We are IntechOpen, the world's leading publisher of Open Access books
Built by scientists, for scientists

6,900
Open access books available

185,000
International authors and editors

200M
Downloads

154
Countries delivered to

Our authors are among the

TOP 1%
most cited scientists

12.2%
Contributors from top 500 universities

BOOK CITATION INDEX
CLARIVATE ANALYTICS
INDEXED

WEB OF SCIENCE™

Selection of our books indexed in the Book Citation Index
in Web of Science™ Core Collection (BKCI)

Interested in publishing with us?
Contact book.department@intechopen.com

Numbers displayed above are based on latest data collected.
For more information visit www.intechopen.com

Crisis Management: A Historical and Conceptual Approach for a Better Understanding of Today's Crises

Khaled Zamoum and Tevhide Serra Gorpe

Additional information is available at the end of the chapter

Abstract

We argue that the basic and contemporary concepts related to crisis management, especially in the communication field, share some similarities with what was practiced in ancient civilizations such as the importance of direct contact between the leadership and the public. Other similarities include the accurate diagnosis of the real causes of the crisis, the forbiddance of the dissemination of false news and the reassurance of the public opinion that there is a solution to the crisis, a sound management decision, and a good plan for its implementation. We link the past time crises to the contemporary era, providing a comparison framework. The history of crisis tends to show us that the study of crisis management cannot be linked to a specific civilization or era, especially when humanity had witnessed multiple and complex environmental, political, economic, and military crisis. Moreover, some of the problems and complex issues in the modern era are rooted in history. Thus, many geopolitical crises nowadays are the result of old causes. The study of crisis management from an academic point of view should be a multifaceted analysis, including a historical, a cultural, and an anthropological one, which determines the course of evolution and consequences of the crisis.

Keywords: history of crisis, crisis management leadership and crisis, ethics and crisis

1. Introduction

Humans today are witnessing multiple serious crises, whether economic, social, environmental, but the most devastating crises are those security crises that end up with endless wars, killing thousands each year, and displacing millions of others. In fact, most of those destroying conflicts could be avoidable if the parties involved embrace wisdom by putting common

interests ahead of their own desires, and choosing patience and dialog over stubbornness and extremism, particularly when conflicts and crises do not build nations and civilizations, but destroy everything instead. Today's crises bring new challenges to address and the theoretical frameworks that have been developed by various scholars may not be adequate to deal with them [1].

The term crisis carries many meanings in itself. These meanings guide the crisis managers and leaders in deciding what to do in a crisis situation. It is an interesting applied area as well since we talk about "managing" a crisis when actually each crisis situation is very unique by itself.

What constitutes a crisis is not easily agreed upon however, despite lack of clarity, there are specific conditions of crises in the crisis literature. For example, crisis situations share six characteristics which are rare, significant, high impact, ambiguous, urgent and involve high stakes [2]. Crisis involves a period of discontinuity, a situation where the core values of the organization/system are under threat, and this requires critical decision-making. There is a destabilizing effect to the organization and its stakeholders and an escalation of one or more issues, errors or procedures are expected in this period [3].

A crisis could start out by a simple piece of news being disseminated through media outlets or social networks, then find recipients at large, which leads to the state of agitation and uncertainty within the target of the crisis. In a narrow framework, crisis can be limited to avoid negative media coverage; however, this is only related to the communication side of a crisis. Crisis prevention, mitigation and communication response starts with a strategic business plan and "…the integrity and legitimacy of the organization are central to the theme of crisis" [4].

The solution against any crisis begins initially with fighting its causes, such as dealing efficiently with the sources of rumors and false news including via social media, which target official and non-official organizations and create a toxic environment, which turns into an explosive one in the real world, if not tackled early enough and efficiently. Crisis management is a proactive process which involves dealing with the crisis before it happens, during the crisis and aftermath [2]. Crisis management is a process designed to prevent or lessen the damage a crisis can inflict on an organization and its stakeholders. As a process, crisis management is not one thing [5]. The purpose of crisis management is to protect the organization, sector or the stakeholders from damage and prevent or diminish the negative outcomes of crisis [6].

