1) Make necessary preparations for the similar crises in the future. (2) Ensure that the organization's stakeholders have a positive impression of the crisis management action of the organization after the crisis event. (3) Ensure that the crisis has completely ended (Coombs, 2007b, p. 32). Specifically, organizations need to maintain follow-up communication with stakeholders about the crisis. First, if an organization issues a message of commitment to the public during a crisis, the organization must continue to honor these commitments after the crisis, such as providing the public with more information during the crisis phase. Otherwise, the organization will still lose public trust. Second, for the losses caused to the organization and stakeholder by the crisis, it is necessary for the organization to publish the recovery process in time (Coombs, 2007c) and announce the latest situation in the investigation of crisis events. After the crisis, the organization should learn from the crisis and avoid making the same mistakes again. Every crisis experience is a valuable learning material for the organization (Coombs, 2006). This experience can be used to guide the organization's work during the pre-crisis stage and crisis event.

**4.2 SCCT used in case study**

When organizations encounter specific crisis situations, SCCT provides a comprehensive guideline for addressing organizational reputation. The importance of SCCT in the academic field has already been mentioned above. By understanding the crisis situations experienced by the organization, the organization's crisis managers can examine the
degree to which the crisis threatens the reputation of the organization in the SCCT model and the response strategies that can minimize the loss of the organization (Coombs, 2007a).

Coombs's research on SCCT is based on the model showed in Figure 4.1. In this model, crisis responsibility directly affects the organizational reputation and stakeholders’ emotion. Crisis response strategies, crisis history, and prior relationship reputation, respectively, exert influence on the responsibility and organizational reputation of the crisis. In addition, crisis response strategies can also affect public sentiment. Therefore, the SCCT model focuses on the choice of crisis response strategies.

The SCCT pointed out that organizations should take two steps to assess the threat posed by the crisis to the organizational reputation. The first is to determine the type of crisis. Organizations should assess the type of crisis from the perspective of media and stakeholder (Coombs, 2007c). Coombs & Holladay (2002) first analyzed the type of crisis based on the attribution of responsibility for the crisis. Subsequently, Coombs (2007a) organized a list of basic crisis type and reputational threat (showed as Table 4.2).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Victim cluster:</strong> In these crisis types, the organization is also a victim of the crisis. (Weak attributions of crisis responsibility; Mild reputational threat)</th>
<th>Natural disaster</th>
<th>Acts of nature damage an organization such as an earthquake.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rumor</td>
<td>False and damaging information about an organization is being circulated.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workplace violence</td>
<td>Current or former employee attacks current employees onsite.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Product tampering/Maleviolence</td>
<td>External agent causes damage to an organization.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Accidental cluster:</strong> In these crisis types, the organizational actions leading to the crisis were unintentional. (Minimal attributions of crisis responsibility; Moderate reputational threat)</th>
<th>Challenges</th>
<th>Stakeholders claim an organization is operating in an inappropriate manner.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Technical-error accidents</td>
<td>A technology or equipment failure causes an industrial accident.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technical-error product harm</td>
<td>A technology or equipment failure causes a product to be recalled.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Preventable cluster:</strong> In these crisis types, the organization knowingly placed people at risk, took inappropriate actions or violated a law/regulation. (Strong attributions of crisis responsibility; Severe reputational threat)</th>
<th>Human-error accidents</th>
<th>Human error causes an industrial accident.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Human-error product harm</td>
<td>Human error causes a product to be recalled.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organizational misdeed with no injuries</td>
<td>Stakeholders are deceived without injury.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organizational misdeed management misconduct</td>
<td>Laws or regulations are violated by management.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organizational misdeed with injuries</td>
<td>Stakeholders are placed at risk by management and injuries occur.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.2 SCCT crisis types by crisis clusters (Sorted by Coombs, 2007a)

After identifying the type of crisis, research of the crisis needs to review the crisis history of the organization and its previous reputation. If organizations have had similar problems before the crisis, or if the organization has a poor prior reputation, then the threat to the reputation of the organization will increase (Coombs, 2006, 2007c). In order to specifically discussing different situations, Coombs (2007a) concluded a set of crisis
communication practice from SCCT research with the consideration of crisis history and prior reputation (showed as Table 4.3).

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Informing and adjusting information alone can be enough when crises have minimal attributions of crisis responsibility (victim crises), no history of similar crises and a neutral or positive prior relationship reputation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Vicimage can be used as part of the response for workplace violence, product tampering, natural disasters and rumors.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Diminish crisis response strategies should be used for crises with minimal attributions of crisis responsibility (victim crises) coupled with a history of similar crises and/or negative prior relationship reputation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Diminish crisis response strategies should be used for crises with low attributions of crisis responsibility (accident crises), which have no history of similar crises, and a neutral or positive prior relationship reputation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Rebuild crisis response strategies should be used for crises with low attributions of crisis responsibility (accident crises), coupled with a history of similar crises and/or negative prior relationship reputation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Rebuild crisis response strategies should be used for crises with strong attributions of crisis responsibility (preventable crises) regardless of crisis history or prior relationship reputation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>The deny posture crisis response strategies should be used for rumor and challenge crises, when possible.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Maintain consistency in crisis response strategies. Mixing deny crisis response strategies with either the diminish or rebuild strategies will erode the effectiveness of the overall response.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.3 SCCT crisis response strategy guidelines (Sorted by Coombs, 2007a)

In this study, Huawei's crisis response strategies adopted by different platforms in the two cases will be input into these several SCCT models. An analysis based on the SCCT framework and evaluation criteria will be used to test the effect of crisis communication strategy in Huawei's case studies.

### 4.3 CCA framework

The CCA model is used by companies to reduce the negative impact of the crisis on companies by advertisements. Kim (2013) established an initial consumer evaluation framework for corporate advertising (Figure 4.2) for the CCA. After the crisis, consumer resistance toward negative news can be reduced by pre-crisis corporate advertising because of inoculation theory. After consumers receive inoculation of corporate advertisements, they will also have a resistance to advertising. Kim (2013) put forward
four external factors that influence the concept consumer's response to corporate advertising: the impact of crisis, corporation, media and individual differences.

Figure 4.2 Model of consumer evaluation to corporate advertising in a corporate crisis (Kim, 2013)

Kim’s model (2013) was created mainly from the perspective of consumer's reaction of resistance. Ho et al. (2017) further developed the CCA model to emphasize the importance of assessing the persuasiveness of corporate advertising during the crisis. Figure 4.3 shows the complete CCA model, which covers the entire crisis process. Pre-crisis advertising can not only influence the stakeholders' evaluation after the crisis by inoculation effect, but also improve the organization’s prior reputation to influence the effect of the crisis. This effect is so-called “Halo Effect”, which may mitigate further damage the organization suffered during the crisis (Ho et al. 2017). According to Kim (2013), the effect of post-crisis advertising can also be changed by pre-crisis advertisements, by reducing the audience's resistance to corporate crisis advertisements.
Figure 4.3 The CCA Framework (Ho et al. 2017)

In the second part of the CCA model, the researchers cited the conclusions of the SCCT. The impact of post-crisis advertisements on the crisis depends on the stakeholders' perception of its appropriateness. In both cases studied in this research, Huawei posted a lot of pre-crisis and post-crisis advertisements. After the textual analysis, the effects of advertisements on the crisis will be discussed and evaluated below.

4.4 Framework for Huawei’s study

Figure 4.4 Theoretical Framework of this article
This paper takes the case study of Huawei’s social media performance during two crises in 2017. The core of the research is Huawei Technologies Co., Ltd. and the two crisis events. For the case study of Huawei P10’s flash memory crisis (case study 1), we use Twitter and Weibo's platform to explore Huawei's social media crisis communication strategies in both international market and Chinese market, respectively, and compare the results of the two markets. For the case study of Mosque controversy of Huawei Mate 10 Pro’s advertisement (case study 2), we focus on Huawei’s crisis response strategy on Weibo. In general, this study applied the SCCT model created by Coombs (2007a, 2007c). We will also discuss Huawei’s crisis history and incorporate this factor into the assessment of the research. The impact of case crisis 1 on case study 2 will also be investigated as Huawei’s prior reputation. In both cases, crisis events will be divided into three stages for separate discussion. Ultimately, this study will evaluate Huawei’s strategy and effectiveness in the crisis in general, and discuss the impact of cross-cultural and multi-cultural environments on the spread of crisis in Chinese multinational technology enterprises and the future direction of development.

