

## Effect of Social Responsibility Components on Crisis Prevention: A Case Study of Crisis Management Organization

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### Original Article

#### Abstract

**INTRODUCTION:** This study was investigated to represent and measure the impact of social responsibility components on crisis prevention in a conceptual model. Therefore, according to the research model, this study proposed 17 hypotheses about the existence of social responsibility among the employees of organizations involved in helping the victims of natural and man-made disasters, which would lead to crisis prevention.

**METHODS:** This applied research was performed based on the descriptive-survey research method with a correlational approach using field study to collect data. The statistical population of this study consisted of 250 managers and experts of the Crisis Management Organization and the general departments of crisis management of the provinces (subdivisions of the Provincial Governments). The samples were selected using the relative stratified random sampling method, and the final sample size was determined at 150 individuals using Cochran's formula. To collect information, a 17-item researcher-made questionnaire was employed consisting of three main components (i.e., macro environment, organizational factors, and individual factors) and items for each of these three components. The responses were rated on a 5-point Likert scale (from 1=very low to 5=very high). Kolmogorov-Smirnov test was used to check the normality of the distribution of variables. Data were analyzed using SPSS-26 and the t-test and confirmatory factor analysis modeling was used in AMOS-24 software

**FINDINGS:** The results showed that the significance levels obtained for all factors, except technological and geographical factors, were less than 0.05; therefore, all these factors were different from the average of the community. On the other hand, since the mean differences were positive in all factors, all components of social responsibility, except technological and geographical factors, had an impact on crisis prevention.

**CONCLUSION:** It can be said that the special attention of managers, authorities, and employees to the vital issue of social responsibility, especially in their daily activities, not only would help improve intra-organizational communication and increase employee motivation but also would lead to preventing crises.

**Keywords:** Crisis management; Individual factors; Macro environment; Organizational factors; Social responsibility.

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#### Introduction

A crisis is a disruptive situation that affects the entire organization (or system) and challenges its underlying assumptions. It is a situation that an individual, group, or organization encounters and cannot deal with it using current methods, and the stress in that situation increases due to sudden changes (1). All organizations are always exposed to various crises;

therefore, their managers must be prepared to face those situations and take measures to resolve and reduce the effects of those crises on their organization (2). Crisis management does not mean waiting for an event, but thinking about unimaginable and unbelievable events that may make the whole organization disintegrate if they occur (3). Consequently, crisis management

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emphasizes the need for regular prediction and preparation for dealing with those internal and external issues that seriously threaten the reputation, profitability, or life of the organization (4).

Once a crisis arises in a company, the general understanding of the crisis and the company's response to it are critical. Therefore, social responsibility is an important factor for authorities to assess the status of the company and manage responsibly before and after the crisis (5). In crisis management, there are three basic principles, namely 1) prevention, 2) coping and preparedness, and 3) reconstruction, of which prevention is the most important one.

Prevention is a set of measures adopted to prevent crises or reduce their harmful effects. Therefore, with extensive studies, it is possible to assess the level of risk in the community and with the necessary measures, including data collection, planning, organizing, creating management structures, training, and providing resources and facilities, reduce its level to an acceptable level (5).

Social responsibility reflects a company's strategic efforts to create economic value in creating value for society through meeting the needs and challenges facing the organization (6). The organization's efforts towards social responsibility include diversity, education, economic development, environment, and human rights, which take place through projects, such as motivation promotion and related issues, voluntary staffing, and the development of social responsibility business practices (7).

The formation of the social responsibility movement of organizations, especially the Crisis Management Organization, arises from two key factors. The first and most important factor is the support in times of crisis and the second factor is the growth of awareness of the consequences of changes caused by events. Neither of these two factors is specifically a new issue; however, what is new is the attention and acceptance of different parties and groups from these two categories (8).

Corporate social responsibility (CSR) is a highly broad concept that includes various dimensions. The central idea of this concept arises from the argument that a company should have other goals in addition to maximum profit. The concept of CSR has been divided into four different categories, namely economic, legal, ethical, and discretionary, which form the pyramid of CSR. The highest level includes a preventive approach in which organizations implement social initiatives (9).

