Walden University

College of Management and Technology

This is to certify that the doctoral study by

Carrine Todman-Lewis

has been found to be complete and satisfactory in all respects,
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2017

Abstract

Strategies for Crisis Preparedness of Tourist Destinations

by

Carrine V. M. Todman-Lewis

MTA, The George Washington University, 2005

BA, The University of the Virgin Islands, 2000

Doctoral Study Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Business Administration

Walden University

March 2017

Abstract

Billion-dollar disasters are projected to increase at a statistically significant rate of 5% annually. Crises affect the viability and lucrativeness of tourism business and implicate destinations in the process. Crisis preparedness is vital to improving outcomes and reducing consequential effects in the tourism industry—a key contributor to socioeconomic progress and infrastructural development worldwide. The study was an exploration of the strategies used for crisis preparedness to reduce business interruptions and improve the image of destinations affected by large-scale natural disasters and human-induced crises. A multiple case study was conducted based on the cycle of preparedness framework. Data were gathered from organization documents and semistructured interviews by telephone with 6 executives of 6 destination management organizations located in the south and west regions of the United States. Transcribed data were coded and then validated via member checking, revealing 3 themes: organizational preparedness, operational preparedness, and strategic communication. Specifically, possessing a crisis mindset, predetermining crisis risks and responses, and managing information to safeguard the reputation of tourism organizations and destinations were attributed to preparedness at the local and organization levels. Tourism and hospitality professionals may benefit from devising crisis plans, establishing rapport with crisis leaders and teams, and partnering with the media to promote positive perceptions and travel behaviors of tourists. Implications for social change include identifying strategies to limit the impact of crises on individuals and communities to improve the perceptions of safety of a tourist destination after a crisis and thus enhance its economic growth.

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Dedication

I dedicate this research project to the memory of my dear loved ones who departed this world during my doctoral pursuits and left footprints on my heart—Avion Julia Phillip-Alleyne and Mother Mary Lewis. You both balanced many roles in my life, serving as mother, friend, and confidant. You gave unselfishly—cooking, paying bills, reviewing my grades and transcripts regularly to ensure I was consistently doing my best. You held me to a high standard and displayed a steadfast dedication to making my doctoral journey easier. Every day I feel the void caused by your absence, but will remain eternally grateful for your life and our time together.

I also dedicate this scholarly contribution in remembrance of my grandmother (Murtella Pitt-James), aunt (Anancia Lanclos-Callwood), and uncle (Mervin Smith). We laughed together, cried together, and comforted each other. I am who I am because of you. I will always love you!

Acknowledgments

The journey to completing a doctoral degree requires rigor, determination, and passion. I could not have completed the journey without the aid of so many people. I was fortunate to have the support of an excellent committee. Therefore, I must first acknowledge and sincerely thank my faculty chair and academic mentor, Dr. Diane Dusick, for her commitment, wisdom, and direction. She was instrumental in helping me identify and develop my research topic from inception to completion, which entailed reading, re-reading, and offering valuable feedback to improve the quality of my work. I also acknowledge the illustrious members of my doctoral committee, Dr. Michael Ewald and Dr. Lynn Szostek, who provided a critical review of my study. Second, I would like to thank my peers, Dr. Chinyere Asoh, Wilbert Francis, Dr. Judith Monestime, Lieutenant Colonel Khot Souimaniphanh, and Jubril Wilson, who provided valuable academic support and served as my accountability partners. After experiencing this journey themselves, they offered their presence and friendship to make my journey easier and help me stay the course. Third, I would like to acknowledge my research participants for giving their time and sharing useful insights and resources on the phenomena of destination crisis preparedness.

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group for continuously keeping me lifted in prayer. Special thanks to the Ivanna Eudora Kean High School Class of 1995 with whom I balanced work, school, and play—but mostly play. My pursuit of a terminal degree is symbolic of the success for which we strive.

My heartfelt thanks and appreciation extends to all my family members. In particular, I am grateful to my loving mother, Cynthia Rosalind Todman; devoted husband, Lorin Lewis; and affectionate aunts, Lydia Smith and Hopelyn Burgher, for their unwavering support. They believed in me and were a constant source of encouragement and inspiration to make it through the long, hard days. I thank them most of all for their effectual fervent prayers. I am grateful also for my siblings, Major Chantaline P. Caban, Charmaine Todman Nwanji, and Kevin "Spary" Todman, who are an essential part of my foundation. In addition, I wish to express my sincere gratitude to Cousin Junie and "Aunt Murt's Cookie Monsters"—Shaquana, Jonny, and Jase, who have and continues to bring out the best in me.

Last, but never least, I give the highest praise to my Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, for the plans He has to prosper me and give me hope, the resources He has always provided for me, and the grace He has bestowed upon me each day of my life. I have the assurance that He has begun a good work in me and will see it through to completion. Thank you, Jesus! Amen!

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Section 1: Foundation of the Study

Natural and human-caused disasters have jeopardized tourism infrastructure and development, which has influenced tourists' perceptions of safety; thereby, affecting opportunities for tourism destinations to thrive (de Sausmarez, 2013; Ghaderi, Som, & Henderson, 2015; Mekinc & Cvikl, 2013; Schumann, 2013). Despite the vulnerability of tourism to the effects of crises (Becken, Mahon, Rennie, & Shakeela, 2014; Boukas & Ziakas, 2014; Ghaderi, Som, & Wang, 2014; Granville, Mehta, & Pike, 2016; Purwomarwanto & Ramachandran, 2015; Ryu, Bordelon, & Pearlman, 2013) and the certainty that destinations will eventually experience a major calamity (Ritchie, 2004; Speakman & Sharpley, 2012), very few tourism leaders are prepared to cope when a catastrophic event occurs (Speakman & Sharpley, 2012). To maintain marketability (de Sausmarez, 2013) and decrease the causes and consequences of disasters (Mekinc & Cvikl, 2013), destination managers must monitor, avert, or manage crises; however, some destination managers are unaware of how to effectively handle disasters (de Sausmarez, 2013). The purpose of this qualitative multiple case study was to explore strategies used for crisis preparedness at U.S. tourist destinations to reduce business interruptions and improve the destination's image of safety.

Background of the Problem

Many destinations rely on tourism for growth and existence (Ritchie, 2004). The reliance on tourism increases the responsibility of destination managers to consider the impact of potential crises and identify strategies to manage them effectively (Ritchie, 2004). If crises are not monitored, averted, or managed, destinations can experience

disastrous effects (Varghese & Paul, 2014) and the severity of the impact will permeate an industry sector that is a key contributor to socioeconomic progress and infrastructural development worldwide (Purwomarwanto & Ramachandran, 2015; United Nation World Tourism Organization, 2015).

Tourism comprises a complex, collaborative, interrelationship of supplier organizations and destinations (Fyall, Garrod, & Wang, 2012). Destination managers facilitate destination-level partnerships between various stakeholders (Fyall et al., 2012). Destination managers also mitigate risks and risk perceptions to establish a positive image and increase the attractiveness of tourism destinations (Chew & Jahari, 2014). Despite the interest in crisis impacts, a paucity of research exists on understanding how destination managers address crises at the local level (Becken & Hughey, 2013).

Problem Statement

To the dismay of tourism organizations and destinations, large-scale natural and human-induced crises have increased in frequency and impact (Becken & Hughey, 2013; Buchanan & Denyer, 2013; Mair, Ritchie, & Walters, 2016; Ryu et al., 2013). Destination managers have integral roles in crisis management to sustain tourism (Borzyszkowski, 2013; Varghese & Paul, 2014), which is the largest service industry in the United States and contributes $1.6 trillion in gross revenue, $75 billion in trade surplus, and 7.9 million jobs (International Trade Organization, 2015). The general business problem is the lack of local-level preparedness, which results in interruptions in normal operations and damage to tourists' sense of destination safety and appeal (Biran, Liu, Li, & Eichhorn, 2014; Paraskevas & Altinay, 2013). The specific business problem

is that some managers of popular U.S. tourist destinations lack strategies for crisis preparedness that could reduce business interruptions and improve their destination's image.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this qualitative multiple case study was to explore the strategies used for crisis preparedness to reduce business interruptions and to improve the image of a destination. The target population was destination managers in the south and west regions of the United States with strategies implemented successfully to proactively manage large-scale crises. The implication of this study for social change may include removing disaster-induced fear and reducing the adverse impact of crises on the lives and livelihood of individuals and communities. With less fear of travel and crisis impacts, communities may benefit from (a) employment opportunities in tourism and supporting industries, (b) infrastructural improvements that promote economic development, and (c) the ability to experience or highlight cultural heritage to preserve traditions. Additional social change implications may also include (a) increased safety for tourists and local residents, (b) a greater willingness for individuals to travel, and (b) improved perceptions of tourist destinations.

Nature of the Study

Researchers use qualitative methods to study participants in their lived environments (Eide & Showalter, 2012). A qualitative research methodology was appropriate for this study in order to understand how destination managers plan for and manage crises within their organizations and destinations. Unlike qualitative methods,

quantitative methods do not include the collection of rich textural data from research participants about their experiences (Sinkovics & Alfoldi, 2012). In addition, researchers use quantitative and mixed methods research methodologies when hypotheses form the basis of query for a study (Petty, Thomson, & Stew, 2012). A quantitative or mixed methods research approach was inappropriate for the study since experiments, including the use of variables to test and verify theories, would not be useful for discovering the preparedness strategies destination managers have used to reduce interruptions in tourism business and to promote perceptions of destination safety.

Stewart (2012) described a multiple case study design as investigating a specific phenomenon at different research sites. Researchers use case study approaches to explore phenomena in varying real-life settings and integrate multiple data collection methods to identify commonalities among the data (Cronin, 2014). Consequently, a multiple case study design was appropriate for identifying the strategies used by some destination managers for emergency preparedness. I considered phenomenological designs, but it was not the intent of the study to understand the human experience from the perspective of individuals living the phenomenon (Chan, Fung, & Chien, 2013; Petty et al., 2012). I considered ethnographical research, but it was not the intent of the study to look at groups of individuals and their cultures (Petty et al., 2012).

Research Question

The central research question for the study was as follows: What strategies have destination managers used for crisis preparedness to reduce business interruptions and improve destination image?

Interview Questions

I used a semistructured interview format to address the guiding question. Interview questions are included in Appendix B and below.

1. What are your overall strategies for local-level destination crisis preparedness?
2. How have you prevented adverse impacts of crises in your destination?
3. How did you gain awareness of potential crises in your destination?
4. How have you responded to crises in your destination?
5. How have you recovered your destination's image and vital tourism activities following a crisis?
6. What strategies were most or least helpful for crisis preparedness?
7. What additional information can you share that is pertinent to your strategies for crisis preparedness?

Conceptual Framework

A conceptual framework provides direction for structuring qualitative research questions, framing the design, and focusing the study (Green, 2014). The conceptual framework that underpins this study is Pelfrey's (2005) cycle of preparedness. The cycle of preparedness is a strategic cycle or timeline designed to help local and national business leaders plan for terrorism threats. The constructs that comprise the cycle of preparedness include four phases: prevention, awareness, response, and recovery. Pelfrey highlighted the integral role of prevention in effective crisis preparedness by dividing prevention into five additional elements: collaboration, information sharing, threat

recognition, risk management, and intervention, but emphasized collaboration and information sharing as essential elements of prevention.

Preparedness, or readiness, as explained in the *Homeland Security Presidential Directive 8*, implies that the required plans, policies, materials, and trainings are available to manage and limit the potential of a cataclysmic event (Pelfrey, 2005). Pelfrey (2005) specifically created the cycle of preparedness to address one type of risk, terrorism threats. However, the framework comprises a dynamic crisis planning cycle that is illustrative of the nature of tourism business and subsequently fits a study on strategies for preparedness to reduce business interruptions and improve the safety perceptions of a tourist destination after a crisis.

Operational Definitions

Crisis: A crisis is a condition or event intensified by flawed managerial structures or resistance to change (Ritchie, Crotts, Zehrer, & Volsky, 2013). A crisis is a sudden, unexpected occurrence that results in chaos and ultimately destroys an organization that lacks decisive action (Prewitt & Weil, 2014).

Crisis Communication: Crisis communication is information and messages relayed to the public to enhance organization image during a crisis (Ritchie, 2004).

Crisis Management: Crisis management refers to activities undertaken to plan prior to, manage during, and evaluate following a crisis (Wang & Ritchie, 2012). Crisis management is a technique used to plan for avoiding catastrophes (Jia, Shi, Jia, & Li, 2012).

Crisis Preparedness: Crisis preparedness includes all activities undertaken during the proactive phase of crisis management to assist crisis prone organizations with becoming crisis prepared (Ritchie, 2004). Crisis preparedness implies that the required plans, policies, materials, and trainings are available to manage and limit the catastrophic effects of major crises (Pelfrey, 2005).

Crisis Prevention: Crisis prevention is the precursor to crisis management and crisis communication, which encompasses actions taken to avert a crisis (Coombs & Holladay, 2012).

Destination: A destination is a territorial development of interconnected tourism amenities and attractions (Pearce, 2015).

DMO: A DMO is a Destination Management Organization or Destination Marketing Organization that manages or markets a destination on a local, regional, or national level by coordinating the influx of tourists and the relationship of tourism stakeholders (Varghese & Paul, 2014). The term DMO captures the array of organizations, which include convention visitors' bureaus (CVBs), tourism development partnerships, and marketing organizations on the city-, county-, regional-, or national-levels (Zavattaro & Adams, 2016).

Disaster: A disaster is an unexpected, external cataclysmic event that an organization has no control over (Ritchie et al., 2013).

Risk Communication: Risk communication is communication that occurs prior to a disaster occurring (Steelman & McCaffrey, 2013).

Assumptions, Limitations, and Delimitations

Assumptions

Assumptions are statements accepted as true without supporting facts or validation (Tufford & Newman, 2012). The first assumption was that research participants would provide honest and accurate responses to the interview questions based on their experiences with crisis preparedness. I also assumed that participants would furnish adequate supporting documentation to demonstrate emergency management and preparedness activities undertaken at their organization. The assumptions were appropriate within the context of the study, since participants might have classified their organization's emergency procedures and resources as proprietary data for organizational use only, thus reluctant to share with individuals outside the organization. Consequently, I was dependent on participants to disclose information, at their discretion, in response to open-ended, semistructured interview questions and to support methodological triangulation to ensure research validity.

Limitations

Limitations are weaknesses of the study beyond a researcher's control that influences the interpretation of study results (Brutus, Aguinis, & Wassmer, 2013). A limitation of the study was the small sample size. Consequently, research findings may not be transferable to a broader population. To address this limitation, I ensured data saturation by including all DMO executives who met the eligibility criterion and agreed to participate in the study. Another limitation was my skills and ability as the researcher and primary data collection instrument, which may have impacted the richness and depth

of the research data collected. Reasonable measures to address limitations resulting from the researcher as an instrument entailed identifying and bracketing my biases and incorporating systematic processes, such as interview and case study protocols.

Delimitations

Delimitations are boundaries a researcher controls to reduce the scope of a study (Di Traglia, Morelli, Casagli, & Garduño Monroy, 2014). I limited the scope of the study to destination managers who had knowledge and experience with implementing strategies for crisis preparedness to handle large-scale natural or human-induced disasters that affected U.S. tourist destinations during the past 10 years. The prospective participants for the study were destination managers with at least 5 years of destination management experience and served in a leadership capacity at their organization, as evidenced by these job titles: president, vice president (VP), chief executive officer (CEO), chief operating officer (COO), chief marketing officer (CMO), or equivalent. Destination managers illustrated crisis management experience by creating or contributing to a written emergency plan that was implemented successfully at least once to prepare for, or to respond to a natural disaster or human-caused crisis. I excluded destination managers who were not in an executive leadership role since they might not have responsibility for crisis management to contribute experiences on preparedness strategies.

Researchers classify crises from two perspectives—gestation period and level of human involvement (Som, Ooi, & Hooy, 2014). Unlike human-caused crisis—that may include human error, negligence, or malicious intent—natural disasters are environmental, catastrophic events (Lamanna, Williams, & Childers, 2012). Although

there is a wide array of crisis types, I have delimited the scope of the study to natural disasters related to hydrometeorological hazards, such as storms, floods, and wildfires; and human-caused intentional crises, such as terrorism and civil unrest. More specifically, the risks that were the focus of the study were large-scale natural disasters and intentional human-caused crises with high consequences for tourist destinations.

Significance of the Study

A crisis can influence an organization, industry, and even the belief individuals place on themselves (Tănase, 2012). Consequently, the results of this study may serve as a resource for tourism destination managers to help reduce the adverse impact of intentional and natural cataclysmic incidents. In this section, I discuss how the study may contribute to effective business processes and practices. I also include an overview of how a study on strategies for destination crisis preparedness may contribute to positive social change.

Contribution to Business Practice

The results of the study may be significant to the effective practice of business by helping destination managers identify factors affiliated with emergency preparedness to facilitate the continuation of core business activities before, during, and following a hydrometeorological hazard or human-caused cataclysmic event. The results offered guidance to destination managers on improving readiness at the local level. Another contribution of the study to business practice included prompting business leaders to adopt a proactive approach to planning and managing for possible risks affecting tourism business operations.

Managers can handle crises effectively by knowing which preparedness strategies are best suited for specific risks and how to identify qualified individuals to collaborate with when handling emergencies. The results of the study may highlight new knowledge that can influence managerial processes and flows to accelerate the speed and extent of crisis recovery. Findings from this study may also be beneficial for destination managers to achieve their goals of managing and marketing tourism destinations that have experienced crises.

Implications for Social Change

The implications of this study for effecting positive social change encompass improvements in human and societal conditions. Results from the study may help remove disaster-induced fear and reduce the adverse impact of crises on the lives and livelihoods of individuals and communities. The resulting effects of social change implications include (a) increased safety for tourists, (b) enhanced willingness of individuals to travel, and (c) improved perceptions of tourist destinations.

A Review of the Professional and Academic Literature

The purpose of this qualitative multiple case study was to explore strategies used for crisis preparedness at U.S. tourist destinations to reduce business interruptions and improve a destination's image. The literature review provided context and substantiation for strategies used for preparedness. The literature review includes a narrative synthesis of quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methods studies to provide an in-depth discussion on crisis preparedness. Here is a list of the contents:

- Crises and disasters,

- Crisis management in the tourism and hospitality industry,
- Crisis management frameworks and the cycle of preparedness,
- Strategies for crisis preparedness for tourism destinations through the lens of the main constructs of the conceptual framework in order to understand the state of tourism crisis management, and
- Barriers to crisis preparedness.

The literature review contains a critical analysis and synthesis of literature. I used the following databases: Business Source Complete, ABI/INFORM Complete, Emerald Management, Google Scholar, and Sage Premier. Primary search terms were *crisis, crisis communication, crisis management, crisis management framework, crisis plan, crisis preparedness, cycle of preparedness, destination image, DMO, destination management organization, destination marketing organization, disaster, disaster preparedness, human-caused crisis,* and *natural disaster*.

I narrowed the literature results based on the criteria of being peer reviewed, dated 2012 or newer, and the relevance to the main tenets of the cycle of preparedness and the central research question. Of the 187 total references used in the study, 177 (95%) are peer-reviewed sources and 171 (91%) were published from 2012 to 2016, which is within 5 or less years of my anticipated graduation date. Of the 108 total references used in the literature review section of the study, 105 (97%) are peer-reviewed sources and 97 (92%) references were published from 2012 to 2016, which is 5 or less years from my anticipated graduation date. Older sources included authors of theory or of seminal works.

Crisis and Disaster

The terms crisis and disaster are complex (Buchanan & Denyer, 2013) and often used interchangeably in the literature. Faulkner (2001) suggested that although the distinctions between the terms are obscure, they represent opposing ends of a continuum. Authors have also failed to provide clear definitions for crisis management and crisis preparedness (Burrell & Heiselt, 2012; Jia et al., 2012; Parnell & Nathan, 2012; Ritchie, 2004). The ambiguity of these key terms encourages further explanation on the usage in a vast context, which is included in this section.

