

Developing Internal Crisis Communication (ICC) Model: A Strategy to Improve Agility among Malaysian Employees during the COVID 19 Pandemic

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Organization of this presentation

1. Introduction
2. Objective of the paper
3. Antecedents and Consequences of Internal Crisis Communication (ICC)
4. Research Method
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Introduction

- The Covid-19 which originated from Wuhan city in the late 2019 and then spread to the eastern and southeastern of Asian countries has led to a considerable number of death (Kobayashi et al., 2020).
- The first detected cases of the COVID-19 pandemic in Malaysia were found in January 2020
- The infamous Seri Petaling cluster, which put the country into lockdown on March 18, infected a total of 3,375 people.
- The contagious disease has grown into public health crisis
- Managing the covid-19 epidemic needs a balanced approach that instantly tells people what they and the health system can do without causing panic (Cowper, 2020).

Introduction

- During a period of crisis, the behavior of the employees to share or seek organizational-related information has significant possibility to minimize threats, at the same time prevents issues from arising (Lee, 2020).
- the process of managing a crisis related closely to internal procedure (Heide & Simonsson, 2015; Taylor, 2010).
- Employees tend to defend and support their organizations which at the long run protects the reputation of the organization (Lee, 2020).
- The effective communication with employees is important particularly to minimize possible damage that can be caused by employee (Kim, 2018; Lee, 2019; Mazzie & Ravazzani, 2015).

Objective

- This study aims to investigate the internal organizational factors that enhance management-employee adaptation and compliance to Covid-19 health pandemic situation.
- The factors include safety culture, supportive environment, perceived organizational support and online communication satisfaction to proffer the evidence in the study in an attempt to inform the front-liners on the cause of mitigation of the disease.

- To provide timely and accurate information to the organizational stakeholders as well as community, an effective mechanism of communication is very important during crisis (Goh, Fung & Lee 2005).
- Due to this, organization indulges in crisis management by designing some strategic factors to deal with crisis and to mitigate the damages occurred through the crisis (Coombs, 2014).
- The four factors: preparation, prevention, revision and response are incorporated in three-stage i.e. pre-crisis, the crisis phase and the post-crisis phases (Coombs, 2014; Coombs & Laufer 2018).

Stages of Crisis



- Actual crisis puts an organizations crisis preparation to test.
- Communication in the crisis stage comprises delivery of ongoing events of crisis to the stakeholders, decisions from the organization on the amount of information to share and decision-making within the crisis management team (Hale et al., 2005) .
- This stage is very crucial to the crisis management team because stakeholders and victims get information about the crisis event (Coombs, 2010).
- This study focuses on the crisis phase to investigate the antecedents and consequences on ICC during Covid-19 crisis.

Safety Culture



- Safety culture is one of the organizational factors identified by researchers that has influence on internal crisis communication (Frandsen & Johansen, 2011).
- Safety culture is a subdivision of organizational culture that is thought to have an emotional impact on the behavior and attitude of the employees regarding to the ongoing safety and health performance of the organizations (Cooper, 2000).
- The learned and shared experiences, interpretation and meanings of safety and work have direct effects on the actions of the employees towards accident, risk and prevention (Richter & Koch, 2004).

- Safety culture is associated with belief, technical and social practices and attitude that are connected with reducing the vulnerability of internal and external stakeholders to conditions well thought out to be dangerous (Turner et al., 1989; Frandsen and Johansen, 2011)
- Achieving all these set of principles by organizational employees will help to improve communication efficiency before and during a crisis situation.
- In fact, strengthening safety culture in an organization will help in achieving a strong relationship between manager and employees especially in a crisis situation.

Supportive Environment



- Supportive environment has a strong impact psychological behavior on employees (Okhomina, 2010).
- Organizations that have the ability to form supportive relationships at work become highly productive and translates not only committed employees but into proceeds that is not lost to interruptions of work and other job related distractions (Taylor, 2008).
- Organization internal environment determines the organization success or failure (Kazmia & Naaranoja, 2015).

- Supportive environment is closely linked to supervisor support which is ***“the degree to which managers are perceived to place a great importance on safety, responding to safety concerns, and provide support and encouragement for subordinates who comply with safety procedures and participate in safety activities”*** (Griffin and Neal, 2004).
- Communication is a two-way process where the manager and employees engage in mutual understanding of the reality to develop positive and supportive environment (Falkheimer & Heide, 2006).

Perceived Organizational Support



- The study reported a positive relationship between perceived organizational support and internal crisis communication (Adamu & Mohamad, 2019).
- Organization that strives to have high degree of quality ICC leads to positively feasible results for their employees such as in career advancement and pro-social conducts (Eisenberger, Fasolo & Davis-LaMastro, 1990).
- The high degree of POS leads to feeling of obligation where the employees feel to have commitment with the organization by involvement in the goals to support the organization (Wayne, Shore & Liden, 1997)

Perceived Organizational Support



- The employees are informed about their organizational situation through the different channels of internal communication depend on the organization. (Korn & Einwiller, 2013)
- The study showed that effective internal crisis communication influences the employee perception that their wellbeing is taken care of by the organization.
- In line with the above findings, it is argued that communication with employees during crisis has impact on perceived organizational support.

