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Crisis Management Strategy and its Effects on Organizational Performance of Multinational Corporations in Nigeria: Empirical Evidence from Promassidor Ltd.

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Abstract
At one time or the other, organizations would witness crisis whether internal or external in which its impact could induce severe consequences or even disasters if wrong strategic moves are devised. The issue of how organizations can maintain good performance when faced with critical situations has largely remained unexplored. This study therefore examines the effect of crisis management strategy on organizational performance of multinational corporations in Nigeria, empirical insight from Promassidor ltd. Crisis management forms the bedrock for peaceful co-existence between employers and employees and even the society at large. Crisis is inevitable in any organization because it comes in varied forms and degrees. In carrying out this study a total of 321 staffs were randomly selected from a staff population of 700. Two hypotheses were formulated to guide the study and the data collected were analyzed using partial correlation. The results revealed that management challenges to crisis management strategy is attributed to poor organizational performance and that crisis management strategy does not have any effect on organizational performance. Based on the findings of the study, recommendations were made that multinational corporations in Nigeria should make funds available for human resource development on a continuous basis, and that management of organizations should be pro-active when it comes to issues of human resource management. Therefore, the extent to which an organization is able to forge ahead in spite of this unavoidable constraint will depend much on the human resource managers on whom rests the arduous task of resolving crisis.
Keywords: Cris management strategy, effect, organizations performance and MNCs.

1.0. INTRODUCTION

As an organization operating in today's society, it would at one time or the other witness instability in which the impacts of event(s) threaten its operations, survivals or reputation. The ability of such organization to successfully craft strategies to manage such crisis is what differentiate an organization that is able to manage instability state of affairs from another organization that allows such horrible state to dampen its strategic objectives (Macfarlane, 2010). Crisis management is therefore seen as the provision of an organization's pre - planned, rapid response capability supported by a leadership, information management and communications capacity in an integrated fashion to enable fast decision making at a strategic level within a structured environment, and thereby allowing for effective recovery and protecting an organization's survival or reputation (Dominic Cockram, 2012). Also, It is imperative for the management to ensure that disasters do not happen or that the impact of critical situations be minimized (Roberts, 2000). A crisis is thus a critical situation that can have severe negative consequences to the organization (Perrow, 2004. Frequently, studies of crisis management have become listings of rhetorical suggestions that lack both the theoretical background and the quantitative foundation with the issue of how organizations could mitigate the impact when a crisis occurs remaining unanswered. There is also an insufficiency of study from an open system's perspective on how aspects of organizational design and task environment interact and affect organizational performance in critical situations (Pearson and Mitroff, 2003). Studies have also ranged from building mathematical models for advising corporate organizations and government parastatals on actions in organizational politics and military crisis situations (Havron and Blanton, 2007), and also designing training tools for managerial crisis prevention (Rolfe 2008; Walker, 2005), and further to relying on operations research for devising logistics systems for tackling crises (Arabmazar, 2003). While these studies have provided new insights into various issues of crisis management, they have largely based themselves on operations research and game theory approaches, instead of organizational theories and strategies, which, we believe, can provide a much more relevant and stronger foundation to the field of crisis management. An attempt is made in this study to address the fundamental issue of how organizations can maintain good performance when faced with critical situations from an open system's perspective of organizations (Thompson, 2007). Tackling crisis in an organization goes beyond developing a crisis management plan, it has to do with crafting effective strategy via information, communication, peaceful dialogue and other approach to resolving organizational crisis in order to enhance overall performance.

In any organization the impact of crisis on organizational performance cannot be overemphasized, it affects everything that the organization stands for. Hence, the attention of the management on crisis management in any organization goes a long way to meet the challenges posed by need for organizational performance. Crisis and its management by organizations and the policy makers, and its effect on organizational performance have the attention of this work. Crisis management is aimed at creating conducive atmosphere where business can thrive and be profitable. However, the inability of managers and other policy makers to successfully resolve crisis that may emanate from both within an outside the organization may have negative effect on productivity level of such organization, stagnation in operational activities, reduced proficiency, inability to meet stated targets, decrease in sales level among others. Crisis managed with levity by an organization might lead to exile of such organizations if appropriate strategic moves are not devised to avert the situation within the shortest time. This study is being conducted to analyze the method of crisis management strategy on efficient usage of resources in the organization.