5. Theoretical Developed Research Questions

In this chapter, I will sort out the specific research questions for this study. After the establishment of the theoretical framework for this study, the previous research theories, research methods, and models concretized the initial research question and obtained the following research questions. These research questions will be discussed separately in case studies and analyses.

This study will adopt the SCCT model as the main theoretical framework for the case analysis, and the important objective of this study is to analyze and evaluate the crisis communication strategies adopted by Huawei in the two cases. In addition, this study will also discuss and evaluate Huawei’s crisis strategy in different cultural markets and the performance of Huawei’s crisis in the context of multicultural conflict in China. Therefore, I first specifically proposed the following research questions:

**RQ1: Did Huawei use proper and successful crisis communication strategies during the two case studies?**
RQ2: How did Huawei consider cultural factors in their crisis communication for the two case studies?

In my research, there are three sets of hypothesis tests made for testing the effectiveness of Huawei’s crisis communication strategies respectively for Twitter strategy in case 1, Weibo strategy in case 1, and Weibo strategy for case 2. For each set, effectiveness is tested by the change of public’s rejection and negative emotion. Therefore, six couples of hypotheses are firstly introduced and explained in this chapter.

In order to study Huawei’s crisis strategy on Twitter for case 1, I compare the share of public comments before and after Huawei showed their strategy during crisis. I first assume that Huawei’s strategy did not change the percentage of public’s rejection comments, and their crisis communication strategies usually decrease stakeholders’ rejection. Then a test is performed to know if the null hypothesis needs to be kept. The first couple of hypotheses are:

H₀¹: There is no significant decrease in the rejection percentage of comments after Huawei’s crisis strategy on Twitter.

Hₐ¹: There is a significant decrease in the rejection percentage of comments before and after Huawei’s crisis strategy on Twitter.

And then, I assume that Huawei’s strategy did not change the percentage of public’s comments with negative emotion on Twitter. The second couple of hypotheses are:

H₀²: There is no significant decrease in the negative emotion percentage of comments after Huawei’s crisis strategy on Twitter.

Hₐ²: There is a significant decrease in the negative emotion percentage of comments after Huawei’s crisis strategy on Twitter.

For testing Huawei’s Weibo crisis strategy in case 1, I compared the public comments again. I assume that Huawei’s strategy did not change the percentage of public’s rejection comments and comments with negative emotion on Weibo, and their crisis communication strategies usually eliminate stakeholders’ negative emotion. The first couple of hypotheses are:

H₀₃: There is no significant decrease in the rejection percentage of comments after Huawei’s crisis strategy on Weibo.
\textbf{H}_03: There is a significant decrease in the rejection percentage of comments before and after Huawei’s crisis strategy on Weibo.

And the second couple of hypotheses are:

\textbf{H}_04: There is no significant decrease in the negative emotion percentage of comments after Huawei’s crisis strategy on Weibo.

\textbf{H}_\alpha 4: There is a significant decrease in the negative emotion percentage of comments after Huawei’s crisis strategy on Weibo.

In the research of Huawei’s crisis case 2 in Chinese Weibo, the last two couples of hypotheses are listed below. The assumption is that Huawei’s strategy did not change the percentage of public’s rejection comments and comments with negative emotion on Weibo, and it usually eliminate public’s rejection and negative emotion.

\textbf{H}_05: There is no significant decrease in the rejection percentage of comments after Huawei’s crisis strategy on Weibo during case 2.

\textbf{H}_\alpha 5: There is a significant decrease in the rejection percentage of comments after Huawei’s crisis strategy on Weibo during case 2.

\textbf{H}_06: There is no significant decrease in the negative emotion percentage of comments after Huawei’s crisis strategy on Weibo during case 2.

\textbf{H}_\alpha 6: There is a significant decrease in the negative emotion percentage of comments after Huawei’s crisis strategy on Weibo during case 2.

\section*{6. Methodology}

In this section, I will describe the research methods used in this study and the specific research design. Overall, this research mainly uses the content analysis method. In addition, textual analysis has also been used to assist in analyzing the information content that organizations and the public publish on social media. The information for this study comes from the social media platforms Twitter and Weibo. Therefore, I will introduce the Twitter and Weibo platforms in this chapter, as well as the basic situation of the case companies on these platforms. In the third part, I will introduce the method of selecting information and data and the method of data analysis, such as the coding method. Finally, I will briefly discuss the methodological shortcomings of this research.
6.1 Content analysis and textual analysis

Content analysis is a research method that is widely used by social science researchers, especially scholars in the field of journalism and communication. Barelson (1952) defines content analysis as "the systematic, objective, quantitative description of the obvious content of communication". Among these, objectivity refers to the fact that each step in the research process needs to comply with clearly defined rules and order. Systematic means that the selection and rejection of content must follow a consistent principle.

Quantitative indicates that the analysis of the content is to measure the research object according to the rules. This method of analysis makes the study more accurate by using quantitative methods. Quantitative content analysis can assist researchers in analyzing the main concepts from the data, thus summing up the theme from a large amount of textual data. In this study, the process of quantification of content analysis is to convert comments and messages on social media to empirical categories. This research method was defined by Weber (1990) as “basic content analysis”, which is the most common form in social science literatures (Driske & Maschi, 2015). Researchers most often use basic content analyses to examine existing texts. The results of basic content analysis are often used to empirically document a perceived social problem (Weber 1990; Driske & Maschi, 2015).

An important purpose of this research is to investigate the stakeholders' cognition, evaluation, and attitude toward the organization in Huawei's crisis. Therefore, this paper uses the basic content analysis method to simplify the complex, multilingual social media information into a coding system. At the same time, content analysis is the basis for further quantitative analysis. This study will quantify the effectiveness of using crisis communication strategies, so it is necessary to code public emotion and recognition of the organization by content analysis.

In addition to content analysis, textual analysis is one of the research methods I used in this study. Quantitative analysis is not perfect. Thompson (1999) discussed the difference between quantitative and qualitative analysis, and she pointed out that quantitative analysis and qualitative analysis are based on the systematic process of the text in accordance with specified rules, but the qualitative analysis method is more flexible. Therefore, text-based qualitative analysis methods are also widely used by
researchers. In this study, I used the textual analysis method for the encoding of social media comments. In addition, the analysis of the contents of Huawei's statement issued in this study is based on textual and qualitative research methods.

6.2 Research on Twitter and Weibo

Twitter is a social networking and microblog platform founded in 2006. As of October 2017, Twitter already had 330 million active users (Russell, 2017). After years of development and ups and downs, Twitter is still one of several influential social media platforms worldwide. Twitter is widely used by organizations as a channel of communication with stakeholders. An organization's Twitter account is usually a tool for advertising and delivering organizational information. In times of crisis, Twitter is often used as an important tool for crisis communication (Guidry et al., 2017). Similar with Twitter, Weibo, which is a Chinese microblog platform, is currently one of the most active social media platforms in China. Weibo has 340 million active users by the end of 2017 (Millward, 2017). In China, Weibo plays the role of Facebook and Twitter play in a global scale. Chinese organizations and multinational organizations that have business in China usually establish their official Weibo accounts, which is used as the communication tool with Chinese netizens.

This study selected “@HuaweiMobile” as the research object on Twitter. This account is an official global account of Huawei mobile equipment. As of April 2018, this account has 309k followers and has released 16.6k tweets. Among many official accounts that Huawei has opened on Twitter, “@HuaweiMobile” is one of the most active one. Social media users also prefer to interact with this account. During the crisis of Huawei, this account also suffered more user comments and attacks.

In this study, a total of three Weibo accounts were selected as case studies. “@Huawei Device Company” (@华为终端公司) is the official Weibo account of the Huawei Consumer Business Group. As of April 2018, this account had 4.12 million followers on Weibo. In a brief interview with a Huawei staff, we learned that this group is a department in the Huawei enterprise which is specifically responsible for the consumer services. Therefore, Huawei often uses this department's Weibo account to communicate with the user. This account was responsible for publishing the first
declaration when Huawei went through P10’s Flash Memory Crisis, so this account is chosen as the research object.

