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An evaluation of the suitability of the four-flows model in an approach to Crisis management: A study of the University of Fort Hare.

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Declaration

I declare that all the information in this study is my original work beside that which has been stated otherwise. This study has never been submitted at any other university or institution of higher learning.

Noel Neville Nyathi

Signature.....

Date.....

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Firstly, I want to acknowledge GMRDC for the supervisor linked bursary offered for my study as it allowed me to progress with my studies amidst my financial woes. If it wasn't for your financial support clearly I would not have afforded. Thanks to McPhee and Zaug who are the major contributors to this study which was inspired by their work on the four flows model. I would like to extend my utmost thanks to my supervisor Professor M. Caldwell whose wisdom, intellect and experience was the foundation of this innovative study. The two greatest lessons I learnt from him are that I should never aim for the ordinary and obvious and that I am capable to work alone.

Dedications

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Abstract

It cannot be denied that communication plays a central role in organisation. This study conceptualises why insufficient organisational communication can incubate crisis and how faulty organisational communication systems may lead to recurrent crises. If the absence of communication can incubate crises such as student protests, questions arise whether organisational communication theory can be used as a guide to an organisations' communication system to prevent organisational crisis from occurring. McPhee and Zaig (2000) argue that communication constitutes organisation by conceptualising the four flows model of organisational communication. Specifically, this study explored the suitability of the four flows model in a proactive approach to managing crises. The purpose of this study was to interpret the case of managing student protests at the University of Fort Hare so as to evaluate the suitability of the four flows model as an proactive approach to organisational crisis management.

Firstly, Fink (1986), Mitroff (1994) and Coombs (2012) crisis management approaches were integrated and interpreted under the concepts of the four flows model. To evidence the representation of the four flows model in crisis management, the model was used to interpret the management of the Australian Bali Bombings, Johnson and Johnsons Tylenol poisoning, Hurricane Katrina, Pentagon Attacks and the Sydney Harbour Oil spill. The study made use of a qualitative approach in which semi-structured interviews were conducted and various documents collected for analysis. Purposive sampling was used to select participants with expert input from their experiential knowledge in the management of student protests. Using interpretive analysis, themes were extracted from the corpus using the theoretical lens of the four flows model. These themes were further categorised under the specifics of the four flows model. The study found that the concepts of the four flows model are foundational to the various processes involved in crisis management and are largely represented in the management of student protests at the University of Fort Hare as well as in the various cases that were examined. However, the four flows model is extremely broad and does not detail the specific processes involved in crisis management. The fact that the model has never been used in the management of an actual crisis situation stands as criticism to its suitability as an approach to crisis management.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

1.1 Introduction

There is a commonly-held view that crises would be averted if there was sufficient communication. Student protests at the University of Fort Hare have become an annual occurrence when contradictions emerge between what appears to be students interests and that of the university management. In an effort to compel management to respond to their demands, the Students Representative Council coordinates with students in protest against the university. The causes of the protests can be associated with communication, for instance the Students Representative Council (SRC) claims the university management is unresponsive to students concerns. Against this position, the management may claim that students' demands are unreasonable. Since 2009, annual student protests characterised by violent behaviour and vandalism of property have disrupted normal activities at the university for at least one or two weeks in each protest.

Seemingly, student protests have been perceived as a method of compelling management to respond positively to students' demands. Most of these protests were resolved after the university management's response that supplied the students with critical information that they need to hear. The constant flow of critical information relevant to organisational problems before crises strike is vital in averting organisational crises and in proactive crisis management. This study looks at crisis management from an organisational communication point of view and conceptualises how organisational communication theory can be useful in an approach to crisis management.

Many organisational crisis theorists take the event-centred approach to crisis management. For instance, Coombs (2012: 2) defines a crisis as "the perception of an unpredictable event that threatens important expectancies of stakeholders and can seriously impact an organisation's performance and generate negative outcomes". While Fearn-Banks (2001: 480) says crisis is "a major occurrence with a potentially negative outcome affecting an organisation as well as its publics, services, products, and/or good name". However, the approach to crisis management from an organisational communication point of view comes to life when crises are analysed as processes that begin way before threats or signs of the crisis are visible.

Roux-Duffort's (2007) processual approach to crisis proposes that crises should be analysed as a process of organisational weakening that degenerates until the crisis event. This approach perceives crises as long incubation processes that suddenly manifest through trigger events. He argues that the event-centred approach to crises looks at the trigger event as the starting point of crises whereas the processual approach reveals crises as the point of arrival of a destabilising process which has been ignored until now. This means that an organisation that manages a crisis event while ignoring the underlying problems that have led to the crises may be a victim of recurrent crises.

It is important to discuss the role of communication in organisations so as to understand how organisational communication problems can lead to crisis. Furthermore, it helps to understand how communication theory can be used as an approach to managing crisis. The continued existence of an organisation requires constant communication and organising to coordinate activities related to its function and production. Weick (1979) views communication as the core process of organising. He identified communication as the means through which human coordinated activities establish relationships and maintain organisations. If organising is constituted by the communication process, it leads to the proposition that communication constitutes "*organisation*" and that organisation cannot be survive without organisational communication. This generates the proposition that discrepancies in organisational communication can cripple the process of organising and make disorganisation inevitable.

This study identifies a faulty organisational communication system as an incubator for recurrent crises. A communication system sets formal and informal procedures and rules, communicates plans and goals, monitors the organisation and informs others of status development within the organisation (Hitt, Ireland and Hockisson 2003). An organisations communication system is fundamental to the smooth function of any organisation such that fault lines in organisational communication can cause various problems in the function of an organisation which may lead to crises. A faulty communication system can cause ripple organisational problems which may lead to recurrent crises.

In the event of crises, relevant information is communicated to stakeholders in an effort to restore the stability, function and reputation of an organisation. Crisis communication describes an organisation confronted by crisis and the urgency to

communicate critical information about the crisis to its relevant publics. Flodin (2000: 20) defines crisis communication as “the exchange of information within and between governmental organisations, other organisations, media and interested individuals and groups before, during and after crises.” Communication is central to organising various activities aimed at detecting, preventing or managing crises. This research explores the constitutive role of communication in proactive crisis management. Proactive crisis management plans involve detecting, preventing and resolving organisational problems before they turn into crises. When an organisation practices stakeholder relations only in crisis situations, it attempts to rebuild a good reputation with its stakeholders that did not exist before the crisis. In contrast, proactive stakeholder relations increase goodwill and stakeholder cooperation which are valuable assets in crisis situations (Hemphill 2006). Developing strong stakeholder relations enables an organisation to meet stakeholder expectations before a crisis emerges, says Heath (1997). Organisations that have effective and efficient communication systems are more equipped to avert crisis and are more prepared for its impact.

In the case of student protests, communicative efforts to develop strong relations with both internal and external stakeholders through interaction, collective sensemaking, change of assumptions and emotional responses may help the university to detect organisational problems and prevent them from turning into crisis. Broadly, the study interrogates the usefulness of the four flows model in an approach to crisis management by interpreting its influence in the case of how student protests were managed at the University of Fort Hare in 2012-2014. This study also interrogates how that interpretation contributes to the conception of the four flows model in a proactive approach to crisis management.

1.2 Theoretical Framework: The Four Flows Model

McPhee and Zaug (2009: 29) argue that “not all communication is organizational” meaning that not all communication constitutes organisation. Henceforth, they modified CCO theory by arguing four flows of communication which constitute organisation. McPhee and Zaug’s four flows model argues that communication constitutes organisation in four analytically distinct but interdependent ways (Putnam and Nicotera 2009). These flows are membership negotiation, organisational self-structuring, activity coordination and institutional positioning. Membership negotiation

argues that organisational communication establishes and transforms the relationship between an organisation and its members through activities such as mentorship, identification, socialization, commitment, leadership and self-positioning. Organisational self-structuring specifies all communication that shapes the organisation towards its goals and objective and is characterised by official documents (such as policies, rules, directives, charters organisational charts), decision making and planning forums, directives, announcements, feedback and other methods of formal control (McPhee and Zaugg 2000). Activity coordination refers to all communication that aims to integrate work processes. This flow aligns and connects local work activities and allows members to manage their combined work. Institutional positioning is outward looking and refers to the flows of communication to the external environment. Types of messages in this flow include marketing, advertising, reputation and image building all in an effort to gain visibility amongst the social order of institutions. Institutional positioning is concerned with externally communicated messages which seek to enable recognition, build and maintain relations.

1.3 Research Problem

Recurrent student protests at the University of Fort Hare continue to threaten the image and reputation of the university. From 2009 to 2014 student protests have recurred with an increasing degree of violence and vandalism in each episode. In most of these protests, the SRC-Students resorted to violence and vandalism which has seemingly become a tool used by the students to attract the attention of the university management and compel them to respond to their demands. Insufficient communication has been identified as the major cause of many crises or ineffective crisis management. In this study, the four flows model of organisational communication is used to explore how proactive crisis management can be pursued. The study also interrogates the model's usefulness in providing an alternative conception of the communicative dimensions of crisis management.

1.4 Research Questions

1. What strategies were used by the University of Fort Hare to manage the annual student protests that occurred in 2012, 2013 and 2014?

2. How is the four flows model represented in the case of managing student protests at the University of Fort Hare?
3. What are the strengths and weaknesses of the four flows model in interpreting the case of managing student protests at the University of Fort Hare?

1.5 Research Aim

The aim of the study is to explore the strategies used in managing student protests from 2012 to 2014 and categorise them under the four processes of the flows model so as to evaluate the suitability of the four flows model in proactively managing organisational crisis.

1.6 The Research Objectives

1. To find out the strategies used by the University of Fort Hare to manage the annual student protests that occurred in 2012, 2013 and 2014.
2. To examine the representation of the four flows model in the case of managing student protests at the University of Fort Hare.
3. To evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of the four flows model in interpreting the case of managing student protests at the University of Fort Hare.

1.7 Limitations of the Study

In conducting this study, several limitations were faced by the researcher. The study focused on the University of Fort Hare's annual student protests that occurred from 2012-2014. It was ideal to use various case studies to add rigor to the interpretive analysis but due to time, financial and accessibility constraints the researcher chose the organisation he is exposed to. Being a student at the University of Fort Hare during the time of the protests, provided experience and observation of how student protests were managed hence making it easier to interpret the way protests were managed. In addition, being in the natural setting of phenomena is a positive factor in regard to exposure to pertinent information.

Organisations are sensitive and hesitant to release information that might portray weaknesses in their strategies hence it was not easy to conduct the study concerning student protests as organisational members may be reluctant to provide information due to the sensitivity of the subject. The researcher faced a challenge in

acquiring the participants who were chosen to be part of the sample. Out of the expected six participants that were expected, only two were accessible to interviews while others who participated in managing previous protests had transferred from the university and some were not available; however several documents were obtained from the rest of the expected participants. The Marketing and Communications Manager did not avail for the interview but provided resourceful documents. The Vice Chancellor who was also a target was not available through his interview with media and his presentation at Department of Higher education provided substantial information. Another challenge obtained was of access to certain participants at the top level hierarchy. Participation in the research was by choice as indicated by the ethical considerations henceforth participants reluctance to participation is inevitable. The study focused on the student protests in 2012, 2013 and 2014. Due to time and financial constraints it could not be carried out in a different organisation however, the four flows model was used to interpret various cases of crises management.

1.8 Structure of the thesis

Chapter 1: Introduction and background of the research

It cannot be argued that communication plays a central role in organisation. Chapter 1 conceptualises why insufficient organisational communication may be an incubator for crises and how faulty organisational communication systems can be the reason for recurrent crises. The four flows model of organisation communication by McPhee and Zaugg (2000) which stems from Weick's (1979) CCO theory conveys how organisation is constituted by communication. If the absence of communication can incubate crises such as student protests, questions arise whether the use of organisational communication theory as a guide to an organisations' communication system prevents organisational crisis from occurring. Furthermore, can the four flows model of organisational communication be used as a proactive approach to managing crises? This chapter presents the background of the study. This includes various aspects such as a discussion of the research problem, aims and objectives of the study and the significance of the research.

Chapter 2: Organisational Communication and Crisis Management

An alternative conception of the constitutive dimensions of crisis management is submitted in this study. Henceforth, before intersecting the suitability of the four flows model in an approach to crisis management, it is important to discuss the four flows

model of organisational communication, its criticisms and its foundations as it may help to discover new ideas. If the four flows model is to be used in an approach to crisis management it should be able to address the activities specified by existing crisis management models. Henceforth, three approaches to crisis management are discussed in this chapter. The correlation between crisis communication and crisis management is discussed together with relevant crisis management approaches to this study. This chapter conveys the importance of communication in preventing and managing organisational crisis and lays a foundation for the four flows model to be considered in an approach to crisis management. The chapter concludes with a motion towards a communicative approach to crisis management using the four flows model.

Chapter 3: Research methodology

The study adopted the interpretive approach which has been built upon constructivist epistemology and an ontology that perceives reality as socially constructed hence the study subscribes to the interpretive approach in which qualitative research methods were used such as semi-interviews, documentary analysis and observations. This study required a select number of participants who were part of the crisis team when managing student protests hence purposive sampling was used to select participants according to their level of participation, experience and knowledge of the strategies and processes used in managing the protests in 2012, 2013 and 2014. Semi-structured interviews were conducted using a four-section interview schedule with questions aimed at probing the representation of the four flows model in the management of student protests. Direct observation in the 2013 and 2014 protest was used to analyse crisis management strategy and how the four flows model was represented. In addition, organisational documents were analysed such as the University prospectus, University of Fort Hare's crisis communication policy, newspaper articles, transcribed emails and online interviews. An interpretive analysis was conducted to interpret the data whereby themes were extracted and categorised under the concepts of the four flows model. Basically this chapter explains the research paradigm, design, methodology and data analysis techniques. Furthermore, it discusses sampling and data analysis methods.

Chapter 4: Interpretation of the four-flows model in crisis management

This chapter integrates the four flows model and three crisis management models to convey how the stages of managing crisis can be categorised under the processes of the flows model. Fink, Mitroff and Coombs crisis management models are inserted into the four flows model to design an approach to managing crisis using the four flows model. Various crisis management case studies were interpreted such as the Shell Oil spill and Johnson and Johnsons Tylenol crisis are interpreted using the four flows model to identify the representation and influence of the four-flows model. The representation of the four flows model in the various case studies was helpful in evaluating the strengths and weaknesses of using the model in interpreting crisis.

Chapter 5: Data analysis and presentations

This chapter presents and analyses data collected in the study of the management of student protests over a three-year period at the University of Fort Hare from 2012 to 2014. This chapter presents the findings of the study according to themes which are categorised under the four flows model. Themes were extracted from the corpus in the form of interview transcripts, University Prospectus (which contains university policy, code of conduct and disciplinary measures), University of Fort Hare's crisis communication policy, newspaper articles, observational notes, transcribed emails and online interviews.

Chapter 6: Findings, conclusions and recommendations

This chapter discusses the findings and conclusions drawn from the research and makes some recommendations to improve organisational communication at the University of Fort Hare. The study aims at evaluating the suitability of the four flows model in an approach to crisis management conveying the strengths and weaknesses of the model in interpreting how Fort Hare the student protests were managed. It conveys the strengths and weaknesses of the four flows model as an approach to crisis management and how helpful it is to the University of Fort Hare in managing recurrent student protests.

1.9 Conclusion

Communication cannot be separated from organising and is a constitutive force in the formation of organisations. When it is absent, disorganisation is inevitable and its insufficiency in organisations has been widely pointed as an incubator for

organisational crisis especially those related with conflict. This study interrogates the usefulness of the four flows model as a proactive approach to crisis management. This chapter provides the background of the study by presenting the research problem, aims, objectives, significance and the limitations of the study. The study explored how student protests were management at the University of Fort Hare between 2012- 2014. The strategies used to manage student protests were analysed and categorized under the concepts of the four flows model so as to interpret the suitability of the four flows model in an approach to managing the crisis of student protests. The next chapter majors in the constitutive role of communication in organisation and in crisis management.

CHAPTER 2: THE CONSTITUTIVE ROLE OF COMMUNICATION IN ORGANISATION AND IN CRISIS MANAGEMENT

2.1 Introduction

The centrality of communication in organisation is arguably the basis of organisational life. Coombs (2012: xi) says “[c]ommunication is the life blood of an organisation in the same way crisis communication is the life blood of crisis management”. This chapter defines the key concepts used in this study and interrogates the constitutive role of communication in organisation and in crisis management. It further discusses the four flows model of organisational communication and various crisis management models upon which the study is founded.

2.1 The Constitutive role of Communication in Organisation

The existence and sustenance of an organisation requires continuous communication and organising aimed at coordinating activities that allow an organisation to function. Putnam and Pacanowsky (1983) argue that communication is not only the transmission of information but it also creates and recreates the social structures that form the crux of organising. They say that organisations emanate from communication processes which enact the ongoing, interlocking behaviours that constitute organisational life. Organisational communication scholars argue that organisations are constructed through discourse which is the basis of organisational life (McPhee and Zaugg 2000). They say that it is through text and talk that organisations are formed and maintain their continual existence. The centrality of communication in organising holds that insufficient communication can cause problems to arise in organisation (2000). The CCO argument makes communication a building block for organisation to be possible, meaning that where communication is insufficient, disorganisation is inevitable. Also, problems with the communication system of an organisation are likely to create problems in the function of an organisation.

Weick (1979) argues that *organisation* should be analysed as a process rather than as a static entity. He argues that organisations are actually continuous acts of organising and identifies communication as the means through which human coordinated activities establish relationships and maintain organisations. Weick views organisations as coordinated behaviours with continuous act-response

sequences which create, maintain or dissolve organisations Putnam and Nicotera (2009). The process approach to organisation conveys that it is not possible to create and maintain an organisation without the constitutive force of communication. This conceives an understanding that organisational problems could stem from faulty organisational communication systems. Such an approach leads to the explanation as to why some organisations may face recurrent crises which may actually be ripple effects that stem from faulty communication systems.

2.1.1 Criticism of the CCO theory

Similar to many communication theories, the CCO theory has its fair share of criticism. Putnam and Nicotera (2009) say that Weick's CCO argument creates the impression that "*communication*" and "*organisation*" are equivalent, which goes too far (See Putnam, Nicotera & McPhee 2009: 7-8). McDonald (2010) expresses shortfall in CCO theory as he sees organisations as being formed and constantly transformed by various processes that are overlooked when narrowed down to simple communication. Jelinek and Litterer (1994: 12) identify organisation as the "deliberately created and maintained social institution within which consciously coordinated behaviours by members aim to produce a limited set of intended outcomes". This definition expresses how complex processes beyond communication are involved in constituting organisations. McPhee and Zaugg (2009) say that not all communication constitutes organisation so they modified CCO theory by generating the four flows model which argues how communication constitutes organisation through membership negotiation, organisational self-structuring, activity coordination and institutional positioning.

Since communication is foundational to organisation, it means that insufficient communication is bound to cause organisational problems which may mature into crises while proactive organisational communication may detect and prevent organisational problems from maturing into crises. Henceforth, this study interrogates the usefulness of the four flows model of organisational communication in providing an alternative conception of the communicative dimensions of crisis management. More, specifically this study examines how each flow of communication is applicable in an approach to proactive crisis management.

2.2 The Four Flows Model

McPhee and Zaug (2000) argue that communication constitutes organisation through a four flows model. The model argues that organisations communicate to four inter-dependent but different audiences through four analytical distinct methods. The model implies that organisations must enunciate and maintain relations to their members through membership negotiation, to themselves as formally controlled entities through organizational self-structuring, to their internal subgroups and processes through activity coordination and to their colleagues in a society of institutions through institutional positioning.

2.2.1 Membership Negotiation

The most vital process in an organisation is its communicative efforts to establish and maintain or transform its member relations (McPhee and Zaug 2000). The four flows model argues that organisational membership is not a natural property of people but a process of organisational communication which establishes relations through activities such as identification, socialization, commitment, leadership and self-positioning. As new members are introduced, the organisations prior-existent members act as mentors and supervisors to the new recruits. In other words (McPhee & Zaug 2000: 6) claim that “organizations exist when they draw members in, lead them to take part in and understand the interactional world unique to the organization”. Through this communicative process of membership negotiation, new members re-identify and/or position themselves with the organisation by acquiring knowledge of and understanding their role in the organisation.

