

Navigating Human Resource Dynamics in Construction Industry during the COVID-19 Pandemic

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Abstract

Human resource management played a crucial role in addressing the abrupt changes in the construction industry caused by lockdown procedures during the COVID-19 pandemic. This qualitative study aimed to investigate the lived experiences of human resource management practitioners and construction workers in Cebu, Philippines, capturing both human resource practices and construction workers' real-world experiences. Through in-depth interviews, the study provided valuable insights into the challenges and resilience demonstrated by those in the construction sector during an unprecedented global crisis. Using purposive sampling, seven human resource practitioners and twelve construction workers were interviewed, and their responses were analyzed using the Collaizzi method. The study identified four key themes for human resource practitioners: work downbeat to the stoppage, inadequate income resources to support human resource operations, rationalized workforce distribution, and adherence to health norms. Construction workers reported experiencing fear and doubt, income loss, resourcefulness, and strength and resolve. The study's findings emphasized the importance of robust Human Resource Management strategies for addressing the distinctive hurdles faced by human resource practitioners and construction workers during the crisis. Consequently, the study recommended the creation of a Human Resource Crisis Management Model to enhance understanding and guide effective crisis management in the construction industry. By tackling these challenges directly, organizations could build resilience and sustainability within the construction industry, promoting adaptability and advancing human resource management practices.

Keywords: Human Resource Practitioners, Construction Workers, Human Resource Crisis Management Model

1. Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic, which claimed many lives worldwide, exerted a negative influence on the economies of numerous countries, leading to job losses and reduced incomes. This variable had varying impacts across nations, with some experiencing significant economic downturns while others were less affected. This remark was corroborated by an International Labour Organisation (2020) report. According to the study, a high percentage of workers, 94%, resided in countries where there were closures of workplaces to some extent. Despite regional variations, a significant portion of workers in both low-income and upper-middle-income countries experienced strict lockdown measures, with approximately 70% of workers in the latter residing in nations with such restrictions in place, whether nationwide or in a specific

geographic areas. Although low-income countries had eased earlier strict measures despite rising COVID-19 cases, the effect of the pandemic on the workforce was noted to be more severe in low- and middle-income countries, as highlighted in the study's seventh edition (2021). Furthermore, the study underscored that vulnerable workers, including informal workers, women, and youth, were disproportionately exaggerated by the pandemic. The International Labour Organisation (ILO) estimated that the pandemic would cause the loss of 255 million full-time employment in 2020, or 8.8% of all working hours worldwide (International Labour Organization, 2021). The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) also observed that the COVID-19 epidemic had led to one of the biggest job crises since the Great Depression, with the possibility of long-term consequences such as increased poverty and inequality (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2020).

One of the sectors hardest hit by the global epidemic was the construction industry. These measures posed challenges to construction companies, resulting in reduced productivity, project delays, and increased costs. According to Pelitones Palcis (2023), the construction industry in the Philippines faced significant setbacks due to the COVID-19 pandemic in many ways, including disruptions in supply chains, concerns about worker safety, and project delays caused by government-imposed lockdowns aimed at controlling virus transmission. The pandemic caused significant challenges for the industry, affecting its operations and projects (Pelitones Palcis, 2023). The study recommended that the construction industry adapt to the new normal brought about by the pandemic. This research was aided by the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA). The PSA's statistics indicated that 31,026 constructions were registered in the fourth quarter of 2020, indicating a -20.9 percent annual drop. Compared to the previous quarter, when there was an annual loss of -30.4 percent, this decline was less severe. In comparison, the number of constructions decreased by -10.4 percent on an annual basis during the fourth quarter of 2019 (Philippine Statistics Authority, 2021).

Human resource management was responsible for developing and implementing policies and procedures that protected employees from the virus while ensuring business continuity. Pelitones Palcis (2023) emphasized that the implementation of digital technology, including Building Information Modeling (BIM), was part of policies and practices that enabled remote collaboration and lessened the need for in-person site visits. It was also recommended that the industry adopt new safety measures, including modular building techniques, to preserve social separation and reduce the possibility of COVID-19 transmission. Consequently, in order to overcome the obstacles posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, the construction industry had to adapt and innovate. Even in the face of hardship, the industry could continue to support the growth and development of the nation by implementing innovative tactics and ideas (Pelitones Palcis, 2023).