Huawei Consumer Business Group’s CEO is Yu Chengdong (Richard Yu), who is also a famous person in China, because he often makes controversial remarks. Richard usually use his personal Weibo account to communicate with his followers and Huawei’s consumers. During the P10’s Flash Memory Crisis, Richard published some explanatory posts, including a letter with introspective implication, which caused a greater impact. Therefore, Richard Yu’s personal account “@Yu Chengdong” (@余承东) is considered as one of the research objects of case 1. As of April 2018, this Weibo account had 6.2 million followers, and the number of Weibo comments was much higher than Huawei’s other official Weibo accounts.

When studying the case of Mosque controversy of Huawei Mate 10 Pro’s advertisement, we chose “@Huawei Device Official” (@华为终端官方微博) as the object. This account currently has more than 20 million followers (as of April 2018). Unlike the first account, this account is introduced as “official product information release platform.” When the crisis of case study 2 broke out, it was on the first day of launch of the Huawei Mate 10 Pro. As a result, this account was responsible for the crisis response during case 2. It also recorded changes in consumer attitudes before and after the crisis.

Social media messages that were published by ordinary users which mentioned or discussed Huawei’s crisis is not selected in my research design. This is because the result from our test is displayed as percentage of positive and negative comments. When users publishing tweets or Weibo in their own accounts to discuss Huawei’s crisis, it is obvious that users tend to complain and criticize instead of expressing supports. If social media users disagreed with Huawei’s strategy, they might post a tweet to show their opinion. And if social media users agree with Huawei, the case could be regarded as a common incident and they might not publish anything online. However, Huawei’s social media messages gave an arena for their supporters and criticizers to discuss Huawei’s crisis and their strategy. Both positive and negative opinions have equal chance to appear under Huawei’s tweets. Therefore, in order to avoid absorbing too much deviated data, I only select Huawei’s official social media messages.
A factor which needs to be claimed is that I only choose tweets, Weibo messages and comments that are in response to what Huawei chose to publish. For some reasons, Huawei might have deleted some tweets whose comments were full of negative expressions. This may hurt the data used for coding and the analysis part.

6.3 Coding

Content population

The coding work of this study is divided into two parts. The first part is about the case study of Huawei P10's flash memory crisis. This part of the study selected 10 tweets from Huawei's Twitter account and 10 posts from Huawei and Richard Yu's Weibo accounts. The 20 social media messages were posted between April 16, 2017 and May 16, 2017. This period is the entire process of the crisis from its beginning to its retreat. In addition, a total of 255 user comments were selected in this section, of which 55 were from Twitter and 200 were from Weibo. Because of the large number of user messages on the Weibo platform, I used a random approach under each post. Twenty comments per tweet were extracted as coding samples. During the screening process, I removed comments that were not related to the enterprise, products, or the crisis event.

The second part is about the case study of Mosque controversy of Huawei Mate 10 Pro’s advertisement. I chose 13 posts published by “@Huawei Device Official”. These posts were published between November 13 and November 23, 2017. This time also included the three phases of the crisis. The way to obtain public comments in the second part is the same as the method in the first part. After removing completely unrelated information, I randomly selected 20 user comments under each post. The total number of comments in this part of the study was 260.

Among these selected tweets and Weibo published by Huawei’s official accounts, some social media messages were not related to Huawei’s crisis. Analysis of this research indicates that Huawei had adopted silence strategy for their most of tweets in order not to mention the scandal. It would cause a potential influence on my research, because comments and discussion about the crisis would be more if all Huawei’s tweets were about their crisis.
Coding procedure

According to SCCT, the 33 social media messages of this study were coded into four categories according to crisis response strategies: (1) silence, (2) deny, (3) diminish, (4) rebuild (Coombs, 2006). Silence refers to the ignorance or nonresponse for Huawei. Deny means that Huawei does not admit that they are responsible for the crisis. This category also includes attacking the accuser and scapegoating (Coombs, 2007a). Diminish refers to an excuse, which is used to minimize the responsibility of crisis, and justification, which means Huawei accepts responsibility but minimizes the perceived damage caused by the crisis. Rebuild indicates that Huawei accepts the responsibility and asks stakeholders for forgiveness (Coombs, 2007a, cited by Chung & Lee, 2016).

Chung & Lee (2016) developed a coding method for their investigation of Salmonella outbreaks in a food factory in the United States, which codes public responses by two types: cognitive and affective. The study used the same coding method as Chung & Lee’s approach. Cognitive responses were coded as (1) rejection, (2) conditional acceptance, (3) acceptance, (4) others, and (5) no cognitive reaction (Coombs & Holladay 2012). Rejection means that user totally reject Huawei’s response and attitude of this crisis. Conditional acceptance indicates that public accept Huawei’s response or attitude but they know that the problem has not been solved. Acceptance refers to support to Huawei in the comments. The other means that the comment is hard to analyze its cognitive mean. No cognition indicates that the comment does not express any cognition information (Chung & Lee, 2016).

Affective responses were coded as (1) negative, (2) neutral, (3) positive, (4) mixed, and (5) no emotion (Choi & Lin, 2009, cited by Chung & Lee, 2016). Negative emotion indicates that the user is angry, fear, dislike or ridicule the company. Neutral emotion means people only express confusion for the post or tweet. Positive emotion refers to sympathy and satisfaction. Mixed emotion means that people feel not good but they hope the company to become better in the future, which is the combination of negative and positive emotions. No emotion means a user’s comment does not have any emotion (Chung & Lee, 2016).
7. Ethics

Ethics is the basic requirement of an academic research. All the data selected in this research were obtained on the open social media platform (Twitter and Weibo). Throughout the whole research, social media users who participated in the review did not disclose any personal information in my paper. Before the study started, in order to increase my understanding of the research subjects, I had a brief interview with a Huawei employee. During the interview, she did not reveal any commercial confidentiality to me. Throughout the research process, I did not ingest any commercial confidentiality from Huawei.

8. Case Study 1: Huawei P10’s Flash Memory Crisis

In April 2017, Huawei’s new smartphone P10 and P10 Plus was exposed on a technology website. Huawei is accused of mixing three different flash memory chips with different operating speeds in the same style of mobile phones. As described in Chapter 2, this incident evolved into a crisis around April 19, 2017. This incident has caused a certain amount of influence on a global scale. However, due to the popularity of Huawei in China, this crisis has evolved very seriously in China. In this chapter, we examined Huawei's crisis response strategies and effectiveness on Twitter and Weibo from perspectives of crisis communication theory and SCCT.

8.1 Stages of crisis

Coding of social media messages on Twitter and Weibo clearly shows the crisis process and strategy by Huawei. Table 8.1 and Table 8.2 list Huawei's performance on Twitter and Weibo during case study 1 respectively. Messages selected in this part can be influenced because Huawei might delete some posts which was full of negative criticizes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tweet number</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Content</th>
<th>Crisis stage</th>
<th>Response strategy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2017.4.16</td>
<td>Wish you a happy Easter</td>
<td>Pre-crisis</td>
<td>Silence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>2017.4.19</td>
<td>Share a review of P10's camera</td>
<td>Crisis</td>
<td>Silence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>2017.4.20</td>
<td>Share a photo taken by P10</td>
<td>Crisis</td>
<td>Silence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>2017.4.20</td>
<td>Share a review of P10</td>
<td>Crisis</td>
<td>Silence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post number</td>
<td>Time</td>
<td>Content</td>
<td>Crisis stage</td>
<td>Response strategy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------</td>
<td>------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------</td>
<td>-------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2017.4.16</td>
<td>Introduce the function of picture editing of P10</td>
<td>Pre-crisis</td>
<td>Silence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>2017.4.17</td>
<td>Introduce the selfie function of P10</td>
<td>Pre-crisis</td>
<td>Silence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>2017.4.19</td>
<td>Explanation for mixing flash memory</td>
<td>Crisis</td>
<td>Diminish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>2017.4.20</td>
<td>Explanation by CEO</td>
<td>Crisis</td>
<td>Deny &amp; Diminish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>2017.4.21</td>
<td>Introduce an advertising event in UAE</td>
<td>Crisis</td>
<td>Silence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>2017.4.27</td>
<td>A letter by CEO</td>
<td>Crisis</td>
<td>Rebuild</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>2017.5.2</td>
<td>Share a video of P10’s product conference in Belarus</td>
<td>Post-crisis</td>
<td>Silence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>2017.5.5</td>
<td>P10 was awarded by ”Byte Magazine” in Spain</td>
<td>Post-crisis</td>
<td>Silence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>2017.5.7</td>
<td>Huawei invite 2015 Miss Universe as P10’s spokesperson in Philippines</td>
<td>Post-crisis</td>
<td>Silence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>2017.5.16</td>
<td>Huawei hold an event of ”Media Open Day” for consumer business</td>
<td>Post-crisis</td>
<td>Silence</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 8.2 Sample posts of Huawei on Weibo during case study 1

