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## Crisis communication in human capital management during war: Addressing social and psychological challenges

### Кризова комунікація в управлінні людським капіталом під час війни: вирішення соціальних і психологічних проблем

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#### Abstract


The article proves that effective crisis communications, allow not only to inform staff about the current situation promptly but also to maintain stability and cohesion in the team, quickly adapt employees to new conditions, and maintain their productivity and psycho-emotional state. The study is based on the use of a wide range of methods for assessing social and psychological threats in the context of crisis communication, namely: the results of questionnaire surveys and


#### Анотація


У статті доведено, що ефективні кризові комунікації дозволяють не лише оперативно інформувати персонал про поточну ситуацію, а й підтримувати стабільність та згуртованість у колективі, швидко адаптувати працівників до нових умов, підтримувати їхню продуктивність та психоемоційний стан. Дослідження базується на використанні широкого спектру методів оцінки соціально-психологічних загроз в контексті кризових комунікацій, а саме:


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sociological research by consulting agencies and international organisations to study and systematise social and psychological risks in the organisation; statistical analysis to identify the direction and dynamics of the development of the main manifestations of mental health; correlation and regression analysis to assess the impact of mental health on employees'. The development of crisis communication models in wartime is based on adapting classical crisis communication models and elements of strategic matrix modelling. The study was based on the results of surveys of employees of Ukrainian organisations for the period 2018-2023, which allowed us to determine the impact on their mental state of the biggest challenges of recent years, namely the Covid-19 pandemic and the war launched by the Russian Federation against Ukraine in February 2022.

**Keywords:** crisis communications, emotional states, mental health, personnel management, psychological counselling, social risks, psychological risks, education.

результатів анкетування та соціологічних досліджень консалтингових агенцій та міжнародних організацій для вивчення та систематизації соціально-психологічних ризиків в організації; статистичного аналізу для виявлення спрямованості та динаміки розвитку основних проявів психічного здоров'я; кореляційно-регресійного аналізу для оцінки впливу психічного здоров'я на діяльність працівників. Розробка моделей кризових комунікацій в умовах воєнного часу базується на адаптації класичних моделей кризових комунікацій та елементів стратегічного матричного моделювання. Дослідження ґрунтується на результатах опитувань працівників українських організацій за період 2018-2023 рр., що дозволило визначити вплив на їхній психічний стан найбільших викликів останніх років, а саме пандемії Covid-19 та війни, розпочатої Російською Федерацією проти України в лютому 2022 року.

**Ключові слова:** кризові комунікації, емоційні стани, психічне здоров'я, управління персоналом, психологічне консультування, соціальні ризики, психологічні ризики, навчання.

## Introduction

Employees' psychological and emotional state is an essential factor in productivity, labour efficiency and the formation of the social and psychological climate in the team. In the context of rapid technological, social, and economic changes, crises, military conflicts, and growing uncertainty, which are characteristic of the current period of human development, the problems of exacerbation of social and psychological risks are becoming more acute. Effective communication is becoming a vital tool for maintaining motivation, reducing conflicts, preventing staff turnover and ensuring team stability. The study of crisis communication allows us to develop effective communication models and tools to support employees, which is critical for maintaining the productivity and resilience of organisations in crises.

The article demonstrates that effective crisis communication, as a vital tool in personnel management, not only facilitates timely updates for employees regarding the current situation but also helps maintain team stability and cohesion. It enables quick adaptation to new conditions while preserving employee productivity and emotional well-being. The study employs diverse methods to assess social and psychological risks in shaping crisis communication, including: questionnaire surveys and sociological research conducted by consulting firms and international organizations to identify and categorize socio-psychological risks within organizations; statistical analysis to track trends and developments in mental health issues among the population; and correlation-regression analysis to evaluate the influence of employee mental health on work productivity.

The development of crisis communication models during wartime involves adapting traditional crisis communication frameworks and incorporating strategic matrix modeling elements. The research is based on survey data collected from employees of Ukrainian organizations between 2018 and 2023, highlighting the impact of major challenges such as the COVID-19 pandemic and the war initiated by the Russian Federation against Ukraine in February 2022 on their working conditions.

The article aims to study the impact of mental health on employee performance and the moral and psychological climate in the team, as well as the theoretical and applied aspects of crisis communication in personnel management in the context of exacerbated social and psychological risks.

## Literature Review

Many scholars have studied various aspects of communication models and the problems of forming crisis communications at enterprises. In particular, Mialkovska et al. (2023) systematised social and psychological technologies in training social sector professionals.

Internal crisis communications and the development of vertical communication strategies in an organisation are the subject of research by Ndone (2023). The researcher conducted an online experiment using a 2 (crisis response strategy: recovery vs. denial) x 2 (timing: anticipation vs. reaction to the event) design. Crisis response strategy and timing were crossed entirely, creating four experimental conditions. The researcher manipulated both the timing and the crisis response strategy that the organisation used to respond to the crisis.

