

Crisis Management Communications System

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Abstract: The article is devoted to the clarification of basic concepts related to crisis management, communications systems, leadership, strategic leadership and its relation to the internal and external factors of crisis management. The study highlights the concept of both strategic leadership and a strategic leader and their significant role in managing educational organizations, maintaining their balance, and evolving and improving their performance in the light of the globalization imposed. The aim is to present study highlights regarding topics that might deter the strategic leader's work in achieving safety and security in public schools after detecting structural crisis. The research is based on the following hypotheses to examine and analyse the associations between strategic leadership represented by dimensions including internal environment, external factors, change management and method and strategic planning and their impact on crisis management. H1. The higher the association between strategic leadership and coping with the internal environment, the greater the lead to crisis management. H2. The higher the association between strategic leadership and coping with the external factors, the greater the lead to crisis management. The methodology includes the method of desk research. The research provides a theoretical review of previous studies of strategic leadership and its impact on crisis management; clarifying the characteristics, attributes, tasks and skills of strategic leadership; and identifying the strategic criteria and types of crises.

Keywords: crisis management, information system, strategic leader, strategic leadership, educational organization, internal and external factors.

Introduction

The purpose of the study is to understand the relation between strategic leaders and crisis management in educational organizations. This requires understanding how an innovative strategic leader can contribute to managing a solid structure for safe and secure public schools. It reflects the evident correlation between the practice of strategic leadership (change management, internal and external environments, strategic process, competence of strategic leaders) and structural crisis management for schools (diagnosis, evaluation and confrontation

of crises). Therefore, sensing risks and crises leads to their prevention, lessens their detrimental effects, and deflects their recurrence.

Crisis Management Information System

The Management Information System (MIS) is the pillar of all organizations where it is based upon a set of humans, material, technical and administrative components that work in unison to gather and analyze all necessary data and information for future use in decision-making in ordinary and exceptional cases, similar to the exposure to crises, making it imperative for those in charge to make quick decisions in a short time using the organization's information system. (Abdul-Aal 2009). [1]

The principal must also consider a number of things for the success of the information system, such as:

- Failure to abide with red tape and formal protocol and to activate informal communication channels to ensure prompt delivery of necessary information to expedite the decision-making process.
- Constant update of information in line with accelerated environmental variables that may lead to educational crises.
- Proper classification, ranking and sorting of information to help its use. (Al-Qahtani, 2002). [2]

This system is supportive and complementary to the Information System, through which information and experience are exchanged and matters relating to the school crisis are consulted between the team leader, the members and supporting associations, both formal and informal, to communicate proper information in time to overcome the crisis, highlighting the importance of the communication factor in school crises. This system involves the following:

- Clarity while stating the reason behind communication during a school crisis.
- Practical identification of those in to be contacted.
- The stated goal and the nature of the school crisis.

This method of clarity helps the leader and his crisis management team to carry out several tasks, the most important of which are:

- Delivering the goals of school crisis management.
- Clarifying the correlation between the crisis management team and the local community of the school.
- Distributing the roles on the team to help information delivery and orders related to the crises, each depending on his assignment.
- Conveying correct and vital information in a timely manner.

It is mandatory to work the communication system in parallel with the information system that needs a bundle of vital information during crisis management. This requires the termination of the restraints amidst the crisis management team and its members from one side, and between the crisis management team and the school's surrounding community from another. And as to avoid time-

wasting, we must skip over the formalities, so we speed up the transaction of sending information in order to take the appropriate measures and decisions against the school crisis in a timely manner. (Ghanima 2014). [3]

Success Factors of School Crisis Management:

Addressing crises generally in all organizations requires a crisis management team that can take administrative measures to avoid crisis, contain its effects and place it under control. This is done by creating a suitable administrative climate, developing practical administrative means, and drawing up the management methodology, all of which assist the success of the objectives of School Crisis Management. (Sadek 2000). [4] This success depends on other numerous factors, the most important of which are:

