

Crisis Management and Organizational Adaptability in Sports Organizations Amid Economic Challenges:

A Field Study at the Directorate of Youth and Sports in M'Sila

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Abstract

This study examined the relationship between crisis management practices and organizational adaptability in sports organizations within a context marked by growing economic pressures and uncertainty. A descriptive correlational, cross-sectional design was adopted. Data were collected from 35 employees of the Directorate of Youth and Sports in M'Sila through a questionnaire covering crisis planning, crisis communication, decision-making, post-crisis recovery, and organizational adaptability. The data were analyzed using SPSS, with descriptive statistics, Pearson's correlation coefficient, and simple linear regression. The findings revealed a positive and statistically significant association between crisis management and organizational adaptability ($r = 0.68$, $p < 0.001$). Regression analysis further showed that crisis management accounted for approximately 46% of the variance in organizational adaptability ($R^2 = 0.46$, $F(1, 33) = 28.73$, $p < 0.001$). These findings indicate that stronger crisis management practices are associated with greater organizational adaptability; however, the correlational nature of the study does not permit causal inference. The study recommends strengthening crisis preparedness, institutional communication, organizational learning, and systematic post-crisis evaluation. Future research should involve larger samples and a broader range of sports organizations.

Keywords: Crisis Management, Sports Organizations, Organizational Adaptability, Economic Challenges, Sport Management.

1. Introduction

Sports organizations and governing bodies operate in increasingly uncertain environments in which economic, organizational, media, and technological considerations are closely intertwined. As the functions of sports organizations have expanded and the number of stakeholders involved has grown, their capacity to sustain operations and achieve their objectives has become increasingly dependent on effective management, sound risk governance, and the ability to respond to sudden change (Hoye et al., 2018).

Crisis management has consequently emerged as an increasingly important field within organizational studies. A crisis may threaten an organization's operations, reputation, and relationships with stakeholders, while simultaneously forcing decision-makers to act under

conditions of limited information and severe time pressure. Bundy et al. (2017) argue that crisis research should encompass the conditions preceding a crisis, the organizational response during the crisis, and the outcomes and learning processes that follow it. Similarly, Coombs (2019) conceptualizes crisis management as an integrated process extending from preparedness and prevention to response, recovery, and organizational learning.

Within the sports sector, the COVID-19 pandemic exposed the vulnerability of several operational and funding models. Sports organizations experienced interruptions to activities, declining revenues, and disruptions to sponsorships, programs, and routine operations (Alam & Abdurraheem, 2023). Research in sport management has also shown that proactive planning and structured communication are central components of institutional crisis response, as illustrated by analyses of FIFA's crisis communication during the pandemic (Manoli & Anagnostou, 2023).

Effective crisis management is closely linked to an organization's ability to adjust its procedures, decisions, and use of resources in response to changing conditions. Recent literature highlights the importance of adaptive capacity when organizations confront unexpected crises: pre-existing plans alone are insufficient if an organization cannot modify its practices as events unfold (Cedergren, 2024). In the sports context, processes such as sensing change, continuous adaptation, resource strengthening, and risk reduction have been identified as organizational mechanisms that help sports organizations navigate disruption and uncertainty (Fasey et al., 2022).

In Algeria, crisis management in sport has been addressed from several perspectives. Boukheras (2012) provided a theoretical treatment of crisis management in the sports field; Amouche and Kheiri (2020) examined the role of investment in managing financial crises within Algerian sports organizations; Othmania (2021) investigated the relationship between leadership styles and crisis management in Directorates of Youth and Sports; and Tebbani et al. (2022) examined the contribution of crisis management strategies to distinguished employee performance at the Directorate of Youth and Sports in M'Sila. These studies demonstrate that crisis management is not absent from the Algerian research landscape. Accordingly, the present research gap does not rest on a claim of general scarcity, but rather on the need to examine the direct relationship between crisis management and organizational adaptability, a construct that differs conceptually from distinguished performance, occupational stability, and leadership.

