

The Effect Of Human Resource Flexibility On Crises Management Effectiveness In Kuwaiti Contracting Companies.

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Abstract: The study aimed to verify the effect of human resource flexibility on crisis management effectiveness in Kuwaiti Contracting Companies. To measure human resource flexibility, a three-dimensional scale was adopted: skills flexibility, behavior flexibility and practices flexibility. To measure crisis management effectiveness, a three-dimensional component was used: responsiveness, communication and information and resource mobilization. To achieve the aims of the study, researchers used descriptive analytical method. To achieve the aims of the study researchers used descriptive analytical method. The study was conducted on a sample consisting of (237) companies active in the field of contracting. The results indicated that there are medium levels of human resource flexibility and crisis management effectiveness. The results indicated that there is a significant effect of human resource flexibility on crisis management effectiveness.

Index Terms: Human Resource Flexibility, Crises Management Effectiveness, Contracting Companies, Kuwait.

1. INTRODUCTION

Although the occurrence of crises is old since the old history, still the awareness of the administrative decision makers has not crystallized yet till the recent years, because of their acceleration, diversity and severity of sudden transformations in the situations, and the eliminated spatial and temporal dimensions between the events and those who are concerned, in addition to organizations abandoning their loyalty and the increase administrative entities feeling as part of greater and wider world than their specific and limited self-entity (Komasawa, Berg & Minam, 2018). All of this has pushed severely to the service the sense of the global crisis whatever is its locality. Today, the use of the scientific method as away for dealing with the crises has become more important and necessity not only because of achieving positive results, but also because of using the un-scientific alternative has results might be dreadful and greatly destructive. Because of the important and riskiness of the topic the crisis's, their management and treating them with the advanced managerial thinking, and for the organizations in the developing countries to follow-up the developed world, the managerial leaders in these organizations should make their decisions far from randomly and partial emotions, to bridge the gap between their organizations and organizations of the advanced countries and following them (Easton, 2017). Crisis's management term has flourished in the public administration science when it was used to indicate at a new method adopted by the governmental authorities and the public organizations to accomplish urgent tasks or to solve urgent dilemma, this has resulted in the appearance of the special tasks force, and management by exclusion, management by the objectives and the results, projects management, the idea the operation champers to manage the severe and explosive problems as crisis management (Watson, Rachel & Wadhwa, 2017). When the features of this method had been crystallized "Crisis Management", the question has risen about the possibility to transform it into an integrated made called "crisis management, by setting the organizational principles and rules for it to become administrative mode with specific features & distinguish mechanisms in confronting the multiple, spontaneous & successive crisis's" (Kuzmanova, 2016). Crisis's management indicates at overcoming the crisis with the different scientific managerial instrument, and avoiding

their negative effects and benefiting from their positive effects.

2. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

2.1 Human Resources Flexibility

Innovative and creative activities in the organizations depend on human resource knowledge, and level of their possession of the skills, and on degree of their commitment, since the way followed by the organizations to accommodate their employees skills and behaviors, also accommodating human resources management's practices according to the changes in these dynamic environments call for human resources flexibility which is considered an important source to achieve the competitive advantage and rising the organizations performance, (Tuan, 2016). Since the rapid dynamic changes push the organizations to adopt a chain of changes to adjust with the new conditions, and most of these changes require investments in human resources systems to make them more flexible, this has led to change in HRM function to a more strategic role, Justifying the need for flexible systems to deal with human resources, (Lastra., Alcazar & Gardey, 2014). So, it is possible o view human resources flexibility as dynamic capability for the organization because it focuses on the organization's internal adjustment with the changing environment in shadow of high degree of uncertainty to guarantee rapid response to the strategic demand (Do et al., 2016). Human resources flexibility expresses HRM ability in the organization in helping it in the adjustment and effectively respond, Just-in-time with the internal and external environmental changes through activating communications internally and externally, developing the skills and the behavior, and reformulating them, which help in achieving creativity, innovation, and achieving the competitive advantage for the organization (Al-Tai & Altameemi, 2016). Human resources flexibility is extracted from a chain of flexible organizational policies and practices designated to deal with the employees, which create in them sense of Job security, and that their organization cares about their well-being, needs, and problems, and helping them in dealing with their work's requirements (Michel & Michel, 2013). Human resources flexibility is defined as the extent the human resources in the organizations possession of the skills and behaviors to be able to develop strategic alternatives in frame of its competitive