- Online satisfaction refers to the importance of communication satisfaction in an online environment especially communication satisfaction of the user with internet-based system (Down & Hazen, 1977; Salleh et al., 2016).
- Similarly, it is a valuable tool to form, maintain and develop relationship with many people (Opreaa & Stan, 2012).
- The employees are satisfied more when the communicative expectation of the employees are met in an interaction (Hung & Chou, 2013).

Online Communication Satisfaction

- Previous studies have shown that ease of use and usefulness of digital technology have important influence on employee satisfaction (Davis, 1989; Hashim, 2008; Salleh, 2014).
- Recent evidence suggests that, in order to know how the employees discover the relationships between satisfaction and communication, it is important to determine and examine communication satisfaction (Salleh, 2014).

Hypothesis Development



Taken together with the explanation above, it is proposed that:

- **Hypothesis 1:** Safety Culture is positively associated with internal crisis communication.
- **Hypothesis 2:** Supportive Environment is positively associated with internal crisis communication
- **Hypothesis 3:** Internal crisis communication is positively associated with employees' perceived organizational support.
- **Hypothesis 4:** Internal crisis communication is positively associated with employee's online communication satisfaction.

Item generations

Literature review

Face Validity

First draft questionnaire

Pilot study

A survey of 30 respondents
(Malaysian Employees)

Reliability analysis

Delete low item-to-total correlation item (<.30)

Final questionnaire

Main study

A survey of 238 Malaysian Employees

Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA)

Reliability Analysis

Delete low item-to-total correlation item (<.30)

Measurement Model Assessment (PLS)

Test measurement model

Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM)

Test structural model

Assessment of the Structural Model

Table: Summary of Results of Hypotheses Testing

Hypothesis	Correlation	β	t	p	95%CI	Result
H1	Safety Culture -> Internal Crisis Communication	0.657	10.622	0.000*	[99%]	Supported
H2	Supportive Environment -> Internal Crisis Communication	0.227	3.467	0.001*	[99%]	Supported
H3	Internal Crisis Communication -> Perceived Organizational Support	0.766	27.634	0.000*	[99%]	Supported
H4	Internal Crisis Communication -> Online Communication Satisfaction	0.718	19.397	0.000*	[99%]	Supported

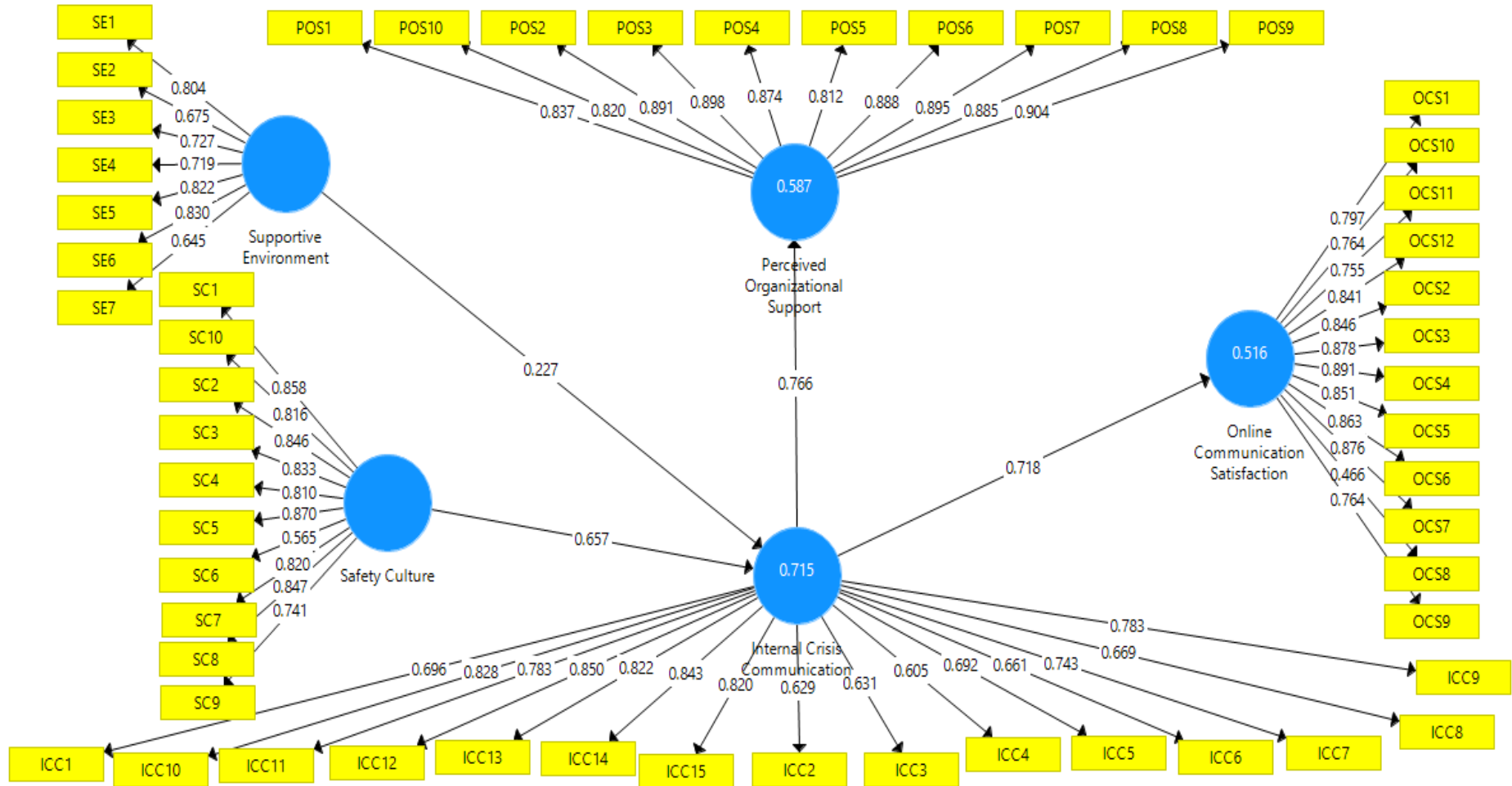
Note: *Significant at the level of 0.05 ($p < 0.05$).

