

PR practitioners' roles in crisis management: Malaysian perspectives

Zeti Azreen Ahmad, International Islamic University, Malaysia

Syed Arabi Iddid, International Islamic University, Malaysia

Abstract

Crisis refers to any occurrence that disturbs a normal routine of individuals or organisations and that inflicts undesirable consequences. Strategic management of a crisis is instrumental to lessen the undesirable impact to those affected. Over the years, scholars have developed theoretical frameworks and strategic responses to salvage organisations' reputation from a myriad of crises. Major crises mainly in the United States and Europe, have been documented as case studies for teaching and learning. However, it is worth noting that there is no one-size-fits-all strategy in handling crises. Despite numerous crises events that have occurred in Malaysia, little attempt has been made to examine how these crises were managed from the public relations (PR) perspective. In addition, how PR practitioners in Malaysia perceived their role in crisis management and how they respond to a crisis have not been much explored. In view of this gap, this study aims to address the following objectives; (i) to explore how PR practitioners in Malaysia perceived their involvement in crisis management, (ii) to identify crisis response strategies adopted by practitioners and (iii) to examine possible role conflict perceived by PR practitioners in crisis management within an organisation. More than 300 PR practitioners working in various organizations in Malaysia took part in a survey conducted in 2018. The findings among others affirmed that PR practitioners perceived their role as dominant and important in crisis management. However, practitioners' reactive approach in crisis management could hinder their ability in managing crisis effectively. The present study serves as a significant attempt to enrich the existing literature on PR role in crisis management from PR practitioners' perspective.

Keywords

crisis management; PR role; crisis response strategies

Introduction

Crisis refers to any occurrence that disturbs the normal routine of individuals or organisations and which in turn inflicts undesirable consequences. A strategic management of a crisis is instrumental to lessen the undesirable impacts on those affected by it. Over the years, scholars have developed theoretical frameworks and strategic responses to salvage organisations' reputation from myriad of crises. Presently, major crises mainly in the United States and Europe have been documented as case studies for teaching and learning. However, it is worth noting that there is no one-size-fits-all strategy in handling crises. Despite numerous crises that have occurred in Malaysia, not many attempts have been made to examine how these crises were managed from a public relations (PR) perspective. In addition, little research has been done on how PR practitioners in Malaysia perceive their role in crisis management and how they respond to crises. This research has thus been conducted to make some contributions to this matter.

While the focus often times has been on analysing crises as events, little attention has been given to how practitioners themselves understand the concept of a crisis and see their role during a crisis within the context of an organisation. In view of this gap, this study aims to address the following objectives: (i) to analyse how Malaysian PR practitioners perceive their involvement in crisis management, (ii) to identify crisis response strategies adopted by practitioners and (iii) to examine possible role conflict perceived by PR practitioners in crisis management within an organisation. More than 300 PR practitioners working in various organisations in Malaysia took part in the survey conducted in 2018. The findings, among others, affirm that these PR practitioners perceived their role as dominant and important in crisis management. However, their reactive approach in crisis management could hinder their ability in managing crises effectively. The present study serves as a significant attempt to enrich the existing literature on PR roles in crisis management from PR practitioners' perspective.

Literature review

The effect of a crisis is often devastating. It is impossible to reverse time and undo a crisis. However, organisations can still control the negative outcome of a crisis by managing it effectively. Coombs (2007) defines crisis as 'a significant threat to operations or reputations that can have negative consequences if not handled properly' (p. 3). In this context, how a crisis is managed would determine the severity of its impact. Drawing from an organisational perspective, poor management of a crisis would jeopardise an organisation's functions and reputation. In the event of a crisis, stakeholders' trust towards business is most likely to dwindle, thus affecting the overall performance of the organisation. In recent years, organisational crisis has been recorded as affecting various types of organisations and industries worldwide. Malaysian companies are not excluded. Corporate misconduct, business downsizing, accidents, product defects, negligence, ethical and integrity issues are among common factors that contribute to organisational crises. The following section provides definitions of organisational crises, PR's roles in crisis management and crisis response strategies adopted in practice.

Organisational crisis

Organisational crisis has received attention across a wide range of academic disciplines, that is, organisational communication, psychology, sociology, political science, etc. It is an evolving concept that has been defined and refined by many scholars leading to its varied definitions. In their early account, Seeger, Sellnow and Ulmer (1998) defined organisational crisis as:

ō 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 organisation's high-priority goals (p. 233).

The above definition emphasises the negative effect of crisis that inhibits organisational goals. However, in their second edition of *Effective Crisis Communication*, the authors conceptualised organisational crisis as bringing both threats and opportunities to business. They then defined organisational crisis as:

ō a specific, unexpected, and non-routine event or series of events that create high levels of uncertainty and simultaneously present an organisation with both opportunities and threats to its high priority goals (Ulmer, Sellnow & Seeger, 2011, p. 7).