Palttala, Boano, Lund, and Vos (2012) defined crises as situations with potentially adverse impacts on life, health, and infrastructure. The definition of crisis by Palttala et al. highlights the negative impact of the phenomenon on individuals and property. By contrast, McCool (2012) suggested that crises are events that create instability or unsafe conditions for individuals, groups, communities, or societies. When defining crises, McCool emphasized the impact of the phenomenon on people. Similarly, Ritchie et al. (2013) described a crisis as a condition or event intensified by flawed managerial structures or resistance to change.

Supporting the definition of crisis put forth by Ritchie et al. (2013), Prewitt and Weil (2014) described a crisis as a sudden, unexpected occurrence that causes chaos and destroys organizations that lack decisive action. However, Tănase (2012) explained that crises are not random and unexpected, but are an accumulation of failures over a long period. Consequently, several researchers (Prewitt & Weil, 2014; Wang & Ritchie, 2013) have adopted the definition of crisis offered by Ritchie et al., which attributes the source

of a crisis to an organization or the failure of an organization leader. In a recent study, Mair et al. (2016) simplified the definition of a crisis as a low probability, high consequence event.

A disaster is a natural or human-caused hazard that results in significant physical and environmental loss or damage (McCool, 2012). Disasters consume communities, organizations, and systems, and require significant recovery measures to achieve normalcy (Sawalha, Jraisat, & Al-Qudah, 2013). The differentiation between a crisis and disaster is the degree in which an extreme event originates internally or externally to an organization. However, for this study, I used both terms interchangeably to denote an unexpected, catastrophic hazard or event, affecting life, livelihood, or infrastructure.

Crisis management integrates planning prior to, management during, and evaluations following an extreme emergency (Wang & Ritchie, 2012). Contrary to other scholars, Pelfrey (2005) used the term crisis management to refer to the segue between the response and recovery phases. Jia et al. (2012) described crisis management as a technique to plan for avoiding calamity. For this study, crisis management refers to activities an organization leader undertakes to identify and manage risk to promote stakeholder interest.

Several authors have classified preparedness as a subordinate of the wider crisis management discipline (Burrell & Heiselt, 2012; Parnell & Nathan, 2012; Ritchie, 2004). Crisis preparedness, which is also referred to as readiness or crisis planning, are activities undertaken during the proactive phase of crisis management to assist crisis prone organizations to become crisis prepared (Ritchie, 2004). Adding to Ritchie's definition,

Burrell and Heiselt (2012) suggested that crisis preparedness includes learning from experiences to limit future occurrences.

In government and scholarly sources, preparedness relates to weapons of mass destruction and terrorism (Pelfrey, 2005). Since the September 2001 terrorist attacks on destinations in New York, Virginia, and Pennsylvania, preparedness became a top priority in the United States, as evidenced by the platforms of presidential candidates and individuals in public office, as well as increased funding for preparedness activities on a national scale (Pelfrey, 2005). Despite the ability of emergency planning to establish resilient tourism businesses (Wang & Ritchie, 2013), many organizations and organization leaders perceive planning as unnecessary or ineffective, which influences their planning behavior and preparedness intentions (Wang & Ritchie, 2012). The vulnerability of organizations and destinations to extreme disasters prompts the need for strategies on how to prepare effectively and consequently supports the need for a study on strategies for preparedness to reduce business interruptions and improve a destination's image.

Crisis Management in the Tourism and Hospitality Industry

Speakman and Sharpley (2012) attributed early tourism crisis research to Arbel and Barur in the 1980s. However, several scholars have suggested that tourism crisis studies emerged in the 1990s, although there are a limited number of publications written prior to 2000 (Wang & Ritchie, 2013). Crisis research increased exponentially following the September 11 terrorist attacks (Rittichainuwat & Chakraborty, 2012). Prior research

on crisis management focused on response, but current research has incorporated management theory and prioritized prevention (Wang & Ritchie, 2012).

Tourism literature and modern tourism is satiated with examples of crisis and the resulting impacts on tourism flux and business operations. Tourism is susceptible to environmental, political, and social influences (Speakman & Sharpley, 2012). More specifically, pandemics, weather emergencies, and human-caused failures create challenges for the global tourism industry and local destinations (Calgaro, Lloyd, & Dominey-Howes, 2014).

Worldwide, tourism destinations have experienced an increase in the number of natural disasters. Examples of natural disasters identified in the literature include (a) earthquakes in Haiti, New Zealand, China, and Japan; (b) floods in Australia, Central America, and India; (c) volcanic eruptions in the United States and Philippines; (d) tsunamis in Japan, Thailand, Indonesia, and Samoa; and (e) forest fires in the United States and Malaysia (Becken & Hughey, 2013; Borzyszkowski, 2013; McCool, 2012; Speakman & Sharpley, 2012). Hurricanes are the most prevalent meteorological events in the United States. (Tomić, Gavrilov, Božić, Stojsavljević, & Marković, 2013). Hurricane Katrina in 2005 and Super Storm Sandy in 2012 caused exorbitant physical and financial damage (Sanial, 2014). Reputed as the costliest natural disaster in U.S. history (Tomić et al., 2013), Hurricane Katrina resulted in 1,836 deaths, $81.2 billion in damages (Ryu et al., 2013), and $150 billion in economic loss to the region, which the Bush administration spent $105 billion to revitalize and restore (Tomić et al., 2013). The widespread impacts

of Hurricane Katrina also spanned multiple travel destinations including South Florida, Cuba, Louisiana, Alabama, and Mississippi (Tomić et al., 2013).

Crises are not restricted to major weather or adverse geologic processes. Epidemics have also placed exogenous shocks on tourism systems. Health outbreaks such as the foot and mouth disease, SARS epidemic, and the avian influenza pandemic resulted in decreased demand within multiple tourism sectors (Borzyszkowski, 2013; Herbane, 2013; Ooi, Chee-Wooi, & Som, 2013).

Human-caused interferences have also exposed system vulnerabilities with consequential effects on tourism. Negligent or deliberate human action rivals natural disasters in terms of cost and adverse impacts on individuals and organizations (Pearson & Mitroff, 1993; Pelfrey, 2005). As examples, Ritchie (2004) recalled the Bali bombing and September 11 terrorist attacks in the United States, while McCool (2012) highlighted the 2008 terrorist attack in Mumbai, India. In recent studies, scholars have emphasized human-imposed calamities such as political unrest in Rwanda and Sierra Leone (Becken & Hughey, 2013; Cui, 2012) and protests and riots in Baltimore, New York, and Ferguson (Bylander, 2015). Due to the global nature of tourism, a catastrophic occurrence in one city, state, or country, has wide-ranging impacts elsewhere.

Crises and extreme events have increased in frequency and consequential impact on tourism organizations and destinations (Becken & Hughey, 2013; (Buchanan & Denyer, 2013; Mair et al., 2016; Ryu et al., 2013). The low probability but high significant effects of crises threaten the existence of organizations (Ural, 2015; Weick, 1988) due to adverse impacts on business operations, finances, and long-term

sustainability (Ghaderi & Henderson, 2013; Goudsmit, 2012; Ural. 2015). During the 21st century, economic losses have expanded with disasters occurring frequently and sporadically (Ural, 2015). In addition, Smith and Katz (2013) forecasted the number of billion-dollar disasters in the United States to increase at a rate of 5% per year. Increases in frequency and costs may adversely affect viability and profitability for tourism businesses. However, future research may quantify and clearly explain how crises affect the tourism and hospitality industry and specific tourism regions and destinations.

Tourism is the largest service industry in the United States (International Trade Organization, 2015). Tourism contributes $1.6 trillion in gross revenue, $75 billion in trade surplus, and 7.9 million in jobs (International Trade Organization, 2015). Although the tourism sector comprises a complex, collaborative, interrelationship of supplier organizations and tourism destinations (Fyall et al., 2012; Jia et al., 2012), tourism businesses are primarily small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs; Wang & Ritchie, 2013).

SMEs have higher levels of crisis impacts because they have lower levels of preparedness and greater reliance on government agencies (Herbane, 2015). Although SME leaders are concerned about disasters (Farooq & Abideen, 2015; Kahan, 2015), they often lack the necessary resources and knowledge to take appropriate action (Becken & Hughey, 2013; Farooq & Abideen, 2015; Kahan, 2015). As an alternate explanation for lack of preparedness for SMEs, Speakman and Sharpley (2012) explained that SME leaders assume that emergency planning is someone else's responsibility, which results in nonexistent planning. By contrast, large businesses have access to safety expertise and

resources that small businesses do not (Lamanna et al., 2012; Wang & Ritchie, 2013). Consequently, approximately 40% of small businesses that are not prepared to handle crises close for business permanently following a catastrophe (Federal Emergency Management Agency, 2015). Nevertheless, several authors agreed that irrespective of size, organization leaders should implement crisis preparedness measures (Kahan, 2015; Parnell & Nathan, 2012).

Practitioners agree that tourism is prone to crisis since major or minor incidences may disrupt tourism functions (Jia et al., 2012). Researchers attribute the vulnerability of tourism organizations and destinations to a wide range of crisis risks and hazards coupled with the large fragmentation, yet interconnectedness, of the tourism industry sector (Paraskevas & Altinay, 2013; Sawalha et al., 2013). Similarly, Wang and Ritchie (2013) confirmed that the tourism industry comprises a wide array of sectors and services that necessitates different crisis management and planning strategies. Although tourism organizations and managers acknowledge the importance of crisis preparedness, they are often reactive in terms of response. In addition, despite the interest in limiting adverse impacts, a paucity of research exists on understanding how tourism leaders prepare for and manage for large-scale incidents at the local level (Becken & Hughey, 2013).

Researchers (Wang & Ritchie, 2013) have focused a significant number of studies on understanding and responding to disasters that affect the hospitality sector, which is a subsector of the wider tourism industry and a soft target for disasters. One of the primary challenges for tourism organizations, and specifically hotels, results from business interruption. Business interruption refers to suspending an organization's operations and

functions, which leads to financial losses (Lamanna et al., 2012). Therefore, disasters may not only cause physical losses at a destination, but also disruptions, such as staff shortages and business closures; and loss of valuable lifeline support services, including transportation, electricity, water, and telephone communications that are needed to deliver goods and services to visitors (Granville et al., 2016; Lamanna et al., 2012). Subsequently, business interruptions affect organizational functionality, which may result in financial losses for tourism businesses and destinations.

International brand-name hotels have reportedly implemented crisis management planning, although other lodging types, such as guesthouses, continue to *manage by crisis*, which implies responding to crises as they occur (Rittichainuwat & Chakraborty, 2012). The current state of emergency preparedness in hospitality and tourism settings is reactive preparedness as opposed to proactive preparedness because tourism industry key players are derelict in their duty for contingency planning (AlBattat & Som, 2014). Many destinations rely on tourism for growth and existence (Ritchie, 2004) because of its positive impact on the gross domestic product and contribution to the nation's economy through employment, foreign exchange, and the multiplier effect (Purwomarwanto & Ramachandran, 2015). If crises are not monitored, averted, or controlled, destinations can experience disastrous effects (Varghese & Paul, 2014) and the severity of the impact will permeate an industry sector (Ritchie, 2004) that is a key contributor to socioeconomic progress and infrastructural development worldwide (Purwomarwanto & Ramachandran, 2015; United Nation World Tourism Organization, 2015). Crisis management and

preparedness at both the organization and local destination levels is vital to improving outcomes and reducing consequential effects of crises on tourism (Mair et al., 2016).

There is a limited number of literary sources available on planning and understanding tourism destination manager's commitment to preparedness (Pennington-Gray, Schroeder, Wu, Donohoe, & Cahyanto, 2013), which prompts the need for further research. In alignment with Pennington-Gray et al.'s (2013) findings, Mair et al. (2016) posited that there is a poor understanding and scarcity of research on tourism destination crisis management and recovery marketing efforts. The study filled this gap by providing strategies that destination managers have used for preparedness to limit business interruptions and improve their destination's image.

The Role of Destination Management and Marketing Organizations

DMOs have an overarching responsibility for facilitating disparate facets of tourism. The term DMO captures the array of organizations, which include CVBs, tourism development partnerships, and marketing organizations on the city-, county-, regional-, or national-levels (Zavattaro & Adams, 2016). Historically, the *M* in DMO referred to marketing (Borzyszkowski, 2015), albeit the inclusivity of functions, structures, and responsibilities has necessitated that DMOs become more management focused (Hristov & Naumov, 2015; Pike & Page, 2014; Volgger & Pechlaner, 2014). Pearce and Schänzel (2013) described destination marketing and management as a tourist-centered economic and cultural activity that integrates varying provider, community, and visitor interests.

The core literature on destination marketing, destination management, and the role of local governments in tourism, ascribes various functions to destination management (Pearce, 2015). Destination management encompasses marketing, branding, positioning, planning, monitoring, product development (Laesser & Beritelli, 2013), promotion (Borzyszkowski, J., 2015; Hristov & Naumov, 2015), resource and information management (Pearce & Schänzel, 2013; Risteskia, Kocevskia, & Arnaudov, 2012), destination leadership, and visitor experiences (Pearce & Schänzel, 2013; Pechlaner, Kozak, & Volgger, 2014). Refuting the core management literature, Pike and Page (2014) argued that destination marketing is a different phenomenon altogether rather than serving as an element of destination management. Volgger and Pechlaner (2014) purported that destination managers are merely mediators in a dynamic network system that functions based on self-organization and self-regulation. Whether DMO represents destination marketing organizations or destination management organizations, DMOs carry out critical roles within tourism destinations.

Several researchers have highlighted the destination manager's role as local-level collaborators who facilitate partnerships between various stakeholders (Becken & Hughey, 2013; Fyall et al., 2012; Varghese & Paul, 2014). DMOs support local businesses and host communities (Hristov & Naumov, 2015), and establish stakeholder relationships (Laesser & Beritelli, 2013). As caretakers of destination resources (Morgan, 2012), destination managers often act on behalf of stakeholders with whom they may not have a direct contractual relationship in order to promote a tourism destination's brand (Pearce & Schänzel, 2013). The extent of a DMOs external or internal focus dictates the

degree to which destination managers fulfill activities, such as developing destination image, mediating with tourism markets and throughout the value chain, and promoting cohesion and quality assurance among local businesses (Pearce, 2014).

Destination crisis management is a relatively new responsibility for destination managers (Paraskevas & Altinay, 2013). Consequently, authors differ on the responsibility for crisis strategy implementation (Becken & Hughey, 2013; Becken et al., 2014; Mair et al., 2016; Varghese & Paul, 2014); whether it should rest with destination managers (Becken & Hughey, 2013) or individual tourism stakeholders (Varghese & Paul, 2014). Becken et al. (2014) suggested that due to the economic impact of the tourism industry, tourism leaders should actively seek to reduce extreme impacts. However, Mair et al. (2016) indicated that destination managers should assist stakeholders by initiating preparedness strategy development and understanding obstacles to crisis planning. The findings from Becken and Hughey's (2013) study on the role of tourism in crisis risk management aligns with Hystad and Keller's (2008) earlier assertion of DMOs as the logical lead agencies at the local level that bridges the lack of systematic emergency management that is evident in tourism literature. In line with Becken et al. and Mair et al.'s recommendation, in this study, I explored the strategies destination managers used for preparedness at the local level.

Destination Image

There is well-established history on how destination image influences tourism demand and tourist intentions to visit or revisit a destination (Chen & Phou, 2013; Chew & Jahari, 2014; Hallmann, Zehrer, & Müller, 2013; Pennington-Gray et al., 2013; Ryu et

al., 2013; Stylos, Vassiliadis, Bellou, & Andronikidis, 2016; Zhang, Fu, Cai, & Lu, 2014). *Destination image* refers to the mental impressions, ideas, and expectations of an environment (Hallmann et al., 2013; Nicoletta & Servidio, 2012; Ryu et al., 2013; Stylos et al., 2016; Zhang et al., 2014). In agreement with Pennington-Gray et al.'s (2013) assertion, Chew and Jahari (2014) and Chen and Phou (2013) explained that tourism destination managers compete for visitors based on perceived destination image.

To ascertain the effects of travel risk in mediating the destination images tourists formulate, Chew and Jahari (2014) examined the perceived physical, socio-psychological, and financial risks of Malaysian tourists to determine revisit intentions to disaster-stricken Japan following the Fukushima disaster. Chew and Jahari's quantitative research study was limited by a modest sample size of 255 repeat tourists from a population of 10,000 Malaysian nationals. Nevertheless, the authors contributed to the existing body of tourism literature by providing empirical evidence to confirm the relationship between perceived risks and destination image (Chew & Jahari, 2014). The researchers concluded that by understanding the types of risks that are specific to a destination and the implications of risks on destination image, destination managers could establish successful strategies to convince visitors to travel to risky destinations (Chew & Jahari, 2014). Similarly, this study offered measures destination managers took to enhance tourist knowledge and desirability for a destination that had experienced a crisis or was prone to specific types of disasters.

Ryu et al. (2013) conducted a mixed methods study to examine the differences in tourists' perceptions of New Orleans' destination image prior to and following Hurricane

Katrina. The researchers determined that the (a) exciting nightlife and entertainment, (b) hospitable nature of the local residents, (c) value of the destination for leisure travel, and (d) perceptions of the destination as a safe place to visit, significantly influenced tourist's perceptions of the destinations' image (Ryu et al., 2013). In line with Chew and Jahari (2014), Ryu et al. concluded that destination image is a vital component to destination selection. However, the researchers concluded that not all destination attributes were significant to potential visitors (Ryu et al., 2013). Therefore, by understanding the core image strengths of a destination, destination managers and tourism leaders can have a clear understanding of where to focus during recovery (Ryu et al., 2013). Destination managers may enhance destination image prior to and following a disaster by marketing the attributes that influences a visitor's destination selection.

Gartner (1994) proposed that three distinct, hierarchical elements comprise destination image: (a) cognitive, (b) affective, and (c) conative components. Cognitive image is the summation of knowledge and beliefs an individual has about a tourism destination (Gartner, 1994). Affective image is a tourist's emotional state towards a destination (Hallmann et al., 2013). Conative image refers to a tourist's active consideration of a destination (Gartner, 1994), which may imply visit intentions (Stylos et al., 2016). Chew and Jahari (2014) suggested that cognitive and affective destination image influences intentions to visit or revisit a destination. After conducting a rigorous meta-analysis of 66 published articles, Zhang et al. (2014) concluded that overall image had the most impact on tourists' loyalty, followed by affective image and cognitive image. Although, prior studies have focused primarily on cognitive image, Stylos et al.

(2016) cautioned that the interrelationship between cognitive, affective, and conative images is unclear in the literature.

Destination managers have responsibility for destination branding, which includes refining and building a destination's image to maintain competitiveness (Varghese & Paul, 2014). Since destination image dictates destination attractiveness (Gaafar, 2013; Jia et al., 2012; Mair et al., 2016) and image develops during periods of normalcy (Tănase, 2012), destination managers should make proactive crisis management a vital consideration for successfully conducting business (Jia et al., 2012). To promote a destination's brand, when a crisis occurs, destination managers will need successful strategies to boost destination perceptions (Pearce & Schänzel, 2013). The results of the study added to the existing literature by contributing knowledge on successful readiness strategies destination managers used to safeguard their destination's image.

Crisis Management Frameworks

The wide array and typologies of disasters, with varying lengths and effects, limits the success of identifying one distinct crisis model (Speakman & Sharpley, 2012). Subsequently, multiple frameworks abound that have gained notoriety in the risk and crisis management literature and have offered ideas and approaches to understanding the components of crises and managing the disastrous effects (Jia et al., 2012; Wang & Ritchie, 2012). In this section, I present frameworks that have contributed to understanding the complex phenomenon of preparedness within a tourism context. Below, I briefly describe the sensemaking theory, five phases of crisis management, and chaos theory.