environment (Garcia et al., 2017). Also, identified as the organizations distinguish aspect which includes three elements: employees skills, behavior, and HRM practices (Esfahani et al., 2017). Identified as extent of HR possession in the organization of skills and behaviors providing new choices to follow-up the strategic alternatives in the organization's competitive environment, also to what extent it is possible to determine the necessary practices to manage human resources, developing and executing them rapidly to achieve maximum limit of adjustment with the changes (Ngo., Loi & Foley, 2012). Human resources flexibility is considered generally as expressing the employees who enjoy wide and diversified skills, and have the ability to change their behaviors according to the new situation, also have the high ability of control and engage in the work, and the ability of the organization to modify human resources practices in it in consistence with the internal and external environmental changes, so it forms a sort of ability allows the organizations to respond to the changes in the markets requirements, and able to adjust, working successfully in the dynamic environment (Pradhan et al., 2017). Human resources flexibility focuses on the nature of the talented employees regarding their experiences, behavior, and their learning, and indicates at the ability to develop HRM system in the organization as a whole to compete based on rapid response to the environment (Kumari & Pradham, 2014). HR flexibility is considered as a dynamic capability at the organization level, it consists of the individuals who possess a group of diversified skills & behavioral references, also consists of HR practices that can be effectively used to respond to the changes in the market's requirements, and successfully adjust in a dynamic environment (Way et al., 2015). So, the independent variable will be measured in this research which represents HR flexibility through three dimensions: skills flexibility, behavior flexibility, practices flexibility (Al-Tai & Al-Tameemi, 2016, Mohammad, 2013, Pradham et al., 2017, Tuan, 2016, Garcia et al, 2017, Way et al., 2015, Do et al., 2016).

1. Skills Flexibility: Organizations that have skills flexibility feature in the employees are characterized by ability to employ those flexible skills to produce new and different products than products currently exist (Hijazi & Ma'aleem, 2013: 103). Skills flexibility indicates at the employee's procession of the required skills to perform their Jobs, and the ability to use this new skills rapidly, to help them in performing a wide range of new work activities successfully, to help the organization to expand its offered products, and satisfying the customers changing desires (Way et al., 2015). Skills flexibility expresses the employees possession of the skills to perform the roles, activities, and tasks, and the use of alternative techniques (Pradham et al., 2017). Also, skills flexibility expresses the employee's ability to learn and apply new skills, managing the present skills and show enthusiasm to learn new skills through looking at the new events as opportunity to learn something new (Al-Tai & Al-Tameemi, 2016). And it indicates at alternative possible wages to apply the employees' skills on them, and how it is possible to redistribute the individuals with different skills rapidly (Esfahani et al., 2017).

2. Behavior Flexibility: Behavior flexibility is linked with the adjustment with the new situations, getting away from the routine behavior, and the aptitude to use new behavior and accommodating them according to requirements of each case (Pradham et al., 2017), this is why employees are trained continuously, predicting the organization's needs of future

skills, and there should be enthusiasm in the employees to learn new ways for the present and new tasks, looking at each incident taking place in the organization as a way to learn something important for the future (Garcia et al., 2017). To be able to apply these behaviors appropriately in shadow of the different conditions instead of following specific procedures to enable the organization to respond to the changing situations, leading to increasing its competitive ability (Ngo et al., 2008).

Also behavior flexibility indicates at the employees' ability to adjust with the changing conditions, since they process a wide range of behavioral texts, to enable them to follow un-standardized procedures in dealing with the changing conditions (Do et al., 2016).