Coombs (2007) considers effective crisis communication management as one of the critical components of overall crisis management and emphasises that a crisis is mainly of a perceptual nature. He notes that public opinion determines whether an event is a crisis. If stakeholders believe a company is in crisis, this is evidence of a crisis. Emphasising the importance of stakeholder and critical audience perceptions in crises, Coombs stresses the need to anticipate possible crisis scenarios and develop appropriate communication strategies. The results of the study of crisis communications are interesting from a practical point of view, as they allowed the author to systematise the basic principles of their formation in organisations. The author identifies the following fundamental principles: rapid response (to reduce uncertainty and minimise damage), transparency and accountability, empathy for the victims, planning, monitoring and feedback (Coombs, 2015).

Manipulative tactics as an element of communication and influence on public perception and behaviour are considered in the example of English-language media discourse in the work of Ukrainian scientists Mialkovska et al. (2023a). Social management and digital communications as important components of modern higher education are described in detail in the scientific work (Mialkovska et al., 2023b). The authors emphasise that in social management, communications are crucial in ensuring effective interaction between organisations, the state, civil society and individuals.

The authors identify media discourse as one form of modern communication, which includes textual and visual information created and disseminated through various media channels. Contemporary English media discourse reflects the dynamic changes in society, technology, and communication methods. Modern media stimulates user dialogue through comments, polls, and likes, allowing instant feedback. These tools for shaping crisis communications are increasingly used to influence users in the context of developing digital technologies and social networks (Mialkovska et al., 2024).

Jugo (2013) analyses all aspects and contexts of crisis communication management in corporations and provides an overview of the key elements of a crisis communication situation, from the factors that most often cause crises and the types of crisis situations that can arise in the corporate environment to the methodology for identifying target audiences and the optimal structure and content of a crisis communication plan.

Claeys & Coombs (2020) proposed a classification of crisis communication strategies based on two critical approaches: crisis response strategies and attribution of responsibility. Their classification aims to help organisations choose the appropriate strategy depending on the nature of the crisis and the level of responsibility that the audience attributes to the organisation.

Crisis communication has become an essential area of research in human resources management and public relations. Researchers Claeys & Opgenhaffen (2016) analyse the extent to which professionals and managers implement theoretical approaches in their activities during crises and also study the reasons for this gap. The results show that the main barriers to the implementation of crisis communications are individual qualities of management (leadership style, motivation, focus on analytical or intuitive tools, team relations) and external factors (image, strategy, consumer and customer behaviour, stakeholders, resource constraints).

Thus, crisis communications in human resources management should be understood as a system of measures and models aimed at effective interaction with employees in crises that may threaten the

organisation's stability or affect its reputation, functioning and morale. The conducted research shows that the role of crisis communications in the HR management of modern organisations is growing in the context of permanent crises and high dynamics of changes that affect the mental health of employees and consumers, determining their social and economic behaviour.

The study of social and psychological risks at different levels of socio-economic systems, methods of systematising the factors of such risks, and their assessment is the subject of interdisciplinary research worldwide and Ukrainian scientific thought.

Psychosocial hazards are related to imbalances in the psychosocial sphere and refer to those interactions that negatively affect workers' health through their perceptions and experiences. Psychosocial hazards cover aspects of work design, organisation and management, and their social and environmental context, which can cause psychological, social or physical harm (Roussos, 2023). Researchers consider different approaches to managing psychosocial risks in the workplace. The first approach collects sufficient information about work processes to identify existing social and psychological problems and develop adapted interventions. The second approach considers the psychological aspects that underlie these risks, usually through the prism of one of the main theories of work stress (Leka & Jain, 2011).

In most developed democracies, there is a system of state standards regulating issues related to supporting psychological health and preventing psychosocial risks in the workplace (Potter et al., 2019). The EU currently has a system of occupational health and safety standards, covering legally binding norms (including EU directives, national legislation and ILO conventions) and "soft" or voluntary standards developed by recognised national, European and international organisations. These standards exist in specifications, guidelines or agreements with social partners. However, the absence of clear definitions of certain concepts, such as "stress", "psychological stress", and "mental health", and the lack of a clear system of indicators for assessing the social and psychological state of employees reduce the effectiveness of these standards (Leka et al., 2011).

Researchers have investigated the correlations between psychological health indices and organisational profitability by the Canadian National Occupational Safety and Health Standards (Botha et al., 2024). The study's results showed significant linear relationships between the mental health of employees and organisational profitability.

Sociological surveys and statistical studies of mental health and the factors that influence it are regularly conducted by international (Senior Labour Inspectors Committee, 2012) and domestic research groups (Gradus Research, 2024). Their research has confirmed the growth of socio-economic risks in today's unstable environment, the emergence of new factors (pandemics, wars, digitalisation, globalisation, etc.), and their increasing impact on the development of socio-economic systems.

