

The Interplay of Decision-Making and Strategic Vigilance: A Foresight-Oriented Framework for Crisis Management

تفاعلية اتخاذ القرار واليقظة الاستراتيجية: نموذج استشرافي لإدارة الأزمات

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Abstract

This paper aims to analyze the importance of decision-making and strategic vigilance and their role in building a foresight-oriented framework for crisis management. In an environment marked by growing uncertainty and escalating risks, organizational continuity and long-term sustainability depend largely on the ability to make informed and timely decisions. This, in turn, requires the presence of an effective strategic vigilance system that provides accurate information, supports managerial judgment, and enables the early identification of potential crises before they occur. The study adopts a descriptive-analytical approach through the analysis of relevant theoretical literature on decision-making, strategic vigilance, and crisis management. The findings show that integrating sound decision-making with an effective strategic vigilance system forms a solid basis for developing a foresight-oriented model that reduces the impact of crises and strengthens organizational stability and sustainability.

Keywords: Decision-Making; Strategic Vigilance; Crisis Management; Strategic Foresight.

ملخص:

تسعى هذه الورقة البحثية إلى تحليل أهمية عمليتي اتخاذ القرار واليقظة الاستراتيجية، وبيان دورهما الحيوي في بناء نموذج استشرافي لإدارة الأزمات، إذ أضحت هاتان العمليتان من الضرورات الملحة وأحد المتطلبات الأساسية للمؤسسات الحديثة. وتقوم استمرارية وديمومة أي مؤسسة على قدرتها على اتخاذ قرارات مستنيرة وسريعة، وهو ما يستلزم وجود نظام فعال لليقظة الاستراتيجية يزود الإدارة بمعلومات دقيقة تسهم في تعزيز فاعلية عملية اتخاذ القرار والتعرف المبكر على الأزمات قبل حدوثها. وقد اعتمدت الدراسة المنهج الوصفي التحليلي، بتحليل الأدبيات والدراسات السابقة ذات الصلة باتخاذ القرار واليقظة الاستراتيجية وإدارة الأزمات، وقد توصلت النتائج إلى أن التكامل بين اتخاذ القرار الرشيد ونظام يقظة استراتيجية فعال يشكل أساساً لبناء نموذج استشرافي يسهم في الحد من آثار الأزمات ويعزز استقرار المؤسسات واستدامتها على المدى الطويل.

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كلمات مفتاحية: اتخاذ القرار؛ اليقظة الاستراتيجية؛ إدارة الأزمات؛ الاستشراف الاستراتيجي.

1. Introduction

Amid the accelerating transformations that characterize today's world, modern organizations are pushed to keep pace with developments that affect their various aspects. These aspects include the organization's core components, such as its organizational structure, human resources, technology, applied techniques, and its organizational processes and procedures. It is evident that the challenges facing contemporary organizations have become increasingly complex due to the multiplicity of factors influencing their operational systems. These factors reflect a dynamic and constantly evolving work environment shaped by reciprocal interactions, which has prompted a reconsideration of work mechanisms, daily management practices, and strategic decision-making processes.

In this evolving environment, organizations are required to develop their decision-making tools and mechanisms in order to strengthen both operational efficiency and strategic direction. This not only contributes to the achievement of intended objectives but also enables organizations to respond effectively to increasingly complex and evolving challenges and threats. Decision-making constitutes a fundamental component of an organization's administrative structure. This facilitates identification of the most appropriate option among multiple alternatives. Achieving this, however, requires a competent and knowledgeable leadership. The quality of the decision-making process depends immensely on the availability of accurate and comprehensive data that support analysis and informed judgment, thereby reinforcing the selection of the most suitable course of action.

The significance of data and information extends beyond their role in supporting administrative decision-making; they lie at the heart of strategic vigilance. Their true value lies in enabling organizations to respond effectively to dynamic changes in the external environment. Through continuous monitoring and systematic analysis, organizations can gain a deeper understanding of promising opportunities and potential future challenges that may directly or indirectly affect their operational and service performance. Consequently, strategic vigilance is an indispensable tool for achieving organizational objectives in an environment characterized by constant change.

Given the instability of external developments, organizations must demonstrate high levels of flexibility and adaptability. This allows for rapid adjustment without compromising internal stability. Strategic vigilance serves as a key tool for the systematic monitoring, analysis, and interpretation of these changes. It supports the formulation of plans and actions aligned with organizational needs and objectives. It also remains a decisive factor in an

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organization's ability to survive and excel in an environment characterized by risks and crises.

