

Identity and Identification is a Key to Prevent/Resolve Crisis in Organizations

Maria Cristina Secci

Department of Corporate Economics, Technology and Environment, Cagliari University Viale S. Ignazio, 74 09123 Cagliari – Italy
☎ +39 (0)70 6753450 ☎ +39 (0)70 6753374, mariacristin@tiscali.it

Abstract

Many scholars have been studied identity and identification of individuals in organizations in which they operates and others have been studied crisis situations and proposed practical framework for stabilizing, than mastering, an unanticipated crisis.

But, what's human behaviour in crisis situations? Can identity and identification in organizations be a key to prevent or to resolve crisis situations? And what kind of crisis?

The aim of this paper is to try to provide an affirmative response to this question and for this purpose we'll adopt a qualitative approach by means of a case study method in particular and behaviour observation.

Introduction

In the actual era characterized by great dynamism it must be considered an aspect of great importance: the success or failure of a firm depends on individuals in which they operates. In this respect many scholars and business operators seek to make it possible that in every organization individuals find continuously stimuli to achieve the goals decided by the organization, people goals must be as much as possible to those of the organization in which they operate, in other words individuals must be motivated.

Speaking of motivation, a passion for work (Linstead S., Brewis J. 2007th; Elliott E., Dweck C. 1988; Locke E., 2000), involves first understanding the process of individual identification in the company (Grinberg L., 1982; Ashforth B.E. and Mael F.A., 1989), processes and ways in which the identification is expressed (Dutton J.E., Dukerich J.M. and Harquail C.V., 1994; Pratt M.G. 1998; Elsbach K.D.,1999). The level of people identification in the organization in fact depends on, among other things, the fact that each of them is not only a part of the firm where they works but also of other social groups: family, friends, etc. and their personal identity (Usai G., 2000).

Looking more thoroughly human behaviour and the place where people works you reach what is called social identity: starting from the notions of identity they reach to understand how a person defines himself in relation to others, the Social Identity Theory (Tajfel H. 1981), to get then the definition of organizational identity, a subject on which many researchers have made valuable contributions (among others see Albert S., Wetten D.A., 1985; Gioia, D.A., Shultz, M. and Corley G., 2000; Hatch M.A. and Shultz M., 2004).

Therefore, if the identity, personal and social, keep primarily to the person as individual and member of a social group, the identification of himself with the organization in which he operates is a far more complex process, which leaves just the identity, individual and organizational. Based on these concepts in social studies on the meaning of the term "identification" various authors (Simon, 1947; Cornellissen J.P., Haslam S.A. and Balmer J.M.T., 2007) had show how the identification is a different concept such as the

organizational identity and what could be factors that can create identification: commitment, self-esteem and organizational citizenship, responsibility and motivation, professionalism, leadership, management, to name a few .

But what happens when organizations go through crisis?

Individuals are “builders” of success or failure of organizations, so many scholars have been concentrated their attention onto crisis situations.

Pearson and Clair (1998) in their work stress the importance of multidisciplinary study approach (psychological, socio-political, technological, and so on) and defined an organizational crisis a “ ...a low-probability, high-impact event that threatens the viability of the organization and is characterized by ambiguity of cause, effect, and means of resolution, as well as by a belief that decisions must be made swiftly”. Other researchers (see also Gundel S., 2005) affirm that “classifying crises is the first step to keep them under control since they can be named and analysed. In this regard, analysing does not only mean carrying out theoretical research but it also includes progress in practically relevant measures, hopefully made possible by a typology serving as sufficient analysis framework”.

Because crisis are perceptions of events rather than events themselves and crisis are different from organization to organization such as individuals reactions, it is many important that valid, reliable assessment instruments are adopted as soon as possible to resolve crisis (Barton L., 2004; Conte C. et al., 2007).

The connection between identity and identification with crisis situations and crisis management is still not much observed. When we talk about crisis management we think to many kinds of sources of potential crisis: accidents and natural events that can create serious damage to organizations,; environmental disasters, not necessarily caused by a company but directly related to it, that can compromise the image of the same company; most common, financial disasters. In many cases the first response of companies in crisis situations is to dismiss their workforce.