Opportunity refers to an avenue to learn, make strategic changes or develop new competitive advantage (Ulmer, Sellnow & Seeger, 2011: p. 8). Management of crises requires strategic and responsible actions in order to restore trust. The process of managing crises should be conducted amicably as it will help business to garner trust from the stakeholders in the midst of distrust through an organisation's commitment and tireless effort to address their needs. Fearn-Banks (2011) defines crisis management as:

ō a process of strategic planning for a crisis or negative turning point, a process that removes some of the risks and uncertainty from the negative occurrence and thereby allows organisation to be in greater control of its own destiny (p. 2).

The definition emphasises that effective crisis management begins way before a crisis hits the organisation. It requires strategic planning that will help the organisation to be more prepared in dealing with uncertainty or high risk situations. Early preparation is vital as it allows the organisation to be in control and permits timely response.

Crisis management is accepted as a strategic process that must take place before the first crisis starts (Crandall, Parnell & Spillan, 2014). Crisis management custodians ought to be alert of the crisis life cycle that is generally inclusive of three-phases: before the crisis (pre-crisis), during the crisis and after the crisis (post-crisis). Wilcox, Cameron and Reber (2015) suggest a four-phase crisis life cycle that includes (a) proactive phase, (b) strategic phase, (c) reactive phase and (d) recovery phase. The proactive phase refers to activities that identify issues that have the potential to become a crisis. At this stage, PR practitioners use multiple ways to identify issues or to conduct issue management. A general crisis management plan should ideally develop at this stage. Next, the strategic stage begins when an issue becomes an emerging crisis and requires the concerted effort of everyone in the crisis management team to take action and communicate its impact to stakeholders. Once the crisis hits, the team must react immediately. At the reactive stage, crisis management and crisis communication should be fully activated to remove the threat

and to meet stakeholders' needs and expectations. The final stage is the post-crisis stage in which the goal is towards image repair and recovery.

On the other hand, stakeholders' perception towards a crisis also requires attention. Scholars affirm that in the midst of a crisis, perception matters more than reality (Benoit 1997; Fearn-Banks, 2011). In a crisis, public opinion prevails over the court of law. Thus, managing public opinion is part of effective crisis management. As crisis management custodians, PR practitioners should strive to change the negative attitudes and opinions of the public and to mitigate the impacts of the crisis. This includes addressing stakeholders' needs and expectations that in turn will change their perception about the crisis. The eventual conduct of any crisis management falls on the personnel in the organisation and inevitably it will be the PR practitioner who will shoulder the heavy responsibility to bring all the resources together and get a meaningful solution.

PR's role in crisis management

Public relations encompasses a wide range of job scopes and this includes crisis management. Broom and Sha (2013) define crisis management as *the PR specialty that helps organisations strategically respond to negative situations and to dialogue with stakeholders affected by perceived and actual consequences of crisis* (p. 40). In this case, PR is in the position to advise management on how to respond to a crisis and to maintain constant communication with affected stakeholders. Drawing from the Excellence Study, PR must be part of strategic management to be effective (Grunig, 2008). As a strategic management function, PR's role is to advise management on issues that affect organisations and their stakeholders that include crisis management. This dominant perspective asserts that PR practitioners' participation in strategic decision-making contributes to organisations' effectiveness. Literature affirms that management expectations and perceived value of PR serve as important factors that determine their involvement in strategic management (see Moss, Warnaby & Newman, 2000; Saidhatul, Nizah, Mat, Tazin & Kaur, 2017). Wilcox, Cameron and Reber (2017) affirm that effective crisis management would help PR to increase its value to management. For instance, a study conducted on an energy company in Malaysia found that PR's role as communication and media counsel was mostly recognized during crises (Saidhatul, Nizah, Mat, Tazin & Kaur, 2017). This study argues that PR practitioners should leverage their expertise in handling crisis to prove their worth and to earn influence in the organisational hierarchy.

Communication with affected stakeholders, including the press, has become more challenging with the presence of social media. The response from organisations must be immediate and multi-pronged. Cases have illustrate how difficult and daunting the situation had become when netizens were involved. Effective crisis management thus includes crisis communication (Fearn-Banks, 2011; Crandall, Parnell & Spillan, 2014). Crisis creates a lot of uncertainty that requires a constant flow of information from a reliable source. Inadequate information would lead to speculations and multiple interpretations made by stakeholders that could worsen things.

Crisis communication refers to the:

communication strategies [that] influence the course of conflict to the benefit of the organisation and, when possible to the benefit of the organisation & many constituents (Wilcox, Cameron & Reber, 2017, p. 275).

In this context, effective communication with affected stakeholders is essential to minimise the impact. PR practitioners have a lot to juggle as a crisis may affect multiple important stakeholders and not only the organisation they serve. Dealing with multiple expectations and at times competing demands, makes crisis management a daunting task. This study will not examine crisis events but addresses how PR practitioners perceive their roles in crisis management and their responses to crises.