3. Practices flexibility: Indicates at the degree to which it is possible to accommodate and modify HRM function, and applying them inside the organization to respond to the internal and external environmental changes (Garcia et al., 2017), which requires changing the followed standards of HR practices in the organization such as modifying HR performance evaluation system & rewards systems, leading to enhance the employees adjusting and leading time behaviors (Way et al., 2015). Also leading to employees empowerment, increasing their ability to accede their roles, and adjust with the new roles (Tuan, 2016), helping the organizations in achieving the sustainable competitive advantage through building enthusiastic and motivated HR base, and the productive to be able to merge and re-formulate it to deal with the environmental changes (Bamela & Stoke, 2016). HR practices flexibility provides the knowledge's and skills needed for the employees to adjust with the new roles or the new work's paths, represent in HRM functions such as practicing the employees selection who have the personality or adjustable behavior, flexibility in practicing the training, providing them with the knowledge's and skills to have high trust to perform the new roles of the work (Tuan, 2016).

2.2 Crisis Management Effectiveness

Several industrial are especially vulnerable to many types of crises including natural disasters, political instability, terrorist attacks, infectious, diseases, industrial accidents, economic recession, and other crises. Such possible create pressure on business managers to plan and think strategically during a crisis by managing the positive opportunities and negative threat that crises present, (Karam, 2018). Crisis management can be achieved through the use of one or more of the following modes for crisis management which are (cooperation, confrontation, escaping, containment, or segmenting the crisis are modes of crisis management used by the managers) (Granvile, Mehta & Pike, 2016). Crisis management is defined as "the process that attempts to identify and predicts areas of crises, the development of actions or measures designed to prevent crises from occurring, minimizing the effects of disruption from a crisis (Vargo & Seville, 2011). In this study, the researchers relied on the following three dimensions to measure crisis management effectiveness:

1. Responsiveness: Effective management of crisis must plan for appropriate responses to help the company's employees to improve their skills in handling unanticipated challenges, from such situations, strategic planning is becoming critical to make sure that the business organization is ready and prepared to meet future difficulties (Al-Kharabsheh, 2018). Responding to a crisis can be described as active preparation for the worst

case situations through devising strategic that can minimize adverse effects on operations in the short and long term (Vargo & Seville, 2011). Since crises are incidents that suddenly occur, they demand quick responses, when companies are prepared for responding to the crisis, the better they will be able to handle and deal with the crisis through the decisions the managers made in order to minimize the negative influences of the crisis (Al-Mudallal et al., 2016).

2. Communication and Information: Crisis situations can happen anytime, ever where, and to anybody, but handling a crisis situation requires good communication, since the success rate in minimizing the damages often depends on what to who, and how to communicate. Crisis communication is very important between management teams and employees in any organizations it is considered as a distinct activity in the organization, through integrating crisis management with crisis communication in different strategies and tactics of the business (Bernstein, 2011). In a recent corporate crisis such as the Macondo oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico, had shed new light on lack of adequate information in managing that crisis and the primary challenge underlying the crisis responses is poor or even lack of communication: Technological, sociological and organizational communication. Nwabueze and Mileski (2018) including strategic planning, strategic formulation, application and analysis.

3. Resource mobilization: Good crisis management depends on management's ability to mobilize all available material resource organization to cope with the crisis. At this stage come the importance of strategic inventory and its use to confront the crisis (Granville et al., 2016). Crisis management must limit all available resources, determine their flexibility, and define the organizational paths for the movement of these resources at the appropriate speed. These resources are limited, whether they are currently available from them and that are in the form of a strategic reserve, as well as what can be provided in the future. The inventory process should be comprehensive and cost-effective (Nwabueze & Mileski, 2018).