This qualitative, phenomenological study sought to understand how the COVID-19 pandemic affected HR practitioners and construction workers' real-world experiences in the construction industry. The magnitude of the crisis, which had an impact on people and organisations all around the world, led to the selection of the study. A notable gap in the existing literature was the lack of in-depth research specifically addressing HR dynamics and crisis management strategies within the construction industry during the pandemic. This study aimed to fill this void by exploring several key research questions:

Research Questions:

1. How did construction companies maintain human resource management during the COVID-19 pandemic?
2. What were the lived experiences of construction workers in these companies during the COVID-19 pandemic?

3. What were the essences and meanings of the experiences among HR practitioners and construction workers?
4. What Human Resource Crisis Management Model could be created?

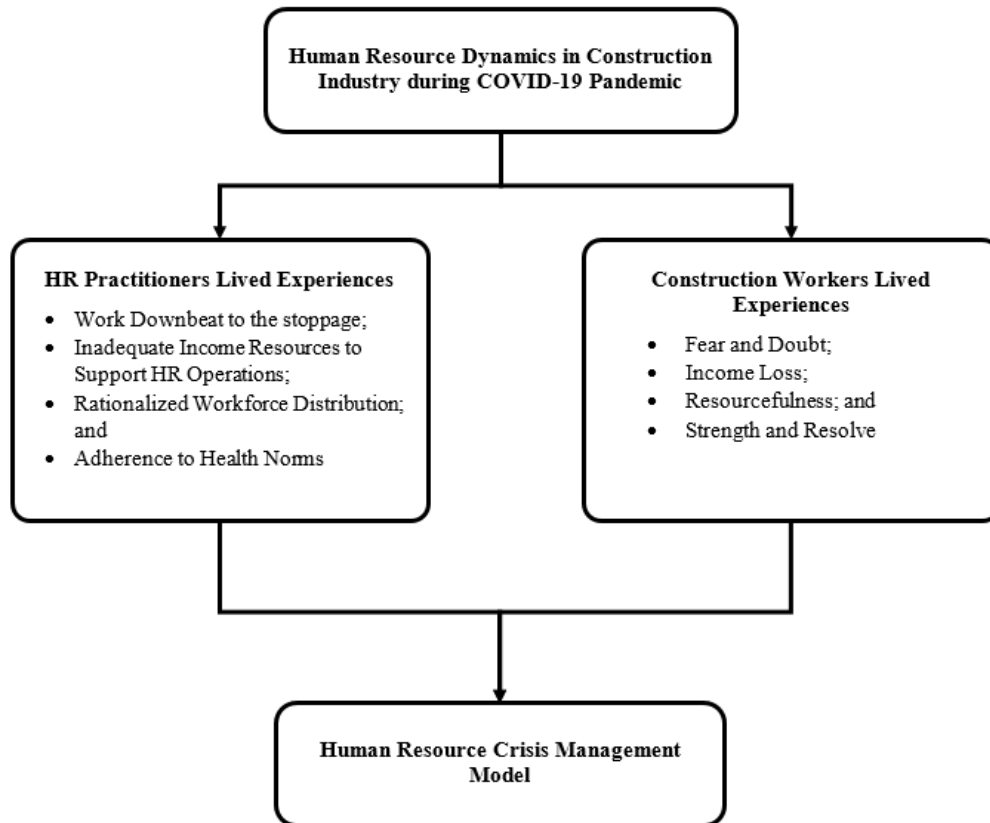


Figure 1 Framework of the Study

2. Research Methodology

Husserl stated that the study employed a descriptive phenomenological design to investigate people's experiences and focus on their perceptions. According to Langdrige (2007), phenomenology was both a theory and a research approach aimed at comprehending and explaining human experience. The goal of this research was to explore the lived experiences of human resource practitioners and construction workers during the pandemic to gain a deeper understanding of the phenomenon. This study was significant as it addressed a gap in the literature by focusing specifically on HR dynamics within the construction industry during an underexplored period. In applying descriptive phenomenology, the study aimed to capture the essence of the participants' experiences by emphasizing their personal perspectives and interpretations. Phenomenology investigated what people had experienced and focused on their perceptions, seeking to provide a rich, detailed account based on everyday life (Langdrige, 2007). This qualitative approach was selected because it allowed for an in-depth exploration of the participants' subjective experiences, offering valuable insights into the phenomena of their experiences amid the pandemic.

Research Participants

The study involved seven HR practitioners and twelve construction workers from various construction sites in Cebu, Philippines, selected through purposive sampling to ensure they had relevant experiences during the COVID-19 pandemic. The HR practitioners, aged 26 to 35 with 2 to 8 years of experience, were responsible for managing workforce safety, implementing crisis management strategies, and adapting HR policies. The construction workers, all male and aged 22 to 38, had 2 to 9 years