In the field of crisis management, given the importance of accountability and what is agreed upon among numerous experts, the task of crisis management is to control the crisis in a short time using the best principles and methods. The process of action and planning of government officials and government and public executive bodies is directed toward preventing crises by observing and analyzing crises in an integrated, comprehensive, and coordinated manner using the available tools. In case of crisis occurrence, they should take actions to reduce it, prepare for it, provide quick relief, and improve the situation to the level of normalcy. In this regard, it is necessary to pay attention to the study of the impact of social responsibility on crisis prevention in the Crisis Management Organization of Iran. This issue transforms CSR from a mere sense of responsibility to an unavoidable priority on the managers' agenda.

Sánchez et al. (2020) examined corporate governance and CSR information disclosure. They stated that the characteristics and gender of the university president and the number of board meetings had no relationship with the policy of CSR information disclosure; nevertheless, leadership, board size, committees on the board, and shareholder participation were determinants of CSR information disclosure. The results of the mentioned study also showed that diversification of practices and communication with stakeholders were highly important for transparency and CSR information disclosure (10).

Davis et al. (2017) in examining the role of personal social responsibility as an element to promote CSR found CSR as a response to the increased demand of communities to create more responsible, ethical, transparent, and respectable public and private organizations. Citizens should also be responsible not only for their purchasing choices but also for the influence of their day-to-day actions and decisions on economic, social, and environmental issues (11).

Williams et al. (2019) in reviewing the development of CSR projects stated that although CSR was one of the important issues, little was known about how companies implemented CSR in practice (12).

Sánchez et al. (2019) found that CSR orientation was considered an important strategy to strengthen long-term competition around the world, which was also happening in African countries. They also concluded that in general, there was a positive understanding of the

economic, social, and environmental dimensions, although a special emphasis was placed on economic and social issues (13).

Domestically, Mohammadi et al. (2022) in analyzing the components of social responsibility as an ethical value in Islamic Azad universities, Iran, found the components of scientific and educational responsibility, economic responsibility, public responsibility to the society and local communities, legal responsibility, developmental responsibility, ethical responsibility, environmental responsibility, organizational responsibility, and technological responsibility, all of which were estimated to be above the average level (14).

Ghamkhoori and Vajargah (2020) in presenting the model of the impact of social responsibility in the field of e-commerce on competitive performance with an emphasis on company culture and services showed that social responsibility in the field of e-commerce had a positive and significant effect on competitive performance, and organizational culture and services played a mediating role in the effect of social responsibility on competitive performance (15).

Bakeri (2020) in a study on the role of entrepreneurial orientation and CSR on the organizational performance of the Electricity Company in Sari, Iran, showed that entrepreneurial orientation and CSR had a positive and significant effect on organizational performance (16). Alavi et al. (2020) in identifying the dimensions of the social responsibility of famous athletes reported political, economic, legal, social, humanitarian, environmental, media-news, and educational-sports responsibilities (17).

Kazemzadeh and Mohammadi Bazargani (2020) in the study of the impact of social responsibility on organizational productivity in the Bazargan Customs, Iran, found that other than economic responsibility, other relevant components, including legal, ethical, and discretionary responsibility among employees, had positive and significant effects on organizational productivity of the Bazargan Customs (18).

In the last few decades, the concept of social responsibility has been introduced as a key theme for organizations to address. The development of social responsibility in Iran is strongly related to the growing pressure of intense competition in the country's market. When a set of emerging conditions dramatically alters the common, predictable trends in workflow, activity, production, service, life, communications, public needs, health, environment,

or public opinion, a critical situation arises (19).

Crises do not themselves determine the extent of damage; rather it is the decision of crisis managers that determines the extent of the damage. Improper crisis planning and management constantly increase the scope of damage; that is why crisis planning and management have become absolutely necessary now. Crisis management means purposefully directing the progress of affairs to a controllable routine and expecting events to return to pre-crisis conditions as soon as possible.

This is one of the traps that usually puts pressure on crisis management officials from outside and is one of the most important factors in making wrong decisions and increasing the scope of the crisis (20). Therefore, this study aimed to investigate the effect of social responsibility components on crisis prevention and, by determining the impact of these components, take the necessary measures to increase the performance and efficiency of crisis management.