The research idea is to study humans behaviour in those organizations that go through crisis situations to demonstrate that if there is a better individuals identification in organizations in which they operates it would be a great possibility to prevent or, even, resolve crisis situations. The case study proposed would to confirm our research question.

At the same time, this work represents a pilot survey forwarded to subsequent studies and other investigations. Thus, it can be intended as the first step of a subsequent multiple-case study.

Identity

The concept of identity has always received great interest in all social science and management but in recent years the interest in these subjects has significantly increased (Albert, Ashforth and Dutton, 2000; Corley et. al., 2006; Haslam and Ellemers, 2005; Schultz, Hatch and Larsen, 2000; Gioia et al., 2000).

Identity can be defined as the exact knowledge of their own individuality and personality along with their targets and limits. In sociology, anthropology and other social sciences, the concept of identity refers both to how the individual sees himself as a member of certain groups, and the way in which the rules of those groups allow each individual to move and relate respect to himself and others.

Today it is necessary to review the concept of identity and that, in consideration to the characteristics of current society and the many commitments and groups to which subjects belong, all individuals possess multiple identities, defined social. Identity is a contextual and relational concept: it depending on the context of the role and position within the network of relationships in which the subject is inserted and can be divided into two parts:

- a. Individual, linked to physical and anthropometric characteristics of individuals (Brown, 2001);
- b. the second tied the groups to which the individual belongs and the relationships he has established within them, the social identity (Brown, 2001; Cornelissen, Haslam and Balmer, 2007)

We can also say that the identity is a property which orders the relations between persons as defining their membership of the organization, membership which plays a very important influence in the behaviour of individuals within the group in which they operate and work. It is therefore crucial to understand how the concept of self that has so much importance in the working life and for the organization itself develops.

Initially, the concept of self is a social concept: the individual defines himself in relation to others that led him to achieve a degree of assuredness. It is what some scholars define as sense of competence (SW Gellerman, 1981). The concept of himself makes use of other elements such as the sense of what the person deserves as a result of his actions, that is important in working environments. The identity that individuals carry on the work is a set of important elements to understand their actions and motivations: from the recognition that they have had from their parents, to the role played within the social groups to which they belong or participated, to the relationship with other actors, past work experience, other experiences of successes and failures (which may do well from what we can not) (SW Gellerman, 1981)

Within the organization, the identity acquires the character of cultural property that is manifested as a sense of belonging, whose intensity degree will be different depending on how the people involved feel they belong, in other words how the organization is perceived by its members, whether as a united whole or a extraneous entity.

To understand how the organization creates identity, you must also consider another factor, the empowerment, which has appeared in management literature since the middle 80s by the American sociologist Rosabeth Moss Kanter (Piccardo, 1995) and that is probably one of the factors underlying the process of creating identity. Briefly the term empowerment means assignment of powers, the authorization given to someone with regard to certain decisions (Bolognini, 2003). It can be a transfer of power down the organizational hierarchy in which those who "power moves" should make that who receives more power "to accept more responsibility and is prepared to take action".

Determining the degree of empowerment in an organization means examining how the policies of personnel management are conducted and empowerment is often seen as an indicator of the level of human motivation and satisfaction (Piccardo, 1995).

On defining the concepts of identity and empowerment it is almost immediate to realize that between identity and empowerment there is a very close relationship. It is an important element that creates identity in organization: a good policy of empowerment could create a sense of belonging and identity to a given organization.

But to understand how to shape a sense of belonging, how you express and the possibility that identity can be a key to prevent or resolve organizational crisis, we must refer to the Social Identity Theory and the proposal developed by Tajfel (1981)

The "Social Identity Theory (SIT) is based on certain assumptions about the nature of people and society and their relationships, psychological functioning and human influences that are received from society, and how instead it is conditioned by individuals: the way in which a person defines himself within a group can be reformulated in terms of the concept of social identity.

Based on S.I.T. the notion of "self" includes an individual part linked to the individual subjective characteristics (skills, interests, traits psychophysical, etc..) and a social part, which incorporates the group elements and characteristics. The social identity helps to answer the question "Who am I?" (Tajfel H., 1978, 1981; Ashforth & Mael, 1989; Dutton J.E., Dukerich

J.M., Harquail C.V., 1994; et al.). The SIT makes reference to the concept of social group that refers to two or more individuals who share a common social identity and are perceived as belonging to the same social category. What changes, compared with the traditional psychology that studies the identity, is the prospect: not the individual within the group but the group and its influences on the individual.

