Crisis Management Research (2014-2023) in the MICE Industry: A Review and Research Agenda

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Abstract: The 21st century is seen as a volatile business environment and requires a proper crisis management standard for most organizations including the MICE sector. Nowadays, managers seek to deal with a potential crisis effectively, with minimum losses or to avert the potential crisis in the best case. The goal is obvious: minimize the impact of the crisis or avoid a potential crisis. This study aims to investigate relevant research domains in the MICE/business events industry context. This paper found that there was very limited study on the topic. The topic of crisis management in the MICE/business events industry only started to gain much attention after COVID-19. To understand how crisis management practices have been adopted in the industry, the authors reviewed 32 articles including 29 papers on COVID-19, spanning 10 years, between 2014 and 2023. The findings showed that the research focuses on crisis management, crisis impact, response, resilience, communication, and recovery. Looking back, health-related crises (including COVID-19), political disturbances and terrorism themes are the biggest trends. This study addressed the need for more study on the topic for advancing knowledge, addressing emerging challenges, and applying findings to improve practice and decision-making as well as to develop a newly conceptual framework that places operational resilience on an equal footing with financial resilience, with indicators adapted to the risk profile of the operating model.

Keywords: Crisis management, MICE, Business events, Disaster management

1. Introduction and Background

The United Nations-World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) Glossary of Terms does not provide a distinct definition for business tourism or MICE. However, literature about business tourism characterizes it based on the extent of business-related activities within the context of tourism (Hussain et al., 2014). For instance, Haven-Tang et al., (2007) have expounded on the concept of business events, elucidating its comprehensive scope as encompassing various types of trips directly linked to a traveller's professional or business pursuits. These encompass a wide range of activities, such as conferences, meetings, exhibitions, trade fairs, and corporate hospitality events. Business events play a crucial role as a pivotal service sector, serving as a socioeconomic catalyst for nations (Kerr et al., 2012). It plays a dual role by not only generating substantial revenue but also providing crucial support to interconnected industries, including hotels, attractions, and meeting facilities (Sable & Bhandalkar, 2019). Nevertheless, there are instances when destinations confront crises and disasters, where business events assume a significant role in facilitating post-crisis or disaster recovery, as emphasized by (Chan & King, 2020), and necessitates the implementation of relevant risk-reducing strategies (Neef & Grayman, 2018).

Crisis management framework is a critical aspect for all industries including business events, particularly considering the COVID-19 pandemic to address potential risks and ensure the safety of their attendees (Kaushal & Srivastava, 2021). In addition, comprehensive protection for businesses in the event industry should encompass crisis management strategies that encompass employee health and wellness, financial stability, legal matters, and customer service (Rudolph et al., 2021). The crisis management framework involves a set of processes and procedures designed to mitigate the impact of crises on businesses. This framework includes four phases: prevention, preparedness, response, and recovery (PPRR) (Wang & Belardo, 2005). The prevention phase involves identifying potential risks and taking proactive measures to prevent crises from occurring (Al-Dabbagh, 2020). The prevention phase encompasses organizational preparedness, where changes in culture, design, or structure can proactively prevent system failures. Additionally, fostering strong relationships with stakeholders can decrease the likelihood of a crisis. These preventive measures are implemented before a crisis occurs. In the context of the coronavirus pandemic, they would have included enhancing health standards and swiftly containing the initial cases as preventive actions, along with bolstering

precautionary measures and healthcare capacity as part of the preparation effort (Bundy et al., 2017). The preparedness phase involves developing plans and procedures to respond to crises (Al-Dabbagh, 2020) which possibility to postpone the occurrence of the crisis (Pedersen et al., 2020). The response phase involves implementing these plans and procedures to manage the crisis (Al-Dabbagh, 2020) which typically has a tactical focus and involves communication (Coombs, 2007), while the recovery phase involves restoring normal business operations (Al-Dabbagh, 2020). The resulting outcome is likely contingent upon various systems, such as organizations, networks, or countries. Systems that deteriorate following a crisis are considered vulnerable, those that recover effectively are deemed resilient, and systems that thrive and become stronger as a result of adversity are referred to as antifragile (Manyena, 2006; Taleb, 2012) These systemic outcomes are also interconnected with the level of preparedness exhibited by organizations during the pre-crisis phase and their actions throughout the three key phases of the crisis (Pedersen et al., 2020).

