

International Interdisciplinary Research Network

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Abstract. The author would like to call on the creation of international interdisciplinary network of researches for the solving of this planned project. Please feel free to contact the author. The subject of the project is investigation of the interdisciplinary approach to the current phenomenon of crisis and crisis management. The analyses of obtained information will be followed by the information synthesis and systematizing. Empirical investigation continuing the pilot project already completed will map the level of managers' approach to crisis and crisis management, both what concerns their theoretical qualification and practical approach. Based on the knowledge gathered by theoretical research and empirical investigation it will be proposed and verified the model of the crisis development in the organization.

Keywords: research, crisis, crisis management, project, model, network

1. Introduction: Summary of the contemporary knowledge in given scientific area

The increasing number of crises, caused by the changes of internal conditions and external environment showed that traditional methods and approaches to crisis management became insufficient and it forced scientists as well as people in practice to change their approaches. The approach of organizations to crises has been changing – from reaction to prevention, from formal procedures to active preparation, etc. However these changes are still insufficient. Only few organizations have recognized the fact that crisis management can be considered a competitive advantage source. Crisis solution is one of the highest priorities for politicians, managers and citizens. The scientific support is available and there is no doubt that we have to prepare for the crisis in still more intensive way. The situation is more difficult without sufficient **typology** of crises [e.g. 12, 13]. With respect to high number of factors influencing the crisis each crisis can be considered unique and unrepeatable. Apart from this fact and without regards of specific features of each crisis, the most significant characteristics of each crisis are its potential critical consequences. So it is necessary to understand the development of different types of crises, related issues and possible management methods. **Readiness for crisis** and response of the company to the crisis management is discussed in the existing literature [e.g. 8, 9, 10]. In relation to critical infrastructure and its reliability the theorists became more interested in **high reliability organizations** (HRO) [e.g. 5]. The investigation of catastrophes related to complex technologies brought the majority of investigators to the conclusion that these accidents were in principal caused not by technical failure but the **human factor** [e.g. 14, 17]. Even after repairs of defected components was acknowledged that a suitable human action could have prevented the catastrophe or at least mitigated its tragic consequences. Another branch is focused on investigation of **moral aspects** of the crisis. Ethical rationality is related to rational and moral responses to crisis events [e.g. 15, 20], possibly the social responsibility of the organization is directly emphasized [e.g. 4, 6, 7, 16]. The position of the **stakeholders** in relation to the company social standing is a subject of a different research direction [e.g. 11]. It deals with the efforts an organization to restore confidence of various stakeholders group. Another principal research area

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covers organizations and their **managers**. The question is why organizations (or their managers) are not willing or able to solve problems that can put the actual existence of their organization at risk. There are many barriers on different levels [e.g. 1, 2, 3, 18]. The topics concerning the system of education and responsible preparation for crises are often discussed. The system of preparation for crisis management includes many disciplines that future managers have to go through during their studies. But the roofing unifying aspect is still missing. The application of crisis management in practice remains on ad hoc bases.

In recent years the awareness of catastrophes and crises increased as well as the knowledge of conditions, which are produced by external environment, and social and technological systems, that however can be impaired due to the failure of prediction and control [e.g. 19]. We can not take it for certain that this vulnerability is caused by accidental environmental forces or by the failure of the technology itself, not even by human factor error, although these factors are very often the case. The theories need to focus on the organization conditions and patterns that should predict crisis events.

From the facts mentioned above it is clear that crises and crisis management is investigated from different points of view. In spite of the fact that the list mentioned here is not (and can not be) complete, it shows that crisis is broadly and vaguely defined concept. Despite the growing scientific interest there is still no generally admitted terminology for crises and crisis model. Many scientists are trying to offer unifying concept, but without remarkable results. The definition of crisis is still changing as well as methods of its management.