**Pre-crisis**

On April 16, 2017, a number of technology websites broke the news that Huawei had mixed flash memory chips in the newly released P10 smartphone, and the evidence from experiments proved that there was a difference in the operating speed of the same phone. However, because the market share of Huawei mobile phones in the world is not as good as that of Apple and Samsung, this incident has not caused widespread discussion within a few days of being exposed. Prior to the outbreak of the crisis in China, Huawei's Twitter account published ads of Huawei P10. Although at the end of March, the
previous negative news had spread on the Internet, which indicates that Huawei’s P10 did not have an oleo-phobic coating layer, Huawei’s pre-crisis stage only continued to release product advertisements, both on Twitter and Weibo. In addition, Huawei’s previous smartphone product, Huawei P9, had experienced public skepticism in 2016 due to the promotion of mobile photography using photos taken with SLR cameras. Huawei had experience in responding to consumers’ crisis of credibility but their own prior reputation was severely hit.

**Crisis event**

From April 17 to April 19, 2017, negative news about Huawei P10 quickly spread in China. It was easy to find that Huawei has done a certain degree of crisis detection on pre-crisis stage in the Chinese market. On April 19, 2017, the official Weibo account of Huawei device “@Huawei Device Company” released the first declaration on Weibo in Chinese.

In this declaration, Huawei stated that,

“...we are facing a situation that tens of millions of products are sold worldwide in a short time. If single-solution is used for core components, it will lead to shortage of new products. In order to balance experience, quality and supply, we have adopted a common method in the industry. The supply of solutions, such as the use of two different flash memory supply solutions at the same time ...”

Huawei also declared that,

“... The performance test for a single device does not accurately reflect the performance of the phone, and it does not meet the user's real demand. The P10 series has never publicized the use of only one particular type of flash memory. Different flash memory is randomly configured during production. There is no case of artificially arranged chips, and there is no deliberately deceiving consumer ...”

From textual analysis, it is easy to know that Huawei adopted diminish strategy by finding an excuse of suppliers. At the same time, Huawei used “a common method in the
industry” to describe this “mistake”, which meant that Huawei’s opponents were also doing the same thing on their products. Huawei also denied the accusation of cheating, because they never “publicize the flash memory they use”.

One day later, Huawei’s Consumer Business Group CEO Yu Chengdong (Richard Yu), posted a long message to explain the difficulties met by Huawei:

“Recently, P10 smartphones have been exposed with many problems. **Our competitors have vilified us...** P10 have adopted two kinds of flash memory solutions. The core reason is that flash memory supply chain is seriously **out of stock**. Our flash memory is still out of stock now. **Our joint optimization design of hardware and software has ensured that even if we use EMMC flash memory, we still maintain a good using experience... Some competitors notice the global sales of Huawei’s P10. **They discredit us and mislead consumers**... **We will never do the inferior things such as cutting corners**, and we will always put consumer interests and value creation in the first place. This is the basic concept of Huawei's development...”

From this Weibo message, Richard Yu responded to the crisis as the head of the company and took the deny strategy and diminish strategy. Richard firstly attacked the accuser. He referred to accusers as Huawei's competitors, and then explained why flash memory was mixed (out of stock). Richard then attacked the accusers again. Finally, Richard denied that Huawei had ever cut corners and made positive commitments to consumers.

At the same time, Huawei's Twitter account did not make any statement about this incident. Although some people on the Twitter have already expressed doubts and dissatisfaction with Huawei in the hashtag #HuaweiP10, there are still not a large number of people accused Huawei on their official Twitter. Therefore, Huawei continues to remain silent on this incident on the global social media platform.

Later, Huawei's Twitter account released the last advertisement on April 22, 2017. Subsequently, all of Huawei’s official social media platforms began a total silence of 10 days. In an additional observation to Huawei’s other social media account on Twitter and Weibo, none of their organizational official accounts has posted messages during their collective silence during April 22th to May 2nd, 2017. This shows that the 10-day silence is an organizational strategy instead of a lack of business intelligence.
As the identity of Huawei’s leader, Richard Yu released "A Letter to my Colleagues" in both Chinese and English on April 27, expressing the reflection of Huawei’s crisis in the crisis:

“...When I saw opinions on Sina Weibo that I didn’t agree with, both positive and negative, the engineer in me was too sensitive about product technology specifications and too eager to express my thoughts. This led me to respond inappropriately. I’m now learning to stop and think before I react…”

Richard added that,

“...Faced with consumers’ suspicions, we responded in terms of the challenges we’d encountered and the efforts we’d made to overcome them. We understand now that this was an arrogant way to react. We need to approach this matters with humility. Consumers have paid with their trust and love. All the requests from them are the power that encourages us to move on and achieve progress. We can’t defend the way we focused only on our difficulties. Instead, we need to listen carefully to different opinions, respond sincerely, and take action quickly to improve…”

After Richard Yu published an open letter of introspection and apology, the crisis entered the post-crisis stage. Richard Yu used his personal social media account to help Huawei adopt the rebuild strategy as a crisis response strategy.

Post-crisis
On May 2, 2017, Huawei’s Twitter account and Weibo account that had been silenced for 10 days returned to normal and began to release P10’s mobile advertisements. This study selected several posts on Twitter and Weibo platforms after May 2 for textual analysis. The results showed that neither Richard nor Huawei’s official account mentioned this crisis event again.
8.2 Statistical result

The coding of public responses in this study shows the distribution of emotions and the perceptions of the stakeholders on Huawei’s social media account. Figure 8.1 shows the evolution of the distribution of cognitive situations in the public response to Huawei’s Twitter during the crisis. As the figure shows, there was a large proportion of negative responses to Huawei’s advertising on the Twitter platform during the crisis. However, due to the low total amount (N = 55), Huawei did not regard the public opinion on the Twitter platform as a severe crisis, and therefore always adopted a silence strategy.

Before the ten-day silence, some public comments used words such as “disappointed” and “rubbish” to express their rejection to Huawei’s new product. Although some users did not show displeasure directly by some words, their comments expressed that they did not think Huawei had “comply with the guarantees of the advertising”. After Huawei’s silence, “support” began to appear in public comments. Satires still existed, but the percentage of rejection had decreased.

Figure 8.1 Analysis of cognitive response percentage across time on Twitter

Figure 8.2 shows the changes in the distribution of affective emotions in public comments under Huawei’s Twitter account during the crisis. From the affective perspective, the changes in public emotions and perceptions are roughly the same. From Figure 8.1 and Figure 8.2, it can be realized intuitively that the ten-day silence taken by Huawei’s Twitter account during the crisis effectively reduced the rejection and negative emotions in the comments. Textual analysis for public comments had caught negative
expressions such as “disgusting” and “terrible” in comments both before and after the silence. But the amount of these words had changed significantly.

Figure 8.2 Analysis of affective response percentage across time on Twitter

Figure 8.3 shows the trend of the cognitive distribution over time in the comments to Huawei’s Weibo account during the crisis. According to the distribution curves of rejection and acceptance, Huawei's first announcement did not reduce the public’s resistance to Huawei’s crisis response. Words such as “liar” (骗子), “arrogant” (傲慢), “insincere” (不真诚) had the highest frequency in public comments before April 21st. An effective social media blogger commented that Huawei’s reaction “had neither covered up their mistakes, nor displayed their frankness”.