The scientific literature presents numerous models of crisis communication within organizations, including the Situational Crisis Communication Theory (SCCT) (Marynissen, 2023), the Four-Phase Model by Steven Fink (Fink, 1986), and the Adaptive Leadership Model (Pujianto et al., 2023). These models focus on selecting communication strategies both within and outside the organization, depending on the crisis level and the degree of employee involvement in discussing and resolving crisis situations.

Social-psychological challenges and risks in personnel management during the war in Ukraine have been analyzed by researchers (Chornodid et al., 2022). The researchers highlight a significant increase in social-psychological issues within teams under wartime conditions and emphasize the need for the development of targeted support programs. Scientific studies (Turianskyi et al., 2024; Karamushka, 2024). emphasize the importance of training employees in self-defense and emergency response skills, as well as establishing an efficient communication and organizational system for promptly addressing threats. Social measures, including support and psychological assistance for staff, are highlighted as critical components in ensuring safety and psychological well-being.

## Methodology

The research is based on the use of a wide range of methods for assessing social and psychological threats in the context of crisis communication, namely: the results of questionnaire surveys and sociological studies by consulting agencies, specialised research and international organisations (Nations around the globe,

2023; Gradus Research, 2024; Krasina, 2023; 4Service, 2024) to systematise and assess key socio-psychological risks at different levels of organisation of socio-economic systems; statistical analysis to identify the direction and dynamics of the main manifestations of mental health of the population; correlation analysis to assess the impact of employees' mental health on their labour productivity. The study was based on the results of surveys of employees of Ukrainian organisations for the period 2018-2023, which allowed us to determine the impact on their mental state of the biggest challenges of recent years, namely the Covid-19 pandemic and the war launched by the Russian Federation against Ukraine in February 2022.

The development of crisis communication models in wartime is based on the adaptation of classical crisis communication models: Situational Crisis Communication Theory (SCCT) (Marynissen, 2023); Four-Phase Model by Steven Fink (Fink, 1986), Adaptive Leadership Model (Pujianto et al., 2023). The method of matrix modelling was used to form a model for choosing crisis communications.

The study proposes a crisis communication selection matrix that integrates socio-psychological factors with potential crisis triggers in the organization. This matrix enables the identification of not only the degree of potential internal and external crises within the organization but also the development of a detailed plan for their prevention and corresponding communication models to influence employees effectively. The matrix consists of four sectors, each combining external and internal factors of a crisis situation within the organization. These factors are calculated as weighted aggregated indicators of internal and external threats. For each of the four sectors, a strategic communication model is proposed, tailored to the severity level of internal and external crises. This model can be applied to develop and optimize the organization's personnel policy during crises.

## Results and Discussion

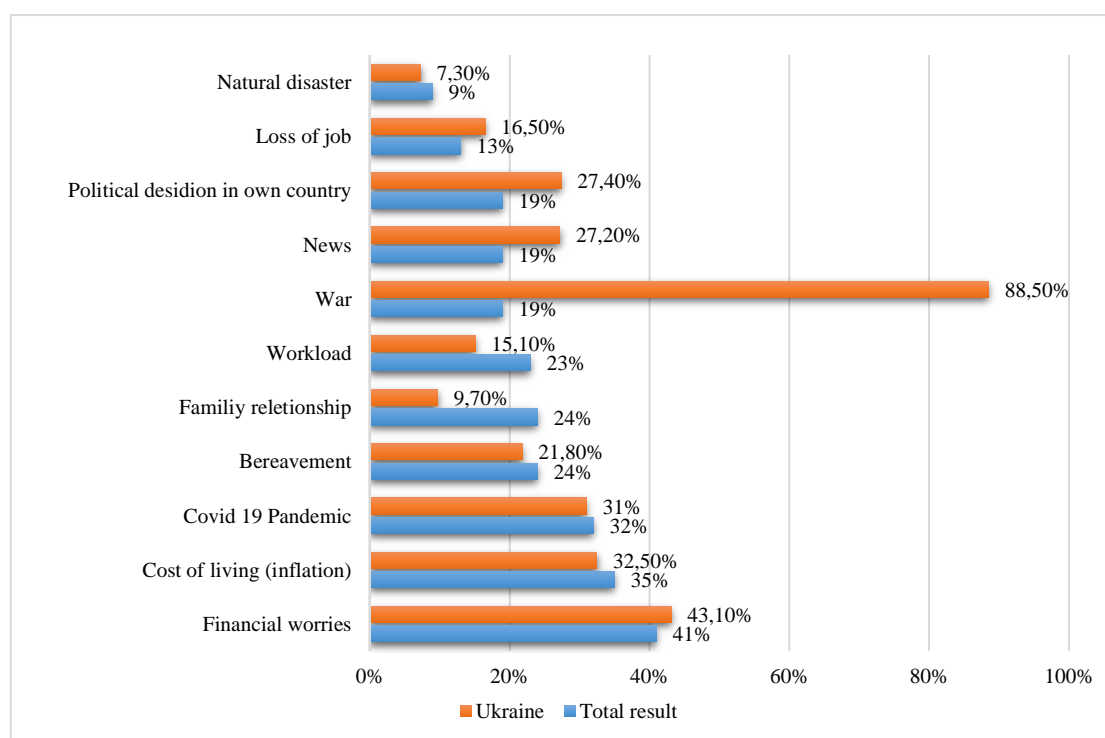
### The impact of social and psychological risks and mental health on the efficiency of socio-economic systems

