

The Role of Public Relations in Crisis Management in Libyan Companies.

Massoud Bilghasim Ibrahim Elghool*

Faculty members, Faculty of Economics and Political Science, Department of Management and Organization, Alzzaytuna University, Libya

*Email (for reference researcher): msalgoul@yahoo.com

دور العلاقات العامة في إدارة الأزمات في الشركات الليبية

مسعود بلقاسم إبراهيم الغول

عضو هيئة تدريس بكلية الاقتصاد والعلوم السياسية، قسم الإدارة والتنظيم، جامعة الزيتونة، ليبيا

Received: 03-06-2026; Accepted: 30-07-2026; Published: 04-08-2026

الملخص

لا يمكن إدارة الأزمات بشكل كامل دون النظر في تأثير العلاقات العامة أثناء الأزمة حيث يهدف هذا البحث إلى تقييم تأثير العلاقات العامة على إدارة الأزمات في الشركات الليبية، واقتراح إطار عمل عملي لتعمل الشركات في بيئات غير مستقرة، معرضة للتغيرات الاقتصادية، والتهديدات الأمنية، وقضايا السمعة، والاضطرابات، علاوة على ذلك هناك تطور محدود في مجال التواصل أثناء الأزمات بين الشركات الليبية.

حيث تم استخدام منهجان لإجراء هذه الدراسة: الأول هو مراجعة الأدبيات المتعلقة بإدارة الأزمات، والعلاقات العامة، والأدبيات الخاصة بليبيا ودول مماثلة، أما المنهج الثاني، فقد تضمن دراسة كمية أجريت على 204 موظفين ومديرين من شركات ليبية. أشارت نتائج تحليل الانحدار إلى أن الاستعداد للأزمات ($\beta = 0.214$)، وممارسات العلاقات العامة ($\beta = 0.328$)، والتواصل الفعال أثناء الأزمات ($\beta = 0.391$) تُعد مؤشرات هامة لأداء المنظمة، حيث يفسر النموذج الكلي 62.6% من التباين في الأداء. وقد وُجد ارتباط قوي جداً بين التواصل الفعال أثناء الأزمات وممارسات العلاقات العامة ($r = 0.742$)، ($p < 0.001$) بجمع النموذج النظري بين المراحل الثلاث للأزمة، وهي ما قبل الأزمة، والأزمة نفسها، وما بعد الأزمة، مع ممارسات العلاقات العامة المناسبة خلال كل مرحلة.

وبخلص النموذج إلى أن دمج العلاقات العامة في عملية صنع القرار يُحسن أداء المؤسسة وقدرتها على مواجهة الأزمات وبناءً على ذلك، تحتاج الشركات الليبية إلى تبني استراتيجيات التواصل في الأزمات، وتدريب المتحدثين الرسميين، وإدارة علاقات أصحاب المصلحة.

الكلمات المفتاحية: إدارة الأزمات؛ العلاقات العامة؛ الشركات الليبية؛ التواصل مع أصحاب المصلحة؛ إدارة السمعة؛ التواصل في الأزمات.

Abstract

Crisis management cannot be complete without considering the impact of public relations during a crisis. This research aims to assess the impact of public relations on crisis management in Libyan firms and to propose a practical framework. These firms operate in unstable environments subject to economic changes, security threats, reputational issues, and disruptions. Moreover, there is little development in crisis communication among Libyan firms. Two approaches were used to conduct this study: the first was a literature review of crisis management, public relations, and literature on Libya and similar countries. The second method involved a quantitative study conducted among 204 employees and managers from Libyan firms. The regression analysis indicated that crisis preparedness ($\beta = 0.214$), public relations practices ($\beta = 0.328$), and effective crisis communication ($\beta = 0.391$) are significant predictors of the organization's performance, with the total model explaining 62.6% of the variance in performance. Effective crisis communication and public relations practices had a very high correlation ($r = 0.742$, $p < 0.001$). The theoretical model combines the three crisis phases, namely pre-crisis, crisis, and post-crisis phases, with appropriate public relations practices during each phase. The conclusion is that integrating public relations into decision-making

increases an organization's performance and crisis resilience. Accordingly, Libyan companies need to incorporate crisis communication strategies, spokesperson training, and stakeholder relations management.

Keywords: Crisis management; public relations; Libyan companies; stakeholder communication; reputation management; crisis communication.

1. Introduction

Companies around the world are facing an increasingly challenging risk environment, as economic, political, technological, operational, and reputational risks can spiral out of control and cause organizational crises. This means that being able to predict, cope with, and recover from a crisis has become a key element of organizational resilience. For Libyan organizations, the challenges are especially pronounced, as the context in which they operate is defined by political changes, economic instability, institutional uncertainty, and insecurity. The political changes brought about by the downfall of the Gaddafi regime have led to dramatic shifts in Libya's socio-economic situation (Sawani, 2012). Consequently, organizations are more exposed to the risks of various types of crises.

In the modern times, however, crisis management has changed from being a process for dealing with crises after they occur to being a process for planning and preparing for emergencies through prevention, response, and recovery. In modern research, crises are seen as processes that involve several stages in which managers have to work together to deal with the problem at hand. Communication is considered to be one of the most important factors in crisis management.

In the current era, public relations have evolved into an essential part of crisis management. Apart from its function in publicity and media relations, modern-day public relations is characterized by stakeholder engagement, environmental scanning, reputation management, strategic communication, and relationship-building (Kriyantono, 2012). In crises, PR professionals are very important for conducting research, communicating effectively, responding to stakeholder queries, and countering false claims. Studies have shown that companies with effective PR functions perform well during crises (Zhiyuan et al., 2023; Peregin, 2025).