Crisis response strategies

Crisis response strategies refer to organisations' reaction to crisis in order to lessen its impact. It is a deliberate and strategic response adopted by organisations to achieve a specific objective such as to save life, to protect reputation, to restore trust etc. Coomb (1998), in his earlier account, has compiled and defined a range of crisis communication strategies that derive from the works of prominent scholars in crisis management such as Benoit (1995, 1997), Allen and Caillouet (1994) and others who have formulated frameworks of crisis response strategies (p. 179) (Refer to Table 2.3.1).

Table 2.3.1: Crisis communication strategies

1	Attack the accuser	Crisis manager confronts the person or group who claims that a crisis exists. This may include a threat to use force (e.g. lawsuit) against the accuser.
2	Denial	Crisis manager states that no crisis exists. This may include explaining why there is no crisis.
3	Excuse	Crisis manager tries to minimise the organisation's responsibility for the crisis. This can include denying any intention to do harm, or claiming the organisation has no control of the events that lead to the crisis, or both.
4	Justification	Crisis manager tries to minimise the perceived damage associated with the crisis. This can include stating there is no serious damage or injuries or claiming that the victims deserve what they receive.
5	Ingratiation	Actions are designed to make stakeholders like the organisation.
6	Corrective action	Crisis manager seeks to repair the damage from the crisis and takes steps to prevent a repeat of the crisis, or both.
7	Full apology	Crisis manager publicly states that the organisation takes full responsibility for the crisis and asks for forgiveness for the crisis. Some compensation (e.g. money or aid) may be included with an apology.

Source: Coombs (1998, p. 180)

Crisis response strategies are divided into two categories: accommodative (ingratiation, corrective action and full apology) and defensive (attack accuser, denial and excuse) (Wilcox & Cameron, 2014). Kim, Avery and Lariscy's (2009) evaluation of crisis communication literature in 11 different journals over a period of 18 years found that the most effective crisis response strategy is full apology whereas defensive is the least effective approach. However, Wilcox and Cameron (2014) affirm that not all successful crisis communication strategies are accommodative. Despite its ineffectiveness, literature found denial as among the frequent response

strategies used (Kim, Avert & Lariscy, 2009). However, Hu and Pang (2016) argue it is important to consider the indigenous social context prior to applying any theoretical frameworks mostly based on Western approaches.

Methodology

Case studies and surveys are dominantly adopted in crisis management research (Nwogwugwu, 2018). This study is slightly different as its focus is on Malaysian PR practitioners, thus a survey was used to gather their insights on their role(s) in crisis management. The research is part of the fifth PR profile project conducted in 2018. The study has been initiated by Professor Dr. Syed Arabi Idid since 1977. Idid has continued with similar initiatives in 1992, 2003 and 2011.

This study utilised a nationwide survey on PR practitioners working in various organisations across the country. Convenience sampling was applied due to the absence of a comprehensive list of PR practitioners in Malaysia. Prospective respondents were identified from the Institute of Public Relations Malaysia (IPRM) membership list, the Public Media directory 2017 and personal contacts. The survey was mainly conducted in capital cities across the states, i.e. Ipoh, Kuala Lumpur, Kuala Terengganu, Kota Bharu, Johor Bharu, Kota Kinabalu and Kuching, to name a few. However, the focus was in the capital city of Kuala Lumpur which is home to the majority of PR offices.

Data collection took place in two phases. The first mainly concentrated on sending personalised email invitations with a survey link to respondents. These invitations were sent to respondents whose contact details were found to be complete (e.g. email address, phone number). In the interim, follow-up calls were made to increase the response rate. However, the response was delayed and dismal. At the same time, WhatsApp was also used as a medium to reach respondents, particularly the researchers' personal contacts who are currently practising PR in the country. The second phase of data collection started a month after the first phase was launched. New strategies were adopted in order to increase response rate. Local research enumerators were employed to facilitate correspondence, distribute and collect questionnaires nationwide.

A total of 357 questionnaires were obtained for the study but only 302 were found suitable for analysis. Similar to 2003s and 2011s profile studies, there were more female (60%) compared to male respondents (40%). The majority of the respondents were less than 40 years old (76%) and only 24% were aged 41 and above.

Findings and Discussion

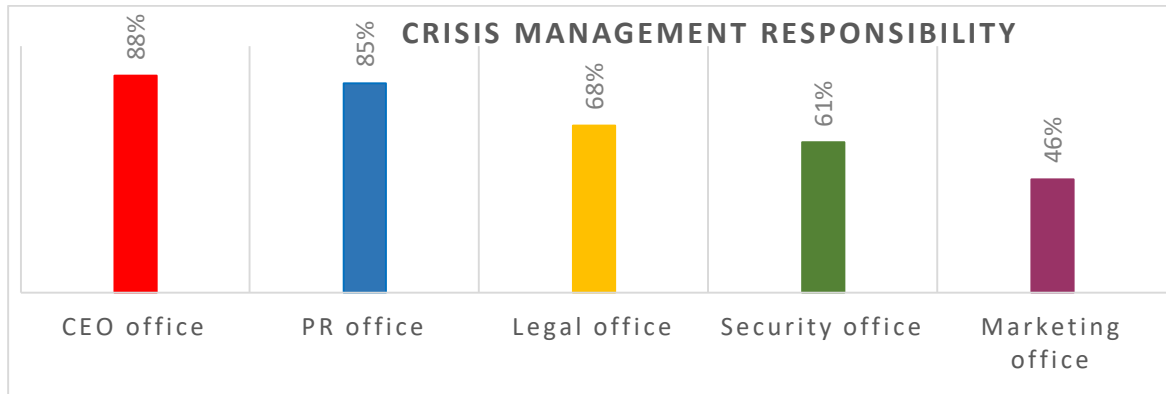
The role of PR and other actors in crisis management