As stated, crisis management is a process with many parts and one of the crisis management models is explained as a three-stage process by Coombs [7]. The pre-crisis stage consists of three sub stages: signal detection, prevention and crisis preparation. At this stage, if a crisis has been detected, this crisis should be prevented from taking place and prepare for crisis management. The goal is to reduce the risks that may create crisis and also be prepared strategically and tactically. In this respect, action wise, the organization at this stage is expected to have a crisis management plan that is updated regularly. The organization forms a team for managing the crisis, selects spokesperson/s and prepares draft crisis messages. The second stage is the crisis stage itself, and this stage is formed by two substages, which are crisis recognition and crisis containment. At this stage, the organization's response to the crisis situation, its communication with stakeholders and how the organization deals with crisis is important. This stage covers the response of the organization to what has actually happened: the crisis

management plan is put into action, and the literature suggests three points which are to be quick, to be accurate and to be consistent. Support from public relations is heavily observed at this stage since they develop the messages to be sent to all stakeholder groups, making sure that the public safety is the most important aspect. The damage that is inflicted on the organization is worked on to repair it. The post-crisis stage, as the name suggests, comes after the crisis is resolved. At this stage, the organization evaluates how they dealt with the crisis. Their focus is to be better prepared for potential crises. The crisis may not be as hot as before, but still the organization scans the media and the activities of stakeholder groups. Understanding the perceptions of their stakeholder groups is vital. In the crisis management literature, there are other crisis management process models suggested [8, 9, 10]. However, this three-phase model is a simpler one compared to them.

A crisis situation creates need for information and that need is fulfilled with communication. Neither the crisis management plan nor the crisis communication before, during and after a crisis should be ignored. Crisis communication addresses to both internal and external audiences affected by the crisis situations. It provides information and that information should be consistent throughout the crisis situation with the designation of one primary spokesperson [11]. Coombs differentiates between two types of crisis communication: "crisis knowledge management" and "stakeholder reaction management." "Crisis knowledge management" involves collecting information, analyzing the information gathered, sharing what is learned and decision-making. The "stakeholder reaction management," involves efforts to influence the organization's stakeholder groups through communication. This may be accomplished through words or what is done, the deed. It is important to understand the perception of the stakeholders' groups of the crisis situation, the organization under crisis and its response to the crisis to influence them [12].

We claim that although scholarship in crisis has augmented both in public relations and management fields recently, crisis situations of different types are common in all civilizations and always there had been an attempt to fight with it. This chapter discusses some areas of a crisis with a focus on the history of the crisis. The attempt to deal with crises in the past times may not be as strategic as today's way of managing crises, but all civilizations fought with it situationally based on the specifics of the society and/or its leaders. Moving from this point, the chapter also shares modern time academic work on crisis including crisis and its link with other fields, crisis management theories, factors affecting the crisis management, leadership in crisis situations, and ethics. Our understanding of crisis is broader than an organizational crisis with operational and/or reputational crisis situations, but encompasses all types of crisis situations. At the conclusion of the chapter, we also put forward some ideas on 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 emanation of the modern academic studies or the practices and

experiences of organizations and agencies, crisis management, rather it benefitted from the expertise and experiences of previous human civilizations. All civilizations had laid the methodological foundations in managing the various crises it faced, within the scope of the moment and its specific challenges, "Crisis and contention do not surface instantly in any society they are rooted in history" [13].

It is argued that as we look back, crises have been a part of the personal, domestic, and international landscape from time immemorial, from the ancient world to the twenty-first century [14]. Thucydides described a crisis between Athens and Sparta that resulted in the Peloponnesian War (431–404BC). The factors that are associated with the importance of direct communication, interaction, and dialog with the public opinion were important in crisis management in the Greek and Roman eras. These civilizations were largely focused on creating spaces for dialog, debates, and direct communication with the public. Those social activities took place in most public venues, such as theaters, stadiums, places of worship, and so on.

As for the Greek civilization, the foundations of its values were based on philosophy, raising theological and nontheological issues for never-ending dialog and discussion. Moreover, the Greek civilization was characterized by its proactive community participatory approach in resolving crises. The citizen had the right to discuss all issues of concern to public affairs. On the other hand, The Roma civilization tended to take care of material and entertainment needs of its citizens to ensure the stability of the empire. Romans also urged residents of Rome and its colonies to participate in the discussion of the problems of the empire, as they believed that the dialog contributed to absorb public anger and this was what had enabled the empire to overcome many crises.

As stated earlier, some of the problems and complex issues in the modern era are rooted in history. Thus, many of the geopolitical crises nowadays are the result of old causes. For example, some military and political conflicts, as well as the emergence of the protesting movement of ethnic and religious minorities in the Middle East and North Africa, have their causes linked mainly to military and political rearrangement plans that were consecrated in the Vienna Conference on 9 June 1815 and the Sykes-Picot Agreement of 1916. They constituted a secret agreement between France and the United Kingdom that was ratified by the Russian Empire, on the sharing of the Fertile Crescent land between France and Britain to determine the zones of influence in West Asia after the pummeling of the Ottoman Empire.