Sensemaking theory. I considered the sensemaking theory introduced by Weick in 1988 as the framework for this study. Buchanan and Denyer (2013) credited Weick's seminal work on sensemaking for stimulating further research on crisis. Weick purported that action taken to understand the crisis frequently exacerbates the situation. Consequently, Weick proposed the sensemaking theory to examine how crises unfold on a micro and macro level from organizational breakdowns in management and communication (Johansen, Aggerholm, & Frandsen, 2012). The main construct of the sensemaking theory is enactment, which refers to acting on a crisis, which sets other structures and events in motion (Weick, 1988). Weick suggested that commitment, capacity, and expectations influence enactment and the resulting severity of a disaster.

The literature on sensemaking appears fragmented, with scholars differing on (a) what stimulates sensemaking, (b) what it entails, (c) how to achieve it, (d) its time sequence, and (e) the degree in which it is shared (Maitlis & Christianson, 2014). In addition, Weick (1988) alluded to sensemaking as a retrospective process of confronting organizational change that disrupts perceptions of normalcy. However, Maitlis and Christianson (2014) and Stigliani and Ravasi (2012) referred to sensemaking as a prospective process, which implies coping with unexpected situations by understanding and engaging forward-thinking approaches (Stigliani & Ravasi, 2012) indicative of crisis knowledge and learning to enhance readiness.

To understand leaders' cognizance when faced with a crisis and the overall organizational response, Combe and Carrington (2015) conducted an empirical study using the sensemaking theoretical framework. Combe and Carrington confirmed the

importance of firsthand and tacit knowledge to problem solving and making sense of new conditions. The authors also found that there was a managerial emphasis on establishing consensus from leadership teams for crisis response (Combe & Carrington, 2015).

The tourism industry is vulnerable to crisis impacts (Becken et al., 2014; Boukas & Ziakas, 2014; Purwomarwanto & Ramachandran, 2015; Ryu et al., 2013) due to the fluctuation resulting from visitors' decisions on whether or not to travel to and invest in a tourism destination based on the perceived value of the destination (Schumann, 2013). However, the certainty exists that tourism destinations will eventually experience a catastrophe (Speakman & Sharpley, 2012). Although the sensemaking theory may offer a framework to understand how crises take shape, the intent of the study was to identify and explore strategies destination managers have used successfully to prepare for and manage crises at the local level. Therefore, the sensemaking theory was inappropriate for the study.

Five phases of crisis management. Pearson and Mitroff (1993) proposed a distinct framework for crisis management that offered a sequential categorization for the progression of events. Pearson and Mitroff examined organizational responses to various human-caused disaster types and the relationship between leaders and various stakeholders. Coining the terms *crisis prone* and *crisis prepared*, Pearson and Mitroff purported that the five phases through which most crises pass are (a) early warning signal detection, (b) preparation/prevention, (c) damage containment, (d) business recovery, and (e) organizational learning.

Signal detection refers to understanding and identifying the clues and triggers of an impending crisis by separating information during daily business from noise (Pearson & Mitroff, 1993). Preparation/prevention implies taking steps to mitigate crises when it is impossible to avert crises entirely (Pearson & Mitroff, 1993). Damage containment refers to the activities undertaken to reduce the spread and effect and of a crisis (Pearson & Mitroff, 1993). Business recovery alludes to developing short-term and long-term procedures, systems, and operations to get back to normal business operations and servicing essential stakeholders (Pearson & Mitroff, 1993). Organizational learning, as the phase most often overlooked, involves understanding and reflecting on the previous phases and identifying the positives and negatives of crisis response (Pearson & Mitroff, 1993).

Pearson and Mitroff (1993) created the five phases of crisis management theory to guide organizations on managing human-caused disasters. The 5-year study encompassed 500 individuals and 200 large organizations across America that had experience with and responsibility for managing crisis. Researchers have criticized the broad, logical, linear format of the theory since it implies that major incidents follow similar flows wherein one phase precipitates another (Buchanan & Denyer, 2013; Speakman & Sharpley, 2012). However, crises are neither predictable nor avoidable (Faulkner, 2001) and can often occur without warning, which may require an organization to immediately enter at a response phase (Pelfrey, 2005; Speakman & Sharpley, 2012).

Sawalha et al. (2013) applied the five phases of crisis management theory in practice and found that early warning signals were not used in the Jordanian hotels

surveyed in the study, despite the high significance of signal detection in managing crisis in the country. Sawalha et al. also purported that disaster management best practices stipulates preparation and prevention. Signal detection and preparation/prevention are the only phases of the five phases of crisis management theory that specifically focuses on preparedness activities. In addition, as one of the critical phases in crisis management, the recovery phase of the theory received more attention than other phases. The five phases of crisis management framework are useful for evaluating an organization's response to different types of emergencies, which was not the intent of the study. Consequently, the framework was not appropriate for the study.

Chaos theory. Lorenz (1963) coined and promoted chaos theory in seminal work published on the unpredictability of weather patterns. Although the term is associated with the natural sciences, researchers have used chaos theory in business and organizational management to understand and manage internal and external environments, formulate decisions, and implement strategies for success. A chaos theory framework is useful for a complex system with interrelated parts that is dynamic and constantly changing (Lorenz, 1963). Gleick (1987) expanded on chaos theory by demonstrating the relevance and applications of the theory in social science research. Based on chaos theory, systems are constantly evolving over time and undergo unpredictable patterns of fluctuation (Gleick, 1987). Discussions on chaos theory have expanded to include nonlinear, dynamic systems and complexity (Resler, 2016).

There is empirical support for the application of chaos theory for crisis management in tourism destinations and business organizations. Boukas and Ziakas

(2014) used chaos theory as a holistic approach to understanding destination crisis and sustainability development in Cypriot tourism. Boukas and Ziakas credited the usefulness of the theory as an iterative cycle applied to understanding destination environments and facilitating rapid recovery. Similarly, Sanial (2014) used chaos and complexity theories to explore the U.S. Coast Guard's strategic management and policy formulation process to achieve a holistic understanding of organizational preparedness. Sanial confirmed an increased understanding of organizational performance despite an unstable external environment by scanning the external environment to anticipate crises and devising appropriate policies and strategies for preparedness.

Speakman and Sharpley (2012) used the chaos theory framework to explore destination crisis management in Mexico during the AH1N1 influenza pandemic. Speakman and Sharpley referenced constructs of chaos theory to understand tourism crises through four lenses: (a) edge of chaos, (b) bifurcation, (c) cosmology, and (d) self-organization. Edge of chaos refers to the phase when a minor, insignificant trigger induces a major climactic event that initiates a chain of other effects; the resulting chain of effects refers to the butterfly effect (Boukas & Ziakas, 2014; Speakman & Sharpley, 2012).

Bifurcation, which is a concept similar to the edge of chaos (Boukas & Ziakas, 2014), denotes the point that an interrupted system goes into a state of disequilibrium (Speakman & Sharpley, 2012). Cosmology implies embracing the emotional state of individuals reacting to the disorder around them (Speakman & Sharpley, 2012). Self-organization is a controversial construct of chaos theory, since it implies that order

derives amidst disorder without the need for preplanning (Speakman & Sharpley, 2012). Self-organization also alludes to the increased, spontaneous availability of resources and energy to resume business operations and processes (Boukas & Ziakas, 2014) and implies a laissez faire approach to management that highlights crisis response. Since the aim of the study was to identify strategies used for preparedness, the tenets of chaos theory were not applicable and the framework was not appropriate for the study.

The inability of tourism destination managers to adopt suitable crisis management models and strategies presents a challenge for the industry (Gaafar, 2013). The existing frameworks presented in this section all contributed to understanding and responding to emergencies. However, the frameworks contained evolutionary phases that may not capture a holistic understanding of preparedness. Sanial (2014) recommended using new theoretical approaches to meet the changing needs of nationwide catastrophes. Therefore, the next logical step was to consider a framework that combined elements of the frameworks in the existing tourism and business literature. The following section of the paper includes the cycle of preparedness framework, which may ensure crisis prepared DMOs and destination managers.

The Cycle of Preparedness

Pelfrey (2005) introduced the cycle of preparedness to assist U.S. business leaders with planning for terrorism threats. Preparedness refers to possessing the required plans, policies, materials, and trainings to manage and limit the catastrophic potential of major disasters. The main constructs of the cycle of preparedness: prevention, awareness, response, and recovery, derives from the elements specified in the temporal framework

used by Homeland Security (Pelfrey, 2005).

The cycle of preparedness distinguishes linkages between the various constructs, which enable managers to establish appropriate processes and tools. Historically, organization leaders viewed response as the first step in crisis management and preparedness as the final stage (Pelfrey, 2005). However, Pelfrey (2005) emphasized prevention as the first priority of preparedness, which is achieved through collaboration and information sharing, as necessary elements, followed by threat recognition, risk management, and intervention, as minor elements. Prevention is integral to crisis management since it entails reducing the effects of identified risks (Selart, Johansen, & Nesse, 2013). Pelfrey rationalized that preventing a crisis eradicates the need for threat recognition, risk management, and intervention. Consequently, results from the study were vital to identifying appropriate preventative measures that destination managers have used to safeguard tourism destination business and post-crisis image.

Awareness is the second element in the cycle of preparedness. Awareness mediates prevention and response and refers to recognizing that a threat is imminent (Pelfrey, 2005). The timeframe of awareness may be brief or long lasting. For example, during the September 11 attacks in New York, there was a 15-minute time delay in recognizing an attack when United Airlines 11 struck the north tower and when American Airlines 175 struck the south tower (Pelfrey, 2005). The rapidity of awareness reduces potential harm (Pelfrey, 2005).

Response, as the third element in the cycle of preparedness, refers to activities initiated upon recognizing an impending crisis (Pelfrey, 2005). Response entails an all-

hazards approach to both natural and human-induced crises, which brings together people and comprehensive systems that possess the required equipment, training, and practice (Pelfrey, 2005). Due to the fluidity of the framework, Pelfrey indicated that response activities may occur at all phases of the cycle.

Recovery, as the final element in the cycle of preparedness, refers to recuperating and repairing harm (Pelfrey, 2005). Discrediting and scrutinizing the effectiveness and practicality of existing frameworks due to the linearity of the models in the preparedness process (Boukas & Ziakas, 2014; Pelfrey, 2005; Speakman & Sharpley, 2012), Pelfrey (2005) suggested that recovery activities may begin at the same time an incident is discovered. Linear approaches are useful for organizing and coordinating response (Boukas & Ziakas, 2014; Speakman & Sharpley, 2012) but are inaccurate in managing the complexity of crises (Pelfrey, 2005).

Existing crisis management frameworks generally lack a real-world perspective. However, the cycle of preparedness offers a threat-specific approach to preparedness. External incidents, such as terrorism, are the hardest to plan and prepare for (Herbane, 2013). In addition, intentional human-caused crises are more catastrophic and rivals natural disasters in terms of cost and adverse impacts on individuals and organizations (Pearson & Mitroff, 1993; Pelfrey, 2005). Tourism destination managers must simultaneously prepare for natural disasters and human induced attacks, which can make preparedness an arduous task (Speakman & Sharpley, 2012). Exploring strategies for preparedness to limit business interruptions and promote perceptions of safety may be a critical task for destination managers.

Pelfrey (2005) was the first researcher to disaggregate preparedness into constituent parts, which enabled individuals from diverse disciplines to understand the complexity of preparedness by identifying patterns in a strategic cycle (Alteneiji, 2015). Since preparedness is an ongoing, consistent process, the reference to Pelfrey's cycle of preparedness as a timeline or cycle is appropriate. A cycle is dynamic, not routine or linear, and comprises phases and elements with reciprocal relationships (Pelfrey, 2005). Boukas and Ziakas (2014), in alignment with Granville et al. (2016), recommended that tourism leaders and destination managers maintain a holistic understanding of the interrelated facets of crisis to mitigate potential repercussions. The most effective technique to obtain a comprehensive understanding of preparedness and its associated tasks entails viewing it as a cycle (Pelfrey, 2005).

The cycle of preparedness has had limited application in the tourism literature. Alteneiji (2015) used the cycle of preparedness to investigate the current emergency preparedness practices in the United Arab Emirates (UAE). Alteneiji boasted that the cycle of preparedness contained the essential elements of preparedness, which made it ideal for emergency preparedness. Based on the findings of Alteneiji's research, emergency management standards exist in the UAE, but several barriers, such as unclear policies and regulations in emergency management, lack of cooperation among organizations, and inadequate training, required improvements.

The cycle of preparedness is a strategic framework. The cycle of preparedness includes risk reduction and systemic and strategic emergency management approaches that aligns with the aims of the U.S. Homeland Security (Pelfrey, 2005), while existing

crisis management frameworks do not. Based on the intent of the study, which was to explore strategies for preparedness that U.S. destination managers have used to limit business interruptions and risk perceptions of tourism destinations, the cycle of preparedness was the most appropriate conceptual framework. Therefore, in the section that follows, I discuss strategies for preparedness for tourism destinations through the lens of the constructs of the cycle of preparedness framework.

Strategies for Crisis Preparedness of Tourist Destinations

The success of tourism destination economies hinges on tourism products and services, destination image, and reduction or elimination of crisis risks (Ryu et al., 2013), which makes destination preparedness important to destination managers and tourism stakeholders. Both Kahan (2015) and Starosta (2014) warned that whether aimed at preventing or mitigating crises, it is important to determine strategies for preparedness. Furthermore, employing appropriate strategies can limit damage and ensure a quick return to normalcy versus threatening an organization and destination's survival (Ghaderi et al., 2014). Destination managers may need to identify and implement specific measures to address the vulnerability of tourism destinations to the effects of crises.

The literature was informative yet inconsistent in measures that may support preparedness. Faulkner (2001) suggested that specific strategies should be in line with the phases of crisis management. In this section, I synthesize the extant literature on preparedness through the four constructs of the cycle of preparedness: prevention, awareness, response, and recovery, to identify strategies destination managers and tourism stakeholders have used.

Prevention strategies. Prevention is the precursor to crisis management and communication, which entail actions taken to avert a crisis (Coombs & Holladay, 2012). Prevention involves identifying and eradicating risks through legal means; strategic applications of which include protection, deterrence, preemption, and mitigation (Pelfrey, 2005). Prevention is a best practice in crisis management (Sawalha et al., 2013) and the most effective and least expensive step in disaster reduction (Wang & Ritchie, 2013).

Although prevention and preparedness are central to crisis management (Herbane, 2013; Pearson & Mitroff, 1993), preparedness is often discussed in a superficial manner and lacks focus and mandates for prevention as a priority of preparedness (Pelfrey, 2005). As the first step in the cycle of preparedness, prevention comprises two major elements: collaboration and information sharing (Pelfrey, 2005). Due to the emphasis Pelfrey (2005) placed on collaboration and information sharing, in this section, I discuss prevention strategies associated with these elements.

Collaboration. Collaboration implies integrating multiple entities to consort. Pelfrey (2005) purported that regular, deliberate collaboration among individuals and organizations is the most critical element in the prevention phase of the cycle of preparedness. Similarly, Volgger and Pechlaner (2014) identified collaboration among tourism stakeholders as the key for destination managers to achieve competitiveness. Furthering this recommendation, Fyall et al. (2012), in line with Laesser and Beritelli (2013) and Morgan (2012), suggested that destination managers should enhance collaborative efforts with various tourism stakeholders, such as public and private sectors, not-for profit organizations, and local communities.

Consistent with findings from Hystad and Keller (2008), Becken and Hughey (2013) found a lack of collaboration between the tourism sector and emergency management officials. For example, Becken and Hughey conducted a research study linking emergency management and tourism and found that the Northland tourism sector was only formally included in early warning networks with Homeland Security on an ad hoc, case-by-case basis. Pelfrey recommended that organizations and individuals from public and private sectors work and train together. Similarly, Becken and Hughey, Faulkner (2001), and Hystad and Keller (2008) highlighted the relevance of collaborating and training to prepare for emergencies.

Collaborative destination management requires contribution by the wider sphere of local leadership and interested groups (Hristov & Naumov, 2015). Since effective collaboration entails trust and communication, inflexibility and cultural constraints limit collaborative efforts (Pelfrey, 2005). Morrison (2015) cited a lack of localized collaboration and planning, which causes businesses and communities to overwhelm public support services during the crisis recovery phase. Since long-term destination success depends on productive collaboration with society, government, and businesses (Morgan, 2012), if stakeholders cannot work together, it may be problematic in devising a shared understanding of vulnerabilities.

Effective destination management should incorporate the perspectives of all stakeholders (Pearce & Schänzel, 2013) since an organization that lacks stakeholder support will fail (Sheehan & Ritchie, 2005). However, although tourism destination marketing implies that tourists are the dominant focus (Pearce & Schänzel, 2013),

Sheehan and Ritchie (2005) found that CEOs of DMOs in the United States placed negligible importance on tourists as destination stakeholders. Since empirical research on how stakeholder collaboration influences DMO success was not yet available (Volgger & Pechlaner, 2014), this study on crisis preparedness, which identified collaborative measures for crisis prevention, filled the gap.

Information sharing. Information sharing is securing, analyzing, and disseminating relevant data among individuals and organizations on a need to know basis (Pelfrey, 2005). AlBattat and Som (2013) found that organization leaders approach crisis management with their own agendas, which results in a lack of resources and confidence among organizations and impedes information sharing. In addition, information sharing can be problematic due to the ability to capture and share organization knowledge (Pelfrey, 2005). From a resource-based perspective, crisis knowledge and learning offers unique resources that an organization can implement to withstand crises since these concepts translates to how to carry out crisis decisions (Paraskevas & Altinay, 2013). Since information sharing encompasses understanding crisis knowledge and learning, I briefly discussed these concepts in the succeeding section.

Crisis knowledge is a unique resource that an organization needs to increase resilience (Paraskevas, Altinay, McLean, & Cooper, 2013). Obtaining the knowledge required to manage crises entails capturing tacit knowledge and making it explicit knowledge (Jia et al., 2012). Tacit knowledge derives from personal experiences and ideas, while explicit knowledge is encoded knowledge that manifest in policies and

organizational rules (Paraskevas et al., 2013). There is a limited amount of research linking knowledge to crisis management (Paraskevas et al., 2013).

Paraskevas et al. (2013) researched the knowledge types and strategies employed by tourism organizations for crisis response. Paraskevas et al. identified four types of knowledge: procedural, behavioral, third party, and learned ignorance. Procedural knowledge comprises clear steps on how to respond to an emergency (Paraskevas et al., 2013). Behavioral knowledge refers to standards and rules generated from organizational crises and social exchanges (Paraskevas et al., 2013). Third party knowledge denotes knowledge obtained from experts external to an organization (Paraskevas et al., 2013). Learned ignorance is an individual's lack of knowledge in understanding and managing a crisis (Paraskevas et al., 2013). Extending beyond tacit and explicit knowledge, Paraskevas et al. highlighted the problematic nature of procedural knowledge, which lacks flexibility and can subsequently lead to inappropriate responses.

The fragmented, yet interrelatedness of the tourism industry exacerbates the issue of transferring and distributing crisis knowledge among and within organizations, which impedes knowledge sharing (Jia et al., 2012). Paraskevas et al. (2013) proposed a crisis knowledge governance framework for the tourism industry. The constructs of the theory comprised four organizational factors: leadership, crisis culture, organizational structure, and communication. Orchiston and Higham (2016) used the crisis knowledge government framework introduced by Paraskevas et al. as the theoretical lens to investigate DMOs on the regional and national levels in response to the Christchurch earthquakes. Orchiston and Higham found that emergent knowledge developed during

the September 2010 earthquake and applied during the February 2011 earthquake was entrenched in organizational knowledge flows to enhance future preparedness. Consequently, merging knowledge ensures the long-term sustainability of tourism destinations (Hristov & Naumov, 2015).

There is a gap in crisis learning in the tourism industry. In the existing crisis management frameworks, several researchers advocated for a period of reflection and learning from crises (AlBattat & Som, 2014; Boukas & Ziakas, 2014; Paraskevas et al. 2013); Speakman & Sharpley, 2012). However, Ghaderi et al. (2014) explained that there is a lack of learning culture and undefined procedures in some tourism businesses. Although Ritchie (2004) advocated for tourism leaders to make decisions prior to a crisis, some tourism leaders who participated in Ghaderi et al.'s study admitted that they gathered new information on what they needed from wherever possible when a problem occurred. More specifically, managers in the hotel and airline industries illustrated crisis learning, as evidenced by documented processes and guidelines that do not exist in other tourism sectors, such as travel agents, tour operators, and tourist attractions (Ghaderi et al., 2014).