2. The project subject

The author (proposer) characterizes the project subject as follows: systemization of investigated observations based on broad empirical and theoretical research and sorting of investigated phenomena according to the defined contexts; creating a model of crisis and its development based on the observed phenomena and offering it for further investigation and practical use.

The area of crisis management is open for further investigation. It is not surprising that it uses still better and more detailed definitions of crisis and its management as well as more accurate understanding of non-predictable facts that caused the crisis. Submitted research project intends to bring progress in this area. The planned contribution of this research is the support of crisis analyzes and crisis prevention provisions. Scientists and managers have to understand different developments of different types of crises and thus to learn how to manage them. The research intends to analyze the complexity of the phenomenon of crisis and its aspects. Crisis and crisis management is approached from several different perspectives. It observes relationships between organization functioning and negative results of its activities and the factors causing these negative results.

The **systematization** of the crisis models and research approaches will be the contribution for further applied research and the impulse for practical preparation for the crises management. The author puts an emphasis on the approach that focuses on the personality of a top manager, culture of an organization, structure of an organization and its strategy. The research wants to emphasize that the formal plans are not the only plans the organization should follow for crisis management. Therefore it will analyze some chosen models in more detailed way.

The **empiric research** intends to establish current level of awareness of crisis management among managers and their preparedness for crises. In September 2009 a **pilot research** was performed. The above facts proved that managers have unclear notion of solution methods of serious problems and existential problems of their companies. Although many of them are educated in economy, when it comes to management they act rather intuitively and their crisis management or notion of crisis course is unclear. The questionnaire research shows insufficient preparedness for crisis management (which was expected) but in the same time awareness of the risk necessity to be prepared to potential crisis situation. The comparison with newly obtained data can bring interesting results in the future.

2.1. Research areas

The preliminarily defined areas of the research task are mutually overlapping:

The system approach to crisis, which means understanding the organization as a system, detail review of the organization (system) research levels, with inherent crisis preconditions, review of different meanings of the term “crisis”, explaining of elements and factors related to the term “crisis”.

To understand crisis as a term, it is necessary to understand organization as a system that can go through crises. The research team has to focus on the system approach to organization, as a system of complicated mutual relations, energy and physical exchanges, feedbacks, complex mutual impacts of these feedbacks, occurrence of disorders and risks that means conditions for the crisis initiation and development. The word “crisis” is often used in common speech and in social sciences. Definition of the current crisis of organization is constantly changing as well as techniques of its structuring. The research will focus on comparison on different concepts of crisis in different authors, their approach and extend. Most of definitions will contain these dialectic elements even if under different titles. These elements must be understood for further theoretical research as well as practical use.

Not only scientists but also managers have to know possible development of different types of crises to be able to choose right strategy of their management. Previous methodology used general division to artificial, natural and general types of crises. However this typology is no more suitable for current mutual related causes of crises. The newly created typology must be suitable and beneficial for present time, on these grounds current methodology uses the terms like normal and abnormal crisis, purposeful and not purposeful accidents, conventional and unpredictable crises and others. Sorting of crises is a dynamic activity. This is the reason why currently available typologies can change the crisis management developments in the future.

The second area contains the crisis **management models**. The crisis management is characterized by the situation similar to the common management. The crisis management like standard management fulfills all functions of management (e.g. planning, organizing, HR activities, leadership and control). The difference is in time pressure, interconnection of issues and in limitation of positive cooperation. The research as well as practical formation of the crisis management system includes many barriers and limitations, which both the scientists and the people in the practice have to cope with. Models and approaches are very complex and often closely interconnected. It will be quite difficult to apply the system approach.

The third area is **creation of the crisis model** and its development within the organization. This model will highlight variety of activities that must be provided by the crisis management and consequently the desired abilities, skills and personal properties of crisis managers. These activities will be divided into individual steps and their casual relations will be defined.

The focus of the research will bring new observation for the scientific area. These observations can be further solved primarily in the development projects focused on practical use in conditions of actual organizations.