The social texture of a society and the nature of crisis which surface in it are a product of its historicity [13].

2.2. Defining crisis and its linked fields

Defining crisis is not an easy task because of the interdisciplinary nature of the crisis concept. There is disagreement on what constitutes a crisis [3]. Although there is no agreed definition of crisis, there is a general consensus that a crisis event is highly unexpected and uncertain in nature [15]. We suggest to remove this definition.

Ithaar Abdul Hadi argues that the concept of crisis is an idiomatic concept used by Arabs as an indication for severity and drought [16]. In the English language, it means a change for the better or the worse [17]. The origins of the word, crisis, in the late Middle English (denoting the turning point of a disease): medical Latin, and from the Greek word krisis, 'decision,' and from krinein 'decide.' The general sense 'decisive point' dates from the early seventeenth century [18].

The Chinese Mandarin character for crisis includes "danger" and "opportunity." This idea is especially useful because it conveys the fact that we may create opportunities out of a situation that threatens us [14]. Some Western and Chinese crisis experts claim that it may mean danger and a "turning point," which indicates a sense of possible positive outcome [19].

Heath and Millar by tracking crisis discussions over the years state that some of these definitions studied feature a mistake or a turning point in the organization, some emphasize the need for management efforts beyond normal sequence and some other discussions focus on stress, inadequate control, uncertainty, violation of ethics weak preparation, preparations and the need for crisis communicating planning [4].

Definitions of crisis by various scholars are outlined in "Parameters for Crisis Communication" by Coombs [20] 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 highlights the issue of the negative impact of a crisis on the effectiveness of the affected company or organization's performance, as any crisis hinders its development and leaves it in a state of confusion, anxiety and instability. "…Crises are largely perceptual. If stakeholders believe there is a crisis, the organization is in a crisis unless it can successfully persuade stakeholders it is not…." [12].

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

> crisis is defined as a significant threat of operations that can have negative consequences if not handled properly. In crisis management, the treat is the potential damage a crisis can inflict on an organization, its stakeholders, and an industry. A crisis can create three related threats: (1) public safety, (2) financial loss, and (3) reputation loss [7].

The roots of crisis management are in emergency and disaster [20]. Mitroff & Anagnos argue that in contrast to the disciplines of emergency and risk management, which deal primarily with natural disasters, the field of crisis management deals mainly with man-made or human-caused crises [23]. Disaster and crisis do not mean the same thing. Crisis management may take place in disaster situations, but disasters are larger in scale and require coordination. Crises can be embedded in disaster and poor disaster management can result in crises for the agencies responsible for dealing with it [24]. Disasters require society's and society's network dealing with it, and the collaboration process is emphasized in disaster management.

Crisis communication is linked or connected with three areas which are issues management, risk communication and reputation management. Failure in any of these areas can create a

crisis situation and a need for crisis management. Also an ineffective crisis communication can create a need for risk communication, issues management and reputation management as well [24].

How are issues management and crisis management related? An issue can create crisis or vice versa. The issue generators are not only government entities, but also stakeholder groups. Stakeholder groups may raise issues about an organization and if they perceive that the organization is not fulfilling their expectations, then, this can turn into a crisis condition where the organization's reputation may be effected as well [24].

Reputation management is a broad area where we talk about measurement in reputation, different reputation dimensions, and a comprehensive reputation management plan. Building and maintaining relationships is a very important topic in reputation management. Crisis communication is a specific part of reputation management because a crisis may endanger the reputation of the entity. A key difference between operational and reputational crises is that operational crises typically create some threat to public safety and/or stakeholder welfare. Reputational crises are not likely to produce the same level concerns. An operational crisis can have an impact reputational image, but reputational crises do not have an impact on operations in a meaningful way [25].

The tactical approach to crisis management dictates what needs to be done or avoided when a crisis of any type hits. In this light, we come across lists of do and do not's, such as "say never no comment, "or be accessible to media." However, we have to benefit from research that has looked at specific dimensions of crisis and the theories that have been borrowed from other disciplines and then became a theory of crisis management. In this way, crisis management field does not turn into a mediated- crisis control using media relations online and offline because the ingredients and surroundings of any crisis situation is complex and should not be underestimated.

