

# Crisis Management and Human Resource Development (HRD): An Integrated Conceptual Framework

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**ABSTRACT**---Product harm crisis may have a significant impact on a firm's reputations, financial value, and sales. Despite there have been overwhelmingly early research studies on the crisis has primarily focused the incident or problem-driven approach as the object of study. On the other hand, few studies on the role of social, political and technical factors suggested that Crisis Management (CM) might be enhanced through considering the actions of people and organizations were also responsible for the causes of crisis event (Hosie and Pforr, 2016). From this line of inquiry, the researcher still looked upon the causes of the crisis event but shifted to critical analysis approach instead of more descriptive in emphasizing on how organizational policies, culture, and communication might have contributed to the crisis development. Within this sphere, the importance of Human Resource Development (HRD) in determining the success of CM cannot be overlooked since most issues that may enhance CM are human based. This research will try to highlight on HRD role and how it will offer a productive solution to enhance organizational CM. This study imply that with the emergence of diverse theoretical assumptions and philosophical paradigm, to manage potential or actual crisis event HRD might act as a central player in helping the organization to understand how such HRD interventions may support the crisis management support in the organizations. Some other interesting point that will be highlighted in this research is the exploration and point out opportunities for HRD in the CM process and how HRD research and practice may contribute support organizations CM efforts.

**Index Terms**---Human Resource Development, Crisis Management and Corporate image.

## I. INTRODUCTION

In the past few decades, there has been an increasing amount of product harm crisis due to the products are unsafe, defective or even harmful (Lu *et al.*, 2016). According to Liu and Shankar (2015), product harm crisis may have a devastating negative effect on a brand, market share and also sales. From this line of inquiry, many organizations are facing an increasing pressure from their stakeholders that they should be more socially responsible due to the crisis (Karabrahimoğlu, 2010). For this reason, the gradual increase in product harm crisis has evoked for an empirical study in finding the causes of crisis and the CM techniques for better managerial implications to attain organizational growth and stability. In this modern business world surround with globalization, advanced technology, deregulation every

organization owe the existence of CM as a strategy to prepare companies and leaders for crisis events (Eldakak, 2014). Specifically, there are several examples of companies which have faced product harm crisis and causes both financial and reputation brand image. For instance, one of the products crisis faced by Samsung and its massive recall of the new Galaxy 7 has directly impacted their products, trust and brand with consumers (Lee, 2016). Some other example is a study prepared by Wahba (2016) on the American food chain Chipotle which was hit by E. Coli contamination that sickened 55 people. Due to the crisis incident, the company faces a loss of 82% profit and also, causes the reputation of the company.

These two examples of product harm crisis emphasize how crisis may threaten organizations entire stability. Therefore, it is important for organization to always ready to response to crisis and have an emergency for crisis plan as arise (Coombs, 2015). According to Situational Crisis Communication Theory (SCCT) adopted by Coombs in (2015), organization with strong reputation and trust are expected to adopt more accommodative strategies because they are more capable of protecting them during crisis. Regardless of any crisis whether big or small disaster, the crisis might end up with severe losses, the losses might be psychological, material where may be a need to have a constant support for some time to revive back to normalcy (Ma *et al.*, 2014).

Chakraborty and Saha (2017), stated in his study that HRD has a crucial role in problem improvement and bring back situation to normalcy. HRD and CM are two difference concepts but tangled in an indispensable way (Hosie and Pforr, 2016). Preceding studies on product harm crisis have paid more attention for finding strategies to overcome the crisis from the consumer's perspective, nevertheless there is void in literature discussing on product harm crisis from firm perspective (Wattegama and Ping, 2015). Moreover, previous studies realized the importance of crisis management activities in organizations management functions as the impact of crisis towards the individual and organizational performance has been increasingly recognized (Wang *et al.*, 2017). However, the existence theories and literature on crisis were found to threat crisis seems to focus on the management itself but ignore the core element of crisis which is the human resource. Even though the study discussing HR crisis, however the human resource itself is ignored. Therefore, this study explores the way HRD may achieve organizational capability and learning that will enhance

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organization flexibility, confidence and capacity to deal with unexpected events once arise. The aim of this paper is to explore the HRD role in managing the crisis in organizations. The research question for this study is as follows 1) How did the crisis take place, 2) How did the company handle the crisis 3) What result came from the HRD part in the crisis?