- Time awareness and management.
- Possessing leadership skills characterized by efficiency and effectiveness, as well as having the ability to assess risks prior to the crisis.
- Utilizing a systematized structure to collect and send information through an effective communication system.
- The leader’s ability to form a trained and successful team in crisis management as to enable fast and effective response to find and identify the type of crisis, as well as marking up appropriate strategic plans to exterminate it. (Qadri 2008). [5]
- Committing to the scientific method for crisis management in planning, organization, directing, follow-up, and evaluation.
- Consulting the largest number of experts in decision-making and adopting the administrative centralization in creating and implementing decisions.
- Rapid initiative to put out any spark that may trigger crises.
- Establishing a special department for crises because it is considered the interface and reputation of public and private educational organizations. (Jadallah 2008). [6]

The negative effects that may result from school crises leave behind a ripple of other difficult crises to address due to the absence of crisis management, which handles planning for crisis management and risk reduction, permanent emergency preparedness and the absent or weak role of school leaders in responding to the crisis.

Consequently, the constraints which impede the success of crisis management can be summarized as follows:

- The administration is unable to do its job and it does not change the methods of addressing crises depending on their differences, for it uses the same method for all.
- Inability to spot early warnings of crises or neglecting it.
- Refusal of the school administration to set up a special crisis management unit.
- Inability of the school organizational culture to address crises.

- Substandard distribution of administrative tasks and roles which weakens the crisis response ability.
- Error in the information and communication systems.
- Poor selection of school leaders leading to weak crisis management and risk alert.
- Lack of a coherent team in crisis management planning, organization, oversight, and evaluation.
- Limited material budgets and human abilities to deal with crises.
- Insufficient communication with the external environment which aids School Crisis Management.
- Poor assessment which inevitably worsens crises and the chances of crisis recurrence because previous mistakes were not considered. (Biomi 2008). [7]
- Excessive confidence that the current leadership of the school does not and has not encountered crises.
- Misconceptions that the current error of a successful organization does not require repair because it is a guarantee of a non-crisis.
- Giving up to the reality in which crises will occur whether coordinated plans are made to remedy them or not. (Saqr 2009). [8]

Strategic Leadership in Crisis Management

The work of the Strategic Leadership is to design a comprehensive management process for predicting, preparing, implementing, and following up on crises in schools and all organizational sectors. For this process to succeed, the Strategic Leadership must support and follow up with Crisis management via the following steps:

- A comprehensive survey of past crises and an assessment of their causes and consequences to avoid their reoccurrence in the future, which will assist the leadership in conjunction with senior management to formulate the strategic vision, set objectives and then prepare a clear strategic plan for crisis management, as well as enhance the capacities of the organizational environment.
- The formation of a Crisis Task Force qualified and trained in environmental analysis and identification of probable crises. Furthermore, the role of the leader is to distribute tasks and authorities to the team members, support them in collecting information and providing necessary resources to enable the effective and successful implementation of the strategic plan.
- The ability of the Strategic Leader to pinpoint the causes of the crisis, the beneficiaries and those affected by it for the success of the Strategic Plan, and to explain them to the Crisis Task Force so that it can start the communication system and participate effectively within the organization and with the surrounding environment.

Thus, the Leader, together with the Crisis Task Force, has a comprehensive organizational readiness to address and respond to crises with a strong strategic

infrastructure of information, communication system and organizational culture capable of studying, analyzing and understanding internal and external environments to enable innovation and change in the interest of crisis management. (Sayed 2000). [9]

Characteristics of a Strategic Leader in Crisis Management

A Strategic Leader is characterized by several fundamental qualities that entitle them the role of a leader and aid their style and pattern of leadership to successfully manage their organization and even excel. Nevertheless, the one effective evaluation that puts the success or failure of a leader at stake is the crises, which are the strategic terminal for the emergence of the leader's attitude and behavior in the face of sudden and rapid decision-making. Here, the efficiency of a leader is then underlined in responding and adapting to all administrative and non-administrative circumstances, where he finds himself deviating away from his current leadership approaches, which can be rendered into two situations: an intangible sensory situation, explicitly brainstorming and thinking to prompt predictions, and a concrete dynamic situation that translates into administrative processes on the ground in reality. Younes 2012). [10]

The most important leadership qualities needed for crisis management include:

- Courage and not being afraid of risks.
- Optimism and high morale.
- Impulsive and confrontational ability.
- Ability to control the task force.
- Motivating and granting authorization to the task force. (Zeidan 2003). [11]
- Persistence and resilience.
- Practical thinking and the ability to analyze and predict.
- Knowledge of time management for smooth decision-making.

