

Midocean University

College of Management

Department of Business Administration



Proposal Title:

**The Role of Leadership in Crisis Management and
Organizational Resilience at the Saudi Ministry of
Health**

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Introduction

In an era marked by unprecedented challenges from public health crises to economic disruptions the critical importance of effective leadership in crisis management has never been more evident. Within the healthcare sector, particularly at the Saudi Ministry of Health, leadership is crucial for ensuring that the organization can respond swiftly and decisively to crises, safeguarding public health and maintaining essential services. The COVID-19 pandemic underscored the need for leadership capable of navigating complex, rapidly changing situations, requiring prompt decision-making, clear communication, and coordinated action to mitigate risks and strengthen resilience. Today's volatile global environment makes organizations increasingly vulnerable to a wide range of crises, including natural disasters, economic shocks, technological failures, and health emergencies like the COVID-19 pandemic. In such scenarios, effective leadership is essential for making swift, strategic decisions that protect the organization's stability and continuity. Beyond immediate responses, strong leadership plays an instrumental role in building organizational resilience the capacity of an organization to adapt, recover, and emerge stronger from adversity. Leaders not only manage the present crisis but also prepare the organization to withstand future disruptions, creating a foundation for long-term sustainability.

Leadership in crisis management extends beyond reactive problem-solving; it encompasses proactive planning, transparent communication, and the ability to mobilize resources swiftly and effectively. Leaders must inspire confidence, foster collaboration, and exhibit adaptability, ensuring that teams remain aligned and focused even under extreme pressure. By fostering a culture of resilience, leaders empower organizations to withstand and adapt to unexpected challenges, reducing vulnerability and enhancing long-term sustainability.

The Saudi Ministry of Health, responsible for overseeing a vast and complex healthcare system, faces unique challenges in crisis management. Effective leadership within the Ministry is essential not only for managing immediate responses but also for building long-term resilience that ensures the healthcare system can withstand future disruptions. Leadership in this context involves setting strategic priorities, fostering collaboration, and promoting adaptability and continuous improvement. By embedding resilience into its organizational framework, the Ministry

enhances its ability to anticipate, prepare for, and respond to diverse crises, from pandemics to natural disasters.

In addition to strategic planning and crisis response, leadership at the Ministry of Health is crucial for fostering innovation and continuous learning in response to evolving challenges. Leaders play a pivotal role in integrating lessons from past crises to refine protocols, update preparedness measures, and improve response times. Through investments in workforce training and a culture of resilience, the Ministry strengthens its operational capacity and empowers healthcare professionals to proactively engage in crisis situations. Moreover, effective leaders prioritize transparency and open communication, ensuring that stakeholders from frontline healthcare workers to the public are informed and engaged during crises. This trust-building approach enhances compliance, boosts morale, and facilitates coordinated action across all organizational levels, creating a more cohesive and resilient healthcare system capable of confronting future crises with agility and strength.

Problem Statement:

In an increasingly complex and unpredictable global environment, healthcare organizations face heightened vulnerability to crises, such as pandemics, economic disruptions, and natural disasters. The Saudi Ministry of Health, responsible for a vast healthcare network serving a growing population, is tasked with ensuring rapid, effective responses to such crises. However, the effectiveness of crisis management efforts within the Ministry is often constrained by challenges such as inconsistent leadership strategies, limited organizational resilience, and gaps in crisis preparedness. While the COVID-19 pandemic has underscored the essential role of leadership in managing healthcare crises, there remains a need to better understand how specific leadership practices can bolster resilience, facilitate adaptive decision-making, and support a cohesive organizational response. Without a clearly defined, resilient leadership framework, the Ministry risks inadequate crisis responses, compromised healthcare delivery, and reduced public trust. This study seeks to address these challenges by examining the role of leadership in crisis management and organizational resilience at the Saudi Ministry of Health, identifying strategies to enhance the Ministry's capacity to manage current and future crises effectively.

Research Significance

Theoretical Significance

The theoretical significance of this study lies in its contribution to the existing body of knowledge on leadership, crisis management, and organizational resilience, especially within the context of healthcare. This research aims to expand the understanding of how leadership practices influence an organization's capacity to navigate crises and recover from disruptions. By examining leadership through the lens of resilience theories and crisis management frameworks, this study adds depth to these concepts, exploring the specific leadership behaviors, skills, and strategies that are most effective in times of crisis. Additionally, this research provides a theoretical model of resilient leadership that integrates adaptive, transformational, and strategic elements tailored to the unique demands of healthcare systems. This study also contributes to understanding the role of leadership in promoting a resilient organizational culture. By identifying the mechanisms through which leaders can foster adaptability, continuous learning, and resourcefulness, this research offers a foundation for future studies on leadership's role in building resilient organizations. It also bridges gaps in literature specific to the healthcare context, offering insights that can inform broader theories of crisis leadership and resilience beyond the immediate scope of healthcare.