The actions of organisational agents and stakeholders convey the important role of human agency in constituting organisation (McPhee and Zaug 2000). Student protests at University of Fort Hare usually lead to termination of normal organisational activities reflecting the central role of organisational members in constituting organised activities. According to Giddens (1984: 9) “Agency concerns events of which an individual is the perpetrator, in the sense that the individual could, at any phase in a given sequence of conduct, have acted differently”. As members figure out their relation to the organisation and how the organisation relates to them, they acquire self-positioning. This study examines the significance of membership negotiation in an approach to crisis management.

2.2.2 Organisational Self-Structuring

An image of organisational self-structuring can involve a planner drawing up an organisation chart, or a new set of policies, or a set of orders, obtaining their approval by the necessary decision-making bodies and disseminating them to part or all of the organisational membership (Putnam and Nicotera 2009). It entails formal communication that legally forms the organisation and determines how members will utilise their time while directing the development and allocation of resources (McPhee and Zaug 2000). This flow refers to all discourse that shapes the organisation towards its goals and objectives which McPhee and Zaug (2000) listed as “official documents (charters, organization charts, policy and procedure manuals), decision-making and planning forums, orders, directives, casual announcements, processes of employee evaluation and feedback, budgeting, accounting and other formalized control” (p. 7). Lutgen-Sandvik and McDermott (2008) added that the types of messages in organisational self-structuring include laws, contracts, budgets and the communication that draws legality from such documents. Self-structuring allows “the organisation as a system to control and influence itself, not merely to handle immediate problems but to set a persistent routine procedure for response” (McPhee and Zaug 2000: 6).

Communication in this flow provides norms, standards and rules for accomplishment of organisational work and is predominantly news-like (scheduling meetings, discussing new procedures, and providing feedback) though it is also manifest as legal documents, policy procedures, and continuing repetitive schedules and plans. Can often substitute on-going interaction between members of an organisation because since everyone knows what is expected of them, there is no need to talk about it” (Miller 2002).

Messages communicated via this flow express an organisations’ formal structure which creates, maintains, controls and steers the direction of the organisation (McPhee and Zaug 2000). The importance of communicating formal structure is to pre-fix work arrangements and norms which in turn gather a smooth work understanding and coordination amongst members. Crisis communication plans pre-fix roles and responsibilities of organisational members in the process of managing crisis. Roles are distributed for effective and efficient crisis management and since everyone knows their roles and responsibilities, members of the crisis management team are able to specialise and perfect their individual roles. Prefixed roles are

beneficial in that when there is division of labour inconsistent tasks and members are easily identified.

Organisational self-structuring shapes the behaviour of organisational members to steer organisational goals and objectives. Through organisational structuring members come to have more or less consensually and acceptably recognized powers (Putnam and Nicotera 2009). As an organisations structure is constantly formed, member agency is altered, enabled and constrained. This study questions the significance of organisational self-structuring in an approach to crisis management. More specifically it examines the significant role of university policy, crisis communication policy, directives, rules, decision-making and planning forums, procedure manuals and other methods of formalized control in managing crisis.

2.2.3 Activity Coordination

Organisational activity co-ordination links organisational members as they co-operate and communicate to perform tasks in organisational activities. The main constitutive contribution of activity coordination to organisations is in the integration of work processes (Putnam and Nicotera 2009). This flow aligns and connects local work activities and allows members to manage their combined work. In an organisation it specifies the type of work being coordinated and how it is coordinated whether in the formal setting or informal setting. McPhee and Zaugg (2000) explicate that in activity coordination members can coordinate against work or coordination may be inactive as members seek control over each other or personal benefit from the organisation. For that reason activity co-ordination can be cooperative, inefficient or conflicted. Activity co-ordination helps organisational practices to endure and adapt through contingency (Putnam and Nicotera 2009). Various activities amongst different organisational departments are coordinated to manage crisis. This study examines the significance of activity coordination in an approach to crisis management.

2.2.4 Institutional Positioning

Institutional positioning to a large extent rests on individuals representing the organisation, especially spanning boundaries as representatives communicating with outside constituencies (Putnam and Nicotera 2009). This flow comprises formal interactions such as public relations and informal interactions when an employee talks to an individual outside the organisation. This flow is outward looking

comprising external activity that positions the organisation in the social order of institutions. It asks the question of what kind of communication is necessary to position an organisation in the macro environment. The nature of the organisation, its goals and objectives as well as its character is expressed through face presentations to the external publics (Putnam and Nicotera 2009). Types of messages in this flow include marketing, advertising, reputation and image building all in an effort to gain visibility amongst the social order of institutions. Institutional positioning is concerned with externally communicated messages which seek to enable recognition, build and maintain relations. It cannot be argued that external communication is a vital flow of communication in crisis management. This study interprets the significance of institutional positioning in an approach to crisis management.

2.3 Defining Crisis management

It is important to define crisis management and be knowledgeable of the processes involved when managing crisis. Crisis management involves two major processes namely communication and organising. MacFarlane (2010: 3) says “Crisis management is a high-tempo and high-consequence activity that works deadlines and requires decisions under conditions of uncertainty where there is very little scope to wait and see”. Boin (2008: 10) defines crisis management “as a systematic attempt by organisational members with external stakeholders to avert or effectively manage crisis that occurs”. He says,

Effective crisis management involves minimizing potential risk before a triggering event. In response to a triggering event, effective crisis management involves interaction by key stakeholders so that individual and collective sense making, shared meaning and roles are reconstructed. Following a triggering event, effective crisis management entails individual and organisational change of basic assumptions, as well as behavioural and emotional responses aimed at recovery and change (Boin 2008: 10. Italics in original).

These definitions convey that within the process of crisis management, internal and external communication is important between organisational members and external stakeholders. Organising plays a central role during this process as various activities are coordinated to ensure crisis managed efficiently and effectively. Now that crisis management has been defined, it is important to discuss the role of communication in managing crisis. Communication should have a central role in

crisis management for the four flows model of organisational communication to be applicable in an approach to crisis management.

2.3.1 The role of communication in Crisis Management

The discussion on Weick's CCO theory argued that *organisation* is a continuous process of organising whereby communication enables human coordinated activities to establish relationships and maintain organisations. Organisational problems can escalate into crises when there is poor organisational communication whereas crises can be averted when there is sufficient communication to address organisational problems. Fearn-Banks (2007: 9) defines crisis communication as "the dialogue between the organisation and its public prior to, during, and after the negative occurrence. The dialog details strategies and tactics that are designed to minimize damage to the image of the organization." Crisis communication describes an organisation confronted by crisis and the urgency to communicate critical information about the crisis to its relevant publics in an effort to restore the stability, function and reputation of an organisation.

Crisis communication cannot be discussed without mentioning crisis management. Crisis management involves a lot of communication as different activities are coordinated between different departments. Coombs and Holladay (2010) say that crisis, crisis management and crisis communication are inextricably interconnected. Further on they mention that, discussions of crisis communication should begin with a review of the background of crisis management which considers the broader context of crisis communication. In all crisis management activities communication has a role to play. For instance, training involves equipping and providing relevant information to everyone who will be involved in the crisis response such as crisis communication team members or spokespersons. It includes research for informed decision making as well as constructing and communicating crisis response messages to relevant people. During the crisis event there is division of labour amongst crisis team members leading to the need for communication to coordinate their different tasks. Even after the crisis follow-up crisis messages are needed as the organisation ensures that crises are managed effectively.

2.4 Approaches to Crisis Management

Three crisis management approaches by Fink (1986), Mitroff (1994) and Coombs (2012) were considered for this study. In the latter chapters these approaches will be

integrated with the four flows model to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of the four flows model in an approach to crisis management. Crisis management models by Fink (1986) and Mitroff (1994) have been major building blocks that have contributed to developing multiple crisis management frameworks. The three stage crisis management approach by Coombs (2012) integrates Fink's (1986) and Mitroff's (1994) crisis management approaches. Thus, understanding the three stage approach which is the recent approach would require analysis of the prior models by Fink and Mitroff that influenced the development of the three stage approach recommended by many writers.

2.4.1 Fink's four stage model

Fink (1986) interprets crisis as an elongated episode with threatening signals before the crisis event. Thus, organisations should treat crises as a state of becoming rather than a sudden occurrence. Fink suggested a four stage approaches which includes the prodromal stage, acute stage, chronic stage and the resolution stage.

Stage One: Prodromal Stage

The discipline of medicine identifies a prodrome as a symptom which gives a warning sign on the onset of a disease (Kash and Darling 1998). Fink (1986) identified the prodromal as a stage when threats are visible before the full blown crisis giving rise to opportunities for crisis prevention if issues, risk or threats are successfully resolved before turning into crisis. Beck's (2006) risk society, suggests that risk and crisis management assessment activities are necessary even when there seems to be no crisis. Through research, continuous evaluation and analysis of organisational behaviour it is possible to detect and resolve issues, risks or threats that may turn into crisis if left unattended hence crisis managers and practitioners should always be on the job to ensure risks and threats are detected and attended.

Stage Two: Acute Stage

The prodromal stage is not easily detected however, if a prodrome is voluntarily or involuntary ignored or unattended the result is the acute stage. According to (Kash and Darling 1998: 182) "Whether the acute symptom emerges suddenly or is a transformation of a prodromal stage, an immediate action is required". Proactive detection and prevention of prodromal stage threats from becoming crisis is much easier and reliable than reactive measures in the acute stage after the crisis has

caused losses and difficulties (Darling *et al.* 1996). During the acute stage, the organisation reacts to control the damage though losses and complications are experienced. The acute stage is characterized by the sudden occurrence of the crisis event as it becomes visible to outsiders of the organisation. Coombs (2012) elaborates Fink's model illustrating how in the acute stage, stakeholders seek information about how the crisis affects them such as whether evacuation is necessary or whether normal activities will resume after the crisis event.

Stage Three: The Chronic Crisis Stage

In this stage crisis effects are visible while efforts by crisis managers continue to clean up the progression of the crisis. The organisation seeks to control and eliminate the effects or damages of the crisis event. Chronic crisis problems necessitate action to be taken by the organisation to completely eliminate effects take control of the situation hence this stage is a sign of recovery for some organisations whereas it may be the hardest or most destructive phase for others (Kash and Darling 1998).

Stage Four: The Resolution Stage

According to Fink (1986), the resolution stage is when the organisation is returning to its pre-crisis existence and stakeholders are receptive to messages that strive to mend and boost the organisation's reputation. Kash and Darling (1998) explain the resolution stage using all stages of Fink's model identifying that crises are detectable as they develop from the prodromal stage though existing symptoms may be related to different problems hence increasing the probability of misinterpretation of an actual problem. This may cause crisis managers to consider that the problem has been solved yet in actual the warning sign was neglected. The warning signal can be detected and resolved in the acute stage though inexperience or incorrect management of a crisis causes the chronic stage. Ignorance or inappropriate crisis management can however lead to recurrent crisis or destruction of the organisation as the crisis creates numerous complications. Henceforth, they conclude that resolution strategies should occur throughout the crisis management process as the organisation tries to prevent escalation of the crisis.

2.4.2 Mitroff's Five stage Model

Mitroff's (1994) five stage model identifies five phases as follows; signal detection stage, prevention/ preparation stage, damage containment stage, recovery

stage and learning stage. Paraskevas (2013) says the first two stages of Mitroff's approach constitute the proactive approach to crisis management and determine an organisation's preparedness to deal with a crisis whereas the last three stages form the reactive approach to crisis management constituted by activities occurring after the crisis event.

Stage One: Signal detection

Mitroff (1988: 18) observed that "long before its actual occurrence, a crisis sends off a repeated and persistent trail of early warning signals". Furthermore, Mitroff and Anagnos (2001) express that there is no need for any surprises at all when crisis strikes because all crises send out continuous trails of early warning signals although these signals can often be weak and filled with noise. This creates the need for crisis managers to continually scan and evaluate the environment to sniff out any risks or threats that may turn into crisis. Mitroff (2002) says in every crisis he has studied, few organisational members would have sniffed and reported the presence early warning signs or threats to superiors though in all cases they were ignored or blocked from reaching the management. In this phase warning signs must be detected and mitigated to prevent risks from turning into crisis. Pearson and Mitroff (1993) noted that all crises leave a trail of early warning signs though in most situations organisations choose to ignore and make efforts to block these signals. Organisations that anticipate the possibility of a crisis and prepare properly will be better equipped to manage different situations. Scanning the environment in this phase may include communication with both internal and external stakeholders of an organisation to detect issues or threats that might be harmful to the organisation if unattended. Early detection of warning signs helps the organisation to take the appropriate measures in the prevention/preparation phase (Paraskevas 2013).

Stage Two: Prevention/Preparation

Mitroff combined Prevention and Preparation as one activity which represents the efforts of an organisation to prevent threats from turning into crisis. In this stage, crisis risk factors are explored and all efforts are made to decrease possible harm (Coombs 2012). According to Mitroff (1994) preparedness means that organisations must have an organised plan of action of how to respond to crises. This includes proactive distribution of staffs, resources and actions during a crisis situation which is made easier through a crisis management plan. In reference to Mitroff's preparation

stage, Chen (2014: 17) says “the pre-establishment of a crisis management plan will be conducive to time-saving since people are informed of their responsibilities in advance”. Organisations that have clearly defined management roles are better prepared to respond and prevent threats from turning into crises.

Stage Three: Damage Containment

In Mitroff’s Damage containment stage, escalation of the crisis is prevented and the damage it has caused is controlled. This stage represents the trigger event of the crisis and crisis teams make effort to limit the damage from spreading into uncontaminated environmental areas. Damage containment prevents the spread of crisis to the unhindered areas of the organisation or its external environment though methods of damage containment are almost impossible to invent during a crisis (Mitroff *et al.* 1996). The signal detection stage and the probing and prevention stage are concerned with efforts made by the organisation to apply damage containment techniques before the crisis contaminates others parts of the organisation. Failure to contain the damage may cause the effects of the crisis to affect external stakeholders but successfully containing the damage, will confine the damage within the organisation and stakeholders are protected along with the organisations reputation (Boin 2010). Organisations should however invest in proactive crisis management to prevent crisis rather than being reactive after crisis occurs. During the crisis, the crisis team must obtain critical information related to the crisis under limited time and disseminate it accordingly to relevant stakeholders. According to Coombs (2013) the crisis team should know what happened, the cause, who is and who might be affected, place of occurrence, degree of damage occurred damage and type of damage sustained.

Stage Four: Recovery

During the recovery phase, organisations implement recovery strategies meant to facilitate resumption of normal organisational activities (Mitroff *et al.* 1996) and organisational members quickly resume normal organisational activities (Coombs 2012). The organisation and its stakeholders cooperate to resume work activities or normal productions in organisational environment. In this stage stakeholder’s problems may have been attended acceptably hence are willing to resume normal organisational activities.

Stage Five: Learning

Organisation members assess and evaluate their efforts toward managing crisis, thus adding to organisational learning. The failure for an organisation to learn from a crisis event may cause similar mistakes during similar events but successful learning results in organisational change of policy or procedure as lessons are applied to future crisis (Boin 2010). When an organisation learns from a crisis, reflexive self-structuring of policies rules and regulations allows the organisation to prevent recurrent crisis. If the crisis is caused by stakeholder activism, learning would result in the organisation creating strategy and evaluation of stakeholder perceptions to ensure that the needs of organisational members or stakeholders are met.

2.4.3 The Basic Three Stage Model

Coombs (2012) summarises all important activities of crisis management fall under four factors namely prevention, preparation, response and revision. He compiled these concepts within a basic three stage approach which considers the pre-crisis stage, crisis event and the post crisis stage. The pre-crisis phase is about detection, prevention and preparation for the crisis event when management must actually respond to a crisis followed by the post-crisis phase whereby the organisation learns from the crisis and prepares for future crisis.

The Pre-Crisis stage

Coombs pre-crisis phase is concerned with signal detection, prevention and preparation. Signal detection is characterised by environmental scanning whereby an organisations practitioners continuously monitor the environment checking for threats that may turn into crisis. Issues management allows these threats to be managed to prevent crisis, however failure to manage the risks may lead to the crisis event whereby the organisation has to be prepared for the impact of the crisis by designing crisis communication and crisis management plans. This stage is concerned with prevention, preparation and planning. Coombs (2012) recommends that organisations must have an annually updated crisis management plan, trained and designated crisis team, conduct exercises annually to test the crisis team and the crisis plan, and crisis managers can pre-draft messages to be used during a crisis. Coombs divided the pre-crisis phase into three sub-stages namely the signal detection stage dedicated to gathering information and detecting warning signals. The second is the prevention stage whereby the organisation quickly responds to

warning signals to prevent a crisis from occurring. The third is the crisis preparation stage whereby the organisation is ready for the crisis event.

The Crisis Event/ Crisis Response stage

Coombs says this stage refers to what an organisations management does and says during a crisis. This stage is the crisis response stage whereby the crisis management team coordinates various activities aimed at responding to the crisis effectively and efficiently. According to Coombs (2012) this stage starts through the trigger event when the crisis starts until crisis resolution. It consists of two sub stages which are crisis recognition and crisis containment. In this stage the organisation recognises the impact of the crisis and the crisis management plan is implemented to solve the crisis at hand. All efforts are made by an organisation to resolve the crisis by communicating relevant information with relevant stakeholders. In this phase the public relations team helps develop messages sent to publics during and after a crisis.

The Post Crisis stage

An assessment of the damages caused by crisis is important in this stage. After crisis resolution an organisations post crisis activity should ensure evaluation of the crisis management strategies used in preparation for the next crisis and to ensure crisis was completely solved (Coombs 2012). Reputation management is an important factor in this stage to maintain a positive image and reputation to its stakeholders in the environment. In the post crisis phase an organisation learns from the crisis event (Coombs 2012), and the crisis life cycle returns to the pre-crisis phase whereby the organisation scans the environment whether the crisis is really over.

2.5 Moving towards a communicative approach to Crisis Management

The review of literature on the CCO theory, the four flows model and crisis management models, allows for an alternative conception on the communicative dimensions of crisis management in which the four flows model is integrated with Fink, Mitroff and Coombs crisis management models. CCO theory argues how communication is responsible for forming and sustaining organisation through continuous acts of organising. Henceforth, problems in communication are bound to affect the process of organising which may create problems in the function of an organisation that may develop and mature into crises if unattended. This idea that

crises can stem from problems in organisational communication leads to the view that crises can be averted by sufficient organisational communication. The process of crisis management is constituted by organising various activities which are aimed at preventing or managing crises. If communication makes organising possible while organising gives life to crisis management it explains why crisis communication is the heart of crisis management. This understanding of CCO gives birth to an alternative conception to crisis management of how proactive crisis management can be pursued using the four flows model of organisational communication.

2.6 Conclusion

The CCO discussion conveyed the constitutive force of communication in the formation, sustenance and function of organisation. Further discussion on crisis management revealed that the principles of communication are the basis of managing crisis. If communication constitutes organisations and is the core of crisis management, this questions whether the four flows model of organisational communication can be useful in an approach to crisis management. In chapter 4, Fink, Mitroff and Coombs' models are interpreted under the four flows to interrogate the suitability of the four flows model in an approach to crisis management. The next chapter explains the methodology used in the study.

CHAPTER 3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This section looks at the methodology used to conduct the research. Crotty (1998: 3) says “methodology is the strategy or plan of action which lies behind the choice and use of particular methods”. According to Babbie and Mouton (2001) research methodology are methods and techniques used in implementing research design including the principles and assumptions motivating why they were used. This chapter explains the methodology used in collecting and analysing interview, documents and observation material for the purpose of evaluating the suitability of the four flows model in an approach to crisis management.