The rising use of digital communication technologies has added greater strategic value to the role of public relations in crisis management. Digital communication technologies enable companies to interact quickly with their stakeholders, but they also facilitate the rapid dissemination of false information and threats to the organization's reputation (Reuter et al., 2018). Akbar et al. (2020) discovered that public relations managers are now using digital communication tools to observe public sentiment, communicate crisis information, and protect organizational reputation. Kaleel (2020) also illustrated the importance of public relations communication in managing crisis situations, using the COVID-19 case in the UAE.

The specific situation in Libya poses distinct difficulties related to crisis communication and public relations practices. According to Farfar and Miconi (2023), the media landscape after Gaddafi is marked by fragmentation, information rivalry, and varying levels of credibility, which complicate communication, especially in crises. Moreover, Brosig (2013) identified problems associated with the lack of coordinated efforts and effective communication, which hampered crisis management in Libya. Further investigation of nonprofit organizations in post-war Libya has shown that public relations is important for fostering trust, legitimacy, and stakeholder engagement (Awobamise & Jarrar, 2018).

Recent research in Libya has revealed the significance of leaders, effective communication, and organizational capacity in crisis management. According to research by Belkhir and Masaud (2024), transformational leadership affects the effectiveness of crisis management in the oil and

gas industry in Libya. In contrast, Marhil et al. (2023) found that HRM processes enhance organizational adaptability and improve performance.

Despite the growing relevance of crisis management practices, there is a lack of scientific studies on how public relations work contributes to crisis management in Libyan firms. Current literature has mostly covered topics such as political change, the media landscape, nonprofits, and leaders' roles, whereas scholars have devoted less effort to understanding the contribution of public relations practices to crisis management within firms (Farfar & Miconi, 2023; Awobamise & Jarrar, 2018). What is more, existing crisis communication models were usually developed in different contexts.

The research seeks to fill this gap by examining how public relations can be useful in crisis management within Libyan firms. In particular, the research aims to identify the major crisis issues Libyan firms may face and to investigate the contribution of public relations to crisis management at various levels. In doing so, the paper will help managers devise strategies to improve their crisis communication practices in Libyan firms by combining the international crisis management literature with the practicalities of business in Libya.

2. Literature Review

Public relations (PR) have evolved from a mere communication tool to a strategic management tool instrumental in crisis management. In modern business organizations, crisis management demands that businesses be able to identify threats, engage in open communication with various stakeholders, and manage the organization's image throughout times of uncertainty (Regester & Larkin, 2008; Kriyantono, 2012). Public relations in today's organizations has become a major means of achieving crisis communication.

There have been many scholarly works focused on the connection between public relations and crisis management. According to Zamoum (2013) and Shafter et al (2020), there is a need to integrate crisis management skills into the scope of educational courses on organizational communication and management. Similarly, Zhiyuan et al. (2023) found that effective crisis management requires strategic communication and quick information exchange. Finally, it was mentioned in the study by Peregin (2025) that it is imperative to use a proactive approach to public relations, including media monitoring, effective communication, and management of stakeholders.

Digital technologies have significantly transformed the practice of crisis communication. For instance, Akbar et al. observed that PR practitioners started using social media platforms for establishing connection with stakeholders, creating reputation management systems, and managing crises. It was also mentioned by Reuter et al. that social media platforms have become a necessity for managing crises. Organizations can monitor sentiments, exchange information, and coordinate their activities through social media platforms.

The importance of public relations in the Arab region has been seen more than ever because of the rise in several different crises resulting from problems such as politics, economy, and public health. As stated by Kaleel (2020), an example of a research conducted in the United Arab Emirates about the coronavirus pandemic showed the significance of having an efficient public relations strategy in building trust, cooperation, and managing crises.

In this regard, it is important to focus on the concept of public relations in crisis management from the perspective of Libya because it has been experiencing such issues after the regime of Gaddafi came down. Considering the challenges related to political, economic, and institutional aspects after Gaddafi's regime was overthrown, it becomes clear that there is a need to examine how the use of communication can help deal with emerging crises. Farfar & Miconi (2023) reported the challenges in crisis journalism and communication after the end of Gaddafi's era. It was also stated that the absence of coordination among communication processes made it difficult to manage crises in Libya.

Public relations in Libya have not been extensively researched. According to Awobamise and Jarrar (2018), researches related to strategic public relations in nonprofit organizations since the Gaddafi era indicated the significance of communication in restoring the public trust and developing a country. Moreover, in another research conducted by Al-Khidr (2025), it was noted that successful public relations and crisis communication can improve the organization's reputation.

The research on organizational behavior carried out in Libya also pointed at the importance of communication and leadership when facing organizational crises. For example, it has been proved by Belkhir and Masaud (2024) that transformational leadership contributes significantly to efficient crisis management within the oil and gas industry of Libya. Also, according to Marhil et al. (2023), proper human resource management ensures better results and higher adaptability. Other Libyan researches on organizational transformation have also addressed the importance of communication, organizational trust, and decision-making in crisis management (Abushrenta, 2022; Alawi & Edderwish, 2025; Ahmad, 2015).

