



Developing a Sustainable Crisis Management Model to Address University Student Unrest in Zimbabwe

Felix Njini

Midlands State University, Zimbabwe

Email: [njiniif@sid.adventist.org](mailto:njinif@sid.adventist.org)

Abstract: *This study primarily aimed to develop a sustainable crisis management model to effectively address university student unrest in Zimbabwe. The research was motivated by the recurring nature of student unrest in both public and private universities, largely attributed to the country's volatile socio-economic and political environment. The study adopted a constructivist paradigm under qualitative approach and qualitative descriptive research design with analytic generalization to explore the experiences of internal stakeholders and develop a model for sustainable crisis management of student unrest. Two universities were selected on pragmatic access grounds; within them, purposive sampling was used to select six administrators, ten faculty, ten non-teaching staff, and four student groups (n=40). Data was generated through semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions. The findings were analyzed using Braun and Clarke's six-step thematic analytic process. The study was anchored on the Crisis Management Theory (CMT) and the Stakeholder Theory (ST) offering a multi-dimensional understanding of crisis dynamics within the higher education sector. Findings revealed that university administrations often delay responding to early warning signs, used punitive heavy-handed strategies to crisis containment and lacked systems to enhance effective crisis learning and recovery. The research emphasized the need for proactive crisis management strategies, including clear communication protocols, stakeholder inclusion and strengthened student involvement in decision-making processes. Ultimately, the study proposes a participatory and systemic approach to managing student unrest, centered on inclusivity, transparency, and institutional preparedness as illustrated by a model which is meant to foster long term stability, improved stakeholder engagement and enhanced proactive responsiveness to student unrests.*

Keywords: *Student Unrest, Crisis Management, Stakeholder Collaboration, Management Strategies*

How to cite this work (APA):

Njini, F. (2026). Developing a Sustainable Crisis Management Model to Address University Student unrest in Zimbabwe. *Journal of Research Innovation and Implications in Education*, 10(1), 73 – 97. <https://doi.org/10.59765/ppy4>

1. Introduction

An examination of extant literature reveals that globally, the 21st Century continues to witness unprecedented episodes of university campus crises mainly caused by frequent student unrest (Gerber & Smith, 2019; Smith et al., 2025; Rao & Wasserman, 2017; Sabzpoor et al., 2018). In 2024, widespread student demonstrations in

solidarity with Palestinians in Gaza swept across university campuses worldwide, starting in late 2023 and peaking in early-mid 2024 affecting many universities in the United States of America, Australia, Europe and Asia (Bacon & Malekar, 2024; Wong, 2024). As a result of these protests, Smith et al., (2025) postulate that over two thousand students were arrested at US campuses amid polarized debates over the right to protest, the limits of free speech and accusations of antisemitism. Many

students were suspended, put on probation and some were expelled from their institutions. According to Smith et al., (2025) what worsened the situation was the involvement of faculty and staff as they took different positions in accordance with their political persuasions.

In Zimbabwe, universities also frequently experience episodes of student unrest that not only disrupt academic activities and destroy infrastructure but also damage internal stakeholder relations and the image of the institutions involved (Mlambo, 2020; Taruberekera, 2022; Nyangairi et al, 2022). A cursory literature survey reveals that university authorities in Zimbabwe generally respond reactively to student unrest by invoking heavy-handed policing, suspension or expulsion of perceived ring leaders of the unrest, media blackouts and banning of gatherings (Moyo & Hadebe, 2020; Nsingo, Gandiwa & Chirozva, 2018; Nyangairi et al., 2022; Ncube, 2022). In the same vein, Chiumbu, (2020) believes that crackdowns by security personnel and law enforcement agents in Zimbabwe often backfire by strengthening students' resolve, swelling protest numbers and laying the foundation for the recurrence and resurgence of the disturbances. Consistent with this assertion, Moyo & Hadebe, (2020) revealed that violent suppression of student unrest leads to radicalization and often serves as a trigger that spreads the unrest wide. Thus, the use of force is known to galvanize support for the unrest invariably masking the original grievances, resulting in further frustrations and violent confrontations. What remains to be explored are strategies and models of addressing student unrest informed by effective crisis management practices to mitigate such disruptive and violent occurrences and promote peaceful campuses.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

The persistent occurrence of student unrest on university campuses worldwide, including Zimbabwe has led to significant disruptions in academic schedules, destruction of infrastructure, institutional reputation damage and strained relationships among university internal stakeholders. Traditional reactive measures employed by university administration such as heavy-handed policing, suspensions, expulsions, media blackouts, and bans on gatherings have often exacerbated tensions resulting in further radicalization and recurrence of these disturbances. Therefore, there is a need to explore systems that are designed to facilitate sustainable crisis management of student unrest. To address this critical gap, this study sought to develop a collaborative, context-specific model for sustainable crisis management of university student unrest in Zimbabwe.

1.2 Research Questions

Recognizing the limitations of punitive, short-term responses and the importance of sustainable and contextually grounded approaches, the following research questions guided the study:

1. How do university internal stakeholders (administration, faculty, staff and students) perceive their institution's crisis management practices in addressing student unrest?
2. What strategies can be employed to enhance internal stakeholder collaboration in addressing student unrest?
3. What key components, processes, and institutional structures should be integrated into a collaborative, context-specific model to sustainably manage student unrest in Zimbabwean universities?

2. Literature Review

The theoretical foundation for this research was primarily grounded in the Crisis Management Theory (CMT) as originally developed by Mitroff and Pearson (1993) complemented by the Stakeholder Theory (ST) advanced by Freeman (1984). The integration of Crisis Management Theory with the Stakeholder Theory was necessitated by the need to establish complementary effects upon the development of a sustainable crisis management framework to address university student unrest. While ST has no clear crisis response processes and assumes consensus as always possible amongst stakeholders, CMT offers structured phases of the crisis and tactics for crisis response in addition to emphasizing prioritization during emergencies. Consequently, combining ST, which ensures inclusive and ethical consideration of administration, staff, faculty and students with CMT, which provides practical tools for responding to a campus crisis gives the study normative depth and practical relevance.

2.1 Crisis Management Theory and Addressing Student Unrest

The Crisis Management Theory (CMT) according to Mitroff & Pearson (1993) projects six phases of crisis management: early signal detection, preparedness and prevention, containment, recovery, learning and redesigning. The CMT further identifies specific major tasks of crisis management at each of the six phases thereby underscoring the need for a systemic and sustainable approach rather than ad hoc reactionary measures. However, it should be noted that scholars such as Fourie (2014) and Maringe and Ojo (2017) argue that most models

of crisis management developed from the Western context fail to account for the complex socio-political environments of African universities where crisis management is undermined by limited institutional capacity, political interference, and historical distrust. Consequently, this study has provision for input from university internal stakeholders thus creating room for adaptation and contextualization of the theoretical framework.

2.2.1 Crisis Signal Detection

The first phase of Crisis Management Theory is crisis detection (Mitroff et al., 2006). This phase involves the identification and recognition of potential triggers of crisis. According to Mitroff et al., (2006), the signal detection phase is the initial stage where signs of an impending crisis can be identified. This allows management to prepare and potentially prevent the crisis from occurring or escalating. Failure to detect or ignoring early warning signs of student unrest such as collective expressions of dissatisfaction, open rebellion and violation of regulations may result in the escalation into a campus crisis (Coombs & Laufer, 2018; Wray-Lake et al., 2018; Ludwig et al., 2018; Altan & Chandra, 2018; Jensen & Young, 2019). At the same time early responses demonstrate that issues are not going unheard and this may assist in building mutual trust between administration and the students (Ludwig, 2018). In the same vein, Mapolisa, (2017) further observes that universities need to closely monitor student sentiments and activities to detect early warning signs of potential unrest such as rising student grievances, activist mobilisation on social media, and planned protests. In this case, Student Representative Council (SRC), campus security, and faculty advisors to student groups can help alert administrators to a detection of such issues. However, these recommendations do not fully address the potential for surveillance, fear and distrust which discourage students from expressing their concerns only to respond violently at an opportune time.

2.2.2 Preparation and Prevention

The preparation or prevention stage follows a situation where there are signals indicating that a crisis is emerging. Mitroff and Pearson (1993) highlight that this phase involves conducting training sessions to enhance effectiveness of planning and coordination coupled with responding proactively to prevent the crisis from happening. The aim is to develop crisis management plans and protocols to prevent or mitigate unrest. This involves securing buy-in from stakeholders, training staff, and developing communication strategies (Mitroff & Pearson, 1993; Boin et al. 2019; Meyers, 2015; Machado, 2020; Moore, 2016). However, such recommendations assume

institutional stability and cooperation. In contrast, Zhou and Zvoushe (2012) posit that universities in Zimbabwe often respond to unrest with reactive, repressive measures rather than systematic planning. This necessitates advancing a collaborative engagement of internal stakeholders in addressing impending student unrest.

2.2.3 Crisis Containment

When the unrest finally breaks on campus it is crucial for universities to effectively respond to the crisis to protect the overall educational environment, maintain the institution's reputation and ensure student well-being. According to Mitroff & Pearson, (1993) the containment phase focuses on limiting the escalation and minimizing the damage caused by an unfolding crisis. This stage involves implementing a well-designed crisis response plan, actively monitoring the situation, and putting in place measures to de-escalate tensions, ensuring the safety and security of students, faculty and staff. Once protests begin, Ludwig et al., (2018) encourages universities to quickly and clearly communicate to the entire campus community about the nature and extent of the unrest, stressing student safety as a top priority. On the same note, Baker and Walsh, (2018) emphasizes the proper use and monitoring of social media platforms by the communication department to ensure accurate information is disseminated. This can be augmented by physical meetings to ensure accurate and empathetic messaging (Jensen & Youngs, 2019). However, Gukurume (2020) observe that in Zimbabwean universities, containment often involves heavy-handed punitive responses, with little room for dialogue or transparency. In contrast, during the *#FeesMustFall* unrest in South Africa, universities experimented with restorative dialogue, but with mixed success (Haffajee, 2017; Langa, 2017). Such models remain under-developed in Zimbabwe, where containment is still largely top-down as highlighted by Gukurume, (2020). The challenge is to develop containment strategies that minimise the negative impact of the crisis through collective involvement of internal stakeholders.

