A Historical and Conceptual Approach to Crisis Management to Better Understand Today's Crises

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Abstract-

We contend that basic and contemporary concepts related to crisis management, particularly in the communication field, have some parallels with what was practised in ancient civilizations, such as the importance of direct contact between the leadership and the public. Other similarities include an accurate diagnosis of the true causes of the crisis, a prohibition on the dissemination of false news, and reassuring the public that there is a solution to the crisis, a sound management decision, and a good plan for its implementation. We provide a comparison framework by connecting past time crises to the contemporary era. The history of crises teaches us that the study of crisis management cannot be limited to a single civilization or era, especially since humanity has experienced multiple and complex environmental, political, economic, and military crises. Furthermore, some of the modern era's problems and complex issues have historical roots. As a result, many geopolitical crises today are the result of old causes. From an academic standpoint, the study of crisis management should be a multifaceted analysis that includes a historical, cultural, and anthropological component that determines the course of evolution and the consequences of the crisis.

Introduction-

Humans are currently witnessing a number of serious crises, whether economic, social, or environmental in nature, but the most devastating crises are those that result in endless wars, killing thousands each year and displacing millions more. In fact, most of those destroying conflicts could be avoided if the parties involved embrace wisdom by putting common interests ahead of their own desires and choosing patience and dialogue over stubbornness and extremism, especially when conflicts and crises do not build nations and civilizations but instead destroy everything. Today's crises present new challenges, and the theoretical frameworks developed by various scholars may not be adequate to address them [1].

The term "crisis" has a wide range of connotations. These definitions help crisis managers and leaders decide what to do in a crisis situation. It is also an interesting applied area because we talk about "managing" a crisis when each crisis situation is very unique in its own right. What constitutes a crisis is not easily agreed upon; however, despite the lack of clarity, the crisis literature contains specific conditions of crises. Crisis situations, for example, share six characteristics: they are rare, significant, high impact, ambiguous, urgent, and involve high stakes [2]. A crisis is characterised by a period of discontinuity, a situation in which the core values of the organization/system are threatened, necessitating critical decision-making. The organisation and its stakeholders are being destabilised, and an escalation of one or more issues, errors, or procedures is expected during this period [3].

A crisis can begin with a simple piece of news being disseminated through media outlets or social networks, which then finds recipients at large, causing agitation and uncertainty within the target of the crisis. In a limited framework, a crisis can be limited to avoid negative media coverage; however, this only applies to the communication side of a crisis. A strategic business plan is the foundation for crisis prevention, mitigation, and communication response, and "...the integrity and legitimacy of the organisation are central to the theme of crisis" [4].

The solution to any crisis begins with combating its causes, such as dealing effectively with the sources of rumours and false news, including those spread via social media, which target both official and non-official organisations and create a toxic environment that, if not addressed early and efficiently, can explode in the real world. Crisis management is a proactive process that involves dealing with the crisis before, during, and after it occurs [2]. Crisis management is a process that aims to prevent or mitigate the harm that a crisis can cause to an organisation and its stakeholders. Crisis management is not a single process [5]. The goal of crisis management is to protect the organisation, sector, or stakeholders from harm and to prevent or mitigate the negative consequences of a crisis [6].

As previously stated, crisis management is a multi-step process, and Coombs describes one of the crisis management models as a three-stage process. [7] The pre-crisis stage is divided into three parts: signal detection, prevention, and crisis preparation. At this point, if a crisis has been identified, it should be avoided and plans for crisis management should be made. The goal is to reduce the risks that could lead to a crisis while also being strategically and tactically prepared. In this regard, the organisation at this stage is expected to have a crisis management plan that is regularly updated. The organisation forms a crisis management team, selects a spokesperson, and draughts crisis messages. The second stage is the crisis stage, which is divided into two substages: crisis recognition and crisis containment. At this stage, the organization's response to the crisis situation, communication with stakeholders, and crisis management are critical. This stage covers the organization's response to what has actually occurred: the crisis management plan is implemented, and the literature suggests three points: be quick, accurate, and consistent. Support from public