3.2 Interpretive Paradigm

All research is grounded on underlying ontological and epistemological positions. Ontology addresses the nature of reality which affects how research is conducted (Klenke 2008). The ontological assumption of this study is based on the social world of meaning in which researchers’ perceive the world as one filled with humans who naturally have different opinions, understandings and meanings of reality (Scotland 2012). Thus, the researcher in this study investigates phenomena through diverse research methods such as interviews, direct observation and various documents that enable expression of various opinions, perceptions and experiences of how three annual student protests from 2012 to 2014 were managed at the University of Fort Hare.

The epistemological position of this study is constructionist. Crotty (2003: 3) defines epistemology as “a way of understanding and explaining how we know what we know” and further defines constructivism as the view that all knowledge and all meaningful reality depends on human practices. He says that reality is constructed, developed and transmitted in a social context when human beings interact with the world. Thus, the researcher’s standpoint is that meaning is not a discovery but a social construction. By using the four flows model to analyse the University of Fort Hare’s management of student protests, conceives an alternative conception to the communicative dimensions of crisis management. More specifically, the representation of the four flows model in the case of managing student protests at the University of Fort Hare is analysed to interpret the suitability of the four flows model in an approach to crisis management. Constructivists also believe that there is

no outright meaning to phenomena hence the researcher uses the case of student protests management in an alternative conception of the communicative dimensions of crisis management.

The study adopted an interpretivist approach which has been built upon constructivist epistemology and an ontology that perceives reality as socially constructed. Creswell (2009: 8) says: "Interpretive methodologies are directed at understanding phenomenon from an individual's perspective, investigating interaction among individuals as well as the historical and cultural contexts which people inhabit". The researcher investigates how the four flows model is represented in the case of managing student protests at the University of Fort Hare to evaluate the suitability of the four flows model in an approach to crisis management.

The ontological position of interpretivism is relativism (Scotland 2012). Guba and Lincoln (1994: 110) consider relativism as "the view that reality is subjective and differs from person to person". Crotty (1998) says reality arises when perceptions engage with phenomena which are already filled with meaning. Frowe (2001) considers reality as individually constructed and indicates that realities are as numerous as individuals. The interpretive epistemology is one of subjectivism which is based on real world phenomena. Meaning is not discovered but is constructed through the interaction between our perceptions and the world (Crotty 1998). This study interrogates the representation of four flows model in the case of managing student protests and interpreted its suitability in an approach to crisis management.

3.2 Qualitative Research

Denzin and Lincoln (2000: 3) define qualitative research as "a situated activity that locates the researcher in the natural setting of the phenomena and attempts to make sense of, or to interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them". They say that qualitative research studies phenomena in their natural setting which enables people to make sense of phenomena through various views and interpretations. Qualitative research subscribes to the interpretivist paradigm which allows phenomena to be understood from an individual perspective. Thus qualitative research methodology was used to conduct the study. The qualitative research approach provided the researcher with suitable methods to explore phenomena such as interviews, observation and document analysis. These methods helped the

researcher to explore how Fort Hare student protests were managed over a three-year period from 2012 to 2014.

2.2 Study Population

Bryman (2004: 87) says population refers to “the universe of units from which the sample is to be selected”. The population of this study was drawn from the University of Fort Hare management in the Alice Campus.

2.3 Sampling

Not all members of management are in a position to provide documents concerning the university’s handling of student protests hence only a relatively small sample were chosen to represent the population. This size can be problematic. Kumar (2005: 164) defines sampling as “the process of choosing a subset of the population to represent the entire population of the study”. However, as the study does not aim to generalise across the population as would be the normal purpose of sampling, but to find out as much as possible from as many who are ‘in the know’, perhaps even the question of sampling ought to be excluded as a factor of the study. In this respect, the thesis resembles a document study rather than an analysis of a population.

This study required a select number of participants who were part of the crisis team during the management of student protests. A non-probability sampling technique was used which does not give everyone an equal chance of being selected. The sample was selected through purposive sampling whereby the researcher purposively selected participants according to their level of participation, experience and knowledge of the strategies and processes used in managing the protests in 2012, 2013 and 2014. Through preliminary research with the Division of Marketing and Communication the researcher was equipped with enough information on which members of the university management were involved in managing student protests. Thus those members became part of the sample. The sample size consisted of two members of the University Council, three members of Institutional Advancement which is responsible for internal and external communications and five SRC members.

2.4 Data Collection

Various data collection methods were used in the study. Flick (2002) says the use of various empirical materials, perspectives and observers in a single study adds rigor, breadth, complexity, richness and depth to any inquiry. Thus, this study collected information from various sources such as semi-structured interviews and document examination (such as the university's crisis communication policy, university prospectus, newspaper articles) as well as electronic mail. Also, to add rigor to the researcher's interpretation of activities, phenomena and their environment the researcher was a direct observer of the student protests in 2012, 2013 and 2014. During the research progress, two student protests occurred in 2013 and 2014 hence the researcher incorporated the two protests into the study. This allowed the researcher to explore the strategies implemented to manage the protests and how the four flows model was represented in the process. This also made it easier for the researcher to compile all emails as they were sent to All Staff and Students during the protests.

2.4.1 Semi-Structured Interviews

Semi structured interviews were used to collect data. Baxter and Babbie (2004) say that semi-structured interviews consist of various questions that guide the interview whilst the interviewer has the freedom to probe the informant for more responses. Since the research explored how student protests were managed, semi-structured interviews allowed the researcher to probe the responses made by participants. Semi structured interviews reduce interviewer bias as they do not restrict interviewees to respond strictly according to structured questions (Mitchell and Jolley 2007). A four section interview schedule was designed as a guideline for the interview with specific questions according to each flow of the four flows model. The interview schedule was designed to probe the representation of each of the processes of the four flows model in the management of the annual student protests from 2012 to 2014. Respondents were asked general questions on the strategies used to manage student protests in 2012, 2013 and 2014 shifting to specific questions that interrogated whether the four flows model was represented in the case of managing the student protests.

2.4.2 Document analysis

Document examination provides a researcher with relevant organisational information to supplement information about the phenomena being studied. Bryman (1989) says document examination has three major values to the qualitative researcher. Firstly it can provide information on issues that cannot be attained through other methods; secondly it can check the validity of information deriving from other methods and thirdly it can contribute a more definite analysis from other methods such as the gap between official policies and actual practice. Relevant university documents related to management of student protests were collected and examined to investigate the representation of the four flows model in the case of managing the protests. These documents included the University Prospectus (which contains university policy, code of conduct and disciplinary measures), University of Fort Hare's crisis communication policy, presentations to the Department of Higher Education Portfolio Committee, transcribed emails sent during the protests, transcribed online audio interviews and newspaper articles. All the information representing the four flows model found in these documents was categorised under the specifics of the four flows model.

2.4.3 Direct Observation

At the time of the student protests the researcher made lot of observations that were made provided information to validate the data from the interviews. The major strength of direct observation is that it is unobtrusive and does not require direct interaction with participants (Adler and Adler 1994). When direct observation is used with other data collection methods, it adds rigor, validity and a wider framework to interpretive data. The closest type of data gathering technique that is relevant in this situation is the observer as participant. In 2013-2014 the researcher attended various mass meetings between the university management and the students also SRC-Students meetings concerning reports from the university management. During these briefings, the researcher paid attention to information relating to the specific flows of communication used in managing the protests, the strategies used in managing the protests and representation of the four flows model in the whole process of managing the protests. The aspects that were noted were further examined and cross-checked with data from other sources as to determine whether the information obtained was valid.

2.5 Data Analysis

Interpretive analysis was used in this study. Terre Blanche *et al.* (2006: PAGE) describes interpretive analysis as the description of the characteristics, processes, transactions, and context that constitute the phenomena being studied, couched in language not alien to the phenomenon, as well as the researcher's role in constructing this description. This study contained two chapters of interpretive work. In chapter four, the four flows model was interpreted in an approach to crisis management. Fink's (1986) four stage model, Mitroff's (1994) five stage model and Coombs (2012) three stage model were interpreted into the four flows model to interrogate the usefulness of the four flows model in an approach to crisis management. Various cases of crises such as Johnson & Johnsons Tylenol poisoning, Australian Bali Bombings and Sydney Harbour Oil Spill crisis are corroborated into the model to evidence the representation of the four flows model in the context of crisis management.

In chapter five, the four flows model was further used to interpret how student protests were managed at the University of Fort Hare since 2012-2014 to evaluate the suitability of the four flows model in an approach to crisis management. This enabled the representation of the four flows model to be analysed in various cases of managing crises for a broader understanding of its suitability in an approach to crisis management. Interpretive analysis was relevant to evaluate the suitability of the four flows model in interpreting the case of managing Fort Hare student protests. This interpretation includes an interrogation of how the four flows model is represented in the strategies implemented to manage student protests.

2.6 Ethical Issues

Ethical considerations are an important factor in every research that is conducted. According to De Vos, Strydom, Fouche and Delport (2005) ethics are set of moral principles which are suggested by an individual or group and are subsequently widely accepted and offer rules and behavioural expectation about the most acceptable conduct towards participants, employees, sponsors, other researchers, assistants and students. Bless, Higson-Smith and Kagee (2006) is of the view that there have been many issues of abuse of people's rights in the name of intellectual property interests hence, the researcher applied and received an ethical clearance certificate from the Fort Hare Research Ethics Committee before

conducting the study. Several ethics were considered during the study such as informed consent, risk/benefit analysis, protection from harm, and confidentiality.

Rivera and Borasky (2009: page) define informed consent as a communication process between the research team and the participant that starts before the research is initiated and continues throughout the study. Furthermore, they express that the informed consent process in a research study should empower a person to decide whether or not to participate in the study. Thus, all necessary information concerning the study was provided to the participants through an informed consent form and a research summary which simplified what the study is about. Oral explanation of the study was used before every interview to explain the purpose of the research and for them to inquire on aspects they did not understand about the research.

The treatment of research participants is perhaps, the most fundamental ethical issue in research, and it involves ensuring that the research participants are not harmed physically or psychologically in any way. This study did not pose any physical or psychological harm to its participants. There should be a thorough analysis to determine who would be at risk and who would benefit from the study. "The anticipated benefits or risks of the study should be identified before study initiation and be included in the research protocol" (Rivera and Borasky 2009). It is unethical to expose persons to avoidable risks which are greater than the expected benefits or to permit a known risk to remain if it can be avoided or at least minimized (CIOMS 1991). There are no foreseeable risks involved in this study. Participants had no material benefit from this research and were informed; however the knowledge gained from the results of the research could benefit the participants with a better understanding of how the four flows model could assist in proactively managing future student protests. According to CIOMS (1991), confidentiality is an agreement between the participant and the investigator about how the participant's data will be handled and to whom it will be disclosed. Responses from the participants were treated confidentially and only the researcher had access to this information including all supporting documents provided by the participants.

2.7 Conclusion

This chapter described the research methods used in the study, explained the sample selection, described the procedure used in designing the instrument and

collecting the data, and explained the procedures used to analyse the data. Semi-structured interviews were conducted using a four-section interview schedule with questions aimed at probing the representation of the four flows model in managing student protests. Direct observation in the 2013 and 2014 protest was used to analyse how the four flows model was represented in the strategies used to manage the protests. In addition, organisational documents were analysed such as the University Prospectus, Fort Hare's crisis communication policy, newspaper articles, transcribed emails and online interviews. Interpretive analysis allowed themes to be extracted from the corpus and categorised the specifics of the four flows model. The next chapter integrates three crisis management models with the four flows model.

CHAPTER 4: INTERPRETATION OF THE FOUR FLOWS MODEL IN AN APPROACH TO CRISIS MANAGEMENT

4.1 Introduction

This section integrates three approaches to crisis management into one model. The different stages in Fink's (1986) four stage model, Mitroff's (1994) five stage model and Coombs (2012) three stage model are merged into three phases of the crisis life cycle which specify crisis management activities before the crisis, during the crisis and after the crisis. The four flows model is used to interpret the activities in these three phases to interrogate the usefulness of the four flows model in an approach to crisis management. The four flows model is then used to interpret how the Australian Government responded to the Bali Bombings, how Johnson and Johnsons managed the Tylenol poisoning and how the Sydney Harbour Oil spill was managed. Other case studies include interpreting activity coordination in a Danish National Crisis Management Organisation as well as a cross case analysis of Hurricane Katrina and the Pentagon attacks to convey the necessity of activity coordination in an approach to crisis management. These various crises management case studies were used to evidence the representation of the four flows model in the management of the various crises. Using the four flows model to interpret various cases of crises helps in evaluating whether the four flows model can be used as an alternative approach to crisis management.

4.2 An Integration of Fink, Mitroff and Coombs models into the four flows model

Three models of crisis management by Fink, Mitroff and Coombs are integrated into three phases of crisis management which categorise crisis management activities before the crisis, during the crisis and after the crisis. The four flows model is used to interpret the activities represented by these stages.

4.2.1 Conceptualising the suitability of a four flows approach before the crisis

The first stage of Fink (1986), Mitroff (1994) and Coombs (2012) crisis management approaches are dedicated to scanning the environment to detect any threats or risks that may turn into crises. Fink's (1986) first stage is the prodromal stage which occurs before the crisis whereby the organisation has to read and check any visible threats in the environment that might lead to a crisis. In Mitroff's (1994) five stage model, the first stage is signal detection whereby organisations must learn

the early warning signs posed by emerging crisis. Mitroff's second stage addresses probing and prevention whereby an organisation constantly searches the environment to detect and prevent threats from turning into crisis. Coombs (2012) refers to this stage as the pre-crisis stage which also addresses the issue of monitoring the environment and checking for any threats that may turn into crisis if unattended, preventing these threats from escalating and preparing for the crisis event. These three models convey that before a crisis occurs, organisations must involve activities such as signal detection as it scans for threats in the environment, it should employ crisis prevention strategies to prevent these threats from turning into crisis and it should prepare for the crisis event.

Before a crisis occurs in an organisation, Fink talks about the prodromal stage, Mitroff talks about signal detection stage while Coombs addresses the pre-crisis stage which is divided into three sub stages namely signal detection, crisis prevention and crisis preparation. Though distinct in name, all these stages addressed by the three scholars point out that before any crisis occurs there are warning signs posed to an organisation. No crisis takes an organisation by surprise but crisis signals are visible, it is the responsibility of the organisation to detect and respond to the warning signs in an effort to prevent crisis from occurring. However, because not all crises can be avoided, organisations should be prepared for the crisis. This section interrogates the usefulness of the four flows model in reading early warning signs as specified by Fink's Prodromal stage, in probing and preventing these signs from developing into crises as specified by Mitroff and its usefulness in increasing an organisations' preparedness for a crisis as specified by Coombs model. More specifically, the four flows model will be used to interpret the activities mentioned by the three scholars in the stages before the crisis.

4.2.2 Conceptualising the suitability of a four flows approach during the crisis

In Fink's (1986) four stage model, the second and third stages are categorised as activities that occur during the crisis. The second stage of Fink's model is the acute stage in which the crisis is visible to external stakeholders while the third stage is the chronic crisis stage whereby crisis effects are visible and the organisation seeks to eliminate the effects of the crisis event. Stage three in Mitroff's (1994) five stage model, is the Damage Containment stage whereby the crisis is prevented from spreading to the uncontaminated parts of the organisation. Coombs (2012) named

this part of the crisis life cycle as the Crisis event which starts at the trigger event and ends when the crisis has been resolved. He says there are two sub-stages which are crisis recognition and crisis containment whereby the organisation should recognise the impact of the crisis at hand and implement the crisis management plan to contain and resolve the crisis. Fink's (1986) acute stage and chronic crisis stage, Mitroff's (1994) damage containment stage and Coombs (2012) crisis event commonly point to the activities required during the climax of the crisis.

An evaluation of these stages shows that when crisis strikes, its effects become visible to its internal and external stakeholders. Thus, the organisation should recognise the impact of the crisis and implement the crisis management plan to mitigate its effects. This study interrogates the usefulness of the four flows model in recognising the effects of the crisis and containing damage to reduce escalation or elongation of the crisis event. More specifically, the four flows model is used to interpret the activities mentioned by the three scholars in the stages during the crisis.

4.2.3 Conceptualising the suitability of a four flows approach after the crisis

The way an organisation responds to a crisis after the trigger event is a very important practice in the crisis life cycle to prevent prolonged harm of crisis effects and the recurrence of similar threats. Fink (1986) calls this the Resolution Stage whereby the organisation communicates messages that seek to resolve the crisis and manage the organisation's reputation. In Mitroff's model, the Recovery stage is concerned with resuming normal activities whereby recovery strategies are implemented. Mitroff dedicated his fifth stage to organisational learning in which organisational members assess and evaluate the effectiveness and efficiency of how the crisis was managed. Moreover, when the organisation learns from the crisis, it is able to prevent recurrence of similar mistakes. Coomb's post-crisis stage is also concerned with assessing damage caused by a crisis and strategies used in managing the crisis. This is a way of preparing for future crises. Coombs post crisis stage is also concerned with managing the reputation of the organisation in an effort to reduce the effects caused by the crisis. Analysis of the damage helps the organisation to ensure that the crisis was completely solved or whether there is still a risk of recurrence. The four flows model is interrogated to examine whether it can be used to disseminate messages concerned with crisis resolution and reputation management. The usefulness of the four flows model in implementing recovery

strategies and facilitating organisational learning to prevent recurrent crisis is examined along with its ability to evaluate strategies used in crisis management.

4.3 Organisational self-structuring in an approach to crisis management

Organisational self-structuring is embedded in the process of crisis management. The message flow in organisational self-structuring can be used for the purposes of crisis management. Crisis management requires proactively planned strategies aimed at detecting, preventing, preparing and mitigating crisis through a wide range of messages related to organisational self-structuring. According to McPhee and Zaig (2000) organisational structuring refers to all discourse that shapes the organisation towards particular goals and objectives which McPhee and Zaig (2000) listed as official documents, decision-making and planning forums, orders, directives, casual announcements, processes of employee evaluation and feedback, budgeting, accounting and other formalized control. It communicates messages that prefix member's roles and responsibilities in the performance of work-related tasks. Messages sent through this flow represent the formal structure of the organisation which steers the direction of the organisation. The formal structure of the organisation is used in crisis management through official documents, decision planning and making forums, orders directives, casual announcements and other methods of formalised control. These assist the organisation in detecting threats, probing and prevention, crisis resolution and other activities related to crisis management.

4.3.1 Official documents

A wide range of official documents are used in crisis management. Proactively documented plans of action make crisis management an easier task. Though the existence of documents that can be used in crisis management depends on the organisation, there are common documents that exist in most organisations that are useful in managing crises such as procedure manuals and policy documents. Procedure manuals which may include crisis communication policy, crisis management plans and any other documents that guide practitioners on how to carry out organisational tasks have a great impact in the process of managing crisis.

Crisis communication policies and crisis management plans are part of organisational self-structuring. A crisis communication policy is a proactively documented plan of action that specifies the strategies, functions and division of

labour that an organisation should practice in response to crisis. Crisis communication policies and crisis management plans boost organisations' crisis preparedness and its ability to efficiently respond to crisis. Marra (1988) affirms that crisis communication plans guide the rapid dissemination of precise and exact information to stakeholders demanding immediate answers to crisis. They depict procedures and specify an organized flow of communication in response to crisis. Organisations without crisis communication plans are bound to fall prey to the press who may pass opinionated, untruthful information to fill the media vacuum to sell their story (Anthonissen 2008). This helps the organisation to detect threats, prevent escalation of threats into crisis or elongation of the crisis event which may cause a lot of effects.

An organisation's official documents such as policies or rules can constrain members from behaviour that may be detrimental to the organisation. The way members behave and conduct themselves when crisis strikes can be shaped by predefined organisational policies or rules. Furthermore, rules and regulations bring in a sense of membership negotiation as they alter, constrain or mould the behaviour of organisational members in sync with the expectations of the organisation. Any member who violates the rules of an organisation even though during the emotionally attached phase of crisis is considered to have breached the organisational rules hence rules become a judgment in decision making. In reference to crisis related to student protests, pre-crisis communication of organisational rules keeps stakeholders well informed about the consequences of behavioral actions hence constraining unacceptable member behavior that may pose a threat to the organisation. The values, beliefs and behavior of members in an organisation can determine how the members are likely to react during crisis. Therefore, one can find two organisations facing the same crisis though the reaction of the members may be distinct due to the different organisational culture. In the post crisis phase an organisation can learn from the crisis upon which new rules and policies may be introduced to improve its crisis management strategy.