Practical Significance

Practically, this study offers actionable insights for the Saudi Ministry of Health and other healthcare organizations seeking to enhance their crisis management and resilience strategies. By identifying specific leadership behaviors and practices that contribute to effective crisis response, this research provides healthcare leaders with a roadmap for strengthening their organizational resilience. These insights are valuable for designing leadership development programs focused on crisis preparedness, communication skills, and decision-making under pressure. Additionally, the findings support the development of policies and procedures within healthcare systems, helping to ensure that they are equipped to respond to crises with agility and cohesion. This research will guide training initiatives aimed at improving leaders' abilities to inspire confidence, foster collaboration, and communicate effectively with diverse stakeholders during crises. Ultimately, this practical guidance can help healthcare organizations improve patient outcomes, maintain public trust, and ensure continuity of essential services during disruptive events. This study's theoretical contributions deepen the academic understanding of leadership and resilience in crisis

management, while its practical applications provide healthcare organizations with strategies to enhance leadership effectiveness in critical situations. Together, these insights support a more resilient and responsive healthcare system, capable of meeting the demands of an increasingly unpredictable global landscape.

Research Objectives

1. To assess the level of leadership application within the Saudi Ministry of Health.
2. To explore the role of leadership in enhancing crisis management and organizational resilience within the Saudi Ministry of Health.
3. To identify the challenges that leaders in the Saudi Ministry of Health face when implementing crisis management strategies.
4. To examine how leadership within the Ministry of Health can support continuous learning and innovation to improve crisis management capabilities.

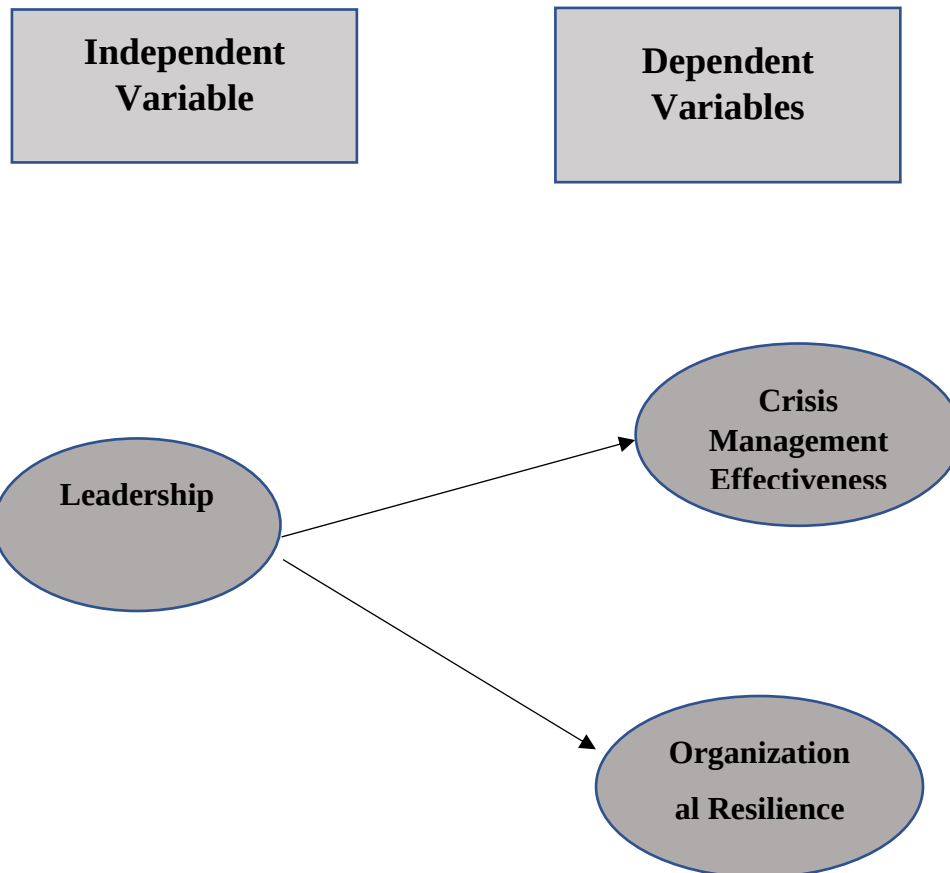
Research Questions

1. What is the Level of Leadership Application in the Saudi Ministry of Health?
2. The Role of Leadership in Crisis Management and Organizational Resilience at the Saudi Ministry of Health?
3. What challenges do leaders in the Saudi Ministry of Health face in implementing crisis management strategies?
4. How can the Ministry of Health's leadership support continuous learning and innovation to improve crisis management capabilities?

Research Hypotheses

is clear to us from the earlier figure, that the current research attempts to The Role of Leadership in Crisis Management and Organizational Resilience at the Saudi Ministry of Health

- Independent Variable : Leadership
- Dependent Variables: Crisis Management Effectiveness, Organizational Resilience



1. **H1:** There is a statistically significant difference in the impact of different leadership styles on crisis management effectiveness at the Saudi Ministry of Health
2. **H2:** There is a statistically significant positive relationship between leadership and crisis management effectiveness at the Saudi Ministry of Health.
3. **H3:** There is a statistically significant positive relationship between leadership and organizational resilience within the Saudi Ministry of Health.