Crisis learning, which refers to the insights leaders and employees obtain from their experiences, may occur from direct experiences through trial and error (Ghaderi et al., 2014; Paraskevas et al., 2013) and diffusing or developing new knowledge through collaboration (AlBattat, Som, & Chiang, 2014; Ghaderi et al., 2014). However, Ghaderi et al. (2014) found that Malaysian tourism managers did not see the relevance in collecting information from previous experiences. Furthermore, Ooi et al. (2013) found

that Malaysian tourism managers felt that crises had little effect on tourism demand. Consequently, only 40% of Malaysian tourism managers shared information and collaborated with all tourism industry members and 60% shared information only with tourism members within the same profession (Ghaderi et al., 2014). Sharing knowledge and experiences facilitates learning and preparedness (Drupsteen & Guldenmund, 2014) needed for destination managers and tourism leaders to move from reacting to preparing for all types of disasters.

Learning from a crisis may also occur when leaders and employees utilize knowledge previously acquired and reflect on the past. However, Ghaderi et al. (2014) found that Malaysian tourism managers did not know what information they had and where it was stored, which limited their ability to use knowledge as anticipated. In addition, 72% of Malaysian tourism managers did not reflect on actions taken in crisis because they felt that they had made sound judgements during the crisis or did not have adequate time to reflect (Ghaderi et al., 2014). Pelfrey (2005) recommended identifying lessons learned in order to prevent future crisis occurrences. How tourism managers handle crises offer valuable lessons for future disaster management and plan development (AlBattat & Som, 2014; Boukas & Ziakas, 2014).

Researchers differ on when learning from crisis occurs. Pelfrey (2005) classified crisis learning as part of the prevention phase of the cycle of preparedness. However, most researchers attribute learning to the post-crisis recovery phrase (Appelbaum, Keller, Alvarez, & Bedard, 2012; Drupsteen & Guldenmund, 2014; Palttala et al., 2012; Sawalha et al., 2013). Ghaderi et al. (2014) encouraged future research on how tourism

organizations have learned from prior incidences. However, although researchers differ on when learning occurs, they agree that learning should occur.

Awareness is the second phase of the cycle of preparedness. Awareness refers to recognizing that an imminent threat is looming in order to limit damage or harm (Pelfrey, 2005). Strategies for disaster readiness to foster awareness are included below.

Awareness strategies. Awareness mediates prevention and response (Pelfrey, 2005). Awareness is critical for tourism organizations and leaders, although that awareness may not necessarily lead to higher instances of preparedness (Becken & Hughey, 2013). Tourism destinations within hazard zones may implement emergency procedures or early warning systems to enhance awareness (AlBattat & Som, 2014). The challenge for tourism leaders and destination managers is striking a balance between warning crisis prone destination stakeholders and creating a false alarm (Becken & Hughey, 2013; van Laere, 2013). Overt safety measures create concerns and negative impressions of destinations (Rittichainuwat, 2013). The pre-crisis management strategies recommended by some authors are early warning systems, crisis planning, communication, strategic forecasting, disaster awareness, and risk analysis (Faulkner, 2001; Pearson & Mitroff, 1993; Sawalha et al., 2013). Below, I discuss the awareness strategies recurrent in the extant literature: crisis management plans, crisis planning, communication, and training.

Crisis management plans. A crisis management plan is the single most critical resource for organizations (Faulkner, 2001). Having a written plan implies a managerial commitment to due diligence of care in visitor protection (Gaafar, 2013). In addition,

destination managers with written crisis management plans recover destinations faster and better than those without plans (Rittichainuwat, 2013). The absence of a formal plan resulted in delayed government response to aid the tourism sector in the wake of the Kenyan riot and unrest following the 2008 elections (de Sausmarez, 2013). Consequently, crisis management plans for destinations should also include all key stakeholders and their respective responsibility for tourism development (Boukas & Ziakas, 2014).

Organizational leaders who have plans are better able to understand specific crisis types, risks, and the resulting impacts on the organization's resources and reputation (Appelbaum et al., 2012). Since organizational factors continuously change (Kahan, 2015), to ascertain relevancy, tourism leaders should adopt, test, and update crisis management plans annually (AlBattat & Som, 2013). After researching crisis management in SMEs in the United Kingdom, Herbane (2013) concluded that organization leaders without crisis plans should determine vulnerabilities and focus efforts on prevention versus reaction.

A written plan can be used as a marketing tactic to attract new and returning tourism visitors (Gaafar, 2013). For example, Rittichainuwat and Chakraborty (2012) reported that destination managers used early warning systems and crisis management plans in marketing collateral to stimulate visitor interest to tsunami-prone destinations in Thailand. International inbound tourists were receptive to receiving crisis management plans in marketing collateral, since they perceive destination safety as important (Rittichainuwat & Chakraborty, 2012). Although Cui (2012) encouraged managers to use

crisis management plans to prepare for specific types of disasters, Paraskevas and Altinay (2013) deemed detailed crisis management plans as useless.

A comprehensive crisis management plan requires money and resources. Wang and Ritchie (2012) suggested that organization leaders allocate sufficient budgets to provide internal staff training and retraining. Similarly, McCool (2012) recommended that to plan for crises effectively, tourism leaders should have written strategies and plans, well-trained staff, and individuals in managerial roles with effective knowledge. Devising a plan offers tourism leaders an opportunity to prioritize and engage operational and strategic crisis planning (McCool, 2012). In addition, creating and enacting crisis management plans promptly following a disaster diminishes the financial impacts of crises (Mair et al., 2016).

Crisis planning. Proactive and reactive planning is required to minimize damage (Kahan, 2015; Lando, 2014; McCool, 2012) and improve crisis response (Chikoto, Sadiq, & Fordyce, 2013). McCool (2012) emphasized the importance of employees as the most vital assets to an organization and recommended soliciting employee input throughout the planning process. Factors considered for proactive planning might include (a) devising a written, functional crisis management plan, (b) involving employees from creation to implementation, and (c) training employees annually (McCool, 2012). By contrast, factors considered for reactive crisis planning might include (a) developing a written marketing plan, (b) collaborating with the media, and (c) assessing organizational resources (McCool, 2012). Wang and Ritchie (2012) found that experience contributed to crisis planning intentions in the hospitality industry. More specifically, experiences

influenced decision-making, which resulted in a competitive advantage for destination management and preparedness (Wang & Ritchie, 2012). Herbane (2013) refuted Wang and Ritchie's findings, claiming that past crisis experience did not necessarily reflect managerial priorities, since managers differ on the relevance attributed to specific types of crisis effects on their organizations.

There is a lack of planning on both the individual operator and local DMO level (Ghaderi, Som, & Henderson, 2012; Mair et al., 2016). Ryu et al. (2013) revealed the need for additional research on natural disasters and crisis planning in the tourism industry. Similarly, as a recommendation for a future study, Wang and Ritchie (2013) suggested that researchers investigate barriers and difficulties of tourism leaders in devising crisis management plans and examine the organizational and environmental factors that influence planning intentions and behaviors. The purpose of the study was to explore the strategies some destination managers have used for preparedness to safeguard tourism businesses and destination perception. Information gleaned from DMO crisis management plans was helpful in triangulating the tourism literature and understanding the planning intentions and priorities of U.S. destination managers.

Risk and crisis communication. Communication in tourism comprises visual and auditory imagery of an environment (Iosim & Popescu, 2015). Communication is essential prior to, during, and following a crisis (Lando, 2014; McCool, 2012; Palttala et al., 2012; Steelman & McCaffrey, 2013), since a communication breakdown with any stakeholder may worsen the situation (McCool, 2012). During a crisis, the noise of stress

and rumor creates communication challenges (Wang & Ritchie, 2012) that may be minimized by proactively devising communication strategies.

Most communication issues that occur during a crisis results from differences in organizational cultures and structures combined with the need to work cooperatively (Palttala et al., 2012). However, Palttala et al. (2012) alluded to communication as not necessarily an integral crisis management component. The goals of crisis communication may also conflict (Palttala et al., 2012). For example, a main communication goal might be to limit physical harm versus safeguarding organization reputation or maintaining order (Palttala et al., 2012). To bridge the gap in crisis communication entails identifying partners and dividing communication tasks during preparedness (Palttala et al., 2012).

Communication is required for decision-making under pressure (Palttala et al., 2012), mitigating perceived risks, and improving responses to crises (Steelman & McCaffrey, 2013). Steelman and McCaffrey (2013) suggested that a gap exists between adopting communications strategies prior to a crisis, which is risk communication, and adopting communication strategies during a crisis, which is crisis communication. Reynolds and Seeger (2005) proposed an emergency risk communication framework to bridge the gap between risk or warning messages and crisis communication, which integrates messages from planning to implementation.

Interactive communications that address local-level concerns and actions are the most effective type of crisis-related communications (Steelman & McCaffrey, 2013). Furthermore, communication should reflect stakeholder priorities, values, and experiences (Reynolds & Seeger, 2005) and include accurate and timely information

(Steelman & McCaffrey, 2013). Transparency in communication during the preparedness phase is also a key determinant to establishing trust (Lachapelle & McCool, 2012). Transparency entails identifying and leveraging appropriate individuals to convey crisis communication messages, which correlates with how destination stakeholders accept and interpret communicated information (Lachapelle & McCool, 2012).

Several authors have advocated for harnessing the power of the media for post-crisis tourism destination recovery (AlBattat & Som, 2014; Becken & Hughey, 2013; McCool, 2012). Destination managers can work with the media to provide accurate and timely messages to tourism markets (Mair et al., 2016). However, although the success of destination management is contingent on media collaboration (Mair et al., 2016), there is little evidence to suggest that collaboration and communication between the media, tourism stakeholders, and destination leaders takes place.

Despite the research on crisis communication, the discipline requires further development (Palttala et al., 2012). Due to the complexity of communicating during crises, it is important to understand effective communication methods. Data derived from the study on strategies for preparedness offers valuable insights on effective communication measures destination managers have used.

Crisis training. Paraskevas et al. (2013) encouraged organization leaders to establish a culture of reliability, accomplished through ongoing training and simulation. However, Paraskevas et al. found that training aimed at achieving procedural knowledge might be ineffective. Consequently, organization managers should receive training on response, given general rules, and be empowered to make and implement judgements

they deem is appropriate (Paraskevas et al., 2013). In addition, employees should be included and trained on all levels of crisis planning and preparedness (McCool, 2012).

As an example of the training DMO staff may need, Becken and Hughey (2013) conducted a study on Destination Northland and determined that since there had not been a disaster that required a mass evacuation, destination managers needed to receive training on how to evacuate tourists effectively. Wang and Ritchie (2013) posited that although tourism managers are amenable to crisis preparedness and value the outcomes of pre-crisis activities, some managers have traditionally held negative attitudes about staff time away for crisis training. Renschler et al. (2015) found that managers were willing to adhere to emergency training mandates, but would have offered less crisis preparation if mandates were lessened.

Response strategies. Early approaches to preparedness and the default stance for dealing with emergencies center on response (Pelfrey, 2005). However, the promptness in which tourism leaders and destination managers respond to crises is contingent on the extent to which they are prepared (Mair et al., 2016). Similarly, Sawalha et al. (2013) explained that crisis prone organizations are usually reactive and fixated on recovery rather than prevention. Similarly, several authors confirmed that although preparedness may ensure more resilient tourism organizations and destinations, focus on response and recovery undermines crisis planning (Selart et al., 2013; Wang & Ritchie, 2012).

Crisis response influences the success of recovery (Appelbaum et al., 2012). Reactive strategies in destination crisis preparedness include communication and stakeholder collaboration (McCool, 2012). Steelman and McCaffrey (2013) suggested

several crisis response activities from lessons learned on wildfire communications in California, Montana, and Wyoming. Communication activities included (a) engaging interactive dialogue with stakeholders, (b) understanding the threat by listening to the public's concerns, (c) offering timely and reliable information, (d) working with reliable sources, and (e) communicating prior to and during a crisis (Steelman & McCaffrey, 2013). McCool's (2012) recommendation for stakeholder collaboration alludes to commencing collaboration during response, although Pelfrey (2005) encouraged stakeholders to collaborate early and often during the prevention phase.

Becken and Hughey (2013) recommended that tourism organization leaders increase their aptitude for crisis response. The strategies found to be most useful for response included preparing media release templates and conducting emergency drills (Becken & Hughey, 2013). Although it is common for the media to require or portray charismatic leadership (Trainor & Velotti, 2013), the role of the media in crisis management and preparedness is controversial. In the following section, I discussed crisis leadership and teams and their respective roles and responsibility for preparedness.

Crisis leadership. Leadership is crucial in proactively managing, integrating, and sharing knowledge (Paraskevas & Altinay, 2013) and preparing for crises. Leadership encompasses the mentality and actions that shape organization culture and strategies (Carone & Di Iorio, 2013; Paraskevas & Altinay, 2013). Stakeholders observe crisis leaders and formulate judgments on managerial abilities (Appelbaum et al., 2012).

CEOs, as organizational leaders, are the drivers of organizational preparedness. Managerial awareness and commitment ensures that an organization's stakeholders have

effective training and resources to limit loss (AlBattat & Som, 2013). Included among the short-term benefits of preparedness is the ability to allocate resources to manage and minimize the adverse impacts of crises, save time, build confidence, and safeguard lives (Wang & Ritchie, 2013). The long-term benefits of preparedness entail increased organization competitiveness, lower insurance premiums, and limited legal liability (Wang & Ritchie, 2013). Despite the benefits, some managers do not actively participate in crisis planning (Renschler et al., 2015). The short and long-term benefits of preparedness may influence managerial attitudes and perceptions on engaging and implementing effective measures. Trainor and Velotti (2013) attributed effective leadership to the culmination of guidance and proactive efforts in crisis planning, awareness, and response. Knowing who is willing and capable of leading tourism crisis efforts adds to the destination's competitiveness (Pechlaner et al., 2014).

Crisis teams. Consistent with Parnell and Nathan (2012), Renschler et al. (2015) and AlBattat and Som (2014) suggested that as a key preparedness activity, organizational leaders should establish crisis teams. Ritchie (2004) shared that to facilitate crisis management, organization leaders must reorganize and manage resources, which may include formulating crisis teams. Crisis teams lead implementation and management, including activities to foster crisis learning (Parnell & Nathan, 2012). Consequently, AlBattat and Som (2014) acknowledged crisis teams as an essential requirement for disaster management. By contrast, Kahan (2015), in alignment with Morrison (2014), insisted that CEOs and business owners lead preparedness activities and involve managers and staff to ensure credibility and commitment. Nevertheless, Ritchie

(2004) claimed that as evidenced by the 1995 Kobe earthquake that occurred in Japan, prompt leadership and decision making was easiest with crisis teams at the organization, industry, or local levels. Despite Ritchie's recommendation, there is limited literature on crisis teams in tourism literature.

Recovery strategies. Just as important as it is to prepare to respond to a crisis, it is also important to prepare to recover from a crisis (Pelfrey, 2005). The recovery of tourism from disasters is critical to the financial success and general recovery of affected areas, as well as regional and global economies (Walters & Mair, 2012). Therefore, destinations managers should devise a recovery strategy prior to a calamity (Ryu et al., 2013). The recovery stage is particularly important in tourism businesses since it relays and reinforces that a tourism destination has survived and efforts to regain normalcy is ongoing (Ryu et al., 2013). Recovery entails cleaning up, rebuilding destination infrastructure, and offering economic aid to businesses (Becken & Hughey, 2013). Biran et al. (2014), in line with Faulkner (2001), recommended that communicating post-disaster destination recovery activities should be a priority.

Recovery is a challenge for tourism organizations and destinations (Becken & Hughey, 2013). First, recovery is focused primarily at the community level, such as in particular geographic areas and on restoration of utilities and infrastructure (Marshall & Schrank, 2014). However, crisis studies lack scope, scale, and theoretical underpinnings on recovery to examine the nature of decision-making that surpasses pre-crisis considerations such as buying insurance or planning evacuation routes, to post-crisis considerations such as business disruption, cash flow issues, and the survivability of

organizations (Marshall & Schrank, 2014). Second, besides the case of the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami, there are a limited number of research articles that offer a detailed account of tourism recovery efforts (Becken & Hughey, 2013). Discrediting Becken and Hughey's claim, AlBattat and Som (2014) researched the impact of disasters on Malaysia's tourism sector and offered accounts of crisis recovery. More specifically, AlBattat and Som found that the countries' reactive preparedness approach enhanced reliance on government resources for recovery. In addition, Malaysia's tourism leaders confessed that they lacked recovery strategies because negative media overshadowed past implementations and previous recovery measures had no impact for the destination (AlBattat & Som, 2014).

Recovery presents an opportunity to rebound and restore disrupted business operations to pre-crisis levels (Campiranon & Scott, 2014). In contrast to Campiranon and Scott's (2014) suggestion, Marshall and Schrank (2014) indicated that some organizations might never achieve pre-crisis levels, so recovery should merely focus on achieving a stable level of business operations. Furthermore, in some instances, damage to tourism resources and destination infrastructures may be significant in scope to make recovery impossible (Mair et al., 2016).

When Campiranon and Scott (2014) researched Phuket hotels to identify critical success factors for recovery, the authors concluded that tourism organizations should focus efforts on revenue-generating markets and avoid the tendency to offer discounts to attract visitors. The findings align with those of Mair et al. (2016) and Walters and Mair (2012) who highlighted the contribution of loyal or repeat visitors as an important market

segment. Furthermore, although tourism leaders may use price reduction to attract visitors to crisis-impacted destinations (Walters & Mair, 2012), Campiranon and Scott identified discounting as the least effective recovery strategy since it diminishes product and service value and disregards the loyalty of past guests. Tourism leaders have also experienced challenges with diminishing business prospects when attempting to readjust back to full price (Mair et al., 2016).

Recovery activities may begin at the same time as response activities (Pelfrey, 2005). In line with Pelfrey (2005), Appelbaum et al. (2012) shared that crisis might not pass through every stage of the model. Furthermore, supporting Pelfrey's observations, Speakman and Sharpley (2012) indicated that emergencies often occur without warning and an organization leader can immediately progress from a pre-crisis to a response phase. I continue with strategies to recover tourism destinations from natural and human-caused disasters with discussions about post-crisis destination marketing and business continuity planning.

Post-crisis destination marketing. The speed of tourism recovery relies on marketing destinations effectively (Becken & Hughey, 2013; Faulkner, 2001) to restore destination images of safety and emphasize recovery efforts (Biran et al., 2014). However, Speakman and Sharpley (2012) uncovered conflicting findings on marketing activities to manage media and tourists' perceptions of destinations recovering from crises. Some destination managers embraced halting or limiting marketing activities when managers learn of a crisis. By contrast, other destination managers advocated for deploying joint marketing efforts with other tourism sectors, such as airlines and hotels,

since these entities have a shared interest in a destination's success (Speakman & Sharpley, 2012). Completely suspending marketing efforts may be inappropriate (Speakman & Sharpley, 2012). As a targeted form of marketing, de Sausmarez (2013) recommended that DMOs and destination leaders host familiarization trips so that press and travel agents can experience tourism destinations and learn the true state of impact and subsequent recovery efforts. However, when Kenyan tourism leaders implemented familiarization trips to recover the destination following a disputed election, their attempts were unsuccessful since they took media and travel agents to view unaffected areas of the destination, which raised suspicion for these viewers and resulted in negative publicity for the destination (de Sausmarez, 2013). By contrast, organized sightseeing tours were a successful strategy for identifying new markets and contributing to the recovery of post-Katrina New Orleans (Tomić et al., 2013).