The effect of ten-day silence of Huawei’s official Weibo account on the public’s perception of the crisis has not been as pronounced on Twitter. But Richard Yu’s open letter has effectively increased public recognition of the Huawei’s crisis response. We can find an obvious increase of using “worthy of recognition” (值得肯定) under Richard Yu’s letter, but “arrogant” was still a popular keyword in comments. Overall, during the post-crisis stage, Huawei’s acceptance from Chinese consumers is still affected by the crisis.
Figure 8.3 Analysis of cognitive response percentage across time on Weibo

Figure 8.4 shows the trend over time of the distribution of affective emotions in public comments on Huawei's Weibo during the crisis. Compared with the cognitive situation, the negative public emotion about Huawei's crisis communication is more than the resistance. Especially when Richard Yu released an open letter on April 27, many social media users accepted the attitude that Richard was willing to communicate with consumers, but they were still dissatisfied with Huawei because they had cheated. Disappointed stakeholders continued to ridicule Huawei’s PR strategy and their supporters by using memes in novels of Lu Xun (魯迅), a modern Chinese literature, for their self-deception. In addition, from the beginning of the crisis until the date when last Weibo message was published, the stakeholders’ negative emotion toward Huawei's public relations performance on Weibo has always been higher than positive emotions.

Figure 8.4 Analysis of affective response percentage across time on Weibo
From the analysis of these line charts, this crisis about flash memory components has caused stakeholders’ negative emotions on Twitter and Weibo, as well as resistance to Huawei. However, after the crisis ended, the cognitive and affective characteristics in public responses showed a slight difference between Twitter and Weibo. A further effectiveness assessment of the crisis response strategy will be completed in the next section with the help of quantitative analysis.

8.3 Hypothesis test

Hypothesis and result

Independent T-test is used to compare the mean of two independent groups. This test can be used in this research in order to test if Huawei’s crisis communication strategy significantly reduced public’s rejection and negative emotion toward Huawei’s brand and their response on social media. In this research, I assume that the distribution of cognition and affective emotions among public responses will not be changed if the organization does not change their crisis communication strategy, so that the percentage of cognition and affective emotions of public responses can be regarded as normally distributed. Another assumption is that Huawei’s crisis strategy cannot increase the public rejection and negative emotion, because the line chart shows no sign of increase of rejection and negative percentage. Therefore, I have compared the mean of cognitive and affective percentage in public response before and after Huawei’s crisis communication strategy, using independent samples T-test. If the percentages of rejection and negative comments have a significant decrease after Huawei uses crisis strategy, Huawei’s strategy can be evaluated as effective and successful.

For this case study, 4 sets of independent samples T-test will be performed to test the cognitive and affective change by Huawei’s crisis communication strategy on Twitter and Weibo respectively. With the help of test result, the effect of Huawei’s crisis response strategy can be further discussed. For all the Independent Sample T-Test in this case study, I have selected 5% of significance level.
In hypothesis test 1 and hypothesis test 2, we will test the effect on public cognition and affective emotion of Huawei’s strategy on Twitter. As mentioned in the Chapter 5, null hypothesis and alternative hypothesis are listed below:

**H₀₁:** There is no significant decrease in the rejection percentage of comments before and after Huawei’s crisis strategy on Twitter.

**Hₐ₁:** There is a significant decrease in the rejection percentage of comments before and after Huawei’s crisis strategy on Twitter.

**H₀₂:** There is no significant decrease in the negative emotion percentage of comments before and after Huawei’s crisis strategy on Twitter.

**Hₐ₂:** There is a significant decrease in the negative emotion percentage of comments before and after Huawei’s crisis strategy on Twitter.

Table 8.3 Independent Samples T-test for Hypothesis Test 1 & 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hypothesis</th>
<th>Levene’s Test for Equality of Variances</th>
<th>t-test for Equality of Means</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Sig.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rej Percentage - Twitter</td>
<td>Equal variances assumed</td>
<td>5.017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Equal variances not assumed</td>
<td>2.552</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neg Percentage - Twitter</td>
<td>Equal variances assumed</td>
<td>1.181</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Equal variances not assumed</td>
<td>3.979</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In hypothesis test 1, the P-value is 0.034. As a result, we can conclude that with 5% significance level, there is a significant decrease in the rejection percentage of comments before and after Huawei’s crisis strategy on Twitter. In hypothesis test 2, the P-value is 0.004. In conclusion, with 5% significance level, there is a significant decrease in the negative emotion percentage of comments before and after Huawei’s crisis strategy on Twitter. The analysis of the data obtained in this quantitative study confirms the guesswork we obtained intuitively from the line graph. When Huawei P10’s flash memory crisis occurred, Huawei’s silence strategy significantly reduced the public’s rejection and negative emotions on Twitter.

In hypothesis test 3 and hypothesis test 4, we will test the effect on public cognition and affective emotion of Huawei’s strategy on Weibo.

**H₀₃:** There is no significant decrease in the rejection percentage of comments after Huawei’s crisis strategy on Weibo.
**Hₐ₃:** There is a significant decrease in the rejection percentage of comments after Huawei’s crisis strategy on Weibo.

**H₀₄:** There is no significant decrease in the negative emotion percentage of comments after Huawei’s crisis strategy on Weibo.

**Hₐ₄:** There is a significant decrease in the negative emotion percentage of comments after Huawei’s crisis strategy on Weibo.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hypothesis</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hₐ₃</td>
<td>There is a significant decrease in the rejection percentage of comments after Huawei’s crisis strategy on Weibo.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H₀₄</td>
<td>There is no significant decrease in the negative emotion percentage of comments after Huawei’s crisis strategy on Weibo.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hₐ₄</td>
<td>There is a significant decrease in the negative emotion percentage of comments after Huawei’s crisis strategy on Weibo.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 8.4 Independent Samples T-test for Hypothesis Test 3 &amp; 4</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Levene’s Test for Equality of Variances</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rejected Percentage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rejected Percentage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative Emotion Percentage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative Emotion Percentage</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In hypothesis test 3, the P-value is 0.058. The null hypothesis is retained. As a result, we can conclude that with 5% significance level, there is no significant difference in the rejection percentage of comments before and after Huawei’s crisis strategy on Weibo. In hypothesis test 4, the P-value is 0.146. As a result, we also retain null hypothesis. In conclusion, with 5% significance level, there is no significant decrease in the negative emotion percentage of comments before and after Huawei’s crisis strategy on Weibo, either. When Huawei P10’s flash memory crisis occurred, Huawei’s diminish and rebuild strategy did not achieve the desired results.

**9. Case Study 2: Controversy of Huawei Mate 10 Pro Advertisement**

On November 15, 2017, Huawei released the latest flagship smartphone in the Chinese market: Huawei Mate 10 Pro. But on the same day, some Chinese netizens found something related to Islam in Huawei’s advertisement on the Huawei website in China. As shown in Figure 9.1, Huawei’s new mobile phone ads displayed a new function that remind Muslims to do morning ceremony. In addition, Huawei Mate 10 Pro also displayed the function of “One-click seeking a nearby mosque” in this ad. Subsequently, this advertising poster quickly triggered controversy in the Chinese Internet, where Han
nationalism and atheism was popular. In this chapter, we will use crisis communication theory and content analysis methods to study the controversial crisis that involves racial and religious issues within China.

