

# The Understanding of Crisis Management in Organization: A Review

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## ABSTRACT

The crisis is mainly associated with disasters and hazards that ruthlessly negate the organization's functionality where an urgent response is not taken to mitigate it. The functional aspect impacts the organization positively while the dysfunctional aspect leaves the organization with negative and destructive consequences just like a crisis. Crisis management is a process that includes identifying and evaluating crisis signals and needs to take and implement necessary precautions to overcome a crisis with minimal damage. The purpose of this study is to provide a comprehensive literature review on crisis management, impact on mental health, consequences and strategies to deal with crisis in the institutes and organizations. Such situations require multidisciplinary crisis management teams at different administrative levels. Moreover, structuring work processes, open, precise, and regular communication, as well as anticipatory, goal-oriented, and effective problem-solving, are described as particularly effective behaviors in crisis management teams.

**Keywords:** Organizational crisis, Crisis management, Crisis and Mental health.

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## INTRODUCTION

A crisis is any situation or set of events that sends a group, team, or organization into a downward spiral by posing a risk of harm to people or property and having the potential to negatively impact and damage an organization, its stakeholders, or even an entire industry if not handled effectively and efficiently (Hale, Dulek, and D. Hale, 2005). For business organizations, a crisis is a state of tension and anxiety that arises from an unexpected circumstance. This unexpected state of surprise can result in the loss of material, human, and moral damage, as well as create an unstable environment and uncertainties for the organizational system and threaten the achievement of organizational goals (Sakarneh, 2017). For these reasons, crisis management is necessary.

Numerous organizations are dealing with crises that pose a threat to their survival, continuity, and very existence. In the modern world, the majority of developed and emerging nations are experiencing numerous problems. A greater understanding of the significance of handling crises through ongoing readiness and the development of integrated preparedness has resulted from the proliferation and diversity of crises, both at the natural and human levels. (Alexy & Reitzig, 2012).

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Many scientists define a crisis as an unpredictable event which threatens the expectations of interested parties and may seriously affect the efficiency of an organization and generate negative results (Coombs, 2012; Thalassinou et al., 2012).

### Definition of crisis in an organization

Crisis is a major unpredictable event that has potentially negative results, significantly limiting the activities of an organization in terms of production, services, employment, financial condition and reputation (Barton, 1993).

A crisis can be understood as a state that threatens a company's survival, the realization of its goals, limits the time available

for taking remedial action and surprises decision-makers with its occurrence, thus creating conditions of severe pressure (Slatter et al. 2001). The concept of crisis management has been addressed by many researchers. For Wang (2009), crisis management is “A set of continuous and systematic processes for identifying, analyzing, and dealing with business crises through some management practices”. Bundy et al. (2017) defined “Crisis management as the actions of organizational leaders that try to reduce the likelihood of a crisis, work to reduce the damage caused by crises, and seek to re-establish order in the aftermath of a crisis”.

Crisis management refers to processes, activities and actions taken by various organizations during a crisis, and effective strategies and plans to deal with certain threats. In addition to a set of effective decisions that are taken in a short time during crises, which impact organizational performance (Al-zahrani, 2014). The goals of crisis management (CM) are to prevent crises from occurring, limit their negative impacts, stop them from getting worse, regulate the amount of damage they cause, and exit the situation with the fewest amount of losses feasible (Al-Ammar, 2002; Al-Marri, 2014). Furthermore, Pearson and Mitroff (1993) offered a framework for CM, which was crucial for several investigations and widespread application. The detection or early warning signal, preparation/prevention signal, damage containment or reduction signal, business recovery signal, and learning signal are the five steps that make up the framework.