Crises are an inevitable phenomenon closely linked to the complexities of contemporary societal and organizational environments. Today, we are witnessing an unprecedented acceleration of economic, political, social, and technological changes. By their very nature, crises pose serious threats to the sustainability of organizations and the stability of societies. They often create conditions that require rapid and decisive responses, which impose significant pressure on decision-makers due to time constraints and the limited availability of accurate information.

Empirical evidence demonstrates that reliance on reactive responses during crises entails substantial risks because addressing crises after their escalation is often costly and may jeopardize organizational stability. Consequently, there is a need to adopt a more conscious and sustainable approach, embodied in a foresight-based model for crisis management. This approach is based on the principle of proactivity, which is the capacity to anticipate, interpret, and analyze crisis indicators before their actual occurrence.

The foresight-based model is not limited to emergency planning or tactical responses to apparent risks; rather, it extends to the use of advanced tools such as early environmental trend monitoring, future scenario analysis, and dynamic risk assessment. This ensures proactive preparedness and provides a solid knowledge base for making well-considered strategic decisions. Drawing on the preceding discussion, this paper raises the following research question:

- How can decision-making and strategic vigilance contribute to the development of an effective foresight-based model for crisis management?

2. Conceptual Framework

We cannot address the topic of decision-making, strategic vigilance, and organizational effectiveness without precisely defining these terms. Such conceptual clarification is essential to eliminate ambiguity surrounding key concepts and to enable a deeper analysis of the topic. Therefore, this section focuses on defining decision-making, strategic vigilance, and organizational effectiveness.

2.1. Decision-Making

Decision-making is defined as “choosing a particular course of action from a set of alternative options” (Wilson, Roe, & Kiely, 2025, p. 1). This definition emphasizes decision-making as a process through which a particular course of action is selected from multiple alternatives. In other words,

decision-making fundamentally involves choosing one option over others.

Trewatha and Newport define decision-making as a process that involves selecting a course of action from two or more possible alternatives in order to arrive at a solution to a specific problem (as cited in Krasniqi, 2025). This definition does not differ substantially from the previous one; rather, it emphasizes that the decision-making process centers on selecting the most appropriate option to address the specific dilemma or problem that necessitates the decision.

2.2. Strategic Vigilance

Ribault defines strategic vigilance as “the general and intelligent monitoring of the organization’s environment through the search for both factual and future-oriented information” (as cited in Al-Buqamī, 2025, p. 154). This definition emphasizes strategic vigilance as the systematic observation and analysis of changes and transformations occurring within both the internal and external environments of the organization. Such monitoring must be conducted intelligently and grounded in both factual and forward-looking data in order to enable timely and effective responses.

Similarly, Condol and Gros assert that “vigilance is a system for supporting strategic decisions through the observation and analysis of the economic, scientific, and technological environment” (Balbaşır, 2025, p. 36). This definition considers strategic vigilance as a support mechanism for the decision-making process while highlighting the critical importance of observing and analyzing the organization’s economic, scientific, and technological environment.

By contrast, Strategic Allocation Theory defines vigilance as “not merely a matter of focusing attention on performing a single task, but rather a matter of distributing effort across a variety of tasks and selecting modes of engagement for those tasks” (Murray & Amaya, 2024, p. 15). This definition differs from the preceding ones in that it emphasizes a distinct aspect of strategic vigilance, namely the distribution of effort or activity across multiple tasks and the selection of appropriate modes of engagement for fulfilling those roles.

2.3. Crisis Management

Before addressing the concept of crisis management, it is necessary to define, first, the notion of a crisis. Within the context of an organization’s activities, a crisis may be understood as “a critical phase in an organization’s operations, characterized by a violation of the principles of sustainable development and the emergence of complex threats that may jeopardize its continuity” (Sobolieva & Kravchenko, 2025, p. 103). This definition indicates that organizations may, at times, be exposed to severe emergency situations

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arising from internal factors, such as the failure to achieve objectives, which may consequently affect their stability and continuity.

Modern organizations have developed a considerable capacity to adapt to challenging situations, changes, and emergencies. Such capacity can only be achieved through the presence of an effective crisis management function. Crisis management is defined as “the process with related steps and procedures, which lead to early prediction of a potential crisis, identification (detection) of the nature of the crisis situation and successful resolution on time” (Vašíčková, 2019, p. 64). This definition illustrates that crisis management constitutes a strategic approach encompassing a set of mechanisms that contribute to proactive foresight, thereby enabling the formulation of appropriate corrective action plans. It further emphasizes crisis management as a structured strategy aimed at providing effective solutions to the problems an organization may encounter.

