

## STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND ITS EFFECTS ON CRISIS MANAGEMENT IN THE UNITED ARABEMIRATES

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### **Abstract**

Strategic communication plays an important role in preventing crises in general, as well as in reducing risks and threats, and reducing losses resulting from the crisis if it occurs, in addition to putting the necessary security procedures and measures into effect, harnessing material and human capabilities, and preparing to confront the crisis. Success in preventing and managing crises of all kinds and at various levels is based, in essence, on a set of main pillars, foremost among which is information and the effectiveness of types of communication, which constitute the cornerstone for the success of all measures and procedures taken for all stages of the crisis, starting from predicting its occurrence, determining its dimensions, warning of it, and passing through planning processes. The total number of questionnaires distributed was 520. A total of 381 questionnaires were collected out of the 520 issued. This yields an 73% collection rate when the number of collected questionnaires is divided by the number disseminated. PLS-SEM were utilised in this work to fulfil the objectives. Strategic communications constitute the most important and prominent components upon which the executive authority agencies in general and the security agencies in particular rely, to achieve public security and order for society, and to ensure the best results when managing crises.

**Keywords:** Strategic communication, crisis management, the United Arab Emirates

### **Introduction**

Crises are part of the fabric of life, and they are a natural thing that may appear at any moment, and when they happen they come suddenly, and their events are characterized by extreme speed, resulting in a state of shock due to the sense of danger and tension associated with it. Crisis management does not begin or end suddenly; Rather, it is a process of constant readiness to deal with sudden events in a scientific, administrative manner, including: planning, organizing, directing, following up, preparing, constant presence, delegating authority, an open-door policy, and constant presence at the scene of events. Most importantly, crisis leadership is characterized by: courage, self-confidence, and the ability to work. In the spirit of the team, developing and developing administrative relations with the work team, the ability to adapt to, agree on and control events, direct team members in an appropriate manner, and finally the ability to make decisions at the appropriate time, and for decisions to be decisive, especially in critical times, and those decisions rely heavily on Communication systems (Al-Naimi, 2013).

Communications systems constitute the most important and prominent components upon which the executive authority agencies in general and the security agencies in particular rely, to achieve public security and order for society, and to ensure the best results when managing crises. The truth on which this statement is based is due to the fact that communications systems related to the security field are what ensure the clarity of the security threats that threaten the stability of security in terms of their size and spread and the threats they pose that disturb tranquillity. As is clear, updating information is the main starting point for the security services to formulate its plans and procedures to confront these dangers effectively ensure the achievement of positive results in the field of neutralizing or eliminating these dangers, with everything related to that, including issuing decisions and building strategies and policies (Copeland, 2008).

Strategic communication is considered the lifeline of any agency, especially government agencies, as it plays a very important role in the decision-making process. Therefore, the efficiency of managing these agencies has become dependent on that information and communications systems and their proper use. To the extent that this data is fast, accurate, and specialized, the communications systems are highly accurate. The more effective and efficient the decisions taken increase, and vice versa, which has led many agencies to create information bases and centers dedicated to them that help them perform their functions successfully and with high efficiency (Kamel, 1999).

Especially in light of the different circumstances, the rapid changes, and the successive developments that the world is witnessing today, it was necessary for it to become important, and even necessary, for the role of information bases to increase, and for their contribution to increase to create new vital interactive forces in our institutions, not only at the level of creation, modernization, and development. Rather, it is to build work structures, within the framework of an integrated knowledge system, to increase the rationality of decisions, good management of matters, and the effectiveness and efficiency of performance (Darwish, 2008). Communication in the modern era has also become a basic necessity in various administrative organizations in general and security agencies in particular in order to provide basic services to individuals, protect citizens and society from any deviation that prevents reassurance, security, stability, and achieve social cohesion between individuals and groups in all fields (Al-Hamidi, 2010). Developing communications skills in the security organization is a necessary and purposeful process, as it aims to achieve an important goal, which is to influence the behavior of others. In order to achieve this goal and the success of the communication process, it is necessary that communication include sending information in an appropriate manner that enables the recipient to understand it (Al-Naqbi, 2011).