Successfully marketing a destination after a crisis entails creating a balance between the realities of the destination, and the desired image, slogans, logos, and visuals (Avraham, 2014). To replace the negative image of a destination entails focusing on the source of the message, which is usually the media, the message itself, and the target market of the message (Avraham, 2014). Destination managers and tourism leaders also differ on the strategy of spinning liabilities into assets in post-crisis destination marketing, since some managers and leaders cited that such messages are negative and counterproductive (Avraham, 2014).

The media and tourism leaders maintain a contested relationship (Ryu et al., 2013). The media often continuously remind prospective tourists about recent or past

crises (Hystad & Keller, 2008). AlBattat and Som (2014) confirmed the negative role media coverage had on Malaysia's tourism following SARS and the avian influenza virus outbreaks. Becken and Hughey (2013) agree that the media often sensationalize details and exacerbate negative consequences of a crisis but can also influence popular perception and foster trust, which has implications for visitor decision-making and beliefs about tourism destinations. Consequently, Speakman and Sharpley (2012) supported implementing a strategy of honest communication with both the media and tourism stakeholders.

Tourism leaders have implemented domestic tourism as a long-term recovery strategy. Domestic tourism refers to targeting local versus international travelers (de Sausmarez, 2013). When SARS and the avian influenza virus outbreaks shocked Asian tourism destinations and international arrivals declined by 20% for 6 months, government leaders introduced a marketing campaign promoting Cuti Cuti Malaysia to entice domestic travel, which subsequently bolstered the destination's recovery process (AlBattat & Som, 2014). Similarly, as part of the destination marketing initiatives in Mexico following the AH1N1 outbreak, destination managers launched the Vive Mexico campaign for domestic visitors and a Welcome Back campaign to appeal to new and frequent travelers to the destination (Speakman & Sharpley, 2012). Stimulating domestic tourism was also effective for Malaysia's tourism sector following the economic downturn in 1997 and 1998 but proved to be an unprofitable and nontraditional recovery technique for the Kenyan tourism sector during the political unrest in 2008 (de

Sausmarez, 2013). The findings of this study helped with understanding successful preparedness strategies used for recovering crisis-impacted destinations.

The marketing messages destination managers communicate to tourism sectors following a disaster are crucial to managing destination image and tourist perceptions. Walters and Mair (2012) examined nine types of recovery marketing messages employed in the case of the 2009 Australian bushfires. The marketing messages included (a) business as usual, (b) community readiness, (c) messages of solidarity, (d) celebrity endorsements, (e) restoring confidence and perceptions, (f) using crisis images as an asset by spinning unsafe images to highlight regeneration, (g) enhancing curiosity, (h) discounting, and (i) visitor testimonials (Walters & Mair, 2012). The celebrity endorsement marketing strategy was most effective for recovery, although the receptiveness of celebrity endorsements for the tourism industry is unknown (Walters & Mair, 2012). Both short-term discounts and open for business marketing approaches were least effective for tourism destination recovery (Walters & Mair, 2012). Destination managers should continue to deliver destination-appropriate marketing messages during recovery. Results from this study may offer insights on appropriate tourism destination crisis marketing strategies for post-crisis recovery preparedness.

Destination managers should determine what aspects of a destination to market following a calamity. Refuting popular belief about the negative effect of crises on tourism destination image, Biran et al. (2014) argued that despite the physical changes to a destination's attributes resulting from a crisis, visitors might be inclined to visit a destination for other reasons. Consequently, harm to a destination's image is only one

aspect of tourism recovery, since some visitors might be interested in experiencing destinations with physical destruction (Biran et al., 2014). Therefore, destination managers must determine which attributes of a destination to market to enhance the physical and psychological uniqueness of a destination (Biran et al., 2014). The results of the study may be beneficial to destination managers seeking to identify marketing strategies that other DMOs and destination managers have successfully used.

Business continuity. Business continuity relates to contingency planning and disaster recovery in the information technology industry (Herbane, 2013). Business continuity is the process in which businesses organize their resources to respond to crises (Herbane, 2013). The results of business continuity planning are comparable to crisis management, which integrates stakeholder perspectives on prevention, response, and recovery (Herbane, 2013). Preparedness for business continuity should include plans for handling business closures, staff shortages, and interruptions of lifeline services in order to continue the delivery of goods and services (Lamanna et al., 2012). However, many tourism businesses lack business continuity plans (Becken & Hughey, 2013).

Barriers to Crisis Preparedness of Tourist Destinations

Barriers to preparedness in the tourism industry include internal organizational factors such as communication, collaboration, and control (AlBattat, Som, & Chiang, 2014). Effective communication is the most critical factor for obtaining and sharing knowledge and devising plans (AlBattat et al., 2014). By contrast, Wang and Ritchie (2012) suggested that gaps in tourism preparedness stems from (a) negative attitudes towards crisis planning, (b) lack of responsibility for disaster management, (c) limited

financial resources, (d) lack of crisis knowledge, (e) low risk perception, (f) small organization size, and (g) the private ownership status of businesses'. In a later study, Wang and Ritchie (2013) proposed that (a) lack of time, (b) access to experts, (c) availability of required technology and equipment, (d) funding, (e) interference with guest experiences, and (f) unnecessary policies and paperwork hindered preparedness.

In addition to barriers to preparedness are impediments to effective crisis management. In a seminal study, Pearson and Mitroff (1993) attributed the slow adoption of emergency preparations in tourism settings to organization culture that stems from the attitudes and beliefs of organization leaders. Failures for emergency management include (a) lack of communication, (b) poor coordination, (c) role ambiguity, (d) insufficient training, (e) chaos and rumors, and (f) problems in learning from previous incidents (AlBattat et al., 2014). Consequently, strategies alone are not effective for crisis management if tourism organizations and destinations lack an adaptive or flexible organizational culture and strong leadership for strategy implementation (Ritchie, 2004).

Transition

Section 1 of the study contained the foundational elements of the study: (a) problem statement, (b) purpose statement, (c) nature of the study, (d) central research question, (e) and interview questions that contribute knowledge to the research question by aligning the constructs of the conceptual framework. I also presented (f) technical definitions, (g) assumptions, limitations, and delimitations, and (h) the significance of the study. Since readiness may ensure more resilient tourism organizations and destinations, destination managers must proactively identify and implement specific measures to

address the vulnerability of tourist destinations to crises. In the literature review, I identified the strategies and barriers to crisis preparedness in tourist destinations nationwide. The literature review includes the following topics: (a) crisis management in the tourism industry, (b) the role of DMOs, (c) destination image, (d) sensemaking theory, (e) five phases of crisis management, (f) chaos theory, and (g) the cycle of preparedness.

In Section 2, I continue with an in-depth discussion and justification on how I conducted the study and measures I took to ensure research reliability and validity. In Section 3, I will present the research findings and include the applicability of the study to effective business practice. I will also offer implications for social change, in addition to recommendations and reflections.

Section 2: The Project

Section 2 includes an in-depth discussion and justification for conducting the study and the measures taken to enhance the reliability and validity of my research. Section 2 begins with a restatement of the purpose statement, and continues with (a) the role of the researcher in data collection, (b) the eligibility requirement of study participants, and (c) the research method and design previously introduced in Section 1. Section 2 also includes (d) population and sampling, (e) ethical research, (f) data collection and organization considerations (g) data analysis, and (h) reliability and validity.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this qualitative multiple case study was to explore the strategies used for crisis preparedness to reduce business interruptions and improve the perception of a destination after a crisis. The target population was destination managers located in DMOs in the south and west regions of the United States with strategies used successfully for crisis preparedness of tourist destinations. The implication of this study for social change may include removing disaster-induced fear and reducing the adverse impact of crises on the lives and livelihood of individuals and communities.

Role of the Researcher

Scholars accept the researcher's role as an instrument in qualitative research (Pezalla, Pettigrew, & Miller-Day, 2012; Xu & Storr, 2012). In fact, the researcher is the primary data collection instrument (Chan et al., 2013; Eide & Showalter, 2012; Morse, Lowery, & Steury, 2014; Pezalla et al., 2012) and therefore assumes multiple roles in

qualitative research. First, the researcher links the research theory to the extant literature (Yin, 2013). Consequently, I reviewed and synthesized the extant literature pertaining to the phenomenon of tourism crisis management to provide a basis and rationale for the study.

Second, qualitative researchers perform central activities such as interviewing, observing, and analyzing, while striving to understand the underlying meaning of information (Merriam, 2014). Eide and Showalter (2012) recommended that researchers collect information accurately, report on all data collected, and identify the experiences of participants pertaining to a phenomenon. Therefore, I devised useful interview questions; identified appropriate participants; selected the research method and design; and collected, analyzed, interpreted, and presented the research findings to formulate solid conclusions and recommendations.

I have limited relationships with the study topic, participants, and research areas. As an industry professional, I have experience with natural disasters, such as hurricanes and snowstorms; and deliberate human actions, such as terrorism and bomb threats. I also have general knowledge of the effects of extreme weather and human-induced emergencies on travel and tourism to participate at conferences and meetings. I have a general awareness of the research participants, since tourism destination managers frequently participate as speakers, exhibitors, or sponsors at meetings and hospitality industry conferences or they maintain memberships in industry-related professional associations. However, I did not have a personal relationship with any individuals or DMOs that participated in the study. I conducted the study in geographic regions that I

visited to execute meetings and events, which were not necessarily near the city and state where I reside.

The ethical objectives of qualitative research dictate treating participants with respect, protecting them from harm, and safeguarding them from undue embarrassment (Donnelly, Gabriel, & Özkazanç-Pan, 2013). Moreover, Schrems (2013) stressed that researchers and ethics reviewers that serve on independent research committees are responsible for ethical research. Therefore, I took three steps to maintain research ethics. First, I previously completed the National Institutes of Health web-based training course, certificate number 993767, regarding protecting human research participants. Second, I adhered to the guidelines specified in the Belmont Report. The Belmont Report addressed issues of health and safety (Bromley, Mikesell, Jones, & Khodyakov, 2015) and represents the first guidelines on ethical research (Lange, Rogers, & Dodds, 2013) to protect vulnerable and disadvantaged human research participants (Bromley et al., 2015; Lange et al., 2013). Third, I submitted a research proposal and the following accompanying forms to Walden University's Internal Review Board (IRB) for review and approval prior to conducting field research:

- A case study protocol (see Appendix A);
- Interview protocol (see Appendix B);
- Informed consent form; and
- A participant recruitment invitation notice.

To mitigate bias and avoid viewing data through a personal perspective, I used an interview protocol. An interview protocol is a procedural guide to direct the interview

process and achieve commonality, consistency, and reliability during qualitative data collection (Jacob & Furgerson, 2012). The interview protocol included (a) an opening statement, (b) a restatement of the research purpose and participant's rights, (c) interviews, (d) audio recording and note taking during each interview, (e) interview probes and follow-up interview questions, and (f) member checking. I used the interview protocol for all participants.

To identify biases, I used a technique referred to as bracketing or *epoché*, which involves describing and recording personal assumptions and ideas about a phenomenon before studying the phenomenon (Tufford & Newman, 2012). Qualitative researchers use bracketing techniques to identify their experiences and preconceptions regarding a phenomenon to mitigate bias in the research process (Tufford & Newman, 2012). Since research data may inadvertently reflect the personal biases of the researcher, which affects the interpretation of study findings, I identified my personal biases and beliefs, which included the following:

1. Destination managers are responsible for local-level crisis preparedness;
2. DMOs and destination managers may not plan for crises at the local level because they defer crisis preparedness and management to local or federal governments and emergency management professionals;
3. Adopting appropriate pre-crisis strategies, may improve a destination's post crisis outcomes;
4. Crisis prepared tourism destinations are safer; and

5. Crisis prepared tourism destinations will experience continued economic growth and tourism demand.

Participants

Identifying the appropriate participants to contribute knowledge about the phenomenon of destination crisis preparedness was integral to the success of the research study. Participants must (a) have experience with the phenomenon under study, (b) be willing and available to participate in interviews and articulate experiences, and (c) be authorized to provide relevant documentation and materials for observation and analysis (Denzin, 2012; Paraskevas et al., 2013). Subsequently, individuals had to meet an eligibility requirement within the scope of the population to qualify as participants for the study. In this section, I describe (a) the eligibility criterion for participation in the research study, (b) strategies for gaining access to participants, and (c) methods for establishing a working relationship with participants.

I developed an eligibility criterion to ensure that study participants were likely to have knowledge, experience, or information that was relevant to the purpose of the study. In order to participate in the study, individuals had to have had at least 5 years of destination management experience and serve in an executive role at a DMO, as evidenced by a job title such as president, VP, CEO, COO, CMO, or equivalent. Participants had to possess experience, knowledge, or responsibility for crisis management as illustrated by the individual's involvement in devising crisis manuals and policies, or executing procedures used by the organization to prepare for or to manage at least one natural disaster or human-caused crisis that affected their organization or

destination. I excluded destination managers who were not in an executive leadership role since they might not have responsibility for crisis management in order to contribute experiences pertaining to successful strategies for crisis preparedness. However, the decision to include only DMO executives with successful crisis preparedness strategies might be a possible limitation of the study, since including a wider range of stakeholders might produce additional perspectives on strategies for crisis preparedness for tourism destinations.

Ethical principles for conducting research necessitates access to participants, informed consent, and confidentiality (Torrance, 2012), which implies gaining access to and establishing a working relationship with participants. I identified participants for the study by conducting an online search on billion-dollar disasters in the United States and documenting the types of and regions in which the crises occurred. From the online search, I identified the CVBs and DMOs located in the impacted regions. Thereafter, I identified the organization's executive leadership team and obtained email addresses and telephone contacts from staff directories publically available on the organization's website. To gain access to study participants, I created a targeted, personalized invitation and recruitment notice and emailed it to each prospective participant, once I received IRB approval. To confirm interest in participating in the study, I incorporated a call to action by asking individuals to respond immediately to my e-mailed invitation with the subject line, "My Destination is Crisis Prepared." I tracked and followed up with both responders and non-responders; providing additional information or sending reminder notifications, as applicable.

Merchant, Halkett, and O'Connor (2012) recommended obtaining permission from management and the research community. In addition, Algeo (2012) indicated that identifying and securing agreements with appropriate study participants is a preliminary way to establish working relationships. Consequently, I sent all participants an informed consent form, which they were asked to sign and return. The informed consent form outlined participants' rights throughout the research process (Aluwihare-Samaranayake, 2012) and served as a foundation for ensuring ethical research (Sonne et al., 2013). The informed consent form also included the purpose of the study and highlighted the benefits of participation. In addition, and as part of the consent requirements, I requested that DMO executives release organization documents to me, such as (a) crisis management plans, (b) business continuity plans, (c) emergency training manuals, (d) evacuation procedures, (e) press releases and destination marketing or promotional collateral to manage destination perceptions, or (f) other relevant policies, processes, or resources. Appendix C includes the case study resources obtained from study participants that I used to validate and triangulate the interview data.

To establish a working relationship with participants, I maintained the confidentiality of study participants. Maintaining confidentiality entailed protecting the identity of the individual study participants, affiliated organizations, and data collected during the research process, as outlined in the informed consent form. To conceal the identities of the DMOs and study participants, I assigned alphanumeric codes from DMO1 to DMO6 and P1 to P6, respectively. I also refrained from collecting and including names, demographics, or other contact information on the interview notes. To

maintain the confidentiality of research data, I will retain sole access to data collected from all data sources. I have stored electronic data on a predesignated disk drive or a password-protected computer. I have secured all hard copy documents and electronic storage media in a locked file drawer in my home office or in a digital fire-resistive safe, which I will retain for a period of 5 years before deleting or destroying.

Research Method and Design

The intent of this qualitative multiple case study was to understand the strategies destination managers have used for crisis preparedness to limit disruptions in the core functions of tourism business and to manage destination perceptions. I selected a qualitative research method and multiple case study design to aid with understanding the phenomenon of preparedness in a tourism context. The method and design structured and systemized the research study. The justification on the method and design contained in this section expands the initial discussion included in the Nature of the Study in Section 1.

Research Method

I selected a qualitative research methodology for the study since an exploratory approach was appropriate for understanding the research problem. Qualitative methods are useful for exploring a case to obtain an in-depth understanding of a phenomenon (Palinkas et al., 2015). In addition, when using a qualitative methodology, researchers can study participants in their lived environments (Eide & Showalter, 2012). Researchers use qualitative methods to produce findings that reflect an individual's experiences, beliefs, and candid thoughts (Walker, 2012). Qualitative methods incorporate open-ended

questions a researcher can adjust, as appropriate, to explore and understand an issue (Bansal & Corley, 2012). The flexibility of qualitative research enables researchers to obtain an abundance of information without being limited to a hypothesis (Bansal & Corley, 2012). Therefore, a qualitative method of inquiry was ideally suited to ascertain how destination managers have reduced business interruptions and improved tourism destination image by implementing successful strategies for preparedness.

The aims of the study and a perusal of comparable studies justified the use of a qualitative research approach to the current case on strategies for destination crisis preparedness. For example, using a qualitative case study methodology, Ghaderi et al. (2012) explored island destinations in Penang, Malaysia and concluded that although the destinations seemed to recover quickly following crises, by formulating a plan, destination managers could mitigate future damage. Similarly, Boukas and Ziakas (2014) used a qualitative approach to understand the effects of the economic recession on tourism development in Cyprus and concluded that small islands should embrace crisis-induced change in local destinations. In addition, using a qualitative methodological approach, AlBattat and Som (2014) explored how crises were affecting Malaysia's tourism sector. In the study, I explored how destination managers have prepared for natural disasters and human-induced crises at popular U.S. tourist destinations.

Quantitative research is most applicable when researchers prioritize the numerical depiction of collected data (Anyan, 2013). Consequently, quantitative approaches are suitable for research involving surveying, planning experiments, or producing statistical measures (Golicic & Davis, 2012). Furthermore, qualitative and quantitative research

methods differ on the ways of collecting and interpreting data (Anyan, 2013). Quantitative research approaches do not include the collection of rich textural data from research participants (Sinkovics & Alfoldi, 2012). Researchers use quantitative and mixed methods research methodologies when hypotheses form the basis of query (Petty et al., 2012). A quantitative or mixed methods approach was inappropriate for the study since experiments, including the use of variables to test and verify theories would not be useful for accurately discovering strategies for destination crisis preparedness. Statistical approaches may also limit respondents from offering detailed feedback on their experiences with preparedness. Based on the objectives of the study, a qualitative research method of inquiry was ideally suited and therefore shaped the research design.

Research Design

A case study is a useful research design when exploring theoretical constructs that require a holistic, in-depth investigation of a contemporary phenomenon (Yin, 2014) in various real-life settings (Cronin, 2014; Yin, 2014). I selected a multiple case study approach to explore the phenomenon of destination crisis preparedness. Both Appelbaum et al. (2012) and Cronin (2014) highlighted the strength of a case study in integrating multiple data collection methods from sources, such as documents, artifacts, observations, and interviews, which enables researchers to identify commonalities among the data to understand a phenomenon.

The aims of the study and a review of the extant literature justified the use of a case study design. Sanial (2014) used a qualitative case study design to explore the U.S. Coast Guard's organizational preparedness. By synthesizing interview data through the

constructs of chaos and complexity theory, Sanial obtained an increased understanding of organizational performance amidst an unstable external environment. Similarly, Becken and Hughey (2013) used a case study design to explore how tourism stakeholders perceived crisis management activities in limiting disaster risks. U.S.-based tourism destinations are suitable case studies since they are well-established tourism destinations that lack empirical research about the phenomenon of destination crisis preparedness. Furthermore, after concluding research on crisis readiness in Turkey and the United States, Parnell and Nathan (2012) recommended future empirical research on preparedness using a case study approach.

Avraham and Ketter (2013) expressed a need for a broad-based study that analyzed multiple cases. Stewart (2012) described a multiple case study design as investigating a specific phenomenon at different research sites. By contrast, Yin (2013) defined multiple case study research as examining the complexities of multiple cases. Yin offered five rationales for developing a single case study design, which included (a) representing a critical case for testing a theory, (b) representing a unique case, (c) denoting a typical, common occurrence, (d) observing a previously inaccessible phenomenon, and (e) studying the same case at two or more points in time. However, Yin indicated a preference for a multiple case study design rather than a single case study design and cautioned researchers to take care in selecting a single case study design to ensure that the case is relevant to the issues. Multiple case study designs are more robust than single case study designs (Yin, 2013; Yin, 2014). Consequently, Yin (2013) recommended having at least two cases in order to make a justifiable argument.