relations is closely monitored at this stage because they develop messages to be sent to all stakeholder groups while ensuring that public safety is the most important factor. The organization's damage is being worked on in order to repair it. The post-crisis stage, as the name implies, occurs after the crisis has been resolved. At this point, the organisation assesses how it handled the crisis. Their primary goal is to be more prepared for potential crises. The crisis may not be as hot as it once was, but the organisation continues to monitor the media and the activities of stakeholder groups. It is critical to understand the perceptions of their stakeholder groups. Other crisis management process models have been proposed in the literature [8, 9, 10]. However, when compared to them, this three-phase model is simpler.

A crisis situation creates a need for information, which is met through communication. Before, during, and after a crisis, neither the crisis management plan nor the crisis communication should be ignored. Crisis communication is aimed at both internal and external audiences who are affected by crisis situations. It provides information, and that information should be consistent throughout the crisis situation, with one primary spokesperson designated [11]. Coombs distinguishes two types of crisis communication: "crisis knowledge management" and "stakeholder reaction management." "Crisis knowledge management" entails gathering information, analysing that information, sharing what is learned, and making decisions. Stakeholder reaction management entails attempting to influence the organization's stakeholder groups through communication. This can be accomplished through words or through action, i.e. the deed. To influence them, it is necessary to understand the perceptions of the stakeholders' groups of the crisis situation, the organisation under crisis, and its response to the crisis [12].

We contend that, while crisis scholarship has recently expanded in both the public relations

and management fields, crisis situations of various types are common in all civilizations, and there has always been an attempt to combat them. This chapter discusses some aspects of a crisis, with a focus on the crisis's history. The attempt to deal with crises in the past may not have been as strategic as it is today, but all civilizations fought it situationally based on the specifics of the society and/or its leaders. Moving on, the chapter discusses contemporary academic work on crisis, such as crisis and its relationship to other fields, crisis management theories, factors affecting crisis management, leadership in crisis situations, and ethics. Our definition of crisis extends beyond an organisational crisis involving operational and/or reputational issues, and includes all types of crisis situations. At the end of the chapter, we also offer some suggestions for how to "approach" crises.

2. Literature review

2.1. "Crisis" from past times

The accumulation of knowledge associated with the evolution of the concept of crisis management is not only the result of modern academic studies or the practises and experiences of organisations and agencies, but it also benefited from the expertise and experiences of previous human civilizations. "Crisis and contention do not surface instantly in any society; they are rooted in history," all civilizations had laid the methodological foundations for managing the various crises it faced, within the scope of the moment and its specific challenges. [13]

It is argued that, from the ancient world to the twenty-first century, crises have been a part of the personal, domestic, and international landscape since time immemorial [14]. Thucydides described the Peloponnesian War (431–404BC) as a crisis between Athens and Sparta. In the Greek and Roman eras, the factors associated with the importance of direct communication, interaction, and dialogue with

the public opinion were important in crisis management. These civilizations were primarily concerned with creating forums for dialogue, debate, and direct communication with the general public. These social activities took place in the majority of public places, such as theatres, stadiums, and places of worship.

The foundations of Greek civilization's values were based on philosophy, raising theological and nontheological issues for never-ending dialogue and discussion. Furthermore, the Greek civilization was distinguished by its proactive community participatory approach to crisis resolution. The citizen had the right to debate any issue pertaining to public affairs. The Roma civilization, on the other hand, tended to take care of its citizens' material and entertainment needs in order to ensure the empire's stability. Romans also encouraged residents of Rome and its colonies to participate in the discussion of the empire's problems, believing that the dialogue helped to absorb public anger and thus enabled the empire to overcome many crises.

As previously stated, some of the modern era's problems and complex issues are rooted in history. As a result, many of today's geopolitical crises are the result of long-standing causes. Some military and political conflicts, for example, as well as the emergence of a protesting movement of ethnic and religious minorities in the Middle East and North Africa, have their origins primarily in military and political reorganisation plans enshrined in the Vienna Conference on June 9, 1815 and the Sykes-Picot Agreement of 1916.

