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Integrated Communication, Conflict Resolution, and Crisis Management in Modern Organizations

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ABSTRACT: Communication is an essential tool in human groups and enterprises. This indicates that an organization cannot operate or succeed without excellent communication. It is also essential for managing conflicts and grievances. Conflicts in human relationships are inevitable because to the distinct personalities, needs, goals, and viewpoints of individuals. A society cannot live without strife; however, it may prosper amidst divergent perspectives. Conflict is an inescapable element of human civilization. Effective communication can be utilized to address and resolve both official and informal issues, as well as emergencies. The research utilized three conflict models: the Structural and Process Model, the Schemer and Conflict Management Model, and the Structural/Six Hubs Wheel Model of Conflict Management. These models were chosen based on the previously described criteria. Furthermore, empirical secondary data was utilized. The paper's findings demonstrate that successful crisis management essentially relies on effective communication, as supported by both research and practical experience. The most successful strategy for crisis management is to ensure consistent and persistent communication. Through diligent planning and sustained communication, individuals are more equipped to manage a crisis.

Keywords: *Communication, Conflict, Crisis, Crisis Management.*

1. INTRODUCTION

Words, signals, symbols, and signs constitute the elements of communication. Humans can utilize any of these ways for communication. We utilize technology to engage with a varied audience via radio, television, newspapers, magazines, and films. Communication transpires across diverse contexts, such as interpersonal, small group, organizational, community, and mass media, encompassing various messages and reasons.

Lester contends that verbal communication was one of the oldest modalities of interaction. This facilitated the transfer of knowledge across generations. Speech is imperfect due to its dependence on individual memories, which are vulnerable to modification and deterioration from memory loss and amnesia. Communication constitutes the cornerstone of all interpersonal interactions. Communication" consists of two components: "com" (originating from the Latin "cum"), which denotes "to create a community or commonality or to share.

He further asserted that communication is essential for our survival and constitutes the foundation of all our efforts. It also facilitates the cultivation of self-awareness, the sustenance of relationships, and the formation, enhancement, and preservation of connections. Humans cannot acquire knowledge without communication. The interchange of ideas, facts, attitudes, and other forms of information is

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Vital for human existence; without it, human connection and life would be devoid of significance.

Anasuya cites Black (1989) stating that most conflicts arise from miscommunication. Thus, conflict resolution requires understanding. The pillars of understanding are education, communication, and knowledge. Poitou asserted, "Communication must be conducted and structured in all environments inhabited by humans." Order is crucial for efficacy, as it promotes understanding and cooperation. The aim of any business or nation is to communicate its policies and the strategies employed for their implementation to both internal and external stakeholders.

It is essential to discover, assess, and classify the target audience based on their interests. He contends that "The source's message must be distinctly conveyed to allow the receiver or audience to attain consensus on a significant issue." This is because individuals cannot be influenced without their consent, and any initiative must be underpinned by an understanding that encompasses the message and expectations. Research indicates that a proactive strategy in crisis management is typically highly effective. Anasuya thinks that the most efficacious approach to crisis management is to avert crises by establishing a consistent and continuous communication strategy.

2. CONCEPT ANALYSIS, DISCUSSION AND EXPLANATIONS

Concept of Communication

Effective communication is crucial for listeners to respond, as the phrase suggests. To achieve this, communicators must consistently evaluate the medium and its effects. The assessment of medium compatibility and the analysis of communication effects can be facilitated by establishing a platform for senders and recipients to interact.

Onekutu and Forebode contend that "communication research transcends the mere analysis of message transmission; it focuses on how individuals utilize messages to inform, persuade, manage, relate to, and influence one another across diverse contexts and cultures, employing various channels and media.

Research indicates that the media, despite its capacity for extensive coverage and influence on attitude modification and behavior, generally fail to effectively change individuals' views or compel them to act in alignment with the conveyed message. For mass media to be effective, it must integrate human connection. Meek advises communicators against relying solely on mass media to engage with the people.

Meek posits that a witch "integrates interpersonal and mass media strategies, meticulously addressing their limitations while amplifying their potentials and strengths. This media strategy disseminates pertinent information to the audience's interpersonal and traditional networks, fostering constructive discourse and insightful comprehension of how disparities can be reconciled." This recommendation arises from the failure.

