Organizational crisis, impression management strategies and employees’ emotions

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ABSTRACT

This paper examines employees’ emotional states and reactions to both organizational crisis and impression management strategies that are employed to manage employees’ impressions during crisis. Using thematic and content analytical strategies, qualitative data from three organizations revealed that beyond anger, employees experienced emotions of fear, sadness and surprise. To manage employees’ impression during crisis, senior managers used several strategies and especially attempted to hide the crisis. Emerging patterns also showed the discrepancies between management and employees preferred way of managing crisis. Implications of the findings are discussed.

Key word: Crisis, impression management and emotions
Contemporary organizations have suffered an increase in the magnitude and frequency of crisis events (Mitroff 2005; Seeger, Sellnow & Ulmer, 1998). Fink (1986) describes an organizational crisis as a sudden, unexpected and unplanned event that has adverse effects on the organization’s bottom line (Fink 1986; Hooghmiestra 2000). Empirical studies also indicate that crises negatively impact organizational image, reputation and legitimacy while damaging organizational relationships with its important stakeholders (see also King III 2002). To manage stakeholders’ impressions, senior managers often target external stakeholders (Mitroff 2005) but largely ignore their employees (Landen 2003). Yet, employees are a key audience to the organization (Wolfinbarger & Gilly 1998) and, in many ways, more valuable to the organization than its other stakeholder groups (see also Benoit 2001). Our research fills this vacuum by integrating literature on organizational crisis, impression management and emotions to examine the strategies used to manage employees’ impressions during crises.

To do this, we pose three main research questions namely: 1) what strategies do senior managers use in managing employees’ impression during a crisis, 2) what are the emotional states of the employees during a crisis and 3) what are the employees’ emotional reactions to the senior managers’ strategies to manage employees’ impression during a crisis. Answers to the above questions should facilitate a better understanding of the nature of employees’ emotional states and reactions during organizational crisis.

Specifically, the current research contributes to the literature on organizational crisis in three ways. First, rather than focus on the reactions of external stakeholders, it examines employees’ emotional states and reactions to organizational crisis. Secondly, based on Affective Event Theory (AET) (Weiss & Cropanzano 1996) the research builds a model of the relationship between organizational crisis, impression management strategies and employees’ emotions. Thirdly, building on the work of Mitroff (2005) it extends impression management literature by examining the employees’ emotional states and reactions to the impression management strategies employed during crisis.

THEORETICAL UNDERPINNINGS AND HYPOTHESES DEVELOPMENT

Weiss and Cropanzano (1996)’s Affective Events Theory (AET) proposes that the workplace environment is a source of discrete, affective events that generate feelings or emotions and that employees’ emotional responses to these events determine their subsequent attitudes and behaviours. Although studies have previously used AET as a theoretical underpinning to understand affective
reactions such as anger during crisis (e.g. McDonald & Härtel 2000), these studies focused solely on external stakeholders and exclusively on the emotion of anger. Up till now, our understanding of other five basic emotional categories of fear, sadness, surprise, love and joy (Schwartz, Kirson & O’Connor 1987) in crisis research is limited. We address this void using AET (Weiss & Cronpazano 1996) as an anchor to examine employees’ emotions to crisis and related impression management strategies. Specifically, we build a conceptual model depicting the relationship between organisational crisis, impression strategies and employees emotions (See Figure 1). We discuss this next.

Organizational crisis and impression management

The study of organizational crisis is still largely at a developmental stage (Simola 2005). Consequently, Pearson and Clair (1998) together with other researchers (Barton 2001; Simola 2005) call for more empirical studies in organizational crisis. We have previously established that organizational crisis is a sudden, unexpected and unplanned event that has adverse effects on the organization’s bottom line (Hooghmiestra 2000). Impression management may also be defined as the behaviours employed to create and protect self-images and impressions and, especially, to influence the way that one is perceived by significant others (Hooghiemstra 2000). Consistently, organizational senior managers rely on Benoit’s 1995 strategies for comprehensive crisis management guidelines (Benoit 2004). Based on Benoit’s strategies, some top managers manage their organizational crisis through denial, evasion of responsibility, reducing the offensiveness of the event, corrective action and mortification. A denial strategy is used when senior management simply denies committing the act. Senior managers may also use evasion of responsibility where the management claims a lack of control over the situation. Similarly, senior managers use reducing the offensiveness of the event, that is, they generate positive feelings amongst stakeholders to offset negative feelings connected with the wrongful act. We also know that these top managers employ corrective action by attempting to correct the problems that caused the crisis. Finally, senior managers use mortification to manage their stakeholders’ impressions in a crisis by seeking forgiveness (Benoit 2004). Taken together, we hypothesize that:

