Leadership in Times of Uncertainty: Proactive Crisis Leadership and Strategic Vigilance among School Administrators in a Selected Private Higher Education Institution

Darwin B. Reyes

Emilio Aguinaldo College, Manila, Philippines

ABSTRACT: This study examines the strategic vigilance and crisis leadership competencies of school administrators, highlighting the critical importance of these skills in navigating the complex and unpredictable landscape of modern education. The analysis covers a range of competencies, including adaptability, communication transparency, global engagement, practical experience, collaboration, ethical decision-making, systemic thinking, and innovation. The study underscores the necessity for school administrators to continuously enhance their skills through practical training and professional development. Key recommendations include fostering a culture of adaptability, improving communication channels, engaging with global best practices, prioritizing ethical decision-making, and promoting continuous learning and innovation. These efforts are essential for maintaining resilience, ensuring operational stability, and achieving long-term success in educational institutions. The results suggest that effective crisis leadership and strategic vigilance are less about inherent traits or background and more about ongoing development and proactive management. This research provides a comprehensive plan for improving leadership strategies, ultimately benefiting students, staff, and the broader educational community.

KEYWORDS: Leadership, Strategic Vigilance, Proactive Crisis Leadership, School Administrators

I. INTRODUCTION

The role of leadership within education institutions has taken on new dimensions. The COVID-19 pandemic, with its far-reaching impacts on educational institutions has highlighted the critical need for proactive crisis leadership and strategic vigilance among educational leaders. Educational leaders must now navigate uncertainty, adapt quickly to changing circumstances, and make difficult decisions to ensure the well-being of students and staff. In addition to managing day-to-day operations, they must also prioritize communication, collaboration, and innovation to effectively address the challenges brought on by the pandemic. As the education landscape continues to evolve, leaders must remain agile, empathetic, and forward-thinking in order to lead their institutions through these unprecedented times.

Leadership scholars emphasize the importance of competencies, which are learned and developed through an iterative process based on professional roles and life experiences. These competencies are categorized into task-related, relational, and change and adaptive competencies. In crisis situations, collaboration is crucial, as are the competencies formed outside of crisis situations. Understanding how these competencies apply in current and future pandemics will be crucial for developing future leadership roles (Sriharan et al., 2021).

Over the past few decades, major crises have had significant implications on economies and organizations, necessitating effective leadership from political and business leaders to address stakeholder demands. The mindsets, personal characteristics, and actions of leaders during a crisis can significantly impact organizations and their stakeholders. However, research on crisis leadership remains fragmented, making it difficult to gain a comprehensive understanding. Four related reviews have been published, but they have limitations in providing insights into crisis leadership (Wu, et al., 2021).

This study will explore how crisis leadership management competency intersects with strategic vigilance among educational leaders. It explores how school administrators have navigated uncharted territory during times of uncertainty. The research will investigate the specific skills and strategies educational leaders employ to effectively handle various crises, such as natural disasters or financial emergencies, and maintain a sense of direction and purpose within their institutions. By examining how the intersection of crisis leadership competency and strategic vigilance influences decision-making, this study aims to provide

valuable insights into how school administrators can successfully navigate challenges and lead their organizations through turbulent times. Ultimately, the findings of this research will deepen our understanding of the complex challenges faced by educational leaders and provide actionable recommendations to enhance crisis management practices in the field of education.

Correlating crisis leadership competency with the level of strategic vigilance is crucial for ensuring effective crisis management within educational institutions. The collaboration between crisis leadership competency and strategic vigilance is essential for efficiently and strategically navigating the complexities of crises. While crisis leadership competency equips leaders with the skills to respond decisively to unfolding crises, strategic vigilance provides the foresight necessary to anticipate and prepare for potential challenges before they escalate. By correlating these competencies, leaders can adaptively make decisions that are aligned with long-term organizational goals, ensuring that crisis responses not only address immediate threats but also safeguard the institution's mission and vision. Hence, educational institutions can develop leaders who are adept at crisis response strategies and capable of proactively predicting and mitigating future challenges by comprehending and utilizing the interplay between crisis leadership competency and strategic vigilance. This, in turn, will improve the institution's sustainability and resilience.

Research Questions

1. What is the significant correlation between crisis leadership competency and level of strategic vigilance of the school administrators?

II. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research design for this study was quantitative, comparative, and correlational. A quantitative approach was used to allow for the measurement and statistical analysis of numerical data, focusing on the extent of crisis leadership management practices and strategic vigilance among school administrators in a private higher education institution (HEI) in Manila. The comparative design aimed to identify differences in crisis leadership management practices and strategic vigilance among school administrators by comparing different groups or variables. A correlational design was included to explore relationships or associations between variables, particularly between crisis leadership management practices and strategic vigilance. This comprehensive research design facilitated systematic data collection and analysis, enabling comparisons and exploration of potential relationships to address the research questions.