2. Literature Review

The growth of MICE tourism, recognized as one of the earliest forms of travel, can be largely attributed to the phenomenon of globalization (Davidson & Cope, 2003; Rogerson, 2015). The MICE industry, also known as Business Tourism and Business Events, encompasses a service sector that amalgamates the realms of travel, trade, transportation, and finance. The acronym "MICE" denotes Meetings, Incentives, Conferences, and Exhibitions. This industry stands out as one of the most vibrant and dynamic sectors, having undergone gradual evolution over an extended period. Its origins can be traced back to the early records, which highlight the imperative of knowledge sharing and product exchange through interactive gatherings (Kapia, 2021). In the context of today's globalized world, the ease and rapidity of travel have heightened the susceptibility of tourism to a multitude of risks. Tourism has demonstrated its vulnerability as a sector, having been profoundly impacted by various crises. The World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) has categorized these crises into five distinct categories which are environmental crises, societal and political, health-related, technological and economic, and climate change and global health emergencies have been identified as the two most critical factors for the tourism industry (UNWTO, 2012). The alarming rise in pandemics since 2000, connected to changes in the environment around the world, should be noted. However, the frequency of infectious disease risk was ranked third-last, and the severity of its impact was ranked tenth in the World Economic Forum's Global Risk Report 2020 (Kapia, 2021).

Given the impact of globalization and the rapidly changing market dynamics in today's business environment, crisis management has become a standard topic for organizational managers to address (Vašíčková, 2019). Besides that, in light of the worldwide occurrence of the COVID-19 pandemic and the subsequent economic challenges experienced by numerous nations, crisis management has once again become a focal point for organizations and research efforts (Qiu et al., 2020). Crisis management encompasses the domain of risk management, as crises arise when risks are not adequately and efficiently handled. For example, in the business tourism context, failure to prioritize risk management by service providers may potentially endanger the safety and well-being of tourists (Wut et al., 2021). The current concept of crisis management emphasizes the importance of adopting a proactive management style. This involves daily tasks for managers to identify warning signals that could potentially lead to a crisis and implement measures to safeguard the organization against future crises (King, 2002; Robert & Lajtha, 2002; Wang & Belardo, 2005). According to Kothai (2002), responding quickly, positively, and effectively to a crisis can not only help to manage the situation, but also result in increased market share, better employee relations, and an improved public perception of the organization. The idea of disruption is not a recent one as it has been a part of business conversations for a while. Business leaders have attempted to comprehend, anticipate, and at times, even instigate disruption (Markides, 2006). To help businesses to provide a fast response to a crisis, having a crisis management framework is important.

There are several review papers on crisis management and recovery. A survey of 64 articles published between 2000 and 2012 on post-crisis recovery was done by Mair et al. (2016). The tourism crisis and disaster were also the subject of a brief synopsis. The three domains included crisis readiness and planning, crisis response and recovery, and crisis resolution and reflection (Aliperti et al., 2019). Ritchie & Jiang (2019) analyzed 142 papers on tourist crisis and disaster management. According to them, it was discovered that the publications, including the framework testing, lacked conceptual and theoretical underpinning and displayed uneven study

themes. A bibliometric analysis conducted by Zhu et al. (2019) in 2019 found that COVID-19 and crisis management were among the top six major themes impacting business economics (Bauwens et al., 2022). Bibliometric analysis is a powerful tool for understanding the current state of the business events industry and predicting its future. By examining the literature related to business events, bibliometric analysis can provide insight into emerging trends, new technologies, and changes in customer preferences. With this information, businesses will be better equipped to make informed decisions about their strategies for success in the business events space (Verma & Gustafsson, 2020).

A bibliometric analysis conducted by Wut et al. (2021) synthesized theoretical insights and empirical findings in crisis leadership literature. Similarly, Bukar et al. (2020) presented a synthesis and critical assessment of state-of-the-art crisis management research in hospitality, categorizing articles based on a three-phase framework: pre-crisis, crisis, and post-crisis, which followed the traditional classification of the three-stage crisis management model by Richardson (1994). These studies highlight the importance of crisis management research in the hospitality and tourism industry, including the business events industry. Wut et al. (2021) also stated that past literature reviews emphasized only the research published in top academic journals. However, since crisis management is an interdisciplinary field, Zanfardini et al. (2016) concluded that literature reviews should not be limited to journals with the highest impact factors. Related papers may also exist in lower-impact factor journals. As a result, it would be beneficial to survey journals with lower influence, and this study would also provide insight into those works.