Hypothesis 1: During a crisis, senior managers will use impression management strategies of denial, evasion of responsibility, reducing offensiveness of the event, corrective action and mortification to manage their employees’ impressions of the crisis in order to restore the organization's image.
Organizational crisis, impression management and appropriate strategy

For the purpose of this research, we define appropriate strategies as strategies that will limit or repair the relational damage brought about by an organisational crisis (see Coombs, 2000). Conversely, inappropriate crisis strategies refer to those strategies that escalate the relational damage brought about by a crisis. We know that the use of various impression management strategies may invoke different emotional reactions (Benoit 2004). For example, denial and the evasion of responsibility may escalate negative emotional reactions to the organization (Benoit 2004) while the strategies of corrective action and mortification lower negative responses to the organization. Inappropriate strategies could escalate the crisis leading to disastrous effects (Borda & Mackey-Kallis 2004). Thus, we argue that managers need to use appropriate impression management strategies with their employees during crisis. Thus, we hypothesize that:

Hypothesis 2: Senior managers’ inappropriate use of impression management strategies in a crisis event will escalate the crisis scenario and, in turn, elicit negative employees’ emotional states and reactions.

Organizational crisis, impression management and employees’ emotions

An organizational crisis is highly correlated with negative emotional states (Lord, Klimoski & Kanfer 2002). Studies show that the greater the perceived involvement of an individual with the organization, the greater the impact of the crisis on the individual (McDonald & Härtel 2000). Thus, we expect that employees’ emotions will be more severely impacted when compared to other stakeholders. In addition, previous literature categorized basic emotions in various ways (Izard 1992; Shaver et al. 1987). However, we focus on Shaver et al. (1987)’s categories of basic emotions namely: anger, fear, sadness, surprise, joy and love. Although researchers have focused predominantly on the study of anger in a crisis (ignoring other emotional states), we argue that given the stress during crisis (Mitroff 2005), employees will experience emotional states of fear and sadness. Based on the above, we hypothesize that:

Hypothesis 3a: Given an organizational crisis event, employees will experience negative emotional states such as anger, sadness, fear and surprise.

We have indicated that senior managers employ impression management strategies to restore their organization’s image after a crisis event and that most of these attempts are targeted at external rather than internal stakeholders (e.g., employees). Given the above discussion which outlined the likely
impact of crisis on the employees, we argue that employees will also be impacted by the impression
management strategies that are employed during the crisis. Therefore, we hypothesize propose that:

*Hypothesis 3b: Senior managers’ impression management strategies employed in managing employees’
reactions to an organizational crisis will have a direct (positive or negative) impact on the employees’
states and reactions.*

**RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY**

To test the above hypotheses, we employed both scientific positivism and realism as our
nomological network. We also adopted a data triangulation approach to collect data, discover and analyse
the impression management strategies and employees’ emotions during crisis. For accuracy and validity,
we collected data less than six months after each of the crises (McDonald & Härtel 2000) studied. We
employed semi-structured interviews for the primary data collection but because crises are highly
sensitive and organizational managers are reluctant to discuss their crisis, we followed Simola (2005) and
Barton (2001) to collect secondary data from newspapers and relevant organizational websites. We expect
that data triangulation should improve the accuracy and validity of our results (Taylor & Bogdan 1998).