This study has attempted to explore how PR practitioners perceived their role in crisis management. This study argues that their perception would reflect their actual action in managing crises. The study found the majority (85%) of practitioners believed that crisis management was under the purview of PR. At the same time, they also attributed the highest responsibility of managing crisis to the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) (88%) (refer to Figure 4.1.1). The study also found other departments, particularly the legal office (68%) and the security office (61%) had a moderate role in managing crisis. However, the marketing office's involvement in

PR practitioners' roles in crisis management

crisis management was low. The acknowledgement that crisis management is under the purview of PR is significant because it makes it explicit that once a crisis occurs, then the PR manager will know that it is his/her duty to take charge. It is also clear that the manager will have to get the CEO as well as other relevant officers (legal, security) to be involved. The crisis management custodians need to ensure that there is no misunderstanding among officers in managing the crisis.

Figure 4.1.1: Crisis management responsibility



Braud (2017) affirms that PR practitioner should be a member of the crisis management team and lead the crisis communication group. Managing crises is part of the strategic management function in which PR is dominantly involved. This study affirms that PR has a significant role in handling a crisis and given the highest authority in the organisation to be dominantly involved in spearheading the effort. The CEO is the person with the utmost power in the organisation. Being the top person in the organisation, he/she is responsible for the overall operations of the organisation and in making key decisions. It has been asserted that the role of CEO in crisis management is instrumental particularly when the integrity of the organisation is being questioned (Lucero, Kwang & Pang, 2009).

Several classic case studies in the past have demonstrated that the involvement of the CEO had somewhat succeeded to weather a crisis, for example, PepsiCo and its diet Pepsi syringe scare (1993) and the product tampering case of Johnson and Johnson Extra-Strength Tylenol (1982). In both cases, the CEOs were at the forefront, taking immediate actions to salvage their organisations reputation; often they were cited as exemplary models for crisis management. In contrast, Exxon Valdez oil spill case (1986) exhibited poor crisis management effort with the absence of its CEO who delegated communication with the press to a lower rank personnel. Exxon CEO's defensive action and poor communication with the media made it a classic example of the wrong way to handle a crisis (Pauly & Hutchison, 2005).

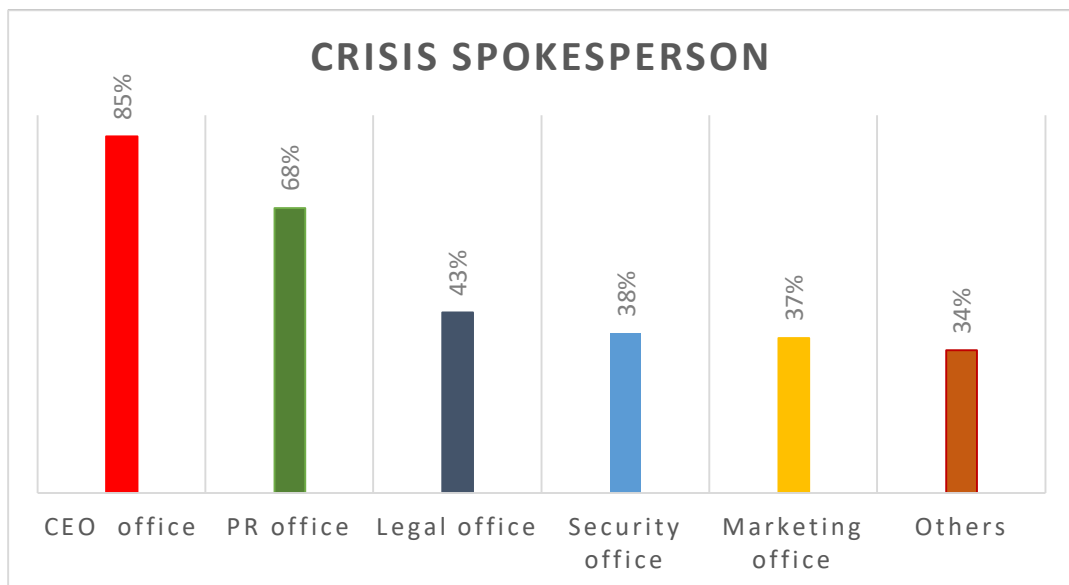
The involvement of other departments is also vital in crisis management. The study found other departments, particularly the legal office and the security office, have a moderate role in managing crises. Moreover, literature often describes the working relationship between PR practitioners and lawyers as conflicting or uneasy. The major issue that causes tension to linger on is the communication aspect. In the area of crisis communication, PR's priority is to communicate early and frequently to avoid speculations and to regain trust from affected stakeholders. However, legal practitioners would restrict communication with stakeholders to protect the organisation's interest. This study argues that effective crisis management would