![Huawei Mate 10 Pro’s Controversial Advertisement in China](image)

**Figure 9.1 Huawei Mate 10 Pro’s Controversial Advertisement in China**

### 9.1 Stage of crisis

In this case study, 13 social media messages and 260 public comments on Weibo are coded. These microblogs were published between November 13 and November 23, 2017. The ten days included the three phases of the crisis. Table 9.1 shows the encoding of the 13 posts by Huawei during the crisis. Messages selected in this part can also be influenced because Huawei might delete some posts which had a lot of negative comments.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Post No.</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Content</th>
<th>Crisis stage</th>
<th>Response strategy</th>
<th>Comments amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2017.11.13</td>
<td>A notice for list of Mate 10 Pro on Nov 15 with a picture of nature</td>
<td>Pre-crisis</td>
<td></td>
<td>339</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>2017.11.14</td>
<td>A notice for list of Mate 10 Pro on Nov 15 with a picture of city</td>
<td>Pre-crisis</td>
<td></td>
<td>154</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>2017.11.15 10am</td>
<td>Announce the list of Mate 10 Pro</td>
<td>Crisis</td>
<td>Silence</td>
<td>807</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>2017.11.15 5pm</td>
<td>Introduce the camera of Mate 10 Pro</td>
<td>Crisis</td>
<td>Silence</td>
<td>149</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>2017.11.16 12pm</td>
<td>Introduce the intelligence design of Mate 10 Pro</td>
<td>Crisis</td>
<td>Silence</td>
<td>260</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>2017.11.16 5pm</td>
<td>Declaration of this crisis</td>
<td>Crisis</td>
<td>Deny</td>
<td>30572</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Pre-crisis
Compared with case study 1, this crisis broke out very quickly. Before November 15, 2017, there was no sign that the crisis will erupt in the next few days. However, Huawei, as a multinational technology enterprise with rich experience in crisis management, should be prepared to respond to various crises. Prior to the launch of the new product, Huawei continued to release new mobile phone advertisements in their Weibo account "@Huawei Device Official", their online product information platform. The two pre-crisis social media messages included in the analysis sample of this study are all notices for the November 15 new product launch. From the perspective of crisis history and prior reputation, Huawei has experienced a severe crisis in earlier 2017, and our research shows that the crisis management and response was not particularly successful at that time. Therefore, Huawei should be prepared to respond to various crises on the premise of poor reputation.

Crisis event
The crisis of this case and Huawei’s product launch broke out at the same time. When the crisis was quickly spreading in China, Huawei’s Weibo is still releasing Mate 10 Pro's purchase information and product advertisements. In Table 9.1, Post 3, 4 & 5 are positive publicity about Huawei's new products. However, the public’s negative emotions and resistance to Huawei’s silence have increased rapidly since November 15. As the concept of “Halal” in China has become more and more widespread in recent years, “Halal plant

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Post Title</th>
<th>Post Type</th>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Views</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2017.11.17</td>
<td>Introduce the Huawei router</td>
<td>Post-crisis</td>
<td>Silence</td>
<td>521</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017.11.18</td>
<td>Introduce functions of Huawei laptop</td>
<td>Post-crisis</td>
<td>Silence</td>
<td>600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017.11.19</td>
<td>Introduce the reading function of Mate 10 Pro</td>
<td>Post-crisis</td>
<td>Silence</td>
<td>260</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017.11.20</td>
<td>Introduce the camera of Mate 10 Pro</td>
<td>Post-crisis</td>
<td>Silence</td>
<td>110</td>
</tr>
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<td>2017.11.21</td>
<td>Introduce the screen of Mate 10 Pro</td>
<td>Post-crisis</td>
<td>Silence</td>
<td>224</td>
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<tr>
<td>2017.11.22</td>
<td>Introduce the selfie function of Mate 10 Pro</td>
<td>Post-crisis</td>
<td>Silence</td>
<td>97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017.11.23</td>
<td>Mate 10 Pro and Thanksgiving Day</td>
<td>Post-crisis</td>
<td>Silence</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 9.1 Sample posts of Huawei on Weibo during case study 2
oils”, “Halal water”, “Halal toilets” and other products that emphasize religion have begun to appear in China. The business initiative of taking care of the Muslim minority has been arousing an aversion in the majority atheism Han people in China. In 2017, when the cultural conflicts among ethnic groups in China became serious, the promotion of “One-click seeking Mosque” function of Huawei smartphone undoubtedly ignited the “anti-Islamic” sentiment of some Chinese netizens. In the Chinese cultural environment dominated by atheism and Han nationalism, most consumers did not tolerate paying for features specifically designed for Muslims when purchasing mobile phones.

At 5 pm on November 16, Huawei finally issued a statement on the controversy caused by this advertisement. Huawei declared that:

“Huawei is a Chinese company and is also a global organization. We provide quality products and services to consumers in more than 170 countries around the world. Faced with consumers from different countries, cultures, and ethnic groups, we provide a wealth of personalized features... When the Huawei Mate 10 Pro series is selling well, there is intensive attack on Chinese Internet for alarm reminder function of Huawei’s smartphone. These accusers have ulterior motives. This function is a personalized reminder service customized by Huawei for a certain foreign region. It is not available in China. These days, some people took the opportunity to distort the facts and instigate an attack. Huawei will take legal action against them.”

By issuing a statement, Huawei denied allegations of their “Halal-generalization”. Huawei claimed that this feature "is not available in China", so this new product would not involve sensitive national issues and religious contradictions. In addition to this information, Huawei had also attacked the accusers for several times. Huawei wanted to tell consumers that this crisis was motivated by people who wanted to attack Huawei. Finally, Huawei also stated that they would take legal action. Overall, Huawei had come up with “globalization” as an excuse for this advertising campaign and had adopted a tough “Attacking accuser strategy.” However, this statement quickly received 30,000 comments. The results of this study show that there is a lot of resistance and rejection toward Huawei’s crisis response. It is worth noting that a large number of netizens ridiculed Huawei in this crisis. They did not appear to be angry, but instead played jokes
about Huawei and Islamic. They even produced a meme of “Halal Huawei” through software such as Adobe Photoshop.

**Post-crisis**

After publishing this response, Huawei’s Weibo no longer mentioned this crisis event. Unlike case study 1, Huawei’s social media account did not keep silent, but continued to advertise products every day. This study continues to examine the 7 posts issued by Huawei during the post-crisis stage. Although Huawei’s response to this crisis was regarded as triggering a secondary crisis by many netizens and popular social media bloggers, Huawei did not publicly rethink its crisis management. In fact, the textual analysis of the comments showed that the discussion about the crisis had slowly declined after Huawei adopted the deny strategy. Most of the negative comments on Huawei during the post-crisis stage came from potential customers who could not buy Mate 10 Pro due to a shortage of new mobile phones.

**9.2 Line chart analysis**

This study's coding of case study 2 shows how the cognitive characteristic and affective emotions of public responses in Huawei’s social media messages change over time at different stages of crisis. Similar with case study 1, this part of the study still uses the percentages in the review as the key data to measure cognitive characteristics and affective emotions.

![Analysis of cognitive response percentage across time](image)

Figure 9.2 Analysis of cognitive response percentage across time for case study 2
Figure 9.2 shows the trend of rejection response and acceptance response’s proportion of comments. In my observation, I think that the proportion of acceptance responses did not change strongly after Huawei adopted a crisis response strategy. Textual analysis indicates that “Islamic”, “Halal” and “green” (which is a symbol color of Islam) had continued to have high word frequency during the whole crisis process. After the crisis, the consumer's resistance to Huawei's brand and advertising had a certain reduction. However, consumer's resistance to Huawei at post-crisis stage was still significantly higher than resistance before the crisis outbreak.

Figure 9.3 shows the trend of the public's negative emotional response and positive emotional response’s proportion changing over time. The positive emotion in the public comments and the acceptance response are similar, but the negative emotion and the rejection are slightly different. By textual analysis, I found that after Huawei issued a statement on attacking accusers, a large part of the public’s anger over Huawei turned into joking. Because the controversial function in this smartphone was not as serious as fraudulent to consumers, when the public obtained a relatively reasonable explanation, the negative emotion towards Huawei decreased. However, Huawei’s tough deny strategy still seems to be resisted by the public because some commentators believe that Huawei still demonstrated the arrogance that Richard Yu had tried to avoid in this crisis response.
9.3 Hypothesis test

Hypothesis and result

This part has the same research design with the case study 1. Independent T-test can be performed to know if Huawei’s crisis communication strategy significantly reduced public’s rejection and negative emotion toward Huawei’s brand and their response on Weibo. Hence, an Independent Samples T-Test will be performed twice to compare the mean of cognitive and affective public response before and after Huawei’s crisis response strategy during case study 2. In this research, I assume that the distribution of cognition and affective emotions among public responses will not be changed if the organization does not change their crisis communication strategy, so that the percentage of cognition and affective emotions of public responses can be regarded as normally distributed. Because of the trend showed on the line chart, I also assume that Huawei’s crisis strategy cannot increase the public rejection and negative emotion. With the help of test result, the effect of Huawei’s crisis response strategy in this case can be further evaluated. For these Independent Sample T-Test in this case study, I also select 5% as significance level. If the percentages of rejection and negative comments have reduced significantly after Huawei’s crisis response, their communication strategy can be regarded as successful.