2.2.4 Recovery Phase

Mitroff & Pearson, (1993) posits that the recovery phase is the stage where efforts are deployed to help the university resume normal operations and address remaining student needs. Expanding on this position, scholars postulate that recovery from a campus crisis requires collaborative decision-making processes that involve input from all stakeholders (Grove & Graves, 2017; Crawford & Albright, 2019). Thus, university management should actively seek feedback, suggestions, and concerns from the campus community. This can be achieved through surveys, focus groups, and open forums. Involving students, faculty,

and staff in the decision-making process not only empowers them but also ensures that their needs and perspectives are considered (Gavin, 2020; Penderson, 2018; Liu et al. 2017; Mazzei & Ravazzani, 2018, Mats, 2018). A study by Shelton (2014) highlighted the importance of conducting a review to address underlying systemic issues, encouraging cross-community dialogues and promoting reconciliation between opposing groups. In addition, Seeger et al., (2021) found that timely messaging from leadership acknowledging public fear or frustration and outlining steps to regain trust fostered more positive perceptions of the institution's recovery. Therefore, successful recovery is a function of coordinated healing initiatives spearheaded by administration that seek involve all stakeholders. The need for consolidated efforts to foster restoration points to the importance of involvement and collaboration of university campus communities in the recovery process.

2.2.5 Learning

According to Mitroff & Pearson, (1993), the learning phase is aimed at restoring normal operations while also examining response effectiveness to improve future crisis handling. The learning phase involves critically examining organizational response weaknesses through formal after-action reviews incorporating input from all stakeholders (Mitroff et al., 2006). This also entails identifying early warning signs that were missed, communication gaps, and facets of the institutional climate contributing to tensions and these are used as guides to the development of preventative reforms (Wray-Lake et al., 2018; Stern, 2014; Shaw & Shaw, 2017). Consequently, management should advocate a review process to examine crisis management effectiveness to learn lessons to improve future responses. Though literature presents the learning phase as crucial for institutional resilience, empirical studies in Zimbabwe show that post-crisis learning is rarely institutionalized. Gukurume (2020, p.89) asserts that in Zimbabwean universities, "... post-crisis evaluations are often performative, with little follow-through on reforms." Reviews are often conducted internally, with limited transparency, and recommendations are not implemented due to lack of political will or resources (Mhando & Senkubuge, 2019; Kenner, 2018). Consequently, there appears to be a dearth of research demonstrating how post-crisis learning leads to structural reform in the Zimbabwe higher education sector.

2.2.6 Redesigning

According to Mitroff and Pearson (1993), the final phase called the redesigning stage works to bring permanent resolution to issues underlying the unrest. This may involve policy or curriculum changes, restorative justice

and open dialogue (Mitroff & Pearson, 1993; Liou & Korba, 2020; Friedman and Ott, 2019). Therefore, the redesigning phase focuses on bringing on board lessons learnt, restoring normalcy and rebuilding trust within the university community. Introducing restorative justice practices is an alternative to punitive measures which often characterize the aftermath of university student unrest episodes. Implementing restorative initiatives, mediation, or reconciliation initiatives to address conflicts and promote healing within the university community requires the involvement of all internal stakeholders. Fearn-Banks (2016) advocate for restorative justice and policy review. Restorative initiatives, such as those implemented in Canada and New Zealand have demonstrated success in rebuilding trust (Wong et al., 2016; Griff, 2014), but similar models are almost non-existent in Zimbabwe (Zhou and Wolhuter, 2020). While international models demonstrate the success of inclusive redesign efforts, integrating lessons learnt into meaningful reforms is crucial. The lack of systematic change in institutions highlights the disconnect between theory and practice, perpetuating institutional fragility and reflecting the need for further research.

2.3 Stakeholder Theory and Enhancement of Internal Stakeholder Collaboration

The Stakeholder Theory (ST) proposes that organizations should consider the interests and concerns of various stakeholders beyond just shareholders or owners (Freeman, 1984). Stakeholders are regarded as individuals or groups who can affect or are affected by an organization's actions, decisions, and policies. In the context of universities, stakeholders include students, faculty, administrators, staff, alumni, and even the broader community. Freeman et al. (2020) provide a comprehensive framework for understanding and managing stakeholder relationships. While not specifically focusing on student unrest, Freeman et al. (2020) emphasize the importance of stakeholder collaboration in problem solving and decision-making processes. Thus, collaboration among internal stakeholders is pivotal in effectively managing university student unrest (Arslan & Darendeli, 2020). Universities, as complex institutions, depend on the coordinated efforts of various actors that include administration, faculty, non-teaching staff and student representatives to respond to and mitigate unrest. However, a study by Gukurume (2020) revealed that political interference often leads to conflicting interests which are likely to hinder effective stakeholder collaboration. Mhando & Senkubuge, (2019) also postulate that if stakeholders perceive that political agendas dictate university policies, trust is eroded leading to withdrawal from participation. Thus, university administration should embrace a multi-dimensional approach to addressing

political polarization to ensure campus tolerance of political differences, freedom of expression and political maturity.

To enhance collaboration, Dewiyanti et al. (2019) underscore the importance of investing in team building. This initiative can be enhanced by clearly articulating and promoting institutional values that emphasise respect, inclusivity, diversity, and peaceful co-existence. Scholars have found that this deliberate focus on teamwork and team-building reduces unrest (Deutsch & Coleman, 2016; Dewiyanti et al., 2019). ST provides insights that help stakeholders understand their diverse interests, perspectives, and relationships, making it suitable for addressing divisions among university internal stakeholders. However, Brown et al. (2020) and Arslan & Darendeli, (2020) observe that traditional hierarchies and power imbalances inhibit open dialogue, discourage participation, and destroys teamwork. Consequently, effective internal stakeholder collaboration requires an inter-disciplinary approach, where stakeholders from different fields come together to address complex challenges. This inter-disciplinary perspective brings diverse knowledge and expertise to the table. Student unrest often arises from multi-faceted issues that cannot be fully understood from a single disciplinary perspective. The inter-disciplinary approach allows for a comprehensive understanding of the underlying factors contributing to student unrest (Johnson et al., 2019; Winkler & Mah, 2019). It should be noted that universities often have complex organizational structures with various departments, faculties, and administrative units. This siloed structure can create barriers to collaboration leading to a lack of information sharing and co-ordination among different units within the university. Therefore, the need for bridging disciplinary boundaries and creating spaces for inter-disciplinary dialogue and collaboration is a pre-requisite to meaningful collaboration.

3. Methodology

3.1 Research Design

This study is grounded in the constructivist paradigm, a subset of the broader interpretivist research philosophy, which posits that reality is subjectively constructed through individual experiences and social interaction. The study employs a qualitative approach, utilizing a Qualitative Descriptive (QD) design with analytic generalisation. This design is particularly suitable for studies aiming to facilitate an in-depth exploration of stakeholders' experiences and perceptions through interviews and focus group discussions. Through data collection and analysis in the lived realities of students, faculty, staff, and administration, the study captures contextual nuances

essential for developing a sustainable model for managing student unrest.

3.2 Population and Sampling

The target population comprised internal stakeholders from both state and private universities in Zimbabwe, totaling twenty-four institutions. Purposive sampling was employed to select one state university and one private university, chosen for their rich information relevant to the study. This method ensured the inclusion of participants with firsthand knowledge and experience concerning student unrest. From each of the two universities, three administrators, five faculty members from different departments, and five non-teaching staff members from middle-level management were interviewed, totaling six administrators, ten faculty members and ten non-teaching staff members. Additionally, two focus group discussions per university were conducted. Each focus group comprising ten students was selected using purposive sampling method. Thus, a total of forty students participated in the focus group discussions. The sample size chosen was deemed heterogenous, representing the population across the four outlined categories of internal stakeholders.

3.3 Data Collection

The study used interviews and focus group discussions to collect data. During these sessions, a secretary took notes and audio recorded the discussions, allowing the interviewer to concentrate on posing primary and probing questions. This approach facilitated a more engaged and responsive interaction with participants. In addition to audio recordings, notes were taken as back-up. To ensure the accuracy and credibility of the findings, member validation was conducted by sharing preliminary summaries with participants. This process allowed participants to verify the interpretations, provide feedback, offer clarifications, or suggest additional insights, thereby enhancing the validity of the study outcomes.

3.4 Data Analysis

The study adopted a qualitative approach to data presentation and analysis, employing Braun and Clarke's (2006) thematic analysis framework. This method involved identifying emerging themes and sub-themes from the data, supported by verbatim responses from participants. Thematic analysis enabled the researcher to systematically collect and analyze participants' views, guided by the research questions. Data were presented in tables highlighting themes, sub-themes, and sample responses, providing a clear and organized depiction of the findings.

The emerging themes and sub-themes were analyzed using the CMT and ST lenses.

3.5 Ethical Considerations

In adherence to ethical research practices, written permission to conduct the study was obtained from the two selected universities. Participants were fully informed about the study's purpose, nature, objectives, the researcher's identity, and how the results would be published and utilized. Informed consent forms were provided and signed by participants, confirming their voluntary participation. Measures were put in place to protect participants from physical, social, emotional, and psychological harm. To prevent marginalization, victimization, and stigmatization, pseudonyms were used to maintain confidentiality. Participants were informed of their right to withdraw from the study at any time without penalty, ensuring their autonomy and comfort throughout the research process.

4. Results and Discussion

The discussion of findings in this section focused on evaluating current crisis management practices of institutions in addressing student unrest. Mitroff and Pearson (1993)'s six phases of crisis management were used as the basis of evaluating crisis management practices employed by the two selected universities. The responses and analysis of findings are categorized according to the following six phases of crisis management: crisis signal detection, preparedness and prevention, containment, recovery, and learning and redesigning. The research was conducted at two anonymised universities in Zimbabwe: one public institution, referred to as University X, and one private institution, referred to as University Y. To maintain confidentiality, data sources from the two universities were assigned alphanumeric codes. For University X, administrators are coded XA1 to XA3, while those from University Y are represented as YA1 to YA3. Faculty participants from University X were assigned the codes XF1 through XF5, and those from University Y were designated as YF1 through YF5. Similarly, non-teaching staff at University X were coded XS1 to XS5, and their counterparts at University Y were coded YS1 to YS5. Student participants were selected for focus group discussions at each of the two institutions. For University X, two focus groups were conducted and coded XST1 to XST2, respectively. The corresponding focus groups at University Y were coded as YST1 and YST2. Individual student participants within each focus group were further anonymised using numerical identifiers following a colon eg XST1:3 or YST2:7.