4.3.2 Decision making and planning forums

Within every organisation there is an organisational structure which identifies specific decision makers concerning particular issues hence the need for decision making and planning forums. Drabek and Gee (2000) outline that, good decision

making in an organisation is characterised by consultation, consensus building and the consideration of alternative views and actions. They further attest that in crisis, important decisions should be made in a very short time frame, whereby delay could impact human security and safety of property. For instance violent and vandal student protests require quick decision making to avoid life or health threats to stakeholders and damage to university property. Decision making must consider the views, perceptions and positions of the people affected by the crisis. Ignorance of the views of affected organisational members or stakeholders may lead to escalation of the crisis and may have a negative effect on the organisations reputation whereas positive response and consideration of various views can help the organisation detect and prevent threats from turning into crisis.

4.3.3 Directives/Instructional information

Directives or instructional information is important in directing organisational members on the course of action to be taken in resolving the crisis. "Instructing information focuses on telling stakeholders what to do to protect themselves physically in the crisis" (Coombs 2012: 146). Marra (1988) affirms that crisis communications plans and provide the means to collect and disseminate truthful and precise information as rapid response to stakeholders demanding immediate answers to crisis. Crisis situations are characterized by high levels of uncertainty hence it is important for directives to be sent out during crisis to inform organisational members on what to do in response to the crisis. Directives are also sent out within the crisis team, across departments and from the decision making forums to coordinate different tasks necessary for efficient and effective crisis management.

4.4 Membership negotiation in an approach to crisis management

The nature of the relationship between an organisation and its members before the crisis may determine how organisational members may react towards the organisation in times of trouble. Thus, an organisation must ensure that it has a good relationship with its members before, during and after crisis. McPhee and Zaugg (2000: 8) describe membership negotiation as "communication that establishes and maintains or transforms its relationship with each of its members". It is clear at the entry process when members are recruited into an organisation for instance when an individual gets a job or a student registers at a university. The process of membership negotiation begins as the relationship between the individual and

organisation is reproduced and transformed. The employee or the student is oriented, supervised and mentored into the organisation or institution in such a manner that is suitable for the functionality of the organisation. However, membership negotiation continues as the relationship between an organisation and its members is continually reconstructed. As specified in Fink, Mitroff and Coombs models, before a crisis occurs an organisation is mainly focused on reading signs in the environment that may become a threat to the organisation. In this stage, an organization must detect, probe and prevent these threats from becoming crisis as well as preparing for crisis in case threats are not mitigated. Membership negotiation constitutes various processes which can be used for detecting, probing and preventing threats from developing into crisis as well as preparing the organisation for a crisis.

McPhee and Zaugg (2000) say organisations exist when they draw members in, leading them to take part in and understand the interactional world unique to the organisation. While relating to organisational members, the organisation can read and understand whether member perceptions and behaviour identify with the organisation. Members who do not identify with an organisations' culture are a threat to the image and reputation of the organisation. Putnam & Pacanowsky (1983: 245) say that "organisational representatives who do not learn the cultural values, priorities and goals of the organisation are less likely to act in the best interest of the organisation". Fink (1986) identified this as the Prodromal Stage, Mitroff as signal detection stage whereby research, continuous evaluation and analysis of organisational behaviour helps the organisation to detect and resolve threats that may turn into crisis if left unattended. Membership negotiation can be used as a proactive approach to study the perceptions and behaviour of its members and detect whether they pose threat to the organisation. Therefore, it is important for organisations to build good relations with its members to proactively detect negative perceptions or issues that may develop into crisis.

Putnam and Pacanowsky (1983: 244) say that "Current organisation members direct their interpersonal communications towards initiating new members into their organisation's culture." This requires socialising new members into organisational culture of values, morals, ethics and behaviour as well as allocation of roles towards an organisation's intended goals and objectives. Socialisation of members into an organisations' culture structures and predicts their perceptions of the organisation

and determines how they react to emerging situations (Putnam and Pacanowsky 1983) remark that. Socialisation plays a major role in shaping uniform attitude, behaviour, values and objectives of members in the organisation. New members of an organisation are socialised into the culture of the organisation in order for all organisational members to operate under a unified organisational culture. Louis (1980) notes two types of content in organisational socialisation, the role related content and the general appreciation organisational culture. In the first content new members are oriented and taught their roles and responsibilities in the organisation whereas folklore plays a pivotal role in the second form of socialisation. Members who are well socialised and negotiated into the organisation's culture and are most likely to act in the best interest of the organisation in times of crisis.

Organisational members who are well socialised into the organisational culture play a pivotal role in promoting a good image and reputation of the organisation to external individuals (Coombs 2012). It is through understanding the background and values of an organisation that members grow in trust and accountability to the organisation. Organisational-member relations before the crisis stage have a great impact on member's perceptions which determine their behaviour or react to critical issues. Membership negotiation processes include socialisation, mentorship, identification and other forms of communication that seek to establish, maintain or transform the relationship between an organisation and its members. Before, during and after the crisis an organisation is able to mould a good image and reputation which will go before the organisation when crisis hits. Crisis management according to Boin (2010: 10) says, "Individual and organisational change of basic assumptions, as well as behavioural and emotional responses aimed at recovery and change". Mutual understanding between the organisation and its members is important for cooperative crisis resolution hence if an organisation has a positive relationship with its members, they are most likely lean to the organisations persuasion when crisis hits.

When an organisation has good stakeholder relations, it is able to read the perceptions circulating in the organisation through informal communication channels. Membership negotiation typifies internal communication which reproduces and transforms the relationship between an organisation and its members. Without proactive conversational relations with its members, an organisation risks ignoring the interests of organisational members may lead to stakeholder dissatisfaction and

cause a crisis. (Heath 1997) says that developing strong stakeholder relations enables the responsibility of an organisation to meet stakeholder expectations before crisis. Contrarily, proactive and collaborative commitment between an organisation and its stakeholders before a crisis reduces the chances of development of negative reputations. Instead goodwill and cooperation by stakeholders is achieved which are valuable positives in times of crisis (Hemphill 2006 cited in Global Corporate Governance Forum 2009). Membership negotiation aids the communication of critical and relevant information to organisational members which in turn reduces uncertainty and the risk of threats developing into crises. Establishment of strong stakeholder relationships may not prevent organisational crisis, but plays a vital role in preventing crisis that can be avoided (Ulmer 2001). If stakeholders are informed in the pre-crisis stage about what to do and how to behave in the event of crisis, they will know how to react in crisis situations. This prepares both the organisation and its members for the crisis event.

During a crisis, the messages communicated between an organisation and its member's change as the organisation may use various message strategies that seek to portray the organisations concern and responsibility over the crisis at hand. These messages may also point to the reputation, mission or vision of the organisation in an effort to create calm and assurance that the crisis is in good hands. After the crisis, membership negotiation slowly shifts back to normality though the organisation continues to detect and mitigate negative effects of the crisis on the perceptions of organisational members. During the crisis, membership negotiation specifically focuses on organisational-member relations, reinforcing their commitment and identification with the organisation. According to Boin (2010: 10), "after the trigger event, effective crisis management entails individual and organisational change of basic assumptions, as well as behavioural and emotional responses aimed at recovery and change". Membership negotiation has the ability to orient, shape and supervise organisational member behaviour to manufacture a shared meaning which aligns member behaviour to organisations expectations. When stakeholder perceptions convey the organisation as ignorant, issues may arise and develop into crises. The nature of social relations between an organisation and its stakeholders can either create positive perceptions or generate negative perceptions which may develop into crisis.

4.5 Activity coordination in an approach to crisis management

Before crisis occurs in an organisation, activity coordination can be used to detect threats and prevent these threats from turning into crisis. Fink's Prodromal stage, Mitroff's signal detection stage and Coombs pre-crisis stage reveal that threats are visible before crisis occurs but it is the duty of organisational practitioners to scan the environment and identify them. Activity coordination is important before crisis as the organisation continuously evaluates analyses the behaviour and perceptions of organisational members in an effort to identify their concerns. This can be done through dialogue in meetings where organisational stakeholders discuss their interests. Through these meetings it is possible to detect and resolve issues, risks or threats that may turn into crisis if left unattended hence crisis managers and practitioners should always be on the job to ensure threats are detected and prevented.

Activity coordination allows different crisis management tasks to be performed simultaneously to enable efficient response to crisis. McPhee and Zaig (2000) say the main constitutive contribution of activity coordination to organisations is in the integration of work processes. Activity co-ordination links organisational members as they co-operate as a unit to perform organisational tasks, specifying the type of work being coordinated and how it is coordinated. Division of labour increases efficiency and increases the need for coordination (Weigand *et al.* 2003). In the process of crisis management, various activities are coordinated, various roles and tasks are distributed to different individuals or departments to enable efficient execution in managing the crisis.

Chandler and Wallace (2007: 6) say "an effective crisis communication plan should make roles and responsibilities clear so that processes are well understood and all parties are included in time of crisis". Coordinated activities in crisis management occur through collaboration of the different departments in an organisation with delegated duties to perform different roles and responsibilities. Though organisational self-structuring specifies roles and responsibilities through transmission of formal structure, for activity coordination to be smooth dialogue is necessitated in the completion of tasks. Thus, we can say organisational self-structuring is more of formal communication whereas activity coordination entails informal communication which is necessary to execute tasks.

4.5.1 Dialogue in Crisis Management

Bohm (1990) says that dialogue is conversational hence it gives group members a free association, a platform for free expression, a free flow of meaning plus it encourages different opinions. He says that in dialogue all participants should suspend their assumptions, all participants must view each other as colleagues and there should be a facilitator who holds the context of dialogue. Dialogue is supposed to be an activity whereby the organisation and its members pave a way forward without pushing for their own interests but in search for mutual benefit from the discussions.

Hargrove (1995: 10) identified that “collaborative conversations are those in which people in groups seek to realise their noblest aspirations with others from divergent views and backgrounds. This involves reframing the way people think and operate as well as looking for specific implementable solutions”.

For instance when there is conflict between two groups, mutual understanding may be achieved and conflict resolved as the two groups reframe their thoughts, perceptions and converge towards mutual understanding towards a common solution. Each group is able to express their view such that solutions reached are appropriate for all.

Activity coordination in crisis necessitates dialogue which allows exchange of information between an organisation and its affected members to manage crisis. Fink's model point out that the Acute stage is characterised by uncertainty as organisational members seek information about the crisis. Direct communication is a more persuasive and emotional response during crisis hence dialogue is more preferable for handling issues during crisis. Organisational members always want to be briefed on whether evacuation is necessary or whether normal activities will resume amidst crisis. Dialogue is more preferred to transmission as it accommodates affected organisational members to engage with the organisation so that both the interests of the organisation and those of its members are considered and discussed. During a crisis, dialogue equips an organisation with enough information to make informed decisions in consideration of organisational members interests. Dialogue is a crucial component in preventing and resolving conflict between an organisation and its stakeholders as it fosters relationship building shared understanding and shared decision making to solve organisational problems.

During the crisis management phases, dialogue is vital between the organisation and its stakeholders as they brainstorm and discuss information in regard to the crisis at hand. Coombs (2012: 168) says that dialogue between the organisation and its stakeholders should exist in good and in bad times. Crisis is one of the bad times that an organisation can face and if mismanaged, detrimental loss can be incurred by the organisation. Prioritisation of stakeholder communication during crisis management assists the crisis management team in crisis containment and recovery.

Yankelovic (1999: 15) says, "Dialogue is a process of successful relationship building". When done expertly, dialogue enables organisations to dissolve stereotypes, mistrust as it develops mutual understanding, vision shaping and facilitates innovations".

Through dialogue many organisations create mutual relations with their members in times of crisis. Dialogue keeps organisations informed about members concerns or perceptions hence it is enabled to make informed decisions to resolve crisis. Inefficient and ineffective crisis management is inevitable when an organisation relies on transmitting information to its members without effort in obtaining feedback on how stakeholders decoded the messages. When there is conflict between an organisation and its stakeholders, dialogue allows the exchange of information in negotiations until mutual understanding is reached. On the contrary, ignorance or the absence of dialogue fosters inequality in the communication process as the views of the affected members may not be heard especially in conflict situations such as student protests. As the views of the affected members are suffocated due to lack of equal grounds to communicate, negative opinions and perceptions are developed, thus making protests inevitable.

When crisis strikes dialogue within the crisis team is necessary to discuss different roles and responsibilities needed to manage crisis as well as to share information on how to manage the crisis. Discussions are meant to assess the atmosphere of the crisis; to identify and strategize against threats and effects caused by the crisis; to discuss how to facilitate crisis response; to brainstorm and evaluate the decisions to be taken to manage the crisis; to finalise the crisis management plan; to distribute tasks and roles in implementing the crisis management plan and to identify who, when and how to initiate crisis response.

4.5.2 Sensemaking in crisis

Weick (1979) notes that coordinated activities in organisations include individual and collective sense making and reconstruction of roles to serve organisational objectives. In this process sensemaking plays an important role as organisational leaders brainstorm issues such as what to respond, how to respond, who to respond to, who will respond and when to respond. Sensemaking is an integral part of crisis management as it questions how something comes to be an event, what the event means to the organisation and what should be done in response to the event. Sense-making is a social construction that occurs when disagreements interfere with organisational activity hence the need for reflective development of reasonable meanings to justify people's deeds (Weick *et al.* 2005). It was redefined as "the ongoing retrospective development of reasonable images that explain what people are doing" (Weick, Sutcliffe and Obstfeld 2005: 409). Taylor and Van Every (2000) simplify it as a way station whereby circumstances are turned into clear understandable situations through words leading to coordinated actions. "During sensemaking a situation is talked into existence and the foundation of the situation is laid so that actions are set to deal with it" (Taylor and Van Every 2000: 58). When crisis strikes, collective sensemaking assists an organisations management; to reflect or compare the current crisis to previous or similar cases elsewhere; to understand the nature and cause of a crisis; to understand probable perceptions and reactions of stakeholders to organizational actions to develop, plan and execute a crisis response mechanism and to develop or implement existing crisis management strategy.

4.5.3 Lateral relations

Lateral relations allow organisations to overcome the communication limitations caused by the bureaucratic organisational structures. Schrauben (2011: PAGE) says that organisational designs that depend on top hierarchal decision making and information processing during crisis are bound to improper transfer of information leading to faulty decisions. Lateral relationships increase interactions between various levels of an organisation to decrease uncertainty (Galbraith 1974). He defines lateral relations as "joint decision processes which cut across lines of authority and move the level of decision making down in the organization to where the information exists" (p. 32). Galbraith identifies the important role of liaison roles in

coordinating departments to address specific issues. Furthermore, Galbraith (1974) says that liaison roles coordinate organisational members with the lower hierarchy who are usually exposed to critical information. Liaisons are “the typical examples of specialized roles designed to facilitate communication between two interdependent departments and to bypass the long lines of communication involved in upward referral” (Galbraith 1974: 33). When an organisation is in crisis, top level organisational members are coordinate with lower level members in dialogue to manage the crisis.

4.6 Institutional positioning in an approach to crisis management

Institutional positioning equips an organisation in detecting threats that may prevail in an organisations external environment. This is characterised by organisational practitioners scanning the environment for perceptions of stakeholders which may pose a bad reputation to the organisation. Institutional positioning before the crisis helps an organisation to build its reputation amongst its external stakeholders which may be beneficial to the organisation in crisis situations. Also, it helps the organisation to scan the external environment to detect threats that may arise. For instance, economic, social or political issues may affect an organisations hence the need for organisational practitioners to constantly communicate with its external environment. Institutional positioning is outward looking comprising external communication that positions the organisation in the social order of institutions (McPhee and Zaugg 2009). Institutional positioning is concerned with externally communicated messages which seek to enable recognition of the organisation as well as the building and maintenance of relations. The reputation of the organisation before crisis can determine whether stakeholders will have positive or negative perceptions or reactions towards the organisation in times of crisis.

External communication of critical information to relevant stakeholders such as the media, press, community, police and government agencies is vital for image and reputation management. Precisely, organisations cannot operate in a vacuum but their function and survival is mutually dependant on the environment. When an organisation is in crisis, external stakeholders are also affected and are in need of information about the crisis. Coombs (2012) says the main focus during crisis is on the media but other stakeholders may ask or demand that their questions be

answered, especially if social media is being used. Thus, an organisation operating in an open system environment should fill the information need of all its stakeholders especially in crisis.

Through public relations, critical information should be provided to media personnel to guard against reputation loss through bad publicity. Media is in a business of selling information to the public hence organisations should constantly communicate and monitor the environment to eliminate uncertainty and rumours that may harm the reputation of the organisation. Anthonissen (2008: 24) says that bad news sells in newspapers, televisions and on the internet therefore it is important for organisations to have crisis communication plans to control the situation and protect their image. Henceforth, effective crisis communication plans should constantly communicate the right message to the right people at the right time. Many organisations in protection of their image and reputation conduct media briefings to communicate their position in the crisis to reduce uncertainty and rumour.

4.7 Interpretation of the four flows model in various crises

To add rigor to the interpretive study, five studies of crises management were analysed to interrogate the representation of the four flows model. These studies include analysis of National Crisis Management in Denmark, Australian Bali Bombings, Cross-case analysis of Hurricane Katrina and Pentagon Attacks, Johnson and Johnsons Tylenol crisis and Sydney Harbours' Oil spill. These crises were analysed to evaluate whether the four flows model can be used in an approach to crisis management.

4.7.1 Interpretation of the four flows at a Denmark Crisis Organisation

This case shows how roles are distributed and activities coordinated within and across different governmental departments in Denmark to enable efficient and effective crisis response. Three levels of coordination occur in a national crisis management organisation in Denmark which comprises a Government Security Committee, Senior Officials Security Committee and a Crisis Management Group as well as two operational staff who are the National and International Operative Staff. Different roles are distributed and various activities are coordinated in response to crisis. The National Operative Staff has representatives from the relevant authorities to strengthen coordination among the military, police and other authorities in case of crisis in Denmark. The primary task of the staff is coordination in case of national

crisis that cannot be resolved in individual regions such as terrorist attacks. McPhee and Zaug (2000) say activity coordination is expressed through the integration of work processes as seen in this organisation whereby different departments specialise on specific tasks which are then coordinated to achieve an efficient crisis response system. Activity coordination reduces workload for each department or staff by distributing tasks across employees and departments for a more accurate and efficient execution of tasks.

The Government Security Committee is responsible for decision making and comprises top governmental leadership which includes the Prime Minister, Minister of Economic and Business Affairs, Minister for Foreign Affairs, Minister of Defence and Minister of Justice. This committee is the primary decision-making body. The main duty of this committee is to provide administrative support and advice to the Government Security Committee and to ensure that action is taken on the decisions they make. Decision-making and planning forums are part of the message flows in organisational self-structuring. Crisis management has to consider that before action is taken in response to national crisis, orders have to be given and decisions have to be taken according to the organisations top management structure. In this case decisions have to be taken by top government leaders who are authorised to make the necessary decisions when responding to national crisis.

The Crisis Management Group consists of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Health, National Defence, National Police and the Emergency Management Agency. The Prime Minister's Department leads this group in dealing with day-to-day issues, advising and supporting the Senior Officials Security Committee. The International Operative Staff is responsible for coordinating action taken for crises that occur outside Denmark, assisting Danish citizens who might be caught up in a disaster. The International Operative Staff is led by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. This conveys the need for institutional positioning in crisis management. Denmark crisis response system does not only cater for internal crisis but is set up to respond to external crises that may occur in surrounding countries.

This case illustrates that activity coordination is an important aspect of crisis management by showing how responsibilities are divided and allocated to different government committees to manage crisis efficiently and effectively. Within the governmental committees different roles are allocated to different individuals and coordinated to reduce departmental work load while increasing task performance

and efficiency. Self-structuring includes all documents that aim to communicate the formal structure of an organisation and direct the organisation towards its goals and objectives. This organised and proactively planned crisis response system with specific lines of duty and responsibility expresses documentation of organisational self-structuring. Thus, this study of Denmark's crisis management plan conveys that activity coordination and organisational self-structuring are represented in the process of managing crisis.