Another definition describes crisis management as the mitigation of a crisis’s impact on an organization’s operations or on the safety and well-being of individuals and the environment; it includes a systemic model for crisis preparedness and response and defines the strategies and procedures for handling the crisis (Zólyomi, 2019). Based on this definition, crisis management is a system or framework designed to minimize risks. A key feature highlighted here is the continuous state of preparedness and readiness inherent in crisis management, along with the capacity for rapid response. In other words, the core characteristics of crisis management are preparedness and response.

3. Decision-Making: A Theoretical Approach

The decision-making process is very complex and challenging since it is influenced by numerous factors and variables and requires a set of fundamental elements to ensure timely and appropriate decisions. Therefore, decision-making cannot be regarded as a simple or easy activity, as decision-makers are expected to possess specific competencies, notably intuition, the ability to perceive or sense something without reliance on formal reasoning, as well as analytical skill, which refers to the capacity to employ logical reasoning to examine and evaluate a given problem (Krasniqi, 2025, p. 27).

Herbert Simon analytically examined the notion of rationality in decision-making and demonstrated that administrative decisions cannot be fully rational in an absolute sense. This limitation arises from the fact that decision-makers cannot possess all the conditions required for complete rationality, which would necessitate comprehensive knowledge of all possible solutions. Consequently, decision-makers must settle for satisfactory or relatively optimal solutions rather than the theoretically optimal one. In this

regard, Simon advocates the concept of bounded rationality in decision-making (Masraḥd, 2018, p. 12).

Reaching a higher level of rationality in decision-making also requires the presence of participative leadership. This contributes to involving human resources in the decision-making process. Participative leadership “encourages employee involvement in decision-making, thereby enhancing commitment and a sense of belonging” (Ṭashṭūsh, 2025, p. 57). When human resources experience commitment and belonging, they foster a spirit of cooperation and teamwork, which strengthens their sense of responsibility toward decision-making, and their willingness to propose ideas, provide leaders with the necessary data, and effectively implement decisions.

Decision-making is no longer carried out through traditional or classical methods based solely on intuition and expectations. Rather, it increasingly relies on accurate and data-driven systems. As noted by Al-Mandilāwī, “the strategic value of participatory data becomes evident when it is integrated into decision-making processes at all levels, including the tactical level; its importance lies in helping managers identify opportunities for both individual and collective development” (Al-Mandilāwī, 2026, p. 92).

Data refers to information and factual evidence that acquire strategic value when effectively used in decision-making processes at different organizational levels. This data contributes to a clearer understanding of the organization’s internal environment, particularly at the tactical level, which focuses on the formulation and implementation of plans, especially those related to day-to-day operations and tasks. The strategic value of data lies in its ability to help identify, capitalize on, and further develop opportunities, whether individual or collective, in ways that support the achievement of organizational objectives. Balbaṣīr argues that “[...] whereas the management system aligns decisions and strategies related to effective productivity and the competitive efficiency of the value-added chain, it addresses three levels of decision-making: operational decisions, tactical decisions, and strategic decisions” (Balbaṣīr, 2024, p. 35).

Sustained productivity and the continuity of value creation cannot be achieved without an effective management system that supports accurate and well-informed decision-making. Such a system operates across three distinct levels of decision-making. Operational decisions relate to the organization’s day-to-day activities, such as human resource management, particularly the organization of work schedules for performance monitoring. Tactical decisions concern short-term planning, including the identification of training needs. Strategic decisions, by contrast, are formulated over the long term and focus on the organization’s major objectives, such as recruitment policies based on criteria and requirements that differ from existing human resources, notably the attraction of creative and talented individuals.

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4. Establishing a Strategic Vigilance System

Today's leading organizations are those able to respond swiftly and effectively to changing situations and conditions. This capacity can only be achieved through a clear and well-defined strategy or the adoption of a forward-looking vision. From this perspective, the need for strategic vigilance has become increasingly evident. Strategic vigilance is therefore regarded as a fundamental organizational response mechanism and should be considered one of the core systems underpinning the organization, given its critical importance.

This importance is reflected in its role as a supportive tool for decision-making in general and for strategic decision-making in particular. Moreover, strategic vigilance functions as an early detection mechanism. It helps organizations identify changes and transformations at an early stage and to adapt and adjust accordingly. In addition, it allows them to respond rapidly and immediately, thereby placing them in a state of continuous preparedness and timely readiness.