From the above literature review, it is clear that public relations is essential to crisis management; communication; protecting organizations' image; building relationships with stakeholders; and organizational resilience. Despite the presence of numerous international articles discussing the impact of public relations in crisis management, the research examining this issue for Libyan organizations remains scarce. In the current literature about Libya, there is extensive discussion about nonprofit sector, leadership, media communication, and public sectors, but no discussion of how public relations can be used to tackle business crises.

While many pieces of literature have been written on the importance of public relations and crisis communication for dealing with organizational crises, there is a lack of research that investigates the role of public relations in crisis management, especially in Libya. In recent years, much of the existing research from Libya has been concentrated on political transitions, crisis journalism, nonprofits, leadership, and government communication but not on private sector organizations and their crisis management efforts (Awobamise & Jarrar, 2018; Farfar & Miconi, 2023; Sawani, 2012). In addition, very few empirical studies have investigated the effect of public relations on crisis management.

In view of this deficiency, this research will focus on achieving four main goals. The first objective is to determine the nature of crises that Libyans face the most often and the reasons behind these crises based on what is available in the literature and existing regional literature. The second objective is to align the three stages of crisis management (before the crisis, during the crisis, and after the crisis) with public relations practices tailored to the Libyan context.

3. Methodology

3.1 Research Design

The methodology for this study was qualitative and synthesis-based. For identification, categorization, and adaptation of ideas from crisis management and public relations, data were gathered from two primary sources: academic literature (2000–2025) and regional reports (2015–2025). The academic literature included peer-reviewed journal articles on crisis types, crisis stages, PR techniques, reputation management, and ethical communication. The regional reports were produced by international organizations, business associations, and economic/security briefings for Libya. For analysis, a thematic synthesis approach was used, with both deductive and inductive coding applied. Deductive coding was based on existing conceptual models of crisis typology and a three-stage crisis model.

Meanwhile, inductive coding was used to identify factors relevant to Libya, including currency fluctuations, conflict, and the use of WhatsApp and local media as PR strategies. The thematic clusters were created based on the findings in the results section of the literature and structured through tables, a conceptual framework, and flowcharts of each result section. To improve

credibility, the themes identified were independently reviewed by two crisis communication researchers and validated through face validity testing with Libyan business managers.

3.2 Population and Sampling

The target group comprised employees, managers, and public relations officers from various firms in Libya operating in industries such as oil and gas, banking, telecommunications, manufacturing, and other service sectors. Convenience sampling technique was adopted in this study because of the issues that were encountered while conducting access. Questionnaires were administered to 250 individuals who returned 204 responses representing 81.6% of the response rate.

3.3 Data Collection Instrument

Data were collected through a structured questionnaire, which was made up of five sections: demographic information, crisis preparedness, public relation strategies, effectiveness of crisis communication and organization performance in crises. Responses were collected using a five-point Likert scale, which comprised of: 1 – Strongly Disagree; 5 – Strongly Agree.

3.4 Data Analysis

Data collected were analyzed through the use of SPSS Version 26. Analytical techniques applied to establish the relationship between variables included descriptive statistics, reliability tests, Pearson correlation test, and multiple regression analysis. Statistical significance was determined at $p < 0.05$ level.

4. Results

4.1 Demographic Profile of Respondents

From the total number of participants in the survey, 63.7% were men and 36.3% were women. The biggest majority of the participants (42.6%) belonged to the age group of 35-44 years. Almost 68.1% of the participants were educated up to the bachelor's level, while 21.6% were educated beyond the bachelor's level. The biggest majority (29.4%) belonged to the services sector.

Table 1: Demographics of Respondents (n=204)

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
Male	130	63.7
Female	74	36.3
Bachelor's Degree	139	68.1
Postgraduate Degree	44	21.6
Management Position	81	39.7
PR/Communication Staff	42	20.6

4.2 Reliability Analysis

Cronbach's alpha values exceeded the recommended threshold of 0.70, indicating satisfactory internal consistency.

Table 2: Reliability Statistics

Construct	Items	Cronbach's Alpha
Crisis Preparedness	5	0.842
Public Relations Practices	5	0.871
Crisis Communication Effectiveness	5	0.889
Organizational Performance	5	0.854

4.3 Correlation Analysis

Pearson correlation analysis revealed significant positive relationships among all study variables.

Table 3: Correlation Matrix

Variable	1	2	3	4
1. Crisis Preparedness	1			
2. PR Practices	.624**	1		
3. Communication Effectiveness	.681**	.742**	1	
4. Organizational Performance	.553**	.689**	.718**	1

Note: $p < .01$

There was a significant correlation between public relations and communication effectiveness ($r = .742$, $p < .001$), indicating that organizations with effective public relations are likely to have higher communication effectiveness.

4.4 Regression Analysis

Multiple regression was employed to test the effect of crisis preparedness, public relations, and communication effectiveness on organizational performance.

Table 4: Multiple Regression Results

Predictor	β	t	p-value
Crisis Preparedness	0.214	3.127	.002
PR Practices	0.328	4.863	.000
Communication Effectiveness	0.391	5.474	.000

Model Statistics: $R = 0.791$, $R^2 = 0.626$, Adjusted $R^2 = 0.619$, $F = 89.341$, $p < .001$

Explanation power for organizational performance was 62.6%. Communication effectiveness was the best predictor variable ($\beta = 0.391$), followed by public relations activities ($\beta = 0.328$) and crisis preparedness ($\beta = 0.214$).