2.3. Crisis management theories

An analysis that has been done in crisis communication research articles in Journal of Public Relations Review and Public Relations Review from 1975 to 2006 reveals the theoretical frameworks of crisis management. The theories that are applied in crisis communication research are situational crisis communication theory, issue and crisis management theory, image restoration theory, apology theory, attribution theory, contingency theory, situational theory, organizational theory and the research also finds other theories such as the excellence theory, the diffusion and innovation theory, the self-disclosure theory, the chaos theory, the commodity theory, the stakeholder theory, postmodern theory, co-orientation theory, and Fink's stages of crisis [26].

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

The situational crisis communication theory proposed by Coombs and Holladay is an extension of the attribution theory [27]. The underlying idea behind SCCT is that corporations should strategically respond to a crisis situation based on an understanding of how the public attributes responsibility for the crisis. If the public perceives a crisis to be more intentional then, they attribute more responsibility to an organization and vice versa [28] SSCT is used to test different crisis response strategies. SCCT is audience-oriented theory and still developing [20].

Issue and crisis management theory: The term issues management is coined by Howard Chase in 1976. In his 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 stated before, issue and crisis have reciprocal relationships. An issue can create a crisis and at the same time, a crisis can create an issue to deal with. If the issue is not handled effectively, it can turn into a crisis. In other words, if effective issue management is done, it is less likely to be faced with a crisis situation. Therefore, in the issues management process, there is a need for anticipation of emerging issues. This scanning can be considered as pre-crisis planning.

Image restoration (*repair theory*): Benoit argues that the image restoration strategies are reputation repair strategies that can be used after a crisis and that successful crisis resolution requires honest and ethical communication in times of crisis [30]. Image restoration theory offers several crisis response strategies. This can range from "denial" to "evading responsibility" and to "reducing offensiveness" and there are several options to select from these strategies. The theory developed by William Benoit evolved over the years. The core concept of the theory states that an attack can threaten the reputation (image). An offensive act or accusation of responsibility for the act is a threat for reputation, and the theory uses communication to defend its reputations [9, 20].

Apology, corporate apologia: Apology and apologia are not similar. Apologia, as another communication response strategy, is more than apology. By using apologia, the organization explains clearly and tries to convince the stakeholders that it is right [9]. Apologia is counter-description where the person/organization defends itself for creating a more favorable content for the allegations. Four strategies can be used when an organization is accused of wrong doing. These are denial (not involved in any wrong doing) bolstering (reminding of good things that has been done) differentiation (remove the action from its negative content) and transcendence (place the action in a new and favorable context [31].

Attribution theory: Attribution theory highlights and emphasizes communication and media dimension and the importance of the role of public relations in crisis management. It explains how people make sense of events. When an event happens and especially when this is negative event, people try to determine why the event occurred. People will make attributions of responsibility for events. When applied to crisis, stakeholders will make attributions of crisis responsibility internally (organization) or externally (environmental factors). Logically, if the stakeholders attribute responsibility to the organizations for the crisis situations, then they will have more negative images of the organization and vice versa.

This theory is audience-based and attempts to understand the factors in the crisis situation itself that shape the crisis attributions stakeholders make [20, 32].

Contingency theory of conflict management tries to explain an organization's communication with its public groups and specifies the various factors that have an effect on this communication. It has the concept of "stance" which implies how an organization responds to competition and conflicts with other parties. Stances are on a continuum and at one point of the continuum, there is advocacy and at the other end is accommodation. When an organization argues for its interest, it is advocacy and when the organization makes concessions to other parties, it is accommodation [33]. Contingency theory applied to crisis demonstrates similarity between the stances and the crisis response strategies of image repair and SCCT [20]. Contingency theory offers additional variables to consider such as threat type and threat duration.

2.4. Factors affecting the process of crisis management

Crisis management process requires many skills and expertise because as stated previously, we are talking here about the process of changing reality and convincing the public opinion of the organization's point of view that defends its vision and interests [34]. Moreover, the crisis management requires social, legal and communication crucial knowledge in the search for possible solutions.

Here are some of the factors affecting crisis management:

Firstly, psychological factors constitute an important element for the individual in charge of crisis management. Self-control, self-confidence, and coolness, are some of the mental attributes that are highly needed, as the crisis management process requires patience, wisdom, and sound thinking in the planning for the management of the crisis and providing appropriate solutions. In this context, Jin argues that the process of managing crises requires some basic knowledge in psychology, mainly because managing some crises needs to a great extent of controlling emotions and sentiments, self-control, patience, calmness and keeping away from anxiety and carelessness [35]. These attitudes and behaviors are essentials for managing a crisis efficiently, professionally, and with a lot of conciseness, preciseness, and without tempered reactions that can affect negatively rational and successful decisions.