2.2. Objective

1. Review of knowledge of the subject area.

Creation of the systematic frame for comparison of interdisciplinary approaches, models, frames, structures, etc. of crises models and crisis management models.

Actual comparison of the crises models and crisis management models, possibly typology.

Empirical research performed in the representative set of business companies, statistic processing and interpretation of research data and their comparison with the pilot investigation.

Creation of the model of the crisis in an organization and its verification.

2.3. Solution method

1. Application of the project team management principles.
2. We are going to use language abilities of the research team. It will be necessary to study and analyze many bases, namely in English language for the purposes of creation of systematizing views of crises models and crisis management models comparison.
3. Empirical research is going to use both the quantitative and qualitative research methods (namely questionnaire investigation, interviews). Obtained data will be processed by the software SPSS.

4. Creation of the crisis development model is going to use creative solution methods. It will be verified with the use of practical business experience.
5. The crisis development model will be created after preparation of the systematic frame for crisis models' research. Its elaboration will be also supported by the results of the empirical research.
6. Partial results of the project will be presented to the professional public in articles and presentations on both domestic and international conferences.
7. Partial results of the project will be presented also to the broader public in an adequate form.
8. The project results will be circulated also to the managers and businessmen, which in the same time will bring us possibility to establish cooperation for further research both basic and applied.

3. Description and analyses of proposed conceptual and methodic procedure necessary for the project solution

The conceptual frame is given by the use of generally accepted methodology of research in social sciences. In line with the defined research target it includes following activities:

1. Analyses of the current knowledge of the subject area.
2. Systemization of observed facts.
3. Implementation of the empirical research.
4. Creation of the model of the crisis in the organization and its verification.

The research team is going to systemize current theories, models, approaches, trends and empirical principals of the crisis management models, so that it could use this knowledge for its own interpretation of the crisis model and the crisis development in the organization.

Methods used in the course of the research individual stages are not clearly determined. All parts will use analytic methods, synthesis methods, comparative methods and creative thinking methods, however in different extend. **Classification analyzes** will be used for differentiation between individual definitions and concepts of crises and the crisis management. On the level of mutual relations it is possible to disclose more complex dependences between the crisis elements and factors influencing the crisis namely **functional dependences**. **Synthesis** of knowledge is a condition for formulation of conclusion. The research team is going to clarify functional mechanisms of observed phenomena by integrating of observations in the broader context. The **synthesis** is not mere sum of individual phenomena but creation of new concepts and new views. The research team will asses properties of examined phenomena using **comparative** methods. New topics will be generated primarily as reflections of provoked thinking processes through free **association** and new thought **combination**. Intuitive thinking will be based on the modified **brainstorming** principles. Intuition in the creative stage will be supplemented with systematic thinking. The method of **comparison of functions** will be utilized in the logic thinking process. Apparent similarities observed by the method of **comparing of similarities** will be inspiration for seeking effective features of examined subjects. The research implementation will use namely the method of **questionnaire investigation**. During verification of the proposed model we will obtain more information in the form of **interviews**.

4. Conclusion

In this research area the research of „crisis“ phenomena is dispersed in many sciences (e.g. economic, business, management, sociology, psychology, history, medicine, military science, and others), which results in significant differences in concepts and approaches to the proposed research subject matter. Current position results in the following statement:

1. The author (proposer) has no information on the existence of any complete interdisciplinary study dealing with the crisis phenomenon in such a broad and interdisciplinary concept as this proposed research is going to do.
2. System approach to various approaches, concepts, constructions or frames dealing with the crisis and the crisis management is still missing. The project is going to fill this gap.
3. Creation of the crisis and crisis management model and its verification will be the contribution for the basic research and the stimulus for further applied research.

4. As far there were no repeated researches using reliable instrument that would bring the information on the business public preparedness to crises and their management.
5. The creation of international network of academic and practice specialists will be fruitful not only for the solution of the tasks of this project but also for the future cooperation. Please – contact the author.

5. References

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