3. Literature Review and Hypotheses

Crisis management and how to deal with them have received the interest of the business organizations management, and the interest of the researchers. This phenomenon has been addressed from its different sides; the researchers had reached different results, in a study conducted by (Lin, lee & Tsao, 2016). They found that crisis management mechanisms have been linked directly with the changes taking place on the external environment surrounding the public hospitals, and extent of the presence of a system monitoring the medical and managerial errors in the internal environment. While Cole (2015) study has showed the importance of planning for the crisis, and that the existing of effective plan for rapid and effective response to the crisis depends on the effective leadership. In another study conducted by Marshall (2015), its showed that the aptitudes stage and discovering the crisis is considered one of the important stages helping the management in reducing effects of the natural and human crisis, while Abouraia (2018) study has indicated at the basic causes of crisis occurrence in the airline flights, including, distraction, stress, pressure, terrorism, lack of communication, lack of knowledge, teamwork, and awareness. While Abdal Kader study (2017) has indicated at basic causes of occurrence of the crisis including the spread of rumors during

the crisis occurrence, ambiguity of the role of the concerned party in managing the crisis, following centralized method in issuing the decisions, the absence of clear strategic plans to confront the crisis. While Samaina & Al-Khadam study (2017) its results showed the absence of clear interest in the processes relating to the strategic planning, and the presence of differences in the employees estimation of crisis management methods attribute to gender variable and in favor of the males, also the study reached the absence of differences between the administrative employees in crisis management methods attribute to scientific qualification variable, and year of experience. In another study conducted by Ja'far (2018), its results indicated at an effect of strategic planning in reducing the crisis confronted by the employees in the public institutions, and the presence of effect of the strategic planning in crisis management. In the same context came results of Ghazi (2017) study, which confirmed the existence of a correlation and great influence between strategic planning processes and crisis management methods, since the relation was negative between strategic planning and the escape method, and positive between strategic planning and confrontation method, cooperation, and containment. While Al-Shobaki, Abu Amuna & Abu Naser (2016) study showed that top management provides the required human resources for the strategic planning but without financial support, and there are deficits in the way the organization managing the crisis before and after its occurrence. Kaman (2018) study showed the presence of correlation and significant effect between strategic planning processes and crisis management methods, and the relation was negative between strategic planning and escape, and positive with confrontation, cooperation and containment. Also the results indicated at the essential role of strategic planning in the crisis times to improve the hotels capability to survive and thrive in crisis confrontation, and managers who practice strategic planning will be more able to manage the crisis, either through using the cooperation and confrontation of containment. From the other side, Beedaweid (2014) study showed the presence of a relation and significant influence between processes strategy and crisis management effectiveness, at the same direction, Al-Aloassi., Badwai & Al-Akeedi (2019) study showed the presence of an influence and significant relation between requirements of strategic planning success and crisis management strategies. Al-Megdab (2014) has indicated at the presence of a relation and influence of the administrative empowerment in crisis management effectiveness, and the basic elements supporting the organization work represent in the need for the administrative empowerment, such as supporting crisis management effectiveness that should be announced by the organization and adopting it if it wants to achieve the competitive excellence in shadow of the rapid changing and dynamic environment. Also, Al-tai & Al-Tameemi (2016) study indicated at the presence of influence of HR flexibility in team work performance, and skills flexibility received the highest correlation value, confirming its effective role in speed of the businesses accomplishments, and adjusting with the occurring changes. At the same direction, Mohammad's study (2013) has indicated at the presence of a relation and effect between HR flexibility and operational performance indicators (effectiveness and competence), while results of Nikkha, Niya and Moradi (2019) study has confirmed the presence of significant relation between HR flexibility and employees

productivity, and skills, flexibility has big role in rising effectiveness which positively reflects on the employees productivity. Pradhan et al., (2017) study showed the presence of great influence of HR flexibility in organizational effectiveness and organizational citizenship behavior has great influence in the relation between HR flexibility and organizational effectiveness.

In light of results from the previous studies, researchers can formulate the following hypothesis:

H1: There is effect of human resource flexibility on crisis management effectiveness of Kuwaiti Contracting Companies.