Secondly, good knowledge of the environment surrounding the organization may include knowledge related to the cultural, social, and political system of the society. This is due to the complexity of the process of managing a crisis that needs quick and decisive decisions and emergency management planning, and execution [36].

Thirdly, those in charge of managing crises should have a good knowledge of the nature of local laws and regulations related to libel, defamation, disinformation, and copyrights. Also, legal and legislative components are associated tightly with moral and value aspects of the society, for those in charge of managing the crisis should be able to control its consequences. Moreover, they will manage to even improving the performance of the organization, its reputation and image, by committing themselves to openness and transparency, and showing genuine empathy for the victims.

For example, British Petroleum (BP) applied the mentioned principals during the oil spill crisis on April 20, 2010, in the Gulf of Mexico [37]. The Company opted for transparency and honesty with the American public opinion and the authorities, by making full disclosure of the crisis and its repercussions, and providing full apology. It also offered compensations that exceeded $20 billion, even though the company's losses from the incident had reached $70 billion.

Fourthly, setting up a communication and media plan aimed at connecting with the public, for it desperately needs a true narrative of the crisis. Thus, any delay, miscommunication, or silence would expose the organization to rumors and false news that aggravates and complicate the crisis even more. Communication strategy must be built on honesty with the public and opinion leaders because it is the right and proper way to restore the ravages of the crisis. The process of regaining the trust of the public during or after the crisis is the biggest challenge, and it is impossible to win it without embracing speech openness and full transparency in managing the crisis.

Fifthly, the necessity of involving the public in managing the crisis. This can take place in several ways. One of them is including nongovernmental organizations, opinion leaders, and members of local community. Involving them in the crisis communication strategy in order to reach the appropriate solutions leads eventually to the absorption of public anger and win back its confidence. In fact one of the approaches in regaining the trust of the public during or after the crisis is to respect the feelings of those affected by the crisis and recognizing their rights in order to rehabilitate them and involve them in making the appropriate decisions.

2.5. Decision-making in crisis and leadership in crisis

On a communicational level, it is primordial that managing a crisis in a positive manner requires a deep understanding of the local cultural environment and its characteristics, as well as the values and ethics of the society to which they belong. This brings us to a discussion of decision-making and ethical leadership.

In the light of what is considered as crisis, decision-making in crisis is very vital. The crisis management process requires making wise and sound decisions, as they contribute to a successful exit of the crisis and alleviate its effects [38]. This might explain why decision-making often requires considerable expertise and knowledge. In fact, key features of an outstanding leader is his ability to make the right decisions in times of crisis, hence the timing of making those decisions is crucial to their success and efficiency. Leaders should not rush to conclusions and make hasty decisions about them, especially when the nature of the crisis does not require a swift interference or decision-making process. This highlights a quality of leadership by not caving to pressure and making mistakes in the process, while it is necessary to take the time needed to look deeply into the problem and consult the people who are aware of it.

Leadership in crisis has become important especially after the 9/11 and the threat of terrorism. This new reality demands for leaders who have communication skills, caring and vision of the crisis situation. In addition to these qualities, empathy and expertise and providing experiences with an ability to lead are the requirements from leaders who have to deal with crisis situations [39]. Task-oriented leadership behaviors are found more helpful to the effectiveness

of crisis leadership. At the same time, people and organization-oriented leadership behaviors are not also low on the effectiveness. The authors conclude that although their research highlights task-oriented leadership, but focusing on this leadership alone will not increase the efficiency of the crisis management [40].

Leaders establish the foundations of the collective consultation that allows the opportunity to participate in decision-making and the research for solutions in time of crisis.

2.6. The ethical aspect of crisis management

The ethical aspect of crisis management is one of the most important components that recent studies emphasize upon, knowing that the ethical element is crucial to the mental image rebuilding process, and to regain the confidence of the public opinion as well [41, 42]. "Engaging in ethical communication in times of crisis seems to be the ongoing theme in today's stakeholders communication research and practice" [41].

Coldwell confirms that recent financial and business crises have indicated repeatedly the poverty of ethical and responsible leadership behavior in high places [42]. A most recent example of this phenomenon with global repercussions was the Volkswagen (VW) Crisis, which was largely brought about through the unethical Business Behavior of its leaders." On September 18, 2015, Volkswagen became embroiled in crisis after the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) confirmed Volkswagen's violation emissions scandal [43].