4.1 Findings of the Study

4.1.1 Crisis Signal Detection

The focus in this section was on how participants in the study viewed their institution in terms of its ability to detect early warning signs of student unrest and the early preventive measures. It emerged from the study that student unrest like any other crisis begins with some warning signs but unfortunately such warning signs are often ignored or underestimated, leading to missed opportunities for early detection and intervention. The findings also revealed that the administration took time to respond to early warning signs of unrest and noted that early indicators were often overlooked with the hope that issues would be settled. These findings are supported by several scholars who discovered that one of the challenges facing universities is failure to recognize the build-up of a campus crisis (Coombs & Laufer, 2018; Bacon & Malekar, 2024; Wray-Lake et al., 2018; Ludwig et al., 2018; Altan & Chandra, 2018; Jensen & Young, 2019). Signal detection is critical in crisis management. Staff and faculty bemoaned the communication gap that existed between them and the administration and that closing this gap could help in detecting signals early. Thus, from the findings of this study, universities are encouraged to establish robust, non-threatening monitoring systems and early warning mechanisms to detect early signs of a crisis.

4.1.2 Preparation and Prevention

The study discovered the urgent need for robust protocols, regular training, and clear communication channels to enhance preparedness for crisis situations. In line with the findings by Meyers, (2015), Hutton & Giddings, (2018) and Machado, (2020), the current study findings highlighted that the use of force to suppress the unrest should be the last resort. Emphasis was placed on the importance of working together with the Student Representative Council to address student concerns. Contrary to the findings of Moore (2016), which revealed how university administration used mediation strategies to address potentially volatile confrontations with students, the current study revealed limitations in preparedness and the need for robust protocols, regular training in conflict resolution and mediation strategies. What came out prominently from the findings was the heavy-handed approach of university authorities to thwart any form of student unrest. The study also recognized the university's crisis response protocols and collaboration with students as important but cited financial constraints as a significant challenge. Thus, members of the administration interviewed acknowledged the limitations in preparedness and the need for robust protocols, regular training, and clear communication channels. Scholars stress that success

or failure of the institution's response to a crisis largely depends on what is accomplished or not done at the preparation/ prevention stage (Machado, 2020; Mitroff & Pearson, 1993).

The study revealed that lack of training and capacity building initiative in crisis management made the institutions vulnerable to campus unrest. The findings indicated lack of clarity on how to respond leading to ineffective actions, with observations of waiting for higher management decisions. Implicitly, emphasis was placed on the need for a comprehensive plan to effectively manage student unrest by universities. This proactive approach ensures that the university is constantly assessing and updating its crisis response strategies. Feedback from participants pointed out the importance of co-ordination plans and the need for a coordinated response strategy. The idea of a coordinated response strategy concurs with the studies carried out by Boin et al. (2019).

4.1.3 Containment

It emerged from the study that to contain student unrest, the administration should assess the nature of the crisis and assign roles to different departments instead of making uninformed decisions. It was highlighted that focus should be on messaging and de-escalation. The study further revealed differences of opinions regarding the way institutions sought to contain campus crisis. While administrators believed they were managing unrest effectively through communication and addressing root causes, faculty, staff and students pointed out critical gaps such as timeliness, inclusivity and sustainability of processes. Faculty, staff and students confirmed that the administration often invoked the powers of the law enforcement agencies to address campus protests. This concurs with several studies pointing to university authorities in Zimbabwe responding reactively to student unrest by invoking heavy-handed policing, suspension or expulsion of perceived ring leaders of the unrest, media blackouts and banning of gatherings (Moyo & Hadebe, 2020; Nsingo, Gandiwa & Chirozva, 2018; Nyangairi et al., 2022; Ncube, 2022; Chiumbu, 2020). In addition, Gukurume (2020) asserts that in Zimbabwean universities, containment often involves heavy-handed punitive responses, with little room for dialogue or transparency.

It was revealed in the study that escalation of unrest was often a result of poor coordination and lack of collaboration and involvement of all internal stakeholders in managing the crisis. Students felt that their concerns were not being addressed. Scholars discovered that open communication with students was key to defusing tensions (Jensen & Youngs, 2019; Coombs & Laufer, 2018).

It also emerged from the current study that during periods of unrest, students are left to guess at the response of administration. The vacuum created leaves space for miscommunication and peddling wrong messages. Coombs & Laufer, (2019) asserts that open communication with students is key to defusing tensions. Scholars suggest that once protests begin, universities authorities must facilitate regular updates and clearly communicate to the entire campus community about the nature and extent of the unrest, stressing students, faculty and staff safety as a top priority (Ludwig et al., 2018). It can be inferred from the responses of participants that the absence of a clear communication strategy during the period of unrest was the major cause of escalation.

4.1.4 Recovery

The current study findings revealed some significant differences of perceptions between administration and the other internal stakeholders. Members of the administration highlighted that present efforts of recovery were inclusive and aimed at facilitating reconciliation and positive change despite the financial challenges faced by the institutions. On the other hand, the sample responses from faculty reflected some mixed views. Some acknowledged that there were proactive efforts, but others pointed to superficial responses that failed to address root causes of the unrest. They also advocated for a more strategic approach to recovery which would be guided by a recovery plan, support for affected individuals and a review of the crisis response plan to improve the system. These findings are in sync with observations by Seeger et al. (2021) who emphasized the importance of putting in place a recovery plan that expresses empathy.

A review of the responses from faculty also revealed that they felt excluded from meaningful roles in recovery efforts. The absence of a proper recovery plan is in sync with findings from Friedman & Ott (2019); Crawford & Albright, (2019); Smith & Matthews (2016) and Seeger et al., (2021).

The study also highlighted a disconnect between strategy and student needs. Faculty and staff felt that their role was being underestimated and underutilized despite being directly involved in providing services to students on a day-to-day basis. Grove and Graves, (2017) underscore that recovery from a campus crisis requires collaborative decision-making processes that involve input from all stakeholders. In the same vein, Liu et al. (2017) discovered that culturally competent responses acknowledging multiple perspectives led to quicker long-term healing and trust restoration. What has to be explored is how stakeholder collaboration could be achieved and utilized in building a sustainable strategy of managing campus crisis in a university setting.

In addition, the findings showed that students acknowledged some progress but expressed dissatisfaction over lack of trust. Students expressed concerns about victimization of perceived ring leaders, unresolved tension, superficial efforts, and failure to address underlying issues. The findings concur with Crawford & Albright, (2019) whose study revealed the importance of conveying care and commitment to university core values through actions such as creating an inclusive task force to take care of the affected students after a campus crisis. Developing the same thought, a study by Mazzei and Ravazzani (2018) found that rapid expressions of care, repairing harm, and learning from mistakes led to more positive perceptions of recovery efforts. Therefore, an effective recovery strategy should focus on regaining trust and administration cannot achieve this alone.

In this study, students echoed the same sentiments with faculty and felt that the underlying root causes of student unrest were not being addressed. This affirms a study by Shelton (2014) and Penderson (2018), which highlighted the importance of conducting a review to address underlying systemic issues that cause student unrest to enhance and facilitate effective recovery processes rather than focusing on retributive measures. This can be achieved through conducting listening sessions with student groups, including those involved in the unrest, to understand issues and concerns (Gavin, 2020). Smith and Matthews (2016) also found that leaders who expressed humility, were visibly prioritizing recovery efforts through resource allocation and checks on progress were viewed as more effective in guiding organizational recovery. The findings by Mats (2018) emphasized that engaging in two-way communication with stakeholders through social media and press releases to frame issues in a relatable yet responsible manner quickened the healing process. Such initiatives show a willingness to address underlying issues. It can be observed that peace-meal or superficial approaches are likely to be the seedbed for future unrests. Thus, to cut the cycle of these disturbances, effective and sustainable crisis management approach should also incorporate crisis recovery strategies.

The findings also reflected a need for rebuilding of confidence through transparency, honesty and inclusive approach. The results resonate with Friedman and Ott's (2019) findings that boosting stakeholder confidence in the recovery journey is crucial in the healing process. Crawford and Albright (2019) also reveal that listening sessions with student advocacy groups, and accountability reports indicating progress eased campus tension over time. On the same note, Seeger and Sellnow (2016) recommended expressions of compassion, transparency in reviewing and updating policies and frequent progress updates tailored to different stakeholder group needs.

Therefore, successful recovery should be a function of coordinated healing initiatives that involve all stakeholders.

Therefore, in summary, the key elements highlighted from the findings include accepting responsibility, a collaborative focus on addressing root causes, promoting dialogue, demonstrating care, as well as transparency in communication. It can be observed that recovery from a campus crisis requires collaborative decision-making processes that involve input from all stakeholders (Grove & Graves, 2017). Involving students, faculty, and staff in the decision-making process not only empowers them but also ensures that their needs and perspectives are considered.

4.1.5 Learning

The findings revealed a clear call for more effective communication and commitment to meaningful change to prevent future unrest. Administrators emphasized structural responses such as collaboration with student bodies and the need to carry out a review of the crisis. This concurs with the findings of Kenner (2018) who stress that post-crisis review is an essential step in institutional crisis learning.

The findings also highlighted the importance of effective communication between students and leadership of the institution as a crucial takeaway from the unrest. The analysis shows that while administrators focus on structural reforms, faculty, staff and students emphasize relational and systemic gaps. Thus, for a university to truly learn from past unrest, it must combine institutional mechanisms with genuine dialogue and systemic reform that addresses student grievances at their root. These findings are in sync with observations by Coombs & Laufer, (2018).