4.7.2 Interpretation of the four flows model in the Bali bombings crisis

On 12 October 2002 in a tourist district on the Indonesian island of Bali, 3 suicide bombers led to the death of 202 people (88 Australians, 38 Indonesians, 27 Britons, 7 Americans, 6 Swedes and 3 Danes) while a further 209 people were injured. Amidst such crisis a lot of communications was to be done to respond to the situation. Dougall, Horsley and McLisky (2008) reflect on the state of media in the crisis of the Bali bombings. They say that as soon as sunset the media centre in Kuta and the satellite media was running the next day in Jakarta. Furthermore they narrate the challenges and communication responses:

“After the suicide attacks, Bali was swamped with international media, relatives looking for their loved ones, national and international emergency health care workers as well as police and security forces”. Approximately 1,200 media registered at the Bali center, which recorded around 300-350 media visits every day. Indo Pacific immediately implemented a routine schedule for at least two media conferences daily, ensuring that the media would be able to count on an official update every morning and afternoon at a pre-determined time. The media were notified of these and other media conferences via text messages. While the agency's client was the Indonesia government, the Indo Pacific team also coordinated communication and announcements from the local police and various other national and local government agencies through the media centers in Bali and Jakarta” p.142.

The hub and spokes approach was used to respond to terrorist attacks in Bali, Australia. This approach specifies that one main agency (hub) coordinates activities performed by different agencies (spokes) to achieve one goal. Different governments were coordinated in response to the crisis. The Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade was the main agency that coordinated various agencies in response to the crisis. The Department of Family and Community Services also took a hub role by coordinating various agents in regard to the domestic aspects of the recovery. These departments attended each other's meetings to provide fully informed response.

Activity coordination in response to the attacks facilitated key agencies and players to share information and coordinate policy responses. It achieved effective consultation, rapid decision making, close attention to the implementation of decisions, and action to address new or unforeseen difficulties, through the use of two inter-departmental committees each chaired by a line agency. In each of the committees, clear directives identified the roles and responsibilities of respective agencies and ensured that mandate issues were resolved early (Efficiency Unit 2009). Directives are listed as part of the discourse in organisational self-structuring which may be used to inform the course of action in an organisation. They are also used in managing crises by directing respective crisis team officials, organisational members and organisational stakeholders according to the course of action which is to be taken to resolve the crisis.

This case expresses how tasks were divided across different governmental agencies and coordinated to manage the crisis of the Bali bombings. Interdependence between these agencies enabled information sharing for effective decision making. Decentralisation of roles and responsibilities to different agencies increased the efficiency and effectiveness of crisis management. The identification of lines of authority, roles and responsibilities provides individuals independence to act as appropriate to circumstances (Efficiency Unit 2009). When tasks are distributed across departments according to specialisation, task completion at higher performance is inevitable. Central to the coordination of activities in managing the crisis of the Bali bombings, is dialogue and sense making between the Department of Foreign relations and each agency which is an important part of crisis management as various issues and decisions are discussed and taken in response to the crisis. Dialogue between relevant departments, officials and stakeholders equips an organisation with a better understanding of the nature and effects of crisis upon which crisis response strategies can be discussed.

4.7.3 Interpreting the four flows in Hurricane Katrina and Pentagon Attacks

Moynihan (2009: 1) says “Hurricane Katrina was the largest natural disaster in the United States in living memory...destroying much of a major city...Over 1,800 people died and tens of thousands were left homeless and without basic supplies”. He further analyses that there was a poor response to the crisis due to a failure to manage various risk factors despite the fact that the New Orleans hurricane threat

had been considered days in advance and enough warnings had been sent out. The respondents failed to convert the warning information into a level of preparation needed to respond to the looming disaster.

Furthermore, Moynihan's (2009: 2) comments on the lack of active engagement preparedness and coordinated activity in response to Katrina by saying:

The dispersed nature of authority in the US intergovernmental response system further weakened response, as federal responders failed to recognise the need to more actively engage. In any case, many of the key institutional capacities to manage the response at every level of government were inadequate. In particular, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) had been weakened during the Bush administration. The DHS was also an untested organisation, unsure of how to deploy its authority and resources. A key failing of DHS leadership was an inability to understand Katrina as an incident of national significance on par with 9/11. Instead, they responded as if it was a routine natural disaster until it was too late.

Lack of activity coordination in Hurricane Katrina is also mentioned by Cole and Fellows (2008: 212):

On August 29, 2005, Hurricane Katrina began a chain of events that would devastate and flood a city, breach protective levees, claim thousands of lives across the Gulf Coast, force over 100,000 people into an exile from which they have yet to return and severely tax the resources of New Orleans, the state of Louisiana, and the federal government. The media, bloggers, and every day citizens blame these consequences on sluggish bureaucracies, lack of cooperation between federal, state, and city governments, an incompetent Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), a failure of leadership at all levels of government, and simply bad luck of epic proportions (Select Bipartisan Committee, 2006; E. Thomas, 2005).

Two cases are used to portray the central role of activity coordination in a comparative analysis of Hurricane Katrina and the Pentagon Attacks. Bolton (2008) says lack of collaboration and coordination between federal officials caused confusion during Hurricane Katrina whereas in the pentagon attacks effective and efficient activity coordination helped in effectively and efficiently managing the Pentagon attacks. Bolton says:

Pentagon officials who had made preparatory decisions of who would be in charge in the event of an attack, and indeed had been staging incident command scenarios with emergency management personnel in Arlington, Virginia well in advance of the actual attack on September 11 (2008: 3).

The importance of activity coordination is reflected in Moynihan (2009: 8) analysis of the Pentagon attacks where he says,

The 2001 Attack on the Pentagon: At 9.38 a.m. on September 11, 2001, American Airlines Flight 77 crashed into the Pentagon, killing the crew of 6, 58

passengers, and 125 occupants of the Pentagon. Responders quickly arrived on the site, contained the fire, rescued surviving occupants, and provided immediate medical treatment. James Schwartz, the Assistant Chief for Operations of the Arlington County Fire Department, was the incident commander. He gradually expanded the command into a unified command by including other agencies. The response to this event has been characterized as a success by the 9/11 Commission (2004, 314), which recommended the widespread use of the ICS. An after-action report also emphasized the positive role of the ICS: "The primary response participants understood the ICS, implemented it effectively, and complied with its provisions" (Titan Systems Corporation 2002, Introduction-11).

McPhee and Zaig (2000) say organisational self-structuring allows the organisation to control itself in handling immediate problems by setting persistent routine procedure for response. In preparation for crisis, officials at the Pentagon practised routine procedures which helped to reduce and minimize casualties and injuries on the day of the attack. This case portrays that routine procedures are beneficial for efficient damage containment, crisis resolution and crisis preparation. The success and failure contrast in these two crises reveals the constitutive force of activity coordination and organisational self-structuring in effective and efficient crisis management. In response to crisis, collaboration and coordination of relevant stakeholders and crisis team officials is vital for crisis recognition and response and resolution.

4.7.4 Interpretation of the four flows model in the Sydney Harbour crisis

Morgner (2001) provides a detailed report of the Sydney Harbour Oil Spill which occurred in 1999. She notes that Shell anticipated risks of an oil spill a decade before the actual crisis in 1999 hence their External Affairs team formulated a stakeholder communications plan. This case portrays Fink, Mitroff and Coombs (2000) approaches which specify the need for organisations to proactively detect threats to stay prepared for crisis. Proactively documented plans such as Shell's stakeholder communications plan are part of organisational self-structuring which increases an organisations' preparedness for crisis and guide the organisation to achieve particular aims and objectives. To manage crisis, Shell's stakeholder communications plan was aimed at facilitating consultations with local residents and other interested groups and initiating dialogue concerning company activities. Institutional positioning is represented as Shell communicated with local residents and other interested groups to inform them all relevant information concerning the crisis.

In 1999 after the oil spill, the External Affairs team had already activated this crisis communication plan. Institutional positioning as identified by McPhee and Zaug (2000) speaks to externally communicated messages through formal and informal relations between an organisation and its external environment. Institutional positioning is concerned with externally communicated messages which seek to enable recognition, build and maintain relations. Institutional positioning is expressed in this case as Shell held a media press conference at the oil spill site and disseminated six press releases within three days to keep the media informed about the crisis and to reduce uncertainty which may lead to rumours that may be harmful to the organisation. Shell Spokespersons used various media to disseminate relevant crisis information such as radio and television interviews, media briefings, one-to-one phone conversations and personal interviews during and after the crisis. During the crisis, Shell communicated with relevant ministers and government departments sending them follow up letters and answering queries to inform them of relevant crisis information. Hand-delivered personal letters were sent to local residents during the crisis including three follow-up letters while phone calls were made to Non Profit organisations to discuss the crisis at hand.

All Shell Australia Staff were emailed at 3am that very night to update them on the crisis before they arrived at work the next morning, while follow up voice mail messages and emails kept them updated through the week. When the oil spill cleared, letters of appreciation were sent to all employees and contractors involved. Organisational learning identified by Mitroff (1994) is visualised as Shell employed more staff to respond to the high level of telephone inquiries from the public plus Customer Service Centre workers were briefed on how to respond to customer queries. Membership negotiation includes mentoring and supervising organisational members in particular roles and responsibilities which in this case is expressed through the supervision of Customer Service Centre employees on how to respond to queries. Shell's recognition of the necessity for institutional positioning is also seen through their frequently updated website which became the most visited website during the crisis. Shell's effective and efficient reaction to the crisis was applauded extensively and increased their positioning amongst its stakeholders and boosted its reputation. Sales did not decrease, long-term business was not damaged and stakeholder reputations were heightened. They received local support, open praise from residents who attended community meetings. This case reveals how

activity coordination between Shell and its external stakeholders before the oil spill benefited Shell in the event of crisis. Shell's dialogue with local residents and interested groups concerning company activities conveys the need for activity coordination with stakeholders to manage crisis.

Institutional positioning is conveyed in Shell's crisis management response by informing and updating the media about the nature of the crisis and the efforts that have been made to manage it. External communication of vital information and warnings to the public and responding to all queries conveyed Shell as an organisation that is concerned about all its publics and gave Shell a reputation of professionalism and responsibility. Proactive response to the media in post-crisis communications establishes media trust. Through communiqués with the media, government, local residents, companies and the general public, the oil spill crisis did not turn out to be disastrous to the organisation's reputation; rather it became an opportunity to boost stakeholder reputation through institutional positioning. McPhee and Zaug (2000) express that institutional positioning occurs through formal interactions when public relations personnel communicate with external stakeholders. Through efficient and effective institutional positioning before the crisis, Shell was known to be a caring and responsible organisation. Thus, their level of responsibility before, during and after the crisis helped them to turn crisis into opportunity as they obtained a positive image and reputation.

4.7.5 Interpretation of the four flows model at Johnson & Johnson's crisis

Abdulrahman, Pattiha, Zhang, Clemente and Flintso (2013) did a broad case study of the cyanide poisoning crisis that affected Johnson and Johnson's. The crisis began after seven people died after consuming Johnson and Johnson's Tylenol Strength capsules which were found to have cyanide poisoning. Immediate warnings were sent out to doctors, shops, hospitals, households and distributors advising them not to use the product. National communication of critical information to relevant stakeholders helped Johnson and Johnson's to recall thirty-one million Tylenol products. Though many people blamed Johnson and Johnson for the incidents, a lot of evidence after investigations revealed that the contamination was not a result of Johnson and Johnson's. Fearn-Banks (2007) says the most striking thing about the organisation was how open and cooperative it was with the media and the public during the entire period of the crisis. Institutional positioning before the

crisis gave Johnson and Johnson's a reputation that it puts the safety of the people first.

During the cyanide poisoning crisis, the public was kept informed as the crisis team exercised its main principle of prioritising people's safety. The media was well informed and message response strategies based on honesty, apology, compassion and commitment to public safety (Fearn- Banks 2007). Following the crisis a law was passed for producers to make seal-breaks on their products to prevent similar crisis from occurring and they were the first to present products with safety packaging in their market. After all the efforts of managing the crisis, product sales of Tylenol Strength capsules increased.

Constant monitoring and briefing of media is necessary in the crisis phases to attend to all inquiries and prevent rumours from filling the information vacuum in the media. Johnson and Johnson's Tylenol crisis team constantly informed its stakeholders about the crisis. Efficient crisis communication was immediately initiated as Johnson and Johnson's crisis team sent warning messages to its stakeholders, recalling all Tylenol bottles and stopping its advertisements. Johnson and Johnson maintained a position of responsibility, concern and trustworthiness by introducing the new product packaging to provide assurance to its stakeholders that measures have been taken to prevent recurrence of similar cases. Information such as future prevention strategies should be shared with the stakeholders, which in this case Johnson and Johnson re-introduced the Tylenol product with seal-packages.

Organisational self-structuring is reflected by the introduction of a new policy by the government in which all products were to be distributed with seal-packages to prevent similar crisis from occurring. After the crisis has dissipated activity coordination and institutional positioning between an organisation and relevant stakeholders is important. "Even in the post crisis phase crisis teams are expected to cooperate with government investigations. Cooperation builds goodwill with the government agencies involved and indicates to other stakeholders that the organisation is open and honest" (Coombs 2012: 181). After successful institutional positioning, Johnson and Johnson's Tylenol product was re-introduced and it retained its market competitiveness within three years.

4.8 Conclusion

The activities specified by Fink's four stage model, Mitroff's five stage model and Coombs three stage model were inserted into each of the flows to interrogate the suitability of the model in interpreting crisis. The four flows model was then used to interpret the representation of the four flows model in the management of various cases of crises to add vigour to the analysis of the four flows model in an approach to crisis management. Specifically, it interrogated the relative occurrence of membership negotiation, organisational self-structuring, activity coordination and institutional positioning in the management of the Australian Bali Bombings, Hurricane Katrina, Pentagon attacks, Johnson and Johnson's and Sydney Harbours' oil spill crisis. The aspects of the four flows model represented in these crises were identified. The next chapter presents results from a study conducted at the University of Fort Hare concerning the management of three student protests that occurred annually over a three year period from 2012-2014.

CHAPTER 5: DATA ANALYSIS OF FOUR FLOWS MODEL IN THE MANAGEMENT OF FORT HARE STUDENT PROTESTS

5.1 Introduction

Interpretive analysis was used to analyse data. Terre Blanche *et al.* (2006) describes interpretive analysis as the description of the characteristics, processes, transactions, and context that constitute the phenomena being studied, couched in language not alien to the phenomenon, as well as the researcher's role in constructing this description. Data was collected through semi structured interviews and documents such as the UFH Crisis communication policy, university prospectus, webmail, newspaper articles, observational notes and audio material. Collected information was analysed using the theoretical lens of the four flow model such that only concepts that fit into the four flows model were extracted. These concepts were used to generate themes that were interpreted according to the specifics of the four flows model. Below is a representation of the method used to analyse corpus and illustrates how different themes were extracted from the corpus and further categorised according to the four flows model. These themes were interpreted according to the processes of the four flows model. This interpretation includes an interrogation of how the four flows model is represented in the strategies

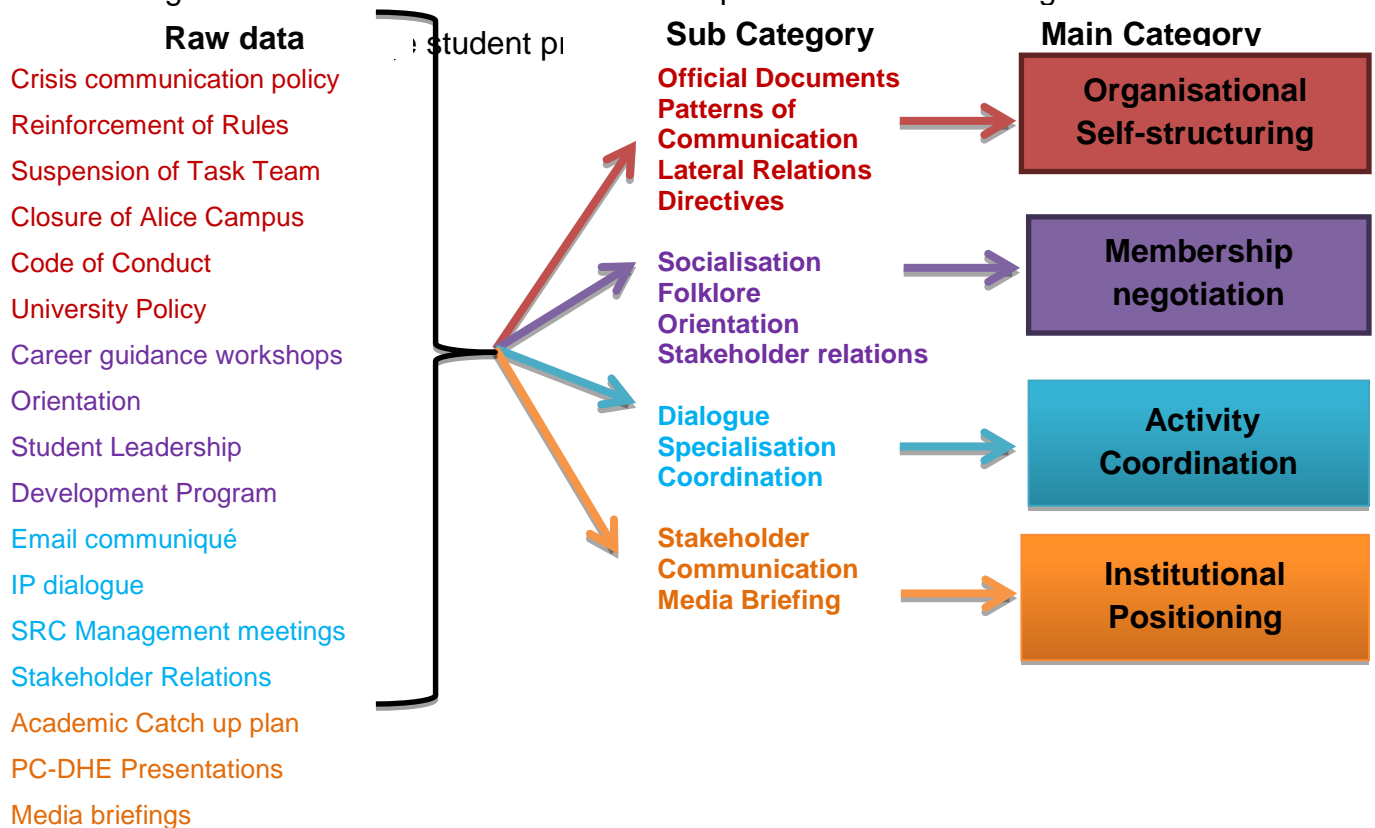


Figure 1: Data Analysis [Interpretive Analysis]

5.1 Organisational self-structuring

Organisational self-structuring refers to all discourse that shapes the organisation towards its goals and objectives which McPhee and Zaug (2000: 9) list as “official documents (charters, organization charts, policy and procedure manuals), decision-making and planning forums, orders, directives, casual announcements, processes of employee evaluation and feedback, budgeting, accounting and other formalized control”. Documents used to manage student protests from 2012-2014 include the university crisis communication policy, code of conduct and university policy.

5.1.1 Crisis communication policy

Self-structuring allows the organisation to control itself and influence itself to handle immediate problems and set persistent routine procedures to respond to these problems (McPhee and Zaug: 2000). Internal communications practitioner mentioned that strategies used by the university management to manage student protests are derived from experiential knowledge from previous protests. UFH Crisis communication policy determines the course of action in response to crisis. This includes internal communications to relevant stakeholders via emails, mass meetings, board meetings and external communication via newspaper, radio and television.

The UFH Crisis Communication policy obtained from Marketing and Communications Manager delineates the crisis communication protocol that guides the university in response to student protests. Crisis communication policies depict procedures and specify an organized flow of communication when potential threats have been detected. Crisis communication policy is a structured and documented plan that dictates the course of action when crisis is identified. It is used to increase crisis preparedness and to boost effective and efficient crisis response. When students concerns, complaints are identified the policy provides direction and guidance to the UFH spokesperson, operational management and communication practitioners on who talks to whom in communicating in a crisis. The strategy used by the university portrays how organisational self-structuring was represented in managing crisis.