Researcher can deliberately select two cases that offer contrasting situations in instances where a direct replication is not required (Yin, 2013). I selected a multiple case study approach for the study on strategies for local-level preparedness to explore and compare the strategies used by destination managers preparing for and managing natural disasters versus human-caused crises.

I considered phenomenological and ethnographical research designs. Researchers use a phenomenological design to study the human experience from the perspective of individuals living the phenomenon (Chan et al., 2013; Petty et al., 2012), which was not the intent of the study. Ethnographic researchers study groups of individuals and their cultures (Petty et al., 2012), which was also not the intent of the study. The phenomenon of destination crisis preparedness is a contemporary one that requires participation of U.S. destination managers with experience, which denotes a real-life context. The case study design was appropriate for this research project as opposed to other designs due to the focus, problem, and unit of analysis, which entails developing an in-depth understanding of the preparedness phenomenon at multiple tourism organizations and destinations. Furthermore, the multiple case study design was best suited to inform the research and interview questions and investigate the complex, interactive nature of preparedness in the context of U.S. DMOs.

Qualitative researchers place primary emphasis on data saturation (Palinkas et al., 2015). The method of research and number of cases in a study has implications for data saturation (Dworkin, 2012; Morse et al., 2014), which affects research validity (Morse et al., 2014). Data saturation is a tool used in qualitative research to guarantee the adequacy

and quality of collected data to support the study (Walker, 2012). Data saturation occurs when participants no longer respond with new information or themes (Morse et al., 2014) to derive theoretical insights (Dworkin, 2012) and critical information is continuously repeated, which makes exploring a phenomenon with additional people futile (Biran et al., 2014). To ensure adequate data to analyze and achieve saturation of themes, I included a purposeful criterion sampling of all destination managers at the selected organizations who met the eligibility requirements and committed to participating in the study.

Population and Sampling

The population for this exploratory, multiple case study was U.S.-based DMO executives who had successfully implemented strategies to manage crises proactively. Obtaining an adequate sample size is a critical consideration for ensuring research credibility (Marshall, Cardon, Poddar, & Fontenot, 2013). Consequently, the justification for selecting a purposeful sampling method was to capture the unique and diverse perspectives of participants with awareness of the phenomenon of the study (Robinson, 2014). Using a purposeful sampling method, researchers identify participants who have insights on a phenomenon (Palinkas et al., 2015) and can offer unique and rich contributions to understanding the phenomenon (Suen et al., 2014) based on personal experience or knowledge of a topic (Cleary, Horsfall, & Hayter, 2014).

To ensure adequate data to analyze and achieve saturation of themes, I included a purposeful criterion sample of all destination managers at the selected organizations who met the eligibility requirement and committed to participating in the study. Criterion

sampling is a purposeful sampling technique used commonly for implementation research (Palinkas et al., 2015). The rationale for criterion sampling is to study all cases that meet a predetermined criterion of relevance (Paraskevas & Altinay, 2013). I developed the eligibility criterion to ensure that study participants were likely to have knowledge, experience, or information pertinent to preparedness to achieve the goals of the study. Based on the criterial I established, participants had to have a minimum 5 years destination management experience and serve in an executive-level capacity at a DMO. Eligible participants had to have demonstrable experience, knowledge, or responsibility for processes and procedures they implemented at least once to prepare for or to manage a natural disaster or human-caused crisis.

A sample size of one individual is adequate for a qualitative study (Sandelowski, 1995). However, Yin (2013) explained that a sample size should be large enough so that researchers find redundancy in participants' responses. Although qualitative researchers may use a single unit with multiple participants (Yin, 2013), my participant recruitment efforts spanned 4 regions, 33 DMOs, and 79 DMO executives. I invited at least two DMO executives from each DMO to participate in the study. The justification for inviting at least two DMO executives from each organization was to obtain multiple perspectives on the phenomena and to ensure data saturation. Elo et al. (2014) purported that a research study is not complete if the data cannot be grouped thematically to produce concepts. The results of my solicitation efforts yielded six executives from six DMOs located in the south and west regions of the United States.

Data saturation has direct implications on quality and content validity in qualitative research (Fusch & Ness, 2015) and ensures the adequacy of collected data to support the study (Fusch & Ness, 2015; Walker, 2012). Morse et al. (2014) described data saturation as the point at which participants no longer respond with new information or themes. Furthering Morse et al.'s explanation, Biran et al. (2014) indicated that critical information begins to be continuously repeated, which makes exploring the phenomenon with additional individuals pointless. The study design may also influence when and how data saturation occurs. I used a multiple case study design and incorporated multiple data collection methods, including initial interviews, member checking interviews, and document review of organization processes and procedures, to support methodological triangulation.

Although face-to-face interviews are common in qualitative research, in some instances, telephone interviews are a viable alternative (Schulz & Ruddat, 2012). More specifically, telephone interviews are useful for collecting data about sensitive topics because it offers greater anonymity (Irvine, Drew, & Sainsbury, 2013; Trier-Bieniek, 2012). Telephone interviews also allow participants to control the privacy of the conversation (Redlich-Amirav & Higginbottom, 2014). By contrast, new web-based technologies, such as Skype interviews, assimilate the face-to-face experience and offers convenience, and ease of recording interviews (Janghorban et al., 2013; Redlich-Amirav & Higginbottom, 2014).

Due to the geographical dispersion of the research sites and spatial distance from where I reside, I worked jointly with participants to select an interview setting that was

most convenient and comfortable. Consequently, I offered interviewees the option of meeting face-to-face, via telephone, or via new web-based technologies, such as Skype, which are all appropriate interview settings for the study. I elaborate more on the interview setting in the succeeding section on data collection technique.

Ethical Research

Researchers must maintain ethical boundaries and protect study participants (Gibson, Benson, & Brand, 2013). I acquired initial knowledge about protecting human research participants by completing a web-based training course offered by the National Institutes of Health (certificate number 993767). Ethical research considerations include addressing issues of health and safety (Bromley et al., 2015), mandating informed consent (Lange et al., 2013), and requiring confidentiality (Torrance, 2012). Furthermore, Pollock (2012) encouraged researchers to maintain the privacy of study sites and participants and engage continuously with participants to discuss and reconfirm informed consent throughout the process.

I included an informed consent form as part of my application submission to IRB. I did not obtain any data or information from participants or research sites until after I obtained Walden IRB approval. After receiving IRB approval (number 10-03-16-0266782), I emailed each prospective research participant an invitation and recruitment notice to introduce the objectives and intent of the study. Once participants agreed to participate in the study, I asked them to sign and return the informed consent form, which included their rights as participants and my obligation to safeguarding their identities and maintaining their confidentiality. Participation in the study was voluntary and individuals

could withdraw from the study at any time without any consequences by sending an email, calling me, or simply choosing not to respond. Also, prior to commencing the interviews, I reminded each participant that they could respond only to questions they felt comfortable answering and, if in providing information, they did not compromise their organization or professional status.

There were no payments or other incentives for participation in this study. Participation was contingent on an individual's interest and experience with the phenomenon. Consequently, upon request, I will share a one- to two-page summary of the final study results with participants.

To conceal the identities of the DMOs and participants, I assigned alphanumeric codes from DMO1 to DMO6 and P1 to P6. I also abstained from collecting and including identifying information on the interview notes. I backed up the interview transcripts and my field notes on a predesignated disk drive or personal computer that was password protected. In accordance with Walden University requirements, for a period of 5 years, I will securely store any hard copy data in a locked file drawer in my home office or in a digital fire-resistant safe for which I have sole access. After 5 years, I will delete or destroy the data to maintain the confidentiality of study participants.

Data Collection Instruments

Case study approaches require researchers to integrate multiple data collection methods and to identify commonalities among the data (Cronin, 2014). Yin (2013) identified five sources of evidence for case study data collection and triangulation: (a) interviews, (b) archival records, (c) organization documents, (d) direct observations, and

(e) participant observations. I incorporated evidence from interviews and organization documents to support data collection for the study. Appendix C includes the case study documents I obtained. The data collection instruments I used for the study encompassed (a) the researcher, (b) semistructured interviews, (c) an audio recorder, (d) an exhaustive literature review, (e) a research journal documenting data collection, and (f) organization documents.

Scholars acknowledge and accept the role of the researcher as an instrument in qualitative research (Pezalla et al., 2012; Xu & Storr, 2012), and more specifically, the researcher is the primary data collection instrument (Chan et al., 2013; Eide & Showalter, 2012; Morse et al., 2014; Pezalla et al., 2012). Lincoln and Guba (1985) introduced the concept of humans as instruments to explain the unique role of the researcher in data collection and analysis that is required for rigorous scientific research examination. Therefore, as the researcher for the study, I was the chief data collection instrument.

The researcher collects data through interviews (Pezalla et al., 2012). Interviews included semistructured interviews, follow-up questions, probes, and member checks. Consequently, semistructured interviews and the audio recorder were the secondary data collection instruments. I used an interview protocol (Appendix B).

I used tertiary data collection instruments to understand the strategies destination managers have used for preparedness, which included conducting a literature review and reviewing journaling notes and information obtained from organization documents related to emergency management. The literature review included a critical analysis and synthesis that provided context and substantiation for strategies used for preparedness, as

noted in the existing literature. Documents pertaining to crisis management include crisis plans, drills, evacuation procedures, and communication plans (Lando, 2014). I obtained several organization documents (see Appendix C), which enhanced my understanding of the organizations crisis management intentions.

Lincoln and Guba (1985) cautioned that the trustworthiness of qualitative research encompasses incorporating several strategies in the study design during data collection and after data interpretation and analysis. Strategies to establish reliability and validity of the data collection instruments for the study include incorporating interview techniques, member checking, and triangulation (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). To enhance the reliability and validity of the researcher as an instrument in the data collection process, I incorporated bracketing techniques and adhered to a case study protocol (Appendix B). To ensure trustworthiness of semistructured interviews, audio recordings, and organization documents, I adhered to an interview protocol (Appendix B) and conducted member-checking interviews following the semistructured interviews.

Linking a variety of literature enhances a researcher's confidence in understanding a phenomenon (Cronin, 2014). In addition, a case study research design requires a minimum of two data collection methods (Cronin, 2014; Torrance, 2012) since a single data collection method is unlikely to provide a comprehensive explanation of a phenomenon (Torrance, 2012). Consequently, I used methodological triangulation to identify common themes from the extant literature on crisis preparedness within a tourism context, as well as all of the data collection instruments identified for the study, as applicable with a case study research approach.

Data Collection Technique

The central research question for the study was as follows: What strategies have destination managers used for crisis preparedness to reduce business interruptions and improve destination image? To understand the phenomenon of destination crisis preparedness, I collected information through interviews and organization documents. In this section, I discuss the advantages and disadvantages of the technique used to collect data and the use of member checking in the research process.

The primary data collection technique for qualitative data collection is interviews (Janghorban, Roudsari, & Taghipour, 2013). An interview is a data collection method in which an interviewer asks an interviewee qualitative or quantitative questions (Doody & Noonan, 2013). Qualitative questions are open-ended and quantitative questions are closed-ended (Doody & Noonan, 2013). Interviews may be structured, unstructured, or semistructured (Doody & Noonan, 2013). The research design dictates the interview format that is most likely to generate the data that is required to answer the research question (Doody & Noonan, 2013). Using information obtained from the literature review and the conceptual framework, I created semistructured interview questions in an open-ended format for the study.

The decision to conduct qualitative research interviews derived from the need for rich, personalized insights about the phenomenon of destination crisis preparedness. An interview technique allows for interactions between the researcher and participants wherein any ambiguities can be immediately resolved (de Sausmarez, 2013). Interviewing is a central activity for qualitative researchers (Merriam, 2014).

Interviewing promotes self-exploration (Doody & Noonan, 2013) and engenders the most in-depth insights and opportunities to explore a phenomenon from an interviewee's perspective (Becken & Hughey, 2013; Doody & Noonan, 2013) in a way that quantitative approaches do not. However, there are drawbacks to using interviews for data collection. Interviews are time consuming and expensive (Doody & Noonan, 2013; Rittichainuwat & Chakraborty, 2012) and may be intrusive to participants (Doody & Noonan, 2013).

I used an interview protocol, also referred to as an *interview guide.* When using an interview protocol, researchers share critical details about the study with participants, including informed consent, which may alleviate participants' concerns about confidentiality (Jacob & Furgerson, 2012). Using the same interview protocol with all study participants ensured consistency, reliability, and validity of the semistructured interviews. I audio recorded all interviews, transcribed interviews verbatim, interpreted what the participants shared, and provided the interpretations to participants for validation.

Problems in qualitative research may occur if researchers are unable to obtain rich, reliable, and sufficient textural data in a cost-efficient manner during the interview process (Condie, 2012). Therefore, although face-to-face interactions are the standard for qualitative research (Schulz & Ruddat, 2012), since the 1980s, telephone media has become a useful and valid data collection alternative (Redlich-Amirav & Higginbottom, 2014; Trier-Bieniek, 2012). However, Trier-Bieniek (2012) warned that participants might complicate telephone interviews by censoring responses. Despite this disadvantage, telephone interviews are useful for collecting data about sensitive topics

since it offers greater anonymity (Irvine, Drew, & Sainsbury, 2013; Trier-Bieniek, 2012). Another notable disadvantage of telephone interviews is the absence of observable nonverbal cues (Redlich-Amirav & Higginbottom, 2014), which may limit the rapport between the researcher and participants (Irvine et al., 2013). However, the telephone is a researcher friendly tool that offers time efficiency, quick turnaround of participants (Trier-Bieniek, 2012), and cost savings (Irvine et al., 2013).

New technologies in qualitative research, such as Skype interviews, assimilates the face-to-face experience while maintaining flexibility from the use of personal space and ease of recording visual and audio interactions (Janghorban et al., 2013; Redlich-Amirav & Higginbottom, 2014). The disadvantages of new technology include reliance on Internet access, the timeframe needed for familiarity with new technology, and occasional technology failures (Redlich-Amirav & Higginbottom, 2014). Despite the geographical dispersion of participants throughout the U.S., I offered them the option to interview face-to-face, by telephone, and virtually using new technology, in order to accommodate the research participants' need for comfort and convenience. I also elected to conduct the interview at a day and time based on the research participants' preference. Consequently, I conducted all interviews by telephone. Participants limited their responses to select interview questions and provided general versus specific examples and scenarios in order to protect their identity and maintain the confidentiality of their organizations and destinations.

The interview protocol (Appendix B) includes (a) an opening statement, (b) restatement of the research purpose and participants' rights, (c) interviews, (d) audio

recording and note taking during each interview, (e) interview probes and follow-up interview questions, and (f) member checking interviews. In addition to the initial semistructured interview questions, I formulated interview probes. Probes help to remind the interviewer of the initial interview questions while allowing unexpected information to emerge (Jacob & Furgerson, 2012). To probe effectively entails beginning with broad, overarching questions that may take interviewees in various directions (Jacob & Furgerson, 2012). Yin (2013) indicated that case study researchers who probe deeply for context would likely only require a small number of cases.

Collecting and reviewing organization documents occurs throughout the data collection process and supports in-depth questioning during the interview process (Owen, 2014). I requested and reviewed organization crisis management plans and crisis communication plans prior to conducting the interview. The rationale for requesting and reviewing these organization documents was that they were most likely to contribute knowledge to the research study and enhance understanding of the phenomenon of crisis preparedness. However, qualitative research data are subject to various interpretations since interviewers' experiences dictate interviewers' understanding (Harland, 2014). Subsequently, member checking is a vital quality control process that offers interviewees an opportunity to review interview statements for accuracy (Harper & Cole, 2012), correct errors, challenge erroneous interpretations, and assess study results (Reilly, 2013). I also confirmed the interpretations of organization documents during the process of member checking. However, Anyan (2013) cautioned that attempts to obtain consensual

knowledge through member checking might be problematic due to emotional barriers for interviewees to accept critical interpretations of what they conveyed.

Data Organization Technique

Data organization is an integral component and precursor to data analysis and interpretation. I used (a) a literature log, (b) a literature review matrix, (c) a reflective journal, and (d) an audio recorder, to organize and track data and emergent understandings. The literature log consisted of hard copy articles on the extant tourism literature chronicled by themes, ordered alphabetically by article title, and compiled into four heavy-duty 3-ring binders.

I organized the data contained in the literature review matrix using Microsoft Excel to ensure ease of accessing and filtering referenced citations by peer review status, key words, and the role of the literary source within the research study. I organized the individual research articles in PDF format in alphabetical order by article title. Additional data and supporting documents that I stored electronically included (a) informed consent forms, (b) interview audio, (c) interview transcripts (d) interview interpretations and summarizations for member checking, and (e) organization documents.

Journaling refers to the process of sharing thoughts, feelings, and experiences in writing (Hayman, Wilkes, & Jackson, 2012). Journaling is a researcher's tool for examining field experiences and simultaneously collecting valuable study data for a later analysis (Lamb, 2013; Hayman et al., 2012). I journalized my observations from the literature review, organization documents, and semistructured interviews and used the information in the data collection process to identify themes across the data sources.

Using an audio recorder limits time and data management cost (Tessier, 2012). Therefore, I used a conference call recording service to capture interview data and convert the data to MP3 format for playback. Audio recording the interviews also ensured consistency with data collection and data transcription.

I organized and transcribed interview data in a format that enabled easy retrieval, coding, and examination. I took notes during the interview in addition to recording the interview, which may increase the risk of losing information. To mitigate this risk, I reviewed, compared, and reconciled the hardcopy notes and digitally recorded data immediately following the interview and shredded or deleted any information that was not needed. In addition, the interview transcript and recordings had a unique, but consistent file naming convention. None of the stored data contained the names or identities of the research participants. Furthermore, in compliance with Walden University's data storage and retention requirement, I securely stored electronic and hard copy research material such as raw data, transcribed interviews, electronic files, removable disks, and digital recordings, with password-protected access and will retain these materials for up to 5 years following graduation. After 5 years, I will shred or delete the data and resources.

Data Analysis

Data analysis is the most critical and arduous task that presents the greatest challenges for qualitative researchers (Basit, 2003). Researchers analyze data with the goal of answering the research questions (Basurto & Speer, 2012). The central research question of the study was what strategies have destination managers used for crisis

preparedness to reduce business interruptions and improve destination image? Data analysis commences with formulating the research question, continues through the literature review and data collection processes, and concludes with the formal analysis and write up of the research study (Harland, 2014).

Triangulation is the process of using multiple methods to study and confirm a phenomenon that may result in increased credibility in the research findings (Bekhet & Zauszniewski, 2012; Houghton, Casey, Shaw, & Murphy, 2013). Yin (2013) acknowledged four types of triangulation: (a) data source, (b) analyst, (c) theory/perspective, and (d) method, but identified the data source and method types as the most likely to enhance case study validity. The appropriate data analysis process for the study using a case study research design was method triangulation, which is referred to also as methodological triangulation (Yin, 2013). Method triangulation is the process of combining multiple methodological practices or empirical materials into a single study to examine and understand a phenomenon (Denzin, 2012). Furthermore, the strength of case studies relies on using multiple data sources to validate the same phenomenon and support the conclusions of the study (Yin, 2013). Therefore, I triangulated data obtained from (a) conducting semistructured interviews, (b) reviewing the extant professional and academic literature on crisis preparedness, and (c) organization documents that offered insights on the organization's crisis management intentions.

Wilson (2014) indicated that although triangulation is common in the social sciences, some researchers have criticized the process of triangulation due to the implication that there is a definitive account of the social world. Other criticism

researchers have regarding triangulation results from the assumption that the varying methods used to understand a phenomenon receives equal priority in contributing to a phenomenon (Wilson, 2014). By contrast and in line with Houghton et al. (2013), Denzin (2012) recommended validating and cross-verifying data obtained from two or more sources, which results in a convergence of evidence.