2. Research Problem and Research Gap

Although Algerian studies have examined crisis management in sports organizations in relation to leadership, investment, and performance, the relationship between crisis management practices and organizational adaptability has received comparatively less attention in the local context, particularly within Directorates of Youth and Sports. This relationship becomes especially relevant under economic pressures that may affect resource availability, priority setting, program implementation, and the speed with which organizations respond to change.

This gap is particularly important because organizational adaptability extends beyond mere organizational continuity or the short-term containment of a crisis. It refers to an organization's capacity to modify its procedures, decisions, resource allocation, and working methods in ways

that correspond to evolving circumstances. The present study therefore seeks to determine whether stronger crisis management practices are associated with higher levels of organizational adaptability among employees of the Directorate of Youth and Sports in M'Sila.

The main research question is:

What is the nature of the relationship between crisis management and organizational adaptability among employees of the Directorate of Youth and Sports in M'Sila amid economic challenges?

3. Research Objectives

- To establish the conceptual foundations of crisis management and organizational adaptability in sports organizations.
- To determine the direction and strength of the relationship between crisis management and organizational adaptability within the study sample.
- To estimate the proportion of variance in organizational adaptability statistically explained by crisis management.
- To formulate practical recommendations that can help sports organizations strengthen crisis preparedness, response, and post-crisis learning.

4. Significance of the Study

The theoretical significance of this study lies in linking the crisis management literature with the concept of organizational adaptability within the field of sport management, while clearly distinguishing organizational adaptability from related constructs such as organizational resilience and organizational sustainability. Its practical significance derives from the potential use of the findings to improve crisis planning, communication, decision-making, and organizational learning within Directorates of Youth and Sports and other sports organizations.

5. Research Hypothesis

H1: There is a positive and statistically significant correlation between the level of crisis management and the level of organizational adaptability among employees of the Directorate of Youth and Sports in M'Sila.

6. Theoretical Framework

6.1 Concept of Crisis Management

Crisis management may be understood as the set of organizational capabilities and processes used to prepare for events that may threaten operations, stakeholders, or reputation, and subsequently to respond to such events, mitigate their adverse consequences, and learn from them. Bundy et al. (2017) provide an integrative framework for crisis scholarship that brings together crisis antecedents, organizational responses, and outcomes. Coombs (2019), in turn, organizes crisis management into three broad phases: pre-crisis, crisis response, and post-crisis management.

6.2 Characteristics of Crisis Situations

Crises are commonly characterized by high levels of uncertainty, time pressure, the potential for wide-ranging consequences, multiple stakeholder demands, and the need to make decisions on the basis of incomplete information. These characteristics make crisis management a coordinated

organizational process involving planning, communication, decision-making, and recovery rather than an isolated or purely reactive response.

6.3 Dimensions of Crisis Management Adopted in the Study

Based on the structure of the research instrument, crisis management was operationalized through four dimensions: pre-crisis planning, communication during the crisis, decision-making, and post-crisis recovery. These dimensions broadly correspond to the phase-based approach to crisis management, which distinguishes preparedness, response, and post-crisis processes (Coombs, 2019), while also intersecting with the sensing, response, communication, and learning mechanisms emphasized in contemporary organizational literature.

6.4 Organizational Adaptability

In this study, organizational adaptability refers to the organization's capacity to modify its practices, procedures, decisions, and use of resources in response to changing circumstances and constraints. It represents an operational capacity to respond to change and is narrower than the broader concept of organizational resilience, which in much of the literature encompasses preparedness, adaptation, learning, and continued functioning across different phases of disruption. For this reason, the present study adopts organizational adaptability as its dependent variable and does not treat organizational resilience or organizational sustainability as synonymous constructs.

In crisis research, adaptive capacity becomes visible when an organization is able to modify its response as a crisis evolves rather than relying rigidly on pre-existing plans. Cedergren (2024) identifies several conditions that support adaptive capacity, including trust, clarity of objectives, the use of prior experience, and the ability to coordinate resources. In sports organizations, sensing change, adapting, maintaining open communication, and strengthening resources have likewise been identified as processes that help organizations manage disruption (Fasey et al., 2022).