The study highlighted the need to train and upskill faculty and staff in conflict resolution so that they can assist students. This came as recognition of the fact that faculty and staff members have more time with students than the administrators. Several scholars also emphasize the importance of training and equipping faculty and staff in conflict management (Deutsch & Coleman, 2016; Mhando & Senkubuge, 2019).

The strong call to develop a comprehensive framework to address issues promptly, reflect a commitment to effective problem-solving. Faculty advocated for a revision of campus policies in collaboration with students and staff to address the root causes of unrest and promote a co-operative approach. This position is supported by Nyangairi et al. (2022). The study reflects a collective

commitment to learning from past challenges and implementing changes that prioritize transparency, communication, inclusivity, conflict resolution, student support, and community engagement.

Additionally, the findings reflected that administration conducted a review of the previous student unrest to improve the institutional response to crisis. Similarly, Stern (2014) argues that documenting lessons from previous crises helps in institutionalizing reforms to achieve strategic, long-term resolution. This encourages a culture of open feedback and organizational learning (Shaw & Shaw, 2017). Having identified gaps and challenges in the previous crisis response, institution can then embark on training sessions and workshops to enhance conflict resolution, communication, and leadership skills for all stakeholders involved in managing student unrest.

4.1.6 Redesigning

The findings of the study emphasized structural and procedural changes that need to be put in place to lessen the possibility of student unrest. It was revealed that some steps towards transparency and representation were implemented as demonstrated by the inclusion of students in boards and committees and the empowerment of the SRC. In support of this initiative, Ludwig et al. 2018 observe that the redesigning phase is characterized by deliberate initiatives to empower student leadership.

However, concerns about superficiality, unaddressed financial issues, and potential retaliation created an atmosphere of disillusionment. There was a call to implement meaningful, tangible changes that address the root causes of unrest and assist in repairing the image of the institution. Griff (2014) also emphasizes the need to put in place strategies to repair and restore the image of the institution after a campus crisis. The feedback provided by the administration, faculty, staff, and students indicates a mix of steps taken by the administration in response to the unrest. While there are commendable initiatives such as increased transparency, diversity and inclusion efforts, and enhanced support services, there are also valid concerns raised regarding symbolic responses, lack of follow-through, and unaddressed systemic issues.

It was noted that the administration's focus on enhancing campus safety measures was commendable, but the unresolved fees issue caused dissatisfaction among students. While additional resources were allocated to student support services, the impact was eroded by price increases due to high inflation, affecting the effectiveness of support services provided to students. In response to the unrest, a task force was formed to investigate the causes

and provide recommendations to the administration, demonstrating a commitment to understanding and addressing underlying issues. However, despite the establishment of committees and promises made post-protests, there are still concerns about a lack of follow-through on commitments. This could be enhanced by conducting regular campus climate surveys to assess the overall satisfaction and well-being of students (Fearn-Banks, 2016).

One of the key features of the redesigning stage is the focus on policy reviews. There was no evidence given of any revision of policies from the findings. Scholars stress the significant role policy reviews play to student unrest by providing a structured framework to address underlying issues, promote dialogue, and ensure fair and inclusive decision-making (Nyangairi et al., 2022; Haffajee, 2017). This inclusive and consultative approach by the administration in revising policies based on student advocacy and experiences of other institutions builds confidence and establishes relevant policies that enhance a conducive learning environment.

4.2 Strategies Employed to enhance Internal Stakeholder Collaboration in Addressing Student Unrest

The findings revealed that collaboration during situations of crisis require relationship building, shared understandings of issues, and collective action among all stakeholders. This concurs with study findings by Winkler and Mah (2019), Johnson et al. (2019), and Arslan and Darendeli (2020) who emphasized the importance of investing in relationship building and teamwork. The findings of the current study emphasize open dialogue and improved communication channels to foster synergies and collaboration. Similarly, Jensen (2019) also highlights the importance of collaborative structures such as peace committees or task forces, and highlights the need for inclusive dialogue, participatory decision-making, and shared responsibilities among stakeholders. Open and transparent communication is essential for successful involvement (Johnson et al., 2019; Freeman, 1984; Freeman et al., 2020). Winkler and Mah (2019) support this idea by advocating the establishment of clear roles and responsibilities to avoid confusion and role conflicts. Johnson et al. (2019) also support this position by noting that periodic reaffirmation of shared principles through meaningful dialogue helps validate community members' belonging and buy-in thereby defusing the possibility of tension and promoting a peaceful campus. Therefore, recognizing and appreciating diverse skills and experiences is viewed as essential for enhancing teamwork and collaboration. Faculty also highlighted the importance of trust among stakeholders, advocating for transparent

communication, empathy and active listening to foster unity. They also suggest aligning and synchronizing departmental goals to ensure collaboration. This position concurs with Tamrat & Teferra, (2021) who further highlight the role of non-teaching staff in providing support services, such as counselling, advising, and campus security, which contribute to student well-being and academic achievement.

The findings placed more special emphasis on the need to invest in training programmes for internal stakeholders to enhance collaboration, trust and effectiveness in crisis management. In the same vein, students stressed the importance of respectful interactions among stakeholders to facilitate open dialogue and mutual understanding. Inclusivity in decision making, embracing diverse viewpoints and training on conflict resolution were the outstanding themes which came out of the focus group discussions. Scholars also underscore the importance of involving internal stakeholders in decision-making processes as essential for effective collaboration (Arslan & Darendeli, 2020; Dewiyanti et al. 2019). In support of the same position highlighted by students, Penderson (2018) stressed the need to promote participatory decision-making that involves diverse stakeholders in the decision-making process, including students, faculty, and staff. One of the themes that recurred in both the interviews and the focus group discussions was the importance of investing in training and skills development in handling crisis. The emphasis was on an inclusive approach to training where all internal stakeholders are involved. Therefore, encouraging a culture of continuous learning and professional development assists stakeholders to enhance their skills and knowledge and this, in turn, fosters effective collaboration.

The overall responses indicate a shared call for dialogue, open communication channels and a commitment to valuing diverse perspectives. The emphasis on creating strong support highlights the need for equipping stakeholders with the skills necessary to navigate conflicts and enhance collaboration. These insights suggest that fostering a collaborative environment requires intentional efforts to build trust, ensure inclusivity and enhance communication at all levels.

4.3 Conclusions drawn from Findings

Based on the findings of the study, the following conclusions were drawn in response to the research questions:

1. *How do university internal stakeholders*

(administration, faculty, staff and students) perceive their institution's crisis management practices in addressing student unrest?

The study found out that current crisis management practices:

- Lacked proactivity, often ignoring early warning signs
- Marked by heavy-handed, reactive responses, which escalate tensions
- Exhibit poor stakeholder coordination, with minimal involvement of faculty, staff and students
- Focus more on structural responses rather than relational or systemic improvements

In conclusion, crisis response mechanisms were found to be ineffective due to their reactive nature and lack of inclusive stakeholder engagement. Consequently, sustainable crisis management must prioritize early detection, proactive measures, inclusive decision-making and transparent communication.

2. *What strategies can be employed to enhance internal stakeholder collaboration in addressing student unrest?*

Sustainable management must involve breaking down silos, investing in training and capacity building and cultivating a culture of shared responsibility and collaboration.

3. *What key components, processes, and institutional structures should be integrated into a collaborative, context-specific model to sustainably manage student unrest in Zimbabwean universities?*

The study concluded that a sustainable crisis management model for university student unrest in Zimbabwe must be:

- Integrative, engaging all internal stakeholders (administration, faculty, staff and students)
- Proactive and preventive through focusing on early warning signs and implementing appropriate mitigation strategies
- Transparent and inclusive promoting dialogue, participatory governance, and trust-building

- Promote continuous learning through reviewing past crisis situations, adapting policies and investing in ongoing training.

Based on an analysis of the findings, a model for sustainable management of student unrest was designed by the researcher as reflected below in Fig.1. The two theories upon which this research is anchored - Crisis Management Theory (CMT) and the Stakeholder Theory (ST) constitute key elements of the model while information extracted

from the data analysis informed the context. CMT offers foundational understanding for dealing with crisis, focusing on structured response strategies. On the other hand, the ST emphasize roles and interests of various stakeholders in managing unrest. The two theories guided the overall approach, ensuring that the model is rooted in both academic and practical perspectives. The model below shows the main features of the proposed crisis management framework:

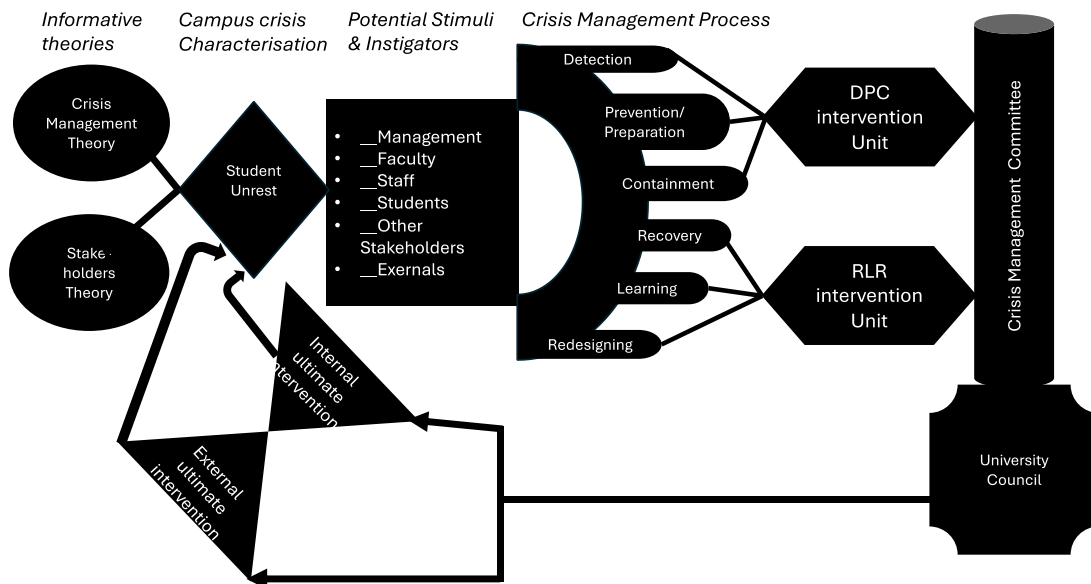


Figure 1: Context-Sensitive Integrative Model (CSIM) of Managing University Student Unrest

The above model illustrates the relationship between the informative theories, the characterization of the crisis, the identification of the probable stimuli, possible instigators of the crisis, and the intervention process for either curbing, containing and managing the crisis. Again, the two major theories (Crisis Management Theory (CMT) and Stakeholders theory (ST) provide adequate information concerning the generally accepted signals or indicators of a looming or already kindled students' unrest that may result into an institutional crisis.