Literature review

The study by Teo, Lee, and Lim (2017) examined how leadership can activate resilience within an organization during a crisis. The researchers introduced the Relational Activation of Resilience (RAR) model, which proposes that leaders play a vital role in fostering resilience by cultivating supportive relationships and mobilizing resources within their teams. This model emphasizes the importance of relational dynamics, suggesting that by strengthening connections and creating a supportive environment, leaders can help employees and the organization as a whole respond more effectively to crises. Using a qualitative approach, the researchers analyzed case studies of organizations that had experienced significant crises. They focused on how leaders influenced employee resilience by facilitating support systems, fostering a psychologically safe environment, and promoting adaptive responses to challenges. Through this in-depth analysis, the study identified key leadership behaviors and relational practices that contributed to organizational resilience. The study found that leaders activate resilience in several critical ways. Firstly, leaders who build strong, trusting relationships within their teams provide a foundation for open communication, mutual support, and collaborative problem-solving. Additionally, leaders who create an environment of psychological safety allow employees to express concerns, take calculated risks, and share innovative solutions without fear of retribution, fostering adaptive thinking and resilience. Effective leaders also mobilize internal and external resources such as mental health support, training, and partnerships to help employees manage stress and adapt to the demands of a crisis. Furthermore, leaders who exhibit adaptive behaviors, empathy, and clear guidance inspire confidence, motivating employees to remain resilient and focused. The study's introduction of the Relational Activation of Resilience model contributes significantly to the field of crisis management by highlighting the relational aspects of resilience-building. It suggests that leadership during crises goes beyond directive actions, emphasizing the importance of fostering supportive connections that empower employees to adapt and thrive. The findings offer practical insights for leaders aiming to strengthen resilience within their organizations, focusing on relational dynamics and creating a safe, resourceful environment for effective crisis response.

The study by Martinez, Kilag, and Macario (2023) examined the impact of organizational culture on leadership strategies during crisis management. The research aimed to understand how various cultural characteristics within organizations shape leaders' responses to crises,

highlighting how culture can either support or limit effective crisis management. The authors sought to explore the specific ways in which organizational culture affects leaders' decision-making, communication, and adaptability during high-stakes situations. Employing a mixed-methods approach, the researchers combined quantitative surveys with qualitative interviews involving leaders from organizations that had recently navigated significant crises. The survey provided data on the relationship between organizational culture and leadership approaches, while the interviews offered in-depth perspectives on how culture shaped leaders' crisis responses. This method allowed the researchers to capture both measurable trends and detailed accounts of how specific cultural attributes influenced leadership during challenging times. The findings revealed several ways in which organizational culture plays a critical role in crisis management. For instance, organizations with adaptable and flexible cultures enabled leaders to respond quickly and creatively, empowering them to make swift decisions and adjust strategies as crises unfolded. Additionally, cultures that prioritize open communication and transparency allowed leaders to maintain consistent and clear messaging, which helped build trust and ensure that everyone understood the crisis situation and their role in managing it. Organizations with a risk-tolerant culture further encouraged leaders to take calculated risks and adopt innovative solutions, viewing crises as opportunities for growth rather than merely threats. However, the study also highlighted differences based on organizational structure. In hierarchical cultures, leaders' responsiveness was often restricted due to multiple levels of approval, leading to slower decision-making processes. In contrast, collaborative cultures allowed for faster and more coordinated crisis responses, as team members were encouraged to contribute ideas and work together toward solutions. This study contributes significantly to the literature on crisis management by showing that organizational culture is a dynamic influence on leadership effectiveness during crises. The findings suggest that culture is not merely a background factor but a powerful element that can either facilitate or hinder successful crisis management. Leaders who understand their organizational culture can leverage it to optimize their crisis strategies. The study also recommends fostering a culture of adaptability, transparency, and collaboration to enhance resilience and improve the effectiveness of crisis management within organizations.

The study by Monternel, Kilag, and Restauero (2023) investigated the relationship between crisis response, employee engagement, and organizational resilience, utilizing Fink's Crisis Management Model as a guiding framework. The research aimed to understand how engaged

employees contribute to resilience during crises and how organizations can leverage this engagement to enhance their crisis response and recovery. Fink's model, which outlines crisis phases from pre-crisis to post-crisis recovery, provided a structured approach for examining employee engagement dynamics at each stage. Using a mixed-methods approach, the researchers gathered data through surveys and case studies from organizations that had recently experienced crises. The survey data offered quantitative insights into levels of employee engagement, resilience, and the effectiveness of crisis responses. In contrast, the case studies provided qualitative perspectives on how organizations maintained engagement across the various stages of a crisis, from prevention to recovery, and how this engagement supported organizational resilience. The findings revealed several significant insights into the connection between crisis response and employee engagement. First, organizations with high levels of employee engagement prior to a crisis were better prepared to handle crises, as engaged employees were more proactive and communicative in taking preventive measures. During the crisis phase, engaged employees displayed adaptability and a commitment to supporting stability and rapid response, motivated by a strong sense of loyalty to the organization. In the post-crisis recovery stage, engaged employees played a critical role in restoring normalcy and contributing to process improvements that strengthened resilience for future crises. Their involvement in post-crisis evaluations enabled organizations to learn from the experience and refine their resilience strategies. This study makes a valuable contribution to crisis management literature by highlighting the crucial role of employee engagement in fostering organizational resilience. By applying Fink's model, the research demonstrates that engaged employees are not only essential during regular operations but are also key assets throughout all phases of crisis management. The findings emphasize the importance of building and maintaining employee engagement as part of resilience planning, providing organizations with practical strategies for leveraging engagement to enhance their crisis response and recovery efforts.