1.1 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The broad objective of this study is to examine crisis management strategy and its effects on organizational performance of multinational corporations in Nigeria. However, the specific objectives of the study are to:

i. Identify the crisis management strategies open to an organization
ii. Analyze the management challenges to effective crisis management strategy on performance
iii. Determine the effect of crisis management on organizational performance

1.2 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

In any business organization, management knows the significance of crisis planning in achieving organizational goals and objectives. The research questions are:

i. What are the crisis management strategies available to an organization?
ii. What are the challenges to effective crisis management in an organization?
iii. What are the causes of crisis in an organization?
iv. What is the relationship between organizational performance and crisis management?

1.3 RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

These are statements that would be tested to determine the significance of the relationships between the variables being tested. The hypotheses are stated in Null form.

(1) **Ho**: Management challenges to effective crisis management is not a function of poor performance.
(2) **Ho:** Crisis management strategy does not have any effects on organizational performance

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Conceptual Clarifications of Crisis and Crisis Management

The word crisis means different thing to different people in different professions. The term crisis has also been defined and conceptualized by different scholars and authorities in the field of management. Pas (2011) defined crisis as an inherently abnormal, unstable and complex situation that represents a threat to the strategic objectives, reputation or existence of an organization. Fink (2002) sees crisis as an abnormal situation, or even perception, which is beyond the scope of everyday business and which threatens the operation, safety, and reputation of an organization. Crisis is also conceptualize as an unstable time or state of affairs in which a decisive change is impending (Seeger & Ulmer, 2003). Crisis is also defined as a specific, unexpected, and non‐routine event or series of events that create high levels of uncertainty and threaten or are perceived to threaten an organization's high priority goals (Boins & Sundelius, 2005). MacFarlane (2010), Crisis is also conceptualize as a serious threat to the basic structures or the fundamental values and norms of a system, which under time pressure and highly uncertain circumstances necessitates making vital decisions. A change, which may be sudden or which may take some time to evolve, that results in an urgent problem that must be addressed immediately. An event that threatens the strategic objectives, reputation or existence of an organization (Pearson & Sommer, 2011) Crises are events or trends that threaten the viability of the organizations within which they occur. (Coombs, 2011), see crisis as the perception of an unpredictable event that threatens important expectancies of stakeholders and can seriously impact an organization's performance and generate negative outcomes.

Crisis Management is a term often used to describe the way in which an organization handles a crisis. A paucity of definitions exists within dictionaries, policy documents, and crisis literature, and where they do exist, those definitions provided differ vastly in focus, scope, and terminology used. The provision of an organization's pre‐planned, rapid response capability supported by a leadership, information management and communications capacity in an integrated fashion to enable fast decision making at a strategic level within a structured environment, and thereby allowing for effective recovery and protecting an organization's survival or reputation. Crisis management is the art of making decisions to head off or mitigate the effects of such an event, often while the event itself is unfolding. This often means making decisions about your institution's future while you are under stress and while you lack key pieces of information. Consistent with the overall philosophy of this manual, the key to being able to manage a crisis is doing as much planning as practical before a crisis starts in order to best position you and your institution to respond to and mitigate such a situation. Crisis Management is the management and coordination of your institution's responses to an incident that threatens to harm, or has harmed, your institution's people, structures, ability to operate, valuables and/or reputation. It takes into account your planning and automatic incident response, but must also dynamically deal with situations as they unfold, often in unpredictable ways.

2.1.2Types of Crisis Management

Coomb's (1999) posited that during the crisis management process, it is important to identify types of crisis, in that different crisis necessitate the use of different crisis management strategies. Lerbinger (1997), argues that potential crisis are enormous, but crisis can be clustered. He later identified categories and types of crisis as:

a. Natural disaster
b. Technological crisis
c. Confrontation
d. Malevolence
e. Organizational misdeeds
f. Workplace violence
g. Rumors.