The central issue is student unrest, indicating a specific type of crisis. This is the focal problem that triggers the entire crisis management process. The model identifies potential stimuli and instigators of unrest both internal and external sources. Internal sources refer to perceived challenges from management, faculty and staff, including students. External sources may emanate from other stakeholders, including external pressure from socio-economic and socio-political environments. Thus, student

unrest is treated as a multidimensional crisis that can emerge from academic grievances, financial or economic stress, social or political discontent, administrative decisions, poor customer care or service delivery including external influence (eg national politics and media). Consequently, the model views student unrest as a dynamic and systemic issue and not just student antisocial behavior, but a symptom of deeper institutional tension.

The categorization of potential actors is crucial. Firstly, internal stakeholders like management are the decision makers whose decisions or policies may trigger unrest. Faculty are key influencers in shaping student experiences and thus can generate discontent and unrest on campus. Students are primarily the affected group and often the initiators of unrest. The second category identifies external stakeholders which may include political actors, parents, non-governmental organizations, media personnel etc. External factors often amplify internal tensions; hence the model emphasizes internal resolution to crisis. Identifying

sources and instigators of unrest helps in pinpointing who or what might be contributing to the crisis which is essential for targeted intervention. The source of the unrest determines the need for internal intervention or external intervention or both depending on the nature and severity of the crisis.

Having highlighted the importance of identifying the source of the unrest, the model outlines two categories of intervention strategies; the Internal Ultimate Intervention (IUI) and the External Ultimate Intervention (EUI). The IUI is the preferred first-line, prioritized strategy which emphasizes resolving issues using internal resources and collaboration. It involves engaging internal stakeholders in dialogue, mediation, negotiation and problem solving. The ultimate benefit is the preservation of institutional autonomy, building internal trust and cohesion and reducing reputational risks.

On the other hand, External Ultimate Intervention (EUI) is considered when internal efforts are insufficient, or the internal efforts have failed to address the crisis. This may involve government interventions, law enforcement agencies and third-party mediators. The involvement of EUI may assist in resolving immediate tension but risk escalating conflicts, damaging stakeholder relationships and undermining long-term institutional trust.

The model reflects a crisis management process which uses a multiphase approach with the following key phases:

- Detection – Identifying early signs of unrest
- Prevention/ Preparation – Proactive planning and risk mitigation
- Containment – Immediate actions to limit escalation
- Recovery – Restoring normalcy post crisis
- Learning – Extracting lessons from the event for future use
- Redesigning – Updating systems and policies based on learned lessons

The model projects two intervention units to ensure specialization, accountability and collaboration in handling different phases of the crisis. The DPC intervention unit is responsible for Detection, Prevention and Containment of the crisis or unrest. The RLR intervention unit focuses on

Recovery, Learning and Redesigning strategies. When the relevant layers (intervention units) of the crisis management committee are in place, they must so much familiarize themselves with these theories that no signal or indicator of a potential crisis will escape their awareness and management strategies. This is possible because adequate knowledge of the said theories helps the intervention units to quickly define the nature and intensity of the crisis and be able to estimate its potential impact on the campus. The units are also able to determine the direct and indirect stimuli and instigators (members of management, faculty members, staff members, students, other stakeholders such as parents and alumni, or externals such as politicians, socio-economic activists, religious fanatics, etc.).

The DPC and RLR operate as crisis intervention sub-committees of the Crisis Management Committee (CMC). The CMC is the central body coordinating interventions and overseeing the process. On the other hand, the University Council in this framework has the ultimate authority that supports or mandates strategic decisions and policy changes. It ensures institutional support and legitimacy for the crisis response.

Specifically, for the crisis to be either prevented and contained, a standing sub-committee (DPC intervention unit) of the crisis management committee must be in place and responsible for detecting the crisis, determining the need for either prevention or containment, and proposing the possible ways of either prevention or containment. In the case where containment is needed, and for the purpose of avoiding potential protraction of biases, partiality, and unfairness, if any, another standing sub-committee (RLR Intervention unit) of the crisis management committee must be in place to take over from the DPC sub-committee to propose the recovery mechanism, bring out the lessons to be learned from the crisis in order to prevent future occurrence. These lessons as well as related best practices in campus crisis management may then be used to redesign the related campus dynamics, to improve the systems that are liable to potential students’ unrest. The table below summarizes the phases of the crisis management process and the roles of the DPC unit and the RLR unit.

Crisis Management Process: A Continuous Cycle

Phase	Description	Handled by
Detection	Early identification of unrest signals (eg protests, petitions, protracted complains)	DPC Unit
Prevention/ Preparation	Policy review, dialogue forums, simulations	DPC Unit
Containment	Immediate measures (eg security, mediation, communication)	DPC Unit
Recovery	Restoring normal operations, healing relationships	RLR Unit
Learning	Documenting lessons, analysing causes	RLR Unit
Redesigning	Institutional reforms based on insights	RLR Unit

It is worth noting that each of the three phases of each intervention unit is reported to the Crisis Management Committee for approval before the next phase; however, the DPC intervention unit, the internal as well as the external ultimate intervention units must be given power to act immediately in cases of extremely dangerous or rapidly escalating and devastating student's unrest. But such interventions must be clearly outlined and described in the campus crisis management manual to avoid confusion or uncertainty in decision-making sessions of the said intervention units. The ultimate internal and external intervention units are the university management and public security agencies, respectively, and their role is to initiate (not later than half an hour from the time of instruction/request) the execution of and report (not later than 72 hours from the time of instruction/request) to the University Council chair through management on the authorized or warranted interventions.

In terms of governance and oversight, the Crisis Management Committee, and the University Council play a major role. The Crisis Management Committee is meant to be a multi-stakeholder committee that coordinates interventions and ensures transparency, accountability and coordination. This committee functions as a bridge between operational units and the university leadership. The University Council in this model is the ultimate decision-making authority that approves major interventions, policy shifts and institutional reforms. It ensures alignment with institutional vision, values and legal frameworks.

In terms of functionality, this model hinges on early detection and management of the unrest, stakeholder engagement, internal collaboration, structured workflow and feedback with learning loops. The detection and preparation stages help in identifying and mitigating potential crises before they escalate. Stakeholder

engagement, a concept derived from the Stakeholder Theory ensures that all parties (students, staff, faculty, management) are involved in the resolution process. This approach builds ownership among all stakeholders, increasing the legitimacy of decisions. The model favors internal collaboration before involving external actors, supporting institutional self-reliance and internal capacity building. The emphasis on internal collaboration before escalating to external involvement ensures a sustainable and context-sensitive response.

Furthermore, the segmentation into intervention units (DPC and RLR) and the process stages provide a clear, actionable workflow from the early warnings of the crisis to the redesigning phase. Clear process phases and specialized units ensure focus and efficiency. Terms of reference for each intervention unit can be developed based on the crisis management phases each unit is responsible for. This assists in reducing possibilities of role conflict and enhances accountability.

The model also reflects feedback and learning loops through the phases of learning and redesigning. Learning and designing encourages flexibility and adaptability which enables the institution to respond to evolving macro and micro contexts. This ensures that crises lead to institutional growth and policy evolution which ultimately enhances institutional resilience over time. The success of implementing this model in mitigating student unrest is premised on investing on capacity building which calls for training, upskilling personnel and having clear crisis management protocols. Efficiency and success of the model is also dependent on stakeholder buy-in, trust and willingness to engage. Management should ensure seamless coordination between the units and governing bodies. The following is an enhanced model built upon the previous one (Fig 1) and based on the research findings.

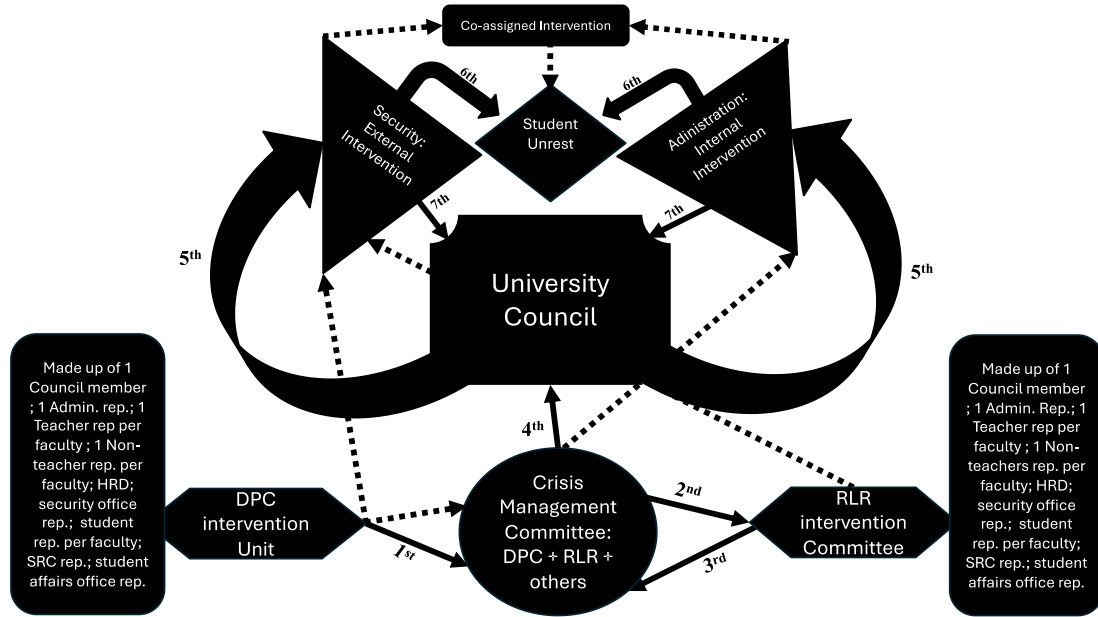


Figure 2: Enhanced Context-Sensitive Integrative Model (CSIM) of Managing University Student Unrest based on Research Findings

The above model aims to add more useful details on the dynamics of the crisis management process by specifying the composition of the internal intervention units and the intervention paths based on the nature, intensity, and gravity of the crisis. The model introduces clearer structural roles, escalating pathways, and dynamic interactions between university governance bodies and intervention units. It provides a comprehensive and sequenced process of addressing student unrest, and balancing internal administrative interventions with external responses, while maintaining centralised oversight by the University Council.