Table: Determination of Co-efficient (R^2)

Constructs	R-Square	R-Square Adjusted
Internal Crisis Communication	0.715	0.713
Online Communication Satisfaction	0.516	0.514
Perceived Organizational Support	0.587	0.585

Note: R^2 : 0.25 (small), 0.50 (medium), 0.75 (large)

Summary of Hypotheses results



Discussion

- The study proposed that internal crisis communication has an outcome on internal stakeholders and examine how effective internal crisis communication will impact online communication satisfaction and perceived organizational support.
- The safety culture and supportive environment are associated with internal crisis communication.
- The internal crisis communication has some effect on online communication satisfaction and perceived organizational support when management communicate effectively with the employees.

Theoretical Implications



- The integrated internal crisis-management literature is integrated with core variables from organizational behavior theories, which include safety (Cooper, 2000) and supportive environment (Griffin & Neal, 2004).
- This study contributes to the current research literature by identifying that organizational management can exert influence on employees by creating safe and supportive environment.
- Therefore, rather than focusing on task-related factors, the significance of safety and supportive organization that is essentially rooted in the role relationship between manager and employee is demonstrated in this study.

Theoretical Implications



- The study proposed and found a relationship between internal crisis communication and online communication satisfaction (Hecht 1978; Salleh, 2014; Salleh et al., 2016)
- Online communication satisfaction requires a concerted effort by the organizational management.
- Internal crisis management is a tool that can be utilized to established mutual and beneficial relationship with employees during crisis.
- The present study suggests that, the positive impact on internal crisis communication on employee online satisfaction is more likely to emerge when managers utilized appropriate online channels to communicate clear cut messages to the employees in time of crisis.

Theoretical Implications



- Interestingly, the result of this study shows that internal crisis communication leads to positive outcome such as perceived organizational support.
- This finding demonstrated employees tend to support their organization if an organization cares about their well being. (Adamu & Mohamad, 2019)
- In the same vein, employees getting help from their organization in times of turbulence are also highlighted as a part of high degree of support (Eisenberger, Fasolo & Davis-LaMastro, 1990).
- Internal crisis communication discloses to the employees that their organization is concerned about them and will be willing to compensate them if the needs arise.

Practical Implications



- Internal crisis communication has been demonstrated and shown to facilitate organization acclimatizing to changing burdens in crisis and challenging periods (Adamu & Mohamad, 2019a; Heide & Simonsson, 2014; Mazzei & Ravazzani, 2011; Ravazzani, 2016).
- Regardless of the severity of a crisis situation, employees would be willing to help the organization in responding to the crisis when there is trust in their relationship with the organization (Kim et al., 2019).
- Therefore, in the current Covid-19 which shows the need for changes in work settings, standard operating procedure and possibility of organization resizing, management must consider how they can minimize fear and worries of employee.

Practical Implications



- Transparent information - the organization post-Covid-19 crisis plan to minimize employee anxiety must be unfolded to top-bottom management.
- The results of this study suggests that safety culture achieves positive influence on effective internal crisis communication during Covid-19 crisis.
- Internal crisis communication prevents negative reaction and improve performance of employee in a crisis situation (Adamu & Mohamad, 2019b).
- The safety measures should be constantly reinforced as a priority during Covid-19 crisis.

Practical Implications



- The dyadic role relationship of employees with organizational management will be highly significant for problem solving (Hassan, Akanmu & Bahaudin, 2018; Qu, Janssen & Shi 2014).
- Co-workers can be encouraged in giving advices to one another on how to safely work in an organisation during Covid-19 crisis.
- The organizational management needs to identify the digital platforms that employees prefer to receive messages and have engagement during Covid-19 crisis.

Conclusion

- In order to understand organizational learning, future studies can also investigate internal crisis communication during post Covid-19 crisis.
- This will bring a new insight on how communication has impacted on employees' psychological wellbeing in organizations.

Thank you

Q & A Session