H2: There is effect of human resource flexibility on responsiveness of Kuwaiti Contracting Companies.

H3: There is effect of human resource flexibility on communication and information of Kuwaiti Contracting Companies.

H4: There is effect of human resource flexibility on resource mobilization of Kuwaiti Contracting Companies.

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1 Sample

The study population represents the entire first and second category contracting companies operating in the capital Kuwait, numbering (292) a company registered in the Contractors Union in Kuwait for the year 2020. The researchers conducted a comprehensive survey of these companies by distributing an electronic questionnaire on their websites. The number of companies that participated in the referendum reached (237) companies. This represents the number of questionnaires that were subjected to statistical analysis.

3.2 Measurement

To measure the study variables, researchers investigated the measures used in previous studies that were tried and indicated a high degree of reliability. To measure human resource flexibility, the three-dimensional scale was used: skills flexibility, behavior flexibility and practices flexibility proposed by Way, Tracey, Fay, Wright, Snell, Chang & Gong (2015) composed of (22) items distributed by (8) items for skills flexibility, (6) items for behavior flexibility and (8) items for practices flexibility. To measure crisis management effectiveness, the scale mentioned in Bedaweed (2019) study consisting of three dimensions was adopted: responsiveness, communication and information and resource mobilization consisting of (12) items distributed by (4) items for responsiveness, (4) items for communication and information and (4) items for resource mobilization. Table (1) shows the Cronbach alpha values for these measures, which exceeded (0.70) and are the lowest value that can be accepted for the purposes of statistical analysis (Sekaran & Bougie, 2012, 325).

4. RESULTS

Table (1) shows the results of the descriptive analysis of the collected data. The results indicated that there are medium levels of dimensional behavioral flexibility and practices flexibility with an average of (3.521, 3.548). While level of skills flexibility was high with an average value of (3.760). As for the dimensions of crisis management effectiveness, the results of the analysis indicated that mean values of all of them were at

intermediate levels (3.481, 3.617, 3.583) higher for communications and information.

Table (1) Descriptive Statistics Results

Variable	Items	Alpha	Mean	Std.
Skills flexibility	8	0.860	3.760	0.690
Behavior flexibility	6	0.872	3.521	0.820
Practices flexibility	8	0.792	3.548	0.634
Responsiveness	4	0.819	3.481	0.711
Communication and Information	4	0.894	3.617	0.692
Resources Mobilization	4	0.786	3.583	0.684

H1. There is effect of human resource flexibility on crisis management effectiveness of Kuwaiti Contracting Companies.

Table (2) Effect of human resource flexibility on crisis management effectiveness

Dimension	B	T	Sig.
Skills flexibility	0.364	3.434	0.001
Behavior flexibility	0.125	1.374	0.171
Practices flexibility	0.240	2.475	0.014
R =0.470	R ² = 0.221	F=18.915	Sig.=0.000

Table (2) indicates the results of the multiple regression of the effect of human resource flexibility on crisis management effectiveness in Kuwaiti contracting companies. The results showed that there is a significant effect of human resource flexibility on crisis management effectiveness, where the value of R² reached (0.221). This means that flexibility of human resource explained (22.1%) of the variation in crisis management effectiveness and the value of F (18.915) reached the level of Sig. (0.000). Regarding the effect of each dimension of human resource flexibility, it was found that there was a significant effect of two dimensions of human resource flexibility on crisis management effectiveness, namely: skills flexibility and practices flexibility, as values of B (0.364, 0.240) and value of T (3.434, 2.475) significantly (0.000). While behavior flexibility did not have a significant effect on crisis management effectiveness, as the effect of Sig. reached (0.171) which is greater than (0.05).

H2: There is effect of human resource flexibility on responsiveness of Kuwaiti Contracting Companies.

