

The effectiveness of organizational communication in crisis management in public institutions

Received date: 15/02/2023 Accepted date:15/03/2024 Published date: 31/03/2024

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Abstract:

This study investigates organizational communication's role in crisis management within public institutions. Findings from surveys among municipal employees in Biskra reveal its significant impact on enhancing coordination and efficacy during crises. Employees highly appreciate the effectiveness of organizational communication strategies in overcoming challenges posed by emergent situations. Consequently, organizational communication emerges as a fundamental element in crisis management, crucial for navigating through challenges and ensuring continuity. Effective communication strategies enable organizations to adapt and respond adeptly to unforeseen challenges, thereby enhancing resilience. Overall, the study underscores the pivotal importance of organizational communication in crisis management for achieving success amidst adversity.

Keywords: communication; crisis management; effectiveness; organizational communication.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Communication has become an immensely crucial aspect of modern societies, serving as a vital link between individuals and their institutions. Every community or organization needs to emphasize the importance of communication to justify its existence and continuity. Communication is considered the fundamental factor that contributes to the cohesion and harmony of various entities and structures.

In crisis organization and response, communication is the first and last line of defense. Crisis communication is a vital intersection between crisis management and institutional communication, playing a prominent role in planning and preparing for crises, as well as directly confronting and attempting to overcome them.

The causes of crises vary greatly and possess multiple characteristics, leaving significant impacts on the organization, whether internally or externally. Therefore, there should be a focus on finding appropriate ways to reduce crisis risks and, ideally, prevent them altogether. In the event of a crisis, effective scenarios for immediate response should be developed, along with planning for post-crisis stages and efforts to minimize its effects as much as possible.

In this context, communication can significantly contribute during the crisis period by supporting decision-makers in the organization during the response phase, enabling them to achieve the best possible crisis outcomes. This helps in reducing its ramifications and expediting the recovery process. Hence, crisis

management and communication during crises are part of public relations activities, focusing on conveying information, guiding the public, and enhancing general awareness with the aim of maintaining trust and providing necessary support.

Organizational communication is one of the most important elements of the administrative process in public and private sector institutions and organizations. Through effective communication, an organization can achieve its goals. Conversely, any interruption in the organizational communication process can result in significant costs in terms of effort, time, and finances, leading to hindrances or failures in achieving those objectives.

The research problem:

With the advancement of societies, communication has become a vital social necessity for enabling interaction and communication among individuals and groups. In the field of crisis management, public relations are considered a fundamental element in shaping the crisis management team, as they play crucial roles in the communication process for crisis management. Acting as repositories of information for any organization or institution, public relations directly contribute to supporting other departments in government or participating in crisis management efforts.

Speaking of effective and successful communication today is primarily associated with the reputation of the institution, known as institutional communication. This relies on a set of communicative processes used by the institution to interact with both its external and internal environments. These processes

involve integrating all available means to facilitate internal operations and formulating a specific overall image that reflects a particular personality aligned with the reality of the institution, meeting the demands of its external surroundings.

The topic of organizational communication has drawn the attention of researchers and scholars in various scientific fields, such as media and communication, business administration, commerce, economics, and politics, for decades. This is due to the tremendous benefits provided by effective communication for organizations. It significantly contributes to facilitating the communication process, expediting decision-making, enhancing adaptability among employees, and achieving organizational flexibility.

Therefore, the main challenge of this study revolves around understanding the effectiveness of organizational communication in crisis management within public institutions. This is achieved by addressing the following sub-questions:

- What is the level of application of organizational communication in crisis management from the perspective of employees at the municipality of Biskra?

What is the role of organizational communication in crisis management from the perspective of employees at the municipality of Biskra?

What is the level of importance of organizational communication in crisis management from the perspective of employees at the municipality of Biskra?

Study Objectives:

The objectives of our study are as follows:

1. To assess the level of application of organizational communication in crisis management from the perspective of employees at the municipality of Biskra.
2. To understand the role of organizational communication in crisis management according to the viewpoint of employees at the municipality of Biskra.
3. To identify the level of importance of organizational communication in crisis management as perceived by employees at the municipality of Biskra.