Student unrest remains the central issue and is depicted as a systemic challenge. The responses to the unrest may either require external security intervention or internal administrative intervention depending on the nature and severity of the unrest. This dual approach highlights the need for situational flexibility in handling unrest. Administration based internal intervention is the preferred and primary response method. Focus is on internal dialogue, mediation, policy review, and administrative reforms. This helps to preserve institutional integrity and minimise disruptions. On the other hand, the security based external intervention involves external actors (eg police, security forces). This becomes necessary when the unrest escalates beyond internal management capacity. It is activated only in severe or violent cases, and only after internal mechanisms have been exhausted or deemed insufficient. The model also proposes a co-assigned

intervention. This is implemented in complex situations where a single pathway is insufficient, demonstrating the model's flexibility and responsiveness. The University Council, being the highest decision-making body, controls intervention endorsement and escalation. This body receives feedback from committees and authorises external involvement when necessary. Council also enhances governance and legitimacy of all actions.

The Crisis Management Committee (CMC) is composed of members from both the DPC and RLR units. This committee functions as the coordinating hub between governance and intervention units. The CMC is responsible for assessing unrest, recommending interventions and coordinating units and reporting to Council through management. Each intervention unit is multi-stakeholder and includes administration representative, faculty members, non-teaching staff, Human Resource Development (HRD) office, and security office representatives, student representatives, SRC, and Student Affairs office representative. This diversity ensures legitimacy and trust in the intervention process. This specifically enhances involvement and participation of the various layers of campus dynamics as implicitly recommended by both the Crisis Management Theory and Stakeholders' Theory.

The ordinal numbers in the figure indicate the order of the processes. The plain arrows indicate the path to follow when the looming or active crisis is slow and not

significantly devastating. The broken arrows indicate the intervention path to follow in case of rapid and significantly devastating crisis. In other words, in the case where the crisis erupts and spreads rapidly and devastatingly, the DPC, RLR, or Administration must immediately act while simultaneously informing their immediate supervisor. For instance, in case students are violently vandalising the university or individual property, or attempting to harm human lives, the DPC, RLR working in collaboration with administration must call security agents to restore order.

The model outlines a step-by-step escalation and response process, marked by numbered arrows. 1st 2nd 3rd arrows depict that student unrest has been detected, and CMC is activated. The CMC assesses the situation and co-ordinates with DPC and RLR units. The 4th arrow shows that the CMC reports findings and recommendations to the University Council. The 5th arrow shows the Council's approval of either an internal administrative-led intervention or an external security led intervention, depending on the severity of the crisis. The 6th arrow depicts complex situations where both arms are activated in a co-assigned intervention. The 7th arrow illustrates post-intervention, where both arms report back to the University Council for review and possible policy redirection.

This model has several strengths. It promotes an integrated governance where the University Council ensures consistency and oversight, thus preventing fragmented or politically motivated responses. The multi-stakeholder representation of the DPC and RLR ensures diversity of perspectives thereby promoting transparency and inclusivity. The model prioritises internal solutions to preserve institutional autonomy and at the same time allows for the intervention of external security when necessary. At the same time, RLR unit ensures that unrest leads to systemic reforms not just temporary fixes.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

5.1 Conclusion

References

- Altan, O. & Chandra, M. (2018). *Intelligent Systems for Crisis Management*. Switzerland: Springer Nature.
- Arslan, G., & Darendeli, I. (2020). Crisis Management and Communication During the COVID-19 Pandemic: A Case Study of the Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality. *International Journal*

This study addressed the complex issue of student unrest in Zimbabwean universities by highlighting the necessity for a collaborative internal stakeholder framework to manage and mitigate these challenges sustainably. Through qualitative analysis involving administration, faculty, staff and students from two universities, several key findings emerged that illuminated the multifaceted nature of student unrest, and the institutional response required. The model developed provides a robust governance structure for managing student unrest through preventive internal strategies, accountable escalating pathways, inclusive stakeholder engagement and continuous institutional learning. The model is highly adaptable, empowering universities to respond decisively while preserving trust, autonomy and sustainability.

5.2 Recommendations

The following are recommendations based on the research findings and analysis:

Recommendations for University Management

1. That the university administration establishes and facilitates training of a standing, multi-stakeholder Crisis Management Committee (CMC) with the two intervention units, firstly the DPC for detecting early warning signs, proactive planning and immediate containment. Secondly, the RLR unit for post-crisis recovery, reflection and recommending institutional reforms.
2. That University Councils study and provide policy and strategic oversight that involves monitoring the performance of the crisis management structure through periodic reviews by a relevant sub-committee of Council.
3. That the empirical testing and validation of the proposed model for managing student unrests through internal stakeholder collaboration be carried out as future research to evaluate its practicality, efficiency and adaptability across various universities need to be explored through research.

of Disaster Risk Reduction, 51, 101-189.

- Bacon, J. and Molly M, (2024). Analyzing Student Activism and Free Speech on College Campuses. *Journal of Higher Education* 96 (1), 56-80.

- Boin, A., Kuipers, S. & Overdijk, W. (2019). Leadership in Times of Crisis: A Framework for Assessment. *International Review of Public Administration*, 18(1), 79-91.

- Boin, A., Kuipers, S. & Overdijk, W. (2019). The Importance of Crisis Coordination. In *The Routledge Handbook of Crisis Communication* (2nd ed., pp. 30-40). London: Routledge.
- Chiumbu, S. (2020). Student Protests and the Securitization of Universities in Zimbabwe: An Analysis of State–Student Relations. *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 46(6), 1025–1041.
- Coombs, T. & Laufer, D. (2018). Global Crisis Management – Current Research and Future Directions, *Journal of International Management, Elsevier*, 24(3), 199-203.
- Crawford, S. & Albright, J. (2019). Student Voices and Higher Education Leadership: The Role of Institutional Response in Effective Protest Resolution. *Review of Higher Education*, 42(2), 545-573.
- Deutsch, M. & Coleman, P. T. (Eds.). (2016). *The Handbook of Conflict Resolution: Theory and Practice*. MI: John Wiley & Sons. <https://inclassreadings.wordpress.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/handbook-of-conflict-resolution.pdf>
- Dewiyanti, S., Raharja, S.J. & Sukoco, B.M. (2019). Campus Safety Management During Student Protest in Indonesian Universities. *International Journal of Safety and Security Engineering*, 9(4), 700-708.
- Fearn-Banks, K. (2016). *Crisis Communications: A Casebook Approach* (5th ed.). CA: Routledge. <https://www.taylorfrancis.com/books/mono/10.4324/9781315684857/crisis-communications-kathleen-fearn-banks>
- Fourie, W. (2014). A Future for Africa’s past? The need for Contextualization in Crisis Management. *Disaster Prevention and Management*, 23(5), 469–482.
- Freeman, R. E. (1984). *Strategic Management: A Stakeholder Approach*. London: Cambridge University Press.
- Freeman, R. E., Harrison, J. S., & Zyglidopoulos, S. C. (2020). *Stakeholder Theory: Concepts and Implications*. London: Cambridge University Press.
- Freeman, R. E., Harrison, J. S., Wicks, A. C., Parmar, B. L., & de Colle, S. (2020). *Stakeholder Theory: The State of the Art*. London: Cambridge University Press.
- Friedman, J. & Ott, S. (2019). Hashtag Activism: Examining the Effectiveness, Opportunities, and Challenges of Activist Communication Campaigns on Twitter and Beyond. *New Media & Society*, 21(8), 1765–1784.
- Gavin, J. (2020). Responding to Campus Unrest: A Case Study of University Crisis Communications. *International Journal of Business Communication*, 57(3), 315–338.
- Gerber, L.G. & Smith, R.M. (Eds.). (2019). *Campus Disruptions: Locations of Contention in American Universities*. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Griff, A (2014). *Crisis, Issues and Reputation Management*. Philadelphia, PA: Kogan Page Limited. <https://www.scribd.com/document/623933218/GRIFFIN-2014-Crisis-Issues-and-Reputation-Management>
- Grove, J. V. & Graves, T. (2017). Disclosing Campus Unrest on Social Media: Assessing Credibility and Identifying Challenges. *Public Relations Review*, 43(1), 196–205.
- Gukurume, S. (2020). Navigating the Liberalisation of Higher Education in Zimbabwe: A Case of Students at one State University. *Critical Studies in Education*, 61(1), 1–15.
- Haffajee, F. (2017). South African University Student Protests 2015-2017: Stretching the Limits of Reform. Transformation: Critical Perspectives on Southern Africa, *Journal of Applied Research in Higher Education*, 97, 29–55.
- Hutton, K. & Giddings, J. (2018). Crisis Management in Higher Education: A Comparative Study of Student Unrest. *Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management*, 40(1), 84-101.
- Jensen, H. (2019). Campus Resilience: Investing in Crisis Coordination and Response Partnerships. *Research in Higher Education Journal*, 35, 1-28.
- Johnson, R., Brown, A. & Thompson, L. (2019). Breaking down Silos: Interdisciplinary Collaboration in Universities. *Journal of Interdisciplinary Studies*