In hypothesis test 5 and hypothesis test 6, we will test the effect on public cognition and affective emotion of Huawei’s strategy on Weibo during the crisis of “Halal Phone”.

H_{05}: There is no significant decrease in the rejection percentage of comments after Huawei’s crisis strategy on Weibo during case 2.

H_{a5}: There is a significant decrease in the rejection percentage of comments after Huawei’s crisis strategy on Weibo during case 2.

H_{06}: There is no significant decrease in the negative emotion percentage of comments after Huawei’s crisis strategy on Weibo during case 2.

H_{a6}: There is a significant decrease in the negative emotion percentage of comments after Huawei’s crisis strategy on Weibo during case 2.
In hypothesis test 5, the P-value is 0.011. In conclusion, with 5% significance level, there is a significant difference in the rejection percentage of comments before and after Huawei’s crisis strategy on Weibo during case 2. In hypothesis test 6, the P-value is 0.043. Hence, we can conclude that with 5% significance level, there is a significant decrease in the negative emotion percentage of comments before and after Huawei’s crisis strategy on Weibo.

Despite some criticism toward Huawei’s response strategy adopted in this crisis, both the rejection and negative emotion in the public response have significantly decreased after the crisis. Overall, Huawei’s crisis manager chose a correct crisis response strategy, and ultimately effectively curbed the negative impact of the crisis. In responding to this crisis, Huawei rationally avoided the issues of ethnic and cultural conflicts that may have caused controversy. They also shirked their own responsibilities and denied subjective intentions. These are some possible reasons for the significant effects of the crisis communication.

### Table 9.2 Independent Samples T-test for Hypothesis Test 5 & 6

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Independent Samples Test</th>
<th>t-test for Equality of Means</th>
<th>95% Confidence Interval of the Difference</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Levene’s Test for Equality of Variances</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Equal variances assumed</td>
<td>Equal variances not assumed</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rej_Percentage_Weibo_2</td>
<td>.301</td>
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<td>.3198</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>df</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>.2500</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Std. Error Difference</td>
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<td>Mean Difference</td>
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<td>5% Confidence Interval</td>
<td></td>
<td>.39198</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

In hypothesis test 5, the P-value is 0.011. In conclusion, with 5% significance level, there is a significant difference in the rejection percentage of comments before and after Huawei’s crisis strategy on Weibo during case 2. In hypothesis test 6, the P-value is 0.043. Hence, we can conclude that with 5% significance level, there is a significant decrease in the negative emotion percentage of comments before and after Huawei’s crisis strategy on Weibo.

Despite some criticism toward Huawei’s response strategy adopted in this crisis, both the rejection and negative emotion in the public response have significantly decreased after the crisis. Overall, Huawei’s crisis manager chose a correct crisis response strategy, and ultimately effectively curbed the negative impact of the crisis. In responding to this crisis, Huawei rationally avoided the issues of ethnic and cultural conflicts that may have caused controversy. They also shirked their own responsibilities and denied subjective intentions. These are some possible reasons for the significant effects of the crisis communication.

### 10. Analysis and Discussion

This section will discuss the reasons for the above findings based on the theory of crisis communication, and conduct a detailed situation analysis of the two crises that Huawei experienced. In addition, this section also compares Huawei’s performance between global social media and Chinese social media, and discusses the impact that the cultural environment may have on Huawei crisis communication strategies. Then, I briefly reviewed the research questions listed in Chapter 5 and answered them. Finally, I
summarize the deficiencies of this study and the outlook for future approach within this field.

10.1 Analysis of Huawei’s crisis management process during two cases

In the SCCT model, attribution analysis of the responsibility of the crisis is an important step. The two crises that Huawei experienced in this study can be analyzed for the specific situation based on the attribution of crisis responsibility. Then, a reasonable solution can be selected with the instruction of situation. Coombs’s (2007a) list of basic crisis type and reputational threat (Table 4.2) divides crisis into three clusters: (1) victim crisis, (2) accidental cluster, (3) preventable cluster.

For the case study of Huawei P10’s Flash Memory Crisis (case 1), Huawei and its stakeholders have different opinions about attribution of responsibility. Huawei’s first announcement posted on Weibo (Post 3, April 19, 2017) and interpretive letter posted by Richard Yu (Post 4, April 20, 2017) all release Huawei’s responsibility for using different types of flash memory to their flash device suppliers. The subtext of Huawei’s crisis response strategy is that the limited capacity of high-performance flash memory suppliers has forced Huawei to adopt multi-solutions. This responsibility attribution is in line with the product tampering crisis (victim cluster) defined by Coombs (2007a). This means Huawei believed that they have only a weak attribution of crisis responsibility. In addition, Huawei emphasized that the negative news about flash memory was the malicious attack from Huawei’s competitors. This attitude also indicates that they regarded themselves as victim. Because crisis in victim cluster has a mild reputational threat to the organization (Coombs, 2007a), the level of crisis threat against Huawei was not judged high. In fact, in the global market, this negative news had not been widely spread, the reputational threat on Twitter was mild.

However, the data from this study shows that this crisis has formed a severe reputational threat toward Huawei on Weibo. A textual analysis of the public response revealed that a large number of stakeholders of Huawei in China said in the comments that, the mixing use of flash memory is intentional jerry-building behavior in order to save costs. Although Huawei did not mention P10's use of flash memory in its ads, consumers pointed out that some of the evaluation samples used by the media for
promotion were high-performance products, so consumers would still be misled and deceived. Hence, this crisis in should belong to the preventable cluster from stakeholder perspective, which refers to strong attribution of responsibility for Huawei.

The disagreement about the crisis attribution and responsibility evaluation between organizations and stakeholders resulted that Huawei did not effectively reduce the threat of reputation. In the case study 1, only the rebuild strategy was met the demand for Huawei’s assessment of responsibility. Coombs (2007a) introduces in SCCT that, rebuild crisis response strategies should be used for crises with strong attributions of crisis responsibility (preventable crises) regardless of crisis history or prior relationship reputation. But Coombs (2007a) also indicates that crisis response strategy should maintain consistency. Mixing use of deny strategy with either the diminish or rebuild strategies will weaken the effectiveness of overall response. This may explain why Huawei’s crisis communication on Weibo had no significant effect even if Richard Yu had adopted rebuild strategies.

For the case study of “Mosque” controversy of advertisement, Huawei learned the lessons of the case study 1 and adhered to the same crisis communication strategy: deny strategy (silence and attack the accuser). The only response Huawei released during the crisis (Post 6, November 16, 2017) claimed that the incident originated from an accidental mistake by the website editor. Huawei identified the incident as challenge crisis, which means that stakeholders claim an organization is operating in an inappropriate manner (Coombs, 2007a). This crisis belongs to the accidental crisis cluster. Huawei has low attribution of responsibility and is under moderate reputational threat in This situation. The SCCT suggests that organizations with crisis histories and bad reputations like Huawei can use rebuild strategies to deal with such crises. However, in response to the rumor or challenge crisis, organizations can also choose the deny strategy.

Through the analysis of public comments, we learned that some of the stakeholders believed that Huawei deliberately chose to use the “seeking Mosque” function as an advertisement in order to fawn on the ethnic minority groups in China. Another part of stakeholders only thought that the advertisement released by Huawei was inappropriate for atheists. They did not think that Huawei has subjective intention. Stakeholders who
believed that Huawei intentionally catered to Islamic expect rebuild strategy in SCCT. Other stakeholders were just expecting Huawei to make a reasonable explanation in the crisis response. Judging from the final statistical results, this large impact crisis was quickly resolved by Huawei’s response strategy. Therefore, most stakeholders also believe that China is just operating in an inappropriate manner, instead of ingratiating Chinese Muslim deliberately.