Communication theory posits that the message must align with the medium that conveys it to effectively reach people and achieve the desired effect. McLuhan asserts that media influences the target audience, as it becomes the message itself. Therefore, it is essential to choose the

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correct medium to attain the intended results. Not all messages are suitable for the media. Communication theory posits that human connection is more effective in various situations, especially in conflict resolution and crisis management, owing to its evident advantages and consequences.

Human communication is the exclusive method via which the communicator can receive prompt feedback on the process's effect. Communicators should not limit themselves to verbal communication, as it represents merely a small fraction of interpersonal communication. Supplementary tactics are employed at every phase of interpersonal communication. We often overlook the fact that we engage in informal communication in our everyday lives, most of which we are unaware of yet is essential for our survival.

Verbal expressions and syntactic structures hold greater importance for us than nonverbal cues, dispositions, and physical proximity. This indicates that we have often erroneously assumed that voice is the exclusive mode of communication in our social interactions, group communications, and public discourse, despite it being a trained, regulated system of predictable vocal responses. This disrespect diminishes our ability to communicate successfully. To effectively manage and resolve conflicts and crises, communicators must first fully understand them. Conflict and crises may manifest as either overt or covert, akin to communication. One type of overt communication is the intentional and prominent conveyance of a message. Unintentional gestures, habits, speech patterns, spatial dynamics, and other elements of covert communication are seldom acknowledged, despite their evident presence. We cannot manage and incorporate these with explicit discourse to achieve persuasion.

Regulating our covert communication is challenging due to our limited awareness, adversely affecting our interactions. Communication disagreement presumably arises from our tendency to verbally communicate one message while conveying a different one nonverbally. The synchronization of these two categories is crucial for efficient communication among interlocutors. Effective crisis communication necessitates the coordination of these two kinds. When these two types of communication are uncoordinated, it becomes challenging for negotiators and reconciliatory to effectively handle crises and resolve conflicts in crisis communication. Children may indicate responses to inquiry by shaking their heads to signify "yes" (overt communication) or "no" (covert communication).

Polemics, kinesics, and contact represent supplementary hidden communication techniques. Considering the aforementioned, how many of us, as persuasive communicators and persons, employ these communication tactics in our regular encounters, particularly in emergency situations? To exemplify this concept, consider the function of clandestine communication in a crisis.

The Oklahoma City bombing, which occurred during Bill Clinton's presidency, is a widely acknowledged event. A situation emerged following a terrorist attack on students. The president utilized deceptive communication methods to evoke emotions, exhibit sorrow and care

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for the victims, bridge the divide between him and the public, and embrace the victims following the catastrophe. Is it not accurate to assert that communication is hindered when physical touch is involved? Can overt and covert communication be meticulously synchronized?

Principles of Effective Communication

The subsequent principles of effective communication are as follows:

- **Completeness:** Comprehensiveness is vital for communication to be significant. Kindly furnish all necessary details to finalize the message. Pictorial communication requires the annotation of charts, graphs, and diagrams.
- **Conciseness:** Conciseness should not compromise compassion and comprehensiveness. Concise and unambiguous wording is imperative. Deliver a succinct and accurate elucidation of the terminology.
- **Clarity:** The message must be exceptionally lucid. Refrain from using convoluted expressions. Grammatical expressions must be accurately formulated to convey their intended meaning.
- **Courtesy:** This involves expressing remorse for offenses, avoiding injurious or derogatory language, and employing words of appreciation. Furthermore, it is essential to reply to emails expeditiously (preferably within two to three days).
- **Concreteness:** This involves expressing remorse for offenses, avoiding injurious or derogatory language, and employing words of appreciation. Furthermore, it is essential to reply to emails expeditiously (preferably within two to three days).
- **Consideration:** Thorough evaluation of the audience's needs and preferences is crucial for effective communication.
- **Correctness:** Each of the aforementioned six principles is assessed. Communication is considered effective when the message is thorough, short, clear, concrete, respectful, and takes the recipient into account, provided all the aforementioned criteria are met. The accuracy of the message is also a factor of correctness.