Study Importance:

The study contributes to enhancing the understanding and application of organizational communication in crisis management within public institutions. This leads to strengthening their ability to deal with challenges and overcome crises more effectively.

By analyzing the importance of organizational communication, public institutions can develop effective strategies to handle and control crises more effectively. The study also aims to understand the effectiveness of organizational communication by encouraging the building of trust between the institution and the public, fostering cooperation and positive interaction during crises. Consequently, institutions can achieve more positive outcomes and mitigate the negative impacts of crises on both the public and the institution.

2. Study Terms Defining:

2.1 Effectiveness

The concept of effectiveness is linked to achieving specific goals at the institutional level.

Effectiveness is defined as reaching the desired results according to predefined standards. It involves maximizing returns on investment through legitimate means.

Effectiveness includes enhancing individual returns and contributing to raising the overall efficiency of the institution.

The concept of effectiveness is also considered an indicator of the ability to survive and maintain control in the environment (Burhuma, 2008, p 56).

2.2 Communication

Communication represents the exchange of ideas, opinions, and information among individuals. This exchange occurs through both oral and non-verbal communication channels. The goal of communication is to influence behavior and achieve desired results (Shaban, 2009, p 05).

According to the Oxford dictionary, communication is defined as the process of transferring, exchanging, or conveying ideas, whether through speech, writing, or signaling (Othman Al-Sadiqi, 2010, p 10).



This is also considered behavior that relies on it as an effective

means of conveying information, meanings, emotions, and opinions to others and influencing their thoughts and persuading them, whether through verbal or non-verbal means (Shaban, 2009, p 07).

2.3 Organizational communication

Refers to the interaction that occurs within organizations, where this communication is influenced by the unique characteristics of the organization itself or the relationships between organizations. Organizational communication aims to convey information among individuals within a specific group, with the goal of achieving the organization's objectives (Delliou, 2003, p 15).

It is defined as the communication present in the organization, originating from the authorities, and participating in managing individuals, meaning it has an impact on individuals' motivation and the social cohesion of the organization. Various means are used in these organizational communications, such as internal records and announcement regulations (Hussein, 2021, p 750).

2.4 The Crisis

A crisis is typically defined as a state of disruption to the flow of organized and expected events, considered a breaking point for customary habits and behaviors. This necessitates a prompt response to restore balance and develop new habits that align with the new circumstances imposed by the crisis (Al-Azam, 2004, p 35).

According to the Oxford Dictionary, a crisis is defined as a turning point or a decisive moment in an individual's life path. Examples include financial and political crises, where these points represent a period characterized by difficulty, danger, and anxiety about the future (Batres Jildah, 2011, p 19).

A crisis is also defined as a situation arising from environmental changes that lead to crises. This situation involves a level of risk, threat, time pressure, and surprise. Dealing with it requires the adoption of innovative and rapid managerial approaches (Jad Allah, 2010, p 97).

2.5 The Institution

The institution is considered the organization or entity that offers goods or services to the market. It is the apparatus that performs essential functions for society. An institution is defined as a social unit established according to a specific structural model to achieve specific objectives (Talaat, 1993, p 09).

In his definition, François Perroux considers an institution as a 'production form that integrates various factors of production, provided by employees distinct from the owner of the institution. This is regarding the sale of a commodity or service in the market to generate cash income resulting from the price difference.' According to Herbert Spencer, 'the institution is considered the member or apparatus that performs essential functions for society (Dramchiya & Belkasmi, 2016, p 01).

3. The applied framework of the study

3.1 Study Methodology

Our research falls within the descriptive studies that aim to obtain accurate and comprehensive information to describe the characteristics and aspects of organizational communication during a crisis within the institution and its effectiveness in managing it. We adopted the descriptive-analytical methodology, focusing on describing the phenomenon and collecting information as it exists in reality.

3.2 Study Population and Sample

The study population includes individuals working in the administration of Biskra Municipality, representing various age groups and job ranks. We relied on a sample consisting of 42 employees selected randomly.