6.5 Crisis Management in Sports Organizations

Sports organizations differ in their structures, resources, and stakeholder configurations, yet they share exposure to operational, financial, organizational, and communication-related crises. Contemporary literature has shown that external crises, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, forced sports organizations to alter their operating models, communication practices, and use of resources, while underscoring the importance of proactive planning and learning from previous experience (Manoli & Anagnostou, 2023). Algerian research has similarly highlighted the importance of crisis management in sports organizations from the perspectives of investment and financial pressure (Amouche & Kheiri, 2020), leadership (Othmania, 2021), and employee performance (Tebbani et al., 2022).

6.6 Theoretical Relationship Between Crisis Management and Organizational Adaptability

The expected relationship between the two variables can be explained through the complementary functions of crisis management practices. Planning enhances preparedness and reduces organizational confusion; communication accelerates the flow of information and limits ambiguity; decision-making allows responses to be adjusted as circumstances develop; and post-crisis recovery supports learning and the reorganization of resources. Accordingly, organizations

that implement more systematic crisis management practices can reasonably be expected to demonstrate a greater capacity to adjust their organizational behavior when conditions change.

7. Previous Studies

Using a Delphi approach with experts in elite sport, Fasey et al. (2021) found that effective organizational responses to change are associated with characteristics such as structural clarity, flexible improvement, shared understanding, reciprocal commitment, and operational awareness. In a subsequent study involving ten elite sport organizations, Fasey et al. (2022) identified sensing and adapting as two core organizational processes supported by resource strengthening and risk reduction.

From a sport management perspective, Bostock and Breese (2023) developed a theoretical framework for organizational resilience in sports organizations, emphasizing the dynamic nature of organizational responses to disruption and the need to manage resources and organizational trade-offs. Although organizational resilience is not identical to the dependent variable examined in the present study, this body of literature helps position adaptation as a central component of organizational responses to change.

In the field of crisis communication, Manoli and Anagnostou (2023) analyzed FIFA's communication during the COVID-19 pandemic and identified evidence of proactive crisis communication planning and the use of lessons from prior experience. Their findings reinforce the importance of communication as a key component of crisis management in sports organizations.

From an economic perspective, Alam and Abdurraheem (2023) showed that the pandemic generated substantial losses, lost revenues, and broad financial pressures across the sports sector, thereby underscoring the need for organizational adaptation and supportive policy responses. In a public-sector context, Cedergren (2024) likewise found that adaptive capacity during crises is associated with trust, disciplined decentralization, clear objectives, and the ability to draw on previous experience.

Within the Algerian context, Boukheras (2012) offered a theoretical examination of crisis management in sport, while Amouche and Kheiri (2020) highlighted the importance of investment in confronting financial crises in Algerian sports organizations. Othmania (2021) identified a relationship between leadership styles and crisis management in the Directorates of Youth and Sports in M'Sila and Bordj Bou Arreridj, whereas Tebbani et al. (2022) found an association between crisis management strategies and distinguished performance among employees of the Directorate of Youth and Sports in M'Sila. The present study differs from these works by focusing specifically on organizational adaptability as the dependent variable.

More recently, Lee et al. (2026) showed that collegiate sport clubs responded to crisis through a dynamic process combining observation, coping, and adaptation, supported by organizational resources, relationships, and responsibility. Their findings further reinforce the relevance of studying adaptation as an integral part of how sports organizations respond to crisis.

7.1 Synthesis of Previous Studies and the Research Gap

The reviewed literature reveals three broad research streams: the first focuses on crisis management, communication, and preparedness; the second examines resilience, adaptation, and organizational resources; and the third addresses crisis management in Algerian sports organizations through leadership, investment, and performance. Given that a previous study conducted at the Directorate of Youth and Sports in M'Sila examined crisis management in relation to distinguished performance, the contribution of the present study depends on clearly differentiating its dependent variable, measurement instrument, data-collection period, and sample. The specific research gap therefore lies in examining the relationship between crisis management and organizational adaptability rather than claiming an absence of prior research on crisis management in sport.

8. Methodological Procedures

8.1 Research Design

The study adopted a descriptive correlational, cross-sectional design. Data were collected at a single point in time in order to describe the study variables and examine the statistical relationship between crisis management and organizational adaptability. This description is more precise than the generic label of a descriptive-analytical approach because the actual analysis includes correlation and regression procedures. Field data were collected between January and February 2026.