There is a high probability that humanity is facing a mental health crisis in the context of current economic, political and environmental upheavals. The results of various studies already evidence this. Managers of organisations are increasingly aware that human capital is their primary resource for economic and business development, and the consequences of this crisis could be dire. Ukrainians at war may face this problem sooner than others.

In wartime conditions, socio-psychological risks become significantly more acute, including heightened stress levels, emotional exhaustion, increased anxiety and fear, reduced team cohesion, and challenges in maintaining effective communication. These factors can lead to decreased employee productivity, impaired decision-making, and a decline in overall psychological well-being, emphasizing the need for targeted interventions and support systems (Chornodid et al., 2022; Turianskyi et al., 2024; Karamushka, 2024).

In August 2023, the Alligators Digital consulting group conducted a statistical study on the impact of factors on the psychological health of the population in 11 world countries representing different continents, different socio-economic statuses, and current or past war experiences. In each country, 1,000 people were surveyed, representing different age groups (13 years and older), social strata and gender. The study identified the most sensitive external factors that affected the general stress and emotional tension of the population in Ukraine in August 2023 (Figure 1).





**Figure 1.** Influence of factors on the state of mental health of the population.

Source: The First Summit of First Ladies and Gentlemen, (Nations around the globe, 2023)

Thus, the surveys have shown that, in general, the main factors of tension and stress are primarily economic (financial situation, inflation, living standards). The Covid pandemic is also a relevant factor (19%), which was accompanied by severe restrictive measures and led to a deterioration in the psychological state and social communications of 32% of respondents. Political factors are essential; in most cases, they also affect future economic expectations (19%). The war is perceived as a factor of stress and emotional tension at 19%, but this figure varies depending on the country of residence. In particular, in Ukraine, where there is a war going on, the priority of this factor is 85%, and in Argentina, where there have been no full-scale wars for many years, this indicator affects only 3.3%. Other factors affecting mental health are family relationships, work and lack of work, climate and the environment. Studies have shown that in most cases, the psychological state of the population depends on the level of negative manifestation of these factors in a particular country and correlates with the motivational levels of Maslow's pyramid.

In Ukraine, the priorities regarding the impact of various factors in the context of war are distributed differently. The leading factor is the war (88.5% of respondents assess the war in the country as a potent stimulant of stress and constant tension), which in turn increases the impact of other factors at a level higher than the average for the countries studied, namely: financial challenges (43.1%), politics (27.4%) and news (27.2%), unemployment (16.5%). At the same time, Ukrainians pay less attention to family relationships, the state of the environment, and other factors that cause stress. Thus, in general, in times of war, Ukrainian citizens experience a higher level of stress and tension and deterioration of mental health than representatives of other countries. In crises and war, the priorities of perception shift to areas primarily dependent on survival, which should be considered when formulating enterprises' communication policy.

The conducted research shows a significant impact of psychosocial risks on the organisation and safety of work and the final results of the organisation's work, which are determined by such indicators as labour productivity, the level of achievement of goals and implementation of development strategies, the organisation's image in the market. In today's environment, characterised by significant changes in work organisation under the influence of digital and other technologies, increased dynamics of external and internal changes, and growing threats to life safety, psychosocial risks affecting mental health and occupational safety are increasing. With this in mind, social and psychological risk management is becoming one of the most critical functions of HR management.

The level of social and psychological risks depends on the field of activity. According to the European

Working Conditions Survey, some professions are particularly vulnerable to the risk of various forms of violence. In particular, in 2005, workers in such sectors as education and healthcare (14.8%), transport and communications (9.8%), and hotel and restaurant business (8.6%) reported the threat of physical violence (Senior Labour Inspectors Committee, 2012).

To assess psychosocial risks, the scientist Roussos P. L. proposed a tool for assessing social and psychological risks in an organisation called PRIWA. This tool includes 68 items to assess occupational psychosocial risks (organisational culture, job demands, job insecurity and presenteeism) and consequences (health and well-being, dysfunctional behaviour, job satisfaction and engagement), making it relatively short and easy to use. The research results based on data from 17 Greek organisations have shown that the factors of psychosocial risks, in most cases, interact with each other and, in aggregate, put pressure on employees, significantly affecting the internal climate and productivity (Roussos, 2023).