They were a secret agreement between France and the United Kingdom, ratified by the Russian Empire, on the sharing of the Fertile Crescent land between France and Britain in order to determine the zones of influence in West Asia following the Ottoman Empire's devastation.

The social texture of a society, as well as the nature of crises that emerge within it, are products of its history [13].

2.2. Defining crisis and its linked fields

Due to the extreme interdisciplinary nature of the crisis concept, defining it is a difficult task. There is debate about what constitutes a crisis [3]. Although there is no universally accepted definition of a crisis, there is widespread agreement that a crisis event is highly unexpected and unpredictable [15]. This definition should be removed, in our opinion.

According to Ithaar Abdul Hadi, the concept of crisis is an idiomatic term used by Arabs to indicate severity and drought [16]. It refers to a change for the better or for the worse in the English language [17]. The word crisis originated in late Middle English (denoting the turning point of a disease) from medical Latin, as well as the Greek words krisis, 'decision,' and krinein, 'decide.' The phrase "decisive point" first appeared in print in the early seventeenth century [18].

The Chinese Mandarin character for crisis combines the words "danger" and "opportunity." This concept is particularly useful because it conveys the fact that we can create opportunities out of a potentially dangerous situation [14]. According to some Western and Chinese crisis experts, it could mean danger and a "turning point," indicating a possible positive outcome [19].

According to Heath and Millar, who have tracked crisis discussions over the years, some of the definitions studied feature a mistake or a turning point in the organisation, while others emphasise the need for management efforts beyond the normal sequence, and still others focus on stress, inadequate control, uncertainty, violation of ethics, poor preparation, and the need for a crisis communicating planning.

"Parameters for Crisis Communication" by Coombs [20] outlines various scholars' definitions of crisis, and Timothy Coombs defines crisis communication as "the perception of an unpredictable event that threatens important expectancies of stakeholders and can seriously impact an organization's performance and generate negative outcomes" [21]. This definition emphasises the negative impact of a crisis on the performance of the affected company or organisation, as any crisis impedes its development and leaves it in a state of confusion, anxiety, and instability. The majority of crises are perceptual in nature. If stakeholders believe there is a crisis, the organisation is in a crisis unless it can successfully persuade stakeholders that there isn't..." [12]

According to Gibson, a true crisis is usually the result of management failing to respond appropriately to an issue, emergency, or accident that necessitates a timely response and communication [22]. Coombs explains the types of damage that a crisis can cause in his definition below:

A crisis is defined as a significant threat to operations that, if not handled properly, can have negative consequences. The treat in crisis management is the potential damage that a crisis can cause to an organisation, its stakeholders, and an industry. A crisis can pose three distinct threats: (1) public safety, (2) financial loss, and (3) reputational harm [7].

The origins of crisis management can be found in emergency and disaster management [20]. According to Mitroff and Anagnos, unlike the disciplines of emergency and risk management, which deal primarily with natural disasters, the field of crisis management focuses on man-made or human-caused crises [23]. The terms "disaster" and "crisis" do not have the same meaning. Disasters may necessitate crisis management, but disasters are larger in scale and necessitate coordination. Disasters can embed crises, and poor disaster management can result in crises for the agencies tasked with dealing with them [24]. Disasters necessitate society's and society's network's response, and disaster management emphasises the collaborative process.

Crisis communication is linked to three areas: issue management, risk communication, and reputation management. Failure in any of these areas can result in a crisis and the need for crisis management. Ineffective crisis communication can also necessitate the need for risk communication, issue management, and reputation management [24].

What is the connection between issue management and crisis management? A problem can lead to a crisis, or vice versa. Issues are generated not only by government entities, but also by stakeholder groups. Stakeholder groups may raise concerns about an organisation, and if they believe the organisation is failing to meet their expectations, this can escalate into a crisis situation, affecting the organization's reputation [24].