8.2 Study Population and Sample

The study population consisted of 45 employees working at the Directorate of Youth and Sports in M'Sila. A pilot study was first conducted with 5 employees, who were subsequently excluded from the main application. The final study sample consisted of 35 employees selected through simple random sampling from the members of the population available for the main study.

8.3 Pilot Study

A pilot study was conducted with 5 employees from the study population prior to the main data collection. Its purpose was to assess the clarity of the questionnaire items, estimate the time required for completion, and examine the preliminary properties of the instrument. Participants in the pilot study were excluded from the main sample in order to avoid any potential effect of prior exposure to the instrument. The final questionnaire was then administered to 35 employees.

8.4 Research Instrument

A questionnaire was used as the primary data-collection instrument. Its dimensions were developed with reference to the literature and previous studies on crisis management and organizational adaptability. The questionnaire comprised five dimensions, each containing 5 items, for a total of 25 items. The dimensions were crisis planning, communication during the crisis, decision-making, post-crisis recovery, and organizational adaptability. Responses were recorded on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

8.5 Instrument Validity

The questionnaire was reviewed by four doctoral-level academics from the University of M'Sila whose expertise was related to sport management and scientific research methodology. They assessed the relevance of the items to the intended constructs, the clarity of the wording, and the extent to which each item appropriately represented its respective dimension. Necessary revisions were made in light of their feedback before the final administration.

8.6 Instrument Reliability

Internal consistency was assessed using Cronbach's alpha. Reliability coefficients ranged from 0.698 to 0.810, indicating overall acceptable to good internal consistency. The coefficient for the post-crisis recovery dimension ($\alpha = 0.698$) was very close to the commonly cited reference threshold of 0.70.

Table 1. Cronbach's Alpha Reliability Coefficients for the Study Dimensions

Dimension	Number of Items	Cronbach's α
Crisis Planning	5	0.810
Communication During the Crisis	5	0.785
Decision-Making	5	0.741
Post-Crisis Recovery	5	0.698
Organizational Adaptability	5	0.754

Source: Authors' calculations based on field survey data (2024).

8.7 Statistical Analysis

The data were analyzed using SPSS. Descriptive statistics included means and standard deviations. Pearson's correlation coefficient was used to test the relationship between crisis management and organizational adaptability, while simple linear regression was employed to estimate the proportion of variance in organizational adaptability statistically associated with crisis management. Cronbach's alpha was used to assess internal consistency. Because the regression model contained only one independent variable, multicollinearity among predictors was not applicable. Tests of linearity, influential outliers, homoscedasticity, and the distribution of residuals require examination of the original dataset and SPSS diagnostic outputs.

9. Study Limitations

- The study was limited to a relatively small sample of 35 employees from a single institution, which restricts the generalizability of the findings.
- The study relied on self-reported responses collected through a cross-sectional questionnaire; therefore, causal conclusions cannot be drawn.
- The research instrument did not include a separate dimension directly measuring global economic challenges. Economic challenges are therefore treated as the contextual setting of the study rather than as an empirically tested variable.
- The four crisis management dimensions were not tested separately in the available results.

- The available data did not include detailed diagnostic outputs for the assumptions underlying correlation and regression, which should be considered when interpreting the findings.

10. Results

10.1 Relationship Between Crisis Management and Organizational Adaptability

Table 2. Pearson Correlation Between Crisis Management and Organizational Adaptability

Variables	r	p	N	Interpretation
Crisis Management × Organizational Adaptability	0.68	$p < 0.001$	35	Positive, statistically significant correlation

Source: Authors' calculations based on field survey data (2024).

The results indicate a positive and statistically significant correlation between crisis management and organizational adaptability ($r = 0.68$, $p < 0.001$). The positive coefficient indicates that higher crisis management scores are associated with higher organizational adaptability scores within the sample. The finding should not be interpreted causally because the study employed a cross-sectional correlational design.