Given the importance of maintaining the psychological health of the population in times of war, Gradus Research conducted a study of the state of mental health of Ukrainians in 2022 and 2024 as part of the All-Ukrainian Mental Health Programme. The study was conducted by filling out questionnaires in the Gradus mobile application. The sample represents the population structure of cities with more than 50,000 residents aged 18 to 60 by gender, age, settlement size, and region, excluding temporarily occupied territories and active combat zones. The survey was conducted in three waves: the first wave in September 2022 (2,001 respondents), the second wave in October 2023 (2,000 respondents), and the third wave in January 2024 (2,423 respondents) (Gradus Research, 2024). According to this study, more than 77% of respondents have been experiencing constant stress and anxiety since the start of the full-scale invasion. As for the leading causes of stress, the answers were distributed as follows: a full-scale war with Russia (72%), financial difficulties (41%), the socio-political situation in the country (38%), and their health (30%). About 47% of women and 32% of men feel the need for professional psychological help, but only 8% of respondents have ever sought it. The main methods of coping with stress are surfing the Internet, watching films and TV series, and communicating with loved ones.

Thus, psychological and social risks are intensified in the context of war, which, if ignored and not paid sufficient attention to, can lead not only to a deterioration in the moral and psychological climate in social systems and a decrease in the efficiency of their development but also to threatening consequences.

In human resources management, social and psychological risks are becoming one of the leading aspects of monitoring, as they directly affect employees' efficiency, motivation and general well-being and, accordingly, affect their work efficiency. Among the main risks, scientists identify workplace stress caused by high workloads, tight deadlines and conflicts, which leads to chronic exhaustion and reduced productivity; emotional burnout, which, without proper support, can cause a sense of exhaustion and reduce engagement in work; conflicts in the team, which create a tense atmosphere and impair teamwork; insufficient social support from colleagues and management, which can cause feelings of isolation and loss of motivation, which underscores the importance of developing a corporate culture that promotes support and interaction within the team.

To assess the impact of social and psychological risks on corporate sector employees' mental health and performance, we conducted a correlation and regression analysis based on a study by the 4Service research holding. Since 2018, the company has been conducting annual surveys of employees of enterprises and organisations in Ukraine on their emotional state, cognitive symptoms experienced by employees, self-assessment of their work efficiency, and measures taken by companies to take care of employees' mental health (Krasina, 2023; 4Servis, 2024). Selected survey results from 2018 are shown in Table 1.

**Table 1.**

*Selected results of surveys of employees of Ukrainian organisations on mental health and self-assessment of work performance*

Signs of deterioration in mental health and performance, % of respondents	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	Increase
Employees who have reported problems with concentration recently $x_1$	31	34	46	35	51	49	18
Employees who felt passive in the performance of their duties, $x_2$	28	24	23	26	22	38	10
Employees who experienced depression, $x_3$	12	10	22	18	28	29	17
Employees who reported a deterioration in communication with colleagues, $x_4$	9	11	14	20	21	35	26
Employees who reported a decrease in their labour efficiency, $x_5$	5	8	22	13	26	23	28

Source: compiled by the authors based on data from (Krasina, 2023; 4 Servis, 2024).

The highest rates of self-assessment of stress, depression, and other mental health indicators were observed in 2020 during the Covid 19 pandemic. Administrative restrictions, the need to change formats and modes of work, and fear for their health and loved ones led to a significant deterioration in work efficiency. They negatively affected the mental health of the respondents. In 2023, there was a steady increase in symptoms indicating a deterioration in employees' work performance and mental health. Internal communications in the surveyed organisations have deteriorated during the war due to stress, tension, and divergent political opinions. Thus, the war has caused an unprecedentedly long and intense strain on the mental health of Ukrainians. In such circumstances, companies need to go beyond ad hoc support for employees and develop a systematic strategy to overcome the effects of the war on their psychological state. However, according to the survey, only 15% of companies are already taking appropriate measures, and some have plans for the future. At the same time, 45% of respondents said their organisations do not plan to implement any initiatives in this area.

The data presented in Table 2 was obtained using the MS Excel software package. The correlation between mental health and the state of internal communications in the organisation was assessed, provided that other factors are neutral.

**Table 2.**

*Correlations between indicators of mental health deterioration, internal team communications and work efficiency*

Indicators of deterioration in mental health	$x_1$	$x_2$	$x_3$	$x_4$	$x_5$
Employees who have reported problems with concentration recently $x_1$	1,00				
Employees who felt passive in the performance of their duties, $x_2$	0,14	1,00			
Employees who felt depressed, $x_3$	0,94	0,32	1,00		
Employees who reported a deterioration in communication with colleagues, $x_4$	0,67	0,71	0,82	1,00	
Employees who reported a decrease in their labour efficiency, $x_5$	0,98	0,07	0,95	0,66	1,00

Source: calculated by the author based on Table 1

The results of the analysis showed that there are close correlations between the factors studied, in particular: in particular, feelings of depression can be both a factor and a consequence of reduced concentration (0.94) and work efficiency (0.95); passivity in the performance of work duties causes conflicts in the team (0.77).