of experience in roles such as installers, masons, drivers, and foremen. They faced challenges related to new health protocols, job security, and project delays due to lockdowns and supply chain disruptions. The study aimed to capture the lived experiences of both groups to provide context for the development of a Human Resource Crisis Management Model (HRCMM). The participants' profiles were presented in Table 1 for HR practitioners and Table 2 for the construction workers.

Table 1: Profile of Human Resource Practitioners

Participant Code	Position	Gender	Age	No. of years working	Status
A1	Human Resource Officer	Female	26	4 years and 9 months	Regular
B2	Human Resource Officer	Female	27	5 years	Regular
C3	Human Resource Officer	Female	35	8 years	Regular
D4	Human Resource Staff	Female	26	3 years and 2 months	Regular
E5	Human Resource-Comp Ben Officer	Female	31	2 years	Regular
Female participants - 5					
F6	Human Resource Personnel	Male	28	2 years	Regular
G7	Human Resource Staff	Male	32	4 years	Regular
Male participants - 2					
Total participants - 7					

Table 2: Profile of Construction Workers

Participant Code	Position	Gender	Age	No. of years working	Status
H8	Installer	Male	38	8 years	Regular
I9	Installer	Male	28	4 years	Regular
J10	Mason	Male	38	3 years	Regular
K11	Driver	Male	34	7 years	Regular
L12	Helper	Male	22	2 years and 2 months	Regular
M13	Painter	Male	28	5 years	Regular
N14	Project-in-Charge	Male	32	9 years	Regular
O15	Driver	Male	26	4 yrs. and 8 months	Regular
P16	Project-in-Charge	Male	25	2 years	Regular
Q17	Aircon Helper	Male	30	3 years and 8 months	Regular
R18	Aircon Helper	Male	30	4 years and 2 months	Regular
S19	Foreman	Male	35	2 years and 2 months	Regular
Male participants - 12					

Throughout this investigation, procedures were used. Organizing the interview questions was the first stage. The interview questions were developed without depending on a particular theoretical framework or prior knowledge because of the study's atheoretical approach, which allowed the researchers to modify the investigation in light of the analysis. Second, the researchers scheduled the participants at a time, place, and date that worked for them. Some participants opted to use Google Meet and Zoom. The participants gave the researchers their informed consent before the interviews began, and they also asked for permission to record the sessions. To maintain anonymity and confidentiality, a participant code was given to each interviewee. Thirdly, the participants received a brief orientation from the researchers on the

goals, methods, and ethical considerations of the study. To capture the interview answers, the researchers used paper, pens, and an audio recorder. The participants were then given access to the transcribed data so they could review it and maybe change their responses.