10.2 Simple Linear Regression

Table 3. Simple Linear Regression Results for the Effect of Crisis Management on Organizational Adaptability

Independent Variable	Dependent Variable	R	R^2 / Adjusted R^2	F	df	p
Crisis Management	Organizational Adaptability	0.68	0.46 / 0.44	28.73	(1, 33)	$p < 0.001$

Source: Authors' calculations based on field survey data (2024).

The coefficient of determination was $R^2 = 0.46$, while the adjusted coefficient calculated from the available values was approximately Adjusted $R^2 = 0.44$. This indicates that the crisis management model statistically accounts for approximately 46% of the variance in organizational adaptability scores within the sample. The regression model was statistically significant, $F(1, 33) = 28.73$, $p < 0.001$. This result does not mean that crisis management caused 46% of organizational adaptability; rather, it indicates the proportion of variance associated with the statistical model.

10.3 Regression Coefficient

Table 4. Regression Coefficient for Crisis Management Predicting Organizational Adaptability

Variable	β	t	p
Crisis Management	0.68	5.36	$p < 0.001$

Source: Authors' calculations based on field survey data (2024).

The standardized regression coefficient was $\beta = 0.68$, and the associated t value was 5.36 ($p < 0.001$), indicating a positive predictive association between crisis management and organizational

adaptability within the study sample. The regression table reports only those coefficient statistics that were actually available in the study results.

11. Discussion

The study found a positive and statistically significant relationship between crisis management and organizational adaptability. One plausible interpretation is that systematic crisis management practices provide organizational mechanisms that help employees and institutions operate under conditions of uncertainty. Planning improves preparedness; communication reduces information gaps; decision-making enables responses to be adjusted as circumstances evolve; and recovery processes support learning and organizational reconfiguration.

This finding is consistent with the broader literature linking crisis preparedness, communication, and organizational learning to the capacity to manage change. Manoli and Anagnostou (2023) demonstrated the importance of proactive crisis communication planning in a global sports organization, while Fasey et al. (2022) showed that sensing change, adapting, communicating openly, and strengthening resources are important processes through which sports organizations navigate disruption. Cedergren (2024) similarly shows that adaptive capacity during crises is associated with organizational conditions such as clarity of objectives and the ability to draw upon previous experience.

Within the Algerian context, the result is broadly consistent with Othmania (2021), who highlighted the importance of managerial factors in crisis management, and with Tebbani et al. (2022), who linked crisis management strategies to distinguished performance among employees of the Directorate of Youth and Sports in M'Sila. The present study, however, does not measure distinguished performance; it focuses on organizational adaptability, which constitutes its principal point of conceptual differentiation and should be emphasized when presenting the study's contribution.

The value of $R^2 = 0.46$ further indicates that crisis management is associated with a substantial proportion of the variance in organizational adaptability. Nevertheless, more than half of the variance remains attributable to factors outside the model, potentially including leadership, organizational culture, resources, experience, flexibility in the distribution of authority, and organizational learning. Crisis management should therefore not be presented as the sole explanatory factor underlying organizational adaptability.

12. Conclusion

The study concludes that crisis management is positively and significantly associated with organizational adaptability among employees of the Directorate of Youth and Sports in M'Sila. The regression model also indicates that crisis management accounts for a substantial proportion of the variance in organizational adaptability. These findings support the importance of institutionalizing systematic practices for crisis preparedness, communication, decision-making, and post-crisis learning. At the same time, the cross-sectional design and limited sample size require the findings to be interpreted as correlational evidence that should be examined further across larger samples and a wider range of sports organizations.

13. Recommendations

- Develop and regularly update crisis plans and scenario-based response protocols in light of changing risks and available resources.
- Strengthen internal communication channels and clearly define responsibilities and authorized information sources during crises.
- Provide managers and employees with training in decision-making under uncertainty and in managing incomplete information.
- Introduce systematic post-crisis evaluation after each crisis or emergency in order to identify lessons learned and convert them into actionable procedures.
- Integrate crisis planning with resource management and operational priority-setting when sports organizations face economic pressures.
- Conduct future studies across multiple Directorates of Youth and Sports and other sports organizations using larger samples, direct measures of economic challenges, and separate testing of each crisis management dimension.

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