help organisations to prevail both in the court of law and in the court of public opinion. In this case, a collaborative effort between PR practitioners and lawyers is inevitable. This study affirms that PR practitioners acknowledged the role of the legal office in supporting crisis management efforts. In addition, failure to address public safety would result in greater damage (Coombs, 2014). Thus, the role of the security office, particularly in a crisis that involves a threat to stakeholders, is inevitable. This finding aligns with Boin, Hart and Kuipersq(2018) assertion that multiple actors are normally involved in crisis management, including people at the strategic and operational levels.

Crisis spokesperson

A spokesperson during a crisis refers to an organisation's personnel who has been officially assigned to release information to the public including to the media. Most PR textbooks explain the importance to speak with one voice to ensure messages released to the public are consistent. The rule of thumb in achieving message consistency is by having one spokesperson. This study found that the role of the spokesperson is largely credited to the CEO instead of the PR personnel. The data show 85% of PR practitioners stated that the CEO should assume the role of spokesperson during a crisis, followed by PR practitioners (68%). Practitioners rated the involvement of other departments such as legal (43%), security (38%) and marketing (37%) as relatively low (Refer to Figure 4.2.1).

Figure 4.2.1: Crisis spokesperson



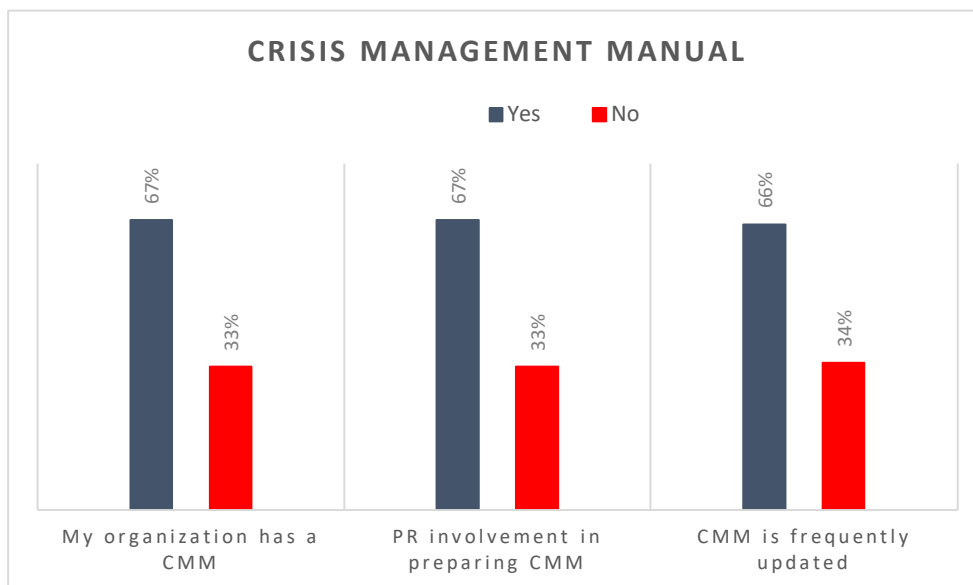
The Edelman Trust Barometer (2018) shows that CEO credibility as a spokesperson has increased from 37% in 2017 to 44% in 2018. However, should the CEO be the only official spokesperson and how many spokespersons should be appointed during a crisis is contestable. Jaques (n.d) argues that the CEO should not be the only spokesperson during a crisis. He also states that it is possible to have multiple spokespersons as long as they speak in one voice and are perceived as credible by the public. The manner in which Malaysian Airline System (MAS) handled the tragic disappearance of MH370 on March 8, 2014 was criticised particularly for having multiple spokespersons who subsequently produced multiple

and inaccurate storylines (Yuhas, 2014). Meanwhile, Tony Howard the former BP CEO who was the only spokesperson in managing the Deep Water Horizon in the Gulf of Mexico in 2010, was also an example of poor crisis communication. His thoughtless statement *there's no one who wants this thing over more than I do, I'd like my life back* (Mohamed & De Wolf, 2013, p. 79) was criticised by many. Thus, proper training and media relations knowledge are vital for those who assume the role of crisis spokesperson, including the CEO.

Crisis management plan

A crisis management manual is a reference tool that helps managers to act quickly during a crisis (Coombs, 2014). In his revised seminal work, Coombs (2014) suggests that managers should annually update their crisis management plan or manual (CMM). Despite the importance of planning ahead before crises, the study found PR practitioners were not giving serious attention to CMM. Only 67% claimed that their organisations had adopted the crisis manual and were directly involved in preparing the document. In addition, only 66% of PR practitioners stated that the CMM was updated frequently (refer to Figure 4.3.1). Having a crisis manual would be imperative to an organisation as it is indicative that management is prepared to face any crisis through the steps that should be taken as prescribed in the manual.