5.1.2 University policy

One of the demands of the 2013 student protest was that students left with one module to graduate must be allowed to re-write an auto-supplementary examination

upon which the University management responded according to university *Rule G.6.3.2* which emphasises that a student with an outstanding module to graduate is allowed to write an auto-supplementary examination. According to the policy automatic writing of supplementary examinations is acceptable if the student obtained a 45% - 49% mark in their examination for some years. University rules were used as a crisis response strategy to clarify part of the issues that caused the student protest. The crisis response of Fort Hare highlights the role played by organisational structuring in crisis management.

5.1.3 University Prospectus/university policy/code of conduct

While an organisation's structure is constantly formed, member agency is altered, enabled and constrained as members come to have more or less consensually and acceptably recognized powers (Putnam and Nicotera 2009: 73). Organisational self-structuring can be used to shape the behaviour and attitudes of organisational members in crisis situations. In the 2013 protest, students were compelled to sign a paper that reflected rule *DR 19.6* in the University Prospectus which states that "damage, to the University property by a wilful, deliberate act or negligence, including painting of slogans or the pasting of private notices on University property". The vice chancellor used this rule to express how violence and vandalism of university property by any student will lead to expulsion. The reinforcement of rules regulated student behaviour and the violent and vandal student protest ended.

"Though organisational structure has influence in the way of thought and action of its members, it cannot solely determine the specific interests and activities of the people within it as they would be regarded as mere robots" (Hays 1994: 61). McPhee and Zaig (2000) say activity coordination can be cooperative, inefficient or conflicted as members can coordinate against normal work activities how not to do work as they seek control amongst each other or personal gain from the organisation. Before the 2014 protest, a mass meeting was held by students who felt that the SRC was slack in communicating their grievances to the management hence they took a decision to select a Task Team to represent the students. When the task team met with the university management, they were told that no discussions can be made with a non-recognized structure as the SRC is the only recognised structure known to represent students to university management.

The 2014 protest led to theft, violence and vandalism of property which incurred great cost in the university. Mvuyo (2014) mentioned that “[s]tudent leaders leading the protests were brought before a disciplinary hearing and charged according to the University rules”. Certain members of the task team were suspended from the university and barred from the Alice campus for inciting students to commit acts of violence and vandalism. The university closed for a week and the protest ended. The way members behave and conduct themselves when crisis strikes can be shaped by an organisation’s rules and regulations. This highlights the tension between structure and agency. Though organisational structure regulates the behaviour of organisational members, they are still liable to make their own decision whether to abide by the dictates of structure. The task team violated university protocol which delineates that the SRC is the only representative council recognised to address student-related matters.

An organisation that encounters such rebellion from members in crisis situation can utilize its university policy or rules to settle matters. According to Rule DR17.1 disciplinary measures were taken to suspend the Task Team after which student protests ended. In a similar scenario the SRC President in 2012 was suspended according to the University rules for inciting that students stay away from class attendance. This expresses how organisational self-structuring plays a role in managing crisis.

5.1.4 Directives/Instructions

Marra (1988) affirms that crisis communication entails the efficient release of accurate and specific information to stakeholders demanding immediate answers to crisis. Crisis situations are characterized by high levels of uncertainty hence it is important for an organisation to effectively and efficiently communicate information during crisis. “Instructing information focuses on telling stakeholders what to do to protect themselves physically in the crisis” (Coombs 2012: 146). A directive sent out in the 2012 student protest by the Vice Chancellor to all staff and students noted:

I want to inform staff and students that this will not be tolerated and any intimidation of students or staff will be dealt with very harshly. It is high time that the students who want to learn are not held to ransom by people like Mr Mabika. The employees and students of the University have to be protected to be able to do their normal activities (**Appendix 5.1**).

This email served as instruction to normalize academic and non-academic work amidst the high level of uncertainty whether normal activities will resume. By

communicating relevant crisis information with affected stakeholders both the stakeholders and the crisis team are satisfied. Coombs (2012) illustrates that stakeholders receive information they need while the crisis team cultivates perceptions that the organisation is in control. In 2013 after a spate of negative rumours concerning the university were sent to the media, an email was sent to all students by the Vice Chancellor, highlighting that releasing information about the organisation or anyone to the press is a criminal offence. He further warned that:

If we do nothing regarding actions of a small group of individuals within our university, the future of our students, academic and non-academic staff will be damaged beyond repair. Criminal, civil or institutional steps may be taken against such individuals responsible for these negative acts. I can assure you that ultimately the negativity will be found and eliminated. They will be dealt with in accordance with the law of the land and the policies of the university including its code of good conduct (**Appendix 5.2**).

During the two protests in 2013 and in 2014 an email sent to all students instructed evacuation from Alice campus as the University closed down for a week. This was a measure taken to protect students from physical harm caused by the violent protest and to prevent vandalism to property. Uncertainty and confusion are prone in crisis situations hence directives or instructional information is used to give direction to staff and students. The Director of Institutional Advancement also gives directives to the External and internal communications Practitioners to release statements on crisis.

5.1.5 Decision making forums

Decision making forums at University of Fort Hare include University Council meetings which is the highest university decision making body consisting of external stakeholders; University Management meetings which consist of internal top management; Institutional advancement meetings which contain communications practitioners and SRC-Management structural meetings through which students concerns are discussed with the management and lower level Institutional Student Parliament which represents all students structures and forwards concerns to the University Management through the SRC. Through these structures students concerns are communicated via the SRC to the University Management who then enter into discussions deliberating on the forwarded concerns. Breakdown in negotiations or lack of satisfactory response usually results in coordination of lower level student structures to initiate protests. Decision making forums are central to

managing crisis as the organisation seeks to make the right decisions efficiently in a way that will end the crisis and still retain its reputation. Basically, the decisions taken in crises such as student protests determine whether the crisis will end or escalate.

5.1.6 Lateral relations

At the University of Fort Hare, lateral relations enable the university management to engage in dialogue with the SRC during negotiations concerning student protests. Liaison role by the SRC mediates between the organisation and the students during student protests to manage conflict. Members who perform integrating roles “are selected so as to be unbiased with respect to the groups they integrate and to have technical competence... they collect information and equalize power differences due to preferential access to knowledge and information” (Galbraith 1974: 34). The Stakeholder Relations Department takes the integrating role to allow effective communication between the university management and the SRC. Lateral relationships in an organization have better information processing than hierarchical structures only.

5.1.7 Patterns of communication

Communication patterns within the organisation ought to observe three distinct directions of communication which are horizontal, upward and downward communication through which organisational communication occurs (Lunenburg 2010). In the University of Fort Hare crisis communication policy horizontal, upward and downward communication occurs from the pre-crisis phase to the post crisis stage. When crisis is identified, the crisis communication process begins with the Marketing and Communications Manager who ensures that all relevant stakeholders are aware of the crisis.

The Marketing and Communications Manager informs the Director of Institutional Advancement about the crisis through downward communication. Through horizontal communication the Director of Institutional Advancement communicates the crisis to the Dean of Students who further informs the Vice Chancellor. The Director of Institutional Advancement who acts as the Chief crisis communications controller during the crisis activates the UFH crisis communication team which coordinates to manage crisis. Media statements are approved by the director of institutional

advancement and sent to the spokesperson for external communication and the internal communications practitioner for internal communication.

Patterns of communication are expressed in organisational self-structuring. An organisation operates with a structure that determines the flow of communication during a crisis. Fort Hare's crisis communication policy portrays the patterns of communication used in managing crisis. Information about the crisis is passed through the hierarchical stages until it reaches all relevant stakeholders. This illustrates how organisational self-structuring is evident in crisis management as messages have to flow through the organisational hierarchy hence when an organisation.

5.2 Membership negotiation

McPhee and Zaug (2000: 8) describe membership negotiation as "communication that establishes and maintains or transforms its relationship with each of its members". Membership negotiation can best be understood from Jablin's (1987) view of member recruitment and socialisation. After member recruitment, member negotiation begins upon which communication plays the major role of orientation and socialisation into the culture of the organisation. Membership negotiation is more of a pre-crisis communications or activities that determine the reaction of stakeholders in crisis situations. It is more like a pre-crisis phase strategy that shapes organisational member behaviour towards an intended organisational behaviour. It prepares organisational members to respond to crisis in a positive manner to the organisation.

5.2.1 Socialisation

Putnam and Pacanowsky (1983: 245) say that "organisational representatives who do not learn the cultural values, priorities and goals of the organisation are less likely to act in the best interest of the organisation". It is through understanding the background and values of an organisation that members grow in trust and accountability to the organisation. University of Fort Hare student leadership is taken through a process of socialisation and mentorship. The Vice Chancellor said that the university facilitates training workshops across student structures such as the SRC; Student Parliament; Faculty Councils and other Student Societies where student leaders are taken through various programs that include:

- Leadership Development program (ethical and quality leadership),

- Role of each stakeholder in the development agenda of the University
- Diversity Management
- Team building and Conflict Resolution
- UFH Strategic Plan, Prospectus, University Protocol
- University Values and preserving of UFH brand and reputation

The SRC has influential powers to persuade the perceptions of the students towards the university management. Hence, it is fundamental for the organisation to conduct leadership training skills founded on the UFH Strategic Plan, University Policy and University Prospectus such that they act in the best interest of the organisation even in crisis. This may prevent them from violating the rules, values and reputation of the university during student protests.

5.2.2 Student orientation

When new students arrive they are issued a General prospectus which contains the expectations that the university has to students including the mission, vision, policies and code of conduct. In order for membership negotiation to take place, members should be socialised and mentored into the university's way of doing things such that new members become acquainted with expected organisational behaviour and culture. When the university recruits students there is an orientation organised by the university and conducted by the SRC briefing and socialising new. In this orientation they are issued the General Prospectus which contains all the requirements of the student to be in good standing with the university. It contains the different departments and structures in the university including all the policies, rules and regulations the students have to abide. During registration a paper that specifically projects the university's rules and regulations is included in the forms signed by new students.

5.2.3 Folklore and socialisation

In an email sent to All Staff and Students in 2013 (Appendix 5.2), to manage emerging threats to the universities image characterised by negative information that was pouring out to the media, the Vice Chancellor emailed all staff and students reinforcing the positive aspects of the University. After a series of negative press releases concerning the University of Fort Hare, the Vice Chancellor noted that the gathering and dissemination of private university information is intolerable criminal activity. He expressed that no organisation is perfect and alluded that the university is not defined by media negativity rather there is a history of excellence which define

University of Fort Hare. Furthermore, he expressed that freedom of speech is an important university value but defended employee and student's rights to privacy. Commitment to transparency and openness in dealing with complaints is a serious university commitment. He commended that all university members should work together to restore the values of academic institution within legal and just processes. By reciting organisational folklore, image and reputation and motivating a shared responsibility of all organisational members in creating and sustaining the image and reputation of the university.

5.3 Activity coordination

The main constitutive contribution of activity coordination to organisations is in the integration of work processes (Putnam and Nicotera 2009: 79). Coordinated activities in crisis management occur through collaboration of the different departments in an organisation with delegated duties to perform different roles and responsibilities.

5.3.1 Specialisation

Activity co-ordination links organisational members as they co-operate as a unit to perform organisational tasks, specifying the type of work being coordinated and how it is coordinated. Coordinated activities equip organisational practices to endure and adapt through contingency (Putnam and Nicotera 2009: 79). The crisis communication policy of University of Fort Fare portrays how activities of different individuals are coordinated to manage organisational crisis. It reflects who does what in crisis situation so as to manage the crisis. Below is the crisis communication policy of University of Fort Hare.

5.3.1.1 University of Fort Hare Crisis communication flow (Appendix 6)

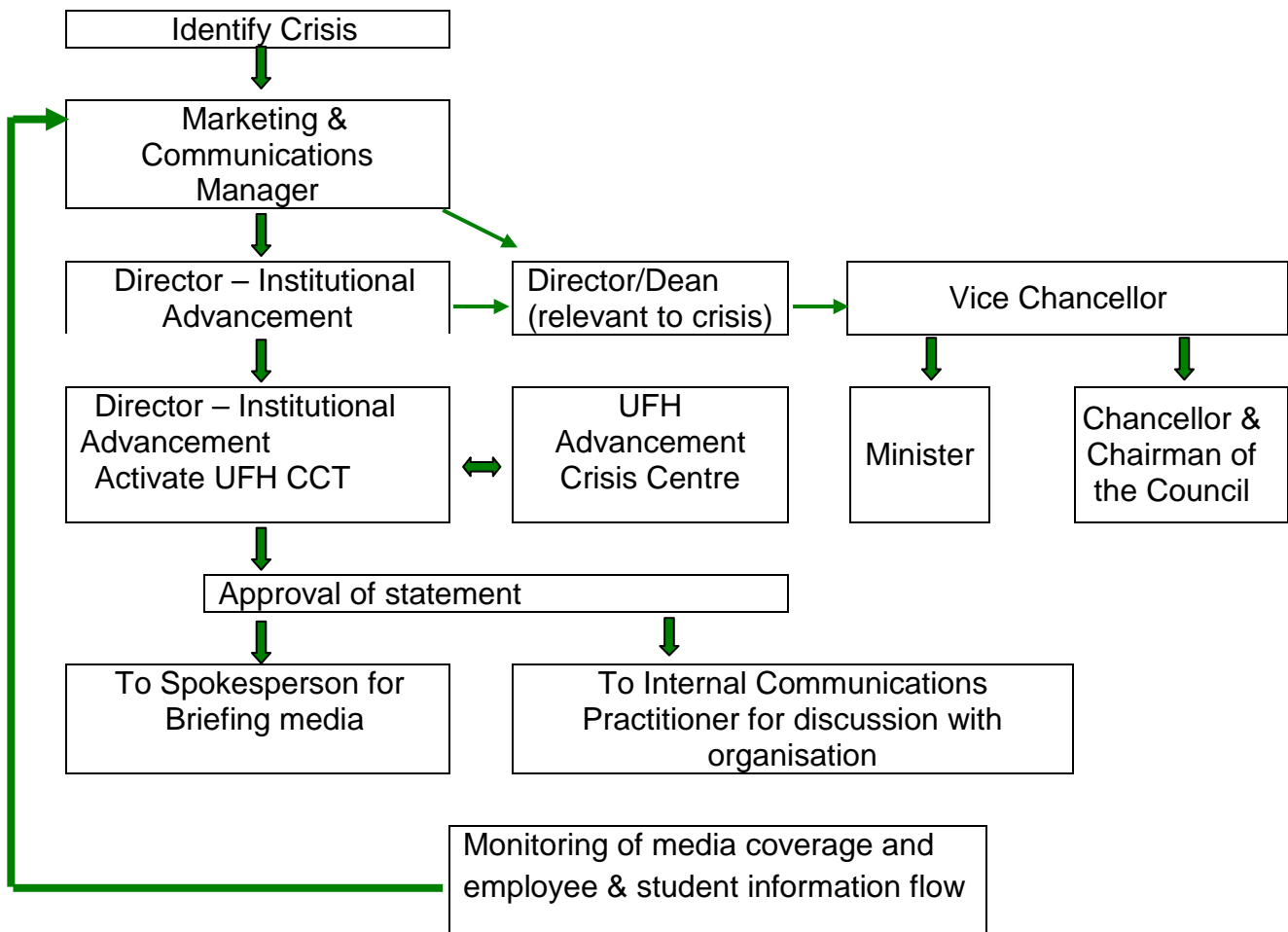


Figure 2: UFH Crisis communication flow

In the university’s crisis communication policy all actors have specialised roles which are coordinated to manage crisis efficiently. It portrays the flow of communication from one personnel to another depicting specialisation of tasks and how those tasks are coordinated to work towards the greater goal of managing crisis. Among other responsibilities, the Marketing and Communications Officers ensure that designated Directorate/Faculty spokespersons, the media, students, employees and all other relevant stakeholders are informed of crises that impact the image and reputation of the university. Part of these responsibilities is to ensure that all corporate/institutional designated spokespersons, understand their roles in relation to the media during a crisis. The Director of Institutional Advancement informs the Dean of students about the crisis who forwards the message to the Vice Chancellor. The Director of Institutional Advancement also determines the impact of the crisis and informs the relevant stakeholders as to who should manage communication

regarding the crisis. Specialised work by different personnel in the communication policy is integrated in an effort to manage crisis effectively. Division of labour and specialisation of tasks in crisis management portrays the vital role of activity coordination in crisis management.

5.3.2 Dialogue

Activity coordination necessitates dialogue as different departments cooperate to manage and solve crisis. Hargrove (1995: 176) indicates that "A dialogue is a conversation where there is a free flow of meaning in a group and diverse views and perspectives are encouraged". In the pre-crisis phase case of Fort Hare student protests, dialogue occurs at the lower level of the hierarchy whereby representatives of student structures meet regularly to discuss critical student issues in an Institutional Parliament. The SRC acts as liaison between the students and the University Management therefore it is their responsibility to further communicate those issues discussed to the management. The case of University of Fort Hare student protests reflects the existence of dialogue between the university management and various stakeholder structures in the pre-crisis phase. Before the decision to increase residence fees was made, the university management engaged in dialogue with student representatives, Institutional Forum and the University Council. A dialogical approach to crisis prevention and management is likely to be more efficient as the organisation and its stakeholders collectively in decision making.

Dialogue in the pre-crisis phase enables an organisation to identify and prevent risks from turning into crisis. However, if the organisation fails to prevent crisis, dialogue continues in the crisis event. Coombs (2012) says that dialogue between the organisation and its stakeholders should exist in good and in bad times. Marketing and Communication Officer of Fort Hare confirmed that the SRC and Management Committee hold meetings during crisis. When there is conflict between an organisation and its stakeholders, dialogue enables the exchange of information in negotiations until mutual understanding is reached. University of Fort Hare management and the SRC negotiate until mutual satisfaction is reached and the crisis is resolved. Dialogue gives an organisation and its stakeholder's equal opportunity to communicate and exchange information which is a more efficient way of resolving conflict.

Even though the organisation has returned to its normal operations in the post crisis phase, it is still liable to communicate with its stakeholders. Coombs (2012: 181) says that “Follow up communication is an extension of the crisis recovery phase. Crisis managers maintain organisation-stakeholder relationships by keeping stakeholders informed about the crisis even when the crisis is over and by continuing to answer new inquiries”. When the student protest in 2014 was over, the University Management and the SRC communicated with the Department of Higher Education. In this dialogue the Vice Chancellor expressed the history, cause, costs, solutions and measures implemented to manage and prevent future student protests. Follow up communication to stakeholders provides clarity and assurance that the organisation is dedicated to managing future crisis.

5.4 Institutional positioning

Institutional positioning is outward looking comprising external communication that positions the organisation in the social order of institutions (McPhee and Zaugg 2009). In an open system, an organisation which takes heed to institutional positioning is likely to manage crisis effectively. Bastedo (2004) notes that open systems theory conceptualises that organisations are strongly influenced by their environment.

5.4.1 Media Briefings

Open systems make it fundamental for organisations to prioritise external relations with the environment as it provides key resources that sustain the organisation. An organisation that positions itself well in the environment is likely to manage crisis effectively. Institutional positioning enables an organisation to communicate with its external stakeholders to ensure that the reputation of the organisation is preserved.

5.4.1.1 Radio and Television Interviews: Vice Chancellor

In the case of University of Fort Hare student protests, institutional positioning is reflected when the Vice Chancellor was interviewed on SABC News in the 2013 student protest to clarify the nature and cause of the student protests and letting stakeholders know that the university is responsibly responding to the situation. Institutional positioning is very important in every organisation before, during and after protests reputation management. Similarly in the 2014 student protest, the Vice Chancellor was interviewed on Power FM to address the state of the 2014 student

protest. In the interview, the VC accepted that students are allowed to raise their concerns, submit a memorandum and have a peaceful march however, when students started closing the gates, intimidation of lecturers, burning tires, being violent and vandalising property, the university management resolved to temporarily close the Alice Campus. He confirmed that communication was maintained between the university management and all relevant stakeholders via email. The Vice Chancellor further explained the cause of the protest, what is being done to address the problem and why the university had to close.