- in Higher Education*, 6(1), 43-59.
- Johnson, H., Robinson, M., & Williams, T. (2019). Facilitating Stakeholder Collaboration in Complex Projects: A Framework for Aligning interests and building Trust. *International Journal of Project Management*, 37(6), 789–802.
- Kenner, A., (2018). Crisis Management and Student Conduct on College Campuses: The Role of Administrative Discretion. University of Arkansas: Fayetteville. <https://scispace.com/pdf/crisis-management-and-student-conduct-on-college-campuses-3359s9rt3h.pdf>
- Langa, M. (2017). #Hashtag: An Analysis of the #FeesMustFall Movement at South African Universities. Pretoria, RSA: Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation.
- Liou, K. T. & Korba, L. (2020). Student Activism on Campus: Analyzing Activism, Protest, and Policymaking from a Systems Perspective. *New Directions for Student Services*, 169(5), 11-25.
- Liu, W. C., Wang, C. K. J., & Kee, Y. H. (2017). Effect of Satisfaction of Basic Psychological needs on Academic Engagement: Does it Differ between High School and University Students? *Social Indicators Research*, 110(2), 821-839.
- Ludwig, T. D., Forrest, G. A., Whitacre, L. D. & Brady, J. V. (2018). Campus Unrest: Promoting Safety and Communication during Times of Crisis. *Journal of Contingencies and Crisis Management*, 26(4), 433-437.
- Machado, S. M. (2020). Crisis Management in Higher Education: A Review of Literature. *Journal of Higher Education Theory and Practice*, 20(9), 50-62.
- Mapolisa, T. (2017). Crisis Management and Communication Preparedness of Universities in Zimbabwe. *Journal of Risk and Crisis Management*, 4(1), 33-48.
- Maringe, F., & Ojo, E. (2017). An Exploratory Study on the Challenges of Crisis Management in Universities in South Africa. *South African Journal of Higher Education*, 31(5), 1–14.
- Mats, E. (2018): Lessons for Crisis Communication on Social Media. Approches to Crises Management. *International Journal of Strategic Communication*, 3(4), 102-153.
- Mazzei, A. & Ravazzani, S. (2018). Image Restoration and Higher Education Institutions: An Analysis of Italian universities. *Corporate Communications: An International Journal*, 21(4), 488-504.
- Meyers, G. C. (2015). *Managing Crisis: A Positive Approach*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.
- Mhando, L. & Senkubuge, F. (2019). Preparing Higher Education Leaders for Managing Crises in Africa. *Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management*, 41(1), 5-18.
- Mitroff, I. I. & Pearson, C. M. (1993). *Crisis Management: A Diagnostic Guide for improving your Organization's Crisis-preparedness*. Adrian, MI: Jossey-Bass.
- Mitroff, I. I., & Pearson, C. M. (1993). *Crisis Management: A Diagnostic Guide for improving your Organization's Crisis-preparedness*. *Academy of Management Executive*, 7(3), 48-59.
- Mitroff, I.I., Alpaslan, C.M. & Green, S.E. (2006). Crisis as a wake-up call: Converting Corporate Breakdowns into Breakthroughs. *Organizational Dynamics*, 35(1), 61-72.
- Mlambo, A. (2020). #OnlineLearningMustFall: Digital Protests echo across Zimbabwean universities. Quartz Africa, 13 May 2020.
- Moore, C. W. (2016). *The Mediation Process: Practical Strategies for Resolving Conflict*. San Diego, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Moyo, S. & Hadebe, S. (2020). Coordinating Security Operations during Student Unrests: Strengthening University-Community Relations in Zimbabwe. *Journal of Security Sector Management*, 8(3), 32-46.
- Ncube, G. (2022). Youth, Protests and the Politics of Repression in Zimbabwean Universities. *Journal of Youth Studies*, 25(4), 510–528.
- Nsingo, S., Gandiwa, E. & Chirozva, C. (2018). Enhancing University Administration Capacity for Constructive Student Protest Management in Zimbabwe. *Africa Education Review*, 15(3), 61-78.

- Nyangairi, T., Garikai, I. & Dziva, D. (2022). A Normative Evaluation of Student Protest Policies in Zimbabwe's Public Universities. *African Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 22(1), 73-91.
- Penderson, J. M. (2018). Understanding and Responding to Student Protests: Toward a Multidimensional Framework. *Journal of Diversity in Higher Education*, 11(2), 154–168.
- Rao, S. & Wasserman H. (2017). Global Student Protests in the News. *African Journalism Studies*, 38:2, 1-4.
- Sabzpoor, E., Mehraban, A.G., & Samavatiyan, H. (2018). College Students' Demonstrations: Challenges and Dangers. *Journal of Law and Conflict Resolution*, 10(3), 28-34.
- Seeger, M. W., & Sellnow, T. L. (2016). *Narratives of crisis: Telling stories of Ruin and Renewal*. London: Stanford University Press.
- Seeger, M. W., Sellnow, T. L., & Ulmer, R. R. (2021). *Communication and Organizational Crisis*. London: Cengage Learning.
- Shaw, E. & Shaw, S. (2017). Communicating in a Crisis at a small Liberal Arts Institution: A Case Study. *Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management*, 39(2), 109-122.
- Shaw, G. P., & Shaw, R. N. (2017). *Effective Communication in Higher Education: A Practical Guide*. Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons.
- Smith, R, Jones A, and Chloe W, (2025). Contentious Politics in Campus Climate: Pro-Palestinian Activism and Institutional Responses. *Sociology of Education*, 88(3), 234-252.
- Smith, D. & Matthews, K. (2016). A Qualitative Exploration of Leadership Practices Associated with Organizational Resilience. *The Journal of Leadership Studies*, 10(2), 65–67.
- Stern, E. K. (2014). Preparing: The Sixth Task of Crisis Leadership. *Journal of Contingencies and Crisis Management*, 22(3), 154-158.
- Tamrat, W. & Teferra, D. (2021). Student Activism in African Higher Education: Trends and Implications. *International Higher Education*, 12 (7), 9–11.
- Taruberekera, N. (2022, September 15). Student Protests Shut Down University of Zimbabwe. London: University World News.
- Winkler, J. & Mah, J. (2019). Internal Stakeholder Engagement at Institutional Transformation. *New Directions for Higher Education*, 188(7), 81–92.
- Wong, L. (2024). Communicating Palestine Online: Social Media, Hashtag Activism and FreePalestine. *First Monday* 21, (3).
- Wong, J. S., Jessica Bouchard, Gravel, J., Bouchard, M., & Morselli, C. (2016). Can At-Risk Youth be Diverted from Crime? A Meta-Analysis of Restorative Diversion Programs. *Criminal Justice and Behavior*, 43(10), 1310-1329.
- Wray-Lake, L., Syvertsen, A. K. & Flanagan, C. A. (2018). Developmental Change in Social Responsibility During Adolescence: An ecological perspective. *Developmental psychology*, 54(3), 1-14.
- Zhou, Y. & Wolhuter, C.C. (2020). Understanding Student Unrest in the Global South: The Missing Link of Non-Academic Staff Engagement. *Compare*, 50(8), 1221–1237.
- Zhou, G. & Wolhuter, C. C. (2020). Student Activism in African Universities: Causes and Responses. *Journal of Student Affairs in Africa*, 8(2), 1–13.
- Zhou, G., & Zvoushe, H. (2012). Public Policymaking in Zimbabwe: A Three Decade-Perspective. *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science*, 2, 212-222.

APPENDIX 1

Thematic Analysis: Crisis Detection Practices in University Crisis Management

Theme	Sub-theme	Stakeholder Group	Key Responses/ Codes	Insights
Reliance on Formal Structures	early warning mechanism	Administration	<i>Work very closely with SRC and they inform us each time ...</i> YA3 (SRC informs).	Administration is a primary mechanism for early signal detection, but may be compromised if SRC is involved in the unrest.
	Student captains as information sources	Administration	<i>Use student captains in all the hostels ...</i> YA2 (Student captains reports).	Student captains serve as informal informants to deans, aiding in early detection.
	Check tools and surveys	Administration	<i>Conduct student and worker satisfaction surveys</i> YA1.	Surveys serve as a formal tool to detect unrest trends
Communication Gaps and Delayed Action	Improve communication	Administration	<i>Opening communication channels and feedback mechanisms ...</i> XA3.	Administration's recognition of internal communication weaknesses
	Administration slow to act	Administration	<i>There were many indicators ... but administration didn't take it seriously</i> XF1 (signs ignored).	Administration often underestimates early warnings
	Ignoring early warnings	Administration	<i>Indicators are overlooked ...</i> YF5 (early indicators overlooked).	Administration's tendency to assume issues will resolve on their own
Reliance on Frontline Staff	Do not overlook	Administration	<i>Feel the pulse ... its up to administration to listen</i> YS1 (ignoring early signs)	Administration's insights often disregarded despite close student interaction
	Recognition of unrest	Administration	<i>University is slow to recognise the signs ...</i> XS3 (slow to recognise signs)	Administration fails to act on staff observations
Perceptions of Governance	Perceived arrogance	Students	<i>There are visible signs ... it seems no one cares</i> XST2:6 (arrogance)	Students perceive administrators as indifferent or dismissive.
	Lack of democratic space	Students	<i>There are no informers among us ... causes fear</i> YST1:8 (informers/ secret police).	Administration's use of informers foster fear and distrust among students

APPENDIX 2

Thematic Analysis: Crisis Prevention and Preparation

Theme	Sub-theme	Stakeholder Group	Key Responses/ Codes	Insights
Formal Infrastructure	Protocols and training	Administration	<i>Use regular trainings to upskill our security ... crisis response protocols ... working with SRC.</i> YA3.	Formal protocols and training reflect preparedness mechanisms
	Religion-based values response	Administration	<i>Use strong spiritual programmes that inculcate Christian values.</i> XA3	Religion-based leadership is part of preventive culture
	Inclusion in governance	Administration	<i>Students are represented in all key committees ... we</i>	Involving students in committees can help anticipate issues and

