

## MANAGING CRISIS IN BUSINESS THROUGH THE MEDIA APPROACH

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DOI: 10.13140/RG.2.2.19482.59846

### Abstract

*This paper discusses the centrality of media approach to effective management of crisis in business organizations. A descriptive survey was carried out to explain the relationships existing between the media and the business organizations. It also stresses on how mass media aims at helping business managers and their subordinates in business operations. The paper employs developmental theory and agenda setting theory which literally give the media audience in business a list of things that they must consider or act upon two ways by framing the messages to tell the people on how to think about an issue through slant it is given. By building agenda, the media plays up news worthy issue to arouse public attention and action. The media can be used as an effective instrument to managing crisis in modern business organizations.*

**Keywords:** crisis, approach, effective, management, organization.

### Introduction

Our business environment of today is a mass media society. Media approach is a best way to promote ideas and ideals and therefore maybe suitably used for crises management in modern businesses. The integration of mass media role in the societies these days is to building the society of businesses together, that is such managers and subordinated to live in harmony and unity providing leadership to the public, acting as the conscience of business society satisfying needs of information, helping the public to establish public acceptance and to providing the business society with mirror of itself (Hanno, Hardt 2019), mass media thus mobilizes people in businesses (Deflaur M. L Denis Mc. Quail 2007)

The mass media virtually sharpens public opinions providing information about events and maintaining commonality of value and creates awareness to the public through dissemination information, caused the masses about work stability and peaceful atmosphere (Defleur M.L and Balt Rokeach 1982). Crisis is inevitable in every human setting. To be precise, crisis is any event issue, occurrence or situation that could be described as a turning point for better or for worse. For positive and negative impact both of them need proper management through media approach. A crisis is also one of the most effective agents of change imaginable (Nwosu, 1996).

While crises management means taking appropriate measures to prevent crisis before it occurs. It is proactive, preventive and preplanned in nature. Tools for proactive crisis management are: information, knowledge and communication. In order to achieve proper crises management, there must be an established two-way communication channel. This can only be achieved with media consideration.

Crisis are unavoidably existing in businesses, which occurs between superior and superior, or between subordinates and subordinates etc.

There are two types of crisis:

- Known unknown-predictable e.g., fraud, protest, embezzlement.
- Unknown unknown (natural crisis)-unanticipated. e.g. accident, hurricane, flood, volcanic eruption etc.

### **Review of Related Literature**

The literature undertakes a theocratical framework of two theories of developmental theory and that of agenda setting theory and other related issues including the role of mass media as a mediator and the relationship between the media and the business society.

### **Developmental Theory**

The developmental theory of the media focusses on how the mass media can be used to develop the state in terms of their reportorial activities. According to Okon (2001, p 133). Citing Kunzick (1995): the term “developmental theory” first cropped up around 1967 to define a notion of journalism according to which reporting events of national and international significance should be constructive

in the sense that it contributes positively to the development of the country concerned. According to Okon (2001) in Vilalilan (1979) when he opened that development theory is centered around “journalism relating to projects and programme lunched in an economically back ward country to provide certain minimum standard to its people”.

The theory tries to explain the relationship existing between media, society and business organizations. It otherwise addresses the processes and the mechanisms that allow communication to take place. Mass communication theory is explanation and prediction of social phenomena that attempts to relate mass communication to various aspects of our personal, cultural and social lives. Kurt Lewin assert is that there is nothing as practical as a sound theory as it helps us to put facts in their basic understandable forms and also to predict events even before they occur. Mass communication is suitable according to Okwenwan examines human attitude, behavior and habit, how and why they differ. Theory as a guide to discovering facts.

### **Agenda Setting Theory**

The agenda setting theory centers around the idea that media outlets tell the public “not what to think, but what to think about.” Agenda theory hypothesis that media have the power to influence the public discourse, and tell people what are important issues facing society. In other words, the media do influence what we think about. What we think about influences what we do. Thus, the agenda setting theory is premised on the assumption that the messages carried out by the media can influence the action if the media consumers. As Cohen (1963: 13) notes: “the media may not be successful much times in telling telling5 people what to think but it is stunningly successful in telling its reader what to think about. And it follows from th6is th6at th6e world looks different to different people, depending not only on their personal interests, but also on the map that is drawn for them by the writers, editors and publishers of the papers that they read.”

Dominic (2005) quips that the agenda theory literally gives the media audience a list of things that they must consider or act upon. He explains that the media achieves this in toe ways: by framing their messages or by agenda building. By framing, th6e media tells people how to think about an issue through slant it is given by agenda building the media plays up newsworthy issues to arouse public attention.

The agenda theory thereby encapsulates that the media can be used to make the people think of peace and actually takes step to actualize it in business. This is so because the media can predetermine what crisis issue are meaningful managed through media approach in such business societies in this modern day.

### **The Role of Mass Media as the Mediator in Business Crisis Management**

Media becomes the third parties that can intervene to identify and enable the getting rid of social challenges. As Bittner (1999) notes: all through history the press has inadvertently or deliberately become deeply involved in the course of events. The media set the agenda for public discussion. Burton (1995) that what third party interveners do is to create an enhanced environment where “controlled communication’ between the parties in any given crisis can take place. The purpose of this communication is to give or obtain information. It has been established, that mediation is a way of resolving crisis. The media can be used to achieve resolution because communication is an instrument for social change, public mobilization, enlightenment and promotion of the public goods. As Olurunyoni (2003) points out:

“the media plays a catalytic role in creating and sustaining a common public culture and its components in terms of books, newspapers, television, videography, films and radio which will help to forge communities in general and thematic terms.”