In general, the organization's attribution of responsibility during the crisis must be determined from the perspective of stakeholders. One of the reasons that Huawei failed to effectively save its reputation in case 1 is that the organization's judgment of responsibility attribution differs from that of stakeholders. However, Huawei's crisis communication on Twitter shows that when the intensity of the crisis is weak, a silence strategy can be adopted to avoid the spread of negative events.

10.2 Crisis communication strategy effected by cultural factors

The introduction of cultural factors in the field of crisis management as an influential parameter has been widely appealed (Falkheimer & Heide, 2006). The case of this study explored the role of cultural factors in the crisis communication of multinational technology enterprises. The results show that while culture is only one of many factors that influence the choice of crisis communication strategies, organizations need to avoid the harm caused by cultural differences and cultural conflicts while dealing with the crisis.

Silence strategy and Eastern philosophy

As the result shows in the Chapter 8 and Chapter 9, Huawei had adopted silence strategy for their most of social media messages during the two crises cases. In Twitter and Weibo platforms, their period of silence time is different. But the similarity of Huawei’s strategy on these two platforms is that they usually avoided to response to accusation or questioning. This strategy may be seemed strange in Western society. However, it shows a clear origin of Eastern cultural perspective of issue management. With a deep influence of Taoism for thousands of years, Chinese organizations tend to use “Wu Wei” (无为), which means “rule by non-activity”, as an ideology of management for issues, especially
when the “activity” may enhance the risk. This Taoism philosophical concept affects Chinese organizations invisibly, and it works efficiently for the most times. As a result, Huawei chose not to mention the crisis on Twitter even they were dealing with issues outside China.

Instead of choosing strategy that were more suitable for Western cultural market, Huawei considered more about the specific situation and seriousness of the crisis in English-speaking community. As I mentioned in the section 10.1, Huawei did nothing in order to avoid catalyzing the crisis on Twitter, because of the evaluation of crisis intensity. However, the cultural factor is less considered from this perspective.

*Expectation of crisis response*

Stakeholders in different territories and cultural contexts have different expectations for the behavior of the organization in a crisis. Huawei's major oversea markets includes Europe, the Middle East, Africa, South America and Southeast Asia. According to the analysis of the mobile phone market, Huawei is not the leading mobile phone enterprise in these regions. Although the market share of Huawei's mobile phones has been rising, Huawei mobile is relying on good quality and low prices to obtain commercial victories in markets outside China. Therefore, Twitter users do not pay special attention to the small mistakes of using multiple flash memories. In China, however, Huawei's positioning is the leader of Chinese national technology enterprise. In the Chinese mobile phone market, the price of Huawei smartphones is generally the highest among Chinese brands. Some of the comments in this study show that many patriotic consumers believe that the purchase of Huawei products is an effort to support Chinese technology enterprise and is also a patriotic act. Therefore, in the Chinese cultural context with strong nationalist ideology, Huawei shoulders very high expectations. When Huawei was questioned for cutting corners, the expectations of Chinese stakeholders for Huawei quickly turned into dissatisfaction, which increased the severity of the crime of case 1. Therefore, after Huawei adopted an inappropriate criticism response strategy, they fell short of Chinese consumers’ expectations. As a result, the public's negative emotions can hardly be reversed in case 1.
Individualism vs. Collectivism

Culture also influences people’s perception and use of crisis communication strategies (Chung & Lee, 2016). Previous studies have demonstrated that apology plays a different role in Western and Eastern cultures, which is influenced by individualism and collectivism. In an individualistic Western society, an apology means acknowledging that an individual should take responsibility in an incident, so the organization's apology often means possibility of taking legal risks. However, in the Eastern collectivism culture represented by China and Japan, apologies are often the only action that must be taken after the accusations (Oki, 1993, cited by Chung & Lee, 2016). The apology of the organization will only show the attitude of the organization and will not cause any risk of legal responsibility to the organization. The apology effect of enterprises with crisis history in China is often weakened because the public no longer expects that apology can reflect the organization’s sincerity.

Crisis communication under multicultural context

In a multicultural context with cultural conflicts, the organization’s crisis communication strategy needs to take the emotions and interests of various cultural groups into account. The case of Huawei Mate 10 Pro’s controversial advertisement represented a certain ethnic inequality for the majority ethnic groups in China. Hence, this group of people developed negative emotions toward Huawei after the incident broke out. However, if Huawei apologized for this matter to the majority atheism ethnic group, they would definitely hurt the minority Muslim ethnic group. In fact, the Muslim ethnic minor has been excluded from the mainstream Han community because of economic backwardness and religion. The special function design for the religious minority can be regarded as the enterprise’s effort to fulfil the corporate social responsibility (CSR). However, in Chinese cultural context which is full of controversy and serious antagonistic emotions, the best corporate communication strategy is usually to avoid ethnic and religious issues. Huawei’s response to this crisis has led religious disputes to the market in the Middle East, thus freeing itself from the suspicion of ingratiating Chinese Muslims and not offending China’s minority consumers. This study believes that there are many ways for companies to fulfil CSR for ethnic and social issues. When companies are threatened by a
crisis, they should give priority to reducing their own losses through appropriate strategies. After the resolution of the crisis, companies can continue to provide equal services for all cultural groups in a multicultural environment.

10.3 Research questions revise
In this study, two case studies were used to evaluate Huawei's strategy for crisis response by Twitter and Weibo. During Huawei P10's flash memory crisis, Huawei adopted a silence strategy on Twitter to escape the influence of negative events. On Weibo, Huawei first used the diminish strategy to find excuses. When this crisis response triggered a more severe threat, the CEO of Huawei's consumer group personally used the rebuild strategy to take responsibility. During the crisis of Huawei Mate 10 Pro's controversial advertisement, Huawei used the deny strategy to respond to the controversy about advertising.

This study uses quantitative content analysis to examine the effectiveness of Huawei's crisis communication strategies in two cases. During Huawei P10's flash memory crisis, Huawei successfully suppressed the negative impact of the crisis on Twitter. However, Huawei's series of crisis responses at Weibo did not significantly reduce the reputational loss suffered by the organization. During the crisis of Huawei Mate 10 Pro's controversial advertisement, Huawei's tough denial sparked public discussion. However, Huawei's crisis communication strategy has played a significant role overall. (RQ1)

For the Huawei P10's flash memory crisis, different crisis communication strategies were chosen between the global market and the Chinese market, after Huawei assessed the severity of the crisis, expectations of stakeholders in different cultural environments, and the legal responsibilities that the crisis strategy might assume. During the crisis of Huawei Mate 10 Pro's controversial advertisement, Huawei responded for the crisis under Chinese multicultural context to escape the risk of ethnic and religious disputes. Huawei's response strategy has cleared its own responsibilities, but it has not further taken care of China's ethnic minority groups. (RQ2)
10.4 Limitation and future research

In the process of collecting data and conducting research, I realized that there are some limitations in the research design. First, the sample size of data on Twitter is too small. Huawei’s Twitter account’s amount of sample is only 55. Compared with Weibo, these data may make the research on Twitter less convincing. Secondly, the entire coding process was completed by me. Therefore, this quantitative study lacks an inter-coder reliability test. Again, when selecting data, I cannot choose enough crisis-related social media messages. Because, as shown in the research results, most of the time, Huawei adopted the silence strategy. Finally, this research chose to compare the percentage of each category response under the post or tweet. Therefore, the comment-deleting actions that Huawei may have made will affect the accuracy of the research data.

Due to the time limit and depth of research, there are still limitations in this paper. The case chosen in this research has a large difference in influence between China and the global social media. Therefore, the persuasiveness of this study has been affected. Secondly, because the core of this research is the case studies of multinational technology enterprise, this paper did not explore the impact of more complex cultural factors on crisis communication. Finally, the quantitative research method used in this study determines that there may be errors in data statistics. Many external factors may affect the results of the experiment. In the future research, multidimensional cultural factors can be added to the crisis management research system. Researchers can examine and analyze the relationship and impact between cultural factors and crisis communication of multinational technology enterprises with the help of more diversified methods.
11. Reference


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