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

It is crucial for organizations today to have an emergency preparedness including developing crisis or disaster plans and training employee. Regardless of the type of crisis where its big or small or natural disaster such as flooding, or a man-made disaster such as fire, emergencies cannot be predetermined (Alexander, 2015). Crisis preparedness is a state of corporate readiness to foresee and effectively address internal or exogenous adversary circumstances with the potential to inflict a multidimensional crisis, by consciously recognizing and proactively preparing for its inevitable occurrence (Prochazkova *et al.*, 2015). Previous scholars posit that a business sector which is the economic drivers of communities become easy to hit by emergency situations through provision of goods and services which require need in crisis response and preparedness (Eldakak, 2014). The ability of organization to gaining stability is through crisis planning which is ultimately the key to successful workplace emergency response.

Nevertheless, it is important for every organization in this modern time regardless of the company size, the human resource have a strategic part to ensure their companies are aware of crisis and provide a plan for future to help reduce its impacts (Eldakak, 2014). In a way for a company to become most efficient and success, the human resource may perform their task to create business focused solutions (Al Shobaki *et al.*, 2016). Thus, in the context of CM, previous studies have supported the argument that HRD activities do have a strong linkage in their abilities to enhance the organization human capital and contribute to explicit business strategies (Rimanoczy and Pearson, 2010).

### A. HRD's Strategic role in CM

HRD was gradually redefined in the term of Strategic Human Resource Development (SHRD) in the early 1990s by Garavan (2007). The emergence of this SHRD is to enhance the organization effectiveness and also to ensure that there is full utilization of the knowledge and skills in each individual employee of the organization (Tseng and Mclean, 2008). From this line of inquiry, HRD may serve as a central player in helping organizations develop the intellectual and social capital needed to effectively manage potential or actual crisis events (Wang *et al.*, 2009). Earliest scholars stated that firm should protect their core competencies through investment in training and development (Lepak and Snell, 1999), this argument imply that value of employees to the firm is related to their uniqueness and value of their capabilities and skills. Competitive advantage can be gained when organization has the skills that are unique difficult to imitate, by competitors (Saeidi *et al.*, 2015).