## Methods

In this research, in order to collect information related to the acceptance or rejection of research questions, the survey method was mainly used. For this purpose, to collect theoretical information related to the subject, related books and articles were reviewed, and the required data were collected from the managers and experts of the Crisis Management Organization, managers and experts of the general departments of crisis management in the provinces (subdivisions of provincial governments), and national and provincial managers of ten other agencies that were the members of the Supreme Council of Crisis Management. The statistical population consisted of 250 individuals, and the samples were selected using the relative stratified random sampling method. The sample size was determined at 150 individuals using Cochran's formula.

Inferential statistics were used to test the hypotheses, and the method of collecting data related to the hypotheses was through sampling from the statistical population. The instrument used to collect data was a 17-item researcher-made questionnaire with three main components (i.e., macro environment, organizational factors, and individual factors), along with the items, scored on a 5-point Likert scale (from 1=very low to 5=very high). Four items were dedicated to the demographic variables of gender, age, education, and work experience. The questionnaire was distributed in

seven components of social responsibility, namely environment, human rights, ethics, community, market, attitudes and values, and labor. Various statistical tests were used to analyze the data.

In order to provide a proper interpretation of the data in the demographic part, descriptive statistics were used to study the statistical population. The purpose of this analysis was to evaluate the gender, educational, and demographic spectrum of the studied samples so that a complete descriptive view of the subjects could be obtained.

After the descriptive analysis of the statistical population of the study, using inferential methods, a statistical analysis of the obtained data was performed to test the hypotheses in SPSS26 software using the t-test. Kolmogorov-Smirnov test was used to check the normality of the distribution of variables, and finally, confirmatory factor analysis modeling was used in the AMOS24 software.

#### **Validity and reliability of questionnaires**

The instrument used in this study was a questionnaire whose validity and reliability were confirmed in a preliminary study. The validity of the questionnaire depends on its accuracy of measurement and its consistency and reliability. The consistency and reliability of a questionnaire are determined over time and, in other words,

through the internal consistency of its questions (21). To confirm the content validity of a questionnaire after its compilation based on scientific components, the questionnaire is provided to experts to give their professional opinions on how to write the questions and determine the number of questions, the content of the questionnaire, the relationship between the questions and the options, and coordination of the questions with the objectives of the research.

After reviewing and considering the comments and suggestions, the final questionnaire is prepared and provided to a statistical sample of the research. Reliability is a scale for which most respondents get the same score at two different times. Unreliability is the result of unreliable items. Since it is often impossible to ask the same questions from the same respondents at two different times, the item-to-item correlation is measured. The reliability index of the whole scale is a statistic called alpha, which ranges from 0 to 1 (22). To determine the reliability (internal consistency) of the questionnaire, in a pilot study, the questionnaire was distributed among the eligible employees of the organization, which was finally calculated using the Cronbach's alpha coefficient (Table 1).

**Table 1.** Cronbach's alpha coefficient to calculate the reliability of the questionnaire

Components	Cronbach's alpha	Items	Cronbach's alpha
Macro environment	0.928	Technological factors	0.959
		Geographical factors	0.958
		Political factors	0.959
		Social factors	0.958
		Governing laws and regulations	0.959
		Economic factors	0.958
Organizational factors	0.948	Support from senior managers	0.958
		Organizational culture	0.959
		Organizational structure	0.958
Individual factors	0.940	Moral belief	0.959
		Environmental perception	0.961
		Pragmatism	0.959
		Realism	0.959
		Trying	0.959
		Sympathy	0.959
		Constructive personality	0.959
Positive emotions	0.959		

### Findings

To assess the demographic status of the sample members, four questions were asked. The results showed that out of 150 respondents, about 93.3% were men and about 6.7% of the cases were women, respectively (Table 2). In terms of age, 70% of the subjects were in the age range of 25-35 years. Approximately 52% of the sample

members had a master's degree, and 33% of the participants had 5-10 years of work experience.

Before examining the hypotheses, it is necessary to consider the mean and standard deviation between the research items. Among the research items, empathy score and technological factors had the highest and lowest scores, respectively (Table 3).