The Role of Communication in Conflict: Conflict and communication are causally interconnected. Although conflict may arise, communication functions as both a preventive and healing agent in conflict scenarios.

Communication as a Casual Factor in Conflict: This section illustrates the possibility of conflict emerging during human contact when communication among persons within an organization is involved. Disagreements may occur during an open dialogue. This demonstrates that communication is a contributing factor to conflict.

Communication as a Conflict Preventing Factor: Establishing a participatory and supportive communication culture is essential for preventing conflict within an organization. In an environment characterized by trust, confidence, and transparency, the emergence of conflict is quite improbable.

Communication as a Conflict Curative Factor: In conflict scenarios, communication can function as a remedial element. This indicates that it is crucial for conflict resolution inside an organization and aids in its management. This will aid

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in delineating conflict management and conflict resolution.

Synergistic Communication Model

The term "synergy" originates from the Greek word "synergic," meaning "collaboration." It refers to the phenomenon where the collective influence or capacity of two or more individuals, groups, or objects surpasses the mere sum of their individual talents. Public relations synergy communication strategies can provide guidance for group management. They assert that the aggregate of its components is less substantial than the entirety. It promotes altruistic, empathetic communication that is more congenial, magnanimous, and inviting, while being less defensive, critical, and litigious.

Nous and Wilson delineated four ways for synergistic communication:

- Utilizing the compassionate communication approach.
- The Ethos, Pathos, and Logos approach is utilized.
- Utilizing the Total Synergistic Communications technique.
- Utilizing the NCTS Mastery methodology and data.

Adopting the Empathetic Communication Strategy: The term "empathetic" signifies the act of adopting another individual's perspective to understand their difficulties and foster a deeper relationship. This suggests that the communicator must prioritize the needs and perspectives of the target audience over their own, which can significantly enhance the customization of messaging. It seeks convergence instead of divergence to accomplish its goal of integrating the organization's information flow.

Adopting the Ethos + Pathos + Logos Strategy: This approach systematically incorporates the tenets of ethos, pathos, and logos. Ethos pertains to an individual's trustworthiness and integrity. Pathos refers to the emotions sent to others and their interpretation, together with the capacity to recognize the obstacles faced by your audience. Moreover, the message's logical substance is conveyed via a logo. The preliminary stages of this method (Ethos) involve self-assessment and analysis. It simply indicates that one should behave rationally and judiciously while demonstrating empathy for others (Pathos).

Adopting the Total Synergistic Communications Strategy: The Total Quality Management (TQM) framework incorporates a thorough synergistic communication approach. It emphasizes the necessity of appropriate mobility within the business's workforce and mandates the involvement of the entire organization in task accomplishment. It is founded on trust and diminished suspicion, fostering collaboration and unity among all employees.

Adopting the Information and NCTS Mastery Strategy: NCTS stands for New Communication Technologies. It consists of computer-based tools that aid managers in making educated decisions for their departments and, ultimately, the organization. To maximize the potential for synergy among all individuals, it is essential that we educate ourselves on the appropriate utilization of NCTs and instruct others in our immediate surroundings. The proper use of these tools will improve productivity, facilitate interoffice communication, and augment employees' capacities in various ways. Efficiency in time and resource use would

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benefit the organization. The incorporation of synergistic communication in crisis management plans would improve relationships, so more effectively serving society.

Concept of Conflict and Conflict Resolution

Conflict: Darling and Walker describe a conflict as "two or more individuals acting within a unit who seem to be incompatible." A problem is resolved upon the discovery of a solution. Conflict resolution is a subset of conflict management. A range of conflict resolution strategies can be utilized at different phases and levels of conflict management, as detailed below. Kolb and Putnam ascribe conflict to disparities in reality or perception [9]. Three paradigms of conflict conceptualization have emerged: conventional, human relations, and integrationist.

Three Conflict Schools of Thought

Traditional Scholars View: Traditional scholars regard conflict as detrimental phenomena that must be evaded and as a sign of underlying issues. This perspective promotes a direct method of conflict management that focuses exclusively on the origins of conflict and the rectification of deficiencies to improve the performance of both the group and the organization [10].