**Research settings**

Three Australian organizations (A, B, C) that had undergone a crisis in the six months preceding
our research were chosen as data collection sites. Organization A is a major sporting organization that has
lost several matches in the season and now faced a crisis when two of its players were apprehended in
separate alcohol-related incidents in a week. Organization B is a media organization where employees
experienced alarming number of a life-threatening disease while Organization C is an educational
institution that faced a crisis after a spate of brain-related diseases were diagnosed in their employees.

**Data Analytical Strategies**

Two analytical strategies were employed (thematic and content analyses) to reinforce each other
and in so doing strengthened the theoretical validity (Yin 2003) of the results. For the thematic analysis,
two coders who were familiar with Benoit’s 1995 strategies but blind to the aims of the research went
through the transcripts and identified the characteristics of the impression management strategies
employed(cf. Van De Vliert et al. 1999). Inter-coder agreement on emerging themes was 80%. For the
content analysis, we developed the coding categories in four stages. First, we examined the frequencies of
the word appearing in the data (Kellehear 1993) to develop categories prior to searching for them in the
data. Secondly, we pre-determined the categories (see Krippendorf 2004) of basic emotions as used by
Shaver and colleagues. Again, two coders who were blind to the aim of the research but exposed to
Shaver et al.’s 1987 emotional categories developed the coding frames for data analysis. Coding frames
experienced three reiterations. Inter-rater reliability was 90%. Thirdly, we employed Leximancer software
to generate codes directly from the data (Smith & Humphreys 2006). We set apriori the categories/
concepts that were important to test the relevant hypotheses. Then, we used the user-defined features of
Leximancer to extract coding frames. The overlap between raters and Leximancer’s coding frames was
85%. Finally, we manually fed (hand-seeded) the coding frames of emotional categories into Leximancer.

RESULTS

We employed thematic analysis to test Hypotheses 1-2. Results revealed the following themes:

Evading Responsibility. Analysis of the secondary data shows that both Organizations B and C attempted to evade responsibility for the crisis event by using the strategy of ‘defeasibility’. For example, management in both Organizations B and C claimed that because the previous investigations showed no link between location and the cluster of the life-threatening diseases, employees can not be relocated.

Reducing offensiveness of the event. Organization A attempted to reduce the offensiveness of the crisis event by shifting the focus from the misbehaviour of the players to the act of sacking the players (Secondary Data: HR,D) while Organization C reduced offensiveness by using the strategy of “bolstering” (Benoit 2004) to increase stakeholders’ positive feeling to offset the negative effect of the crisis. For example, Organization C established a website which stressed the positive and immediate steps the management took to manage the crisis such as closing the ‘affected’ floor, allowing employees to work from home- all to reiterate Organization C’s focus on protecting its internal stakeholders. In addition, interesting strategies targeted toward the employees were revealed. For example, Organizations B and C offered to compensate victims and other employees with free counselling and medical check up. These efforts were used to reduce the animosity and offensiveness of the crisis event.

Corrective Actions. The three organizations responded to the respective crisis events by taking corrective actions. Organization A responded by sacking the two players while Organizations B and C conducted two rounds of investigations each to uncover the cause for the cluster of diseases presented in their
employees. Data did not show any clear indication of denial and mortification impression management strategies in all organisations studied. However, given the above evidence, Hypothesis 1 is supported.

Hypothesis 2, postulated that inappropriate use of impression management strategies in a crisis event will have negative effects on the employees. Only Organization B’s strategy of reducing offensiveness appeared to be inappropriate. This is because reducing offensiveness in this case seems to have escalated the damage done by the crisis rather than improving it. Other corrective strategies e.g. setting up new investigations and free services are submissive strategies (Benoit 1995). However, based on the reactions of the employees, these strategies worsened the crisis situation and invoked more negative emotional responses from the employees. In contrast, Organization C evacuated employees from affected floors and allows employees to work from home until the investigations were completed. While employees in Organization C reacted favourably to the impression management strategies targeted towards them, the employees in Organization B reacted negatively. Taken the above evidence together, inappropriate use of impression management will result in increased employees negative emotions. Thus, Hypothesis 2 is supported.