Reputation management is a broad topic that includes reputation measurement, different reputation dimensions, and a comprehensive reputation management plan. Relationship building and maintenance is a critical aspect of reputation management. Because a crisis can jeopardise an entity's reputation, crisis communication is a subset of reputation management. The primary distinction between operational and reputational crises is that operational crises typically endanger public safety and/or stakeholder welfare. Reputational crises are unlikely to generate the same level of concern. An operational crisis can have an impact on reputational image, but reputational crises do not have a significant impact on operations [25].

When a crisis of any kind strikes, the tactical approach to crisis management dictates what needs to be done or avoided. In this context, we encounter lists of dos and don'ts, such as "say never no comment, "or be accessible to media." However, we must draw on research that has looked at specific aspects of crisis and theories that have been borrowed from other disciplines and then transformed into a crisis management

theory. As a result, the crisis management field does not become a mediated-crisis control using online and offline media relations because the ingredients and surroundings of any crisis situation are complex and should not be underestimated.

2.3. Crisis management theories

An examination of crisis communication research articles published in the Journal of Public Relations Review and Public Relations Review between 1975 and 2006 reveals the theoretical frameworks of crisis management. Situational crisis communication theory, issue and crisis management theory, image restoration theory, apology theory, attribution theory, contingency theory, situational theory, organisational theory, and the research also finds other theories such as the excellence theory, diffusion and innovation theory, self-disclosure theory, chaos theory, commodity theory, stakeholder theory, postmodern theory, co-orientation theory, and Fink's crisis stages [26]

Public relations, management, and rhetorical theories such as image restoration and apology theory are among the crisis management theories. The situational crisis communication theory was the most frequently mentioned theory in the study (SCCT). In brief, the explanations of the widely mentioned theories in the research paper are provided below.

Coombs and Holladay's situational crisis communication theory is an extension of the attribution theory [27]. The underlying concept of SCCT is that corporations should respond to a crisis situation strategically based on an understanding of how the public assigns blame for the crisis. If the public believes a crisis was planned, they will place more blame on an organisation, and vice versa. [28] Formalized paraphrase SSCT is used to put various crisis response strategies to the test. SCCT is an audience-oriented theory that is still evolving [20].

Theory of issue and crisis management: Howard Chase coined the term "issues management" in 1976. In his own words:

Issues management is the capacity to understand mobilize, coordinate and direct all strategic and policy making functions, and all public affairs/public relations skills, toward achievement of one objective: meaningful participation in creation of public policy that affects personal and institutional destiny [29].

As previously stated, issues and crises are mutually exclusive. An issue can cause a crisis, and a crisis can cause an issue to be dealt with. If the problem is not handled properly, it can escalate into a crisis. In other words, if effective issue management is practised, the likelihood of a crisis situation is reduced. As a result, anticipating emerging issues is essential in the issues management process. This scanning can be thought of as pre-crisis preparation.

Image restoration (repair theory): According to Benoit, image restoration strategies are reputation repair strategies that can be used after a crisis, and that successful crisis resolution requires honest and ethical communication during a crisis [30]. Several crisis response strategies are proposed by image restoration theory. This can range from "denial" to "evading responsibility" to "reducing offensiveness," and there are several options to choose from. William Benoit's theory grew and changed over time. The theory's central premise is that an attack can endanger one's reputation (image). An offensive act or an accusation of responsibility for the act is a threat to reputation, and the theory employs communication to defend its reputation [9, 20].

Apology vs. corporate apologia: Apology and apologia are not the same thing. Apologia is more than just an apology as a communication response strategy. The organisation explains clearly and tries to persuade stakeholders that it is correct by using apologia [9]. Apologia is a counter-description in which the individual or

organisation defends itself in order to create more favourable content for the allegations. When an organisation is accused of wrongdoing, four strategies can be used. These are examples of denial (not involved in any wrong doing) bolstering (reminding of good things done), differentiation (separating the action from its negative content), and transcendence (placing the action in a new and favourable context [31]).