**Table 2.** Demographic characteristics of the samples

Variable	Levels	Percent	Variable	Levels	Percent
Gender	Male	93.3	Education	Bachelor's	24.7
	Female	6.7		Master's	52
Age (years)	<25	3		PhD	23.3
	25-35	70	<5	7	
	36-45	15	5-10	33	
	>45	12	11-15	23	
			16-20	16	
			>20	21	

**Table 3.** Descriptive statistics of the questionnaire items

Item	Mean	SD
Technological factors	2.96	0.919
Geographical factors	2.99	0.897
Political factors	3.03	0.941
Social factors	3.06	0.861
Governing laws and regulations	3.03	0.867
Economic factors	3.06	0.921
Support from senior managers	3.05	0.865
Organizational culture	3.05	0.805
Organizational structure	3.01	0.890
Moral belief	3.21	0.973
Environmental perception	3.11	0.928
Pragmatism	3.14	0.912
Realism	3.09	0.885
Trying	3.09	0.922
Sympathy	3.70	0.925
Constructive personality	3.07	0.970
Positive emotions	3.16	0.844

### Hypotheses testing

The purpose of testing statistical hypotheses is to check whether, based on the information obtained from the sample data, the assumption made about a feature of society is confirmed or not. This assumption, according to the purpose of the research, typically includes a claim about the value of a parameter of society. Therefore, a statistical assumption may be accepted or rejected. It should always be borne in mind that the acceptance of a statistical assumption may be due to insufficient evidence in the sample that prevents it from being rejected (23).

In this part, hypotheses were tested using a t-test. To examine the effect of social responsibility components on crisis prevention, a one-sample t-test was used, which is a parametric statistical test, since the distribution of most criteria was normal. Social responsibility was summarized in 3 components (Table 4), each containing items. Therefore, in order to evaluate the effectiveness, a test needed to be performed on each item of the component. To determine which point was considered the point of comparison, the answers to the Likert scale were summed up together and their means were calculated; regarding this, the sum of

**Table 4.** Classification of questionnaire items

Structure	Number of items per component
Macro environment	6
Organizational factors	3
Individual factors	8

**Table 5.** Results of the t-test for the items of each structure

	T-value	Degree of freedom	Sig	Mean difference	95% Confidence interval		Results
					Inf	Sup	
Technological factors	1.466	149	0.145	0.110	-0.04	0.26	Rejected
Geographical factors	1.865	149	0.064	0.137	-0.01	0.28	Rejected
Political factors	2.300	149	0.023	0.177	0.02	0.33	Accepted
Social factors	2.987	149	0.003	0.210	0.07	0.35	Accepted
Governing laws and regulations	2.497	149	0.014	0.177	0.04	0.32	Accepted
Economic factors	2.792	149	0.006	0.210	0.06	0.36	Accepted
Support from senior managers	3.878	149	0.005	0.203	0.06	0.34	Accepted
Organizational culture	2.990	149	0.003	0.197	0.07	0.33	Accepted
Organizational structure	2.248	149	0.026	0.163	0.02	0.31	Accepted
Moral belief	4.572	149	0.000	0.363	0.21	0.52	Accepted
Environmental perception	3.388	149	0.001	0.257	0.11	0.41	Accepted
Pragmatism	3.892	149	0.000	0.290	0.14	0.44	Accepted
Realism	3.368	149	0.001	0.243	0.10	0.39	Accepted
Trying	2.232	149	0.002	0.243	0.09	0.39	Accepted
Sympathy	4.281	149	0.000	0.323	0.17	0.47	Accepted
Constructive personality	2.820	149	0.005	0.223	0.07	0.38	Accepted
Positive emotions	4.498	149	0.000	0.310	0.17	0.45	Accepted

the numbers 1 to 5 was equal to 15 and their mean was equal to 3. Therefore, a mean greater than 3 was considered a claim, while a mean less than or equal to 3 was considered a null hypothesis.