The study by Sommer, Howell, and Hadley (2016) examined how positive affect (emotions and mood) and team leadership contribute to developing resilience within teams during organizational crises. The researchers aimed to understand how leaders can use positive emotions and foster supportive team dynamics to build resilience, helping teams to remain focused, adapt, and recover effectively in the face of adversity. Employing a mixed-methods approach, the researchers combined surveys and case studies from organizations that had recently experienced

crises. Quantitative data measured levels of positive affect, team cohesion, leadership support, and resilience, while qualitative insights from case studies provided a deeper understanding of how team leaders managed emotions and encouraged resilience-building behaviors during challenging times. The findings revealed that both positive affect and supportive team leadership are critical for fostering resilience in crisis situations. Teams with higher levels of positive affect demonstrated greater resilience, as positive emotions helped members maintain optimism, manage stress, and stay focused on problem-solving rather than succumbing to negativity or fear. Leaders who provided emotional support, encouraged optimism, and fostered a sense of cohesion played a key role in strengthening resilience within their teams. These supportive leaders helped their teams feel united, valued, and confident in their ability to overcome the crisis together. Furthermore, teams led by positive, supportive leaders exhibited greater adaptability and strength-building. These teams were better able to draw on their strengths and adjust to the demands of the crisis, fostering a sense of growth and confidence in handling future challenges. This study contributes to the crisis management and resilience literature by highlighting the importance of positive affect and team leadership in building resilience. It underscores that emotional support, optimism, and team cohesion are essential for helping teams cope with and recover from crises. The findings offer practical insights for leaders, suggesting that fostering a positive, supportive environment can significantly enhance team resilience, enabling them to navigate crises more effectively and emerge stronger.

The study by Sharief (2024) examined the impact of various leadership styles on organizational resilience during crises in Sudan. Focusing on a region frequently affected by political instability, economic challenges, and natural disasters, the research aimed to understand how different leadership approaches such as transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire affect an organization's ability to withstand and recover from disruptions. By providing insights into resilience-building in such a challenging environment, the study highlights critical factors that contribute to organizational survival and adaptability in times of crisis. Using a quantitative approach, Sharief surveyed leaders and employees across multiple sectors in Sudanese organizations that had recently experienced crises. The survey assessed leadership styles and perceived levels of organizational resilience, including adaptability, recovery speed, and effectiveness in managing disruptions. Statistical analyses were then conducted to evaluate the influence of each leadership style on these resilience indicators. The findings revealed that

leadership style plays a significant role in determining an organization's resilience during crises. Transformational leadership, which inspires and motivates employees while fostering a shared sense of purpose, was associated with the highest levels of resilience. Organizations led by transformational leaders showed greater adaptability, quicker recovery, and stronger employee cohesion, which enabled them to navigate crises more effectively. Transactional leadership, which focuses on structure, rewards, and performance, also contributed to resilience, although to a lesser extent than transformational leadership. While this style was effective in maintaining stability and ensuring essential tasks were completed, it did not promote the same levels of adaptability or innovation needed during crises. Conversely, laissez-faire leadership, characterized by a hands-off approach, negatively impacted resilience. Organizations with laissez-faire leaders struggled with cohesion and recovery, as employees lacked direction and support in critical moments. This study contributes valuable insights into the relationship between leadership and resilience, particularly within crisis-prone regions like Sudan. The findings suggest that transformational leadership is particularly effective in fostering organizational resilience by promoting adaptability, cohesion, and a proactive approach to crises. The research emphasizes the importance of supportive, engaged leadership in building resilient organizations and offers practical implications for leaders seeking to enhance their organization's capacity to withstand and recover from crises.

Study by (Williams et al. 2017) sought to integrate the fields of crisis management and resilience, exploring how organizations respond to adversity by combining elements from both research streams. The authors aimed to develop a unified framework that addresses the complex ways in which organizations navigate crises and build resilience to withstand future challenges. This study recognizes that while crisis management traditionally focuses on reactive responses to sudden threats, resilience research emphasizes adaptability and recovery, offering insights into both immediate and long-term responses to adversity. The researchers conducted an extensive review of literature on crisis management and organizational resilience, identifying common themes, approaches, and gaps between the two fields. By synthesizing findings from both areas, they developed a framework that highlights how organizations can more effectively respond to crises by leveraging resilience practices. The study proposed a framework that fuses crisis management and resilience strategies, advocating for a dual approach to handling adversity. Key findings emphasized the importance of adaptive capacities, such as flexibility, learning, and proactive planning, which enable organizations to prepare for, respond to, and recover from crises.

The framework highlights that successful organizational responses to crises are not only reactive but also incorporate resilience-building processes that support sustained performance in uncertain environments. This research contributes a cohesive model that bridges crisis management and resilience, providing organizations with a more holistic approach to navigating adversity. The framework encourages organizations to develop both reactive crisis protocols and proactive resilience-building strategies, thereby creating a robust foundation for managing both present and future disruptions.