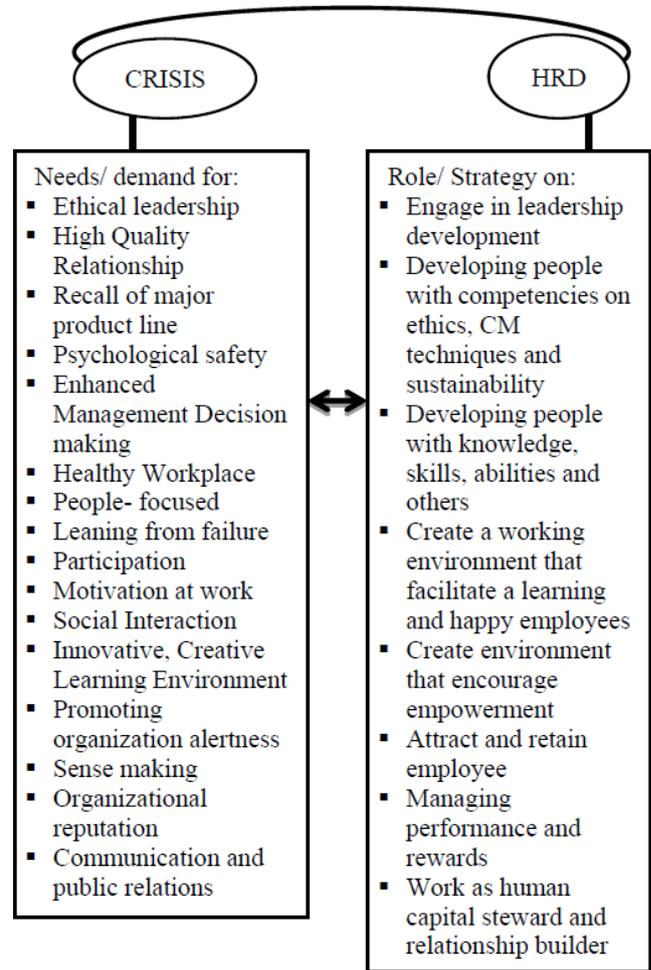


Fig 1: Relationship between CM and HRD Role

Several studies have recognized the importance of HRD in firms (Alagaraja *et al.*, 2014; C. Hurt *et al.*, 2014; Garavan and Carbery, 2012; Ghosh and Jacobson, 2016; Ghosh *et al.*, 2014; Gibb and Wallace, 2014; McCracken and Wallace, 2000; Poell *et al.*, 2003; Sheehan *et al.*, 2014; Stoffers *et al.*, 2018). These studies have highlighted the dependency of firms either big or small on the importance of skills and capabilities of workforce to gain success and growth. Figure 1 illustrates the relationship between HRD roles in supporting CM efforts. Figure 1 below posits the importance and contribution of HRD initiatives in enhance awareness and competencies for CM. In order for such transformations in crisis needs and demands to occur, a strategic approach of HRD is vital. Previous scholars and researcher have strongly argued the linkage between HRD in facilitating the CM (MacKenzie *et al.*, 2014). Figure 1 above shows that by integrating HRD activities in CM, it leads to develop organizational goals and values and capabilities that may enhance competitive advantage (Garavan, 2007). Specifically, there are two contributions that SHRD may make to CM which includes provides organization with operational capabilities to manage crisis and enable organization to understand basis objective of crisis that is by learning from crisis to prevent, improve responses to future crisis (Doppelt, 2017).

However, for such CM to occur, it requires the development of firm specific capabilities and learning and performance intervention which may enable the stakeholders to identify, response and recover from crisis event. For the implementation of CM to succeed it requires high level of strategic integration between HRD, organizational structure, culture and strategy. Moreover, to confirm successful implementation across organization, gaining stakeholder support is also important and this may achieve by aligning learning, change and performance interventions with organizational strategy (Wang et al., 2009). Thus, this study may explore the way in which HRD achieve the intellectual, social and human capital and crisis learning capability that may enhance organization capacity, flexibility and confidence to deal with crisis event.

### *B. Leadership And Training, Organizational Structure And Culture, Learning And Crisis Communication*

According to Sommer et al., (2016) the willingness and efforts from the internal stakeholders to learn from the crisis is crucial for strengthening the organization and leaders play a key role in this process as they focus attention on the repair and transformation of the organization. Leadership is one of the most critical aspects in CM, however the research on leadership, involvement as one of the keys in CM is left unattended (Schoenberg, 2005). Most of the past studies on CM have explained how crisis influence all the phases in the CM steps, however there is limited research that identifies the knowledge skills or abilities of leaders and employee in leading the organization through all these phases Wooten and James (2008). Moreover, it is important in developing a systematic strategy in CM require the involvement of the top manager to convince others in the organization to cooperate (Williams et al., 2017). Although many organizations realize the consequences and the negative impact associated with crisis, yet their formal training and on the job related activities do not prepare them for CM. In this modern business environment, managing the most important pressure such as communication and public relation should be considered first instead of behavior such as sense making, taking risk, managing the crisis and others (Wooten and James, 2008). Therefore, it is crucial for organization does require leaders to adopt a complex set of competencies which included but not limited to communicating effectively to lead organization through success recovery in every phases of the crisis phases (Johansson and Bäck, 2017).