Problems with concentrating on work issues, which are most often caused by external stressful situations, lead to poor communication (0.67) and reduced performance (0.98). Thus, mental health and well-being issues significantly impact both the effectiveness of work performance and the internal climate of the team. Studies have confirmed that in times of war and crisis, social and psychological risks in society are exacerbated, affecting health, motivation, performance, and overall quality of life. In such conditions, the role of crisis communications in HR management is growing, as it is designed to prevent and reduce social and psychological risks, prevent conflicts, reduce stress among employees, and support their productivity.



### **Crisis communication models as a tool for HR management in the context of modern challenges**

In the classical sense, human resource management encompasses a set of strategic and operational measures aimed at the effective use of the potential of employees in an organisation. The main goal of human resources management is to create conditions under which employees can fully realise their abilities and significantly contribute to achieving the organisation's strategic goals. In times of war, this aspect of management acquires additional importance, focusing on the rational formation and use of personnel and their physical preservation and adjustment to high productivity in complex social and psychological circumstances (Kramar & Baranov, 2024).

Employee mental health is a crucial resource for commercial organisations that requires constant attention and investment. Creating a supportive work environment and promoting mental well-being can increase productivity and foster professional growth. Investing in mental health support programmes not only improves the well-being of employees but also meets the company's strategic interests, ensuring its long-term success (Halahan & Raievska, 2024).

Human resource managers need to use all available resources to minimise the devastating consequences by predicting possible crisis scenarios, developing crisis communication plans and ensuring that they are as prepared as possible for a crisis. In such situations, it is essential to be aware of the available reactive strategies that can help a company communicate effectively, reducing the negative impact on the organisation's corporate image and internal environment (Jugo, 2013).

Organisations facing a crisis often choose sub-optimal response strategies, preferring those that help to avoid short-term losses to those that provide long-term benefits. The research conducted by the authors suggests that intuitive decisions and communications prevail in crises, but only in some cases does this approach yield a positive result (Claeys & Coombs, 2020). Effective crisis communications management requires a strategic approach combining proactive and reactive actions. It is essential to prepare for potential crises in advance, create a communications plan and ensure prompt interaction with all stakeholders during a crisis.

The choice of a specific crisis communication model depends on the type of crisis, its scale, the degree of responsibility of the organisation, and the expectations and reactions of stakeholders. The following factors must be taken into account: the nature of the crisis (man-made, financial, reputational, etc.), target audiences (staff, customers, investors, the public, the media), and the speed of information dissemination.

The scientific literature presents many models of crisis communication in the organisation, including Situational Crisis Communication Theory (SCCT) (Marynissen, 2023), the Four-Phase Model by Steven Fink (Fink, 1986), the Adaptive Leadership Model (Pujianto et al., 2023). These models aim to choose a strategy for direct communication both inside and outside the organisation, depending on the level of crisis and employee involvement in discussing and resolving crisis situations. However, approaches to choosing the optimal crisis communication model depending on the crisis's specific circumstances are not sufficiently substantiated.

Studies have shown that in times of war, one of the most sensitive threats to an organisation is the socio-psychological state of employees (who are under constant emotional stress and depression) and the moral and psychological climate of the team. In this context, an essential function of HR management is to form an anti-crisis model of internal communications based on monitoring the individual mental states of employees and the internal moral and psychological climate. It is also crucial to identify and predict external factors of the crisis, which will improve the information content of communications and targeted instructions. In this context, we propose a crisis communications model that considers external and internal factors and their combination (Figure 2).

The Crisis Communication Selection Matrix combines socio-psychological factors with possible crisis factors in an organisation. It allows not only to determine the degree of possible internal and external crises in an organisation but also to develop a detailed plan for their prevention and appropriate models of communication impact on employees. The model can also be used to develop and optimise an organisation's HR policy in times of crisis. The model development involves the following steps:

1. Development of norms and criteria for assessing the team's internal psychological state and external environment risks. For example, the criteria for assessing the moral and psychological climate may include the effectiveness of teamwork, the number of conflicts and stresses in the workplace, the

effectiveness of information exchange, the occurrence of strikes, and discipline violations. The factors that have the most significant impact on the organisation's performance are ranked to assess external risks and the probability of their occurrence.