The first scholars to suggest the application of SIT in organizational studies were B.E. Ashforth and F. Mael (B. E. Ashforth, F. Mael, 1989)

Starting from the consideration that the organization can be regarded as a significant human group, the presence of social categories in the organizations shows that the social identity represents a significant component of the definition of the individual identity that becomes even more significant when belonging to that organization is a source of pride and increased self-esteem for the individual. The social identity is not originated only by a whole organization but especially by its working groups, departments, in other words, its subsystems. Within the organization are identified and differentiated the various groups in which subjects are identified but the most important factors are the consequences related to individual and social identity for the organization (Tajfel, 1978, 1981).

The commitment of the players will be greater the more the person feels the more the person is in tune with their personal identity and the organization: within the organization, the identity of each subject is subjected to a contextual change: from personal to social identity and it is precisely this that leads the individual to feel loyal to an organization or social culture. Theorists who have remade the social identity theory, the SIT, say that their work organization is one of the social groups that contributes most to defining the social identity of the individual.

This theory proposes the existence of motivation of self esteem fulfilled by maximizing the positive differences for comparisons between groups. From this comparison and the recognition of the identity socially defined, there are consequences of considerable importance in an organization, ranging from wanting to remain in the group to the negative of leaving that group (Tajfel, 1981). You can say that it is the comparative perspective that links the social identity to the social categorization.

As an individual consider the membership of a group on the basis of aspects of their social identity by which the group helps to establish positive, if the same group will not be able to offer appropriate conditions to maintain a positive identity, it will be dropped from subject, or physically, if possible, or psychologically, by a lesser commitment or, in extreme cases, even through the struggle and conflict within the same organization. It is not difficult understand that between identity and organization crisis there is a closed relationship.

Organizational identity

You can now specify that when the "actors" in their inter-subjective processes, are recognized as members of the organization, dealing with the organizational identity (Albert S. and Whetten D.A., 1985, Dutton J.E. and Dukerich JM, 1991; Gioia, DA, Shultz, M. and G. Corley, 2000; Cornelissen J.P., Haslam S.A., Balmer J.M.T., 2007).

It can be stated briefly that the organizational identity can be represented by those values identified as central, distinctive and durable by members of the organization (Tajfel, 1979, Albert and Wetten, 1985, Dutton and Dukerich, 1991; Alvesson M. and Empson L., 2006).

According to some authors through the perspective of "social actor", stretches of identity are seen as durable, allowing you to maintain a balance between past and future, members who work in the organization are satisfied by the collective action to the organization itself as well as the definition of their states, their rights and responsibilities. From the perspective of "social aggregator" organizational identity is constantly being

revised, and is flexible: its identity traits do not change, it changes their interpretation. Based on this perspective some authors (Scott, Cormann & Cheney, 1998, L. Lillia, 2005, to name a few) consider the identity immutable and only interpretations are just changing.

Subjects then experienced its own identity based to the collective identity (Ashforth and Mael, 1989). But to better understand the link between the individual and identity of the organization can attract the levels of identity:

- 1) Individual personal traits, or the individual personality;
- 2) Relational level of identity: the identity-related role;
- 3) Level of social identity: identity tied to the context they belong to.

Given that the organizational identity that defines the experience that people do in the last two levels we can only conclude that these two are strongly linked to that of the organization (Brewer, 2003)

In the process of social construction of identity as "looking glass self" (Hatch M.J. & Schultz M., 2004) the organizational identity rise of a clear interpretation of the external reflection (What others think of organization). Referring to S.I.T. and the definition of social identity as a mixed sense of individuality and of belonging to the group, the awareness of the organization makes an individual proud to be part of that organization and the very traits that make the subject proud, that attract himself and ensure a sense of continuity over time, developing the basic principle of the Self affirmation theory (L. Illia, 2005; Reither S., 2004).