Strategic communication plays an important role in preventing crises in general, as well as in reducing risks and threats, and reducing losses resulting from the crisis if it occurs, in addition to putting the necessary security procedures and measures into effect, harnessing material and human capabilities, and preparing to confront the crisis. Success in preventing and managing crises of all kinds and at various levels is based, in essence, on a set of main pillars, foremost of which is

information and the effectiveness of types of communication, which constitute the cornerstone for the success of all measures and procedures taken for all stages of the crisis, starting from predicting its occurrence, determining its dimensions, warning of it, and passing through planning and coordination processes. And setting policies, then presenting alternatives, choosing the most appropriate ones, making decisions and how to deal with them, confronting reactions and their possible repercussions, leading to restoring the situation and maximizing it by drawing conclusions and coming up with lessons learned for the benefit of future use in preventing and managing any similar crises, as information and communication systems at various levels bear the main burden in building Basic information bases, continuing to update and analyze them, and providing them to crisis management centers at the appropriate time to ensure successful management of the crisis (Al Habsi, 2009).

Communication represents one of the important pillars on which the organizational structure is based, as it is one of the most prominent components of the cooperative activity of groups, and through it coordination and integration are achieved between various works and activities. The importance of exchanging information in the organization has added to the belief that the organization itself is like a network of communication that branches and overlaps in All levels and organizational units, as the effectiveness of this network depends on the transmission of orders, decisions, results and data, but also feelings and trends across the various parts of the organization (Ibrahim et al., 2017). Communication in any organization has two main purposes: the first is to prepare the necessary information necessary to make any decisions that achieve the organization's set of goals, and the second is to influence the behavior of employees in a way that allows them to be motivated to face their activities in reasonable harmony with the goals and interests of the organization. The first is more concerned with knowledge and information, and the second deals more with With incentives, but it is clear that there is a close interrelationship between the two (Muslim, 2015).

## **Literature Review**

The Karim (2011) study aimed to present a design to measure the factors of the business continuity program to prepare for disasters through the use of statistical indicators and develop knowledge about how companies and institutions continue with the business continuity program to recover from disasters. The study reached a number of results, the most important of which are: There is a significant impact For strategic management, risk analysis, training, awareness, information, and the life role of the business continuity program, which is considered the basis for the success of preparing for any disaster. The study also concluded that planning for disaster management is not limited to planning to respond to traditional disasters, but must include preparing for disasters using strategic management. The study recommended developing Implementing awareness programs through workshops, seminars and conferences to instill a culture of business continuity management within the organizational culture of all public and private sector institutions and encouraging all employees to participate in business continuity management.

Coombs study (2015) aimed to identify the effectiveness of communication in crisis management in institutions, which has become an important mechanism in the success of the crisis management process, and this is according to the foundations and rules that the institution relies on in dealing with its crises and the risks that occur at its level and taking the necessary procedures and measures during the stages of the crisis. In which communication is the basic pillar on which the institution relies to protect the institution's interests, primarily its relations with its audiences, reduce rumors, and work to protect the institution's image during the crisis and emerge from it with the least possible damage. The study reached a set of results, the most important of which is that communication is an important and essential element in the crisis management process in the institution, which is another complement to the objectives and vision of the institution, which has one goal to protect the reputation of the institution, and that crisis communications are planned communications based on foundations and preventive procedures in order to deal and prepare. Advance crisis management in the organization, and an indispensable element of support during strategic planning for crisis management in the organization. It represents an essential part of the crisis management plan in the organization and an important factor in managing the crisis for the worse or the better.

The Pinta study (2022) aimed to identify the extent of the need to develop emergency and recovery plans and set recovery goals, which may greatly affect the efficiency of the information and communications technology infrastructure, which is considered one of the most important factors for organizations in all branches of business, as the importance of ensuring the continued operation of information systems has increased. These needs require developing a plan for business continuity management and disaster recovery planning. The study reached a number of results, the most important of which are: 1- The increased demand for providing resources requires the existence of requirements for ICT continuity (business continuity), and these requirements lead to the development of business continuity management plans, which are also part of the ICT disaster recovery plans. The study recommended the necessity of integrating the business continuity system into the standards and policies of organizations to enhance their efficiency in facing crises and disasters.