Human Relations Perspective: Conflict is a prevalent phenomenon in all organizations and should be embraced from the human relations perspective, rather than regarded as detrimental. Thus, this viewpoint selected conflict management as a strategic approach to leverage the beneficial outcomes of conflict to improve the performance of both individuals and organizations, in contrast to the traditional method of conflict avoidance.

Integrationist View: The integrationist perspective cultivates discord inside organizations, as a serene, collaborative, and peaceful environment is more prone to stagnation, inertia, and a lack of interest in innovation and transformation. Integrationists did not propose that all conflicts are beneficial, according to Robbins [10]. This setting has analyzed functional and dysfunctional conflicts. Functional disagreements benefit organizations. Dysfunctional conflicts may render the organization unstable and hinder its effective functioning. Instead of utilizing behaviors and systems that could lead to dysfunctional conflict, choose to create productive conflicts. Hagen defines organizational conflict as "a disagreement between the organizational means, objectives, or both." [10] Moreover, Hagen differentiated between two categories of conflict: emotive and interest-based.

Conflict of interest arises when individuals or groups pursue status, power, or personal advantage, or when they are driven by self-interest and the desire for acknowledgment. They often emphasize their own interests above those of others. Affective conflict arises from disagreements between partners with divergent values, standards, and viewpoints. Conflict is more likely to arise when the parties exhibit greater dogmatism. Most institutional or organizational problems involve conflict and competing interests.

Different Approaches to Conflict

- The Radical Approach, influenced by Hegel and Karl Marx, asserts that conflict arises from unequal access to state authority and resources,

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complicating nonviolent settlement. It examines human organization through the lens of power dynamics.

- The Pluralistic Approach, influenced by Frantz [12], recognizes the varied roles of many societal groups, including men, women, youth, and the military, in the execution of planned change and growth. Frantz's "human ecology psych-social factors" are based on his conviction that the four groups possess the ability to employ civil disobedience or violence to contest the prevailing dominance and exploitation.
- Teepee contends that society is not a quiet graveyard and advocates for a measured degree of conflict among groups and civilizations to encourage introspection and reassessment.

Characteristics of Conflict

- Nous asserts that recognizing conflict situations requires identifying the following characteristics: when parties prioritize winning the argument over formulating a durable solution. When individuals obscure or propagate false information, such as detrimental propaganda. Effective communication and mass media have become essential.
- As groups grow more cohesive and reconciliation efforts face penalties, it is essential to conform to the group's viewpoint on the issue.
- Contact with the opposing party or organization is permissible solely under regulated, sanctioned, and restricted conditions.
- Effective public relations or communication is vital when the opposing party or organization is negatively stereotyped, hence enhancing one's position or group's image or reputation.
- Nonetheless, Ajai [14] delineates certain benefits of conflict. He contends that conflict can yield the following outcomes if managed efficiently and expeditiously:
- Promote concord and equilibrium following the resolution of conflicts.
- Integrate a higher degree of creativity and creative concepts into an organization or group.
- Foster curiosity and innovation
- Encouraging disputing parties to articulate their perspectives is advisable, as it may enhance understanding and respect for one another's feelings.
- Affords individuals the opportunity to assess their tolerance, forgiveness, acceptability, and harmonious cohabitation.
- Conversely, the conflict may result in the following if not addressed promptly and appropriately:
- Mental instability: The psychological well-being of the involved party or parties may be negatively impacted. Under some conditions, conflicts, wars, homicides, separations, or evasion may transpire.
- The alteration of business objectives is the most significant negative outcome of conflict.
- Collaboration is compromised and collective goals are jeopardized by disorder and ambiguity, whilst discord may lead to inefficiency in any context.

Concept of Crisis Management

T.C. Crisis prevention holds greater significance than crisis management. It is anticipatory, precautionary, and deliberate. Crisis management" refers to the process

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of responding to an already happened crisis. The conflict is being addressed through intermittent and disorganized attempts. Responsive and analogous to a fire department. Communication, expertise, and information are utilized in proactive crisis management. The importance of communication in crisis and conflict management is growing.