4.5 Hypothesis Testing

Table 5: Summary of Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis	Result
H1: Crisis preparedness positively influences organizational performance.	Supported
H2: Public relations practices positively influence organizational performance.	Supported
H3: Crisis communication effectiveness positively influences organizational performance.	Supported

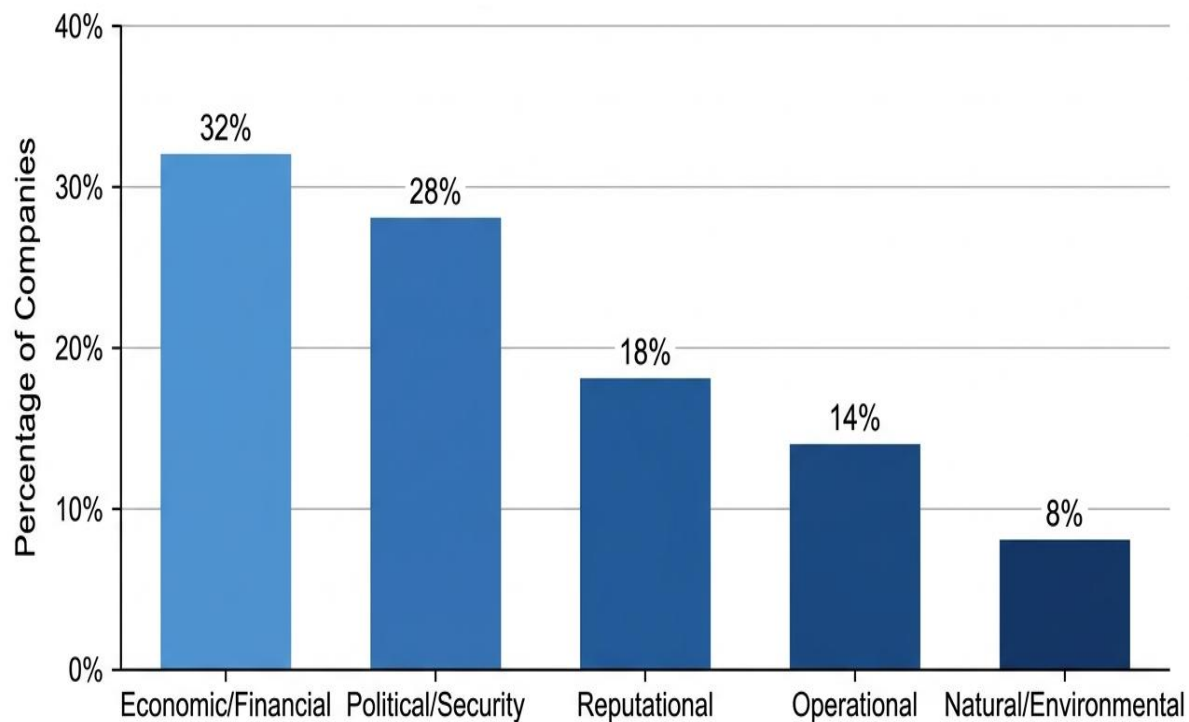
4.6 Crisis Types and Causes Relevant to Libyan Companies

Synthesizing from the literature and regional reports, five crisis types are particularly relevant to Libyan companies, as presented in Table 6.

Table 6. Crisis Types and Causes in Libyan Companies (Shafter 2021)

Crisis Type	Primary Causes	Typical Impact
Economic/Financial	Currency fluctuations, inflation, liquidity shortages, and reduced foreign investment	Cash flow disruption, delayed payments, increased costs
Political/Security	Government instability, armed conflict, travel restrictions, and regulatory changes	Operational shutdown, supply chain interruption, safety risks
Reputational	Negative media coverage, customer complaints, employee misconduct, and rumor propagation	Loss of customer trust, reduced sales, and difficulty attracting partners
Operational (Shafter 2018)	Equipment failure, supply chain disruption, quality control problems, and IT system failure	Production delays, service interruptions, and increased waste
Natural/Environmental	Flooding, fire, dust storms, and extreme temperatures	Facility damage, employee health risks, business interruption

Each crisis type will have unique forms of preparedness. Economic crises will need economic contingency plans and alternative sources of income. Political and security crises will require safety measures and contingency plans. Reputational crises will require effective communication plans and stakeholder involvement. Operational crises will have alternatives to ensure continuity of operations. Finally, natural disasters will need the procurement of equipment and the security of facilities. Table 7 shows the distribution of crisis types reported in business surveys conducted in the Libyan region.