Participants included 100 teacher respondents from the private HEI, selected through purposive sampling to ensure significant experience and expertise in education and leadership. Participants were required to be current teachers or professors with at least three years of teaching experience, ensuring a substantial background in education. This criteria was crucial for gathering relevant and meaningful data.

A researcher-made questionnaire was used as the instrument for data collection. The questionnaire underwent rigorous validation and reliability assessment, demonstrating high internal consistency and content validity (Cronbach's alpha = 0.99).

The data gathering procedure involved obtaining necessary permissions, informing participants about the study, obtaining written consent, and distributing the research instrument. Participation was voluntary, with the option to withdraw at any point. Data was meticulously organized and prepared for analysis, addressing incomplete or improperly filled instruments.

Statistical treatments included descriptive statistics for analyzing respondent profiles and inferential statistics to investigate differences in crisis leadership competency and strategic vigilance based on demographic factors. Correlational analysis examined the relationship between crisis leadership competency and strategic vigilance, providing insights into their interrelationship.

Ethical considerations were paramount, with permissions sought from relevant authorities, informed consent obtained, and confidentiality and anonymity maintained. Data was securely stored, and findings were communicated transparently, adhering to ethical guidelines to ensure the well-being and rights of all participants.

.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1. Correlation Between Crisis Leadership Competency and Strategic Vigilance

Indicator	Mean	SD	Pearson Correlation	Sig. (2-tailed)	Decision	Interpretation
Crisis Leadership Competency	3.437	0.470	0.760	0.000	Rejected	Significant
Strategic Vigilance	3.438	0.484				

The significant Pearson Correlation of .760 between general crisis leadership competency and overall strategic vigilance highlights a robust positive relationship, suggesting that strong crisis leadership is integral to achieving high levels of strategic vigilance across all assessed domains. The consistent rejection of the null hypothesis across all correlations confirms the statistical significance of these relationships.

Leadership in Times of Uncertainty: Proactive Crisis Leadership and Strategic Vigilance among School Administrators in a Selected Private Higher Education Institution

Proactive Crisis Leadership involves the ability of leaders to anticipate, plan for, and effectively respond to crises before they escalate. It encompasses behaviors and practices that enable leaders to navigate uncertain and challenging situations, ensuring the organization's resilience and adaptability. This approach emphasizes the importance of foresight and strategic preparedness in crisis management. Proactive crisis leadership is characterized by open communication, contingency planning, and a commitment to fostering a culture of resilience within the organization (Azra, 2023; Permatasari et al., 2022; Schechter et al., 2022).

According to (Azza et al., 2023), there is a significant positive relationship between strategic learning and the types of strategic vigilance, with a Pearson's correlation ranging between 0.485-0.745 at a confidence level of 99%. The study recommends that IOCs officials use these findings to develop specific plans and strategies for strategic learning and vigilance to improve company performance. By understanding the strong correlation between strategic learning and strategic vigilance, IOCs officials can tailor training programs and initiatives to enhance these skills within their organization. By investing in the development of these abilities, companies can stay ahead of competitors and adapt more effectively to changing market conditions. Ultimately, this proactive approach to learning and vigilance can lead to increased profitability and long-term success for IOCs.

IV. CONCLUSION

A combination of people-oriented competencies, collaboration, ethical decision-making, system perspective, and global awareness are necessary for maintaining a competitive edge in today's complex educaional environment. Without strong crisis leadership, organizations may struggle to navigate challenges and seize opportunities in a timely and effective manner. By prioritizing these key factors, companies can cultivate a culture of innovation, adaptability, and resilience that will drive long-term success. Therefore, it is crucial for leaders to invest in developing these skills and fostering a culture that values continuous learning and growth. By doing so, school can better prepare themselves to not only survive but thrive in an ever-changing landscape. In essence, strategic vigilance is not just about being proactive in the face of challenges, but also about building a strong foundation for sustained success in the future.

REFERENCES

1) Azra, A. (2023). Role of Innovation Management Practices in Enhancing Firm Agility and Adaptability during Times of Crisis in Turkey. International Journal of Strategic Management, 10.47604/ijsm.2185.
2) Azza, et al., (2023). The Academic Journal of Contemporary Commercial Research 3 no. https://ajccr.journals.ekb.eg/article_333046.html
3) James, E. and Wooten, L. (2019). Leading under pressure: From surviving to thriving before, during, and after a crisis. Routledge.
4) Permatasari, M. and Mahyuni, L. (2022). Crisis management practices during the COVID-19 pandemic: The case of a newly-opened hotel in Bali. Journal of General Management, 10.1177/03063070211063717.
5) Schechter, C., et al (2022). Crisis leadership: Leading schools in a global pandemic. Management in Education, 10.1177/08920206221084050.
6) Sriharan, A., et al (2021). Leadership during the COVID-19 pandemic: Building and sustaining trust in times of uncertainty. Management in Healthcare, 5(2), 142-148.
7) Wu, Z., et al (2021). When is crisis leadership effective? Reviewing the situational determinants of crisis leadership effectiveness. The Leadership Quarterly, 32(1), 101417.