The organizational identity can be examined under two dimensions: in terms of players within the organization, its members or, in terms of external entities, non-members, which can be both stakeholders with which it comes into contact and maintains relationships, both the players see and feel the organization only as a presence and will be attractive to workers when enabling them to maintain and increase their self-esteem (see also Cornelissen et al . 2007). The organizational identity will be as attractive when based on values and characteristics that the subjects included in the organization have of them or that are the basis of their individuality or personal identity. This is also crucial in the process of identification. Individuals will be proud to belong to or work in an organization recognized as having the positive effect of the overlap between individual values and organizational values, and will be brought to desert the same organization in the opposite case.

The Identification

The identification is linked to the sphere of the individual and is central and fundamental to the understanding of the development of personality, character and identity itself.

The dictionary of the Italian language includes a definition sufficiently precise: identification is defined as a psychological process wherein a person feels or is deemed equal to another (1990).

Freud refers to identification as the most primitive form of emotional bond with another person. It is fundamentally different to imitation but it is often confused with it because imitation is "doing something to look like other" while identifying it is not a type of behavior (in this case the reproduction of acts) but is something more: it is an unconscious mechanism that produces lasting changes in the subject (L. Grinberg, 1976) and is something meaningful for the subject from the emotional point of view. It refers to a change of self, that changing the behavior of the subject makes it increasingly resemble the same object taken as a model: it might correspond to the "want to be like the other." The mechanism is completely unconscious contrary to the imitation where he has full knowledge and willingness to "copy" the traits of the object or person admired.

According to other scholars of identification studies it is a mental process that leads a person to be like another. The definition by Rycroft, in which the identification is the process

by which a person extends their identity within someone else, borrows the identity of someone else, and melts confuses his identity with that of someone else (L. Grinberg, 1982) is interesting.

For Shaker, however, identification is an unconscious process in which the subject changes their behavior patterns and representations of the self that are in such a way as to "... feel like to ..." (L. Grinberg, 1982) .

Those just presented are some definitions for the identification and examination that you want to read more carefully, we can agree that the identification is a process that involves the deepest part of the personality of the individual to change the identity.

Of course, the process of identifying may relate the human beings to groups of individuals in which case the analysis becomes more complicated especially if it refers to groups not temporary but stable organizations within which the entity operates. It's in this context that we develop theories of identification in relation to organizational behaviour (Bolognini, 2003)

Identification is fundamentally different to the organizational identity as defined above. Sometimes the relationship between individual and organization goes beyond the simple exchange of mutual benefits and assumes implications that come to influence the image that the individual has to himself. One of the first theoretical groped to give an explanation of what was the identification is Simon (1947) for which the identification is a process through which individuals come to replace the individual with those of the organization. He, however, not focused on the meaning of the concept, but sought an explanation of the causes and effects of identification with the organization.

Later, in the late eighties, several research was published on the subject of identification by several theorists and researchers. The most significant contributions, which have inspired subsequent studies, are those of Asforth and Mael (1981) and Dutton Dekeriq and Arquail (1989) (also see Pratt, 1998; Elsbach, 1999).

The first, using the principles of SIT make an important systematic study of identification while the latter, in addition to proposing a comprehensive scheme, assume those are the links with some pre-identification, make also a number of assumptions about possible relationships between perceived organizational identity and level of identification such as the attractiveness of the organizational link between the concept of self and organizational identity, characteristics of the organization itself.

The categorization processes implemented by the individual, developed through the experience are the basis of identification with the organization in providing the individual knowledge of the social world and the position taken by him within it. Through the categorization a subject incorporates his personal identity and similarly integrates the attributes of the organization: if the comparison between the two diagrams show a degree of overlapping individuals tend to identify himself with the organization (see also Elstak, M.N. and Van Riel, C.B.M., 2005; Ellmers at al. 2004).

The identification with an organization may be examined using both the cognitive aspects (Ashfort and Mael, 1989) and emotional aspects. It is not the same for all and it is different from individual to individual, and in the same subject is different from organization to organization. We can say that the degree of identification to a member with his organization depends on the intensity with which the concept of self and the concept of the organization overlap, in other words, between individual identity and organizational identity. It comes, therefore, by many factors and many cases in combination with each other, in consideration that the current society, as has often been noted, no longer has stability, but is subject to continuous and sudden changes not occurring at other times gone by.

The influence of identification on individual behavior

Compared to the problems of identification another two factors can be included among the most significant and important determinants: the responsibility and motivation.