**Figure 1:** Distribution of crisis types experienced by Libyan companies (Percentages)

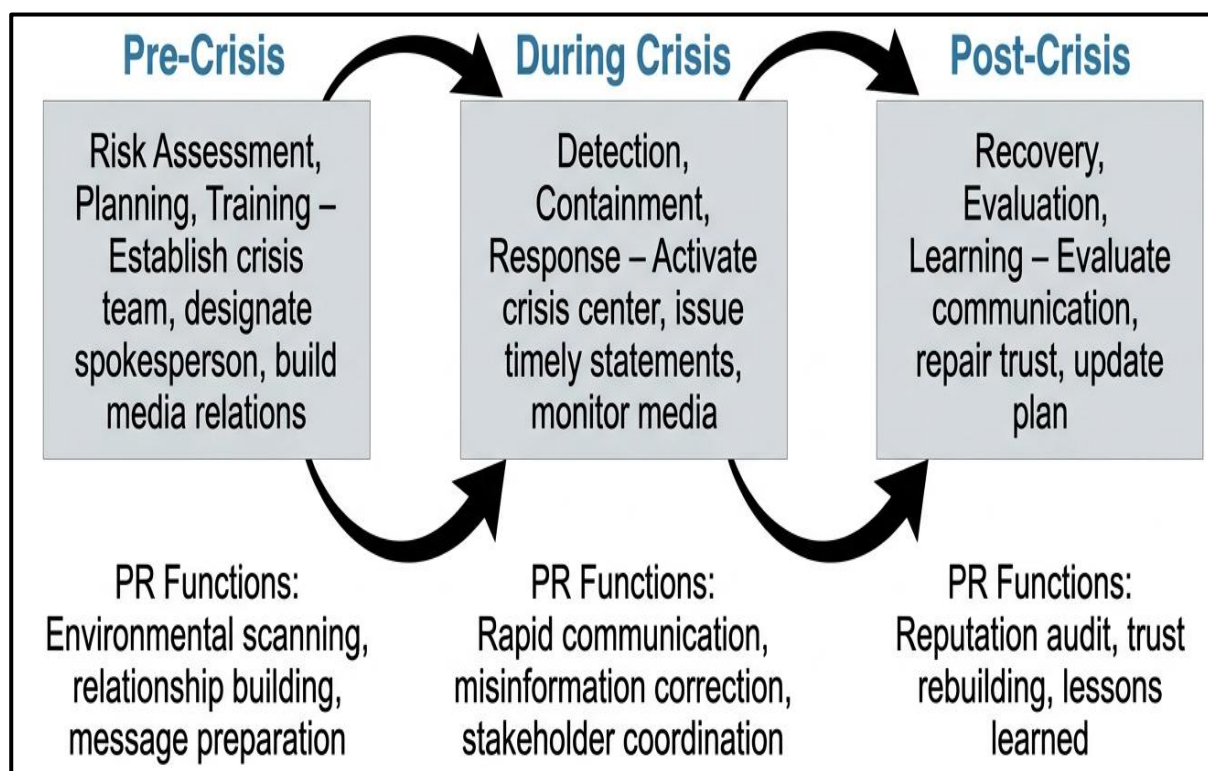
4.7 Crisis Management Phases and Public Relations Activities

Table 7 maps the three crisis phases to corresponding public relations activities, adapted for Libyan companies.

Table 7. Crisis Phases and Public Relations Activities for Libyan Companies

Phase	Organizational Activities	Public Relations Functions
Pre-Crisis	Risk assessment, planning, training, and resource allocation	Establish crisis team, designate spokesperson, prepare message templates, build media relationships, conduct simulation drills
During Crisis	Detection, containment, response, damage control	Activate crisis center, collect verified information, issue timely statements, monitor media and social media, coordinate with stakeholders, correct misinformation
Post-Crisis	Recovery, evaluation, learning, restructuring	Evaluate communication effectiveness, repair stakeholder trust, issue follow-up statements, update the crisis plan based on lessons learned, and communicate improvements.

Unfortunately, in many organizations operating in Libya, this period is overlooked owing to the pressure exerted by day-to-day activities and a lack of understanding of its importance. Nonetheless, this stage requires minimal costs yet produces the best results. Expenditures on developing a crisis communication strategy, training a spokesperson, and cultivating good relations with key media personnel can yield significant profits during a crisis. Figure 2 below provides an example of such a model.

**Figure 2:** Integrated Crisis Management and Public Relations Process Model

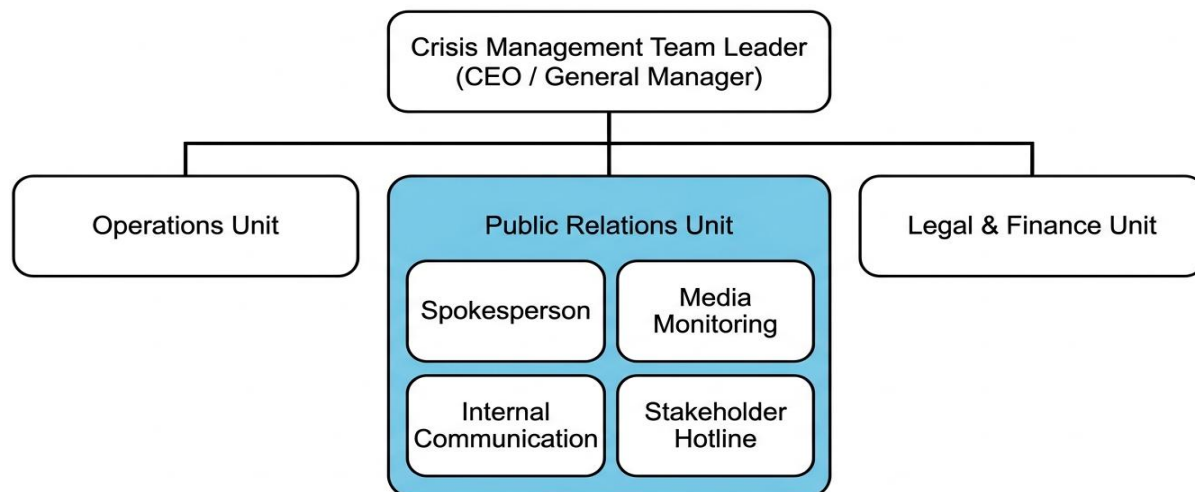
4.8 Important Public Relations Tools for Crisis Management

Table 8 lists essential public relations tools and their application in Libyan crisis contexts, along with practical considerations.

