Role of Media on Crisis Management

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ABSTRACT
The purpose of this article is exploring and evaluation role and performance of mass media in crisis management. According to author, mass media is not just neutral phenomenon and catalyst but has the most effects on human among modern instruments and professions of technology and is creator of new era. Mass media activities in informing and advertisement have changed it to the forming factor of public opinion in contemporary communities. Mass media has significant role in crisis and social, political, and international conflicts according to its power in attracting mass audience and participation process to form public opinion. Various studies have shown that mass media can play vital role before, while, and after crisis. Mass media has very important performance in various aspects of crisis. This article tries to answer the question: “what is role of mass media in crisis management?” To answer to this question, documentary analysis method has been used that is qualitative method. The present documents by this method include books, articles, etc. The present study first explains crisis conception and crisis management and finally role of mass media in crisis management has been explored and evaluated.

Keywords: Crisis Management, Media, Think tank.

INTRODUCTION
Crisis is inseparable and natural part of today communities lives. Crisis is not anymore considered as unnatural, scarce, and accidental feature for global society, but it has penetrated in modern societies’ context. All societies are influenced by small and big crisis in every moment and day. Therefore, managers should consistently be ready to face with crisis and think about crises effects on their communities to reduce or prevent from their effects. They should understand that their communities should be secured against crisis as much as possible. Today, control and tact of each crisis has close relationship with identification threats and opportunities originated from it and obtaining accurate resultant of both of them. In crisis condition that information is distorted from on hand and common power technologies and consequently decision making and management methods become insufficient in ordinary conditions on the other hand, any tact needs proper productivity of different strategic knowledge’s. In this regard, this article tries to answer this question that “what are performances of mass media in crisis management?” research findings.

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show that today tact and power of controlling any crisis has close relationship with identification threats and its opportunities, and obtaining precise resultant of them. In crisis condition that information is distorted from on hand and common power technologies and consequently decision making and management methods become insufficient in ordinary conditions on the other hand, any tact needs proper productivity of different strategic knowledge’s. According to the author point of view, mass media is not just neutral phenomena and catalyst, but it has the most effects on human among the other modern technologies and is creator of new era. Media activities in informing and advertisements fields have changed it to the principal actor of forming public opinion in contemporary communities. Media has significant role in crises and social, political, and international conflicts according to its power in attracting audiences and participation in process of forming public opinion. Various studies have shown that media can play vital role before, while, and after crisis. Media has very important performances in various aspects of crisis.

CRISIS DEFINITION

Crisis is gotten from Greek word “Krinon” which means expressing danger time about political, social, and economic issues. Crisis is proposed whenever a phenomenon doesn’t happens naturally, chaos or distortion is made or unnatural situation occurs. The sensitive moment in crisis is when it gets to its climax and is landmark. In this regard, crisis is condition with distortion the natural order includes: “existence uncommon or unordinary conditions in movement process of a system”. In other words, crisis in unstable condition in one or several elements made in order variable. (Ibid) Therefore, according to various points of view, many definitions have been proposed by scientists in various scientific fields. These definitions mostly emphasize on conditions of lack of decision, negligence, and limited time for reaction, threatening purposes and values, potential increase in instability, conflict, anger, and violence1.

Various definitions and their proofs show that crisis has multi-aspect nature and it is analyzable for variety of examples in various levels2.

CRISIS CYCLE

Some scientists believe that events repetitions mean evidences move like cycle and make short-term, middle-term, long-term, and very long-term periods and emphasize that we can predict future evolutions by discerning these cycles and their accurate change and interpretation3.

Herman Kahn in one nature definition of crisis determined 24 discernable step or stage in “escalation ladder”. These steps starts from very small motivation and end to the final step of full-scale war. He knows gradual increase of crisis as a useful tool to manage crises in this delimitation4.

According to pattern of “escalation ladder”, crises includes 4 various steps:
1. Crisis accumulation that crisis signs show themselves in it.
2. Crisis forming or outbreak showing itself as tangible or threatening reality.
3. Crisis reaction step or chronic step that crisis range decreases significantly and places in beneath layers.
4. Improvement and removing step that is the last step of crisis and can be considered as the finishing step.
CRISIS MANAGEMENT

“Crisis management” has different definitions and precisions like conception of “crisis” according to various aspects. Conceptual extension of definition of this term is more extensive and encompassing each preparations to prevent from scientific search of crisis, crisis, end, and control crisis to provide benefits etc. According to “Pearson” and “Claier”, crisis management includes systematic attempt by organization members with beneficiaries out of organization to prevent from crises or effective management to minimize its effects while doing this process. The worst situations should be planed then method of solving should be searched. In some literatures, crisis management proving type of strategic tact in which necessary identification is obtained, strategies are created that helps elites to get determined purposes and suitable policies in analyzed crisis in internal and external environments. Crisis management is a process to prevent or minimize its effects to do this process. The worst conditions should be planned then methods to find it should be found.