Crisis Management Models of Managing Conflicts

This model delineates the predominant types of conflicts among civilizations, encompassing racial, ethnic, environmental, institutional, intrapersonal, and familial conflicts. The model illustrates the influence of environmental elements on the origin, ramifications, management, and resolution of particular types of conflict. Moreover, it emphasizes the unique functions of communication, media, and the environment in conflict management and resolution. It further asserts that each of these issues is the duty of a person. This paradigm is essential to a whole conflict management theory, as it requires the skillful settlement of every dispute that emerges in human existence.

In human civilization, dissent is accepted, and individuals are allowed to negotiate and reach consensus. The animosity, anger, and antagonism characteristic of a crisis stem only from poorly handled conflicts. Irrespective of the result, disputes serve as powerful catalysts for beneficial transformation. The term "crisis" denotes "any event, issue, occurrence, or situation that can be characterized as a pivotal moment, whether positive or negative," or an actual or purported "period of intensified uncertainty that necessitates planning, and a juncture at which external and internal pressures alter the objectives, operatives, and operational practices of an organization," according to Nous. Conflict or crisis entails both benefits and drawbacks, as suggested by the definition. Proactive conflict resolution is essential for both parties.

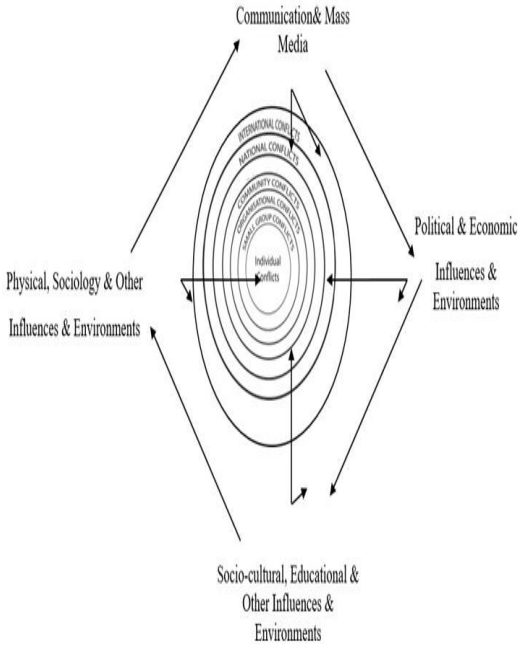


Fig. 1. Structural /Six Hubs Wheel Model of Conflict Management [7].

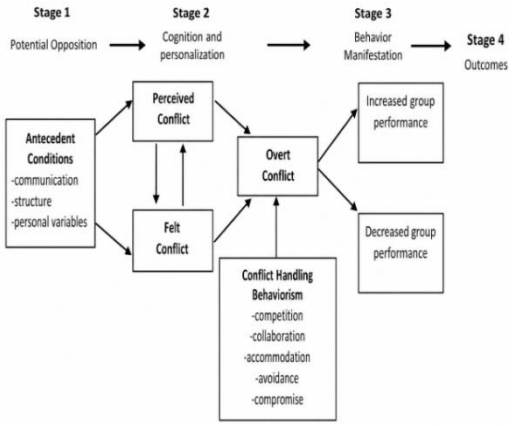


Fig. 2. The Structural and Process Model [10].

The Four Stages of Process Model are:

- **Antecedent Conditions:** Antecedent conditions are the factors that precipitate conflict when one individual seeks to undermine another. Robbins [15] delineates three sources of conflict:

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communication (including noise and ineffective communication), structure (comprising size, level of functional specialization, clarity of jurisdiction, and leadership styles), and human characteristics (containing individual value systems).

- **Cognition and Personalization of Conflict:** This is allegedly the result of resource limitations, like when a person seeks to safeguard their interests in a conflict scenario, group dynamics and/or policies, and individual role behaviors.
- **Behavior Manifestation:** This transpires after the conflict has peaked, believed to present as a nuanced, hostile, violent, aggressive, or unmanageable struggle. Robbins [15] asserts that this may lead to responses like accommodation, avoidance, competitiveness, compromise, or cooperation. Lippi [17] and Thomas [16] further categorized these responses as confronting, smoothing, compromising, forcing, and withdrawing.
- **Outcomes:** A disagreement might provide either beneficial or detrimental outcomes. Conflict seems to yield more detrimental outcomes than beneficial ones. Functional conflict ensures solidarity, innovative ideas, new policies, and the regeneration of organizations and programs, while also enhancing excitement and purpose among opposing parties. Dysfunctional contacts result in emotional exhaustion, entrenched hostility, increased anger and misinterpretation, bodily or psychological distress, among other effects.