Behaviors of a Strategic Leader in Crises Management

The leader can bring about organizational stability through his successful style of leadership. However, what distinguishes a true leader from the formal leader is that a true leader has what it takes to go on a new and different path from what he usually takes when faced with sudden risks and crises, whereas the formalist leader cannot adapt to sudden circumstances, and faces the risks in the same ineffective manner that he uses in his organization, which may succumb and fail his organization.

Therefore, it is not about the quality or the quantity of crises that defines strategic leaders, but there is a specific method and a certain leadership style that must be followed to successfully implement crises adaptation plans. The most important of these methods include:

- Displaying unusual and unfamiliar leadership skills on normal days.
- Leadership creativity in sudden situations.

- Flexibility, improved communication and sharing information for timely decision-making during the crisis.
- Avoid placing members of the Crisis Management Task Force under pressure and overstress orders and requests.
- Filling the gaps resulted from the lack of information to deal with the crisis.
- Entailing calmness and composure so that the crisis can be absorbed and handled properly.
- Clarifying the goals to direct efforts to the appropriate location.
- Targeted scientific and practical logical thinking.
- Not taking hasty and risky decisions when a crisis occurs and resorting to strategic alternatives with clear results. (Youness 2012). [12]

Leadership Authorities in Crisis Management

The concept of authority in a general sense holds the meaning of delegation granted by the leader to members of his team to instigate new tasks and bearing their consequences. This lessens the burden on the leader and senior management, giving them plenty of time to devote themselves to other crucial strategic tasks, especially in the face of unusual circumstances like crises. The leader then must abide by the time, manage it properly and minimize bureaucratic tasks as to speed up administrative transactions and make quick decisions depending on the leader's flexibility in dealing with his task force to contain the crisis and achieve the desired objectives, supporting individual's freedom of expression, and allowing them to participate in decision-making to benefit from everyone's experience.

The most important benefits of empowerment and leadership authorities include:

- The leader's knowledge of the working environment is to be able to formulate proper solutions to crises.
- The importance of the Leader's commitment to their duties and professional loyalty in public organizations and schools.
- Swift decision-making, implementation of actions and easing the burdens on senior management. (Al-Maany 2010). [13]

Leadership Decisions in Crisis Management

To make decisions during the crisis, the Leader needs a knowledge base grounded on a collection of available and necessary information, and rapid communication between the members of the Task Force and the community to contain the crisis. These decisions and their necessities require a strategic leader who is familiar with crisis management, time awareness and management to entail rapid decision-making, implementation, follow-up, and evaluation. (Al-Shahrani 2012). As to not reach a stage of despair, confusion, and inability to make a decision amidst the crisis, and to avoid the need to make decisions with the purpose of delivery instead of planning, the leader must take into account the following fundamentals:

- Formulating a quick goal to solve a crisis.
- Suitable time management.
- Rapid scientific initiative to analyze and select the best alternatives and swiftness in their implementation. (Al-Shahrani 2012). [14]

Strategic Leadership and its Relation to the Internal Factors of Crisis Management

Internal Communication

Strategic leadership plays a vital role in the internal communication on one hand, and the communication of the organization with the external environment on another. With that, it ensures coherence internally and externally, ensures investment in all individuals and ensures the ability to form active task forces that will help cooperative emergency crisis actions. While addressing crises, internal communication depends on several things, such as the information system used to gather data, and using that system properly after the distribution of tasks and authorities on the crisis management task force, which requires an effective strategic leadership in crises management. (DeLair 1992). [15]

The significance of strategic leadership is also empathized through the practice of numerous tasks to achieve the strategic goals in crises management, the most important of which are:

- Following up with the internal communication to ensure the success of the strategic plan.
- Coherence between information and crisis-instigated warnings
- Following up and evaluating the crises and its consequences.