Ethics recommend that the physical and psychological needs of the stakeholders be the top priority in a crisis [44]. A crisis should be managed in an ethical manner and "decision-makers who understand the needs of a wide range of stakeholders as part of their strategic decision-making will make more ethical decisions during a time of crisis" [45, 46]. Thus, ethical rationality is a habit that must be ingrained in the culture and daily operations of the organization [47]. This ethical rationality involves the careful management of the organization's internal and external stakeholders throughout the duration of the crisis. Moreover, many recent studies emphasize on the correlation between the moral aspect and the practical elements such as credibility, objectivity, and the accurate knowledge in the field of public relations [42].

Credible messages about the potential cause or blame for crisis help the organization to create a connection to shareholders of the organization. An honest approach is essential during times of crisis. If communication during crisis events is not ethical, there could be detrimental reputation damage to the company if proper blame is not assigned for the causes of crisis [48].

Morality and integrity form a solid foundation for a real prevention and risk management plan, which can be adopted by modern crisis management strategies. This is the best method to solve crises, meaning by using amnesty and being flexible, as crisis resolution methods by pass the intra-conflicts that create a worse environment.

Crisis management requires openness and credibility, as lies and opacity lead to deprive a company of public trust, and make it even harder to regain any credibility in the public opinions. There are always long-term gains when telling the truth. The other aspect of practicing truthiness has to do with adopting a strict and clear approach in using traditional and digital

media when relaying information, news, and opinions. Lots of crises start with a rumor, false information, an unverified piece of news, and so on. The responsibility of spreading misinformation lies on both the sources and the media, as freedom of speech is tied to a minimum of responsibility. In fact, the result of spreading rumors leads mostly to large crises, as we have seen what happened to some banks in the United States, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Greece and Cyprus, where major financial institutions were affected by the spread of rumors during the global economic crisis that hit the United States in 2008.

The only applicable measure against rumors is to educate people on its negative impact and its unattended consequences. This mandate works as a basis for public relations ethical principles/standards: be honest, be accurate, be loyal, and be just [49].

Management should start with establishing an effective communication strategy, which relays on building a clear, logical and convincing message, as the public is mostly influenced by the communication style and form, as well as its substance. Spokespeople are essential in the context of crisis management. The style of the spokespeople must be marked impacted by their unique and attractive personality. On the other hand, their eloquence, and their open and effective communication style, coupled with their unique way in delivering information and knowledge, enable them to influence their audience. The other specificity of spokespeople's approach is their abilities in using nonverbal communication, as their facial expressions, their mettle, and body language always reflecting the mood of the moment. Spokespeople must know how to adjust their voice during their speeches, mixing high and low pitches to suit their talking points.

3. Conclusion

Examples of different types of crises are identifiable throughout the human history even though they may not integrate wholly the professional and academic knowledge of crisis management as we know by of today. Public opinion has been an important force in the history and we see examples of leaders/organizations that have scanned the opinion of the public informally and thus showed respect to the opinion of the people. The history is also rich with examples where public opinion is not paid attention to and thus resulting in negative consequences. Public opinion, public safety, positive image, and less damage in the crisis situation to the inflected parties have been important pillars in a crisis situation. For example, Suleiman the Magnificent, the longest reigning Sultan of Ottoman Empire died during the Battle of Szigetvár, but his death has been kept as a secret to avoid further negative situations. In any type of interaction, we can see any of these happening-information, persuasion, compromise, cooperation, which reminds us of the function of crisis management stages. The accumulation of knowledge on crisis management forms the basis either for avoiding or managing crises effectively. For example, most of the past military and security crises, including the Second World War, have been linked to the spread of hatred and racism. Similarly, we are witnessing the same type of political rhetoric in the mainstream media. The persecution of the Rohingya minority in Myanmar for over 50 years of military rule is a vivid example of a culture of hatred that had become a systemic policy.

It is inevitable to live in a crisis-free zone as citizens of the world; therefore, we suggest "crisis literacy" awareness similar to media literacy in some ways. The main concepts of media literacy can be applied to crisis literacy as well and having crisis literacy expertise will create an ability to encode and decode crisis situations in a meaningful way. Today's information landscape is originating from myriad of sources. The judgment of the individuals may be distorted through these wisely crafted powerful illusions and sometimes the reality from the creatively constructed crisis communication media messages can be omitted purposefully. The mediated crisis management efforts may blur the stakeholders groups about the facts. At the same time, audiences attempt to shape the perceptions about the crisis just like the media and the organization may do.