### ***The primary objectives of crisis management are as follows***

Proactive planning is the process by which organizations set up crisis management teams, procedures, and communication plans far in advance of any crisis. (b) The organization initiates its crisis management strategy in the event of a crisis, coordinating actions to immediately resolve the problem. This could entail allocating resources, handling urgent repercussions, and making crucial choices. (c) The recovery phase of crisis management begins with returning everything to normal, taking care of any outstanding problems, and using the lessons learned to avoid such situations in the future. (d) Reputation protection for the company is an essential part of crisis management. Transparency, a dedication to ethical crisis resolution, and effective stakeholder communication are essential. (e) Enhancing organizational resilience is another aspect of crisis management that makes sure the company can adjust and prosper in the face of difficulty.

### ***Crisis Management Approaches***

#### ***Escaping approach***

In this approach, it is necessary to follow the internal and external environment constantly, review the available

resources and improve prediction methods about the future before a crisis in order to prevent the negative effects of crises.

#### ***Solving approach***

This approach depends both on the prediction of conditions before a crisis and on a timely move for the problem resolution during a crisis. During a crisis, current conditions should be perceived and identified clearly and behaved in a realistic and patient manner. In addition, some efforts such as the systematic compilation of information for effective decisions, extra opportunities for staff in different levels, the reduction of the time pressure, and the detailed identification of sources of a crisis should be made.

#### ***Proactive approach***

According to this protective approach, top management should produce alternative solutions against potential crises. For developing such an approach, items presented below should be fulfilled, Providing correct and adequate information, Determining risks, Establishing early warning systems, Making a prevention plan, Forming a crisis prevention team.

#### ***Interactive approach***

The crisis process is assessed using an integrated approach prior to, during, and following the crisis. It incorporates the self-control mechanism and ongoing organizational learning as a result of the knowledge gathered throughout this process. For the good of all responsible parties' reputations, there is a constant flow of information and contact.

### ***Stages of Crisis Management***

The nature and underlying causes of crisis management make it fundamentally a complicated social phenomena. It passes through several phases. Every stage is distinct from the others due to its unique qualities and attributes. Harwati (2013) separated crisis management into four stages: response (protecting people and property after a crisis), recovery (rebuilding after a disaster in an effort to resume normal operations), mitigation (preventing future emergencies and taking steps to minimize their effects), preparedness (making preparations ahead of time to be ready for an emergency), and finally learning and evaluation of results. Grimmelt (2017) separated crisis management into three primary stages. The first is the pre-crisis phase, where the crisis's likely occurrence is anticipated. The response stage, which is the primary part of crisis management, then begins. The third phase is the post-crisis phase, during which the crisis' effects are initially managed.

#### ***Pre-crisis phase***

The pre-crisis phase involves preventing and preparing for a crisis, the crisis response phase involves dealing with the crisis and attempting to contain its damages, and the

post-crisis phase addresses the long-term objectives of recovery from damage and image restoration. Through risk assessment, which is “the process of identification, analysis, and response to the project risks,” the pre-crisis phase seeks to avert catastrophes. (Petru, 2013) and entails surveying and examining the surroundings to methodically recognize, evaluate, rank, and prioritize the various environmental risks. It also involves estimating the likelihood that a specific crisis will materialize, as well as its anticipated frequency and possible effects on operations.

These risks can be evaluated with the help of qualified risk analysts who link the unique traits and vulnerabilities of their client firms to the risk qualities of particular countries in order to generate reports tailored specifically for each organization. Information can be gathered through on-site visits, local media, diplomatic sources, exceptional expert consultants, or other business people with recent experience operating in the host nation. Companies may search for signs of current unrest or discontent, clues to economic stability, and patterns in cultural and religious practices in order to determine a nation’s risk level.

### ***Crisis Assessment Tools in Organizations***

#### ***Social media monitoring***

Regular monitoring helps to track social media platforms to understand the trends, scope of crisis and the external factors which can impact the reputation of an organization.

#### ***Risk assessment tool***

Proactive measure which helps to identify potential risks and vulnerability (infrastructure, management, manpower shortage, safety, financial crunch, protest by employee) of organization to allow preemptive measures.

#### ***Swot***

(strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats) Analysis-Helps to identify and evaluate risks & to utilize internal and external resources.