The study by H'emon Robert (2020) aimed to show the development of the concept of "state of preparedness" in a state of adaptation (resilience) in the field of emergency management. This study presented two directions for evaluating readiness, namely readiness management and response capacity, which contribute to the development of the concept of "state of readiness" to a state of adaptation (resilience), which is defined as the ability of any system to maintain and sustain a minimum level of performance despite disturbances and failure. The study showed a number of results, the most important of which are: The development of the concept of readiness into a state of adaptation (resilience) will help institutions better understand their performance and the environment in which they operate, and the institution must learn to adapt to the changing environment, which may generate impacts at various levels, whether positive or negative. The

study recommended preparing all training programs based on the expected dangers and potential scenarios of crises and risks facing the organization.

The study Engkavanish (2009) aimed at analyzing the effectiveness of the communication and information exchange in the institutions of modernity, in the state of Sijiria in Germany. The study showed that the development of institutions from the independence to a modernity caused by the existence of technologies and employees who share goals, information and knowledge in order to finish the tasks, and the study tried to compare between Communication and information exchange between traditional institutions and modern organizational institutions. The study reached a number of results, the most important of which are: that communication and information in modern institutions have positive effects on the success of the project and the satisfaction of individuals in it, and the quality of the tasks and the institution depends primarily on the method of communication and the information that is extracted. The study confirmed that the contribution of communication and information differs between modern institutions and traditional institutions, which leads to a difference in the management of the institution and the communications and information used. Jin et al. (2022) examine strategic communication management during the 2014 Ebola crisis and focus on the interaction between the information source, its message, and audience characteristics in seeking and sharing information. The study aims to understand how these factors influence the public's response to crisis-related information. The data was collected through an opinion poll distributed to a national sample in the United States, and the data was analyzed using statistical tools and multiple analysis techniques. The results showed that the source of information affects the public's interest in searching for and sharing information, as individuals tend to rely on trustworthy and trustworthy sources. The study also showed that communication messages that focus on awareness and practical information receive more attention and participation from the audience. In addition, the study indicated that audience characteristics such as prior knowledge, age participation, and gender affect information search and sharing. The study recommends that Strategic communication strategies take these factors into account and adapt accordingly to maximize the benefit of crisis communication. This study contributes to a better understanding of how strategic communication is managed in a crisis context and provides valuable guidance to practitioners in the field of crisis management and communication.

Yan (2006) study addresses the role of strategic communication in crisis management, and is based on a case study of the aviation industry. The study aims to extract important lessons and principles from the aviation industry regarding strategic communication in crisis management, and apply them in other contexts. Data was collected through interviews Personally with communications managers in airline companies and related organizations, and data analysis was based on analyzing the content of these interviews. The study reached several important results. First, it showed the importance of having a well-thought-out communication strategy in crisis management, as strategic communication can contribute to directing messages. Information effectively and enhancing communication with the target audience and concerned parties. The study also

indicated that transparency and effective communication with the public and the media play a crucial role in successful crisis management. The study also indicated that cooperation and coordination between the various parties concerned enhances the effectiveness of strategic communication in crisis management. In conclusion, the study recommended that organizations have a clear strategic communication strategy based on continuous research and analysis of changes in the environment, and that training and preparation for dealing with crises be enhanced and strategic capabilities in the field of communication be developed.

## **Methodology**

A quantitative technique, involving the distribution of thorough questionnaires to varied respondents, will be employed for this inquiry. This strategy will be carried out in the way just described. The selection of quantitative procedures, on the other hand, is consistent with the observation made by Melo and Marroig (2015) on the process of formulating research questions and the methodologies that will be employed. The fundamental goal of this study is to give the researcher with a profile of the phenomenon or to explain important aspects of the phenomenon. The goal of this study is not to evaluate whether one variable is accountable for another, but rather to discover whether there is any relationship between the variables under consideration. A quantitative research technique based on surveys was used to achieve the goals and objectives of this study. The basic goal of survey research is to collect information from one or more respondents on a set of organizationally linked dimensions (Ketokivi, 2019).