Based on a one-sample t-test, the obtained significant levels for all factors, except technological and geographical factors, were less than 0.05 (Table 5); therefore, all these factors were different from the average of the community. On the other hand, the mean difference was positive in all factors; regarding this, all factors of social responsibility, except technological and geographical factors, had an impact on crisis prevention.

After fitting the model, the fitting indices were summarized in Table 6.

According to Table 6, all the values obtained

for the Chi-square divided by degree of freedom, the goodness of fit index, root mean square error of approximation, and comparative fit index were in the desired range, meaning that the model of the present study had a good fit; consequently, it can be concluded that the validity of the model was confirmed (Figure 1).

As you can be seen in Table 7, the t-values are greater than 1.96, meaning that all path coefficients were significant at the 95% confidence level. Decisions on the hypotheses should be made based on these values. In statistics, in order for a hypothesis to be confirmed at the 95% confidence level, the t-value corresponding to that test must be greater than 1.96. As shown in Table 7, since the t-values for all path coefficients were greater than 1.96, all path coefficients were significant.

**Table 6.** Fit indices for the conceptual model

Index	Acceptable fit	Values obtained from the scale
$\frac{\chi^2}{df}$	<3	1.302
Goodness of fit index	0.5-1	0.98
Root mean square error of approximation	0-1	0.045
Comparative fit index (modified)	>0.9	0.91

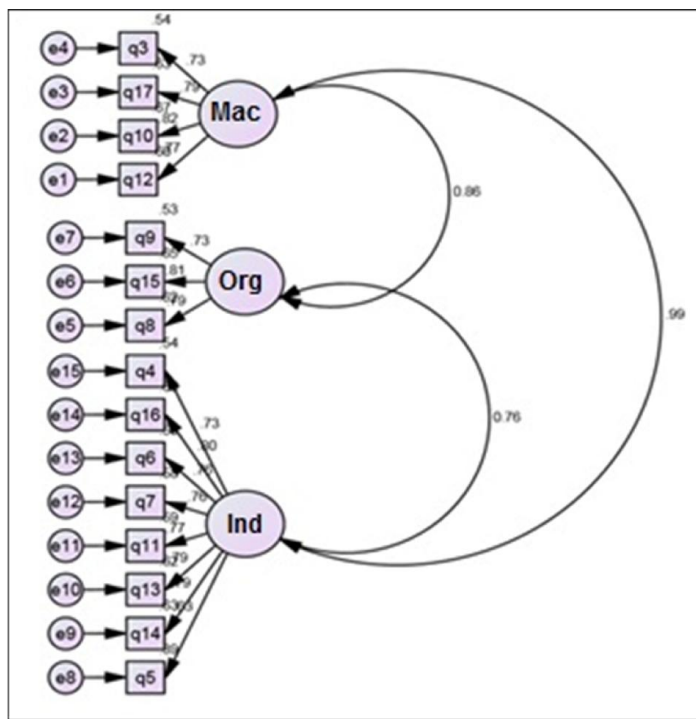


Figure 1. Concept model fitted with Amos-standard model

Table 7. Index of results from the evaluation of the fit of the structural model of the research

Model paths	Non-standard path coefficient	Standard path coefficient	t-value (Sig)	Sig
Macro ---> q12	1.000	0.772	2.789	0.04
Macro ---> q10	1.124	0.816	11.087	0.000
Macro ---> q17	1.020	0.793	10.693	0.000
Macro ---> q3	1.032	0.734	9.726	0.000
Organizational ---> q8	1.000	0.789	3.754	0.043
Organizational ---> q15	1.052	0.807	11.379	0.000
Organizational ---> q9	0.862	0.731	9.999	0.000
Individual ---> q5	1.000	0.627	2.731	0.000
Individual ---> q14	1.321	0.792	8.111	0.000
Individual ---> q13	1.257	0.790	8.097	0.000
Individual ---> q11	1.218	0.768	7.927	0.000
Individual ---> q7	1.161	0.762	7.885	0.000
Individual ---> q6	1.198	0.763	7.891	0.000
Individual ---> q16	1.168	0.805	8.208	0.000
Individual ---> q4	1.228	0.733	7.654	0.000

**Discussion and Conclusion**

Due to the harmful consequences and effects of crises, as well as the unpredictability or uncontrollability of their occurrence, to resolve crisis-related issues, it is necessary to employ a management mechanism, and a tool is required that can be used before, during, and after the crisis to prevent the crisis and be adopted to take the

necessary measures to reduce effects and complications of the crisis, provide quick relief, and improve conditions. These measures are aimed at saving; reducing waste and damages; preventing the disruption of life, production, and services; maintaining communication; and preserving the environment.