			<i>try and address their concerns. XA2.</i>	address grievances before they escalate
	is last resort	stration	<i>uation deteriorates, the Zimbabwe Republic Police will be invited ... but this is always the last resort. YA1.</i>	involvement is seen as escalation rather than prevention
ation gaps	training and clarity	and Staff	<i>a need for better training ...to manage crisis proactively XF5</i>	ternal coordination weakens institutional readiness
	response culture		<i>of a co-ordination plan led to confusion and unpreparedness YF4.</i>	e of clear roles causes staff hesitation in crisis
Perspectives	ie versus confrontation	s	<i>here could be dialogue instead of violent confrontation. XST1:2.</i>	e is preferred over reactive measures
	ising root causes	s	<i>g the root cause ... not targeting students. YST2:9.</i>	ve problem solving is seen as key to unrest prevention

APPENDIX 3

Thematic Analysis: Containment of Student Unrest

		sights
<p>Communication and Communication</p> <p>Communication and dialogue are perceived as effective strategies for crisis containment.</p>	<p><i>ue (YA3, XA2, XF3)</i> <i>conversation (YA1)</i> <i>listening (XF5, XS2)</i> <i>ing to grievances (XS2, YST2:4)</i> <i>nect (XST2:6)</i></p>	<p>Participants recognise efforts to engage in dialogue with students, especially through the SRC. Honest and transparent communication, such as direct involvement by leadership was seen as effective in diffusing tensions. Some noted insufficient communication, leading to misunderstandings and escalation. A disconnect between administration and students was seen as a significant barrier to containment.</p>
<p>Proactive versus Reactive Responses</p> <p>Need to shift from reactive crisis management to proactive engagement</p>	<p><i>ive approach (YF5, XF1, YST2:2)</i> <i>ive approach and reactive responses (YST2:2)</i> <i>sing problems proactively (XF1)</i></p>	<p>University authorities were criticised for being reactive rather than proactive, suggesting that delayed intervention created room for tensions to escalate. Participants emphasised early identification of issues and addressing root causes. Reactive measures were regarded as punitive and provocative.</p>
<p>Faculty and Participation in Decision-making</p> <p>Stakeholder governance and stakeholder involvement are deemed essential in containment efforts</p>	<p><i>nclusive-decision making (XST1:10)</i> <i>prehensive involvement (YF2)</i> <i>eration (YS2, YS4)</i> <i>f co-ordination (YF3)</i></p>	<p>Participants called for participation of faculty, non-teaching staff and students in decision-making processes. Some perceived the administration as exclusive and unilateral, leading to poor coordination and a lack of shared responsibility. Inclusive approaches were highlighted as a means of better understanding of student concerns and more sustainable containment.</p>
<p>Structural Support Structures</p>	<p><i>oration (XA1)</i></p>	<p>Participants emphasised the effectiveness of inter-departmental collaboration, such as involving</p>

onal framework and inter-departmental collaboration play a key role in crisis containment	<i>rtive and inclusive environment (XA3)</i> <i>management team (XA1)</i> <i>ful methods (XS1)</i>	finance, public relations, legal staff in crisis management teams. Creating a supportive environment where students feel heard was highlighted. Staff who are on the frontlines felt they could play a larger role in de-escalation through peaceful engagement.
nication Deficiencies and Misinformation k of a coherent communication strategy hampers containment	<i>re of communication strategy (XF4)</i> <i>media challenges (XF5)</i> <i>f co-ordination (YF3)</i>	responses highlighted the danger of misinformation spread through social media. Again, the lack of a communication strategy was seen as a major weakness. Co-ordination gaps further complicated messaging and response efforts.

APPENDIX 4

Thematic Analysis: Recovery from Student Unrest

		ative Quotes	ights
cial Recovery versus Sustainable Change ants expressed concern that recovery efforts are often surface-level, failing to address root causes of unrest	icial solutions (XF5, XST1:3) uate response (YST2:5) f clear direction (YST1:8) to address root causes (XST1:6)	<i>iversity's response ... has been superficial, with a focus on surface-level solutions ... (XF5)</i> <i>orts seemed superficial, and underlying issues were not fully addressed ... (XST1:3)</i>	ry is perceived as reactive and performative rather than strategic. s a call for deep, structural reform and long-term solutions to rebuild trust.
re and Collaborative Recovery Efforts dents acknowledged efforts to listen, include diverse voices, and foster engagement demonstrating that inclusivity can support recovery.	ng to student voices (XA1, XA4). ve engagement (XA3). ciliation and healing (YA3). ialogue (XST2:7) f non-teaching staff (YS1).	<i>listen to student voices, implement meaningful changes, and foster a sense of belonging (XA1).</i> <i>iversity's approach ... has been rooted in proactive engagement, transparent communication ... (XA3).</i> <i>se ... characterised by reconciliation, healing, and learning from past experience (YA3).</i>	ry is more effective when it includes open communication and stakeholder collaboration . ching staff and student voices are recognised as important, though often sidelined
Strategic Planning respondents pointed to a lack of structure, long-term planning and documentation in recovery processes.	ategic document (YF4) f clear director (YST1:8) ace (YF2)	<i>wish we could up with a strategic document ... (YF4).</i> <i>a lack of clear direction and long-term planning ... (YST1:8).</i> <i>bserved a slow pace in the university's response ... (YF2).</i>	ence of a strategic recovery framework creates confusion, delays, and loss of trust. ants call for well-structured, documented recovery initiatives.

<p>Communication Gaps and Mistrust</p> <p>of clear, transparent communication and an atmosphere of suspicion hampers recovery.</p>	<p>f clarity in communication(XS2).</p> <p>nect between strategies and student need (XS2).</p> <p>phere of suspicion (YST1:8)</p>	<p><i>noticed a lack of clarity in communication and a disconnect ... XS2 is still an atmosphere of suspicion (YST1:8).</i></p>	<p>recovery is undermined by top-down communication and perceived hidden agendas</p> <p>need for transparent, trust-building dialogue.</p>
<p>Financial and Resource Constraints</p>	<p>Financial challenges (XA1)</p>	<p><i>difficult to effect positive changes but this has been very minimal because of financial challenges (XA1).</i></p>	<p>Financial limitations are a real barrier, though not always communicated effectively.</p> <p>Financial constraints may be used to justify limited or slow recovery efforts.</p>

APPENDIX 5

Thematic Analysis: Learning from past Student Unrests

		Thematic Quotes	Insights
<p>Efforts toward Institutional Learning and Structural Reforms</p>	<p>Advisory committee (XA1, XA3).</p> <p>Feedback (YST2:3)</p> <p>Engage students (YA1)</p>	<p><i>Set up a committee to review the unrest and come up with recommendations. We are still implementing some of the recommendations ...</i></p>	<p>Responses suggest some institutional willingness to reflect on past crises and implement structural changes. Involving students and engaging in dialogue are recognized as effective learning mechanisms.</p>

		<p><i>... supposed to set up a review committee to do some post mortem study ... XS3.</i></p> <p><i>... learnt is that the involvement of students in decision-making processes is the best way of establishing peace ... YA1.</i></p>	
Communication Gaps and Monitoring Challenges	<p>... social media (YF5)</p> <p>... communication breakdown (XF3)</p>	<p><i>... nication is one of the key areas that needs our attention. We need a robust strategy of monitoring social media trafficking (YF5).</i></p> <p><i>... led a disconnect between students and administration, leading to a breakdown in trust and communication (XF3).</i></p>	<p>... an acknowledgement that communication, especially through modern platforms like social media, is a weak point in crisis mitigation and learning. A lack of trust and poor communication continue to hinder learning.</p>
Special or missed Learning Opportunities	<p><i>... opportunity to learn (YS2)</i></p> <p><i>... of acknowledgement of causal issues (XST1:1)</i></p> <p><i>... ic failure (YF4)</i></p> <p><i>... nge, no learning (YST1:9)</i></p>	<p><i>... ew, our university missed an opportunity to deeply understand and learn from the crisis ... (YS2)</i></p> <p><i>... eems to be a lack of acknowledgment of the underlying issues ... (XST1:9)</i></p>	<p>... esponses reflect scepticism about the depth of institutional learning. Some participants feel that universities have returned to 'business as usual' without addressing root causes, indicating performative rather than transformative responses.</p>

APPENDIX 6

Redesigning after Student Unrest: Themes and Observations

		Key Quotes	Insights
Inclusive and Participatory Governance	<p>... erent communication (XA1)</p> <p>... er student (YF5)</p>	<p><i>... versity introduced more transparent communication channels and increased student representation in decision-making processes XA1</i></p> <p><i>... ere some initiatives to empower students to actively participate in shaping campus policies and decisions ... YF5</i></p>	<p>... esponses reflect a positive shift toward inclusive governance. Student representation on committees is seen as a meaningful step toward institutional transformation, through the depth of impact is uncertain.</p>
Superficial or Surface-Level Responses	<p>... mpact (YF1)</p> <p>... nge (YF4)</p> <p>... ble changes (XA3)</p>	<p><i>... nistration's response was largely cosmetic, with little real impact ... YF1</i></p> <p><i>... ness as usual. No changes YF4</i></p>	<p>... lders express disillusionment with the absence of genuine reform, suggesting that while some actions were taken, they did not lead to tangible or lasting improvements.</p>

		<i>was a lack of visible changes that would address the root causes ... XA3</i>	
al Response Mechanisms	orce (YA3, XS2) committee (XF5)	<i>ministration established a task force to give careful study to the causes of unrest... YA3</i> <i>iversity created a task force on campus safety and security ... XS2</i> <i>iversity established a committee to review and recommend changes ... but we have not seen any changes on the ground XF5</i>	ne formation of committees and task forces reflects an organised institutional response, participants criticised the ineffectiveness of these bodies when not followed up with action.
n Safety and Student Welfare	s safety (YS2, XS2) sources (YS5)	<i>iversity administration enhanced campus safety measures YS2</i> <i>ministration allocated additional resources to student support services but this has now been eroded ... YS5</i>	ere efforts to improve physical and emotional safety, but these were undermined by external economic factors like inflation or a lack of comprehensive reforms.
to Address Core Issues or fulfil promises	ow-through (XST1:7) ple changes (XA3) ous (YST1:4)	<i>e protests, there was a noticeable lack of follow-through on promises XST1:7</i> <i>udents and university workers ... were followed up. Some were fired! YST1:4</i>	esponses suggest a breach of trust. Stakeholders felt that universities either failed to act on their commitments or resorted to punitive responses rather than systemic reforms.