During crisis, stakeholders become uncertain and desire to know and understand the crisis at hand including the course of action taken by the organisation in resolving crisis. Henceforth, institutional positioning enables the organisation to communicate with its external stakeholders. Efficient crisis response by an organisation eliminates uncertainty and prevents the build-up of distrust amongst stakeholders. External communication of factual and relevant information to fill the information vacuum protects the organisations image and reputation from negative rumours which may accumulate to fill the media vacuum.

5.4.1.2 Daily Dispatch Interview: SRC

During organisational crisis that involves conflict between the organisation and its members, external stakeholders desire to hear the views of both parties to determine who is right or wrong. Henceforth, during student protests an SRC spokesperson is chosen usually being the President or the Secretary General to speak on behalf of students in the media. Henceforth in the 2014 protest, Daily Dispatch met with the SRC President who confirmed that a peaceful march commenced around campus upon which a memorandum with 26 demands was issued to university management leading to negotiations via SRC-Management Committee meetings. On the basis that the university said they had no money to meet student's allowance demands, negotiations came to a halt as students decided to abort lectures and protest. On this premise institutional positioning does not only occur through the top management but students are also represented in the media by the SRC hence the need for organisational members to be in one accord with the organisation.

5.4.1.3 Police Awareness

An organisation in an open system depends on the resources in the external environment for its survival. Police assistance is vital when organisational crisis is

out of hand especially when it involves violence and vandalism. When student protests threaten the university the Police are informed to stay alert for assistance. The SRC also submits a letter with a memorandum to the police specifying the date that the SRC would have expected management to respond and that failure for management to respond on that date, student protests would begin. In the 2013 and 2014 protests, high levels of violence and vandalism created an unsafe environment for students hence the university approached the police for assistance in restoring order in Alice Campus.

5.4.2 Presentations to the Department of Higher Education

A two day national meeting between the Department of Higher Education, university management and the SRC was arranged to discuss the hiccups that the university had with NSFAS and addressing the issues listed by the university management and students so as to pave way to solving the issues. A crisis arouses interest and concern to organisational stakeholders. Thus, the Department of Higher Education is interested in university affairs especially when there is a crisis which disturbs academic activities. Any disturbance to education in academic institutions calls for the attention of Higher Education as it seeks to promote and improve Education in South Africa. Thus, academic organisations ought to communicate with the Department of Higher Education to inform them about crisis and measure taken to manage it.

5.5 Conclusion

This chapter conveyed how data was analysed using interpretive analysis. Various themes were extracted from the data using the specifications of the four flows model. These themes were interpreted according to the four flows model to convey the representation of the four flows model in the case of managing Fort Hare student protests. Several themes were extracted and categorised under the four flows model to portray the influence of the four flows model in the managing of Fort Hare student protests. The next chapter presents the findings and conclusions of the study.

CHAPTER 6: FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECCOMENDATIONS

3. Introduction

The purpose of this study was to evaluate the suitability of the four flows model of organisational communication in proactively managing organisational crisis. The research questioned the communicative and administrative strategies used to manage Fort Hare's recurrent student protests and how the four flows model is represented in the case of managing Fort Hare student protests. The study also questioned the strengths and weaknesses of the four flows model in interpreting the case of managing student protests at the University of Fort Hare.

Originally, the four flows model is designed to explain how communication constitutes organisation; however, this study conceptualises how proactive crisis management can be pursued using the four flows model of organisational communication. The four flows model was applied in the context of crisis management to explore its influence in the various activities involved in managing crisis. In Chapter 5, the four-flows model was used to interpret how recurrent protests were managed at the University of Fort Hare. This chapter presents the findings and conclusions to the study. The research found that the four flows model comprises of analytically distinct yet interactional communication processes mentioned by McPhee and Zaugg (2000).

6.2 Organisational self-structuring in an approach to crisis management

The study found that organisational self-structuring messages are influential in guiding the process of crisis management. Organisational self-structuring provides the formal structure which is to be used in crisis management such as crisis communication policies, crisis management plans, directives, orders and policies upon which membership negotiation, activity coordination and institutional positioning are the processes through which organisational self-structuring is manifest. Organisational self-structuring sort of controls the other flows and is dominant in all crisis management activity. Proactively documented plans of action such as crisis management plans, crisis communication plans and procedure manuals all benefit a smooth crisis management process. Official documents such as crisis communication policy, rules, code of conduct and general policy were used to manage student protests and were evident in the management of the Sydney Harbour Oil Spill. These aspects of organisational self-structuring are fundamental to

crisis management process. Crisis management can be achieved when an organisation has a well-documented plan of action that specifies who does what, who talks to whom, who makes decisions and who coordinates with whom. Clearly defined and communicated roles and responsibilities depict how organisational self-structuring can facilitate proactive crisis management. The study found proactively planned documentation such as having a crisis communication policy is a vital organisational structuring instrument in crisis management in ensuring efficient crisis response as people know who to talk to and what to do in crisis response.

Directives are very important in the crisis life cycle to guide organisational members according to the crisis management plan and to inform organisational members what to do in response to the crisis or to keep themselves safe during crisis. Uncertainty is prone in the event of crises hence it is important for directives to be sent out to organisational members. Critical information must be communicated to stakeholders to reduce uncertainty and they should also be told what they are expected to do. The use of rules and regulations in the student protests conveys how organisational self-structuring can be used to constrain and direct organisational behaviour which may be helpful in preventing violence and vandalism during student protests.

6.3 Membership negotiation in an approach to crisis management

Establishing stakeholder relations in the pre-crisis phase gives stakeholders valuable interest in the success of the organisation and fosters strong relations between an organisation and its members. The way an organisation socialises its members into the organisation can determine the behaviour of organisational members in the event of crisis. In as much as structure is clearly defined, it needs to be communicated and understood by organisational members so that it may be able to compel or constrain members towards or against certain organisational behaviour. University policy, code of conduct and all documents that shape organisational culture need to be communicated to organisational members through membership negotiation. The SRC has influential powers to persuade the perceptions of the students towards the university management hence every year new SRC leadership is socialised through a leadership training program which seeks to create mutual relations between the SRC and the university management. Through orientations,

every year students are socialised into the university as they are mentored through the folklore, values and all vital organisational information.

Frequent communication between the organisation and affected stakeholders is important to eliminate uncertainty. In the case of University of Fort Hare protests, the Vice Chancellor frequently reminded and reinforced university policies as a measure to resolve violence and vandalism during the student protests. Through emails, message strategies that point to the university's reputation and sometimes warnings to unacceptable behaviour were sent by the Vice Chancellor to all students. In the post crisis phase as a process of image and reputation management, it is important for the organisation to strengthen stakeholder relations by communicating critical information. Membership negotiation proves to be a proactive approach to crisis management as it focuses on building mutual organisational-member relations before the crisis. Mutual relations help an organisation to detect and attend to threats that may become crisis if left unattended by monitoring organisational behaviour and perceptions. When an open communications channel is achieved through membership negotiation it is easier for an organisation to detect and prevent threats from becoming crisis. However, during the crisis organisations must maintain good and positive stakeholder relations through emotional message strategies aimed at reinforcing the organisations reputation which helps in crisis resolution.

Membership negotiation is very important in shaping an organisation's culture that leads students away from violent student protests. By socialising students into an organisation's culture such as rules and regulations, folklore, university ethics and policies, organisational members gain a shared responsibility of maintaining the image and reputation of the university.

6.4 Activity coordination in an approach to crisis management

Activity coordination is vital for effective and efficient execution of crisis management tasks. Efficient crisis management cannot occur without division of labour, specialisation and coordination of different roles and responsibilities. Division of labour increases performance of individual tasks while coordination of the tasks allows organisations to respond to the crisis efficiently. For effective and efficient coordination of activities it is important for crisis communication plans to clearly define the specific roles and responsibilities of each department or member involved in the crisis management process. This prevents clashing of tasks or omission of

certain vital tasks that need to be performed. Activity coordination is represented in Fort Hare's crisis communication policy as the different roles of each member are clearly defined and coordinated to manage crisis. The model is not very specific about the crisis management activities that should be conducted to manage crisis and rather becomes too general to be used as an approach as it is. However, the representation of its processes in the study of Fort Hare student protests as well as other cases expressed in Chapter 4 reveals that it is possible to design a crisis management plan using the concepts of the guidelines of the four flows model.

6.5 Institutional positioning in an approach to crisis management

One of the efforts of organisational crisis management is to limit the impact of crisis in the external environment through crisis containment. Institutional positioning is vital in managing the organisation's image and reputation in the external environment. Organisations operate in an open system whereby the external environment influences an organisation's sustenance and survival. The cases of Johnson and Johnsons Tylenol crisis, BP's oil spill and Fort Hare's student protests convey the importance of media update in times of crisis. Crises are characterized by uncertainty henceforth organisations should aim to fill the information vacuum created in the media in times of crises to avoid rumour and speculation from damaging the image and reputation. In the case of University of Fort Hare protests, the Department of Higher Education and the police were informed about the student protests. The police were notified on grounds that there was violence and vandalism of university property and the university had become an unsafe environment for habitation.

Institutional positioning is an important process before the crisis, to create good reputation between the organisation and its members such that the organisation may have the support and understanding of organisational members even in crisis situations. For example Johnson and Johnson's had a good reputation of caring for the people hence when they were in the crisis of the cyanide poisoning the people trusted in the responsibility and professionalism of the organisation. After the incident, Johnson and Johnson's turned the crisis into opportunity by portraying and communicating their image of maximum care for the people.

6.6 The weaknesses of the four flows model in interpreting Fort Hare protests

The criticisms of the four flows model of organisational communication are likely to reappear as weaknesses of the model when used in an approach to crisis management. Firstly the model has been criticised for being vague and general because it does not draw a specific line as to where each flows starts and ends. For instance, there are messages that are sent to internal publics which may not be aimed at socialisation or identification and they are not specified in the model. Hence, in an approach to crisis management the model does not give specific attention to internal communication messages that are necessary between the organisation and its members.

The four flows are analytically distinct yet independent (Putnam and Nicotera 2009), hence the flows overlap into each other such that activities in one flow can influence the other. For instance, organisational self-structuring messages can be used in the process of membership negotiation, activity coordination or institutional positioning. During membership negotiation, documents in organisational self-structuring may be used as a guide to socialisation and identification of members. Thus, it might be unclear where each flow begins and ends hence it may be strenuous to identify the points of weakness in the process of crisis management. The interactional nature of the four flows model may hinder identification of the problem source, whether it emanates from poor membership negotiation, activity coordination, organisational self-structuring or institutional positioning.

The four flows model is too broad and may overlook specific practices that are necessary in managing crisis. Though it represents the processes of crisis management it borrows concepts from existing crisis management approaches for it to be substantially explained as an approach to crisis management. It becomes more like an overview of the basic flows of communication that should be considered in the process of crisis management but it cannot be used independently. Though the four flows model interprets the case of managing student protests and the strategies and processes of crisis management were categorised under the processes of the four flows model, it has never been tested as an actual approach to managing crisis and that is a point of criticism for this research. Therefore, the four flows model cannot be considered as a suitable approach to effective crisis management until it has been used in an actual process of crisis management.

6.7 Recommendations

The university management communicates to the students via the SRC when it comes to disseminating critical information. This typifies the two step flow model whereby information is communicated to opinion leaders who then bring information to the masses. McPhee and Zaug point out that activity coordination also occurs when organisational members have their own agendas and coordinate on how not to do work. This shows that activity coordination is not always positive and is witnessed through the SRC who may become gatekeepers and opportunists as they seek personal advantage from the organisation. Information to the students may be distorted as the SRC addresses its own agendas influenced by their power struggles amongst political structures in the university.

Constant communication with students is important to avoid emotional reactions by students who feel they are unfairly treated. In most cases when the university management directly communicated with the students and addressed critical information pertinent to their concerns, violence and vandalism have come to a halt. Therefore direct communication between the university management and the students is very important to prevent uncertainties that may lead to student protests. As information is passed through the hierarchies, information richness is lost. Henceforth, transmission of information from the top management to the students is not a favourable method of communicating critical information that needs in-depth explanation.

Through dialogue and direct communication before the crisis alleviates uncertainty and student protests might be prevented as students will receive adequate and accurate information to make informed decisions. The 2013 and 2014 student protests came to an end after the Vice Chancellor initiated direct communication with the students. The way an organisation responds to crisis shapes its reputation and determines the perceptions that organisational members have. The university management has to ensure that transmitted information via the SRC is communicated properly to the students in order to obtain a shared understanding amongst all stakeholders. Stakeholder relations are very important before, during and after the crisis.

6.8 Conclusion

This study explored the representation of the four flows model in various cases of crisis management and interpreted its suitability as an approach to crisis management. In chapter 4, various cases were analysed and interpreted to convey the role of the four flows model in crisis management. In chapter 5, the four flows model is used to interpret the management of University of Fort Hare's annual student protests from 2012-2014.

Organisational self-structuring lays the foundation for effective crisis management. Bureaucratic organisations have been found to have various organisational communication problems which link to crisis however through lateral relations and dialogue; organisations are able to overcome the deficiencies of their structures. SRC- Management Committee meetings have served as a method of managing student protests whereby mutual understanding is achieved through dialogue. The research identified the importance of directives during crisis management to direct the various activities necessary to resolve the crisis. Crisis situations are characterised by uncertainty hence the position of the organisation concerning the crisis at hand must be communicated to stakeholders and organisational members should know what the organisation expects them to do in response to the crisis. In addition to self-structuring, crisis communication policy is an important procedure manual that guides how organisational can proactively detect, prevent and prepare for crisis in the way Fink (1986), Mitroff (1994) and Coombs (2012) mentioned in their stages before the crisis.

Through membership negotiation before the crisis, an organisation can proactively prevent how organisational members react to crisis situations. By seeking to reach a shared understanding with organisational members, organisations can ensure that organisational members learn the effects and consequences of rowdy behaviour during crisis. Therefore, membership negotiation can be considerable approach to proactive crisis management which could be beneficial to University of Fort Hare in shaping member behaviour according to expected organisational behaviour.

Coordinated activities are fundamental to effective crisis management. Firstly, the crisis communication policy should specify different roles and responsibilities for organisational members required to manage crisis. This prevents role-conflict and ensures that all tasks are attended. In managing Fort Hare crisis, the Director of

Institutional Advancement is notified of the crisis by the Marketing and Communications Manager, who then communicates the crisis to relevant departments. Different roles were performed such as research about the crisis, monitoring internal communication, monitoring of media, internal communications, external communications, spokespersons, organising meetings with SRC and relevant stakeholders as well as the preparation of statements sent to media and to stakeholders.

Institutional positioning before the crisis is much different from institutional positioning during the crisis event. Organisations that have a good image and reputation before crisis are safer in the event of crisis. However, when crisis strikes the way an organisation responds to the crisis can determine the image and reputation it will portray to its members. In the case of Fort Hare, the media was notified of the crisis through television and radio whereby the Vice Chancellor explained the causes of the protests and how the university is in the process of handling the matter. The Vice Chancellor further presented at the Department of Higher Education where the nature, causes, responses, costs and future prevention strategies of student protests were discussed. Institutional positioning is an important crisis management strategy to maintain support from the organisation's stakeholders who provide resources for the organisations survival.

This study focused on organisational crisis specifically student protests at the University of Fort Hare, however different cases of crisis management can be conducted to further interrogate the suitability of the four flows model in an approach to crisis management. The interrelation between communication and organising in crisis management can be investigated in greater depth than this study. The four flows model has not been tested in an actual crisis situation hence it bears uncertainties of whether it will address all the minute aspects necessary for managing crisis. However, the research laid a foundation for future researchers to conceptualise the four flows model as an approach to crisis management or as a foundational theory for building crisis communication and crisis management plans.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Semi-structured Interview schedule



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DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNICATION

Supervisor: Prof M Caldwell

1. What are the various communicative and administrative procedures and strategies that were used in 2012-2014 to manage student protests before, during and after they occur?

Membership negotiation

2. Does the university communicate the policies rules and regulations to the students besides through the University Prospectus?
3. How does the university communicate organisational culture, expected behavior with organisational members in an effort to mentor, guide and mould existing students to behave in a way intended by the university? When new students arrive at Fort Hare do you communicate to them the expected behavior of the organisation?
4. How does the university ensure a positive relationship with students throughout the year?
5. Is the process of membership negotiation evident in the case of managing student protests at the University of Fort Hare before during and after a crisis?

Organisational self-structuring

6. What aspects of organisational self-structuring were used to manage student protests in the pre-crisis phase, crisis event and post crisis phase?

7. How useful is organisational self-structuring in managing student protests. Did it provide a proactive nature to the management of the student protests
8. Is there a crisis communication policy or crisis management plan to guide how student protests are managed?
9. Did the university alter or create policies, rules and regulations as a measure of managing student protests or to prevent future protests?

Activity coordination

10. What activities are coordinated before, during and after student protests in an effort to resolve the issue?
11. How were activities coordinated to manage student protests, who was involved and what was the procedure of who does what and who talks to whom?
12. Are students aware of procedure and action during student protests and are they informed about what they are expected to do?

Institutional positioning

13. Does the university engage in external communication when there is a crisis such as student protests?
14. Did the university communicate information to the media to ensure that the image of the university is positive in the external environment?
15. When crisis strikes, what procedures are taken in communicating with external stakeholders concerning who will be spokesperson, when to speak to media, what to communicate to the media and which type of medium will be used?
16. Is the process of institutional positioning evident in the phases before, during and after a crisis?

Thank you for your assistance. God bless you will be sure to provide the final project to share the findings of the research.

Thank you.

Appendix 2: Informed Consent Form



University of Fort Hare
Together in Excellence

Department of Communication Informed Consent Form

- I Nyathi Noel Neville (200909664) a Masters Student from the Department of Communication am doing a research on the suitability of the four flows model of organisational communication in an approach to Crisis Management. My request is for you to provide information from your experience and knowledge of the communicative and administrative strategies used to manage annual student protests from 2012-2014 at the University of Fort Hare through a 30 - 45 minute interview. Please understand that **you are not being forced** to take part in this study and the choice whether to participate or not is yours alone. If you agree to participate, **you may stop me at any time** and tell me that you don't want to go on with the interview. If you do this there will also be no penalties and **you will NOT be prejudiced in ANY way. Confidentiality will be observed professionally.** I will not be recording your name anywhere on collected data and no one will be able to link you to the answers you give. I will be asking you questions and ask that you be as open and honest as possible in answering these questions. Some questions may be of a personal and/or sensitive nature. I will be asking some questions that you may not have thought about before, & which also involve thinking about the past or the future. If possible, I would like to come back to all members of the university management once the study is completed to inform you of what the results are & discuss the findings of the study & how the four flows model can be useful in proactively managing student protests.

INFORMED CONSENT

I hereby agree to participate in research regarding the four flows model of organisational communication and crisis management at the University of Fort Hare. I understand that I am participating freely and without being forced in any way to do so. I also understand that I can stop this interview at any point should if I do not want to continue and that this decision will not in any way affect me negatively. I understand that this is a research project whose purpose is not necessarily to benefit me personally. I understand that this consent form will not be linked to the questionnaire, and that my answers will remain confidential. I understand that if at all possible, feedback will be given to my department on the results of the research.

Signature of participant Date:

Appendix 3 Research Summary



University of Fort Hare
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I Noel Neville Nyathi (200909664) a Masters student from the Department of Communication, humbly request your participation and input from your experiential knowledge on how the University managed the 2012-2014 annual student protests. The aim of my research is to evaluate the suitability of the four flows model in an approach to crisis management. I hope that my work will be beneficial to the university in the same manner as it will be beneficial to my studies.

Research Topic

An evaluation of the suitability of the Four -Flows model in an approach to Crisis management: A study of the University of Fort Hare.