Motivation and responsibility are linked to them: the motivation may be treated as a psychological contract that binds the employee to the organization (Sarchielli, 1978), which is satisfactory when we reach a perfect degree of correlation between what the individual considers to receive and as he feels the need to give in return, first, what the organization expects the individual on the other, in a performance-return (S. Linstead, J. Brewis, 2007).

The meaning of the term motivation here is to recruit all of the objectives that move individuals: if an initial examination of the most common factors are money, prestige, security, social status, to a more thorough one discovers that those are only the means or the cause of the behaviour and the aim, that really move people, is to be themselves, make themselves live in a manner appropriate to their role and be treated on the basis of this model, to be rewarded their skills, or rather, as each considers to be their value.

According to McClelland (1961, see also JM Atkinson, 1964) there are three different types of needs related to many reasons:

- a) Success, the desire to excel;
- b) Power, desire to achieve a position of influence and control over others;
- c) Affiliation, relationships with others.

Motivation, the need to believe and take greater satisfaction in what you do, in addition to being a source of wealth for the individual is a productive resource for the organization. The basis of the motivation are factors such as professional identity, the institutional recognition, the professional skills itself. It is the set of stimuli, energy and resources that people feel make the relationship available to the organization, availability differs from individual to individual and may take different degrees of intensity. The motivation is closely linked to responsibility, both in terms of meaning of the word and in the content as responsibility means precisely to have consciousness for the consequences arising from their conduct, both positive and negative.

Taking the definition of motivation as a set of resources that people feel they make available to the organization (S. Linstead, J. Brewis, 2007; E. Elliott, Dweck C., 1988; E. Locke, 2000 et al.) is easy to comprehend the tie that binds motivation to responsibility: a highly motivated person will be willing to assume more responsibility to those who should compete on the basis of role. Similarly, the higher the perceived level of responsibility of the individual the greater the degree of identification with the organization.

One can not overlook, however, as related to motivation and responsibility, professional identification, a complex process that includes the identification with a specific occupation, or a status, or a working structure in question. Everything depends on the socialization processes put in place by the actors.

Everett C. Hughes (Sarchielli 1978), in his studies of professional identification says that for every person the profession may be considered in two different ways, such as culture and technology. The latter is seen as a language of their group that uses it, which tends to build through it, a sort of collective representation, of peculiar and sometimes incomprehensible to the surrounding community.

The professional identification often tends to represent those places and the most popular activities, which may be considered desirable by society. The human beings are identified in who determines the success in the institutions in which they would like to work, even if access to them must be part of a "caste or group" that we know for sure, protects and ensures its members. It is extremely important to examine the mechanisms of the process of identification with the profession especially in view of the obsession of work that can occur. It's a question of socio-psychological mechanisms that influence the experience and image of

individuals themselves, the way in which the career conduct subjects to new experiences that transform their identity work and create the conditions for further movement. Everyone is included in the organizational world and more specifically, in the world of work, is linked to groups of colleagues and superiors, in interaction with which it becomes aware of the ideologies professional: the professional identification acts in the work involved in doing what the individual acquires the identity linked to the tasks and involvement in the "name" of the occupation (Sarchielli, 1978)

The professional identification therefore depends on many factors that affect both individual identity and the processes of socialization, both models available with society, especially those with a significant and prestigious comparison and/or image. It's extremely important when you want to consider the organizational identification. May be antecedent or consequent, but it is undeniable that the two concepts are connected in a relationship of cause and effect.

If culture, professionalism, motivation, sense of belonging and social identity, are the individual characteristics considered in itself or as part of a group, among the determinants of identification are not only endogenous factors but also factors external to him that stimulate and produce in him identifying with the organization. Among these plays a key role the leadership (Cornelissen et al., 2007).

For the society the leader is the one capable of leading a group, a person who embodies these qualities in themselves that they are followed without difficulty, with charisma, natural talent and / or intellectuals. If these characteristics are present in individuals who, within the decision-making positions, able therefore to give decision to all those organizational behaviour processes, there is already an initial image of how a leader will have a positive influence on identification in organization.