The primary objective of this study is to conduct a comprehensive and systematic examination and evaluation of the existing literature on crisis management within the business tourism or MICE industry. As the field of research continues to expand, a noticeable increase in scholarly papers has been observed in the past decade. Moreover, because of COVID-19, it is anticipated that a significant number of research papers focusing on the implications of the global health crises will emerge soon. By conducting a thematic content analysis of relevant peer-reviewed journal articles, this study aims to identify the current trends, major themes, and agenda for future investigations. As a result, this study seeks to address the following research goals:

- What are the main themes of crisis management literature in the MICE industry?
- What is the future research agenda regarding the MCIE industry and crisis management?

3. Research Methodology

This systematic review of literature followed the procedure outlined in the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-analysis (PRISMA). The process involved: 1) identifying relevant articles from various databases and sources, 2) collecting records while eliminating duplicates, 3) screening the obtained records, 4) evaluating full-text papers to determine eligibility, and 5) incorporating selected studies into the qualitative synthesis (Liberati et al., 2009).

This article conducted a literature search in electronic databases to locate peer-reviewed journal articles concentrating on crisis management within the business events industry, particularly targeting journals published since 2014. The search encompassed various academic platforms, including Science Direct, Emerald, Web of Science, Taylor & Francis Online, Scopus and Google Scholar databases. These databases were chosen to collect academic journal papers related to the specified topic. This method was deemed appropriate for comprehensively analyzing existing literature, given the interdisciplinary nature of the subject (Wut et al., 2021). The literature search was structured using five keywords: 'crisis management,' 'crisis,' 'disaster management', 'business events,' 'MICE,' and 'meetings.' Papers selected for further analysis fulfilled the following criteria.

- Peer-reviewed articles.
- Date Published: 2014-2023
- Source: Academic Journals
- Language: English
- Seeks to study crisis management in the business events/MICE industry.

The search was performed on 16th February 2024 and in total, 32 papers were generated from the literature search which involves different combinations of keywords. The earliest article was published in 2014. Overall, the selected articles were published between 2014 and 2023. The authors assessed the full-text papers retrieved for inclusion in this review.

The titles, abstracts, and complete texts of the papers underwent thorough review and examination. Following the acquisition of initial results, a screening procedure was implemented to eliminate articles not aligning with the predetermined relevance criteria for this study. Only articles satisfying the inclusion criteria were preserved for subsequent analysis, with those failing to meet the criteria being excluded from the final pool of analyzed articles. Attention was paid to the key topics of each article, and they were assigned to one of the six crisis types: political crisis, financial crisis, health crisis, natural disaster and terrorism. Subsequently, the research emphases of the articles were determined and summarized. The identification procedure was executed through content analysis, employing an inductive methodology. In instances where uncertainty regarding classification arose for a specific paper, a novel category was formulated to mitigate ambiguity (Eisenhardt, 1989).

In cases where a paper addressed multiple topics such as crisis prevention and crisis preparedness, it was categorized under the umbrella of crisis management (multiple topics). Consequently, 8 distinct research themes were identified within the broader domain of crisis management, encompassing crisis impact, crisis recovery, crisis resilience, crisis communication, crisis response, crisis event (description, and crisis management (organizational) learning.

4. Results and Discussion

Journals, authors, and year of publication: The result indicates that there were 21 journals. Among these 21 journals, Asia Pacific International Events Management Journal published one paper, Asia-Pacific Journal of Innovation in Hospitality and Tourism (APJIHT) published one paper, Empirical Economics published one paper, Event Management published three papers, GeoJournal of Tourism and Geosites published one paper, International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management published one paper, International Journal of Religious Tourism and Pilgrimage published one paper, Journal of Accountancy and Management published one paper, Journal of Business, Innovation and Sustainability published one paper, Journal Of Convention & Event Tourism published one paper, Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Insights published two papers, Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Management published one paper, Journal of Korea Trade published one paper, Journal of Tourism and Service published one paper, Museum International published one paper, Tourism Review International published one paper and Tourism Management Perspectives published two papers, Tourism Review International published one paper and Tourism Management published one paper.

Overall, there was a notable preference for event-focused journals, with 9 and 3 papers about the topic of crisis management and its associated research objectives. Within the subset of event-focused journals, the International Journal of Event and Festival Management emerged as the predominant publication outlet.