**Results of the content and thematic analyses for Organization A (Primary and Secondary Data)**

We tested hypotheses 3a and 3b using thematic and content (Leximancer) analytical strategies. We forced the Shaver et al. 1987’s basic emotions categories on the data to organize the employees’ emotional states/reactions that emerged (See Table 1). Table 2 presents the words representing the emotional state and reactions of employees in Organization A. Also, the thematic analysis of data from Organization A revealed that the players in Organization A were angry but ironically, their anger seemed to spur them to a good match immediately after the crisis event: These findings from content and thematic analyses suggest that employees from Organization A experienced emotional states of anger, sadness and shame. Also based on emotional words such as shock and desperate, we can infer that they also experienced surprise.

[Insert Tables 1 and 2]

**Results of the content and thematic analyses for Organization B (Secondary data)**

Table 3 indicates the most frequently used emotional words in Organization B given content analysis. Also thematic analysis suggests anger as an employees’ reaction to crisis. Employees’ anger was
revealed when the employees contemplated strike action, legal action and demanded their office be relocated (Secondary Data-Org B, H, L ). Thematic analysis suggests that employees in Organization B had fear. One victim of the disease described her state of fear and disbelief:

"You wake up in the morning and the first thing you think is, 'Oh my God, I've got XXX. There's that disbelief that goes along with it. And the fear that is so real, you can almost taste it. It stays with you’" (Secondary Data: Organization B_ M)

[Insert Table 3]

Results of the content and thematic analyses for Organization C (Secondary Data)

Table 4 presents the most frequent emotional concepts that emerged from Organization C’s data using Leximancer. Similarly, thematic analysis revealed that employees (and students) in Organization C were scared. An informant thought "It's spooky; everyone is a little shaken… “ (Source Key Informant _Organization C ). Employees in Organisation C were also shocked to find out that their organisation was previously aware of similar problems in the past but did not make it public to them. Given the evidence illustrated above, hypothesis 3a is supported.

For hypothesis 3b, content analysis revealed that the other players reacted to Organizational A’s impression management strategy with shock. Also, results from thematic analysis on Organization A corroborated this:

"...We’re all a bit stunned and shocked by what's happened but we’re all trying to get our heads around a very big game on Sunday." (Secondary Data Key Informant, Organization A).

For Organization B, content analysis indicated that employees’ most frequently used words as a reaction to Organization B’s impression management strategies include amazement (10%), horrible (11%), uncertainty (12%), disappointment (10%) and devastation (11%). Data also revealed that senior managers managed the crisis by discussing the main concerns with staff, meeting with media and hiring experts on the disease to investigate the organization’s site and determining if there was a link between environment and the cases. Managers also arranged for free medical check up and free counselling for staff while they released findings from previous investigations about the possible cause of the cluster of the disease. However, results of the thematic analysis showed employees’ reactions to the above impression management strategies were mixed. For example, some employees reacted positively and
noted “it’s reassuring to know that something will be done about it” (Secondary Data, Organization B_LR) but majority of the employees’ had negative reactions and threatened to go on strike. These reactions suggest anger, frustration and disappointment with the organization’s management of the crisis. Overall, there was a general negativity about the impression management strategies as revealed by a representative employee:

“I was disappointed with the SGovt investigation and would have liked more testing to have been done… they never tested the air, the soil or water. We gave them a list of things they could potentially look for, including PCBs. They said ‘We don’t know what to look for, so we’re not going to look’. That just doesn’t make sense.” (Secondary Source-Organization B_C).

Like Organization B, Organization C also employed impression management strategies such as closing the affected floor of the building, allowing staff to work from home, calling for another review of the worksite to check for any potential medical threats and provided free health checks, counselling, mailed all staff and opened help lines to answer questions from employees, students and their parents (Secondary Data, Org B_Bab; MR). Thematic analysis of transcripts of data from Organization C’s website indicated that the employees’ reactions were also varied. Some employees reacted negatively to the impression management strategies. Specifically, they were frustrated that no conclusive evidence emerged from the investigations. “It is like asbestos… the safety standards don’t address prolonged exposure; they only test immediate effects. What happens if you spend 10-15 years in a room with elevated levels? (Secondary Data: Organization C_ Key Informant 2). Overall, evidence from Organizations A, B and C indicates that employees’ reactions to the impression management strategies employed by their organizations were predominantly negative. Thus, there is support for Hypothesis 3b.