Natural crisis: Natural crisis, typically natural disasters considered as "acts of God", are such environmental phenomena as earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, tornadoes and hurricanes, floods, landslides, tsunamis, storms and droughts that threaten life, property and the environment itself. Example is the 2004 Indian Ocean earthquake (Tsunami).

Technological crisis: Technological crisis are caused by human application of science and technology. Technological accident inevitably occurs when technology becomes complex and coupled and something goes wrong in the system as a whole (technological break down). Some technological crisis occur when human error or natural forces causes disruptions in normal routine of such technology. People tend to assign blame for technological disaster because technology is subject to human manipulation whereas they do not hold anyone responsible for natural disasters. When an accident creates significant environmental damage, the crisis is categorized as mega-damage such as that that occurred in Japan (Tsunami induced technology crisis). Samples include software failures, industrial accidents and oil spills. Examples are Chernobyl disaster, Exxon Valdez oil spill.

Confrontation crisis: confrontation crisis occurs when discontented individuals and/or groups fight businesses, government, and various interest groups to win acceptance of their demands and expectations. The common type of confrontation crisis in boycotts, and other types are picketing, sit-ins ultimatums to those in authority, blockade or occupation of buildings, and resisting or disobeying police.

Crisis of malevolence: an organization faces a crisis of malevolence when opponents or miscreants individuals use criminal means or other extreme tactics for the purpose of expressing hostility or anger toward, or seeking gain form a company, country or economic system, perhaps with the aim of destabilizing or destroying, malicious rumours, terrorism and espionage. Example is the Niger Delta crisis.

Workplace violence: crisis occurs when an employee or former employee commits violence against other employees on organizational grounds.

Rumours: false information about an organization or its products create crisis hurting the organization's reputation. Sample is linking the organization to radical groups or stories that their products are contaminated. Example is the Procter and Gamble's logo controversy.

Crisis of organizational misdeeds: crisis occurs when management takes action it knows will harm or place stakeholders at risk for harm without adequate precautions. Lerbinger (op. cit) specified three different types of organizational misdeeds; crisis of skewed management values, crisis of deception and crisis of management misconduct. He posited that crisis of skewed management values are caused when managers favour short-term economic gain and neglect broader social values, and stakeholders other than investors. This state of top sided values is rooted in the classical business creed that focuses on the interests of stock holders and tends to view the interest of its other stakeholders such as customers, employees and the community. Example is the Oni led Cadbury Boardroom crisis. While crisis of deception occur when management conceals or misrepresents information about itself and its product in its dealings with customers and others. Good example is the Daewoo Racer crisis of 1991. On the other hand, crisis of management misconduct some of which are caused not only by skewed values and deception, but also by deliberate amorality and illegality. Successfully defusing a crisis requires an understanding of how to handle a crisis – before they occur. Gonzatez Herrero and Pratt found the different phases of crisis management. There are 3 phases in any crisis management are as below:

- The diagnosis of the impending trouble or the danger signals
- Choosing appropriate turnaround strategy
- Implementation of the change process and its monitoring.

2.2 Management Crisis Planning

No corporation looks forward to facing a situation that causes significant description to their business, especially one that stimulates extensive media coverage. Public scrutiny can result in a negative financial, political, legal and government impact. Crisis management planning deals with providing the best response to a crisis (Coombs; 2007).

Contingency Planning

Preparing contingency plans in advance, as part of a crisis management plan, is the first step to ensuring an organization is appropriately prepared for a crisis. Crisis management teams rehearse a crisis plan by developing a simulated scenario to use as a drill. The plan should clearly stipulate that the only people to speak publicly about the crisis are the designated persons, such as the company's spokesperson or crisis team members. The first hours after a crisis breaks are the most crucial, so working with speed and efficiency is important, and the plan should indicate how quickly each function should be performed. When preparing to offer a statement externally as well as internally, information should be accurate. Providing incorrect or manipulated information has a tendency to backfire and will greatly exacerbate the situation. The contingency plan should contain information and guidance that will help decision makers to consider not only the short-term consequences, but the long-term effects of every decision.