Background of the Research

Communication is central to crisis management and when organisational communication is insufficient, uncertainty heightens and organisational crises are inevitable such as student protests. This study interrogates an alternative conception to crisis management by using the four flows model of organisational communication in an approach to crisis management. More specifically, this study evaluates the suitability of the four flows model in an approach to crisis management approach using the Four Flows model of organisational communication. Broadly this study explores how annual student protests at the University of Fort Hare in 2012, 2013 and 2014 were managed and then seeks to identify how the four flows model is represented in this case so as to interpret its suitability in an approach to crisis management.

Appendix 4: Ethical Clearance Certificate



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ETHICAL CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE **REC-270710-028-RA Level 01**

Certificate Reference Number: CAL021SNYA01

Project title: **An evaluation of the suitability of the four – flows model in the approach to crisis management: A case study of the University of Fort Hare**

Nature of Project: Masters

Principal Researcher: Noel Neville Nyathi

Supervisor: Prof M Caldwell

Co-supervisor:

On behalf of the University of Fort Hare's Research Ethics Committee (UREC) I hereby give ethical approval in respect of the undertakings contained in the above-mentioned project and research instrument(s). Should any other instruments be used, these require separate authorization. The Researcher may therefore commence with the research as from the date of this certificate, using the reference number indicated above.

Please note that the UREC must be informed immediately of

- Any material change in the conditions or undertakings mentioned in the document
- Any material breaches of ethical undertakings or events that impact upon the ethical conduct of the research

Special conditions: Research that includes children as per the official regulations of the act must take the following into account:

Note: The UREC is aware of the provisions of s71 of the National Health Act 61 of 2003 and that matters pertaining to obtaining the Minister's consent are under discussion and remain unresolved. Nonetheless, as was decided at a meeting between the National Health Research Ethics Committee and stakeholders on 6 June 2013, university ethics committees may continue to grant ethical clearance for research involving children without the Minister's consent, provided that the prescripts of the previous rules have been met. This certificate is granted in terms of this agreement.

The UREC retains the right to

- Withdraw or amend this Ethical Clearance Certificate if
 - Any unethical principal or practices are revealed or suspected
 - Relevant information has been withheld or misrepresented
 - Regulatory changes of whatsoever nature so require
 - The conditions contained in the Certificate have not been adhered to
- Request access to any information or data at any time during the course or after completion of the project.
- In addition to the need to comply with the highest level of ethical conduct principle investigators must report back annually as an evaluation and monitoring mechanism on the progress being made by the research. Such a report must be sent to the Dean of Research's office

The Ethics Committee wished you well in your research.

Yours sincerely


Professor Gideon de Wet
Dean of Research

24 July 2014

Appendix 5: 2012 Strike Communique Email

From: Tom, Mvuyo

Sent: 04 March 2012 09:31 PM

To: *All Fort Hare Staff; All Students

Subject: Normalization of Academic and Non-Academic Work OS DIRECTIVE

Dear All,

It has come to my notice that Mr Siphon Mabika is spreading word that there will be no attendance of lectures by students tomorrow. I want to inform staff and students that this will not be tolerated and any intimidation of students or staff will be dealt with very harshly. It is high time that the students who want to learn are not held to ransom by people like Mr Mabika. The employees and students of the University have to be protected to be able to do their normal activities. I expect no violation of anybody's rights tomorrow. Whoever embarks on any activity that is seen to be preventing anyone from carrying on with their normal daily activity will have to face the consequences of their actions! I also would like to request every student and staff member to carry their identification cards at all times so that they can be identified as bona fide employees or students of the University of Fort Hare.

I sincerely hope we shall not be pushed to take these actions.

Truly yours,

Dr Mvuyo Tom

Vice-Chancellor

University of Fort Hare

Private Bag X1314 ALICE 5700

Tel +27 (0)40 6022071 Fax +27 (0) 40 6531338

Appendix 6: 2013 Communique

University of Fort Hare

OFFICE OF THE VICE CHANCELLOR

Alice (main) Campus:
Private Bag X1314, King William's Town Rd, Alice, 5700, RSA
Tel: +27 (0) 40 602 2071 • Fax: +27 (0) 40 653 1338 • i-Fax: 0866282675
email: mxoseka@ufh.ac.za



13 November 2013

RE: UNIVERSITY OF FORT HARE – YOUR UNIVERSITY

Lately, there has been a spate of releases in the press of a negative nature regarding the University of Fort Hare. This has been generated as a result of illegal gathering and dissemination of information to the media which includes private conversations and personal information that is proprietary to the university. Releasing any information regarding the University, either from a file or individual, is criminal and an action of great concern to the university. It will not be tolerated.


There is no university or organisation that is perfect and the University of Fort Hare is no exception. However, we at the University of Fort Hare, are not defined by the negative issues raised in the media. Pockets of misdemeanor, fraud, corruption, cronyism or plagiarism cannot be ignored and will be dealt with, but they do not define the character of the University of Fort Hare. Many women and men of this university are doing their job and pursuing their studies with honesty and integrity. There are many centres and areas of excellence that objectively define the University of Fort Hare. It has taken barrels of hard sweat, blood and tears to build our brand over the years and through generations before us. We should not and will not allow that brand and its character to be destroyed.

If we do nothing regarding the negative actions of a small group of individuals within our university, then the future of our students, academic and non-academic staff will be totally damaged beyond repair. It may be the motive of the persons who act in a negative way to cause the maximum damage to the university. Whatever their motive, the consequences of their actions are wider and broader than that motive. Criminal, civil or institutional steps may be taken against individuals responsible for these negative acts. I can assure you that ultimately the negativity will be found and eliminated. They will be dealt with in accordance with the law of the land and the policies of the university, including its code of good conduct.

So there is no doubt that we should all take responsibility to do our best to report cases of misconduct that flout the code of conduct of the university. The university encourages freedom of speech and values the freedom of the press. These are rights we have fought hard for and shall strenuously defend. However, we shall also defend the equally important constitutional rights of employees and students to privacy. Commitment to transparency and openness in dealing with complaints is a commitment that the university is taking seriously. A line has now been drawn of the illegal gathering, retention and dissemination of information and every step will be taken to find the culprits. Rights to freedom of speech and the seeking of justice should not be mistaken to be rights to tread on other people's rights.

Let us work together to reclaim the University of Fort Hare and restore the values of our academic institution. But let us do that within legal and just processes.

Yours sincerely


Mvuyo Tom (Dr)
Vice Chancellor



together in excellence



www.ufh.ac.za



2012 - 2013

Appendix 7: 2014 Strike Communique

University of Fort Hare

OFFICE OF THE VICE CHANCELLOR

Alice (main) Campus:
Private Bag X1314, King William's Town Rd, Alice, 5700, RSA
Tel: +27 (0) 40 862 2071 • Fax: +27 (0) 40 853 1338 • E-Fax: 0866282675
email: mxoseta@ufh.ac.za



06 August 2014

To: Alice Campus Students

The University management hereby welcomes all students of the Alice Campus back to the University following the closure of the Alice Campus on 31 July 2014.

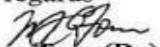
The Alice Campus will re-open on Friday, 08 August 2014 at 08h00, and the academic programmes will commence on the same day. You are therefore urged to make all the necessary arrangements to be back on Campus on the said day.

Please note that NO re-registration is required, and as such when you report back to the University on Friday, 08 August 2014, you will be expected to proceed to your residence and to your lecture halls. With final examinations approaching, Management would like to urge you to work twice as hard to ensure that you succeed in your final examinations. In this regard, we have requested our academic staff to assist you in any way possible, considering the time lost.

The University Management will continue to engage the SRC regarding student concerns and discuss any other issue/s concerning the wellbeing of the students of the University of Fort Hare. Further, Management is committed to resolving all the issues raised as soon as possible.

We would like to take this opportunity to wish you well for the rest of the 2014 academic year.

Kind regards


Mvuyo Tom (Dr)
Vice Chancellor



Recipient of the
**Supreme Order
of Baobab**
(gold)

1 | together in excellence



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Appendix 8: University of Fort Hare Crisis Communication Policy

Contents

INTRODUCTION

- 1 SCOPE
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- 5 RESPONSIBILITIES
- 6 PROCEDURE (FLOW DIAGRAM)
- 7 REVISIONS

Annexes

ANNEX A MAINTENANCE OF UFH'S CRISIS COMMUNICATION POLICY AND PLAN

Introduction

An organisation worthy of its reputation and interested in maintaining its credibility has to be prepared for the communication challenges unique to crisis situations. A crisis communication policy is one of mechanisms put into place to minimise the reality and perceptions created by crisis situations. This plan should be read in conjunction with the University of Fort Hare (UFH) crisis communication policy.

1. Scope

- 1.1. Crisis management is the ability of an organisation to deal quickly, efficiently and effectively with contingency operations with the objective of:
 - 1.1.1. reducing the threat to human health and safety;
 - 1.1.2. the loss of public or corporate property;
 - 1.1.3. the adverse impact on normal business continuance; and damage to the company's good name – its reputation.

2. Purpose

- 2.1. The purpose of this policy is to manage the impact of any event or incident, which has the potential to damage the business interests and/or image of the university of Fort hare by creating negative perceptions of UFH among all, or specific, target audiences, with the objective to:
 - 2.2. reduce, or prevent the negative impact a crisis may have on the image of the UFH;
 - 2.3. provide direction and guidance to the UFH spokesperson, operational management and communication practitioners on communicating in a crisis;
 - 2.4. ensure congruent response and message dissemination to negate the risk to the image of UFH;
 - 2.5. establish UFH as only credible source of information;
 - 2.6. ensure that all relevant stakeholders are informed promptly;
 - 2.7. win opponents over and get them involved in solving the problem;
 - 2.8. reduce stakeholder uncertainty and demonstrate human concern in times of crisis; and
 - 2.9. help maintain employee morale before, during and after a crisis.

3. Applicability

- 3.1. This Plan is applicable to the University of Fort Hare, its Directorates, Centres, Schools and Faculties.

4. Normative/Informative references

- 4.1. The following document contains provisions that constitute requirements of this plan. All controlled documents are subject to revision, and parties to agreements based on this plan are encouraged to investigate the possibility of applying the most recent edition of the UFH Crisis Communications Policy.

5. Definitions

- 5.1. Crisis: An event, incident, or issue that causes a real, or perceived, negative impact on the institution and its stakeholders.
- 5.2. **Crisis/Proto-team:** The team that deals with all aspects of a crisis.
- 5.3. **National/International impact:** Covers events which are of national/international interest and importance, and which could affect the opinion of stakeholders throughout the country, or internationally.
- 5.4. **Spokesperson:** A person designated to speak to the media on behalf of UFH in the event of a crisis.
- 5.5. **University of Fort Hare:** means the entire university, its Directorates, Centres, Schools and Faculties.

6. Stakeholders

6.1. Internal Stakeholders:

- 6.1.1. UFH Chancellor, Council Chairman, University Council, Vice Chancellor, Senate, MANCO, EMT, Director – Institutional Advancement, Marketing and Communications Manager, Stakeholder Relations Manager, UFH Spokesperson, Internal Communications Practitioner, Institutional Forum, Organised Labour, SRC, Students, Employees

6.2. External Stakeholders:

- 6.2.1. The media (all media), The Government (national, provincial and local), Communities, Suppliers, Donors

7. Responsibilities

7.1. Vice Chancellor, or Designated Deputy Vice Chancellor

- 7.1.1. Is the custodian of the image and well-being of the organisation
- 7.1.2. Informs the Chancellor, Council Chairman, the UFH Council and the Minister for Higher Education and Training

8. Director/Dean:

- 8.1. Informs the Vice Chancellor of the crisis in his/her Directorate/Faculty

- 8.2. Delegates the necessary spokespersons in his/her Directorate/Faculty
- 8.3. Forms part of the Crisis Communications Team (CCT), or delegates the directorate/Faculty representative to serve on the CCT when the crisis has a direct link to the operations of his/her Directorate/Faculty.

9. Designated Spokespersons

- 9.1. Present facts to the media and all relevant stakeholders
- 9.2. Act as representatives of the institution in times of a crisis

10. Director – Institutional Advancement

- 10.1. Ensures that the crisis communications policy is reviewed annually and updated when necessary
- 10.2. Informs the Director/Dean of the affected Directorate/Faculty, about the crisis in his/her area.
- 10.3. Determines the impact of the crisis and informs the relevant stakeholders as to who should manage the communication regarding the crisis.
- 10.4. Acts as the chief crisis communications controller during the crisis.
- 10.5. Approves draft messages before they are sent to the Vice Chancellor or his designate for final approval.

11. Marketing and Communications Manager

- 11.1. Ensures designated Directorate/Faculty spokespersons, the media, students, employees and all other relevant stakeholders are informed of events/crises' with a national, or international impact on UFH's image.
- 11.2. Ensures that all spokespersons receive the necessary media training and appropriate refresher courses for crisis situations.
- 11.3. Ensures that all corporate/institutional spokespersons, designated Directorate/Faculty spokespersons and account executives understand their roles in relation to the media during a crisis.
- 11.4. Ensures that the Advancement crisis centre is kept running smoothly at all times.
- 11.5. Tracks the information flow regarding the crisis within UFH for the duration of the crisis.

Stakeholder Relations Manager

- 11.6. Liaise with relevant proto/crisis teams
- 11.7. Keeps provincial & national government informed
- 11.8. Ensures that the Council that the Council are kept informed
- 11.9. Ensures that account executives react to messages management within their respective faculties

12. Internal Communications Practitioner

- 12.1. Disseminates the same statements that are sent to the media, to all students and staff.
- 12.2. Keeps staff updated with information for the duration of the crisis.
- 12.3. Where necessary, formulates special internal messages aimed at quelling negative rumours, and maintaining high staff and student morale.

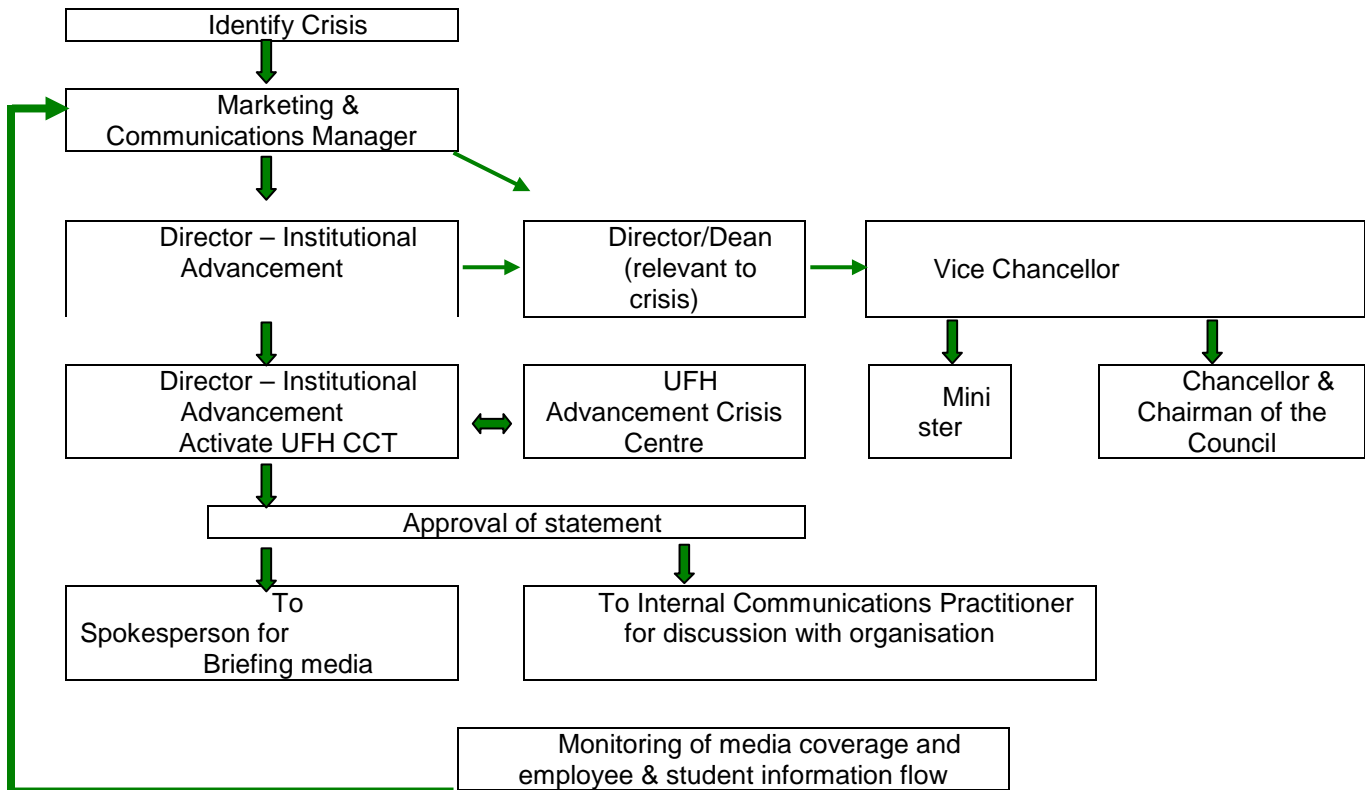
13. UFH Spokesperson

- 13.1. Assists the media in obtaining the correct information.
- 13.2. Keeps media lists, and lists of all key stakeholders, updated and available at all times.
- 13.3. Arranges a venue and facilities for media (media centre).
- 13.4. Handles all media in the event of a crisis that has national, or international, impact on the image of the UFH.
- 13.5. Compiles a spokesperson's list for all possible issues at UFH and update the list every six months

14. Account Executives

- 14.1. Compile crisis communication plans for their respective Directorates/Faculties.
- 14.2. Identify Directorate/Faculty spokespersons (in consultation with their Directors/Deans) on relevant topical issues.
- 14.3. Keeps his/her Director/Dean informed for the duration of the crisis.
- 14.4. Represent their Directorate/Faculty as and when required.

Procedure (Flow Diagram)



Annex A

(Informative)

Maintenance of UFH's crisis communication policy and plan

A.1 Institutional Advancement shall be involved in a detailed simulated crisis exercise at least once a year, to test each of the communication procedures and facilities which have been put in place.

A.2 Each stage of the simulated exercise should be monitored by qualified observers.

A.2.1 Checklist for Advancement Crisis Centre:

- Telephones, fax machines, online laptop connection points and printers.
- Stocks of press release paper, general UFH documentation and stationery.
- Contact lists of all stakeholders and members of the UFH Council and EMT.
- Flip charts and pens.
- Television and radio.
- DVD Player and monitor.

- Tape recording facilities for interviews and incoming calls.
- Media kit with information about the institution, photographs, location map, etc.
- Director – Institutional Advancement to monitor and make decisions regarding staff relief in instances of prolonged crisis management incidents.
- Events management to take care of refreshments for crisis communication team.
- Courier service (admin team from Institutional Advancement to be provided to the crisis communication team).
- Copies of the UFH Crisis Communication Plan, UFH spokespersons and their contact numbers.

A.2.2 The following documents should be available in the crisis centre:

- Fact sheets, position statements and holding statements.
- Do's and don'ts during a crisis.
- Information needed by stakeholders.
- Contact details (key stakeholders, spokesperson).
- UFH Crisis Communication management process flow diagram.

A.2.3 An example of a holding statement (for a very quick response):

At about 00:00 today, one hundred final exam papers were discovered in the XXXX student resident. Of these thirty were from the Faculty of Science and Agriculture, fifty from the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, and twenty from the Faculty of Management and Commerce. In addition, five signed certificates awarding degrees to two students that were never registered with the University and three that had failed. This has resulted in the postponement of the final exam for new examination papers to be set. The students in whose rooms the papers were found and the students whose names are on the degree certificates have been arrested. The police are looking for the two who do not appear on our books.

At this time we are doing our best to establish the nature and extent of the breach, as well as determining whether there are any other affected Faculties.

In response to the postponement of the examinations and the re-setting of the examination papers, the students stormed the administration buildings of the Alice and East London campuses in protest.

As soon as we have more information, we will communicate it. In the meantime the University of Fort Hare is doing everything possible to restore normality with speed.

- *Media desk to develop media holding statements for various possible crisis scenarios*