Social responsibility is defined as the activities that the employees of the organizations involved in

voluntarily helping the victims of natural and man-made disasters perform as effective and useful members of society. Adequate knowledge and strengthening the spirit of social responsibility among the employees of the organizations involved in helping the victims of natural and man-made disasters will lead to crisis prevention, which has great benefits for them and the organizations. Moreover, special attention of managers, employees, and authorities to this vital matter, particularly in their daily activities, while helping improve intra-organizational communication and increase employee's motivation to direct their professional behaviors, speeches, and organizational activities toward obtaining benefit from the organizational commitment and social responsibility and making necessary efforts to facilitate and accelerate the service delivery process to the organization's stakeholders, will have an important and significant effect in reducing the time of providing service to the target community and increase the sincere cooperation and participation of various organizational elements to better promote programs and strategies aimed at achieving the predetermined goals of the organization. According to the obtained results, all research hypotheses, except hypotheses 3 and 4 (i.e., technological factors and geographical factors), were accepted.

To the best of our knowledge, no research has been conducted investigating the social responsibility in crisis management; however, some research has been performed on other organizations. The findings of the present study were consistent with those of studies carried out by Mohammadi et al. (2022), Ghankhoori and Vajargah (2020), Bakeri (2020), and Alavi et al. (2020). Nevertheless, based on the findings of the study by Kazemzadeh and Mohammadi Bazargani (2020), except for economic responsibility, the impact of other components was significant. This inconsistency with the findings of the present study (non-confirmation of technological and geographical factors) is attributed to the nature of the description of organizational duties and different missions in the economic perspective of the Customs Organization with crisis management. Nonetheless, in other dimensions, such as the individual dimension, they pointed to the moral and honesty index, which was in line with the results of the present study; this consistency can be due to the closeness of

organizational culture in the two societies under study.

There is a general agreement with the findings of foreign research conducted by Sánchez et al. (2020), Sánchez et al. (2019), and Davis et al. (2017). However, in these studies, the components of social responsibility have not been addressed in detail. In general, as can be observed, the results of the current study were in line with those of previous research and reinforced each other. In other words, they expressed effective indicators of social responsibility in order to improve crisis management.

The results of the present research showed that the personal dimensions of social responsibility, including empathy, moral belief, environmental perception, constructive personality, positive emotions, pragmatism, trying, and realism, were effective in preventing crises. Accordingly, it is suggested to the managers of organizations involved in crisis management that at the time of recruiting, to achieve better results in social responsibility, perform personality tests and check the existence of such characteristics in individuals. Moreover, they are recommended that by formulating and implementing incentive policies for creating and strengthening the culture of empathy-pragmatism-trying, strengthen social responsibility as much as possible among the employees of the organization.

The effective organizational dimensions of social responsibility on crisis prevention included support from senior managers, organizational structure, and organizational culture. Therefore, senior organizational managers and officials in various departments who are responsible for planning, creating infrastructure, and providing the necessary resources for the development and issuance of rulings and circular letters are recommended that considering the special attention to the importance of social responsibility in organizations, by allocating appropriate budgets, expanding incentives appropriate to the individuals' dignity, and promoting employees, help strengthen social responsibility as much as possible and by providing legal requirements for senior managers encourage them to provide maximum support.

The macro dimensions of social responsibility effective in crisis prevention were found to be social factors, economic factors, governing laws and regulations, and political factors. Consequently, managers and officials in various

high-rank sectors, who are responsible for legislation and policy-making in order to achieve the country's macro-social, economic, and political goals, are suggested to develop the level and position of social responsibility in the country by enacting appropriate and consistent laws.

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### Conflict of Interests

Authors declared no conflict of interests regarding the publication of the present study.

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