The other area that is also one of the fundamental roles of HRD is to develop human resources through training and development activities. Training refers to the abilities of organization to provide employee with the learning relating to their work related competencies. However, it is crucial for the employee to possess these competencies such as their abilities, knowledge and skills that potentially create successful in performance (A. Noe, 2010). In this regard, by giving training it may enable the employee to create working condition that encourages continuous learning is through the high leverage training practices. This continuous learning seeks employees to understand their entire work systems which associate with the connection surrounded by their jobs, their work units and the company. According to Fung et al., (2015), one of the factors that attribute to the occurrence of

crisis is human error. Within a crisis environment, it is paramount for every organization to build a knowledge base of crisis and capability of coping with it. As Wang et al (2009) noted, this may be done through training because it is an effective tool in eliminate, reduce the impact of crisis such as technology and human errors. Empirical studies have confirmed that training and development does have a significant positive influence in enhancing crisis events (Gaba et al., 2001; Reznick et al., 2003; Weller et al., 2003). For instance, in Weller et al., 2003 studies have investigated the long term effects of a simulation based training in anesthesia CM where this study has distributed a questionnaire to all the anesthetist and the result shows that 69% of the respondents perceive there is a change in practice and improvement in interaction between team members and also enhance in problem solving in preventing and managing crisis. On that account, it is the HRD professionals crucial role in educating the leaders and members on the change management process and seeking the appropriate development interventions to cope with the crisis (Abdullah, 2009).

Other area that is certainly important and HRD can make a big impact is on fostering crisis prepared organizational culture. Earliest researcher's defined organizational culture as a mechanism through which effort is integrated through the coordination of activities and also describes as a mechanism that direct behavior towards achieves shared values, goals and norms (O'Neill et al., 2016). Organizational culture believes to be one of the major predictor of crisis events because it represent shared beliefs on issues such as risk and organizations vulnerability to crisis situations (Bowers et al., 2017). However, how to create an organizational environment with crisis prepared mentality situations is a major task for the HRD professionals. Such culture can be created through training interventions and through teaching the leaders and members to constantly assessing organizations practices and look for sign. (Dhar, 2015; Naranjo-Valencia et al., 2016).

For instance, one study done by Bower et al., (2017) proposes that by combining the element of organizational culture with individual leadership style it may allow organization to match a given crisis with the best possible crisis response leader. This successful implementation approach was present in a real-world case study of the U.S Airforce Taiwan- 4 crisis. Based on the crisis case study, the result shows that culture plays an important role in the development and managing crisis and the crucial role of leaders in CM does matters. It is important for organization to consistently prepare for crisis response by knowing the organizations culture and leaders and monitoring the CM based on crisis environment, organizational culture and leadership style to select the right leader for the crisis (Bower et al., 2017).

Furthermore, another area that HRD professional can facilitate change and enhance crisis prepare organizational culture is through promoting organizational learning (OL). (Trehan and Rigg, 2015). Organizational learning has been defined in so many different ways, however the earliest definition was proposed by Kim (1997) who recognized OL

as the acquisition of new knowledge and the translation of this knowledge into more effective organizational action. However, recent studies have introduced new concept of learning referred as Learning in Crisis (LiC) which draw upon theoretical relationship between OL and CM (Antonacopoulou and Sheaffer, 2014). LiC introduces the new ways of learning by engage leaders in learning not only when in crisis but to engage in reflexive critique as part-and-parcel of their everyday practice. By doing this, they become more aware of the learning traps they can fall into unintentionally which might encourage them to be mindful of the lessons they seek to distil and have as a basis of their learning. Moreover, it will prompt them to be aware of the judgments that inform their actions and be more accountable and responsible as they experiment with the possibilities they create while practicing (Antonacopoulou and Sheaffer, 2014). Learning plays an important part in every crisis phase and also helps enhance organizational operational readiness (Wang *et al.*, 2009). By encouraging in this learning intervention is it may guide organization to establish effective crisis communication system through developing individual critical thinking and reflection skills, enhance their organizations crisis knowledge base and also encourage double loop learning (Brown and Duguid, 2000). However, despite the importance of learning in the prevention and preparation in crisis phases, it is also important for organization to identify new learning opportunities arising from crisis event is also one of the central areas whereby HRD research may involve stakeholders in reflective learning opportunities to redesign system and process that may have failed (Wang *et al.*, 2009). Action learning and evaluative inquiry is the common analysis HRD method that may help stakeholders identify and process crisis events to enhance ongoing CM procedures (Trehan and Rigg, 2015).