The leaders who reach high levels of productivity set standards of conduct and means of verification, not as targets but as tools to determine how they can help their subordinates. The basis of all leaders must be fully aware of the quality of each individual that makes up the group, and trust that the leader puts in each of them. One of the ways that allows the leaders to eliminate the gap between the goals of the organization and those of individuals who work for it, thereby creating identification, is to establish a relationship of loyalty between him and his collaborators; on the other hand there will be the loyalty of the group in the leader, that increasing productivity makes the individuals proud to be part of that organization.

It's obvious that the leader can not and must not impose his personality on the people who work with him if he wants to achieve and / or maintain a good degree of identification with the organization of the same individuals. Every leader, consciously or unconsciously, acts in order to achieve their own success as well as for the organization they operate within He is an individual like any other that lives the identification in two different ways: his own, the organization to which he operates, and one that leads to his team.

When a person identifies closely with the organization they assume certain desirable attitudes that may relate to the increased collaboration with other group members, a greater effort to achieve the organizational objectives, a higher level of motivation to participate and have a strong desire to remain in the organization.

From the managerial point of view, identification is an opportunity to devote much attention: the management has at its disposal many levers to facilitate the identification and its (the identification) understanding can foster greater understanding awareness of organizational processes and the possibility of using the tools that can act on it (Gioia D.A, Schultz M. Corley K.G., 2000; Alvesson M., Empson L., 2006; Cornelissen et al. 2007).

The management organization should consider and take into account that the opportunity to participate in a group can increase self-esteem in individuals and provide an incentive for greater participation in the organization. Also highlighted that the identification

with the organization also depends on the attractiveness/appeal of perceived organizational and external perceptions, the levers available to management are just the image and external identity organization. The subjects are generally proud of belonging to a company with a good external image and tend to move away from it, as already defined, if the organization itself has a negative reputation. It's clear that these are subjective evaluations and may reflect or not the reputation, but regardless of it, when the individuals believe that the external image is very good, tend to identify themselves with greater intensity, taking behaviours such as greater organizational collaboration and commitment, and also their self-esteem will be higher. The management will act in this case, using marketing techniques at its disposal to ensure that the organization's image in the view of others, non-members, is the "desired" by the participants.

The management has therefore not only the responsibility to achieve results but also, and perhaps most importantly, to build prestige thus encouraging the identification in the human being: prestige is one of the forces that attracts individuals to the organization and directs choices at the same time is a possible form of remuneration in terms of status that the organization can offer to the individual to work in it. (Bergami, 1996). Management have also the responsibility to resolve organization crisis: in this case we can state and understand, as describe above in relation to the management role, the relation between identification and crisis.

A starting point for understanding the concept of identification with the organization may be the concept of social identity as defined by Tajfel and studies on organization and behavioral processes by Ashforth and Mael. They, in their studies on Social Identity Theory, by examining the identification, show four basis points including, to name a few, a cognitive perceptual process, not associated with a specific behavior or emotional states, and personal experience of successes of individual and failures of the group stating that social identification is a cognitive process and not affective that makes links with organization and self opinion.

In the managerial literature individual-organization relationship is one of the determinants of performance in the belief that human being identified with the organization yield better results (performance).

If it takes the concept of identity (as defined by Ashforth and Mael) that the social identity would perceive themselves as part of a social group, linked to the fate of the group, where the successes and failures of that are seen and experienced as their own, can be defined as the identification with the organization "... a specific form of social identity, defined by Hall, Schneider and Nygren (1970) as a process through which the objectives of becoming closely integrated and related. (Bertolotti, and others, 2004)

G. Usai (Usai, 2000) states that, since each organization is an entity "wanted" and created by humans being, it is important to understand the degree of identification of the individual with the same, the processes that determine the identification and how and where it's expressed. This is because every individual is a part not only of the organization in which he operates, but also to other social groups and this fact implies that the degree of identification of the person with the organization can not be total (see also C. Barnard, 1948). The degree of identification of the organization comes to its significant contribution to the pursuit of goals that it set itself.

The Crisis

The comprehensiveness of a crisis definition is so difficult as to apply methodological approach and theories to study organizational crisis.