Table 3: Data Analysis

Collaizzi Analysis	Description
1. Familiarization	The researchers familiarized themselves with the collected data by carefully going over each participant's file.
2. Identifying significant statements	Significant statements about the phenomenon were found, and interpretations that made sense for the produced occurrences were developed.
3. Formulating meaning	The researchers analyse the significant statements and come up with insightful interpretations. They make an effort not to let their preconceptions colour the proceedings.
4. Clustering themes	The meanings that were found were arranged by the researchers into themes that appeared through all the papers.
5. Developing an exhaustive description	The researchers created a thorough analysis of the phenomenon that covered every issue that was created.
6. Producing the fundamental structure	The explanation was condensed by the researchers into a single sentence that only included the structural elements of the phenomena that were significant.
7. Seeking verification of the fundamental structure	By giving the participants their original copies of the essential core assertions, the researchers attempted verification. The researchers made some adjustments early on in the feedback review process.

Morrow, Rodriguez, & King, 2015

The primary concepts in the transcriptions were classified and categorised by the researchers, who then compared the results to the identified emerging themes and modified the study's approach as necessary. Any changes to the approach were based only on conclusions drawn from the data itself. The Collaizzi data analysis method was employed by the researchers during the review procedure. Collaizzi (1978) created a strategy that was divided into seven parts specifically designed for qualitative research. This approach also aligned with the way that Collaizzi's descriptive phenomenological method was presented by Morrow et al. (2015). Table 3 outlined the steps in Collaizzi's descriptive phenomenological technique.

3. Results and Discussion

This study examined HR practitioners' and construction workers' experiences during the COVID-19 pandemic and identified eight key themes. For HR practitioners, the themes included "Work Downbeat to the Stoppage," which detailed the operational halts due to lockdowns; "Inadequate Income Resources to Support HR Operations," which addressed financial constraints; "Rationalized Workforce Distribution," which focused on managing personnel amidst shutdowns; and "Adherence to Health Norms," which highlighted the enforcement of health protocols. For construction workers, the themes were "Fear and Doubt," which captured their mental health struggles and job insecurity; "Income Loss," which reflected the financial impact and dependence on aid; "Resourcefulness," which showed their efforts to find alternative income sources; and "Strength and Resolve," which demonstrated their resilience. These themes provided a nuanced understanding of the pandemic's impact and were directly related to the research questions, offering insights into how construction companies managed HR practices, the lived experiences of workers, and potential strategies for developing a Human Resource Crisis Management Model tailored to the unique challenges faced during the pandemic. By addressing these themes, the study filled significant gaps in the

literature, particularly concerning HR dynamics and crisis management within the construction sector, thereby offering a comprehensive understanding of the sector's response to the crisis.

HR practitioner's lived experiences

The researchers aimed to obtain a comprehensive understanding of the difficulties encountered by HR practitioners and the inventive tactics they utilised to manoeuvre through the intricacies of the pandemic period by scrutinising their perspectives and encounters. Four themes corroborate the assertion that the participants' comments were mostly focused on the management difficulties they encountered. These themes illuminated the diverse experiences and significant contributions of HR practitioners amidst the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic. Each theme underscored their dedication, resilience, and impact within the construction industry as it navigated unprecedented circumstances.

-Theme 1: Work downbeat to the stoppage

During the epidemic, most construction companies faced an automatic slowdown in their activities, leading to a complete cessation of operations across offices and building sites. This was a direct result of the government's response to the unprecedented global impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

"We started slowing down construction on all of our projects right away, and eventually we had no choice but to close down due to the Department of Health's (DOH) orders for a nationwide lockdown. We made sure that all our construction workers were given Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) for their safety." (A1)

"Our company made the decision to stop working on all construction projects, and we gave our employees instructions by calling their on-site managers to go home until further notice. We formulated measures to minimize the negative impact of the work stoppage for both the company and the on-site workers." (B2)

Participants described their companies' proactive responses, by providing PPE for the workers safety to initially slowing down construction operations across projects or suspending construction activities and sending workers home while providing the PPE for the workers safety. Ultimately, they were compelled to shut down completely due to tightening lockdown measures, reflecting the widespread impact on the industry's ability to operate amidst the risks posed by the pandemic. According to Bedford et al. (2020) and Gostin et al. (2020), companies were immediately under pressure to ensure compliance and protect the health of their workforce as the government imposed nationwide lockdowns, which included travel restrictions, bans on public gatherings, company closures, self-isolation, curfew observance, and the requirement that people work from home.