3.3 Study Tool

The tools used by the researcher to collect data and information about the research variables to achieve the desired objectives and answer research questions. We primarily relied on the questionnaire as the study tool, which is considered one of the widely used scientific research methods to obtain data or information for studying individuals' attitudes. This is based on previous studies. Our questionnaire consists of 30 statements divided into three axes, representing:

Axis One: Application of organizational communication in crisis management from the perspective of the employees of Biskra Municipality, consisting of 10 statements.

Axis Two: The role of organizational communication in crisis management from the perspective of employees of Biskra Municipality, consisting of 10 statements.

Axis Three: The importance of organizational communication in crisis management from the perspective of employees of Biskra Municipality, consisting of 10 statements.

We utilized the Likert five-point scale to measure the variables of the practical study and assess the opinions of the researched sample. Weight or grades were assigned to the study scale as follows:

After setting the minimum and maximum limits of the scale, the goal is to obtain the weighted average. This is achieved by calculating the range by finding the difference between the highest and lowest weight. Then, the average range is calculated by dividing the range by the number of scale points to obtain the length of one unit on the scale. Afterward, this value is added to the minimum score of the scale to obtain the minimum and maximum limits for each grade, as illustrated in the following table:

Table 1. Minimum and Maximum Limits of the Likert Scale

Grade	1	2	3	4	5
Level of Agreement	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Score Range	1.00-1.79	1.80-2.59	2.60-3.39	3.40-4.19	4.20-5.00
Level of Acceptance	Very Low	Low	Moderate	High	Very High

Source: Prepared by the researcher based on previous studies.

3.4 Test of Study Tool Stability

Credibility and stability are among the most important topics that concern researchers in terms of their significant impact on the research results and their ability to generalize these results. Credibility and stability are associated with the tools used in the research and their ability to measure the intended variables. The reliability coefficient is calculated by taking the square root of the stability coefficient.

Table 2. Results of Cronbach's Alpha Stability Coefficients.

Questionnaire Axes	Number of Statements	Cronbach's Alpha Stability Coefficient	Reliability Coefficient
Axis One: Application of Organizational Communication	10	0.890	0.943
Axis Two: Role of Organizational Communication	10	0.900	0.948
Axis Three: Importance of Organizational Communication	10	0.701	0.837
Total Questionnaire Statements	30	0.926	0.962

Source: Prepared by the researcher based on the outputs of SPSS V25.

It is evident from the table above that the Cronbach's Alpha reliability coefficient is greater than 0.8. This indicates that all dimensions of the study axes and the questionnaire as a whole have a high level of stability. The overall reliability coefficient for the study tool is (0.926), which is an excellent value. Therefore, it can be relied upon in the field study.

3.5 Ensuring Internal Consistency

Through this, the internal construct validity of the questionnaire statements is confirmed by examining the correlation coefficient for each dimension with the corresponding axis, as illustrated in the following table:

Table 3. Measuring Internal Consistency for Questionnaire Statements
(Pearson Correlation Coefficient)

Statement	Correlation Coefficient	Statement	Correlation Coefficient
Axis One: Application of Organizational Communication in Crisis Management			
01	**0.633	06	**0.627
02	**0.802	07	**0.605
03	**0.833	08	**0.807
04	**0.683	09	**0.790
05	**0.745	10	**0.663
Axis Two: Role of Organizational Communication in Crisis Management			
01	**0.582	06	**0.823
02	**0.671	07	**0.773
03	**0.780	08	**0.682
04	**0.712	09	**0.673
05	**0.849	10	**0.751
Axis Three: Importance of Organizational Communication in Crisis Management			
01	**0.730	06	*0.323

02	**0.797	07	**0.516
03	**0.814	08	**0.597
04	**0.792	09	**0.417
05	**0.823	10	**0.484

Source: Prepared by the researcher based on the outputs of SPSS V25.