Study by (Adamu et al., 2024) explored the impact of internal crisis management strategies on organizational resilience, focusing on how these strategies influence employee sensemaking (interpreting and understanding crises) and sensegiving (guiding others' interpretations). The study aimed to examine how strategic crisis management practices shape employees' understanding and response to crises, ultimately supporting organizational resilience. The study utilized a qualitative approach, conducting interviews with employees and managers across various organizations that had experienced recent crises. The researchers analyzed how crisis management practices affected employees' ability to make sense of and communicate about crises, highlighting the relational and cognitive processes that support resilience. Findings indicated that effective internal crisis management enhances employees' ability to make sense of crises, providing clarity and reducing uncertainty. Leaders who actively engaged in sensegiving guiding how employees interpret the crisis were able to foster a stronger sense of direction and confidence within their teams. This proactive communication approach facilitated resilience by enabling employees to adapt quickly, stay focused, and work collaboratively. Additionally, the study found that resilience was reinforced when employees felt involved in the crisis response, contributing to a collective sense of agency and control. This study underscores the importance of strategic internal crisis management in supporting organizational resilience by empowering employees to interpret and respond to crises effectively. The research highlights the role of sensemaking and sensegiving in crisis contexts, suggesting that clear, consistent communication from leaders is crucial for building resilience. This approach offers practical insights for organizations looking to strengthen resilience through strategic crisis management that engages employees at all levels, enhancing their capacity to navigate and overcome adversity.

The study by (Orozco, et al., (2023) explored the essential components of effective crisis management in organizational settings, focusing on how organizations can navigate unpredictability and prepare for unforeseen challenges. By examining various case studies across industries and conducting a comprehensive literature review, the researchers identified common strategies that organizations use to manage crises. The study revealed several core elements crucial for successful crisis management, including preparedness and planning, leadership, communication, and adaptability. Organizations with robust crisis plans were found to respond more effectively to unexpected events, while strong leadership played a critical role in facilitating quick and informed decision-making. Additionally, effective communication channels and coordination across departments helped organizations work cohesively during crises. The study emphasized adaptability and learning as key components, as organizations that could adapt quickly and learn from crisis experiences emerged stronger and better prepared for future disruptions. Overall, the findings provide a framework for organizations to strengthen their crisis management capabilities, focusing on these fundamental elements to navigate unpredictability effectively.

In a separate study (Ghazi et al., 2024) examined the role of strategic leadership in enhancing operational resilience within the hotel industry, specifically investigating how crisis response strategies and e-readiness contribute to resilience. Using a mixed-methods approach that combined surveys and interviews with hotel managers and staff, the researchers analyzed the impact of strategic leadership, digital preparedness, and well-defined crisis response strategies on operational resilience. The study found that strategic leadership, when combined with proactive crisis response strategies and high e-readiness, significantly boosted resilience, enabling hotels to maintain continuity despite industry-specific challenges. Leaders who took a proactive approach to crisis management were more effective in guiding teams and ensuring operational continuity. Additionally, hotels with established crisis response strategies and investments in digital infrastructure (e-readiness) demonstrated greater flexibility and operational resilience, allowing them to respond swiftly to disruptions. This study highlights the importance of an integrated approach—strategic leadership, digital preparedness, and proactive response strategies—as essential to building resilience in the hospitality sector, allowing hotels to manage crises effectively and maintain service quality.

Theoretical foundations of the study

Concept of Leadership

The concept of leadership refers to the ability to influence, guide, and motivate a group or an organization toward achieving common goals. Leadership involves setting a vision, making strategic decisions, and creating an environment that fosters collaboration and growth. Effective leaders inspire trust, model desired behaviors, and empower others to reach their full potential, often adapting their style to the needs of the situation and the people they lead. Leadership is not limited to a position of authority but is more about the impact one has on others and the ability to bring out the best in them. It combines personal attributes, such as integrity, empathy, and resilience, with skills like communication, decision-making, and strategic thinking. The concept of leadership continues to evolve, especially in response to global and organizational changes, highlighting the importance of emotional intelligence, ethical leadership, and adaptability in today's dynamic environment (Teo et al.,2017).

Type of Leadership

There are various types of leadership styles, each with unique characteristics and approaches to guiding and influencing a team. Here are some common types (Martinez et al.,2023).

1. **Autocratic Leadership** make decisions independently, without input from team members. This style can be effective in situations requiring quick decision-making or when there's a need for clear direction, but it may stifle creativity and lower morale if overused.
2. **Democratic Leadership** encourage team members to participate in decision-making, fostering a collaborative environment. This style can lead to high team morale and innovation, as members feel valued and empowered, though it may slow down decision-making processes.
3. **Transformational Leadership** inspire and motivate their teams by setting a compelling vision and encouraging personal growth. They focus on creating change and innovation, often leading to high levels of engagement and performance. However, it requires a leader with strong charisma and the ability to connect on a deeper level with team members.
4. **Transactional Leadership** focus on structure, rules, and rewards. They emphasize tasks and goals, with clear rewards for success and consequences for failure. This style works well in stable environments but may not inspire innovation or adaptability.

5. Servant Leadership prioritize the needs and development of their team members over their own ambitions. They focus on supporting others and empowering them to reach their potential. This style fosters trust and loyalty but may require more time to achieve goals, as the leader places a high emphasis on individual growth.
6. Laissez-Faire Leadership Laissez-faire leaders give their teams considerable freedom in how they work, providing little direction or supervision. This style can be effective with experienced, self-motivated teams but may lead to a lack of direction and accountability if team members need more guidance.

Definition of Crisis Management

Crisis management is the process by which an organization or individual prepares for, responds to, and recovers from unexpected and potentially damaging events. It involves identifying potential risks, creating plans to mitigate them, and establishing protocols for managing a crisis if it arises. The goal of crisis management is to minimize harm to people, property, and reputation, while maintaining or quickly restoring normal operations. Effective crisis management includes several key stages: preparation, where risks are assessed, and plans are developed; response, where the crisis is managed in real-time through clear communication and action plans; and recovery, which focuses on restoring stability, learning from the incident, and implementing improvements. It requires strong leadership, clear communication, and coordination across all levels of an organization to ensure that all stakeholders understand their roles and can respond quickly and effectively (Monternel et al.,2023).