HR practitioners were essential in putting mitigation plans in place to protect construction workers' health and safety in reaction to the increased danger of person-to-person transmission within the sector. Understanding how critical it was to halt work on-site in order to slow the virus's spread, HR practitioners established open lines of communication to make sure employees were aware of the decision and knew why it was made.

-Theme 2: Inadequate Income Resources to Support HR Operations

Poor financial resources in the construction industry were noted due to the stoppage and downsizing of operations during the nationwide lockdown. This resulted in almost complete closure of economic activities in the country, impacting how industry's income resources were managed.

"Because of the lockdowns, our company hardly had the resources to continue operating; no projects were started, and no deals were closed because of COVID-19." (B2)

"It was challenging. We had fewer or no resources available for the business's operations when there were no projects. Income was the company's lifeblood." (D4)

"The company nearly stopped operations and closed down right away, but we were trying our best to give financial assistance even though we knew it's was not enough (E5)

"We had a sense of sadness as a result of the company's owner's directive to cease operations." (G7)

Participants lamented that the lockdown measures had effectively brought project initiatives and deals to a standstill, leaving companies grappling with dwindling resources to sustain their operations. The absence of new projects translated to a dire situation where operational funds, often considered the lifeblood of these businesses, were depleted, exacerbating the challenges faced in managing human resources effectively. Contractors often faced bankruptcy not due to a shortage of projects but because they exhausted their financial resources (Gavin, 2011). The likelihood of cash flow problems in the construction sector rises in light of the COVID-19 pandemic (Kamarazaly et al., 2020).

In the existing environment, organizations' main goals were to maintain their existence, ensure welfare, and effectively manage their human resources. Amidst the disruption of business continuity, particularly during times of crisis, one of the HR practitioner's top priorities was to mitigate the impact not only on the survival of the construction industry but also on the livelihoods of construction workers, many of whom relied heavily on these jobs for their sustenance. This necessitated implementing cost-cutting measures such as renegotiating contracts with contractors or suppliers, reducing unnecessary spending, and allocating resources efficiently.

-Theme 3: Rationalized Workforce Distribution

Ineffective human resource distribution was another pandemic after effect that had an impact on construction companies' human resource operations.

"The work stoppage was unavoidable, but the reality was that we still need to hire enough people to maintain our machinery, which needed to be maintained during the complete lockdown even in the absence of operations or projects." (C3)

The participant, with extensive experience in HR practices, highlighted the complexities of retaining personnel during the total lockdown, emphasizing the necessity of maintaining equipment despite the absence of ongoing operations or projects. Preserving remaining resources became a crucial operation for business continuity despite project shutdowns. According to Linge et al. (2022), while numerous businesses faced closures, the construction industry stood resilient, implementing innovative approaches to sustain operations amidst significant health risks to on-site workers. HR practitioners navigated these challenges by rationalizing manpower deployment and stretching resources to ensure the upkeep of equipment and facilities, despite the adverse impacts of the pandemic on traditional business operations.

-Theme 4: Adherence to Health Norms

During the peak of the pandemic, adherence to health protocols was of the utmost importance as the construction industry could not afford to contract COVID-19 and risk disruptions to project timelines and worker safety.

"Our main office really made sure that the protocol was complied with before the construction sites were completely shut down in March 2020". According to records, we had one construction worker who died from COVID." (F6)

Participants emphasized the critical importance of strict enforcement of these protocols to lessen the risk of COVID-19 transmission among workers. Tragically, as highlighted by one of the participant's disclosure, the consequences of lax enforcement became painfully evident with the loss of a construction worker to COVID-19. Strict attention to health procedures was crucial for protecting the construction company's employees and minimizing the potential costs associated with COVID-19 infections. By implementing robust regulations and procedures to enforce protocol compliance, the risk of COVID-19 transmission was reduced. To halt the rapid spread of virus infection, authorities implemented lockdowns or curfews in several nations (Paital et al., 2020).

