

# Leadership style and crisis management assignment

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In this paper have summarized the article and offer comments on where additional research would assist in further understanding of the issue. The authors of this article used retrospective review which uses existing data and researches. Leadership style and crisis management have always been the main topics in the wake of a disaster and are always a debate topic between the public and the politicians in power.

The reason this article seemed more interesting is that I personally followed up on all the media coverage on the issue of Strain and believed that the government at the time failed on so many levels to meet the affected people's need for health and safety. On the other hand it is interesting to know how the government would implement the existing policies in the wake of unexpected catastrophes. Article Summary This article explains the leadership styles and public criticism frequently after the crisis and how the administrations manage the blame and apply these intents to President's bush response to Hurricane Strain in 2005.

The article mainly emphasizes that at the time of crisis the leaders are facing three crucial challenges: Facing Inquiries, Dealing with public criticism, and coping with political verdict. The authors are trying to explain the leaders' response to these challenges in terms of their leadership style. According to the Psychological research used in the article, two important characteristics of leadership style are: 1- Need for control and involvement and 2- Sensitivity to context, which may explain the leaders' response in time of crisis.

Leaders with high need for control, tend to be in front and centre and appear to be “hands on” leaders Vs. leaders with less need for control, known as “business executive” style, which allocate responsibility to particularly selected subordinates. The leaders with higher involvement are seen more for their fine work and are more in danger of being blamed and criticized as the result of their failure. In contrast, less controlling leaders are at risk for not being realized for their great job or receiving a large amount of blame in times of failure.

The second characteristic, sensitivity to context, indicated the need for information before making a decision, the higher their need for information on the context the longer time they may take to make a decision and better chances of being a high quality decision. According to the author, President Bush’s leadership style appeared to be “hands-off” crisis management style. His leadership style made him and his administration more vulnerable to be blamed for being out of touch with events, and insensitive to the situation of people affected by Strain.

The authors in this article are pointing out two important aspects of a leadership style and try to explain the leader’s coping system they choose in order to deal with all the criticism and drama following a disaster/crisis. For example one dimension that is pointed out is the “sensitivity to context”, which the authors are linking to the response time. Leaders with emphasis on information and detailed discussion on the issue may take more time to make a crucial decision. Unfortunately, this could put them at a

disadvantage of being criticized in times that people's health and safety are in danger.

On the other hand presidents with not as much need for a wide range of information and rely more on their circle of advisors can make quick decision at time of crisis. According to the authors this type of decision making may as well put the administration in danger of being perceived as thoughtless and reckless. This means different type of leaders may face different challenges when it comes to blame management at time of crisis. As we have learned in sessions it is very hard to measure the public service and government's work end result as its goals are quite different than the private sector.

But at times of crisis the way leaders respond and how quick and efficient they decide when people's life and safety is at risk is a measure of how successful they are. In the case of Hurricane Strain media coverage on desperate people trapped in superdome, in anticipation of rescue, were the measure of leaders failure in the public eye. Political leaders have also much more attention from the media therefore it is vital to engage in mindful blame management strategies.

Dealing with the aftermath of the crisis is also important assessment of the government. For instance, as it is mentioned in the article President Bush did not visit New Orleans, he rather flew over the affected area, and this act clearly did not help his image and made him look insensitive and careless.

Article Limitations This article focuses mainly on only one particular situation

and that can not be generalized to various critical situations political leaders may face during their leadership period.

It also indicates that every leadership style would leave the leader vulnerable to some sort of blame attribution post crisis; what it does not identify is whether or not there is a link between leadership characteristics and the leaders blame management strategies. It would be beneficial to see some research in that area, hence future research could look at different leadership style in diverse emergency situations and the leaders' management strategies.

It would have been in their advantage to use some official records of the government administration decision making process on the issue of Strain; the authors have relied on journalist's reports which could be biased, since President Bush administration did not enter the Strain crisis with a clean slate (many were still blaming them for Iraq war and so on The most appealing part of the article is the Table used to list the dimensions of leadership style and the challenges each will face in the wake of a crisis.

Based on this 2 by 2 table each style has its own advantages and vulnerabilities that could put the leader in front line of public blame. The time to make a decision in critical situation is an absolute crucial point which can work both ways, sometimes being able to make a quick decision in times of emergency may be received as either more decisive or reckless, on the other hand if they spend longer time to do wider range of research on the context it may be perceived The least interesting part of the article is that it does not as incompetence. Roved any explanation regarding the relationship

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between the leadership style and the leaders' crisis management skills. The argument provided by the authors is definitely persuasive and interesting but it could have been more logical and convincing if there was a comparison between President Bush's crisis response and his previous presidents in a similar situation.