Table (3) Effect of human resource flexibility on responsiveness

R	R ²	B	F	Sig.
0.268	0.072	0.388	15.681	0.000

Table (3) presents the results of the simple regression analysis of the effect of human resource flexibility on responsiveness to crises. The results indicated that there was a significant effect of human resource flexibility on responsiveness to crises, as the value of R² (0.072) this means that human resource flexibility explained (7.2%) in the variation in responsiveness to crises. The value of B (0.388) and the value of F (15.681) were significantly (0.000).

H3: There is effect of human resource flexibility on communication and information of Kuwaiti Contracting Companies.

Table (4) Effect of human resource flexibility on communication and information

R	R ²	B	F	Sig.
0.395	0.156	0.603	37.401	0.000

Table (4) presents the results of the simple regression analysis of the effect of human resource flexibility on

communication and information. The results indicated that there is a significant effect of human resource flexibility on communication and information, where the value of R^2 (0.156). This means that human resource flexibility explained (15.6%) in the variance in communications and information. The value of B (0.603) and the value of F (37.401) were significantly (0.000).

H4: There is effect of human resource flexibility on resource mobilization of Kuwaiti Contracting Companies.

Table (5) Effect of human resource flexibility on resource mobilization

R	R^2	B	F	Sig.
0.367	0.135	0.508	31.426	0.000

Table (5) presents the results of the simple regression analysis of the effect of human resource flexibility on resource mobilization. The results indicated that there is a significant effect of human resource flexibility on resource mobilization as the value of R^2 (0.135) this means that the flexibility of human resource flexibility explained (13.5%) in the variance in resource mobilization. The value of B (0.508) and the value of F (31.426) were significantly (0.000).

5. DISCUSSION

In this study researchers tried to test the effect of human resource flexibility on crisis management effectiveness in Kuwaiti Contracting Companies. After research and analysis, the study results indicated that there are medium levels of two dimensions of human resource flexibility, namely behavior flexibility and practices flexibility, while the level of skills flexibility was high. The researchers believe that the nature of the activity practiced by these companies needs a high degree of flexibility for the purpose of applying the principle of substitution among employees according to what the work need requires. On the contrary, the need for flexibility in behavior may be less than the need for it due to the limited interaction of employees in these companies with parties outside the company's borders, which makes the presence of medium levels of behavior flexibility a natural matter. The results showed that there are medium levels for all dimensions of crisis management effectiveness, as these companies suffer from some kind of slow pace in responsiveness and taking appropriate decisions to face the crises they are exposed to. In addition to not having the necessary capacity to mobilize resources, whether material or moral, to confront these crises. The results showed that there is a significant effect of human resource flexibility on crisis management effectiveness, especially after dimension skills flexibility and practices flexibility, as these companies need, at the time of exposure to crises, to have employees who have multiple skills for the purpose of maneuvering them by converting them to work in other disciplines as needed. The results showed that there is a significant effect of human resource flexibility on all dimensions of crisis management effectiveness, this means that whenever the company has high flexibility in its human resource in terms of skill, behavior and practices, the more effective it is in responsiveness to crises, its ability to communicate and provide information as well as in mobilizing the necessary resource to face crises.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

1. There is an imperative to increase the interest of construction companies in developing the skills of

their employees because of their importance in their ability to carry out many new work activities, enabling the company to expand the scope of its services in an effort to meet the desires of its customers. To achieve this, these companies can use the work team's mechanism to raise the skills of their employees, in addition to using the method of job recycling for employees.

2. Contracting companies should pay attention to human resource management practices and their applications in a manner that ensures their response to appropriate changes in the internal and external environment. This can be achieved by adopting a performance appraisal system that encourages initiation in order to respond to the dynamic changes taking place in the environment.
3. The need for construction companies to recognize the importance of rapid response to crises and to take appropriate decisions so that they can stop stopping them in their initial stages or reduce their negative effects by collecting the necessary information on them from all parties and facilitate the communication process to obtain creative ideas that help reduce the strength of the crisis and its repercussions, in addition to quickly diagnose the company's resources and use them economically.

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