Table 8. Public Relations Tools for Crisis Management in Libyan Companies

Tool	Purpose	Libyan Context Considerations
Crisis Communication Plan	Document procedures, responsibilities, and contact lists	Must be simple, accessible, and updated regularly; store both digitally and in hard copy
Spokesperson	Deliver consistent, credible messages to media and stakeholders	Choose a senior manager with authority; train in handling hostile questions; ensure availability
Holding Statements	Pre-prepared messages for initial response	Translate into Arabic and English; avoid speculating; express concern and commitment to transparency.
Media Monitoring	Track coverage and public sentiment	Monitor satellite TV (Al Jazeera, Al Arabiya, Libya Alahrar), local newspapers, Facebook, and WhatsApp groups.
Internal Communication Channels	Keep employees informed and aligned	Use SMS, WhatsApp, email, and staff meetings; address rumors quickly
Stakeholder Hotline	Provide direct access for concerned parties	Dedicate phone numbers and email addresses; staff with trained responders; log all inquiries.

Figure 3 provides a sample organizational chart for a crisis management team, showing the public relations unit's position and reporting lines.

**Figure 3:** Crisis Management Team Structure with Public Relations Role

4.9 The Role of Reputation Management

For a Libyan company, reputation is an essential intangible resource that must be developed and maintained to secure future business transactions and investment deals. A crisis can wipe away years of good reputation in mere days. Public relations can help manage corporate reputation through three channels, as listed in Table 9 below.

Table 9. Reputation Management Channels During a Crisis

Mechanism	Description	Implementation in Libyan Companies
Ethical Responsibility	Acting with integrity, honesty, and accountability	Acknowledge mistakes promptly; avoid cover-ups; comply with local laws and international standards
Social Responsibility	Demonstrating concern for community welfare	Engage in local development; support employees and affected communities during crises.
Transparent Communication	Providing accurate, timely information	Share what is known, what is not known, and when more information will be available

The process of reputation management during crises follows the following pattern: first, show sympathy towards the affected individuals; second, accept any responsibility; third, communicate the correction; fourth, follow up with stakeholders to show continuous improvement. Libyan firms that adhere to this sequence are usually able to restore their reputation faster than those that are silent or defend themselves. Figure 4 shows the pattern of reputation recovery following a crisis.

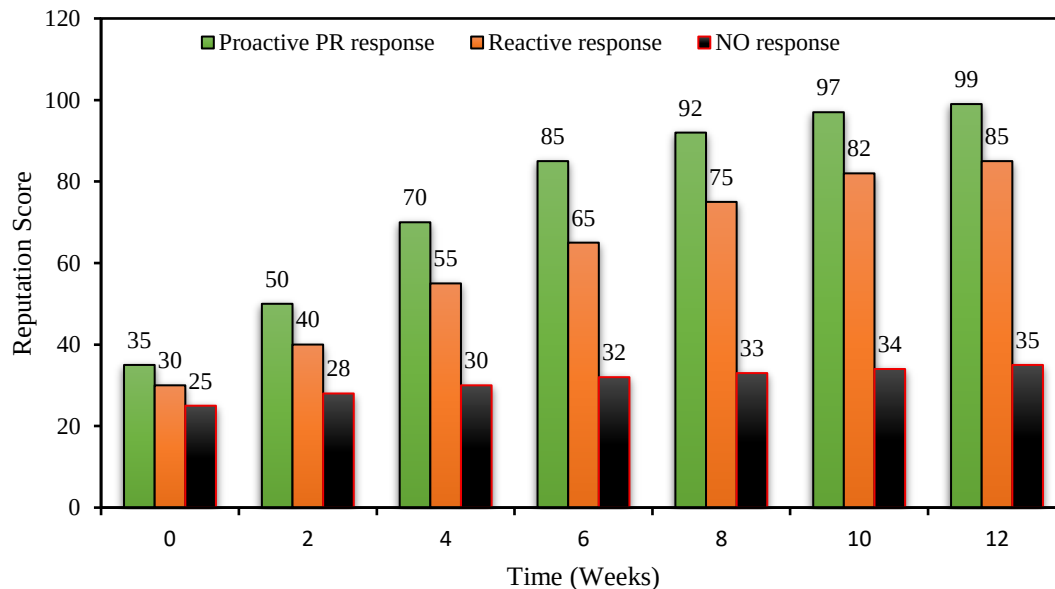


Figure 4: Reputation recovery graph with different crisis response strategies

4.10 Ethical and Social Responsibilities in Crisis Communication

Ethical dilemmas arise in crisis situations. The need to defend the organization may conflict with the need to communicate the truth to the people. In addition, public relations professionals in Libyan firms must deal with other factors, such as politics, security issues, and matters of honor.

Figure 5 presents a decision flowchart for ethical crisis communication, guiding practitioners through important choices.