The importance of strategic vigilance extends beyond anticipation alone; it also serves as a means for formulating, developing, and planning organizational strategy. Moreover, it functions as a tool for anticipating change and gaining time, as it relies on specific mechanisms to achieve objectives or manage crises. Ultimately, strategic vigilance contributes to effective risk management and enhances organizational security (Bakūsh, 2024).

Beyond this, strategic vigilance aims to achieve higher levels of organizational success by enabling the identification of opportunities, supporting sound decision-making, and reducing risks. According to Bakūsh, it ensures the success of activities and decisions related to the organization's future by providing timely warnings and facilitating the exploitation of opportunities. When it comes to making critical decisions, such as formulating or modifying a strategy, strategic vigilance enables the selection and implementation of the most appropriate decisions while mitigating risks (Bakūsh, 2024).

Despite the importance of strategic vigilance and the benefits it offers to organizations, several obstacles hinder its effective implementation. One of the main challenges lies in integrating the vigilance unit into existing operational structures. Strategic vigilance systems often struggle to move from a project-based initiative to an institutionalized process embedded across the organization's various functions. As a result, many actors involved in vigilance activities lack awareness of the roles, activities, or representatives of the organization's formal vigilance system, which limits their effective contribution.

Strategic vigilance also faces challenges related to management involvement and integration. Given its strategic nature, managerial

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engagement is crucial to its success. Insufficient management support or limited intervention undermines the credibility and legitimacy of vigilance initiatives, leading to participant frustration and weakening the system, which may ultimately result in failure. Furthermore, an unsuitable organizational culture may hinder the success of strategic vigilance, particularly when organizational members refuse to share information or monopolize it through concealment and its use as a source of power (‘Alāwah, 2017). In addition, practical difficulties may arise at each stage of the vigilance process.

A crisis has a significant impact on an organization and its various systems and structures. It affects organizational and productive systems through a decline in production volume and the failure to achieve the desired level of organizational effectiveness. This situation may be accompanied by internal conflicts, a deterioration in discipline and work commitment, and a decline in employee engagement with work outcomes. Moreover, “a crisis affects the economic aspect through a decrease in consumer demand for the organization’s products” (Sobolieva & Kravchenko, 2025, pp. 103–104), or services, along with increased competitive pressure in the market.

From a strategic perspective, a crisis may damage an organization’s reputation, lead to a loss of trust among clients and partners, and hinder its ability to undertake strategic transformation or adapt to market changes and emerging technologies. From a financial perspective, a crisis can result in a shortage of cash resources needed to meet financial obligations on time, as well as an increase in debt levels. To avoid losses and organizational failure, organizations are therefore ought to develop plans to address such situations, a practice commonly referred to as crisis management.

Crisis management is the systematic process of preparing an organization for potential crisis situations. It involves identifying potential threats, conducting risk analysis, and developing procedures and action strategies. The key elements of crisis planning include the following:

- **Threat identification:** recognizing and classifying potential threats that may affect the organization.
- **Risk assessment:** analyzing the likelihood of individual threats and their potential consequences.
- **Action plan development:** creating detailed procedures to respond to crisis scenarios.
- **Training and exercises:** providing regular employee training and conducting crisis simulations to prepare teams for effective performance during crises.
- **Crisis response** (Ciekanowski et al., 2024, p. 612)

For a crisis management strategy to be effective and viable, it must proceed through a series of essential stages. The first stage involves monitoring

and analyzing changes and identifying potential threats, whether internal or external to the organization. The second stage focuses on assessing risks and threats and evaluating their potential impact on the organization. The third stage corresponds to the corrective planning phase, during which a clear and structured action plan is developed to ensure an effective response to crises and threats.

The fourth stage relates to training and aims to prepare human resources by equipping them with the skills necessary to manage, simulate, and anticipate risks and crises. Finally, the fifth stage consists of crisis response. This stage goes beyond reactive behavior or isolated actions within the organization; rather, crisis response has evolved into a structured system with its own functions and executive mechanisms. As noted by Zólyomi (2019), “the crisis management system is closely linked to the emergency response system. While the emergency response system focuses on the immediate tactical response to a specific emergency situation, the crisis management system addresses strategic issues and responses” (p. 353). Nevertheless, the crisis management system and the emergency response system are mutually complementary and interdependent.