Understanding Organizational Resilience

Organizational resilience refers to an organization's ability to withstand, adapt to, and recover from disruptions, crises, or unexpected changes while continuing to function and pursue its strategic goals. It encompasses not only the capacity to manage crises effectively but also the agility to anticipate risks, adapt to changing conditions, and learn from past experiences to strengthen future responses (Sommer et al.,2016).

Key components of organizational resilience include:

1. **Adaptability** The ability to adjust to new conditions, whether these involve changes in the market, technology, or external environments. Adaptable organizations are flexible in their processes, allowing them to pivot and reallocate resources as needed.
2. **Preparedness** Building resilience requires proactive planning and the development of crisis management plans, risk assessments, and contingency measures. Preparedness involves identifying potential threats and putting structures in place to respond swiftly.
3. **Robustness** Resilient organizations are built to withstand disruptions through strong infrastructure, dependable systems, and clear protocols. This robustness ensures that essential functions remain operational, even during adverse conditions.
4. **Learning and Improvement** Learning from past crises or challenges is essential for enhancing resilience. Resilient organizations analyze their responses to disruptions, identify what went well and what could be improved, and integrate these insights into future planning.
5. **Employee Engagement and Empowerment** Employees play a crucial role in resilience, as they are often on the front lines during crises. Resilient organizations empower their workforce with training, clear communication, and decision-making authority, enabling them to respond effectively.
6. **Leadership and Culture** Strong leadership and a supportive organizational culture are fundamental to resilience. Leaders in resilient organizations model calm, decisive behavior during crises, fostering a culture of trust, innovation, and collective responsibility.

Organizational resilience not only helps a company survive crises but also thrive in a competitive and uncertain world. By embedding resilience into their culture and operations, organizations position themselves to adapt swiftly, innovate continuously, and maintain a competitive edge, regardless of external challenges.

Leadership Theories to Crisis Management and Resilience

Transformational leadership is especially effective in times of crisis because it centers on inspiring and motivating people through a shared vision. Leaders with a transformational approach work to instill purpose and unity, guiding employees through uncertainty with optimism and resilience. This leadership style fosters an environment where adaptability and creative problem-

solving are encouraged, which can be crucial in dynamic, high-stakes situations. By focusing on the emotional and psychological well-being of their teams, transformational leaders help maintain morale and foster a sense of collective resilience, allowing the organization to confront and navigate crises effectively (Kim,2020)

Transactional leadership provides structure, stability, and clarity in a crisis by emphasizing clear roles, established procedures, and task-oriented actions. During crises, a transactional approach can be beneficial for organizations needing consistency and predictability, as it reinforces compliance with protocols and minimizes confusion. Leaders who adopt this style ensure that everyone knows their responsibilities and that procedures are followed, which is essential for maintaining order when rapid action is required. By rewarding adherence to established protocols and performance under pressure, transactional leaders reinforce a sense of stability and control, helping organizations manage the immediate impact of a crisis effectively. Adaptive and situational leadership styles are characterized by their flexibility, making them highly suitable for crisis management, where conditions can change rapidly. Leaders who adopt these approaches adjust their methods based on the unique demands of each stage of the crisis. In high-stress moments, they may take on a more directive role, while during recovery phases, they may encourage autonomy and empower employees to make decisions. By assessing needs in real-time and adapting their approach accordingly, these leaders create a responsive and resilient organizational culture, equipping teams to meet the shifting demands of a crisis and emerge stronger (Suryaningtyas et al.,2019).

The Relational Activation of Resilience Model underscores the importance of relationships and social support in building resilience. According to this model, leaders can enhance resilience by fostering a network of supportive relationships within the organization, encouraging open communication, and providing a space where employees feel safe to express their concerns. In times of crisis, this relational support strengthens the organization's resilience as individuals come together to collaborate and offer mutual support. Leaders who focus on activating resilience through social connections leverage the power of teamwork and solidarity, which can significantly buffer against the stress and challenges of a crisis (Orozco et al.,2023).

Fink's Crisis Management Model divides crises into four phases: prodromal (early warnings), acute (crisis hits), chronic (ongoing management), and resolution. This model highlights that effective crisis leadership requires different roles and actions at each phase. During the prodromal phase, leaders are vigilant, identifying early warning signs and preparing the organization for potential risks. In the acute phase, leaders must act decisively to manage the immediate effects of the crisis. As the crisis continues into the chronic phase, leaders focus on addressing long-term impacts, managing financial or operational consequences, and maintaining morale. Finally, in the resolution phase, leaders guide the organization back to stability, focusing on recovery and integrating lessons learned to strengthen future preparedness. Fink's model demonstrates that successful crisis management involves a balanced approach of preparedness, decisive action, and a commitment to long-term recovery and learning (Kim et al.,2020).