Data coding is integral to data analysis (Basit, 2003) and supports the goal of identifying common themes and trends in research (Sinkovics & Alfoldi, 2012). Researchers use coding to organize, communicate, connect, and make sense of data to generate theory grounded in the data (Basit, 2003; Basurto & Speer, 2012). Since manually coding qualitative data is a tedious process, innovative researchers are increasingly adapting electronic methods of coding data (Basit, 2003). Selecting between manual or electronic methods is contingent on the size of the project, funding available, and expertise of the researcher (Basit, 2003). I used an electronic data analysis process for time and resource efficiency. More specifically, I used NVivo 11 Pro qualitative data analysis software to organize, analyze, and gain insights on the unstructured, qualitative data collected from the data collection sources for the study. Further attesting to the value of electronic data analysis, Leech and Onwuegbuzie (2011) found that NVivo software was more useful than managing the data analysis process manually. NVivo software also offers researchers the ability to record, store, index, and sort data to visualize the relationships among the data sources (Leech & Onwuegbuzie, 2011). Appendix D includes a case study code book that comprises the data codes, descriptions, and

frequency of themes obtained from using NVivo 11 Pro software to code all collected data for analysis.

Basit (2003) cautioned that data coding and data analysis are not synonymous. Furthermore, researchers must devise a data-coding scheme for use in identifying relevant themes (Basit, 2003). Sinkovics and Alfoldi (2012) recommended that researchers focus their analysis of empirical data embedded in the conceptual theory. Consequently, I linked the themes from all data collection sources with the cycle of preparedness, which was the conceptual framework selected for the study. The four main constructs of the cycle of preparedness are prevention, awareness, response, and recovery (Pelfrey, 2005), which was used as the provisional starting list for coding the research data.

Qualitative data analysis is a rigorous process that is not self-contained to the research phase, since it may occur at any time during the process of data collection (Basit, 2003). Qualitative data analysis involves listening to and transcribing interviews, summarizing transcripts into matrices, coding statements, linking themes, and selecting quotations for inclusion in a final report (Basit, 2003). Similarly, and in line with Basit's experience, my data analysis process entailed:

1. Reviewing the extant literature on tourism crisis management and preparedness;
2. Perusing organization documents, such as crisis management and communication plans, and training procedures; and journalizing notes for member checks;

3. Conducting semistructured interviews;
4. Listening to the interview audio recordings;
5. Reading interview notes;
6. Transcribing interviews verbatim from audio to text in Microsoft Word format;
7. Reading the interview transcripts multiple times;
8. Summarizing the interview transcripts;
9. Member checking the interpretations of transcribed interviews and organization documents for accuracy;
10. Importing Microsoft Word and PDF documents into NVivo 11 Pro software for electronic coding, triangulating, and observing similarities and differences between the literature review, organization documents, and semistructured interviews;
11. Performing electronic coding, data organization, and analysis in NVivo 11 Pro software using the constructs of the conceptual framework and preparedness strategies identified in the literature review;
12. Selecting quotations from participant interviews; and
13. Writing a coherent case study report on the research findings.

Reliability and Validity

Approaches for assessing the trustworthiness of qualitative research include determining credibility, dependability, confirmability, and transferability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Reilly, 2013; White, Oelke, & Friesen, 2012; Yin, 2014), which replaces

traditional and quantitative notions of reliability (Yin, 2014). Furthermore, due to the bias that can result from a purposeful sampling technique, qualitative researchers must address issues of reliability and validity (Zivkovic, 2012). Therefore, I have included a discussion of reliability and validity factors below.

Reliability

Reliability refers to a researcher's ability to replicate research findings to obtain consistency of results versus consistency of the data collection instrument (Fan, 2013). Lincoln and Guba (1985) proposed the concept of dependability as an alternate criterion for determining reliability and trustworthiness. Reliability implies transparency in the research process.

The quality of empirical research is contingent on the reliability and validity of the methodology used (Street & Ward, 2012). Furthermore, Yin (2014) explained that qualitative researchers could use case study protocols to demonstrate dependability. Consequently, to ensure reliability and validity of the qualitative research methods used for this study, I included a case study protocol (see Appendix A) as a guide for data collection, data analysis, and reporting on research findings and conclusions. To enhance dependability, I used the same open-ended, semistructured interview questions for all participants, in the same sequential order. I validated interpretations of interviews and organization document reviews through the process of member checking. Member checking is a quality control process that offers interviewees an opportunity to review interview statements for accuracy (Harper & Cole, 2012) and therefore correct or challenge erroneous interpretations (Reilly, 2013).

Validity

Threats to research validity include personal biases and flawed processes. Tufford and Newman (2012) recommended that qualitative researchers use bracketing techniques to identify their experiences and preconceptions about a phenomenon to mitigate bias in the research process. Therefore, since research data may inadvertently reflect the personal biases of the researcher and affect the interpretation of study findings, I identified my personal biases and beliefs on the phenomenon prior to commencing research. Standards for ensuring research validity include credibility, transferability, and confirmability.

Creditability refers to the research findings from the perspectives of study participants. To establish credibility, researchers must accurately identify and describe research participants (Elo et al., 2014). In alignment with Elo et al. (2014), Paraskevas and Altinay (2013) indicated that credibility in qualitative research relies on using a population sample that is well informed, authoritative, and relevant to understanding the phenomenon of the study. Therefore, to identify destination managers who were best qualified to contribute knowledge, experiences, or information about destination crisis preparedness to achieve the purpose of the study, I developed a participant eligibility criterion. Credibility also refers to confidence in how well the data address the intended purpose (Polit & Beck, 2012), which implies that the researcher must skillfully collect the most suitable content for analysis. Consequently, case study documents (see Appendix C) used for analysis and methodological triangulation included various types of crisis plans that were demonstrative of the respective organizations managerial intentions. I enhanced credibility of the research findings by using techniques such as member checking of the

data interpretation, using an interview and a case study protocol, and employing methodological triangulation.

Transferability refers to the extent in which researchers can apply or transfer the findings of one study to other settings or groups (Polit & Beck, 2012). Due to the impracticality of conducting all research in all settings, researchers must assess if research conducted in one setting is pertinent to other settings (Burchett, Mayhew, Lavis, & Dobrow, 2013). Bekhet and Zauszniewski (2012) suggested that researchers could achieve transferability in qualitative research by reaching data saturation. Data saturation occurs when study participants no longer respond with new information (Morse et al., 2014) to derive theoretical insights (Dworkin, 2012). By contrast, Lincoln and Guba (1985) argued that transferability is the responsibility of the individual wanting to transfer research findings to other situations or populations than it is of the researcher of the original study. Although I ensured data saturation by interviewing all the DMO executives who met the criteria and were willing to participate in the study, in alignment with Elo et al.'s (2014) recommendation, future researchers maintain the burden of transferring the findings of the study to other contexts.

Confirmability refers to accuracy in presenting the information that the participants provide, as opposed to intentional or unintentional misinterpretations made by the researcher (Polit & Beck, 2012). Techniques to achieve confirmability, that I applied in the study included probes during interviews, follow up member checking interviews, and methodological triangulation of the extant literature, organization documents, journal notes, and semistructured interviews. Researchers ensure

confirmability by writing the final report and highlighting the shortcomings of the study, since it presents a transparent link between study results and the actual experiences of the participants in the study (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). In Section 3, I include the findings of the study, along with recommendations and reflections.

Transition and Summary

The use of audio-recorded semistructured interviews with six DMO executives and review of organization crisis documents may help with exploring the strategies destination managers have used proactively to reduce interruptions in business and improve safety perceptions in a tourist destination. In Section 2, I discussed the methods and procedures undertaken to ensure that I conducted the research study in an ethical manner. I also identified tools and techniques for data collection, organization, and analysis to achieve the analogous criteria of research reliability and validity.

Section 3 begins with a restatement of the purpose and research question. Section 3 also includes my interpretation, analysis, and presentation of key themes as viewed within the constructs of the conceptual framework. I also include the (a) application to professional practice, (b) implications for social change, (c) recommendations, and (d) study conclusions.

Section 3: Application to Professional Practice and Implications for Change

In Section 1, I provided the rationale for why this study is important to business leaders. In Section 2, I explained the study design and research implementation procedures. In Section 3, I present the research findings and discuss the (a) application of the study to professional practice, (b) implications for social change, (c) recommendations for action and further research, and (d) offer personal reflections on my research experience.

Introduction

I conducted a qualitative multiple case study to explore strategies used for preparedness to reduce business interruptions and improve perceptions of safety of tourist destinations after a crisis. Using a purposeful criterion sampling method, I identified and recruited DMO executives with knowledge and experience, about proactively managing large-scale natural and human-caused disasters. I obtained data for the study by reviewing organizations' crisis documents (see Appendix C) and by conducting semistructured interviews with six executives from six DMOs geographically dispersed in the south and west regions of the United States. Four of the six participants served as the president and CEO of their organization. Additional participants served as VP of communications and director of government relations, respectively.

During the semistructured interviews, which all occurred by telephone and lasted for an average of 30 minutes, each study participant answered a series of seven open-ended questions. I also incorporated probe questions, as needed, to elicit in-depth responses from participants. I recorded and transcribed the interviews and then coded and

analyzed them using NVivo 11 Pro software. Triangulation of the interview data from all the organizations' crisis documents (see Appendix C), and the tourism crisis management literature provided additional insights into the measures that destination managers have used to monitor, avert, and manage actual crises to limit business interruptions and safeguard tourism business in their destinations.

Presentation of the Findings

The central research question used to guide the study was as follows: What strategies have destination managers used for crisis preparedness to reduce business interruptions and improve destination image? The conceptual framework that underpinned the study was Pelfrey's cycle of preparedness, which helped U.S. business leaders plan for terrorism threats (2005). The cycle of preparedness derived from elements specified in the temporal framework used by Homeland Security (Pelfrey, 2005).The main constructs of the cycle of preparedness are prevention, awareness, response, and recovery.

I used the main constructs of the conceptual framework and key words from the literature as broad themes and a priori codes for organizing, coding, and analyzing the data. Appendix D includes a case study code book with the frequency of key words derived from a priori and emergent codes from the research data. Based on the guiding question, analysis of the data from the semistructured interviews, organizations' crisis documents, and the extant literature, I identified eight strategies for destination crisis preparedness, which I then grouped into three emergent themes: (a) organizational preparedness, (b) operational preparedness, and (c) strategic communication.

Emergent Theme: Organizational Preparedness

Organizational preparedness is the first main theme derived from the research findings. Organizational preparedness implies possessing a crisis mindset, which typically starts with leaders. Table 1 displays the frequency of reference to strategies that relate to organizational preparedness, which are (a) identifying key personnel to lead and manage crises, (b) conducting or participating in crisis training, and (c) developing a safety culture. The frequency of occurrence of strategies attributed to organizational preparedness disconfirms Wang and Ritchie's (2012) suggestion that organizations and organization leaders perceive crisis planning as unnecessary or ineffective, which influences their crisis planning behavior and preparedness intentions.

Table 1

Frequency of Themes for Organizational Preparedness Strategies for Destination Crisis Preparedness

Thematic categories	Cycle of preparedness	Frequency of reference to the thematic categories	Frequency of reference as percentage (%)
Key personnel	Response	63	64.95
Crisis training	Awareness	22	22.68
Safety culture	Prevention	12	12.37

Key personnel. All interviewees (P1 through P6) acknowledged that key personnel are needed to lead and manage crisis preparedness efforts. In addition, all interviewees confirmed that when handling destination crises, the local government and emergency management officials serve as the face of the actual crisis and destination manager's work in conjunction with government officials who take the lead on the messaging. Hence, destination managers rely on elected officials for direction on crisis

response. The findings highlight the decision-making hierarchy that exists among key personnel, which contributes to organizational preparedness for crises and disasters.

All respondents agreed that the essential personnel required for crisis readiness encompasses crisis leaders and crisis teams. References in the literature also supported the need for crisis leaders and crisis teams. Crisis leadership encompasses the mentality and actions that shape organization culture and crisis strategies (Carone & Di Iorio, 2013; Paraskevas & Altinay, 2013). Trainor and Velotti (2013) attributed effective crisis leadership to the culmination of guidance and proactive efforts in crisis planning, awareness, and response. The findings confirm the peer-reviewed study by Wang and Ritchie (2012) which attributed crisis planning intentions to the predisposed beliefs of organization leaders. For example, Wang and Ritchie found that past crisis experience contributed to planning intentions in the hospitality industry. Furthermore, P3 admitted, "Our members are looking to us as leaders of this organization to tell their visitors what's going on." The finding supports the need for organizational preparedness in both the internal organization environment and external stakeholder environment by highlighting destination managers' role as leaders among their respective DMOs in addition to leading crisis efforts among tourism partners and businesses.

Consistent with Parnell and Nathan (2012) and as a vital preparedness activity, Renschler et al. (2015) and AlBattat and Som (2014) recommended that organization leaders establish crisis teams. In alignment with Richie's (2004) recommendation, destination managers have developed and managed crisis teams at the organization, industry, and local levels. The crisis teams comprise organization executives, staff,

stakeholders, first responders, and law enforcement officials (P1through P6). P4 indicated that the least helpful crisis preparedness strategy is "being disorganized around what each of us needs to do." As P1 explained,

> I think one of the most helpful strategies is to know what your role is and accept the fact, that as part of a team, your job is to do what you are good at and to stay out of everybody else's way. It is natural for people to want to help when something happens. The problem that I have seen several times is the significant rush of people trying to get to the scene of an incident so that they can help and all they do is create more chaos.

Organization crisis documents, such as crisis management plans and crisis communication plans (Documents 1, 2, 3, 5, and 6; see Appendix C), confirm the development of multiple crisis management and crisis communication teams with specified roles and tasks to support crisis plan execution. In addition, organization crisis documents (Documents 1 through 6) support participants' responses by outlining the roles and responsibilities of crisis leaders and support staff. P1 and P4 endorsed predetermining staff roles and responsibilities to implement crisis response effectively. The task of distinguishing specific roles may entail identifying and assigning individuals, departments, or organizations to crisis response activities.

Key personnel must establish and build relationships in order to lead and manage crises effectively. P1 and P4 recommended establishing relationships with emergency first responders. P1 explained, "It enables us to be ready to assist first line responders during a crisis without running interference." Adding further, P6 suggested,

> You have to have the right people within the chain of command in emergency mode who are resilient, resourceful, and persistent. We are not normally the first people who are thought of during a crisis. It is about making sure you are on the list. Making sure the hospitality industry is not left out of the city's response consciousness is critical. Our primary resource is the mayor's office and literally communicating directly with the mayor and the city's public works department; they are the people that know what areas of town are safe or impacted; also, the Office of Emergency Management, which is usually the source for weather related issues; and, the police department. We have their contact information and relationships. We are in their consciousness. We have worked hard enough to make sure they know—tornado, flood, ice storm, anything that has an impact on us is going to affect their budgets. So, building the rapport and relationship when you don't need it so you're not starting from scratch when you do need it. (P6)

Identifying key personnel to lead and manage aids crisis response. Based on the frequency of occurrence (64.95%), identifying key personnel is the single main strategy for organizational preparedness. The findings indicate that organizational alignment, partnerships, and rapport with key crisis personnel, including elected officials, is effective for organizational preparedness to facilitate crisis response effectively.

Crisis training. Findings from the study suggest that destination managers use training as an organizational preparedness strategy to support crisis awareness. The organization's crisis plan documents (Documents 1 and 2 from DMO1 and DMO2)

referenced or implied crisis training. Crisis training routinely occurs quarterly, semiannually, or annually (P1, P2, P3, and P4).

The crisis management plan from DMO5 included a mandate that at least 15% of organization staff complete first aid training biennially. The findings align with recommendations by researchers in the existing tourism crisis literature. McCool (2012) suggested that employees train on all levels of crisis planning and preparedness. Orchiston (2013) and Paraskevas et al. (2013) proposed and encouraged organization leaders to incorporate ongoing crisis training and simulation during pre-crisis preparedness. Respondents P2 and P4 identified crisis training as their organization's most helpful strategy for crisis preparedness. P4 emphasized "practicing and making sure that everyone continues to understand what it is that they are expected to do in a crisis." Based on this finding, crisis training should be ongoing so that roles and duties become embedded in the awareness of all organization members.

The findings also emphasized the types of crisis training undertaken by destination managers. P3 shared,

> We participate with the Mayor's Office, the Office of Homeland Security, the Governor's Office, the National Guard, and all the first responder organizations in an ongoing training exercise. We meet in a neutral location as if there was a crisis. We break up into groups and the facilitators introduce new crises for us to solve. We do this in times when there is no crisis to make sure that we are ready for a surprise crisis. This is a daylong exercise where we are given a series of challenges and crises that we work together as a team to solve. Through the

> course of these exercises, we are able to identify things we would have done differently if this had been a real crisis. We are able to correct that for better response in real time.

The finding reveals that destination managers participate with crisis teams in mock exercises to gain experience and develop personal crisis skills and awareness. Similarly, P2 gave credence to tabletop exercises, which involve talking and thinking through various crisis scenarios, which "expose flaws in the crisis management plan, enhance overall knowledge, and ensure logical and strategic crisis plan execution (P2)." The finding indicates that open discussion and engagement with team members enhances awareness and uncovers weaknesses in organizational preparedness. The findings also suggest that key organization members are transitioning from a silo mindset and embracing team members' perspectives.

P2 recommended crisis training via presentations delivered by crisis experts and step-by-step video instructions developed by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security. P2 noted,

> We read about active shooters. It is important for us to know what to do if an active shooter were to enter your building. What better way to find out than actually bring someone from either the SWAT Team or your local law enforcement office to give a presentation on what to do.

Similarly, P1 shared about collaborating with emergency preparedness professionals to publish simple brochures disseminated to hotels, attractions, and other tourism entities about the services available during a natural disaster. The findings from

P1 and P2's responses endorse involving crisis experts to support crisis training measures, which ultimately aids with recognizing and detecting imminent crisis threats. By contrast, P6 admitted,

> We train under fire! We produce two major events a year for the city. They are probably the two biggest one-day events in the entire state—we have well over 100,000 people attend. We are constantly looking at our emergency plans for those events, which helps us train under fire. We do not have specific training. If there is a training part to it, it would be, do not panic. For us, trying to pick every kind of emergency or disaster probably takes a different response. A terrorist occurrence here versus a flood is very different. If you get too caught up in fitting a square peg in a square hole, you may not be nimble enough to respond when the situation is different. Therefore, training to be responsive to different happenings is more important.

The finding suggests, while it might be helpful to have a crisis plan, crisis learning is more effective when individuals have the flexibility to engage creatively to solve an issue that arises that they may not have trained for. The finding confirms Paraskevas et al.'s (2013) concern that training aimed at achieving procedural knowledge might be ineffective. More specifically, Paraskevas et al. warned about the problematic nature of procedural knowledge, which lacks flexibility and can subsequently lead to inappropriate crisis responses. Consequently, Paraskevas et al. recommended that organization staff receive training on crisis response, given general rules, and be empowered to make and implement judgements as appropriate.

Safety culture. Crisis culture is characteristic of an organization leader's values, attitudes, and beliefs (Carone & Di Iorio, 2013; Paraskevas, et al., 2013; Paraskevas & Altinay, 2013; Pearson & Mitroff, 1993). Crisis culture encompasses how individuals within the organization act, communicate, and perceive crises (Paraskevas et al., 2013). All organization crisis documents (Documents 1–5) validated interviewees' commitment to organizational preparedness.

The existence of a crisis plan and explicit crisis management and communication procedures further demonstrates the safety culture entrenched in the DMOs, which enhances crisis detection, enables crisis prevention, improves crisis response, and accelerates crisis recovery. P1 shared that at DMO1, staff members monitor current laws and local, state, and national legislative acts. Staff members also maintain access to full time lobbyists at their organization and in the hotel and restaurant industries who handle legislations that are introduced that might negatively affect the safety and security of visitors and residents (P1). I did not read in the existing crisis literature about legislative monitoring as a crisis preparedness strategy. Therefore, the finding extends knowledge on the safety culture within the DMO and tourism industry. Organization safety culture aids crisis prevention. Based on the cycle of preparedness, prevention is the first priority of preparedness.

