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IDENTIFICATION OF CRISIS MANAGEMENT INFLUENCING FACTORS IN THE ABU DHABI POLICE FORCE, UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

A. Al Mulla[1,2], Q.T. Nguyen[3], R.N.G. Naguib[3], M. Samy[2] and A. Tsoularis[2]

[1]Abu Dhabi Police, UAE
[2]Leeds Beckett University, UK
[3]BIOCORE Research and Consultancy Ltd, UK

Problem statement: Through various disasters, due to both anthropological and natural causes, the development of effective crisis management (CM) mechanisms has become inevitably critical in order to reduce not only various types of losses, but also the potential magnitude of future calamities (Sahin, 2009). Although a number of researchers examined effective CM in organisations located in and/or managed by Western countries (Adams and Stewart, 2014), little has been conducted in the United Arab Emirates (UAE). In fact, to date, there has been no such research applied to any UAE police department. Thus, this study aims to review CM within the General Headquarters (GHQ) of Abu Dhabi Police in order to identify potential influencing factors contributing to effective CM in the organisation, and eventually develop a holistic framework based on global benchmarking.

Method: A comprehensive literature survey of factors that affect effective CM is conducted. Systematically, this paves the way to carry out an assessment of the current situation in the Abu Dhabi Police GHQ. Emerging critical factors are identified and analysed.

Analysis: The perception of effective CM in organisations has been diversely studied and discussed. Some studies assert that effective CM is entirely based on good judgment, information, pre-planning, decision, and luck (Fragouli et al, 2013), whereas others highlight psychological, socio-political, technological, and structural issues; human resource development; leadership; coordination and agreement between team members; and effective communications as influencing factors for effective CM. Furthermore, the lack of capability to adopt changes during crisis situations, as well as inefficient planning, decision making, training practices, tools and equipment could negatively contribute to effective CM practices (Beck et al, 2010; Bernstein, 2011; Groom and Fritz, 2012).

This study focuses on the Abu Dhabi Police GHQ, which is one of the most important law enforcement agencies in the UAE. The organisation integrates the latest and most advanced technologies for systems management and practices, thus enabling it to address each concern comprehensively and competently (Abu Dhabi Police, 2015). By way of example, in 2013, the organisation launched an Apple app assisting local individuals and companies with policing services. As a result of its complex organisational structure and enormous workload, the agency is influenced by numerous factors that are construed as barriers to achieving effective CM.

Conclusion: A theoretical framework is developed which suggests that the lack of training, capability to adapt to changes, communication and HR development are the essential factors affecting CM practices in the Abu Dhabi Police GHQ. Corporate public relations and social responsibility are also areas requiring more research in order to

strengthen the relationship between the organisation and other stakeholders, and ensure the fluid flow of communication.

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