Leadership Behaviors that Foster Organizational Resilience

In building organizational resilience, leaders play a crucial role by adopting specific behaviors that prepare, support, and empower teams to withstand challenges. Several key leadership behaviors have proven to be particularly effective in fostering resilience within organizations, including building trust and psychological safety, promoting effective communication and transparency, encouraging adaptability and innovation, and supporting employee well-being and engagement during crises. Trust and psychological safety are foundational elements of a resilient organization. Leaders foster trust by being reliable, consistent, and fair in their decisions, actions, and interactions with employees. Psychological safety, where team members feel comfortable sharing ideas, asking questions, or admitting mistakes without fear of negative consequences, is cultivated by leaders who listen actively, avoid punitive responses, and value each person's input. When employees feel trusted and psychologically safe, they are more likely to take necessary risks, collaborate effectively, and bounce back from setbacks, all of which are vital for organizational resilience (Yağmur & Myrvang,2023).

During crises, clear and transparent communication is essential for maintaining resilience. Leaders who prioritize open and honest communication ensure that employees are informed about the situation, aware of any immediate changes, and understand their roles in the response. Transparency helps build trust and reduces uncertainty, as team members feel that they are

receiving accurate information and are not left in the dark. By actively listening to feedback and addressing concerns, leaders can foster a culture of openness, which enhances the organization's ability to navigate the crisis together with confidence and coordination. Resilient organizations thrive on adaptability, and leaders who encourage a culture of flexibility and innovation can help their teams respond effectively to unexpected challenges. Leaders promote adaptability by being open to new ideas, allowing for flexible workflows, and rewarding creative solutions. They model adaptability themselves by adjusting strategies when necessary and demonstrating that change is an opportunity for growth rather than a setback. This behavior helps employees feel empowered to experiment and innovate, making the organization more agile and better prepared to pivot quickly when facing crises (Gečienė, 2021).

Employee well-being is a crucial component of organizational resilience, particularly during times of crisis. Leaders who support their team's mental and physical well-being create a stronger, more resilient workforce. They do so by providing resources for stress management, offering flexibility where possible, and showing empathy toward employees' individual challenges. Furthermore, engaging employees by recognizing their efforts, involving them in decision-making, and reinforcing their sense of purpose helps to boost morale and maintain motivation. Leaders who prioritize well-being and engagement help reduce burnout and create a work environment where employees feel valued and supported, which strengthens the organization's resilience (Channa et al., 2019).

The Role of Employee Engagement in Crisis Management

Employee engagement plays a pivotal role in crisis management, as engaged employees are more committed, motivated, and aligned with the organization's goals, which can be crucial during times of disruption. Engaged employees demonstrate a heightened sense of responsibility, resilience, and adaptability, qualities that are essential in managing and navigating crises effectively. When employees are fully engaged, they are not only willing to go the extra mile but are also more likely to contribute innovative solutions and ideas to address the challenges at hand. One of the key benefits of employee engagement in crisis management is the enhancement of communication and collaboration. Engaged employees are generally more open to communication, whether it involves sharing important updates, expressing concerns, or providing

feedback. This collaborative culture can be critical during a crisis, as it allows for seamless information flow, rapid identification of issues, and coordinated response efforts. When leaders actively involve engaged employees in decision-making processes, it fosters a sense of ownership and accountability, helping the organization respond to the crisis with a unified, focused approach (Williams et al.,2017).

Moreover, engaged employees tend to display greater emotional resilience, which can help stabilize the organization in turbulent times. They are more likely to cope with uncertainty and stress, as their connection to the organization's purpose and values provides them with a sense of direction and motivation. Leaders who actively support employee engagement during a crisis, through recognition, clear communication, and providing resources for well-being, help sustain morale and reduce burnout. In essence, employee engagement strengthens an organization's crisis response by creating a resilient workforce that is adaptable, motivated, and aligned with the organization's mission. By fostering a culture of engagement, organizations not only improve their ability to manage crises effectively but also position themselves for faster recovery and future growth (Adamu et al.,2024).

Leadership Challenges in Crisis Management and Resilience Building

Leadership plays a crucial role in navigating organizations through crises and fostering resilience; however, leaders often encounter significant challenges in fulfilling these responsibilities. These challenges can arise from the complexity and unpredictability of crises, the need for rapid decision-making, maintaining morale under stress, and balancing short-term crisis response with long-term resilience planning. Understanding these challenges is essential for developing more effective leadership practices in crisis-prone environments (Gichuhi, 2021).

1. Decision-Making Under Uncertainty

One of the most prominent challenges leaders face in crisis management is making swift and informed decisions amid high uncertainty. Crises often present ambiguous situations with rapidly changing information, making it difficult for leaders to accurately assess risks and anticipate outcomes. Leaders must rely on incomplete data, act decisively, and adapt as new

information emerges. This requires a high level of adaptability and strategic thinking to navigate complex situations without full clarity, often under significant time pressure (Adamu et al.,2024).

2. Maintaining Communication and Transparency

Effective communication is critical in a crisis, yet it can be challenging for leaders to maintain clear and transparent communication with employees and stakeholders. The need to balance transparency with the protection of sensitive information, avoid causing unnecessary panic, and manage conflicting information adds to the complexity. Leaders must convey information that is timely, accurate, and accessible, ensuring that all stakeholders understand the situation, their roles, and the organization's response strategy. Failure to communicate effectively can lead to misunderstandings, reduced trust, and a breakdown in cooperation.

3. Balancing Short-Term Crisis Response with Long-Term Resilience

During crises, leaders are often focused on immediate response actions, which can make it difficult to allocate time and resources toward long-term resilience-building initiatives. The challenge lies in balancing the urgency of addressing present threats with the need to strengthen the organization's capacity to withstand future crises. Leaders must prioritize resilience-building efforts such as developing adaptive processes, fostering a resilient culture, and implementing proactive risk management strategies while managing the crisis at hand (Sharief, 2024).