**DISCUSSION**

We have established that given organizational crisis, organizations will make an attempt to repair their image by employing some impression management strategies (Mohamed & Gardner 2004). Our results support prior findings in this area. All the three organizations studied employed some impression management strategies directed towards the employees to ameliorate the pejorative consequences of the crisis on their image. Specifically, our results revealed that the participating organizations employed the strategies of evading responsibility, reduction of the seriousness of the event and corrective actions to
restore their organizations’ image after the crisis. This is in congruence with previous findings in this area. For example, the work of Hooghiemstra (2000) showed how Shell employed the impression management tactics Cowden & Sellnow (2002) indicated that Northwest Airlines responded to their 1998 pilots strike using image restoration strategies.

Furthermore, our findings suggest that the employees experienced emotional states of anger, fear, and sadness following an organizational crisis further confirming the Shaver et al. s’ categories of basic emotions. Results also revealed that the majority of the emotional reactions to the crisis from the studied organizations were negative and included frustration, disappointment, confusion, shock and surprise. These findings support Weiss and Cropanzano’s 1996 AET that proposes that workplace endogenous factors including stressful events such as organizational crisis produce moods and emotions (Weiss & Cropanzano 1996).

Our results indicate that some impression management strategies elicited positive emotions (e.g., amazement) while some elicited negative emotions (e.g., sadness). Further analysis revealed that employees who reacted positively to impression management strategies were not direct victims of crisis. This is an interesting result that reiterates literature in the area of organizational trauma which suggests that the degree of exposure to strain may be a determining factor (Norris et al. 1999). For example, in a study of the Oklahoma bombing disaster, those who were more closely connected to the disaster experienced greater symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder (Tucker 2000). Overall, our results revealed that employees’ reactions were dependent on how well they received the strategies.

Emotional events in the workplace can have important attitudinal and behavioural consequences (Weiss 2002). Given AET, we anticipate that employees’ emotional reactions to discrete, affective events such as organizational crisis may have an impact on the existing constructed trust between employees and their organization. Besides, Jones and George (1998) report that affective reactions such as anger and disappointment (e.g., induced by crisis) influence how people evaluate their feelings for, attachment to and trust in others (see also Lewicki & Bunker 1995; Williams 2001). Our findings show that employees’ emotional reactions to the crisis affected employees’ feelings to the organisations involved in crisis. Specifically, our results show that the direct victims of the crisis would prefer not to continue working in the organization. Such feelings of intention to turnover may have been triggered by employees’ negative
emotions after an organizational crisis. This finding can be explained by the fact that downsizing and change that may result from organizational crisis may deeply affect how the survivors feel toward the organization (Brockner, Tyler & Cooper-Schneider 1992). Besides, research into other types of stressors suggests that they are associated with absenteeism (Bryon & Peterson 2002).

Overall, our findings demonstrate that organizational crisis and impression management will elicit emotional states and emotional reactions in the employees. These emotional reactions may impact employees’ turnover or absenteeism and other commitments (e.g. trust) to the organization.

**Limitations of research**

The reluctance of organizations to participate in the current research resulted in the collection of only one primary data but large secondary data. This is a limitation of the study. In spite of this limitation, our secondary data have more than compensated for this limitation (see Lee 2000). In addition, our study is qualitative and although it has provided us with rich data, our findings may not be easily generalised across organisations. In addition, there are still some questions that have not been answered in this research. For example, what is the connection between employees’ emotions during crisis and turnover, absenteeism and lack of trust in the organisation? More qualitative research is needed to probe the above questions so that we can have a better understanding of the full implications of employees’ emotions during crisis on their subsequent attitude and behaviour in the organisation.