Table I: Summary of List of journals (N=32)

	Journal	Year	Total
		Published	
1.	International Journal of Event and Festival Management	2022, 2023	9
2.	Event Management	2022, 2023	3
3.	Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Insights	2022, 2023	2
4.	Tourism Management Perspectives	2020, 2023	2
5.	International Journal of Religious Tourism and Pilgrimage	2014	1
6.	Asia Pacific International Events Management Journal	2020	1
7.	Asia-Pacific Journal of Innovation in Hospitality and Tourism	2023	1
	(APJIHT)		
8.	Empirical Economics	2021	1

9.	GeoJournal of Tourism and Geosites	2021	1
10.	International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management	2022	1
11.	Journal of Accountancy and Management	2021	1
12.	Journal of Business, Innovation and Sustainability	2023	1
13.	Journal Of Convention & Event Tourism	2023	1
14.	Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Management	2022	1
15.	Journal of Korea Trade	2021	1
16.	Journal of Tourism and Service	2023	1
17.	Museum International	2021	1
18.	Tourism Review International	2022	1
19.	Sustainability	2023	1
20.	Tourism Review International	2022	1
21.	Tourism Management	2022	1

In terms of authorship patterns, the most prevalent collaborative pattern observed in this study was the collaboration between two and three authors, which was found in 7 papers, accounting for 21.21% of the total. Following closely, four-person authorship was also highly adopted and identified in 6 papers, representing 18.18% of the sample. Additionally, there were 4 papers with five authors and single authorship (12.12%), 3 papers with seven authors (9.09%), 1 paper with eight authors (3.03%), and 1 paper with six authors (3.03%). These findings highlight the prevalence of collaborative efforts among authors in academic publications. The most productive first authors in this field were Zahed Ghaderi with 84 publications, followed by Grzegorz Kwiatkowski with 80 publications, Bingjie Liu-Lastres with 71 publications and Cosmas Gatot Haryono with 56 publications.

Based on Table 1 above, the topic of crisis management relating to business events/MICE was published as early as 2014, however with only one publication. The topic is starting to get more attention in the year 2020 onwards. In the year 2023, 14 papers were published, meanwhile, 10 papers were published in 2022, 5 papers in 2021 and 2 papers in 2020.

Types of crises and research focus in the business events industry: Previously, crisis types were classified into three categories: natural disasters, technical error accidents, and human error accidents, based on the degree of organizational responsibility. Natural disasters typically involve limited organizational responsibility due to their occurrence being largely beyond operational control (Coombs, 2021). The development of mitigation strategies is predominantly limited to reactive measures. Technical error accidents, characterized by minimal organizational control over technical malfunctions, inherently carry a low level of organizational responsibility. Conversely, preventable crises, largely attributable to human errors, necessitate organizations to bear the primary responsibility (Coombs, 2021).

The 32 papers revealed that health crisis was the highest type of crisis mentioned (25 papers), followed by general global crisis topic (4 papers), political crisis with 1 paper, and crime/terrorist (2 papers). Among the reviewed papers, 13 papers were related to the impacts of COVID-19, 6 papers were related to the crisis resilience due to COVID-19, 2 papers on crisis recovery due to COVID-19, 8 papers on crisis response which included topic from COVID-19, 2 papers on crisis event (description, and crisis management (organizational) learning and 1 paper on the crisis communication with the focus topic in terrorist attack.

5. Conclusion

This study conducted a systematic review of crisis management literature within the MICE/business events industry spanning from 2014 to 2023, encompassing 10 years. It identified a limited number of articles during the earlier years, followed by a notable surge in related research interests thereafter, especially after COVID-19. The analysis examined various prominent academic journals, delineating the trends in their publication of crisis management studies, and providing insights into authorship patterns. Furthermore, the study offers a comprehensive summary of crisis types and the focus topics within the MICE/business events industry.

Within the realm of crisis management within the MICE/business events sector, the traditional research

focuses were identified to encompass crisis management, crisis impacts and recovery, and crisis response. Additionally, this study outlined that predominant emerging themes over the past decade have centered on health-related crises such as COVID-19, political disturbances, and terrorism crises. Future research directions for crisis management in the business events industry should include the development of a new conceptual framework that places operational resilience on an equal footing with financial resilience, with indicators adapted to the risk profile of the operating model. Additionally, systematically synthesized scholarly findings on COVID-19 in the business and management disciplines and updated previous literature reviews, highlighting the need for further research on crisis management in the context of pandemics and other unexpected events (Hashemi et al., 2022).

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