If we define crisis management as planning to control crisis, 4 steps should be done to plan for crisis control. First, unpleasant phenomena should be predicted, then situational plans should be set, crisis management teams should be made, trained, and organized. Eventually, they should be executed as trial or practical exercise.

So how should crisis strategic policies, especially the ones government faces with, be? And what are media roles in this field? How does medium act before, while, and after occurrence of a crisis to get to the favorite purpose?

Crisis cycle can be shown as following:
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![Figure 1. Comprehensive management cycle of crisis](image)

**MEDIA AND CRISIS**

Systematic attitude to events including crisis events show that in window, background, and behind each crisis, various factors play roles that some of them may be unwanted or unconscious. These factors are people and various social and trade groups, governmental institutions, international elements, and media. By this view, media roles are seeable, tracking, and analyzable. Today information is received mostly from media. Media activities in informing and advertisement have changed them principally to form public opinion in contemporary communities. Media has significant role in crises, social, political, and international conflicts for their power in attracting mass audience and participation in forming process of public opinion. Of course, public perception of society and intensifying or stabilizing reactions of masses against crisis is not only in authority of media, but also media is one of the most important social factor. McQuail knew this power in intrinsic ability of media. He says: “media can lead to predicted or unwanted changes, make limited changes, facilitate changes, reinforce the present condition, or prevent from the present condition”. All these changes happen in people, society institutions, and culture.” Of course, this role can be along with making crisis and removing crisis. Today, in information and communication era, what makes mind busy when crisis happens is whether media will be aligned with crisis motivation, remove, or control it or not. Media working on crisis and covering it is so ordinary and common issue, because crises are salient resources for news. According to empirical analyses, more than 25% of all media new is related natural, political, technological, etc. crises. Media coverage of crises usually makes audiences attracted by attractive, varied, and exciting stories in crises contexts for mass media. Media interests to crises has raised to the extent that one of the main criterion of evaluation importance of each crisis in 21st century is amount of attention of main media streams. As much as media attends to crisis, that crisis is evaluated more important, original, and dangerous. This issue makes media effective in determination governments’ policies against various crises to the great extent.

But covering crises by media is their intended selection emphasizing on different priorities based on crisis type and factors. In spite of proper performances of media in crisis management, selective attention of media to crisis leads to exaggerate minor and limited crises in many cases for attraction; on the other hand, important and dangerous crises will be neglected for not paying intended.
MEDIA PERFORMANCE IN CRISIS MANAGEMENT

Lasswell in his known article explains communication and performance in society (1948) in the way that social communicational performances are divided to the following 3 classification:

a) **Supervision**: data collection that society knows to answer to needs, communications, and chances.

b) **Correlation**: using society answer about related data to policy making, self-organization, power distribution, responsibilities, and evolution pattern for needs.

c) **Sociability**: according to Lasswell, we can signify introvert and unaware members’ thoughts by going through knowledge and society values. Therefore, children grow in society to be useful and responsible citizens and adults will be aligned with each other around a sciences and beliefs network10.

Neil Postman believes that these issues are actually mass media, that in an extensive view, on one hand mass media undertakes what we know our daily increasing role to it, we familiarize with it, face with it, we experience, save as experience, we learn as knowledge, and how we shape our understandings; in other hand, it imposes what and how we think, and what and how we feel quip like14.

Jean Casino wrote about this though: this thought was spread among people, both educated and non-educated that mass media has extra imagination power and can influence on philosophical and political thoughts, reform it, and guide all behaviors15.

PERFORMANCE OF MEDIA IN VARIOUS STEPS OF CRISIS MANAGEMENT

Various studies have shown that media can play significant role before, while, and after crises. Media has very important performances in various aspects of crisis. Its participation is so vital for crisis optimum management16. Public education about crisis, warning of dangers, collecting and transferring information to the damaged regions, reporting damaged people specific needs to governmental institutions and relief organizations, possibility for conversation about preparation and responsiveness accurate methods while crisis occurrence in society are all important and principal performances in crisis management17. Of course role of various media (visual, vocal, and written) in crisis management is different based on used technology, data transfer method and news collection method. Vocal- visual media has mostly role of data quick distributor in initial stages of crisis while written media mostly plays role in after-crisis stage.