From managing work slowdowns to stoppages to grappling with financial constraints, HR practitioners demonstrated their commitment to overcoming obstacles and ensuring the sustainability of HR operations. Moreover, their strategic distribution of manpower and steadfast adherence to health protocols showcase their ability to adapt and thrive in the face of adversity. Through their unwavering dedication to safeguarding employee well-being and optimizing organizational efficiency, HR practitioners played a vital role in shaping resilient and adaptive workplaces during these challenging times.

Construction worker's lived experiences

The researchers defined four broad themes that encapsulated the obstacles faced by workers in the construction industry throughout the pandemic. Concern and uncertainty dominated conversations as the pandemic's course and its effects on project schedules and results loomed large, undermining employees' feeling of security and stability in their jobs.

-Theme 1: Fear and Doubt

The COVID-19 pandemic had a negative impact on people's mental health everywhere. People were also feeling distressed and uncertain about their current and future circumstances as a result of the pandemic.

"I was afraid since I had no idea that I might come into contact with COVID because of how contagious it was." (N14)

"Since my children were still young and we didn't have a source of money, I was so worried by the sudden transfer." (H8)

"I was distressed thinking how to support family knowing the possibility of losing a job because of the pandemic." (I9)

"The work stoppage was not expected. I had mixed emotions and was very stressed at the time." (J10)

Participants worried about how they were going to support their families out of fear of losing their jobs. These stories revealed the immense pressure, anxiety felt by construction workers, who were suddenly left without work and unsure of how to make ends meet. Their expressions of worry, confusion, and desperation underscored the human impact of the pandemic, emphasizing the urgent need for support and solutions to address their fears and uncertainties. Construction firms and the HR practitioners need to put preventive measures and empathetic support systems at the top of their priority list in order to ensure the well-being of their workers amid pandemic and beyond. A study conducted in Sweden revealed that losing one's job correlated with an increase in depression, while workplace downsizing was linked to heightened anxiety. The research proposed that maintaining employment through initiatives like short-time work allowances, as observed in Sweden during the COVID-19 pandemic, could mitigate mental health issues among workers during economic downturns (Blomqvist et al., 2023).

-Theme 2: Income Loss

The COVID-19 pandemic led to one of the worst employment crises in history. There was a genuine risk that the crisis would made inequality and poverty worse.

"Our supervisor made the choice to force us to cease working. Our only source of money or food was the support given by the Local Government Unit (LGU) and other government assistance centers." (K11)

"All of us, including my siblings who worked in construction, lost our source of income." (S19)

Participants accounted of being ordered to stop working, coupled with reliance on relief centers for basic necessities, highlighted the stark reality faced by construction workers during this challenging times. The pandemic-induced loss of income not only threatened immediate financial security but also had long-term implications for individuals and their families, exacerbating poverty and widening inequalities. Research conducted by de Miquel et al. (2023) found that income loss increased the risk of depression and panic attacks. The study highlighted financial stress as a significant mediator, emphasizing the need for social and income support policies during the COVID-19 pandemic to address mental health challenges. The HR practitioners could help employees by offering resources for financial literacy and assisting them in applying for government assistance programs or unemployment benefits.

-Theme 3: Resourcefulness

All employees in the construction sector were compelled to look for alternative sources of income in order to support their families during the work stoppage.

"I cook food and sell it to my neighbours." (L12)

"I accept any job as long as I earn money decently." (M13)

"I worked from home, repairing anything broken for pay." (O15)

Participants shared their experiences of seeking out other opportunities near their homes, whether it be odd jobs or offering services for pay. These narratives underscored the resilience and adaptability of construction workers, who were able to pivot and utilize their skills to generate income during challenging times. This resourcefulness not only provided financial support but also served as a testament to the ingenuity and determination of construction workers to overcome obstacles and provide for their families during times of crisis. Opportunities existed for those who thought creatively and considered taking on tasks that organizations needed to complete, even though it appeared that the pandemic had temporarily closed the labour market (Kovach, J. Jr., 2020).