In addition to crisis, literacy education embedded in media literacy and/or crisis management course, and we also suggest working and compiling on crisis management cases from previous civilizations in all realms of life such as political, religious, individual, international, and so on. An analysis might reveal not much has changed in what has been done in a crisis situation since then. However, we also need to add that crisis management has become more scientific today. Global crisis management can be analyzed from different approaches, and we suggest a historical, ethical and societal approach/framework which will be comprehensive for all aspects of crisis, including, leadership, ethics, and communication. The world needs it now.

Author details

Khaled Zamoum[1] and Tevhide Serra Gorpe[2]*

*Address all correspondence to: serragorp@yahoo.com

1 College of Communication, University of Sharjah, Sharjah, UAE

2 Independent Scientist, Istanbul, Turkey

References

[1] Topper B, Lagadec P. Fractal crises- a new path for crisis theory and management. Journal of Contingencies & Crisis Management. 2013;**21**(1). DOI: 10.1111/1468-5973.12008

[2] Simola S. Teaching corporate crisis management through business ethics education. European Journal of Training and Development. 2014;**38**(5):485-503. DOI: 10.1108/EJTD-05-2013-0055

[3] Kayes DC, Allen NC, Self N. Integrating learning, leadership, and crisis in management education: Lessons from army officers in Iraq and Afghanistan. Journal of Management Education. 2012;**37**(2):180-202. DOI: 10.1177/1052562912456168

[4] Heath RL. Introduction crisis communication: Defining the beast and de-marginalizing key publics. In: Timothy Coombs W, Holladay SJ, editors. The Handbook of Crisis Communication. Oxford: Wiley/Blackwell; 2010. pp. 1-11

[5] Coombs WT. September 2014. Crisis management and communications. http://www.instituteforpr.org/crisis-management-communications/

[6] Coombs WT. Ongoing Crisis Management: Planning, Managing and Responding. Thousands Oak: Sage; 1999

[7] Coombs WT. Ongoing Crisis Management: Planning, Managing and Responding. 3rd ed. Thousands Oak: Sage; 2012

[8] Fink S. Crisis Management: Planning for the Inevitable. New York: AMACOM; 1986

[9] Smith D. Beyond contingency planning: Towards a model of crisis management. Industrial Crisis Quarterly. 1990;**4**:263-275

[10] Mitroff II. Crisis management and environmentalism: A natural fit. California Management Review. 1994;**36**(2):101-113

[11] Lando LA. The critical role of crisis communication plan in corporations' crises preparedness and management. Global Media Journal – Canadian Edition. 2014;**7**(1):5-19

[12] Coombs WT. Conceptualizing crisis communication. In: Heath RL, O'Hair HD, editors. Handbook of Crisis and Risk Communication. New York: Routledge; 2009. pp. 100-120

[13] Oommen T. Crisis and Contention in India Society. New Delhi: Sage Publications; 2005

[14] Pfaltzgraff RL. Crisis management: Looking back and looking ahead. Presented at: The Crisis Management Conference: Athena. Organized by the Hellenic Ministry of National Defense. 2008. Retrieved February 25, 2016, from: www.ifpa.org/pdf/athena_08.pdf

[15] Mrudula A et al. The impact of culture and society on crisis perception, management, and learning in the Indian context. Adult Education Research Conference; 2013. Retrieved June 10, 2017, from: http://newprairiepress.org/aerc/2013/papers/3/

[16] Ithaar A. Crises management strategy according to Islamic perspective; 2011. Retrieved February 16, 2016, from:www.iasj.net/iasj?func=fulltext&aId=3333 (In Arabic)

[17] Al-Razi M. Muktar Al-Sehah. Arabic Dictionary Book. Beirut: Maktabat Nacheroun; 1995

[18] Oxford Dictionaries. Crisis. 2017. Retrieved Jun 10, 2017, from https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/crisis

[19] Johnston AI. The evolution of interstate security crisis-management theory and practice in China. Naval War College Review. 2016;**69**(1):29-71

[20] Coombs WT. Parameters for crisis communication. In: Timothey Coombs W, Holladay SJ, editors. The Handbook of Crisis Communication. Oxford: Wiley/Blackwell; 2010. pp. 17-53

[21] Coombs WT. Crisis Management and Communications. 2007. Retrieved December 20, 2017, from: http://www.instituteforpr.org/crisis-management-and-communications/

[22] Gibson P. Crisis Communication. 2012. Retrieved Jun 10, 2017, from: http://www.instituteforpr.org/crisis-management-and-communications/

[23] Mitroff I, Anagnos G. Managing Crisis before they Happen. New York: American Management Association; 2001