In pre-crisis stage, educational performance and media acculturalization is so important, because making preparation by education is so low cost than learning from a disaster (Thematic Discussion Paper Cluster 3, 2005). Mass media by accurate management can be valuable instrument for public education to prevent crisis and preparation for it18.

Public education about crisis should be in a way to lead to access and usage of native knowledge to protect people, equities, cultural heritage etc19. Education in this step includes:

- Identification crisis and its condition
- making preparation in responsible organizations when facing with crisis
- training coping methods with crisis20.

Media for having supervision performance on environment and interpretation can identify potential and forming crises in national environment and mention to authorities21. In this step, TV can undertake the best role, because TV by leaning on vision has high educational power. In this stage, radio and written media has complementary role for TV like the complementary role it plays in commercial advertisement. In each stage of crisis occurrence, informing and media news, and also attracting public participation have more importance, because crises contain rumors and
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should be informed by thoughtful methods to guide public opinion. “Undoubtedly, informing is the most clear and principal way of mass media against crisis” and it is the strongest and the most reliable method of distributing on-time information in society while crisis. On the other hand, according to studies, regarding to people idea, media is the main resource of getting information in crises.

People unawareness about crisis increases possibility of not being ready and making necessary decisions; therefore, mass media is responsible to provide enough information about crisis for people, radio has significant role while crisis especially natural disasters for being small, portable, and accessible in any environment. Media coverage made in crisis makes people participate in local, national, and regional level. This participation attraction in international level, has short-term contribution of both developed and developing countries.

In pre-crisis stage, various methods of mental and social reinforcement, providing proper analysis with necessary trainings before involving to the next crisis, utilizing others experiences in new, reporting, and analytical forms, and finally active presence in forming positive public opinions can be useful policy for healthy management of crises by media in this field. Experts consider 3 roles for media in this stage:

- Informing to reinforce correlation with injured
- Exploring how responsible organization face with crisis
- Informing and training to calm survivals

Press has more significant role by working on the reason and manner of crisis and how to remove it among various media. Actually, written media for having ability “to be press in calendar” can provide many partial and interpretative information as special magazines and articles series for readers.

RESPONSIBILITY OF MEDIA MANAGEMENT IN CRISIS TIME

In this management, some people are responsible of recognizing needs, extracting priorities, and then making decision. This management is responsible of determination and accomplishment purposes, planning, organizing, and employing human force, leadership, and supervision in crisis time. Role of news management is to imagine potential evidences for audiences using news background and evidence news coverage.

Chief Editor should ask himself: what news should be published? Or how should evidences look, and what policies can be effective to cope with crisis?

Escaping from crisis occurrence in crisis time is one of the most important responsibility of media. One of successful managers in Iran press knows coping with crisis as “focus on media” until it leads to increase mass media abilities to satisfy involved parties by publishing message in injection or needle forms. Another action media management does to inform coping with crisis is media coverage based on relationship among crisis factors, governors, and impartial audiences. A wise and thoughtful person should report in this situation who is not “crisis-sick” and respect to the main duty of new setting and publication means principle of “impartiality”.

Announcing feel of sympathy, strengthening spirit of participation and cooperation by media management and attempt to evoke public feeling to remove crisis unhappy face from damaged areas are the other responsibility of news management in crisis time. Using news penetration for public satisfaction to remove crisis condition or adaptation with getting far from damaged areas is performed by news management.

CONCLUSION

Crisis management includes any preparation to prevent from thoughtful search for crisis, control and end crisis along with providing national benefits etc. crisis management is a form of
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strategic tact that internal and external environments of crisis are analyzed, necessary recognition is obtained, strategic path is established, and strategies are created in its process that help elites to get to their determined purposes and efficient tact for crisis.

There are certain and regular stages for crisis management which considering is obligatory. Then strategies of crisis management should be designed and for implementation of strategies we need crisis management technics that some of which includes: bargain, mental, prevention, crisis government establishment, mainstreaming and credit increase strategies.

Research findings show that media is not only neutral phenomenon and catalyst in crisis conditions, but also it has the most effects on human among modern professions and instruments and creator of modern era. Media activities in informing and advertisement have changed them to main factor of forming public opinions in contemporary communities. Media has significant role in social, political, and international conflicts and crises according to its power in attracting mass audiences and participation in process of forming public opinion. Various studies and researches have shown that media has vital role before, while, and after crisis. Media has very important performances in various aspects of crisis.

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