4. Managing Employee Morale and Well-Being

Crises can significantly impact employee morale and well-being, with leaders facing the challenge of keeping employees engaged, motivated, and emotionally supported. Leaders must navigate heightened stress, fear, and uncertainty among employees, which can affect performance, mental health, and productivity. Effective leaders must provide emotional support, foster a sense of security, and create a psychologically safe environment, even when the future may be unclear. This requires empathy, patience, and the ability to address employees' concerns while keeping them aligned with organizational goals (Ruslaini et al.,2024).

5. Resource Constraints and Prioritization

Crises often create or exacerbate resource constraints, challenging leaders to allocate limited resources strategically. Financial limitations, reduced staffing, or limited access to necessary tools can hinder an organization's crisis response and resilience-building efforts. Leaders must prioritize resources effectively, making difficult choices about which aspects of crisis management to emphasize while managing trade-offs between immediate needs and long-term sustainability (Ghazi et al.,2024).

6. Cultivating Adaptability and Innovation

Encouraging adaptability and innovation is essential for resilience, yet leaders may face challenges in fostering a culture that embraces change during crises. Employees may be resistant to new approaches due to fear of failure or disruption to established practices. Leaders must encourage creative problem-solving, support risk-taking within reasonable bounds, and model adaptability themselves, helping employees see crises as opportunities for learning and growth rather than threats (Bhaduri, 2019)

7. Managing Stakeholder Expectations and Trust

Leaders must manage the expectations of multiple stakeholders, including employees, clients, partners, and sometimes the public. Different groups may have varied and even conflicting priorities, making it challenging for leaders to address all concerns satisfactorily. Maintaining trust with stakeholders is essential for sustained support, yet it can be difficult to meet every demand or assure positive outcomes in uncertain conditions. Leaders must strive for transparent communication, set realistic expectations, and remain accessible to foster trust and credibility.

8. Ensuring Organizational Learning and Continuous Improvement

After a crisis, one of the most valuable steps is to capture lessons learned and integrate them into the organization's practices. Leaders may face challenges in formalizing and implementing these lessons, especially when operational demands return to normal. Building resilience requires an ongoing commitment to learning and improvement, which can be challenging to prioritize without sufficient time or resources. Leaders must ensure that lessons from crises are documented, analyzed, and used to refine crisis management protocols, preparing the organization for future disruptions (Mokline et al.,2021).

Methodology and research methods

This study adopted a descriptive analytical approach to assess the level of leadership application within the Saudi Ministry of Health. To explore the role of leadership in enhancing crisis management and organizational resilience within the Saudi Ministry of Health. To identify the challenges that leaders in the Saudi Ministry of Health face when implementing crisis management strategies. To examine how leadership within the Ministry of Health can support continuous learning and innovation to improve crisis management capabilities

Study tools

To achieve the objectives of this study on "The Role of Leadership in Crisis Management and Organizational Resilience at the Saudi Ministry of Health," a questionnaire will serve as the primary tool for data collection. This questionnaire is designed to capture comprehensive and detailed insights from participants regarding their perspectives and experiences with leadership practices, crisis management strategies, and resilience-building initiatives within the Ministry. This approach ensures that the data gathered reflects firsthand insights, providing a robust foundation for analyzing the role of leadership in shaping crisis response and organizational resilience in healthcare settings. The collected data will undergo various statistical analyses to ensure precision and reliability in the findings. To assess the reliability and consistency of the questionnaire, Cronbach's alpha coefficient will be used as a key indicator, verifying the internal consistency of the instrument and confirming that it is dependable for gathering reliable data. Additionally, arithmetic mean and standard deviation calculations will be performed to explore the central tendency and dispersion within the dataset, allowing for a clear understanding of response patterns and the identification of prevailing trends in leadership practices within crisis management contexts. To evaluate the relationships between the different variables, linear regression analysis will be conducted, determining the extent to which the independent variables (various dimensions of leadership) influence the dependent variable (organizational resilience and effectiveness in crisis management). This comprehensive statistical approach provides a deeper and more accurate interpretation of the data, strengthening the study's validity and enhancing the overall reliability of the results. Through these analytical methods, the study aims to offer valuable insights into how

leadership practices at the Saudi Ministry of Health impact its capacity to manage crises effectively and foster organizational resilience.

Study limitations

1. Temporal Limitations: Conducted during 2024, the study's data collection and analysis reflect only the current practices and challenges in leadership, crisis management, and resilience-building at the Ministry of Health. Future changes in practices or policies may not be captured.
2. Spatial Limitations: The research is confined to the Saudi Ministry of Health, focusing specifically on its internal crisis management strategies and resilience practices. Therefore, the findings may not apply to other sectors or ministries outside healthcare.
3. Objective Limitations: The study aims to evaluate the Ministry's leadership role in crisis management, explore the impact of various leadership styles, identify challenges faced by leaders, and propose strategies aligned with Vision 2030. This focus may limit the study's application beyond these objectives.
4. Human Limitations: The study involves a targeted sample within the Ministry, including leaders and healthcare professionals, but does not include perspectives from external stakeholders, such as patients or non-governmental providers, which may limit the comprehensiveness of the findings.

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