Pearson and Clair in their work (1998) affirm that many scholars have conducted conceptual and empirical studies on the topic of large-scale organizational crisis and at the same time they precise that “because the study of organizational crisis involves multiple disciplines” the appropriate method is to study crisis using a system approach. This demonstrate the difficult to understand, planning and resolve crisis. They describe organizational crisis, as indicated above, as “a low probability, high-impact situation that is perceived by critical stakeholders to threaten the viability of the organization and that is subjectively experienced by these individuals as personally and socially threatening. Ambiguity of cause, effect, and means of resolution of the organizational crisis will lead to disillusionment or loss of psychic and shared meaning, as well as to the shattering of commonly held beliefs and values and individuals’s basic assumptions”. (Pearson C.M., Clair, J.A., 1998).

Generally, “a crisis is a change ... that results in an urgent problem that must be addressed immediately. For a business, a crisis is anything with the potential to cause sudden and serious damage to it employees, reputation or bottom line”. (Burton, 2004).

The crisis is an event whose occurrence and whose visibility outside threaten to produce a negative effect on the organization and its reputation, its goods and services, its employees and other stakeholders on policy and, finally, its financial results (Invernizzi, 2006).

The meaning of the term “crisis” is the result of the different meanings given by that word over the centuries, from the ancient world. In ancient Greek "Krisis" means decision, choice, and indicates, therefore, a beginning of the change. The term during the time took a negative meaning to indicate a period of great adversity and in particular in the economic field but with the word crisis also indicate the particular situations in which a company may encounter in their lifetime. You are referring to the unforeseen events that seriously damage, both from an earnings, both in terms of image (Gilardoni 1994). According to Invernizzi, the crisis is characterized by the following three aspects:

1. exceptional nature of the critical, unique and often unexpected;
2. visibility of the event and its negative effects because amplified by the media. The only reality of the crisis is perceived by the stakeholders as a true reference of the organization (Lombardi, 1993; Meyers, 1988);
3. need to timely and relevant response in the twenty-four hours after determining the success / failure in the protection of the fundamental objectives and to safeguard the reputation of the organization.

Defining the concept of crisis, therefore, may seem difficult since it is not possible to give a universal definition of the term, because there are many elements that make it different to changing situations and the type of business. Even assuming that the same emergency occurs in the same company - but several years later - the situation probably would be different because they might have evolved the culture and objectives of the organization or could be changed the attitude of public opinion . However we can agree that, with regard to a company, we can talk of a crisis whenever something happens that does not allow the institution to pursue - in the way it was planned - the goal set by management plan.

You can identify some specific skills crisis (Berge, 1991, in Invernizzi, 2006):

1. Importance and high seriousness of the event: they refer to the damage suffered not only in economic terms but also as a strong increase in social tension;
2. Surprise effect: if the event was not unexpected and highly unlikely, there will be something to do with an emergency situation but with an unusual situation, however, address schemes already in use;
3. Strong time pressure: the strict time constraint requires to make decisions quickly and efficiently to avert the further aggravation of the situation, due to the loss of trust of

customers and investors and to the deterioration of the morale of employees. Often the immediate awareness of these circumstances is the factor that determines the crisis management success or failure;

4. Inapplicability of the decision-making procedures and routine: this is because the situation forces to take on atypical behaviour, to abandon pro tempore, the set of norms, hierarchical relationships, organizational mechanisms during automatically over time and involves the alteration of the balance usual;
5. Threat to the survival and organization reputation: when it was hit by a crisis of some importance, what is important is to protect the image, reputation, both from possible attacks by the media, both by rumors and assumptions that are spreading in these cases.

These are the common denominators that help to grasp the objective characteristics of the crisis, which do not provide, however, a sufficient aid to affected organizations as it is important to consider also, and above all, by what criteria a situation is perceived as a crisis (aspects perceptual) from those who live

Other researches define crisis as any naturally occurring or humanly engineered disruptions in social, economic or political systems (Rusaw, C.A., Rusaw, M.F., 2008). Many scholars agreed that a crisis event "...is highly ambiguous, unknown and unexpected, has a low probability of occurrence yet high impact on organization and their stakeholders, offers little time to respond and presents a challenge for decision making that leads to better or worse results (in Wang J, 2008).

According to Shrivastava and others, an organizational crisis has been described as two interacting sets of failure, one that include the human and organizational factors that are internal to the organization and the second one that include failures external to the organization (Hutchins, H.M., 2008).