Figure 4.3.1: Crisis management manual (CMM)



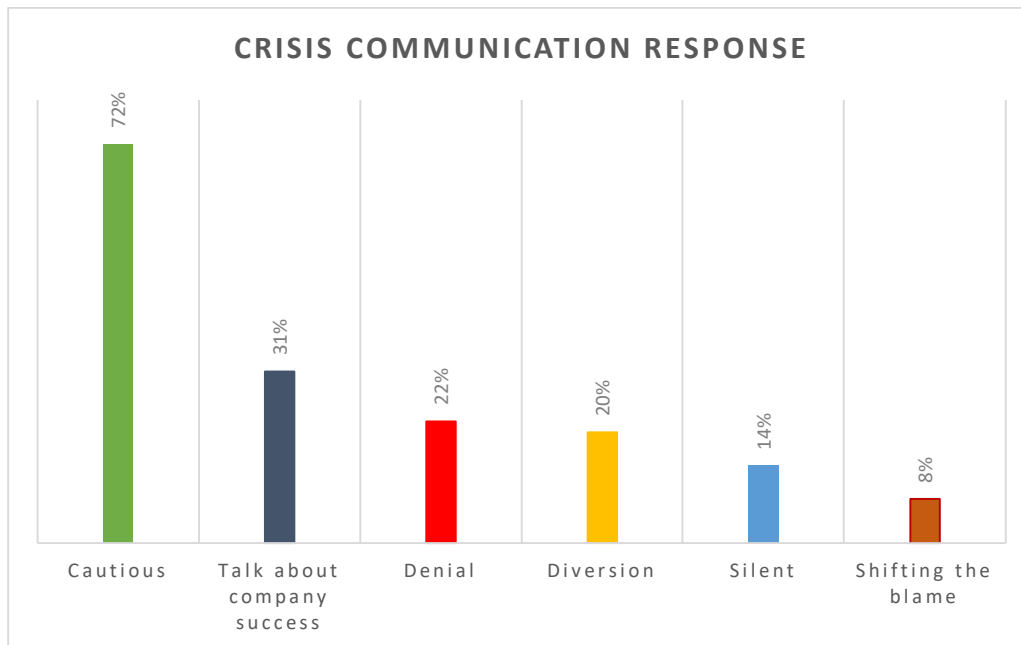
This finding indicates that not all organisations take the proactive approach in dealing with crises. The absence of CMM shows organisations have underestimated the importance of planning at the pre-crisis stage thus going against the principle of effective crisis management. In this context, PR's role in crisis management could be interpreted as reactive instead of proactive. Lack of preparation to deal with a crisis would impose severe damage to organisations' performance and reputation.

Crisis response strategies

The manner by which organisations handle a crisis will determine the success of crisis management. Various steps have been recommended. Coombs (2010) affirms what organisations communicate during a crisis has a significant effect on the

outcomes of the crisis. This study found that the respondents were cautious (72%) in responding to crises. Meanwhile, 31% chose to discuss their organisations success instead of talking about the crisis. Others claimed to have adopted denial (22%) and diversion to other issues (20%) when responding to crises. Being silent about the crisis (14%) and shifting the blame to others (8%) were also relatively low in practice (refer to Figure: 4.4.2: Crisis communication response strategies).

Figure 4.4.2: Crisis communication response strategies



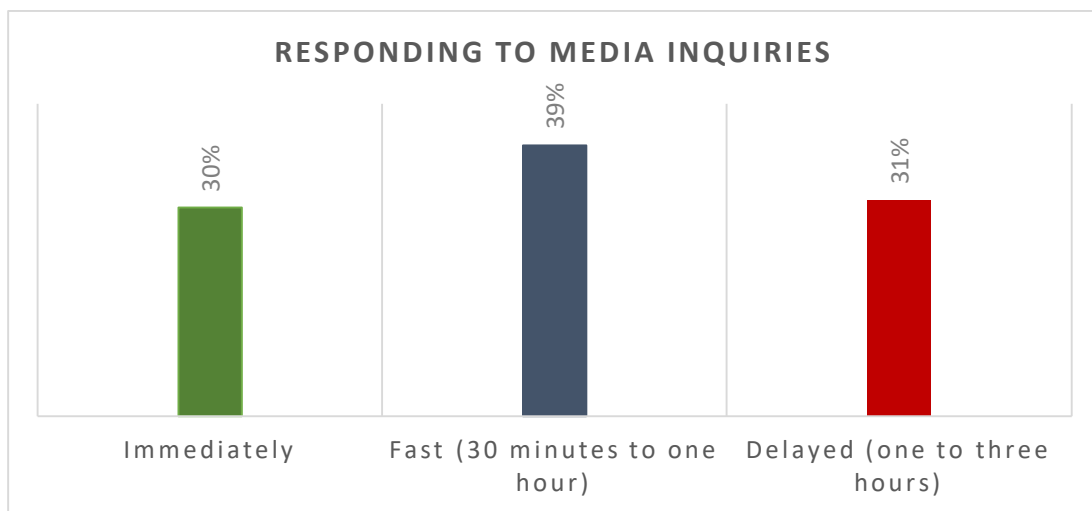
This study found cautious to be the preferred style of communication adopted by practitioners. Being cautious is an attempt to buy time instead of giving immediate response to inquiries. It is a slow and careful act that may delay action and communication during crisis. This strategy was adopted particularly when a crisis guardian did not have sufficient information about a crisis. A common response that, the crisis is under investigation implies not knowing what is actually happening and that it is still searching for facts. Taking time to respond has an implication, as it gives an opportunity to others to create their own versions about the crisis. As a result, speculations will be on the rise and this reduces the organisation's ability to be in control of the situation. Thus, a crisis management plan or manual is useful as it provides clear guidelines on what to do and how to respond to multiple stakeholders during a crisis.