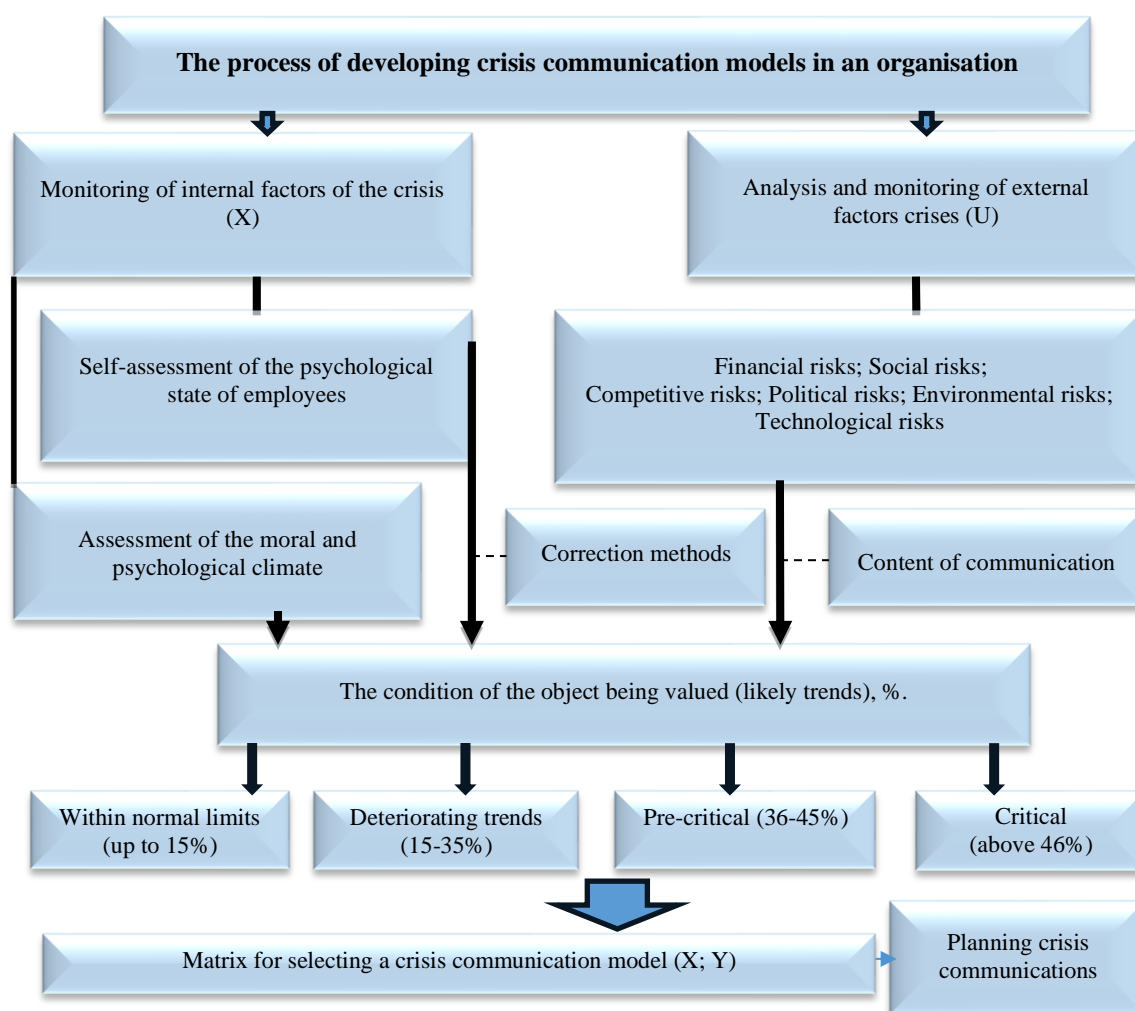
2. Methods of calculating the criticality of factors that reduce quantitative and qualitative assessment indicators to a single measurement in percentage or points. In this context, the simplest is linear normalisation by the formula:

$$X_i = \frac{x_f}{x_n} \times 100 \quad (1)$$

Where,  $x_i$  is the value of the indicator at the time of assessment;

$x_f$  - the value of the indicator at the time of assessment;

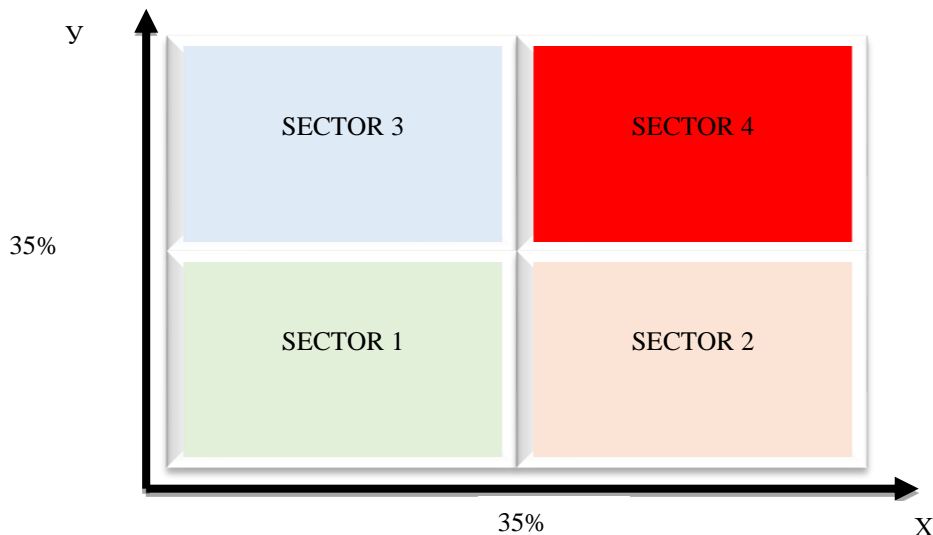
$x_n$  - is the normatively permissible value.