Henceforth, internal communication is not only related to gathering and delivering information, but to understand, explain and detail that information to all members of the Crisis management Task Force to achieve collective work and reach the desired goal. Furthermore, it is important to cooperate between delivering information and putting it to effective use with the adopted leadership style away from formalities and restrictions to short-cut time and communicate rapidly with the helpful local community. Situations during crises go beyond natural laws and deviate to a circumstantial direction, where the geographical location plays its role in the success of the external communication process as well. (Castelnaud & Mettling 2001). [16]

The organizational culture's system consists of a set of main elements that affect the way employees think and understand things inside the organization, and the way they deal with emergency cases such as crises. These elements can be summed into:

Acquirements: Acquirements are related to the social environment of the organization and the interactive language is the communication between individuals, their affiliation and their ethical behavior towards each other.

Assumptions: Assumptions are connected to the Leadership behavior in directing individuals in the organization and precise strategic thinking about the

fundamentals that are non-negotiable. The results are often positive contrary to the unrealistic and negative assumptions of what the results will turn out to be. (Al-Mughrabi 1995). [17]

Values: Values are a set of beliefs that determine the internal behavior of employees in the organization, be it bad, good, acceptable or improper, which helps in solving the organizational crises, and reflecting the fairness, equality, cooperation and spiritual affiliation of the working environment to all employees. Values are derived from socialization. (Al-Qaryouti, 2000) [18] and leadership behavior in directing individuals, assuring the success of the organization. (Francis, Wookcock & Woodcock 1995). [19] Values are divided into two parts:

Instrumental Values: They are beliefs that the organization is keen to protect, from ethical behavior when dealing with one another, to sobriety at work, respect for authority and work principles, and distinctive innovative thought in withstanding risks and facing crises.

Terminal Values: They are the end-results that the organization pursues to attain, where employees seek to achieve them with creativity and excellence. (Al-Salem 2002). [20]

Custom Regulations: They're a set of standards that shape the practical environment inside an organization, adhered by each member of the organizational structure. It may be stipulated in the law of the organization, or it can be unwritten, but every employee must abide by them, and they include the employment of brothers and others. (Al-Madhoun & Al-Jazrawi 1995) [21]

Ethical Practices: The process of leadership decision-making in crisis management is a mixture of strategic planning encapsulated by ethical commitment that is part of the organizational culture of the institution, and a refinery of leadership actions and practices where strategic leaders are responsible for ethical practices and the development of organizational culture. (Schoenberg, 2004). [22]

Therefore, the organizational values, beliefs, customs, and ethical practices of the organizational culture prevailing in the organization in which individuals adopt when dealing with crises, are the determining factors of the success or failure of leadership in crisis management.

Consequently, wrapping the organizational culture with ethical practices depends on two important factors, the first based on the strategic leader's ethical practices and the second is based on the individuals of the organization's adoption to the prevailing morality and ethics. (Jadelrab 2010). [23]

Strategic Leadership and its Relation to the External Factors of Crisis Management

School Management undergoes a lot of challenges by the variables of its external environment. There are multiple variables, including social, economic, political, and technological. This leads to new alterations in the school administrative sector to ensure school stability and quality. Therefore, the external environment variables must be analyzed due to their direct impact on the strategic

analysis, which helps the school leader formulate strategic plans in response to crises and risks. (Al-Sayed 2011). [24] The major external factors are:

Economic Variables: They include the overall economic system of schools and its fiscal policy as well as the economic conditions prevailing in society, which have an impact on the educational process and educational management. The more luxurious the society is, the more parents work to provide the best services for their children; and vice versa, where parents give up some of their goals in difficult economic circumstances, which may cause a school crisis for the leader to find appropriate solutions in line with the given conditions as to not let the school educational level and output decline. (Al-Aarfi & Mahdi 1996). [25]

Henceforth, economic variables affect the school management to a high degree, forcing the strategic leader to understand and analyze the situation conditions to precipitate management changes, leadership methods, individual and systemic trends to find a way out of these crises. (Abdul Malak 2016). [26]

Social Variables: The most essential social phenomena to be considered in the educational sector, in general, and schools, in particular, are:

- Preserving the rights of staff in schools, including administrators and educators, and promoting social justice.
- Offering moral attention through motivation, participation, and self-censorship.
- Encouraging and developing personnel with knowledge and excellence in intellectual creativity for their active contribution to future strategic vision and competitive advantage. (Al-Qadi 2006). [27]

The government works hard to provide social services to the fullest through targeted and implementable plans. However, those plans often face emergency changes that hinder the quality of these services, such as displacement, population increase, wars, political conflicts and other matters that obscure the government and obstruct its effective role towards the educational sector, leading to a decline in the educational process's output. (Fawzi 2018). [28]

Political Variables: Political variables are the main factors that impact the educational process and school management directly to a certain degree. The country's political stability, on the one hand, and the reduction of external government interventions (outside the scope of the law), on the other, determine the solidity of the school administration's productivity, the quality of its performance, spreading awareness, the quality of political participation within schools (Abu-Ali, 2010), the containment of crises and addressing them through the promotion of a high-quality leadership style based on creative and effective co-operation. (Wiklund, Klefsjo, Wiklund, & Edvardsson 2003). [29]

It is worth highlighting the role that the government plays in passing new governmental laws and legislations which have their own influence on the educational sector in terms of labor laws and social security laws, as well as the financial and monetary policies of the government, which may play a negative role

amidst the harsh school crises. All the above are factors that call for the rapid intervention of school leaders in gathering information and making the necessary contacts to wisely manage inevitable crises. (Robbins 1983). [30]

Technological Variables: Technology is one of the key features of the modern era, which is growing geometrically rather than numerically. Skills are evolving rapidly and have a positive impact on educational organizations and schools specifically, where they help in achieving the educational process on the one hand and school management on the other. It is also a significant tool for expediting leadership in schools. (Mokhtar 1986). [31]

The variables with the most impact on these changes on organizations are:

- Modern technological inventions that aid organizations at all levels founded on mental abilities and not just material.
- Technological equipment that has traded human beings in many sectors of industry, management and so on.
- Technology and cognitive employment have replaced routine and manual work.

This obliged the leaders to make compulsory changes in line with the demands of the time, including:

- The replacement of some workers with others who surpass them in technological innovation and the modern view of things, thereby changing the quantity and quality of labor market profiles, instigating crises in the Public-School Sector, which is subject to official laws in the administrative structures of promotion and appointments. (Raynal 2003). [32]
- Changes at the management level, which changes the organization's strategic plans and automatically changes the formulation of objectives.
- Quick access to the required information and data that became accessible to all, which has affected leadership practices and methods, imposing them to change to cope with potential crises. (Al-Qadi 2006). [33]

It is worth noting that the reality of all organizations with their different activities cannot separate between the internal and external environments that fall subject to global and local rapid changes. To face challenges and foresee crises, all leaders must modify their strategic plans to withhold against the crises and adapt by undergoing training and awareness courses based on the new styles, away from the adopted traditional methods that no longer fit the new variables that inevitably disintegrate the organization. Leadership should also undertake new resourceful ideas that can earn the organization competitive advantage and the ability to be innovative. (Al-Sayrafi 2006). [34]

Conclusion

After looking into what preceded, it can be concluded that strategic leadership plays an important role in crisis management through analysing the internal and external environments and the impact of their variables on crises that threatened all organizations, schools specifically, identifying the leading

causes that instigate those crises to collect the necessary information, and commencing a targeted communication system to avoid crises or limit their risks as they occur.

Furthermore, in order for the leader to effectively participate in crisis management before, during and after the occurrence of a crisis, the strategic leader must work on providing all strategic requirements, from investing in the human and material resources by establishing a crisis management task force and training them on team work, as well as distributing tasks between the members and providing a detailed explanation of the strategic plan as to ensure the success of the team in the implementation of their work.

Moreover, the importance of the strategic leader is highlighted by spreading mutual trust between the internal and external environments of the organization to flourish the organizational culture, and in the leader's proper investment in creative thought, improving it, and fully understanding the causes inducing crises with the purpose of commencing the organizational change management in parallel with good time management.

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