It is evident from the table above that all correlation coefficients between each dimension and the corresponding axis are positive and statistically significant at a significance level of 0.05 or less. This indicates the consistency of the statements with their axes, thereby achieving internal consistency for the questionnaire.

3.6 Presentation of the Results of the Study's Axis Analysis

First Axis: The Application of Organizational Communication in Crisis Management from the Perspective of Municipal Employees in Biskra.

Table 4. Evaluation of the Sample for Statements on the Application of Organizational Communication in Crisis Management

No.	Mean	Standard Deviation	Acceptance Level	Ranking
01	3.78	1.024	High	02
02	3.85	0.899	High	01
03	3.76	1.077	High	04
04	3.54	1.040	High	06
05	3.76	0.820	High	03
06	3.30	1.157	Average	08
07	3.76	1.265	High	05
08	3.33	1.140	Average	07
09	3.07	1.176	Average	09
10	2.88	1.253	Average	10
Axis Total	3.50	0.776	High	/

Source: Prepared by the researcher based on the outputs of SPSS V25.

The table above indicates that the sample's attitudes were mostly positive towards all statements of the axis on the application of organizational communication in crisis management from the perspective of municipal employees in Biskra. Most of them achieved a high level of acceptance. The overall mean for the axis was 3.50, representing a high level of acceptance, with a standard deviation of 0.776, indicating consistency and agreement in the employees' responses.

It is noteworthy that Statement 02, stating that reports from departments are clear and accurate, ranked first with a mean of 3.85, indicating a high level of acceptance, and a standard deviation of 0.899. This is supported by Statement 01 with a mean of 3.78 and a standard deviation of 1.024, indicating that managers disclose the necessary information for employees to understand and perform their tasks. Following closely is Statement 05, indicating that direct managers provide accurate information, with a mean of 3.76.

On the other hand, Statement 10, indicating that communication is concerned with monitoring performance during crises, ranked last in this axis with a mean of 2.88 and a standard deviation of 1.253, indicating a moderate level of acceptance. This suggests that communication is less focused on monitoring performance during crises according to the respondents' perspectives

Second Axis: The Role of Organizational Communication in Crisis Management from the Perspective of Municipal Employees in Biskra



Table 5. Sample Evaluation of Statements on the Role of Organizational Communication in Crisis Management

Number	Average	Standard Deviation	Acceptance Level	Ranking
01	2.85	1.180	Average	09
02	2.80	0.943	Average	10
03	3.04	0.986	Average	08
04	3.21	1.200	Average	07
05	3.69	1.070	High	04
06	3.59	1.083	High	05
07	3.42	1.085	High	06
08	3.97	1.047	High	03
09	4.07	1.021	High	02
10	4.19	0.968	High	01
Axis Total	3.48	0.771	Average	/

Source: Prepared by the researcher based on the outputs of SPSS V25.

The table above indicates that the sample's attitudes were positive towards each statement in the axis of the role of organizational communication in crisis management from the perspective of municipal employees in Biskra. Most of them achieved a high level of acceptance, with an overall average for the axis of 3.48, indicating a moderate level of acceptance. The standard deviation was 0.771, suggesting consistency and agreement in the responses of the surveyed individuals.

It is noteworthy that statement number 10, which expresses that organizational communication motivates employees to participate in avoiding crises, ranked first with an average of 4.19, indicating a high level of acceptance and a standard deviation of 0.968. Following it is statement number 09, with an average of 4.07 and a standard deviation of 1.021, indicating that organizational communication helps in exchanging experience to face crises. Next is statement number 08, indicating that organizational communication helps in improving coordination between entities responsible for crisis management. with an average of 3.97. Meanwhile, statement number 02 ranks last in this axis with an average of 2.80 and a standard deviation of 0.943, indicating a moderate level of acceptance. This reflects that organizational communication provides accurate information about the crisis magnitude

Third Axis: The Importance of Organizational Communication in Crisis Management from the Perspective of Municipal Employees in Biskra:

Table 6. Sample Evaluation of Statements on the Importance of Organizational Communication in Crisis Management

Number	Average	Standard Deviation	Acceptance Level	Ranking
01	3.52	0.993	High	04
02	3.38	1.080	Average	06
03	3.21	1.179	Average	08
04	3.54	1.016	High	03
05	3.42	1.129	High	07
06	4.21	0.682	High	01
07	2.71	1.110	Average	09
08	2.61	1.167	Average	10
09	3.50	0.803	High	05
10	3.59	0.828	High	02
Axis Total	3.37	0.526	Average	/

Source: Prepared by the researcher based on the outputs of SPSS V25.