5. The Triadic Relationship between Decision-Making, Strategic Vigilance, and Crisis Management

The situations and challenges faced by organizations today have made planning and decision-making central to the administrative and managerial process. This evolving reality has intensified ambiguity and complexity, making it increasingly difficult for managers to maintain control in an environment marked by uncertainty and unpredictability. As a result, it has become essential to analyze the organizational environment using more precise and objective methods.

According to Herbert Simon, vigilance constitutes the initial stage of the decision-making model, as it involves scanning environmental events, anticipating potential developments, and understanding possible behavioral patterns (Balbaşır, 2024). However, the absence of certainty can complicate the decision-making process. Decision-making during crises relies on the information collected, the interpretations provided by decision-makers, and their experience and knowledge of the phenomenon or problem confronting the organization, all of which have a significant impact on decision outcomes. In this regard, M. Firsiroutou and Y. Allaire propose three approaches for dealing with situations of uncertainty:

- Anticipating and preparing for the future;
- Controlling or mitigating uncertainty, through mechanisms such as political pressure, negotiation, compromise, mergers and acquisitions, divestment, risk transfer to third parties, and disciplined competition;

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- Developing the necessary capacity for resilience, enabling adaptation to uncertainty beyond the organization's boundaries. (‘Allūt, 2020, pp. 110-111)

The relationship of interaction, collaboration, and mutual engagement between the vigilance officer and the decision-maker within the strategic vigilance system constitutes a fundamental basis for effective collective action. This relationship facilitates the efficient exchange of views, information, and perspectives. In this regard, Kislin describes the vigilance officer as an informational decision-maker and, in effect, a second decision-maker, given that the officer operates under the same organizational constraints and pressures faced by the primary decision-maker. Moreover, the vigilance officer plays a key role in determining which information is most relevant and appropriate for decision-making purposes (Nahḥāsiyya, 2018).

Strategic vigilance is regarded as a key tool for anticipating future developments within organizations, as it enables decision-makers to access accurate and timely information, thereby supporting the anticipation of potential social, economic, and environmental crises and contributing to the limitation of their impact through the continuous collection, analysis, and evaluation of internal and external data. In this sense, strategic vigilance functions as an early warning system that guides informed decision-making processes (Doghri & Alroubaie, 2025, pp. 82-83).

Supporting decision-making and problem-solving are among the core organizational processes that enable decision-makers to select well-considered and effective alternatives. These choices are based on accurate assessments and reliable information derived from analyses of competitors’ trends, applicable laws and regulations, and technological developments (Al-‘Āmirī & Rājīḥ, 2024).

Empirical evidence further supports this relationship. A study by Altarawneh entitled *The Role of Organizational Improvisation in Crisis Management Methods: The Moderating Role of Strategic Vigilance* (Altarawneh, 2024), demonstrated that strategic vigilance, across its various dimensions, contributes to improving the efficiency of commercial banks in crisis management. In the same vein, Al-Suhimat et al. (2025) found that attributes of wisdom, particularly decision-making capability, self-control, and moral integrity, are positively associated with successful crisis management.

The development of a foresight-based model for crisis management depends on two fundamental variables: sound and wise decision-making, and strategic vigilance grounded in an accurate perception of reality. This relationship can be expressed as follows:

Crisis Management = Decision-Making × Strategic Vigilance

CM = D × SV

6. Conclusion

In conclusion, it can be firmly asserted that establishing a proactive and foresight-oriented framework for crisis management goes beyond a mere organizational or planning exercise; it constitutes a critical necessity, particularly in light of the increasing complexity and continuous evolution of organizations' external environments. Organizational effectiveness in managing crises does not depend solely on the rapid implementation of procedures, but rather on the degree of dynamic interaction between strategic vigilance, as an anticipatory mechanism for monitoring and analyzing change, and a comprehensive decision-making process, which ultimately shapes the organization's response to unforeseen challenges.

Among the key recommendations suggested by this study is the need for effective decision-making grounded in clearly defining the objective of the decision, collecting information from reliable sources, and carefully evaluating available alternatives in order to select the most appropriate option. With regard to strategic vigilance, the study emphasizes the importance of continuous monitoring of the organization's external environment, systematic analysis of information, and adaptive responses to change. As for crisis management, organizations should ensure thorough preparedness by developing a structured crisis management plan, establishing clear communication with the crisis management team, assessing the crisis situation, identifying its causes and consequences, and implementing a rapid and effective response.

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