#### ***Incident reporting tools***

Streamline the process of reporting, recording or documentation, evaluation, tracking and resolving the incident. It ensures that the whole process and response is coordinated among the stakeholders and employees.

#### ***Communication assessment tool***

Helps to assess and ensure the effectiveness and immediate implication of all modes and platforms of communication among the employee and stakeholders in organization during crisis and urgently deal with barriers.

#### ***Biopsychosocial and cultural assessment***

These assessments are designed to measure the client’s situation, stress levels, existing problems, coping skills, etc.

These assessments include monitoring and observation using semi-structured interviews, psychological rating scales, and goal achievement scales.

### ***Crisis Response Phase***

The organization swings into “crisis mode” and enters the response phase, which is marked by short decision times, complexity, and ambiguity because there is still a chance of immediate harm occurring, when avoidance attempts fail and a crisis arises. A decisive response is required, and the focus must be on getting the situation under control as soon as possible in order to contain the crisis and minimize damage. “Observation, interpretation, choice, and dissemination—repeating the process steps numerous times” is the path that the organization takes. Acquiring as much precise information as soon as possible is the first step towards assessing the situation and containing the problem. It is crucial to identify the scale of the crisis, that is, whether it is local, regional, or global, because multinational corporations may encounter problems. Following the evaluation, the crisis management team will assume control and mobilize the required resources to carry out the pre-assigned duties. However, the crisis management plan is more of a reference tool than a detailed step-by-step manual. It includes forms to be used to document the crisis response, lists of important contacts, and reminders of what should normally be done in a crisis. Stakeholders must be informed of identified potential risks through a process known as “risk communication,” which involves informing stakeholders of ongoing crisis events, facilitating decision-making within the crisis management team, and making organizational decisions about whether and how much information to share to ensure that their staff members and stakeholders are aware and equipped to respond in an emergency. In order for local government agencies and emergency services to plan ahead and create emergency protocols, they need also be notified when hazards affect public safety. These communication tactics need to take into consideration cultural differences, language difficulties, and various communication channels when working in a multinational environment. The results of the risk assessment can then be utilized to begin developing a workable crisis management strategy.

Informing the CM team and the general public or employees about the situation is the next step. When “information is communicated quickly, accurately, directly, and candidly to critical stakeholders, including the media,” effective communication takes place. According to Coombs (2011), there should be a multidisciplinary crisis team that is pre-designated and consists of experts in “public relations, health, legal, security, operations, finance, and human resources.” This team should also be aware of the duties

and responsibilities that they must carry out during a crisis. Team members will respond more quickly and efficiently, make better decisions, take the initiative, and strengthen their response capabilities if they receive training in various hypothetical circumstances on a yearly basis. According to Baubion (2012), two essential abilities that must be stressed are the capacity for creative thought and for exercising leadership, as crises are often unexpected and distinct in character, necessitating actions and frequently novel and innovative solutions. The public relations department should ideally train the spokespeople who will handle communication during the crisis, and they should preferably have media relations and good communication abilities. Spokespersons must also be pre-assigned. (Coombs, 2011).

Employees must also be knowledgeable about and trained in the use of organizational resources. This may be achieved through training sessions that aim to make employees “aware of protocols, procedures, and action plans to deploy when there is an impending crisis.” According to Coombs (2011), Organizations should show their sympathy and concern for any individuals affected by the crisis. As such, they incorporate a clear message regarding rehabilitation and compensation in their communication.

Additionally, crisis managers must use social media to engage with the public, disseminate information, and keep an eye on the viewpoints expressed there. (Baubion, 2012), utilizing staff members who have received social media training and specialized social media response teams. Internal communication should enlighten, reassure, and guarantee employee engagement. This can be done through print, electronic media, in-person meetings, emails, phone calls, bulletins, or intranet sites. (Coombs, 2011).