-Theme 4: Strength and Resolve

The construction workers' expressions of dread and concern were a catalyst for them to show strength and resolve and to rise beyond any obstacles they faced.

"Despite our circumstances, we must rise above everything for the sake of our family and their future." (P16)

"We must overcome every obstacle in life. Nobody was immune to the effects of COVID-19." (Q17)

"My family and I never stopped praying that God would help us get through all of the difficulties." (R18)

Participants exemplified resilience, emphasizing the imperative to transcend their circumstances for the well-being of their families and future generations. Their words echoed a collective resolve to confront and overcome life's trials, including the challenges brought by the COVID-19 pandemic. Their sentiments serve as a poignant testament to the human spirit's resilience, inspiring hope and fortitude amidst challenging times.

The lived experiences within the construction industry during the pandemic highlighted the resilience, adaptability, and determination of both human resource practitioners and construction workers, showcasing their ability to persevere and thrive in the face of adversity. Despite the tough decisions and operational halts forced upon construction firms, HR practitioners and managers played a crucial role in supporting employees and mitigating the impact of the pandemic. Simultaneously, construction workers showcased remarkable resourcefulness and determination, seeking alternative sources of income and adapting to the evolving landscape to provide for their families. The pandemic prompted human resource practitioners to revise their policies and guidelines significantly to provide stronger support for on-site workers. These included implementing plans both before and after the pandemic to ensure employees were adequately supported throughout the crisis.

The Human Resource Crisis Management Model

Preparation, prevention, coping, and recovery were just a few of the phases of crisis management that the construction industry may address with the use of the Human Resource Crisis Management Model. Specifically created to address the difficulties presented by crises such as the COVID-19 pandemic, this approach combines HR Management methods to incorporate crisis aspects with construction industry management. Figure 2 displays the Human Resource Crisis Management Model.

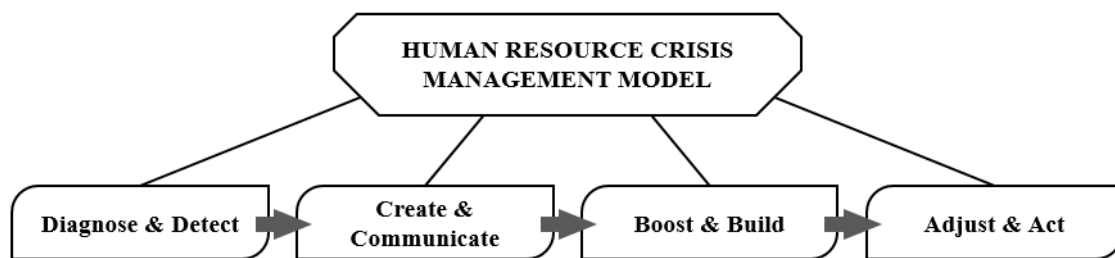


Figure 2: The Human Resource Crisis Management Model

D, which stands for *diagnose*, emphasized the importance of identifying early warning signs and promptly responding to crises. Leaders and HR practitioners played a crucial role in sensing these signals, informing employees, and taking immediate action to address the crisis.

1. The facts need to be available:

Precise and trustworthy data relevant to the current situation were gathered. It was crucial to ensure that the data collected were supported by facts and verified observations rather than conjecture or opinion. This involved gathering in-depth knowledge about the problem being diagnosed through surveys, interviews, or data analysis of existing information.

2. Everyone must be aware of what was happening and why:

Ensuring that all parties participating in the diagnosis process had a thorough awareness of the situation and its underlying causes required effective communication.

3. Gather participants and request creative solutions:

To come up with creative solutions for the identified issue, it was crucial to interact with the appropriate stakeholders and solicit their opinions.

C, represented *create*, underscored the need to establish a dedicated crisis management team comprised of experts, including HR practitioners. This team devised relevant strategies and ensured effective communication to address the crisis promptly.

1. Members of the team have compassion:

Understanding, cooperation, and compassion among team members were crucial during the creativity phase. Members of a compassionate team foster a welcoming and inclusive atmosphere where people were treated with respect and feel appreciated.