**Figure 2.** The process of choosing a crisis communication model.

Source: provided by the authors

3. Formation of a matrix for choosing a crisis communication model, which provides for the ratio of the assessment of the criticality of external factors of the probability of crises and internal social and psychological risks in the team. The matrix looks like this (Figure 3)



X - Internal social and psychological threats;  
U- External threats of a crisis

**Figure 3.** Matrix for selecting a crisis communication model.

Source: provided by the authors

The matrix consists of four sectors, each of which combines external and internal factors of the crisis at the enterprise, assessed as a weighted average aggregate indicator of internal and external threats using the formula:

$$X = \sum X_i \times K \quad K \in (0,1;1) \quad (2)$$

where K is the importance coefficient of the factor.

A model of strategic communications is proposed for each sector, taking into account the level of aggravation of internal and external crises:

**Sector 1.** This sector is characterised by low social and psychological risks of crises shortly. For this sector, the most optimal model is preventive communication, which is focused on increasing the enterprise's productivity and preventing possible conflicts in the team and mental stress on employees. Potential crises are discussed at the highest level of management without involving staff.

**Sector 2.** The organisation has high social and psychological risks without significant pressure from external factors. The optimal communication model aims to resolve internal conflicts and stresses, active HR policy, provide psychological support, and improve the corporate climate.

**Sector 3.** High level of external pressure at the enterprise with a relatively stable internal psychological climate. Active crisis communication involves the creation of crisis management teams, active informing of the staff, and increased employee participation in decision-making.

**Sector 4.** There is high internal tension and social and psychological risks amid growing external threats. In such conditions, it is key to ensure ongoing dialogue, maintain trust and pay attention to the psychological state of employees. It is necessary to support staff through empathetic messages, reinforce a sense of security and trust, and encourage teamwork to overcome the crisis together. Leadership should demonstrate control over the situation by communicating the specific measures to protect the organisation. It is essential to organise anti-crisis training aimed at stress management and provide access to professional psychological support to prevent emotional burnout and maintain staff's mental health.

In Sector 2 and Sector 4, psychological counselling and emotional distress management are crucial elements of crisis communications. Psychological counselling plays a vital role in crisis communications by providing employees emotional support through individual and group counselling. Such sessions create a

safe space to discuss experiences and help reduce stress and anxiety by teaching self-regulation techniques (breathing techniques, cognitive restructuring, relaxation). Psychological training helps to improve interpersonal communication, develop conflict resolution skills, and increase the effectiveness of teamwork, even under stressful conditions.

The proposed model can be applied to shape personnel policies and manage crisis communications in Ukrainian enterprises, both during the war to alleviate the social-emotional and psychological burdens on employees, and in the post-war period to develop crisis communications aimed at supporting the adaptation of individuals who participated in the country's defense.

## Conclusions

Based on the research, crisis communications are an important tool in managing an organisation's personnel. They are designed to prepare for, respond to, and eliminate the consequences of crisis situations by building effective internal and external communication models.

In the context of war and other socio-economic shocks, psychological and social risks are increasing. If ignored and not paid sufficient attention to, these risks can lead not only to a deterioration in the moral and psychological climate in social systems and a decrease in their development efficiency but also to threatening consequences. The correlation analysis has shown a high level of influence of employees' social and psychological risks and mental health on their labour efficiency and moral and psychological climate.

To optimise the process of selecting models of crisis communications at enterprises, the article offered a matrix that combines socio-psychological factors with possible factors of occurrence of crises in an organisation and allows determining not only the degree of possible internal and external crisis of an organisation but also developing a detailed plan of their prevention and corresponding models of communication impact on employees. This matrix can also be used to develop and optimise an organisation's HR policy in times of crisis. The matrix consists of four sectors, each combining external risks and internal (social and psychological) factors of the crisis at the enterprise. For each sector, a strategic communications model is proposed, which considers the level of aggravation of internal and external crises. Ukrainian organisations, under increased pressure from external threats and in the context of escalating internal social and psychological risks, are in Sector 4 and need an active HR policy aimed at supporting and providing psychological support to staff and developing effective anti-crisis adaptation strategies.

The limitations of the study primarily include the general reluctance of individuals to participate in social surveys, the lack of effective methods for assessing the socio-psychological state within teams, and the limited availability of psychological services in enterprises and organizations.

Future research will focus on developing effective models of socio-psychological adaptation for employees in the workplace who have suffered physical and psychological trauma during the war. This is a crucial condition for rebuilding the economy and improving the socio-psychological climate in the social environment.

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