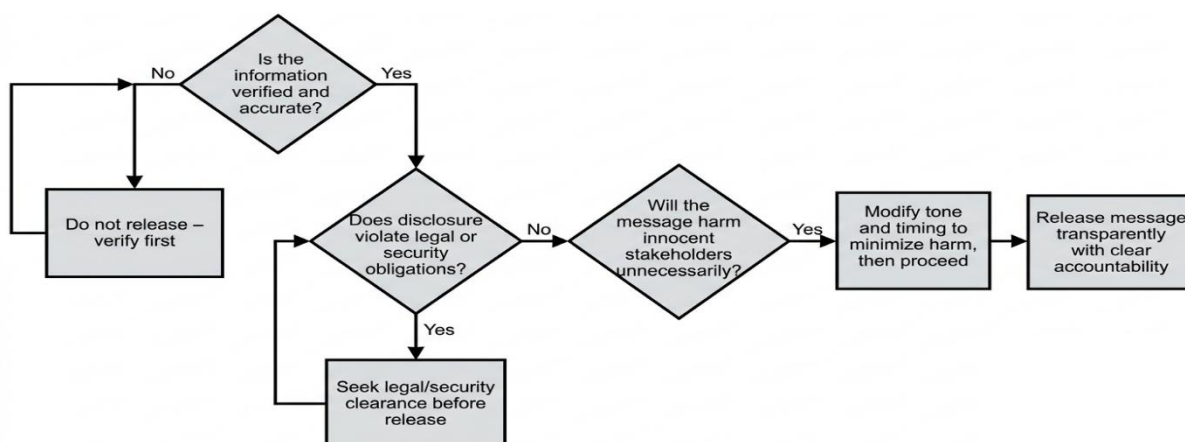


Figure 5: Ethical Decision-Making Flowchart for Crisis Communication

5. Discussion

The present study investigates the importance of public relations in managing crises for organizations operating in Libya. Findings obtained through quantitative data collection and analysis from a sample size of 204 respondents comprising managers and employees of different industries serve to validate the hypotheses proposed in this research regarding the relationship between crisis preparation, public relations, crisis communication, and organizational success. Discussion on the findings of this research is provided below.

5.1 Crisis Preparedness in Libyan Companies

From the descriptive statistics analysis, it becomes evident that there is inequality regarding the level of crisis readiness between the firms operating in Libya. Although the majority of respondents acknowledge the necessity for crisis preparation, many admitted that their organization was lacking crisis plans, training or simulation. The aforementioned result supports the review of literature assumption concerning the lack of attention given to the stage before a crisis due to other daily activities and ignorance of crisis planning benefits. As noted by Sawani (2012), the prolonged political process in Libya has resulted in a reactive instead of responsive stance from organizations.

From Table 4, which presents the results of the regression analysis, it is clear that being prepared for a crisis has a significant positive effect on organizational performance ($\beta = 0.214$, $p = .002$). Therefore, Hypothesis 1 is proven and supports the assumptions made by Regester & Larkin (2008) and Kriyantono (2012). As per the latter authors, any effort made during crisis preparation, including forming a crisis response team and developing an appropriate communication strategy, has a great effect on organizational readiness to face a crisis.

5.2 The Strategic Role of Public Relations Practices

A very high positive relationship exists between the PR practices and the effectiveness of crisis communications ($r = .742$, $p < .001$). This is the highest positive relationship among all pairs of variables under investigation, meaning that organizations with effective PR practices possess the capability of effectively communicating and handling crises. This is according to Zhiyuan et al. (2023) and Peregin (2025) who state that good crisis management entails effective communication and engagement with stakeholders. However, Table 1 shows that only 20.6% of the respondents were PR/communications specialists whereas 39.7% were management specialists. It appears that PR practices have not been accepted in many companies in Libya as a strategic practice. From the regression analysis, it can be deduced that there exists a positive relationship between the PR practices and organizational performance ($\beta = 0.328$, $p < .001$), supporting Hypothesis 2. Thus, Libyan companies that consider the PR practice as strategic will attain good outcomes during crisis, recovering more rapidly from any negative reputation impacts. This can be seen through the reputation recovery model shown in Figure 4.

5.3 Crisis Communication Effectiveness as the Strongest Predictor

Amongst all variables considered, effectiveness in crisis communication was the one with the largest standardized coefficient ($\beta = 0.391$, $p < .001$). In other words, effectiveness of crisis communication was the most critical factor in shaping performance of the organizations analyzed. The findings obtained from the regression analysis revealed that the above variable explained 62.6% of variability in organizational performance ($R^2 = 0.626$, $F = 89.341$, $p < .001$); hence, showed how effective communication was the key to translating preparedness and PR efforts into tangible gains.

The findings agree with those of Akbar et al. (2020) and Reuter et al. (2018), who argue that, with modern developments in media, it is essential to manage one's crisis communication effectively to avoid negative outcomes. In the Libyan context, where traditional media cannot operate effectively while social media such as WhatsApp and Facebook serve as sources of news (Farfar & Miconi, 2023), it is especially important to maintain effective crisis

communication, as any failure may lead to the spread of rumors and misconceptions about companies. Thus, hypothesis 3 has been proven right.

5.4 Demographic and Sectoral Insights

Most of the sample (63.7%) consisted of males, who were also highly educated, since 68.1% had bachelor's degrees, while 21.6% had postgraduate education. By industry, most respondents came from services (29.4%), followed by telecommunications (23.5%) and oil and gas (18.6%). Even though the current study does not examine sectoral differences, it is reasonable to expect that, given the diversity, the results are valid across all sectors of the Libyan economy. Nonetheless, future research can investigate the differences in crisis management across various industries, such as oil and gas and services (Shafter 2018).

5.5 Reliability and Validity of the Measures

The constructs demonstrated high internal consistency, with Cronbach's Alpha ranging from 0.842 to 0.889, which exceeded the recommended value of 0.70 (see Table 2).

5.6 Linking to the Conceptual Model

This study provides empirical support for the integrated crisis management and public relations process model illustrated in Figure 2 above. This is because the significant relationship among preparedness, public relations practices, communications, and performance demonstrates that the three stages are integral to crisis outcomes. The strong relationship between public relations practices and communication effectiveness ($r = .742$) also demonstrates public relations' role as the main driver across the three stages. In poorly developed public relations within Libyan organizations, such linkage would be low.'