**CONCLUSIONS**

Using affective events theory (AET), the present study examined the emotional states and reactions of employees during an organizational crisis. As far as we aware, this is one of the first few attempts to examine employees’ emotions to crisis and impression management strategies during crisis. Our study has further illuminated the process of managing organizational crisis beyond Benoit’s strategies to include employee counselling, compensations and the choice of working from home while the triangulation of data as employed by the current research has allowed insight into more categories of emotional states during crisis such as fear, sadness and surprise. Moreover, we have further insights into the need to align both employees and management impression management strategies for effective crisis management. A dominant theme in our study is that the employees’ emotional reactions to crisis and the impression management strategies are mostly negative. We theorize that if unmanaged, these negative emotions
emotions may in the short term lead employees to strikes and litigation and in the long term to turnover, absenteeism and decreased trust in the organization. Overall our research has extended theory and practice on crisis, emotions and impression management.

**Practical Implications**

Our findings have several practical implications. Firstly, given our findings, we know that inappropriate impression management strategies vary from organisation to organisation and may worsen employees’ emotional states and reactions during crisis; therefore it is imperative for managers to have skills in identifying key employees’ emotional states and reactions to crisis and the impression management strategies employed to manage them. Secondly, managers need to be familiar with their organisational context to be able to determine what impression management strategies may be a good fit for managing their employees’ emotions in time of crisis. A training that sharpens managers’ emotional intelligence will be helpful in managing emotions of employees during crisis. Thirdly, our findings showed that there could be a tension in managers’ and employees’ preferred strategies for managing crisis. Senior managers’ strategies for managing employees need to be aligned with employees’ expectations for effective crisis management. Fourthly, our findings have implications for pre crisis planning. Managers need to be more strategic and proactive about crisis management. For purposes of generalization, future research should now use quantitative approaches to test the propositions presented in the current study to further explicate the relationship between organizational crisis impression management and employees emotions.
REFERENCES


Table 1: Data revealed emotional words within Shavers et al. (1987) basic emotional categories

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Anger</th>
<th>Fear</th>
<th>Sadness</th>
<th>Surprise</th>
<th>Love</th>
<th>Joy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Frustrating</td>
<td>Desperate</td>
<td>Disappointing</td>
<td>Shocked</td>
<td>Love</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Horrible</td>
<td>Depression</td>
<td>Depression</td>
<td>Scare</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disbelief</td>
<td>Scare</td>
<td>Woe</td>
<td>Shocked</td>
<td></td>
<td>Exciting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confused</td>
<td>Alarming</td>
<td>Sad</td>
<td>Scared</td>
<td></td>
<td>Funny</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hate</td>
<td>Nervousness</td>
<td>Distressing</td>
<td>Distressed</td>
<td></td>
<td>Wonderful</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Disturbing</td>
<td>Concerned</td>
<td>Concerned</td>
<td></td>
<td>Happy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mystified</td>
<td>Distressing</td>
<td>Confused</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2: Emotional Concepts in organisation A from a relevant website

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Concept</th>
<th>Absolute Count</th>
<th>Relative Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. shocked</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. desperate</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. disappointing</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>93.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. depression</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. woes</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>13.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. difficult</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>13.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 3: Ranked list of emotional concepts related to employees in Organization B

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Emotional Concept</th>
<th>Absolute Count</th>
<th>Relative Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>scare</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>72.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>concerned</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>55.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fear</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>18.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>disbelief</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>18.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>concerns</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>15.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>disappointed</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sad</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>distressing</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>horrible</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3.4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4: Ranked list of emotional concepts related to employees in Organization C

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Concepts</th>
<th>Relative Count</th>
<th>Absolute Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>disturbing</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>80.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mystified</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>77.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>concerned</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nervousness</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>frustrating</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>concern</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>47.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>scared</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>44.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>confused</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>41.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>overwhelming</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>41.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>horrified</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>41.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>shaken</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>41.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>confident</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>disbelief</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>27.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>concerns</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>27.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>distressing</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>scare</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>22.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>shock(ed)</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>16.6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Figure 1: The conceptual model of the relationship between organizational crisis, impression management strategies and employee emotional reactions