Talking about the company's success stories and achievements instead of focusing on the crisis was among the strategies adopted by PR practitioners. This strategy is an attempt to raise the organisation's legitimacy based on its achievements and contributions in the past. Such a strategy serves as a defence mechanism to protect its reputation. On the other hand, denial is a form of response to show the organisation is not involved in the crisis thus not taking any responsibility for the event. Coombs (2014) argues that denial would be counter-productive and it could worsen the crisis's impact especially when the organisation is responsible. However, denial may be appropriate if the crisis is the result of untrue information such as a hoax. On the other hand, silence is a very passive response and reflects

uncertainty and passivity, the exact opposite of what an organisation should be attempting to create. When an organisation remains silent, it allows others to take control of the situation (Brummett, 1980) and define the crisis for stakeholders.

Responding to the media is another important task during a crisis. This study, among others, explored how much time PR practitioners took to respond to media inquiry during a crisis. The study found that only 30% of PR practitioners claimed to meet media request immediately (less than 30 minutes). Others stated that they needed more than 30 minutes (39%) to three hours (31%) to refer to the media (refer to Figure 4.4.1).

Figure 4.4.1: Responding to media inquiries during crises



Communicating too quickly during a crisis is also not without consequences (Ulmer, Seeger & Sellnow, 2011). Often a crisis spokesperson is more likely to make mistakes by releasing unverified information to stakeholders, including the media, and subsequently aggravates the situation. On the other hand, delayed communication would most likely contribute to speculations and rumours. Practitioners have to consider whether to give a quick but cautious or provide a detailed but late response. With social media camped in the surrounding environment, a slow response would invite criticisms and be reflective of a poorly managed crisis.

Conclusion

By and large, PR practitioners in this study viewed their involvement in crisis management as dominant and important. At the same time, PR practitioners also perceived other actors, primarily the CEO, as instrumental in managing crises. This study argues that despite being the most credible and authoritative voice, the CEO must be further guided by the PR on the best approach to communicate with the media and other stakeholders. Presenting the right contents that meet stakeholders' expectation is equally important as having the right person to represent the organisation during a crisis. The involvement of multiple actors in managing crises supports similar studies that assert excellent PR is not only involved in strategic decision processes but must also work with other management functions to build relationships with relevant stakeholders (Grunig, 2008). All key business functions that include legal, safety, human resource and others besides communication are to

be involved in crisis management (Sapriel, 2003). Sapriel (2003) proposes that a crisis management plan has to be institutionalised as part of the business contingency plan (BCP). This integrated approach requires a systematic coordination to avoid redundant tasks and inconsistent communication among key actors during a crisis. Each actor or office should know his/her or its responsibility and support one another to regain equilibrium and restore order. Identification of each office's tasks and responsibilities should be made early prior to experiencing crises. Therefore, a crisis management manual (CMM) is vital as it will identify specific roles and tasks to be performed during and after the crisis by all crisis actors.

Although early preparation for managing crises is important, more than 30% of the PR practitioners claimed that their organisations did not have CMM and that the PR role in the preparation of the manual was just moderate. The absence of CMM indicates that organisations are not keen in making any preparation. Thus, the PR's role in advising management on effective crisis management could be merely reactive instead of proactive. The study also questioned the role of PR in advising management at the pre-crisis stage which should allow organisations to anticipate and assess risks and identify suitable response strategies to minimise undesirable effects.

In terms of crisis response strategy, Malaysian practitioners were inclined to be cautious in their actions. This study argues that being cautious could be a result of the organisation's ineptness in managing crises and will most likely delay actions and communication. As a result, speculations may spread rapidly and influence public opinion. This study suggests that a qualitative research is useful to further understand the challenging experience of PR practitioners in spearheading a crisis management effort in the presence of multiple actors within an organisation. In addition, future research should also explore plausible constraints experienced by PR practitioners in championing effective crisis management at the pre-crisis stage. The study concludes that to study crises, one must study the PR practitioners first, knowing the extent to which they are sensitive and alert to the demands of managing crises. At the same time, PR practitioners should acknowledge their strengths and weaknesses, and continue to improve their capability in spearheading crisis management.