The table above indicates that the sample's attitudes were positive towards each statement in the axis of the importance of organizational communication in crisis management from the perspective of municipal employees in Biskra. Most of them achieved a high level of acceptance, with an overall average for the axis of 3.37, indicating a moderate level of acceptance. The standard deviation was 0.526, suggesting consistency and agreement in the responses of the surveyed individuals.

It is noteworthy that statement number 06, expressing that organizational communication enhances employees' ability to observe and understand, ranked first with an average of 4.21, indicating a high level of acceptance and a standard deviation of 0.682. This is supported by statement number 10, with an average of 3.59 and a standard deviation of 0.828, indicating that organizational communication is an important means of coordinating efforts among employees. Following this is statement number 04, indicating that organizational communication contributes to enhancing loyalty to the institution, with an average of 3.54.

On the other hand, statement number 08 ranks last in this axis, with an average of 2.61 and a standard deviation of 1.167, indicating a moderate level of acceptance. This suggests that the success of organizational communication is linked to the organization's effective performance in its role.

3.6 Explanation of Results

From the previous tables, the following can be concluded:

The application of organizational communication plays a crucial role in enhancing coordination and effectiveness in crisis management. Individual factors in organizational communication significantly impact the efficiency of this process.

Regarding the axis of the level of application of organizational communication in crisis management, it is evident from the results that employees in the municipality of Biskra generally express their

appreciation and acceptance of the efforts made in applying organizational communication during crises. The average scores for most statements related to the general axis of organizational communication indicate a high level of acceptance, emphasizing the importance and effectiveness of this aspect of management under such circumstances. This is evident through the characteristics of reports received from departments, which include clarity, accuracy in providing information, and performance monitoring during crises.

As for the axis of the role of organizational communication in crisis management, data analysis reveals a positive role for organizational communication in crisis management, as this axis scored a high level of acceptance. Therefore, organizational communication helps stimulate employees to participate and collaborate in overcoming crises. It also contributes to enhancing coordination among relevant entities in crisis management. Moreover, organizational communication provides accurate information about the crisis's magnitude. It is noteworthy that employees consider this aspect crucial for understanding crises and achieving effectiveness in dealing with them.

Finally, regarding the axis of the importance of organizational communication in crisis management, the responses from employees in the municipality of Biskra confirm the significance of organizational communication in enhancing understanding and communication among employees, leading to increased loyalty to the

institution. This axis received a moderate level of acceptance in the results, indicating that organizational communication enhances employees' ability to observe and understand. This implies that the way information is organized and exchanged within the institution contributes to improving employees' ability to observe and understand. In other words, the element of organizational communication is considered an effective means to empower employees to better understand situations and information in the context of crisis management.

4. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, in this study, we have attempted to gain a deeper understanding of the role of organizational communication in crisis management. The findings can guide future research and practices in this field, contributing to the development of institutions that are more adaptable and responsive to emergency challenges.

Organizational communication proves to be a vital element in crisis management, facilitating coordination among stakeholders and enhancing effectiveness in dealing with emergency situations. Through data analysis and interpretation of practical results, it is evident that employees of the municipality of Biskra recognize the significant importance of organizational communication in confronting crises. They evaluate the level of application and importance of communication at a high level.

Consequently, this study highlights the necessity for institutions



to focus on developing effective strategies for organizational communication. This can be achieved by improving internal communication channels or enhancing a culture of communication and interaction within the organization. By adopting these measures, organizations can be better prepared and more effective in dealing with potential crises, ultimately achieving success in facing them.

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