[24] Coombs WT. Crisis communication and its allied fields. In: Timothy Coombs W, Holladay SJ, editors. The Handbook of Crisis Communication. Oxford: Wiley/Blackwell; 2010b. pp. 54-64

[25] Coombs WT. State of crisis communication: Evidence and bleeding edge. Research Journal of the Institute for Public Relations. Summer 2014;**1**(1):1-12 http://www.insti-tuteforpr.org/wp-content/uploads/CoombsFinalWES.pdf

[26] An K-S, Cheng I-H. Crisis communication research in public relations journals: Tracking research trends over thirty years. In: Timothy Coombs W, Holladay SJ, editors. The Handbook of Crisis Communication. Oxford: Wiley/Blackwell; 2010. pp. 66-90

[27] Weiner B. An Attributional Theory of Motivation and Emotion. New York: Springer; 1986

[28] Ham C-D, Kim J. The role of CSR in crises: Integration of situational crisis communication theory and the persuasion knowledge model. Journal of Business Ethics. 2017. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-017-3706-0

[29] Seitel F. The Practice of Public Relations. 10th ed. New Jersey: Prentice Hall; 2007

[30] Benoit WL. Image repair discourse and crisis communication. Public Relations Review. 1997;**23**:177-190

[31] Ihlen O. Defending the Mercedes A- class: Combining and changing crisis response strategies. Journal of Public Relations Research. 2002;**14**(3):1-10

[32] Wise K. Attribution versus compassion: The city of Chicago's response to the E2 crisis. Public Relations Review. 2004;**29**(4):461-472

[33] Shin J, Cheng I, Jin Y, Cameron GT. Going head to head: Content analysis of high profile conflicts as played out in the press. Public Relations Review. 2005;**31**(2):209-217

[34] Heiderich D. Lee double je de la communication sensible. Magazine de la Communication Sensible. 2011;**20**(1):2

[35] Jin Y. The effects of public cognitive appraisal of emotions in crises on crisis coping and strategy assessment. Public Relations Review. 2009;**35**(3):310-313

[36] Heath R, Lee J, Ni L. Crisis and risk approaches to emergency management planning and communication: The role of similarity and sensitivity. Journal of Public Relations Research. 2009;**21**(2):123-141

[37] Bond D. The science of catastrophe: Making sense of the BP oil spill. Anthropology Now. 2011;**3**(1):36-46

[38] Center AH, Jackson P. Public Relations Practices: Managerial Case Studies and Problems. 6th ed. New Jersey: Prentice Hall; 2002

[39] Powley EH, Taylor SN. Pedagogical approaches to develop critical thinking and crisis leadership. Journal of Management Education. 2014;**38**(4):560-585. DOI: 10.1177/0525629135119081

[40] Kapucu N, Ustun Y. Collaborative crisis management and leadership in the public sector. International Journal of Public Administration. 2017. DOI: 10.1080/01900692.2017.1280819

[41] Austin L, Yan J. Approaching ethical crisis communication with accuracy and sensitivity: Exploring common ground and gaps between journalism and public relations. The Public Relations Journal. 2015;**9**(1):2-26

[42] Coldwell D. Ethical Leadership in Crisis Management: The Role of University Education. 2017. Retrieved December 25, 2017, from https://cdn.intechopen.com/pdfs-wm/52477.pdf

[43] Lim J. Volkswagen's Crisis Communication: Twitter use Diesel Gate. 2016. Retrieved December 18, 2017, from: digital.library.ryerson.ca/…/Volkswagen___s_crisis_communication

[44] Coombs WT. Protecting organization reputations during a crisis: The development and application of situational crisis communication theory. Corporate Reputation Review. 2007b;**10**:163-176

[45] Coombs WT. The Underlying Role of Ethics in Crisis Management. 2006. Retrieved February 26, 2016, from: www.sagepub.in/upm-data/28757_10.pdf

[46] Snyder P, Hall M, Robertson J, Jasinski T, Miller J. Ethical rationality: A strategic approach to organizational crisis. Journal of Business Ethics. 2006;**63**(1):371-383

[47] Fritzsche D. Business Ethics: A Global and Managerial Perspective. 2nd ed. New York: McGraw-Hill; 2005

[48] Hagan Thain Y, Long S. The ethics of crisis management: A juxtaposition of examples in cognitive- decision making and framing in corporate crisis management. Journal of Business & Economics Research. 2005;**3**(1):49-59

[49] El-Astal M. A survey of ethical judgments of public relations officers in higher education institutions (Colleges and Universities): A cross-national survey [Doctoral Research]. Penang: University Sains Malaysia; 2003