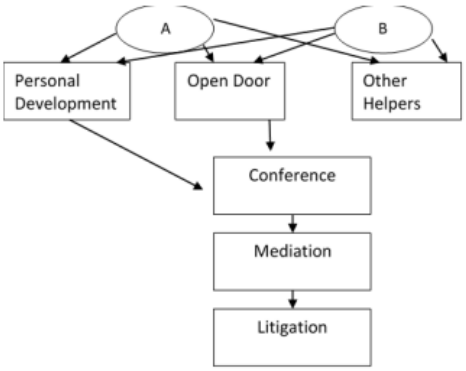


Fig. 3. Schemer Conflict Management Model [7]

The Conflict Management Model proposed by Schemer [7]

Schemer [18] proposed a Conflict Management Program model consisting of four separate phases:

- **Open Door Stage**: The barrier for addressing issues, disagreements, or conflicts, facilitating fast resolution among the involved persons, their work group, and their direct supervisor before the situation escalates into a significant crisis.
- **Conference Stage**: The Conference Stage represents the subsequent phase in the resolution of a dispute that remains unresolved in the Open Door Stage. It is essential to convene a conference between the conflicting parties, as it provides a forum for dialogue between them (ASUU versus Federal Government).
- **Nigeria Conflict:** Conference aims not to resolve disputes or reach a consensus on their resolution, but to establish the highest standard of procedural justice as an essential requirement for conflict resolution.
- **Mediation Stage**: The mediation phase is an internal effort by the management of the disputed company to amicably resolve the conflict within its own parameters. Compared to litigation, this approach is more economical and efficient.

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- **Litigation Stage:** The concluding phase of the litigation process involves the participation of representatives from the conflicting parties in the conflict management procedure.

A conflict management system. Darling and Walker [8] categorized the previously stated styles as Relater, Analyzer, Director, and Socialize, with each quadrant of this model representing one of the four behavioral styles.

Methods of Conflict Management

According to Robins, conflict management necessitates comprehending and regulating the intentions of the participating parties. In the context of conflict, intervention decisions are regarded as intents. These techniques have delineated four conflict strategies:

- **Collaborating Technique**: The collaborative technique is a mutually advantageous conflict resolution strategy. It highlights the interplay between antagonism and collaboration to address disputes, which is crucial for integrating perspectives, identifying cohesive solutions, and fostering learning.
- **Accommodating**: Accommodating refers to the act of being cooperative and non-confrontational, prioritizing the interests of the adversary over one's own to resolve conflicts regardless of the consequences. This strategy is crucial when an individual acknowledges their errors, when aiming for a broader objective, or when seeking to foster growth in subordinates from their missteps.
- **Compromising:** Compromise refers to the readiness of both parties to make sacrifices to attain harmony when objectives are substantial but not worth the effort.
- **Avoiding:** Avoidance is a strategy utilized to resolve disagreements by adopting a passive and unresponsive stance, with the expectation that the problem would dissipate or become manageable. Nonetheless, this method is seldom effective in confrontations and should be limited to minor conflicts or emergencies.

3.CONCLUSION

The examination of communication, conflict, and crisis management aims to alleviate or resolve disputes and emergencies through effective communication. Crises and conflicts can be preemptively addressed to prevent adverse effects on society and industrial entities. The prompt implementation of communication-based negotiation, dispute resolution, and collective bargaining strategies can foster harmonious coexistence in businesses and communities. Genuine consensus is essential, as communication is pivotal in crisis management and conflict resolution. Initially, communication should be asymmetric and focused on persuasion, followed by a symmetric approach emphasizing mediation among crisis stakeholders. This constitutes the appropriate response to challenges and emergencies.

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