2. *Techniques were exchanged:*

It was crucial to ensure that everyone in the team was aligned with the goals, plans, and expectations through effective communication of strategies. Techniques such as sharing best practices, conducting skill-sharing sessions, and exchanging innovative approaches must be employed.

3. *It was essential to communicate:*

The creation phase relied heavily on communication as it allowed team members to share ideas, information, and comments with each other. Making educated judgments, settling disputes, and defining expectations all depended on effective communication.

B, denoting *boost*, focused on maintaining morale among employees during times of crisis. HR practitioners and management should uplift employees and seek external resources to lessen the impact of the crisis on both individuals and the company.

1. *To improve or elevate the situation for the victims:*

In this context, "boosting" referred to measures taken to encourage and support people or groups affected by a disaster; these acts could include offering emotional support, resources, or aid in their reconstruction or recovery.

2. *To seek external assistance to alleviate the crisis:*

Boosting also entailed looking for outside assistance or resources to lessen the effects of the crisis and speed up recovery. This could mean contacting outside partners, governmental bodies, or neighbourhood associations in order to obtain more resources

3. *To assist the business in resolving the crisis:*

The goal of boosting was to assist the business in getting through the crisis and coming out stronger on the other side. This entailed putting strategic objectives, cost-cutting measures, and operational improvements into practice to stabilize the business's finances, operations, and reputation.

A, standing for *adjust*, highlights the importance of adapting to new circumstances and implementing necessary changes. By analysing factors contributing to the crisis, HR practitioners and organizations could prioritize actions and collaborate effectively to navigate the challenges.

1. *Distinguished between assumptions and facts:*

It was essential during this stage to distinguish between assumptions, which were unverifiable beliefs or conjectures, and facts, which were verifiable and supported by evidence. Organizations could make well-informed judgments and create successful crisis management plans by depending on accurate information.

2. *Prioritised tasks and anticipated setbacks:*

At this phase, businesses understood that not every project would be successful, and they expected failures as a necessary component of learning. This required defining precise goals, creating reasonable deadlines, and encouraging an environment that values experimentation and ongoing development.

3. *Collaborating facilitates swift and efficient task completion:*

Effective and efficient goal achievement required cooperation and teamwork. This entailed encouraging open communication, promoting cross-functional teamwork, and giving staff members the freedom to share their knowledge and suggestions.

The Crisis Management Model, summarized by the acronym DCBA, provided a structured approach for preparing, preventing, responding to, and recovering from crises within the construction industry.

4. Summary of Findings

The study investigated how HR practitioners and construction workers in the construction industry managed the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic. HR practitioners navigated operational slowdowns and stoppages by implementing measures such as providing PPE and rationalizing workforce distribution amidst financial constraints. They emphasized adherence to health protocols to protect workers' well-being. Meanwhile, construction workers experienced fear and uncertainty about job security and income loss due to project halts, prompting them to demonstrate resilience through resourcefulness and determination. The findings emphasized the importance of HR practitioners maintaining proactive leadership through implementing timely and effective crisis management strategies, promoting open communication between management and workers, and advocating for policies that prioritize employee health and safety.

5. Conclusion and Recommendation

This study highlighted the pivotal role of HR practitioners in the construction industry during crises such as the COVID-19 pandemic. Beyond crisis management, HR practitioners implemented proactive strategies that prioritized employee well-being, ensured effective communication, and fostered resilience within the industry. The findings emphasized the critical need for robust support mechanisms, including health and safety initiatives and tailored professional development programs, to empower HR practitioners in addressing challenges like job insecurity and financial constraints faced by construction workers. By fostering a culture of continuous learning and adaptation, HR enhanced organizational resilience and supported the workforce in overcoming adversity, contributing to sustained industry stability and employee welfare. It was recommended that construction companies prioritize comprehensive crisis management plans that include explicit health and safety guidelines, foster open communication, and provide diverse income options. HR practitioners enhanced the DCBA Crisis Management Model by early crisis signal identification, agile response teams, and proactive measures to sustain morale and productivity, strengthening resilience and safeguarding worker welfare.

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