The other area that is also a crucial role that must be considered is the communication in the organization itself. The ability to communicate effectively deem to be the most closely identified competency in crisis management (Wooten and James, 2008). According to Wooten and James (2008), communication is important because it shapes the stakeholders perception of the crisis and the organization. Specifically, the role of communication in crisis is during the damage control or the containment phase and leaders will communicate with the organization personnel and provide seek for information and instruction and store a calm or provide reassurance to the respective constituents. It is important for leaders at this phase to be confident, persuasive or emphatic in their messaging. In addition, the leaders competency in communicating effectively depends on his or her ability to connect emotionally and psychologically with the audience and influence the opinion to be either same of more favorable in following the crisis (Mileti and Beck, 1975).

Based on some cases that experience crisis situation such as Coca-Cola crisis, they are lack of transparency in handling the crisis and communication messages that are interpreted are defensive. The Coca-cola crisis have effect their brand and reputation suffered in the press due to its denial stance (Wooten and James, 2008). However, through apologies, expression of empathy and emotional appeals, the leaders are able to connect with their audience in a way to

work to organization advantage and at the same time their communication consistent with the organization interest by putting the patient or customer first (Seeger, 2006). Synthesizing on the literature review, an integrated conceptual framework of variable explaining role of HRD in crisis is depicted in Figure 2.

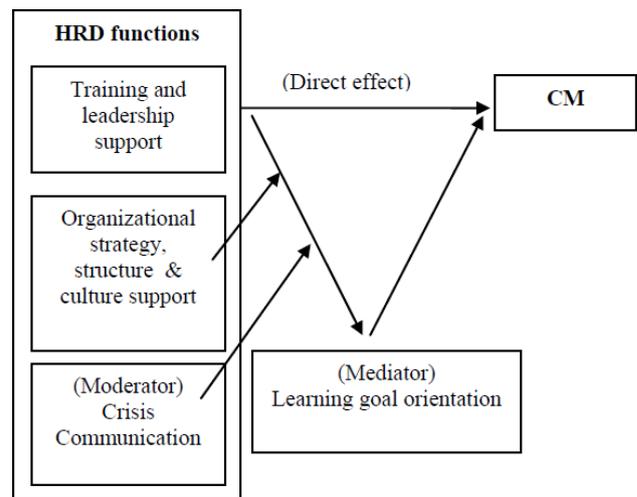


Figure 2: Theoretical Research framework of HRD functions and CM

### C. Organizational CM

With the complexity of organizational crisis and increase in frequency the need for crisis planning to mitigate crisis event become a serious event for organizations (Wang *et al.*, 2008). The earliest definition of crisis is defined by Milburn *et al.*, (1983), crisis is defined as a low probability, high impact situation that is unfamiliar, unexpected and precipitated by people, organizational structure, economics, technology or natural disasters. However CM refers to a systematic process in averting or managing crisis to sustain or maintain business operation to normalcy and minimize losses. (Alexander, 2014). Previous scholars have identified three elements of crisis which includes threats to goals, reduced the ability to control the environment and reduce time pressure (Sweetser and Metzgar, 2007). Timothy Coombs and Holladay (2006) defines crisis as an unpredictable, major threat that can negatively affect the organization, industry and stakeholders if it is not handled properly. While Sapriel (2003) defined crisis as an unexpected, specific and non-routine event that leads to high level of uncertainty and may threaten the organizations goals

