

Example of the shootings at columbine high school: the law enforcement response c...

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The case study is important for it brings to light essential matters of coordination and efficiency in addressing critical incidents. Students need to spend some time on it so as to learn from the mistakes and oversights committed by responsible officers that led to the losses both in terms of lives and property. Indeed, it must be appreciated that the approach by the response teams was not necessarily the most tactical and that a more prepared team would have saved more lives in good time. The case falls within this article for it shows the role of administrative communication and how it interfaces with other matters when the crisis strikes. It gives the students a chance to relate the essence of management and effective communication among law enforcement officers and other related personnel.

The case essentially flows from the point at which the two gun men, Eric Harris and Dylan Klebold, previously students of the school began shooting after the bombs failed to explode. From hence, the County Sheriff is alerted and he begins his journey towards the field. Meanwhile, the two gun men proceed with the shoot-out. The two briefly exchange fire with Deputy Gardner just outside school before the latter enter the school premises. They kill at least eleven students and seriously injure Dave Sanders leaving him for the dead. The two then commit suicide in the library where several other students are hiding and trapped not knowing whether other gun men are present. The bleeding to deaths sign in the window of a class informs outsiders of the need to rescue the students and teachers trapped in the classes. The SWAT splits into two. The first team rescues first sixty students and then another sixty students who are evacuated immediately. The second

team reaches Dave Sanders who is then pronounced dead. SWAT team enters the library where they find twelve dead including the two gunmen. They rescue one girl who had been previously trapped. The SWAT then conducts another round of search and fails to discover any further gunmen. The bomb technicians carry their search and the day is brought to a close with parents of missing parents being required to return home for the night. The next day, the search and identification of bodies begin as early as seven thirty. It turns out that the two rogue students had decided to carry out the murders.

Indeed a number of issues need to be highlighted and noted in the case. First the reaction of the law enforcement officers to the distress messages that reached their offices. It is illustrative to note the manner in which Jefferson County Sheriff reacted. He later confessed that he had only anticipated a grisly road accident. He is soon confronted with a worse situation. In addition, the manner of reaction by the field officer attached to Columbine exposes his unpreparedness. He has less superior armory and his firing back at the two gunmen was insufficient in stopping any damage in terms of deaths and the entrapment of the students. The slow response in terms of coordinating the SWAT teams and other related response teams need to be noted. In fact, it is noteworthy that Columbine though within the jurisdiction of Jefferson County only, drew reaction from across the Sheriffs. However, the manpower was not well coordinated to at least save the dying persons and enable a last minute rescue. Indeed, it is interesting that only a single girl was saved from the library despite the fact that the teacher had communicated to the officers and even offered a route on how to access the

place. It comes out that the uncoordinated approach in which law enforcement officers tackled the issue could have been responsible for the adverse damage. In addition, the ill preparation seen for example in the field officer Gardner disabled some personnel the capacity to effectively avert the crisis. One wonders whether the deaths would have been much if the gunmen would have been cornered at the point they exchanged fire with Gardner. Lastly, it would have been essential for the diverse critical management team to have been coordinated.

The case study brings out the essence of preparedness and coordination of efforts in crisis management. It strictly brings out the factors that ought to be considered in devising the best approach to crisis and emergency situation management. It equally brings out the essential role of communication process in administrative functions. The answers the case provides include the need for coordination and a harmonized nature of implementing a crisis situation. It calls for the law enforcement officers, the media and related functional units to ensure they work in a coordinated and structured manner in handling crisis or emergency situations. From the case it can be drawn as an implication that coordination and communication of integrated services especially in cases of emergencies needs to be performed in a structured manner that is expeditious and responsive to the circumstances of the cases involved. In conclusion it is the position of this paper that coordination and communication in management of critical accidents is important.

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Blackwell Publishing Ltd 008 10. 1111/j. 1751-9020. 2007. 00008. x June

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