#### *Post crisis phase*

After the crisis passes, the company moves into the last stage, known as the post-crisis phase, where the danger is eliminated and operations resume as usual. As a result, although the crisis still needs to be addressed, management no longer prioritizes it. Now that the crisis has passed, the corporation may concentrate its efforts on recuperating and re-establishing credibility and confidence through public perception management. In order to recover, one must make an effort to “learn from the event internally and “manage” the situation externally. In addition to fulfilling obligations made during the crisis phase, the post-crisis phase seeks to mend any reputational harm that may have been caused and searches for ways to better prepare for the next catastrophe.

A crisis should be viewed as an opportunity for learning, and the methods used to manage it should be assessed to determine what is effective and what requires improvement. To do this,

a company may designate a crisis review team, which should consist of individuals distinct from the CM team, to evaluate how the crisis was handled and suggest modifications to crisis protocols. By including lessons learned into the organization’s crisis management system, this will stop crisis recurrence and damage and enable better preparedness, prevention, and reaction.

The next step is to determine what harm it has incurred during the crisis and make the necessary repairs—most often, reputational harm. Also the time to carry out any agreements established during the crisis communication stage, such as paying compensation to victims and keeping in touch with them thereafter. The company needs to provide updates on the recovery process, outline the corrective measures being implemented, and make any findings from the crisis inquiry public. The quantity of information offered during the crisis and the time it takes to finish the recovery process determine how much follow-up contact is necessary. (Coombs, 2011)

#### *Crisis Management Models*

Organizations may navigate and respond to crises more skillfully when they use crisis management models, which offer organized frameworks and guidance (Karimian et al., 2022). These models provide systematic ways to crisis response by drawing on a variety of disciplines, such as psychology, sociology, management, and communication. Important models for CM consist:

##### *The Four-Stage Model*

The four stages of this classic CM strategy are learning, containment and damage control, recovery, and detection and identification. It highlights how critical it is to identify and contain crises quickly, then move on to a phase of recovery that entails rebuilding and learning from the crisis to avoid recurring (Xu, 2020).

##### *The PPRR (Prevention, Preparedness, Response, Recovery) Model*

Comprehensive CM is the main focus of this approach. Efforts to lessen the possibility of a catastrophe start with preparation and prevention. Organizations respond to a crisis and then work to recover so that business as usual can resume (Liu, Qi & Wang, 2023).

##### *Situational Crisis Communication Theory (SCCT)*

According to the nature of the crisis and the extent of the organization’s accountability, Timothy Coombs’ SCCT examines how organizations should modify their crisis communication plans. It places a focus on adapting the communication strategy to the demands of the crisis (Coombs et al 2020).



### ***Integrated Crisis Management (ICM) Model***

During a crisis, the ICM model places a strong emphasis on cooperation and coordination amongst different organizational levels and functions. It promotes coordinated preparation, dialogue, and decision-making to produce a coherent and successful crisis response (LaGree, Wilbur & Cameron, 2019).

### ***The Three-Component Model of Organizational Resilience***

Organizational resilience and CM are combined in this paradigm. It highlights how crucial crisis reaction, planning and preparation, and post-crisis recovery are to boosting general resilience (Luu & Phan, 2020).

### ***Crisis Mapping Models***

Crisis mapping models in the digital age make use of data and technology to track, evaluate, and react to crises instantly. These models use data analytics and geographic information systems (GIS) to deliver timely information to decision-makers (Matthiessen, Hald & Vigre, 2022).

These crisis management models emphasize readiness, quick action, clear communication, and learning from the crisis experience. They provide businesses with systematic methods for handling crises. These models can be useful tools for creating crisis management plans and guaranteeing a robust reaction to obstacles, depending on the type of crisis and the particular circumstances of the company.