Business Continuity Planning

When a crisis will undoubtedly cause a significant disruption to an organization, a business continuity plan can help minimize the disruption. First, one must identify the critical functions and processes that are necessary to keep the organization running. Then each critical function and/or process must have its own contingency plan in the event that one of the functional processes ceases or fails. Testing these contingency plans by rehearsing the required actions in a simulation will allow for all involved to become more sensitive and aware of the possibility of a crisis. As a result, in the event of an actual crisis, the team members will act more quickly and effectively.

2.2.1METHODS OF CRISIS MANAGEMENT

James (2007) defines organization crisis as "any emotionally charged situation that, once it becomes public, invites negative stakeholder's reaction and thereby has the potential to threaten the financial well being, reputation or survival of the firm or some portion thereof". He classified organization crisis into two primary types:

Sudden crisis: which he identified as any circumstances that occur without warning and beyond an institutions control. Consequently, sudden crisis are most often situations for which the institution and its leadership are not blamed.

Smoldering crisis: he differentiated between smoldering crisis and sudden crisis in that they begin as minor internal issues, that, due to manager's negligence develop to crisis status. These are situations when leaders are blamed for the crisis and its subsequent effect on the institution in question.

James categorizes five phases of crisis that require specific crisis leadership competencies. Each phase contains an obstacle that a leader must overcome to improve the structure and operations of an organization. James case study on crisis in the financial services sector, for example, explores why crisis events erode public trust in leadership. James' research demonstrates how leadership competencies of integrity, positive intent, capability, mutual respect, and transparency impact the trust building process.

- Signal detection preparation and prevention
- Containment and damage control
- Business recovery
- Learning

Signal detection: signal detection is the stage in a crisis in which leaders should, but do not always, sense early warning signals (red flags) that suggest the possibility of a crisis. The detection stages of a crisis include:

Sense – making: represents an attempt to create order and make sense, retrospectively, or what occurs. Perspective taking: the ability to consider another person's or groups point of view.

Preparation and prevention: it is during this stage that crisis handlers begin preparing for or averting the crisis that had been foreshadowed in the signal detection stage. Organizations such as the Red Cross's primary mission are to prepare for and prevent the escalation of crisis events. Walmart has been described as an emergency relief standard bearer after having witnessed the incredibly speedy and well-coordinated effort to get supplies to the gulf coast of the United States in anticipation of Hurricane Katrina.

Containment and damage control: usually the most vivid stage, the goal of crisis containment and damage control is to limit the reputational, financial, safety and other threats to firm's survival. Crisis handlers' work diligently during this stage to bring the crisis to an end as quickly as possible to limit the negative publicity to the organization and move into the business recovery stage.

Business recovery: when crisis hits, organizations must be able to carry on with their business in the midst of the crisis while simultaneously planning for how they will recover from the damage the crisis has caused. Crisis handlers not only engage in continuity planning (determining the people, financial, and technology resources needed to keep the organization running), but will also actively pursue organizational resilience.

Learning: in the wake of a crisis, organizational decision makers adopt a learning orientation and use prior experiences to develop new routines and behaviours that ultimately change the way the organization operates. The best leaders recognize this and are purposeful and skillful in finding the learning opportunities inherent in every situation. Crisis management methods of a business or an organization are called crisis management plan. Power (2011) identified crisis management as consist of:

- Methods used to respond to both the reality and perception of crisis.
- Establishing metrics to define what scenarios constitute a crisis and should consequently trigger the necessary response mechanism.
- Communication that occurs within the response phase of emergency management scenarios

The credibility and reputation of organizations is heavily influenced by the perception of their responses during crisis situations. The organization and communication process. The related terms emergency management and business continuity management, focus respectively on the prompt but short-lived "first aid" type of response (e.g. putting the fire out) and the longer term recovery and restoration phases (e.g. moving operations to another location). Crisis is also a facet of risk management, although it is probably untrue to say that crisis management represents a failure of risk management since it will never be possible to totally instigate the chances of catastrophes occurring.