Attribution theory highlights and emphasises the communication and media dimensions, as well as the importance of public relations in crisis management. It explains how people interpret events. When an event occurs, especially if it is a negative event, people try to figure out why it occurred. People will assign blame to various events. When applied to a crisis, stakeholders will assign crisis responsibility either internally (to the organisation) or externally (environmental factors). Logically, if stakeholders hold organisations accountable for crisis situations, they will have a negative image of the organisation, and vice versa. This audience-based theory seeks to comprehend the factors in the crisis situation that shape the crisis attributions stakeholders make [20, 32].

The contingency theory of conflict management attempts to explain an organization's communication with its public groups and identifies the various factors that influence this communication. It includes the concept of "stance," which refers to how an organisation responds to competition and conflicts with other parties. Stances exist on a continuum, with advocacy at one end of the spectrum and accommodation at the other. Advocacy occurs when an organisation argues for its own interests, while accommodation occurs when the organisation makes concessions to other parties [33]. The application of contingency theory to crisis demonstrates similarities between the stances and crisis response strategies of image repair and SCCT [20]. Contingency theory adds

new variables to consider, such as threat type and duration.

2.4 Factors affecting the process of crisis management-

Though since, as previously stated, we are discussing the process of changing reality and convincing the public opinion of the organization's point of view that defends its vision and interests [34], the crisis management process necessitates a wide range of skills and expertise. Furthermore, crisis management necessitates the use of critical social, legal, and communication knowledge in the search for potential solutions.

Here are some of the factors affecting crisis management-

For starters, psychological factors are critical for the person in charge of crisis management. Self-control, self-confidence, and coolness are some of the mental characteristics that are highly required, as the crisis management process necessitates patience, wisdom, and sound thinking in the planning for crisis management and providing appropriate solutions. In this context, Jin contends that the process of crisis management necessitates some basic psychological knowledge, primarily because managing some crises necessitates a great deal of controlling emotions and sentiments, self-control, patience, calmness, and staying away from anxiety and carelessness [35]. These attitudes and behaviours are critical for managing a crisis efficiently, professionally, and with a high level of conciseness, precision, and without tempered reactions that can undermine rational and successful decisions.

Second, good knowledge of the organization's surroundings may include knowledge of the society's cultural, social, and political systems. This is due to the complexity of the crisis management process, which necessitates quick and decisive decisions as well as emergency management planning and execution [36].

Third, those in charge of crisis management should be well-versed in the nature of local laws and regulations concerning libel, defamation, disinformation, and copyrights. Furthermore, legal and legislative components are inextricably linked with moral and value aspects of society, implying that those in charge of managing the crisis should be able to control its consequences. Furthermore, they will be able to improve the organization's performance, reputation, and image by committing to openness and transparency, as well as demonstrating genuine empathy for the victims.

For example, British Petroleum (BP) used the aforementioned principles during the oil spill crisis in the Gulf of Mexico on April 20, 2010 [37]. The Company chose transparency and honesty with the American public and authorities by fully disclosing the crisis and its consequences and issuing a full apology. It also offered compensation in excess of $20 billion, despite the fact that the company's losses from the incident totalled $70 billion.

Fourth, develop a communication and media strategy aimed at connecting with the public, which is in desperate need of a true narrative of the crisis. As a result, any delay, miscommunication, or silence exposes the organisation to rumours and false news, exacerbating and complicating the crisis. Because it is the right and proper way to restore the ravages of the crisis, communication strategy must be built on honesty with the public and opinion leaders. The process of regaining the public's trust during or after the crisis is the most difficult, and it is impossible to win without embracing speech openness and full transparency in crisis management.

Fifth, the importance of involving the public in crisis management. This can happen in a variety of ways. Nongovernmental organisations, opinion leaders, and members of the local community are among them. Involving them in the crisis communication strategy in order to find appropriate solutions eventually leads to

the absorption of public anger and the re-establishment of public trust. In fact, one approach to regaining public trust during or after a crisis is to respect the feelings of those affected by the crisis and recognise their rights in order to rehabilitate them and involve them in making appropriate decisions.