All crisis definitions demonstrate the variability of the concept which correspond to many possible systems of crisis resolution and many classifications. We can affirm that it would be impossible to list every potential business crisis but many researches have been studied crisis situations and provided various types of crisis classification.

Disease outbreaks, investor fraud, terrorist acts, and natural disasters are but a few of the events that can morph into crisis events and have severe impacts on organization sustainability (Hutchins, H.M. , 2008). Other scholars describe not only a typologies crisis classification but also the most evident organizations consequences common to all organizations such as damage to organization reputation and workers stress and depression (Lewis, G., 2006; Barton L., 2004).

Gundel (2005) states that provide a classification of types of crises is the first step towards a solution and their control. He proposes a crisis classification by taking over the definitions of other researchers and, in particular, he represents a four-area matrix that "... allowing us to make a rough estimate of the exposure of different types of crisis..." divided into four types: conventional crises; unexpected crisis; intractable crisis; fundamental crisis.

If we examine others works and studies, we can find that many scholars and researchers have focused the attention especially in types of crisis, classifications, resolutions systems and so on, and many of them have neglected the human behavior importance in workplace in particular.

Methodology

The research proposed imply on the one hand human behaviours and on the other side typologies of organizations situations that involves, in particular, human beings. So, the philosophical approach is qualitative because we think it would the major system to study the

problem as illustrated above as in the qualitative research the stress is on the understanding of the social world through an examination of the interpretation of that world by its participants (Bryman A., Bell E., 2007).

The qualitative method, even using measuring instruments, is intended to illustrate the phenomenon studied, explain, understand the path without having to measure. Through this approach we can examine issues that quantitative research does not show, such as psycho-social, emotional. It lends itself to be used in cases in which the principle of contingency becomes important as the analysis of the phenomenon is to be contextualised, studied in his space and his time.

Blumer expresses the difference between quantitative and qualitative survey with two words: "definitive" and "sensitizing" that capture the salient aspects of both types (Bryman A., Bell, E., 2007).

This work is attributed great importance to the human value, to the knowledge and the social aspect. In view of this, you chose a method of qualitative research, which, despite the limitations it might create (risk of excessive involvement of the researcher and so on.) on the other hand it seemed the most appropriate to the study of the phenomenon as in this case one needs to have direct contact with reality and the people that it will operate.

This type of research provides various tools which can include interviews, structured and semi-structured, focus group, ethnography/participant observation, case study, and so on.

The case study proposed allowed us to understand the case, to observe the mechanism and the processes of a case (Yin, 2003) and show the importance of workforce behaviour.

It concern a medium sized firm working in the chemical sector. The quiet and successful life of this firm was upset by a terrible fire. The entire building was destroyed. The rebirth was possible only with the immediate care of all the workers. What became immediately clear was the rebirth of a different climate among the people, a different relationship was created without the necessity to waste many words in order to start the actions for a new activity.

Identity assumes a wide meaning involving not only the manager and the board of directors but also the individuals working inside the firm.

Conclusion

In an attempt to study and understanding crisis situations Pearson and Clair (1998) propose and discuss research grounded in three different perspectives: psychological, social-political, and technological-structural perspective.

Neglecting for brevity of discussion but not least the last two points, the psychological view of crisis in particular, examine human behavior and suggests that individuals play an important role in organizational crises and how many scholars and researches little attention has been paid to the individual experiences of an organizational crisis once it unfolds.

Most important during crisis is to maintain motivation and moral of the workforce. Today many scholars and researches assumes that motivated employees make better and more productive employees (Lewis G., 2006) especially if organizations go through crisis. If we think that motivation is the base of a better identity and identification in organizations it is not difficult to understand that identity and identifications can be the key to resolve or prevent crisis situations.

As Rhonda K . Reger noted "... identity can develop in response to a crisis. The crisis evokes action and experimentation, and an identity emerges from that" (1998:115).

The unpredictable nature of crisis calls for organizations to develop nimble structures and systems to respond to a variety of contingent situations in the environment (Rusaw, A.C.,

Rusaw M.F., 2008). In any case, if causes or solution differ from organizations to organizations what cannot change is the identity and identification that can be different in their content of space and time but not in their intrinsic meaning.

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