Baumann and Siebert (1993) emphasized that the media can become the agent mediator and agents for or against conflicts / crisis and their resolutions. The media can choose two options for crisis managements such as low and high roads to mediation

**Low Road Mediation:** the low road mediation sees crisis or conflict as battles that must be won, even when the war may be lost. The combatants strive to impose their goals on the other party or parties. In other words, media reports are propaganda. Propagandists mislead, deceive or distort to get public attention.

**The High Road to Mediation:** the high road sees conflict/ crisis as opportunities to change the parties in crisis. Whichever party has the upper hand in the conflict/crisis does not use violence to push its views down the throat of the

opponent. The media reports are programmed to engineer peace and human progress.

Media accounts encourage the parties in the conflict/crises to use the crisis as a platform to identify new ways to manage their differences.

From the above foregoing, it is obvious that for the media to be mediators, they must follow the high road and choose to refuse a ride long the low road. This means that the newspapers and magazines must frame their stories to build peace. The media as a mediator must be financially independent and strictly adhere to its mission of promoting peace, dialogue and participation. The media should remain independent watchdogs.

### **Relationship between the Media and the Society of Business**

Most importantly, there is interface between the media and the society of businesses. The media are important of the society particularly the business organizations. The media greatly serve the businesses in the society at large. The mass media of communication include the newspapers, magazines, radio, television, films, cinema and the internet. With a single message the media can reach millions of different places at the same time, for example, a single radio broadcast station can reach the ears of millions of listeners who are tuned to that station that time.

The media are the mirrors of crisis resolution in the society in businesses and not business organizations. Media can inform, educate and entertain. They inform by telling significant messages, ideas and feelings of uniting the minds of people. Shadrack (2020) observes that mass media is essential agent or way of preventing and removing crisis situation in organization. The relevance of mass media cannot be overemphasized as it causes stability among people within an organization like business entities, by preaching peace and unity/harmony among workers in businesses, in essence, mass media is a way that brings people together in business. At times, the top-down structure of media system seems to contribute to the development of business culture, particularly business media through television, radio or internet.

Theoretically, media technology has the capability to bridge the business environment distance without any scale bias. However, in practice, Olagunju (2002) points out "the simple secret of media system is easiest mediation

method forum of business where they are able to listen to each other with empathy.”

### **Methology**

A descriptive survey was employed in generating data for the study. The raw data collected from respondent were presented in tabular form and analyzed using simple percentages. To ensure the validity of the study, few questionnaires were pretested in the faculty of social and management sciences at university of Africa, Torou-Orua. The instrument, 20 questionnaires were self-administered to 20 lecturers by the two researchers, to ensure the efficient gathering of data. It was a satisfying random sampling technique was adopted to select the data from different departments from the faculty of social and management sciences.

The data for this study was collected through two sources namely; the primary and secondary sources from published works, book, internet, articles and journals and questionnaire reports respectively. The data collected through the primary source of questionnaires were processed on statistical package of social science (SPSS) by frequency table.

### **Analysis of Data / Discussion of Findings / Results**

The interpretation and discussion of data gotten from the analysis of responses to the questionnaires administered to academia’s of the faculty of social and management sciences, university of Africa, Torou-orua, which was to give intended audience and future researchers the method of riving at result and making generalizations from the study.

A total of 20 questionnaires were administered to and all was received by five departments of the faculty by the two researchers, therefore, represents 100%. Discussion and interpretation are based as;

Table 1; respondent view on media approach to generate solution to business crisis.

<b>Options</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Strongly agree	5	25

Agree	10	50
Disagree	2	10
Strongly disagree	3	15
Don't know	0	00.00
Total	20	100

**Sources:** Research Data, 2020

The above table depicted the various responses that 15 respondents, representing 75% agreed and confirmed that media approach is best way to management of crisis in business. This response is in line with the assertion of Olagunju (2002) Shadrack (2002) that mass media is an essential agent to preventing and removing crisis situation in organizations. Whereas 5 respondents (25%) disagree on the above view. The table above authenticated that media approach is one best way crisis management in organizations.

<b>Options</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Strongly agree	7	35
Agree	10	50
Disagree	3	15
Strongly disagree	0	15
Don't know	0	00.00
Total	20	100

**Sources:** Field Data, 2020

The table indicates that 17 respondents representing 75% are of the view that the increased relationship between media and the society of business workers. This is in conformity with the assertion of Baumann and Siebert (1993) that there is an increased relationship between media and organization workers. While 3 respondents (15%) disagreed. The table Had authenticating the facts that media

can be agent for mitigating relationship between managers and their subordinates in every business organization.

### **Conclusion and Recommendations**

In our previous survey of opinions conducted on media approach to crisis managements of business, it was concluded that a relatively media can be agent for preventing and removing conflict or crisis situations available to the parties in business conflict. It is also a simple secrete of mediation in resolving crisis, which thereby promotes relationship between management and employees and vice vasa. In order mitigate peaceful atmosphere in every business environment, then the following recommendations are proffered as follows. There must be a critical application of business media as peace generation strategy by each business managers, there is urgent need for adoption of crisis management principles which is proactive in nature rather than management of crisis. Management should always embrace peacebuilding media in businesses and public relations mass communication systems be always applied in everyday business situations and activities. Finally, the business management board should employ experienced public relations practitioners and mass communicators in their businesses.

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