This study employed a cross-sectional survey, and the data for this inquiry were gathered from more than one occurrence at a given time. Cross-sectional designs are chosen over longitudinal designs for investigations because they save time and money. A researcher would most likely do survey research to obtain data for a correlational study; they will also need to be aware of the pros and limitations of employing this technique. Only survey research can give accurate and required information while being easier, more efficient, and less expensive (Chaudhry & Khan, 2016). In addition, a self-administered questionnaire was employed for this study. Researchers focused on employees who are working in the National Crisis and Disaster Management Authority that were featured in the 2023 UAE business directory. The total number of questionnaires distributed was 520. A total of 381 questionnaires were collected out of the 520 issued. This yields an 73% collection rate when the number of collected questionnaires is divided by the number disseminated. PLS-SEM were utilised in this work to fulfil the objectives.

## **Findings**

The measurement validity was evaluated for each construct inside the measurement model, taking into account all variables. Following Ramayah et al. (2018)'s criteria, three critical assessments were judged necessary for the measurement model: internal consistency reliability, convergent validity, and discriminant validity. Each item's factor loading was evaluated in this study and found to fulfil the standard criteria. After establishing the measurement model's reliability and validity,

the structural model must be evaluated. As highly advocated by Hair et al. (2017) and Ramayah et al. (2018), this evaluation entails performing numerous tests to examine the inner model. Assessments for lateral collinearity, coefficient of determination ( $R^2$ ), effect size ( $f^2$ ), predictive relevance ( $Q^2$ ), and the path coefficient were performed. The structural model, exhibiting simply the constructs and their associated t-values. The final stage of evaluating the structural model required a detailed study of the route coefficients to examine research hypotheses. The purpose of this study was to determine the strength of the variables' linkages in the structural model. The bootstrapping approach was used by the researcher to provide findings for the path coefficients, t-values, and p-values for each hypothesis route.

The outcomes of this study lend credence to numerous ideas about the correlations between various factors. First, Hypothesis H1 was validated, which implies a favourable and substantial association between strategic communication and crisis management.  $\beta$ - value of 0.321, a t-value of 3.237, and a p-value of 0.000 support this. The high t-value and low p-value imply a significant link between the variables, whereas the strong positive-value shows a significant positive correlation. The  $R^2$  value of 0.891 indicates that the exogenous variable included in the structural model can explain about 89.1% of the variance seen in crisis management. A modest impact size of ( $f^2 = 0.149$ ) was identified for the direct association between strategic communication and crisis management. The  $Q^2$  findings for the endogenous latent variables in this investigation showed that all cross- validated redundancy values were greater than zero, indicating that the model had adequate predictive potential. These results back up the argument that the model used in this study accurately predicts the connections between the constructs.

## Discussion and Conclusion

This study's findings emphasise the significance of strategic communication and its favourable influence on crisis management. Strategic communication is necessary at all administrative levels that work in the field of providing services and implementing projects. Communication is the means of management in transferring and exchanging information, ideas and directives related to its desired goals and its tool in achieving efficiency and effectiveness. Therefore, the importance of administrative communication is highlighted in that it is an effective tool to influence the job behavior of subordinates. And directing their efforts, as effective communication between the leader and his subordinates raises the morale of the subordinates, develops team spirit in them, and strengthens their sense of belonging to the organization. It also informs the leader of his subordinates' needs and goals, and reactions to the organization's goals and policies (Kanaan, 2009).

Strategic communication in organizations is a necessary and purposeful process, as it aims to achieve an important goal, which is to influence the behavior of others. In order to achieve this goal and the success of the communication process, it is necessary that the communication include sending information in an appropriate manner that enables the recipient to understand it. Hence the importance of feedback so that the security leader knows the implications of his message for

the future in order to take the correct measures in light of that (Al-Naqbi, 2011). The importance of strategic communication increases during crises, as the leader often discovers that one of the real reasons behind the exacerbation and development of crises is the lack of an effective communication system between the different administrative levels, and an effective communication system that must be examined carefully and quickly to find out where the defect lies? Then address it before the crisis escalates and intensifies (Abdel Fattah, 2011).

Where the media is used to communicate with the public and society. The main message, target audience, appropriate platforms and budget available for communicating with the media are determined, and cooperation is undertaken with the media to provide the necessary information to the public and help educate the public on specific topics or in crisis situations. This includes providing correct, accurate and timely information that helps in crisis management and improving communication between the community and the organization. This also includes providing useful and new information to the media on a regular basis to keep the public engaged and supportive of the organization. This result is consistent with the findings of the study by Sawalha (2021), the study by (Engkavanish, 2018), and the study by (Miller et al., 2018).

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