2.2.2ROLE OF APOLOGIES IN CRISIS MANAGEMENT

There has been a debate about the role of apologies in crisis management and some argue that apology opens an organization up for possible legal consequences. However, some evidence indicates that compensation and sympathy, two less expensive strategies, are as effective as an apology in shaping people's perceptions of the organization; taking responsibility for the crisis because these strategies focus on the victim's needs. The sympathy response expresses concern for victims while compensation offers victims something to offset the suffering.

2.3 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Crisis management is the process by which an organization deals with a major event that threatens the harm the organization, its stakeholders, or the general public. Venette (2003) argues that "crisis is a process of transformation where the old system can no longer be maintained".

Seegor, Sellnow and Umer (2003) identified the three elements common to most definitions of crisis: (a) a threat to the organization, (b) the element of surprise, and (c) a short decision time. Therefore, the fourth defining quality is the need for change. If change is not needed, the event could more accurately be described as a failure or incident. In contrast to risk management, which involves assessing potential threats and finding the best ways to avoid those threats, crisis management involves dealing with threats after they have occurred. It is discipline within the broader context of management consisting of skills and techniques required to identify, assess, understand and cope with a serious situation, especially from the procedures start.

Crisis management is occasionally referred to as incident management; although several industry specialists such as Power (2011) argue that the term crisis management is more accurate. He identified crisis management theories as:

STRUCTURAL – FUNCTIONAL SYSTEMS THEORY

Providing information to an organization in a time of crisis is critical to effective crisis management. Structural-functional systems theory addresses the intricacies of information networks and levels of command making up organizational communication. Rancer and Womack (1997) posited that the structural – functional theory identifies information flow in organizations as "networks" made up of members and links. Information in organizations flow in patterns called networks.

DIFFUSION OF INNOVATION THEORY

Another theory that can be applied to the sharing of information identified by James is the diffusion of innovation theory, developed by Everett Rogers (1962). The theory seeks to explain how, why and what rate new ideas are spread in an organization. Diffusion is the process by which an innovation is communicated through certain channels overtime among the members of a social system. Four key elements are involved in diffusion. These elements are:

Innovation: Rogers defines innovation as an "idea, practice or object that is perceived as new by an individual or other unit of adoption"

Communication channel: this is the means by which messages get from one individual to another.

Time: the innovation – decision period is the length of time required to pass through the innovation decision process.

Social system: is a set of interrelated units that are engaged in joint problem solving to accomplish a common goal.

Diffusion of innovation in communication occurs when an individual communicates a new idea to one or several others. At its most elementary form, the process involves:

i. an innovation
ii. an individual or other unit of adoption that has knowledge of or experience with using the innovation,

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iii. another individual or other unit of adoption that does not yet have knowledge of the innovation and
iv. A communication channel connecting the two units. It describes how an idea or practice is disseminated and communicated

3.0 METHODOLOGY

The study was carried out in Nigeria, using descriptive survey research design. The target population are employees of Promassidor Nigeria Ltd in Lagos State. Lagos state was chosen because greater percentage of multinational corporations operating in Nigeria are located in Lagos state, the industrial nerve Centre of the country. A sample size of 321 employees formed the respondents for the study, out of 700 staffs that formed the population of Promassidor Nigeria Ltd. Stratified and simple random sampling techniques were used to select the respondents whereby the employees were stratified according to their designation. Questionnaires were used to collect data which were validated through a pilot study. The questions were closed ended on a five point Likert scale. Descriptive statistics was used to analyze data.

4.0 DATA EXHIBITION

The data was collected through questionnaires are then entered in Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). Data analysis and presentation started with the analysis and presentation of demographics. Findings from the study shows the respondents distribution according to sex thus: The majority of the respondents are male with 65% of the respondents and female forms the rest of the group. The pie chart below depicts the sex distribution.