References

- Benoit, W. (1997). Image repair discourse and crisis communication. *Public Relations Review*, 23(2), 177-186.
- Boin, A, Hart, P., & Kuipers, S. (2017). The crisis approach. In Rodríguez,H. et al. (Eds.), *Handbook of Disaster Research, Handbooks of Sociology and Social Research*, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-63254-4_2, pp.23-35
- Braud, G. (2017, April 7). Who should be your spokesman in a crisis? *Ragan's PR Daily* Retrieved from <https://www.prdaily.com/who-should-be-your-spokesman-in-a-crisis/>
- Brummet, B. (2009). Towards a theory of silence as a political strategy. *Quarterly Journal of Speech*. 66(3), 289-303.
- Coombs, W. (1998). An analytic framework for crisis situations: better responses from a better understanding of the situation. *Journal of Public Relations Research*, 10(3), 177-191.

- Coombs, W. (2010). Parameters for crisis communication. Coombs, W., Holladay, S. (Eds). *The Handbook of Crisis Communication* (pp.17-53) United Kingdom: Wiley Blackwell.
- Coombs, W. (2014) State of crisis communication: evidence and the bleeding age. *Research Journal of the Institute for Public Relations*. 1(1), 1-12. Retrieved from <https://instituteforpr.org/crisis-management-communications/>
- Crandall, W., Parnell, A., & Spillan, J. (2014). *Crisis Management. Leading in the New Strategy Landscape*. Los Angeles: Sage.
- Fearn-Banks, K. (2011). *Crisis Communications: A Casebook Approach* (4th Ed). New York: Routledge.
- Grunig, J. (2008). *Excellence theory in Public Relations*. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.1002/9781405186407.wbiece047>
- Hu, Y. & Pang, A. (2016) Public relations practitioners' perceptions of the use of crisis response strategies in China. *Public Relations Review*, 42, 333-335.
- Jaques, T. (n.d). Is the CEO really the best crisis spokesperson? Four myths exposed. The CEO Magazine.com. Retrieved from http://www.issueoutcomes.com.au/Websites/issueoutcomes/images/Is_the_CEO_the_best_crisis_spokesperson.pdf
- Kim, S., Avery, E., & Lariscy, R. (2009) Are crisis communicators practicing what we preach?: An evaluation of crisis response strategy analysed in public relations research from 1991 to 2009. *Public Relations Review*, 35, 446-448.
- Lucero, M., Kwang, A. & Pang, A. (2009). Crisis leadership: when should the CEO step up? *Corporate Communication: An International Journal*, 14(3), 234-248.
- Moss, D., Warnaby, G. & Newman, A. (2000). Public relations practitioner role enactment at the senior management level within U.K. companies. *Journal of Public Relations Research*, 12(4), 277. 307.
- Mohamed, M. & Wolf, D. (2013). Crisis management: Lessons learnt from the BP Deepwater Horizon spill oil. *Business Management and Strategy*, 4(2), 67-90.
- Pauly, J., & Hutchison, L. (2005). Moral fables of public relations practice: The Tylenol and Exxon Valdez cases. *Journal of Mass Media Ethics*, 20(4), 231-249.
- Tazin, M., Nizah, S., & Kaur, K. (2017). Exploratory study of a crisis commander's perspectives on the role and value of public relations in crisis management. In *SHS Web of Conferences* (Vol. 33) doi: 10.1051/, 00047 (2017) 73300047
- Steyn, B. (1999) CEO expectations in terms of PR roles. *Communicare* 19(1), 20-43.
- Nwogwugwu, D. (2018). Influence of crisis communication strategies on stakeholders' perception of organisational reputation: A review of research trends. *Journal of Communication and Media Research*, 10(2), 125-138.
- Sapriel, C. (2003). Effective crisis management: tools and best practice for the new millennium. *Journal of Communication Management*, 7(4), 348-355.

Seeger, M., Sellnow, T., & Ulmer, R. (1998) Communication, organisations and crisis. *Annals of the International Communication Association*, 21(1), 231-276, doi: 10.1080/23808985.1998.11678952

The Edelman Trust Barometer (2018) Retrieved from https://www.edelman.com/sites/g/files/aatuss191/files/2018-10/2018_Edelman_Trust_Barometer_Global_Report_FEB.pdf.

Ulmer, R., Sellnow, T., & Seeger, M. (2011). *Effective Crisis Communication: Moving from Crisis to Opportunity*. London: Sage.

Wilcox, D., Cameron, G., & Reber, B. (2015). *Public Relations Strategies and Tactics* (11th ed), Boston: Pearson.

Yuhas, A. (2014, 13 March). Malaysia Airlines flight MH370: Clarifying conflicting media claims. *The Guardian*. Retrieved from <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/mar/13/malaysia-airlines-flight-mh370-media-claims>