### ***The CM Process***

Prediction, prevention, preparedness, property determination and control, recovery, and learning are all parts of the process of crisis management (Mitroff, 1993). [A]Prediction -Undoubtedly, crises provide some early warning signs before they happen. Because they can provide crucial and valuable information regarding crises, these signals are extremely significant. Early detection and identification of them can stop crises from happening and their possible consequences. It will be unavoidable that top managers will struggle with crises if they do not closely monitor and assess these actions. [B]Prevention and Preparation - A crisis cannot be resolved by merely consistently adhering to early warning indicators. Depending on the importance of these signals, top management should work with the CM team to make certain preparations to shield the construction company from potential crisis damages. At this point, managers ought to make an effort to reduce risks as much as possible because they can offset such actions with anticipated gains. In the event that a crisis is unavoidable, the preparation steps will aid in CM. The following is a list of the tasks that managers ought to complete during the planning phase: Developing a constructive strategy for CM, Gaining confidence through fulfilling obligations in tasks, Being prepared for potential

crisis situations, Establishing a competitive CM team, Identifying probable crisis types, enhancing regulations to avert possible crises, Creating plans and methods to deal with impending crises, Identifying danger and CM protocols, reating and evaluating crisis scenarios and plans. [C] Control -While early warning, preventative, and protection systems may be useful in certain situations, regulating procedures must also be followed in order to precisely handle crises. On the one hand, staff members need to be motivated. However, policies that can cause tension and anxiety have to be avoided at all costs. [D] Recovery-At this point, it is important to implement both short- and middle-term healing strategies. Stated differently, the replacement of losses with fresh earnings occurs during this period. A construction company that is capable of handling a crisis should take quick action to restore normalcy. The tactics that have been previously defined should be followed when allocating resources, procedures, and individuals toward this goal. Here, resolving the issue and reaping any rewards are the goals. Step-by-step, low-level managers' suspended authorities, centralized management, and restricted spending should return them to their pre-crisis positions. [E] Learning and Evaluation -After a crisis, the following actions should be taken to reverse their detrimental effects and take a new course, Setting up structured training courses for each employee, Rehabilitating the workplace, Rewarding productive employees for their important contributions during the CM process, Making the solution development team out of the crisis management team, Creating strategic reports for an extended program of efficiency and productivity.

### ***Organizational crisis and mental health***

Organizational crises affects mental health of leaders and every employees in form of psychological distress like grief, fatigue, stress, fear of losing job opportunity, anxiety, somatic concerns, lack of attention and interest to perform responsibility, unhealthy coping strategies such as using excessive alcohol, smoking and cannabis, depression, suicidal ideation, disturbed sleep, feeling of hopelessness, helplessness and difficulty to control anger or regulate difficult emotions.

### ***Strategies***

Every organization should learn and adapt strategies to address the mental health concerns and to support and improve mental health of employees during crises likes Conduct psychological assessment, Identify, acknowledge and address emotional and behavioral problems, Employees assistance program or counseling services, Organize regular mental health training program and workshops, Health and wellness program, Flexible work arrangement and promote work life balance, Team building and social support program, Proactive effective communication, Preparedness to deal

with crisis, Regular support, supervision and monitoring, Reestablish stability and balance

## CONCLUSION

CM is a multidisciplinary field with considerations for psychological, social-political, and public relations factors. This suggests that risk must be incorporated into all decision-making processes and methodically taken into account in all ongoing operations. The CM plan should be updated frequently, and its principles should be adaptable enough to change as internal or external conditions do. (Baubion 2012) It is an abrupt, unforeseen event that jeopardizes an organization's ability to operate normally. Numerous factors, including technological, political, social, or economic developments, might trigger a crisis. A crisis can lead to a number of outcomes, including the organization's liquidation, activity disruption, monetary losses, emotional distress, and reputational harm. The team must all be committed to the intricate process of CM. Reducing the effects of disruptions requires the use of proactive crisis management strategies driven by leadership, technological advancements, and preparedness. The development of collective cognition in the face of risk is influenced by a variety of elements, such as prior experience managing crises, the ability to communicate hazards, the ability to mobilize resources, and the coordination of reaction actions. Lastly, after a crisis, CM promotes recovery, stability, and expansion.

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