5.7 Practical Implications for Libyan Companies

There are various implications that have been noted based on findings from this study. First, it is vital for crisis readiness to be taken seriously regardless of resource challenges. The creation of a one-page crisis communication plan, identifying a spokesperson, and conducting annual tabletop drills have been observed to raise performance significantly. Secondly, public relations activities should be involved in decision making rather than considering them to be only media relations related. Lastly, communications investments should be prioritized due to the fragmented media environment in Libya.

5.8 Limitations and Future Research Directions

Limitations include several areas that need consideration. For instance, this research was based on perceptions collected from a convenience sample. Therefore, there may be issues with social desirability and generalizability. Furthermore, despite the significance of the results, this research does not provide insight into the day-to-day contextual difficulties facing Libyan public relations practitioners, such as dealing with security concerns, political sensitivities, or even questions of honor (see Section 5.5). Future research may focus more on qualitative methodology (i.e., in-depth interviews and/or case studies) to uncover those difficulties. In addition, a longitudinal approach could be used to examine whether crisis management skills change as Libyan organizations become more experienced in handling crises.

6. Conclusion

A survey study examined the impact of public relations on crisis management among Libyan firms, based on data collected from 204 participants. All the hypotheses were proved as crisis preparedness ($\beta = 0.214$), public relations activities ($\beta = 0.328$), and crisis communication efficacy ($\beta = 0.391$) had significant positive effects on organizational performance; however, communication efficacy was the most effective predictor. The model accounts for 62.6% of the variance in performance. There was a strong correlation between PR activities and effectiveness of communication ($r = 0.742$). The conclusions drawn above are evident when considering the challenges faced by Libyan organizations in terms of economic uncertainty and unpredictable political situation. It would be beneficial to undertake appropriate preparations for an eventual

crisis, such as having a crisis plan, training a spokesperson, and monitoring social media communications. PR activities need to be shifted from being a reactive media strategy to a proactive management tool.

Limitations of this research include a convenience sampling method and cross-sectional approach applied. Further research may consider issues related to cultural and security barriers in Libya. Yet, Libyan businesses are likely to recover much faster using the suggested PR approach.

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Annexure A

Questionnaire for the Study

The Role of Public Relations in Crisis Management in Libyan Companies

Dear Respondent,

This questionnaire is designed to collect information for academic research on the role of public relations in crisis management within Libyan companies. Your responses will be kept confidential and used solely for research purposes. Please tick (✓) the option that best reflects your opinion.

Section A: Demographic Information

1. Gender
 - ☐ Male
 - ☐ Female
2. Age
 - ☐ Under 25 years
 - ☐ 25–34 years
 - ☐ 35–44 years
 - ☐ 45–54 years
 - ☐ 55 years and above
3. Educational Qualification
 - ☐ Diploma
 - ☐ Bachelor's Degree
 - ☐ Master's Degree

- ☐ Doctorate
 - ☐ Other
4. Position in the Company
- ☐ Top Management
 - ☐ Middle Management
 - ☐ Public Relations Officer
 - ☐ Administrative Staff
 - ☐ Other
5. Years of Work Experience
- ☐ Less than 5 years
 - ☐ 5–10 years
 - ☐ 11–15 years
 - ☐ More than 15 years
6. Sector of Employment
- ☐ Oil and Gas
 - ☐ Banking and Finance
 - ☐ Telecommunications
 - ☐ Manufacturing
 - ☐ Services
 - ☐ Other

Section B: Crisis Preparedness

Please indicate your level of agreement using the following scale:

1 = Strongly Disagree 2 = Disagree 3 = Neutral 4 = Agree 5 = Strongly Agree

No.	Statement	1	2	3	4	5
CP1	My organization has a written crisis management plan.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
CP2	Employees receive training on crisis response procedures.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
CP3	A crisis management team is formally established.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
CP4	Crisis simulations or drills are conducted regularly.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
CP5	Potential organizational risks are regularly assessed.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Section C: Public Relations Practices

No.	Statement	1	2	3	4	5
PR1	Public relations are involved in strategic decision-making.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
PR2	Public relations staff communicate effectively with stakeholders during crises.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
PR3	The organization maintains strong relationships with media outlets.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
PR4	Social media is effectively used for crisis communication.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
PR5	Public relations help protect the organization's reputation during crises.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Section D: Crisis Communication Effectiveness

No.	Statement	1	2	3	4	5
CC1	Crisis information is communicated promptly.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
CC2	Information shared during crises is accurate and reliable.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

No.	Statement	1	2	3	4	5
CC3	Stakeholders receive regular updates during crises.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
CC4	The organization responds effectively to rumors and misinformation.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
CC5	Internal communication remains effective during crises.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Section E: Organizational Performance During Crises

No.	Statement	1	2	3	4	5
OP1	The organization maintains operational continuity during crises.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
OP2	Stakeholder trust is preserved during crisis situations.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
OP3	The organization recovers quickly after a crisis.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
OP4	Crisis management efforts reduce reputational damage.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
OP5	Effective public relations contributes to organizational resilience.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Section F: Open-Ended Questions

1. What are the most common crises faced by your organization?
2. What challenges does your organization face in communicating during crises?
3. How can public relations practices be improved to enhance crisis management in Libyan companies?

Thank you for your valuable participation.

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