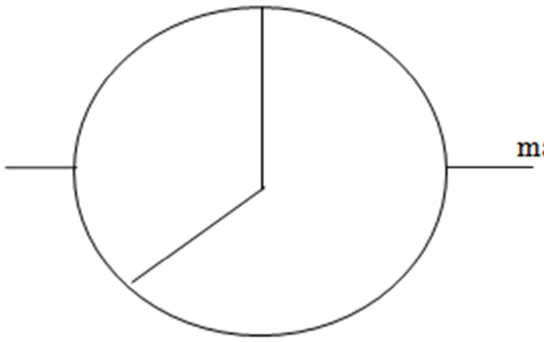

Figure 1: Sex distribution

4.1 Descriptive Statistics:

Correlations

Control Variables			Crisis management strategy	Organizational performance	Challenges of crisis Management
-none-[a]	Crisis management strategy	Correlation	1.000	.805	-.617
		Significance (2-tailed)	.	.000	.000
		df	0	313	313
	Organizational performance	Correlation	.805	1.000	-.218
		Significance (2-tailed)	.000	.	.000
		df	313	0	313
	Challenges of crisis Managment	Correlation	-.617	-.218	1.000
		Significance (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.
		df	313	313	0
Challenges of crisis Management	Crisis management strategy	Correlation	1.000	.874	
		Significance (2-tailed)	.	.000	
		df	0	312	
	Organizational performance	Correlation	.874	1.000	
		Significance (2-tailed)	.000	.	
		df	312	0	

a. Cells contain zero-order (Pearson) correlations.

Partial correlation was used to explore the relationship between crisis management strategy and organization performance, while controlling for the effect of the challenges of crisis management strategy. There was a strong, positive, partial correlation between crisis management strategy and organization performance, while controlling for the effect of the challenges of crisis management strategy, $r = -0.875$, $n = 312$, $p < .0005$,. An inspection of the zero order correlation ($r = 0.805$) suggested that controlling for challenges of crisis management strategy had significant effect on the strength of the relationship between crisis management strategy and organization performance. However there is a strong negative correlation between organization performance and challenges of crisis management strategy, $r=-0.617$, $n=312$, $p < .0005$. Which implies that high challenges of crisis management strategy is attributed to poor organization performance.

5.0 CONCLUSION & RECOMMENDATIONS.

Crisis management has become a defining feature of contemporary governance. In times of crisis, communities and members of organizations expect their public leaders to minimize the impact of the crisis at hand, while critics and bureaucratic competitors try to seize the moment to blame incumbent rulers and their policies. In extreme environment, policy makers must somehow establish a sense of normality, and foster collective learning from the crisis experience. In the face of crisis, leaders must deal with the strategic challenges they face, the political risks and opportunities they encounter, the errors they make, the pitfalls they need to avoid, and the paths away from crisis they may pursue. The necessity for management is even more significant with the advent of a 24 hour news cycle and an increasingly internet savvy audience with ever changing technology at its finger tips. Public leaders have a special responsibility to help safeguard society from the adverse consequences of crisis. Experts in crisis management note to concern themselves with all crisis phases; the incubation stage, the onset, and the aftermath. Crisis leadership then involves five critical tasks: sense making, decision making, and meaning making, terminating and learning. Conclusively, the survival and growth of any business organization depend on its people because a considerable proportion of the value of an organization is determined not just by the recruitment and training policies adopted by the organization but also by the way in which the structure and culture of the organization allow strategic human resources development. Although this task is a very difficult one to accomplish, a first and necessary step towards a remarkable success in this area begins with a good knowledge of what the employees need in terms of career development. This enables the organization to adapt its capacities and capabilities to channeling all its available resources towards meeting these needs in their various forms.

Crisis management methods of a business or in an organization are called crisis management plan. The credibility and reputation of organizations is heavily influenced by the perception of their responses during crisis situations. The organization and communication involved in responding to a crisis in a timely fashion makes for a challenge in businesses. There must be open and consistent communication throughout the hierarchy to contribute to a successful crisis communication process. The related terms emergency management and business continuity management focus respectively on the prompt but short lined “first aid” type of response (e.g. putting the fire out) and the longer term recovery and restoration phases (e.g. moving operations to another site). Crisis is also a facet of risk management, although it is probably untrue to say that crisis management represents a failure of risk management since it will never be possible to totally mitigate the chances of catastrophes occurring.

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