2.5. Decision-making in crisis and leadership in crisis

On a communication level, it is essential to understand that managing a crisis in a positive way necessitates a thorough understanding of the local cultural environment and its characteristics, as well as the values and ethics of the society to which they belong. This leads us to the topic of decision-making and ethical leadership.

Decision-making in a crisis is critical in light of what is considered a crisis. The crisis management process necessitates making wise and sound decisions, as they contribute to the crisis's successful exit and alleviation of its effects [38]. This could explain why decision-making frequently necessitates a high level of expertise and knowledge. In fact, one of the most important characteristics of an outstanding leader is his ability to make the right decisions in times of crisis, so the timing of those decisions is critical to their success and efficiency. Leaders should not jump to conclusions or make hasty decisions, especially when the nature of the crisis does not necessitate immediate intervention or decision-making. This demonstrates a quality of leadership by not succumbing to pressure and making mistakes in the process, while it is necessary to take the time needed to investigate the problem thoroughly and consult with those who are aware of it.

Leadership in times of crisis has become increasingly important, particularly in the aftermath of 9/11 and the threat of terrorism. This new reality necessitates leaders with strong communication skills, compassion, and a clear vision of the crisis situation. In addition to these qualities, empathy and expertise, as well as the ability to lead, are required of leaders who must deal with crisis situations [39]. Task-oriented leadership behaviours have been found to be more beneficial to crisis leadership effectiveness. At the same time, people-oriented and organizational-oriented leadership behaviours are not ineffective. The authors conclude that, while their research focuses on task-oriented leadership, focusing solely on this leadership will not increase the efficiency of crisis management [40].

Leaders lay the groundwork for collective consultation, which allows people to participate in decision-making and problem-solving in times of crisis.

3. Conclusion

Examples of various types of crises can be found throughout human history, even if they do not fully integrate the professional and academic knowledge of crisis management as we know it today. Public opinion has been a powerful force throughout history, and we can see examples of leaders/organizations that have scanned the public's opinion informally and thus demonstrated respect for the people's opinions. History is also replete with examples of public opinion being ignored, resulting in negative consequences. Public opinion, public safety, a positive image, and less damage to the affected parties in a crisis situation have all been important pillars in a crisis situation. For example, Suleiman the Magnificent, the Ottoman Empire's longest reigning Sultan, died during the Battle of Szigetvár, but his death was kept secret to avoid further negative situations. We can see any of these happening in any type of interaction: information, persuasion, compromise, and cooperation, which reminds us of the function of crisis management stages. The accumulation of crisis management knowledge serves as the foundation for either avoiding or effectively managing crises. For example, the

spread of hatred and racism has been linked to the majority of previous military and security crises, including the Second World War. Similarly, in the mainstream media, we are witnessing the same type of political rhetoric. Persecution of the Rohingya minority in Myanmar for more than 50 years of military rule is a vivid example of a culture of hatred that had become systemic policy.

As global citizens, it is impossible to live in a crisis-free zone; thus, we propose "crisis literacy" awareness, which is similar to media literacy in some ways. The fundamental concepts of media literacy can also be applied to crisis literacy, and having crisis literacy expertise will provide the ability to encode and decode crisis situations in a meaningful way. Today's information landscape is fuelled by a plethora of sources. Individuals' judgement may be distorted by these wisely crafted powerful illusions, and the reality from the creatively constructed crisis communication media messages may be purposefully omitted. The mediated crisis management efforts may create confusion among stakeholders about the facts. At the same time, audiences, like the media and organisations, attempt to shape public perceptions of the crisis.

In addition to crisis, literacy education embedded in media literacy and/or crisis management courses, we recommend working on and compiling crisis management cases from previous civilizations in all realms of life such as political, religious, individual, international, and so on. An examination of what has been done in a crisis situation since then may reveal that not much has changed. However, we must also mention that crisis management has become more scientific in recent years. Different approaches can be used to analyse global crisis management, and we propose a historical, ethical, and societal approach/framework that will be comprehensive for all aspects of crisis management, including

leadership, ethics, and communication. The world requires it right now.

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