Crisis management consists of a set of factors that is used to combat crisis to reduce the actual damage of crisis and it is referred as a change process plan by organization to reduce negative effects to the organization and other relevant stakeholders (Timothy Coombs and Holladay, 2006). Further, in the organization change process, crisis management believed to be the first step in creating the sense need for change (Wang *et al.*, 2009). Crisis management is about being prepared to handle adversity, minimizing the impact of the crisis effectively and facilitating the management process within the environment of chaos (Sapriel, 2003). According



to Reddy et al (2009), in order to manage the crisis effectively, firstly organizations must be aware of all the phases and steps involved in the overall process for crisis management. Crisis management encompasses all aspect of business includes operation, marketing, media relations, distribution and legal matters (Jaques, 2007). This includes planning, organizing, leading and controlling assets before and after the crisis (Jaques, 2007). Most researchers and scholars discussing crisis management includes topics such as type of crisis, process of crisis management and their executive and leadership role in handling crisis management.

### III. OBJECTIVE

The objective of this study is to explore the role of HRD in Crisis management in the organization. There are several benefits of implementing HRD roles in enhancing crisis management as a crucial part in every organization to ensure organizations reputation, growth and stability.

### IV. METHODOLOGY

The primary approach for this study is to capture the richness the individual experiences with the crisis events and how they deal and manage the crisis. The proposed research methodology is qualitative. The core method utilized to generate data to answer the above research aims will be interview. According to Bogdan and Biklen (1997), interview is the most appropriate in accessing the personal experience of workers and hence and the focus will be on reporting individual perspectives and feelings. This method are useful when how and why questions are being posed. The advantages of using qualitative as approach for this study is it offer a means to understanding and describing the social situations and the one we will use are group or personal interviews, observations and document analysis. These techniques may capture the full richness and complexity of the real world and will allow me to have a deeper understanding of the social situation and describing the behavior in their daily interactions.

### V. EXPECTED RESULT OF THE RESEARCH AGENDA CAN BE REGARDED ON TWO LEVELS

#### A. Academic Field

The emerging concept of the link between crisis management and the role of HRD is less developed and tend to leave overlooked (Nizamidou and Vouzas, 2018). In this study, the link between crisis management and HRD will be explored and how HRD can contribute to the development of operational capability and enhance capability to learn both during and after the crisis. By doing this, this study will provide full richness of the involvement of HRD in the basis of attaining crisis management objectives and goals. Moreover, the theories of crisis management may expand their ways of handling their crisis event through incorporate with the HRD activities. Our framework for this study may add a particular way to learn and capability to overcome crisis issues in future.

#### B. Business And Organization Development

We believe that crisis management is not a one way activity but it is a process of human action and interaction of

knowledge in the organization. The effective management of organizational crisis is dependent on leadership behavior that encourage the member to actively engage in knowledge and formulation of strategies to resolve the crisis. Thus, in this study we will demonstrate that if organization and leaders effectively pay attention on the HRD role and develop skills to prevent and effectively respond to crisis and other strategic issues and make them as part of their organizational routines, the organization will able to create organization with common goals, manage firm reputation brand and financial security.

### VI. CONCLUSION

This study believes that natural disaster or crisis event may disrupt the operation of business and also huge impact at employee's job and enterprise life cycle at any form and other major crisis. Previously, crisis management have been focused more on recovering business and its operation, however currently the need and importance of people have been realized and as any crisis attempt it is crucial to take care of the valuable assets that's is the human assets. Thus, each organization may encounter different kind of crisis, but the above discussed guidelines should be extremely contributive to the crisis management. To conclude, it is intention of this study to suggest that HRD role should be taken as one of the important parts in crisis management initiatives. This study would also define that the role of HRD is immense. They need to make sure that the human capital is taken care of, giving support in all the crisis management plan, and deep enrichment in crisis communication plan training in safety and security and managing the internal talent and has relevant succession planning.

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