Destination managers maintain a crisis culture that prioritizes employee and visitor safety (P1 through P6). Documents 1, 2, 3, 4, and 6 all highlighted personal safety. When a crisis occurs, "The first thing that we think about is the safety of employees" (P4). The focus then switches to the impact of the crisis on visitors driving through or

staying at hotels or Airbnb's around the city." Similarly, P5 shared, "A few staff members were impacted by a recent flood, so we have been trying to accommodate our staff and first responders with limited hotel inventory available." The findings indicate that destination managers try to first accommodate employees, as their internal customers, so that employees can aid with implementing crisis plans efficiently to external customers.

As part of the commitment to visitor safety, P1 produces crisis brochures used to train the local tourism community and destination visitors. Similarly, P4 expressed concern for crisis impacts on destination visitors, the messages visitors received from city officials, and how DMOs, as tourist-centric organizations, could connect with and provide supplies, information, and support to visitors, hotels, airports, and other tourism businesses. Correspondingly, P1 conveyed an interest in keeping the traveling public informed about crisis situations within a destination so that they would "know when it is safe to return to the community, where it is safe to be in the community and how they can avoid becoming a problem to the recovery effort, which may sometimes last for weeks." The findings reveal that DMOs aim to be the primary source for visitor information and resources to support crisis efforts and limit devastating effects on travel destinations and specifically, tourism products and services.

Respondent P6 boasted, "We have a culture of awareness and responsiveness in our everyday way of thinking. Everyone is geared to think proactively. There are some basics to it . . . being ready—it's in our DNA." The finding indicates that a good organization design incorporates a crisis safety culture. The organization structure would

also comprise decentralized decision-making, which enables organization staff the flexibility to think and act proactively to limit or prevent emergencies.

Emergent Theme: Operational Preparedness

Operational preparedness is the second main theme derived from the research findings. Operational preparedness refers to how to get ready for a crisis in case it happens and how to best contain the situation and get back to regular operation. Lando (2014) posited that organizations with a crisis plan are better equipped to respond to crises and achieve normalcy in a short timeframe. Table 2 shows the frequency of reference to strategies for operational preparedness: (a) developing a crisis and emergency management plan and (b) planning contingencies for business continuance.

Table 2

Frequency of Themes for Operational Preparedness Strategies for Destination Crisis Preparedness

Thematic categories	Cycle of preparedness	Frequency of reference to the thematic categories	Frequency of reference as percentage (%)
Crisis and emergency management plan	Awareness	49	80.33
Business continuity and contingency planning	Recovery	12	19.67

Developing a crisis and emergency management plan. The theme supports the awareness phase of the conceptual framework, which Pelfrey (2005) distinguished as a segue between crisis prevention and crisis response. All participants have and maintain a crisis plan regularly (P1 through P6). The crisis plans obtained from P2, P3, and P6 included procedures for evacuating and sheltering in place. The citywide emergency plan

obtained from P6 included procedures for active shooter situations. Organization crisis documents (Documents 3 and 6, see Appendix C) retrieved from P3 and P6, extended emergency preparedness to include procedures for medical emergencies, fire or smoke, bomb threats, suspicious packages, hazardous materials, and civil disorder. Similarly, P5's crisis management plan comprised procedures for responding to medical epidemics and human-caused crises resulting from the activities of the organization's leaders or caused by data breaches. The crisis management plan obtained from P5 also included technology backup and recovery procedures. The findings suggest that destination managers take an all hazards approach to destination crisis preparedness and disconfirm AlBattat and Som's (2014) assertion that the current state of crisis preparation in the hospitality and tourism industry is reactive preparedness as tourism industry key players neglect their duty for crisis planning.

P2 recommended having a personal crisis and emergency plan. The finding extends knowledge in the tourism crisis management and preparedness discipline. In the review of the tourism crisis literature, I did not observe previous references to or recommendations for a written crisis plan for at-home use. P2 also identified not having a plan at home as the least helpful strategy for crisis preparedness. More specifically, P2 explicitly stated that not having a personal crisis plan is "one of the worst things" and warned, "that could throw everything off kilter." P2 further explained,

> It is great for the organization to have a plan, but if you don't have a plan at home, then our plan becomes null and void. If you have a child who is in school, that is

> going to be your first priority. You are really going to take our plan and file 13 and your goal is going to be to get to your kid.

In alignment with P2, P4 shared, "First, take care of yourself and your family and then we go from there." Findings from the study suggest that the absence of a personal crisis plan may limit personal and organizational effectiveness during crisis response if primary focus is concentrated elsewhere. More specifically, personal crisis planning at home is a prerequisite for guaranteeing peace of mind to efficaciously devise and execute organization and destination-level crisis plans.

P2 also recommended identifying and tasking an individual with updating the crisis plan regularly. The recommendation from P2 ties into the first strategy for organizational preparedness—identifying key personnel to lead and manage crisis—since it implies staff roles and responsibilities are predetermined and preassigned. The consequence of failing to assign an individual to oversee regular crisis plan updates is encapsulated in the following excerpt from P2,

> It is something as simple as, looking at our employee list; making sure that every phone number is updated. It would be a tragedy if something were to happen, and we realize that somebody changed addresses or changed telephone numbers and nobody knew that. Having a dedicated person is a good thing.

As a commitment to preparedness, P2 and P4 retain emergency supplies in the office, which includes first-aid kits, mobile phones, food, radios, and blankets. In the event of an emergency, employees at DMO4 have access to an extensive industry and

employee listserv and the city's visitor information center is earmarked as a gathering place (P4).

> P2 shared the following additional concern about maintaining a crisis plan,
>
> Many organizations say they have a plan but no one knows where it is. On the other hand, suppose the person who has the plan, isn't there that day. Ensuring the plan doesn't just rest with one particular person; multiple people have the plan; usually in different offices so it can be accessible by different people.

The crisis management plans for DMO2 and DMO4 support P2's recommendation. The crisis plan for DMO2 contains the remote work schedule for all employees, which specifies when staff are expected to work at the office versus at home. I observed that the crisis plan for DMO4 was the only plan that included a signature confirmation page for employees to sign to acknowledge that they had reviewed the plan, which confirms that organization employees are aware that there is a crisis plan and they are acquainted with it.

P4 is currently updating and improving the organization crisis plan for DMO4, which is reviewed and discussed quarterly or at least every six months to ensure employees are well acclimated and understand their perspective roles. Since organizational factors continuously change (Kahan, 2015), to ascertain relevancy, tourism leaders should adopt, test, and update crisis management plans annually (AlBattat & Som, 2013). In line with the recommendation from previous scholars, the finding indicates that destination managers tailor crisis plans to ensure relevancy and enhance the efficacy of crisis plans for operational preparedness in tourism settings.

P4 highlighted the importance of devising a crisis communication plan and network as the most helpful strategies to coordinate accurate and timely messaging and ensure safety and destination appeal once the immediate threat of a crisis has passed. P1's crisis communication plan is designed for informing the local community, stakeholders, the public, and the media. P1's crisis plan includes multiple crisis scenarios and how the organization's staff would respond. The finding confirms the existing literature. Lando (2014) warned about the critical role of a crisis communication plan in organizational preparedness and management. Organization documents (Documents 1, 2, 3, and 6) incorporates specific crisis communication measures as part of the crisis plan.

The findings show crisis and emergency plans as a vital strategy for handling crises. More specifically, crisis plans contain tactical responses, messaging strategies, and distribution procedures that destination managers can use to maintain an all hazards approach to operational crisis preparedness. Destination managers maintain emergency resources to accommodate all members of the organization. By consistently assessing organization and destination vulnerabilities and creating personal and organization crisis plans, destination managers may limit disruptions of core processes and services.

Planning contingencies for business continuance. Business continuity is the process in which businesses leaders organize their resources to respond to crises (Herbane, 2013). The theme supports the recovery phase of the conceptual framework. Lamanna et al. (2012) suggested that preparing for business continuity should include plans for handling business closures, staff shortages, and interruptions of lifeline services in order to continue the delivery of goods and services. Responses from interviewees

revealed experiences and challenges involving contingencies related to business continuity. P5 indicated,

> Two meetings for the fall were relocated, the convention center was used as a shelter for flood victims, and most hotels in the area were filled with first responders, flood victims, FEMA staff, and other personnel. This was actually a slow period so we did not expect much business in the city. We are evaluating what we have lost.

Similarly, P6 shared,

> Everyone was in the office but no one could do anything. We found different places for leadership staff so they could communicate with us, and others. We had to figure out how to get power to our building. We called a company, got them to make us a 120-foot extension cord that was industrial— heavy duty—to carry the power. Then we had to configure it to plug it into a power source to power our servers. Fans would not cool the room. Servers were heating the room. I sent my staff to buy dry ice. We got the temperature just below the point of panic and held it there. Then, we assessed the damage and got accurate information out. Then we had to determine what business we could save and what pieces of business were going to be canceled. Based on experience, we backup all of our info in the clouds and we have a backup server at a third-party company far away from our office and they have redundant energy supply. We also have a remote emergency headquarter to make sure we can get in to communicate with staff and constituents.

Business continuity and contingency planning supports the recovery phase of the conceptual framework. The responses from P5 and P6 are related to ensuring continuity and planning contingencies, which disconfirms Becken and Hughey's (2013) assertion that tourism businesses lack business continuity plans. The findings demonstrate the operational preparedness of destination managers and illustrate the resourcefulness and flexibility needed as the business environment changes.

Emergent Theme: Strategic Communication

Strategic communication is the third main theme derived from the research findings. Strategic communication refers to managing information and its meaning (Coombs, 2015). Communication choices influence organization image and reputation, which supports the need for strategic communication for destination crisis preparedness to reduce business interruptions and improve destination image. Organization leaders communicate with the media and other stakeholders to promote positive perceptions and behaviors and to build rapport for effective crisis response. Table 3 displays the frequency of reference to strategies that relate to strategic communication: (a) communicating before, during, and following a crisis; (b) collaborating and exchanging information; and (c) partnering with the media.

Table 3

Frequency of Themes for Strategic Communication Strategies for Destination Crisis Preparedness

Thematic categories	Cycle of preparedness	Frequency of reference to the thematic categories	Frequency of reference as percentage (%)
Risk and crisis communication	Awareness, Response, Recovery	82	50.31
Collaboration and information exchange	Prevention	53	32.52
Media relations	Response, Recovery	28	17.18

Communicating before, during, and following a crisis. Crisis planning in all organizations is fundamental to promoting a positive image and sustaining a good reputation (Derani & Naidu, 2016). Participants (P1, P3, P4, and P6) indicated that ensuring positive perceptions for stakeholders and the public during emergencies was attainable through effective communication before, during, and following a crisis. P3 identified risk and crisis communication as DMO3's overall strategy for destination crisis preparedness. Risk communication occurs prior to a crisis and crisis communication occurs during a crisis (Steelman & McCaffrey, 2013). P6 warned, "When your ability to communicate is gone, you do not have an emergency response." The finding support strategic crisis communication as a critical component for crisis response.

P3 advised on ensuring integrity when communicating with both internal and external stakeholders and explicitly stated "honesty is key." Tourism leaders should communicate often and accurately about the condition of the destination (P3). P6 recommended, "be nimble, flexible, very responsive, but also cautious in that you gather all the facts before you respond. Go out nationally and internationally with messaging."

P6's recommendation supports P1's advice on making sure the community understands what precautions crisis leaders are taking. The finding suggests that information conveyed prior to, during, and following a crisis must be accurate and timely. P3 indicated,

> After [a hurricane], devastated our region, we customized the way that we talked about what happened. For instance, we didn't try to act like we weren't damaged. When we talked about the conditions in [our city], we were very honest about what visitors might find here. We talked about the conditions being damaged. They were damaged, but the core of our city was still intact. We were able to say, if you were our guest, the visitor experience in the heart of the city would not be interrupted. You would still have all the conveniences that you would expect.

The findings indicate that although a destination may experience a crisis, if the infrastructure is intact and can accommodate visitors, destination managers can communicate strategically to influence public perceptions in order to attract visitors and maintain tourism business within the destination. Communicating during a crisis may be complex. Consequently, to communicate strategically, destination managers incorporate multiple communication methods.

Data derived from the study offered insights on the communication measures used by destination managers for crisis preparedness. P1 leverages print media, social media, and television to communicate to the public on available resources and to promote and ensure individual safety. P2 incorporates text messaging and email alerts, landline access, and walkie-talkies. "In the event we are here and we have to shelter in place, we can get

on our walkie-talkies and effectively communicate with each other" (P2). Communication devices employed at DMO3 encompass satellite radios, text messaging, and cell phones for use outside the crisis-impacted areas (P3). Furthermore, if cell phone service is inoperable, individuals are strategically located at satellite offices outside of the impacted region (P3). Respondents P4 and P6 update the landing page of their organization's website to include pertinent information. P2 indicated that organization members sign up for alerts. Crisis alerts are applicable to the awareness phase of the conceptual framework. P2 shared, "Usually every states' emergency management office or agency sends out alerts. It is important for the IT department, within a DMO, receive alerts from the local emergency management agency." P2 also confirmed the existence of emergency alerts within the organization, so that they have the ability to send out emergency text messages to organization staff.

P3's crisis preparedness centers on communicating primarily with individuals empowered to respond to and resolve the crisis (P3). P2, P5, and P6 acknowledged that their organization members have direct communication with their local elected officials. Organization documents support this communication strategy. The crisis plan from DMO3 encompasses procedures for communicating with first responders, organization employees, government leaders, and destination visitors. P3 shared,

> Key organization members report to a Joint Information Center (JIC), which serves as the city-wide command center in establishing and reinforcing networks with the National Guard, police force, EMT's, and other first responders, once an

emergency situation elevates above a specified threshold. Communication is synchronized and disseminated from the JIC.

Central to crisis response is the "ability to make sure your key team members are all accessible and always available (P6)." To ensure access requires maintaining internal and external contact lists, which P2 includes in the organization's crisis management plan. In addition, the crisis management plan contains the remote work schedules of all employees, which alleviate concerns about accessing key personnel during emergencies (P2). Similarly, organization staff retains an updated hard copy of the staffing lists at home (P3). P4 indicated,

> We have a rather large industry listserv of member businesses. It is one vehicle that we could use to blast out any information that we're being provided by the government agencies. We certainly have the employee list. Furthermore, our PR agencies—we have a list of those who we know we need to be in contact with very soon after a crisis starts so that we're coordinating and putting out a similar message with the right information.

The findings support having multiple ways of communicating with stakeholders to ensure efficient and strategic emergency messaging. DMO2's crisis management plan includes an extensive contact listing of federal, law enforcement, and support agencies. Similarly, DMO4's crisis management plan contains an exhaustive listing of local media contacts.

The primary spokesperson across all DMOs (DMO1 through DMO6) is the organization's president and CEO. P6 shared,

> There is a funnel of information. Nothing goes in or out without coming through me during the point of emergency. I am normally the spokesperson. If I am not giving the message, I am approving the message. Before staff responds, they verify things first. I ask them to verify what you are hearing, seeing, reading, because there is a lot of misinformation. It [misinformation] flows and it flows rapidly. Gather all the facts—that takes all of us.

The finding denotes that a credible and reliable authoritative source is needed to communicate risk and crisis messages. The finding supports Steelman and McCaffrey's (2013) assertion in the tourism literature on how to convey emergency messages effectively. Leaders are responsible for the messaging and managing stakeholder perceptions, which is attainable by synchronizing the messages communicated across all entities.

Collaborating and exchanging information. Pelfrey (2005) identified collaboration and information sharing as two major elements of the prevention phase of the cycle of preparedness. Information sharing is securing, analyzing, and disseminating relevant data among individuals and organizations on a need to know basis (Pelfrey, 2005). Fyall et al. (2012), in line with Laesser and Beritelli (2013) and Morgan (2012), suggested that destination managers enhance collaborative efforts with various tourism stakeholders, such as public and private sectors, not-for profit organizations, and local communities. Consistent with findings from Hystad and Keller (2008), Becken and Hughey (2013) found a lack of collaboration between the tourism sector and emergency management officials. The findings of the study disconfirm the belief noted by tourism

researchers concerning a lack of collaboration and information exchange among tourism leaders and elected and emergency officials.

P1 and P2 realized success from collaborating and sharing information among multiple entities, including police and emergency preparedness teams on the local, county, and state levels; tourism and hospitality partners; organizational leaders; prospective and actualized visitors; and the media. P3 establishes and reinforces networks with the National Guard, police force, EMT's, and other first responders, as well as local, statewide, and national media outlets. P4 liaises with city hall to determine their direction for the residents. Through collaboration and information sharing, DMO2 gains awareness of potential hazards (P2), which supports the awareness phase of the conceptual framework and information available in the existing crisis literature. Organization DMO6 is integrated with the city's emergency preparedness system and is able to access integral information. More specifically, P6 explained, "we have them to rely on; we can reach out to them, they can reach out to us."

In line with sharing and exchanging information, is establishing relationships with key officials. P6 admitted to "having a relationship with the key city agencies, the first responders." As part of the crisis plan for DMO1 and DMO2, individuals are assigned to liaise and establish rapport with government and tourism organizations. Pre-establishing networks and relationship expedites collaboration and the efficient flow of information to all essential individuals (P2). Furthermore, P2 shared,

> It is critical that any information that we are disseminating is not in conflict with what the local government or state government are saying. People would

> definitely want to know what the DMO is doing, and we want to ensure that our information is in concert with the local government, albeit with a twist for hospitality so we can control the messaging around what is affecting visitors and locals from a hospitality perspective.

The finding demonstrates the effectiveness of sharing information among multiple entities to increase disaster awareness and emergency preparedness for threats affecting tourism organizations and destinations. By sharing information, key personnel can ensure the consistency of crisis messages. Consequently, collaborating and exchanging information is an appropriate strategy for preparedness to reduce business disruptions and improve the perceptions of tourism destinations.

Partnering with the media. P2 indicated, "If we don't tell [our] story, someone else will tell it for us." The finding necessitates proactivity for controlling crisis messages. However, controlling the message poses a challenge during preparedness and response. Scholars (Hystad & Keller, 2008; Ryu et al., 2013) have suggested that the media and tourism leaders maintain a contested relationship. Findings from this study disconfirm prior research studies. More specifically, participants described their relationship with the media as "vibrant" (P1), "very, very strong" (P4), "very good" (P3) and even shared that the media "became our friend" (P6). As P3 explained it,

> That's one of the byproducts of these crises. We got to become very familiar with lots of news organizations. We already had good relationships with local and state-wide news media, but because so many of the national media outlets were

here for extended periods, we got to know the producers of major networks and news programs.

The findings show that destination managers have established relationships with the media resulting from experiences with past incidents. Through the media, destination managers have also developed awareness of imminent threats (P1, P2, P4, and P6). Establishing media relations can consequently support strategic communication efforts to enhance readiness.

Hystad and Keller (2008) purported, the media often reminds prospective tourists continuously about recent or past disasters. Corroborating Hystad and Keller's position, P1 noted, "The news media unfortunately hones in on the worst. Oftentimes, those particular situations are very isolated." P1's sentiments echo the findings of AlBattat and Som (2014) concerning the negative role media coverage had on Malaysia's tourism following SARS and the avian influenza virus pandemics. In alignment with P1 and Hystad and Keller, Becken and Hughey (2013) also asserted that the media frequently sensationalizes details and exacerbates negative consequences of a crisis. P6 explained, "If they do not have factual, accurate information, then they are going to be an obstacle for you. They will always look to sensationalize. But if you are honest, clear, factual, and prompt, they can't ignore it."

The findings further highlight the importance of cooperating with the media.

According to P3, since media coverage usually highlights extremities of a disaster, a primary response and recovery strategy is not only providing accurate information, but also educating the media. The crisis management plan from DMO2

includes recommendations for working with communication firms to plan media outreach and public relations campaigns. The crisis management plan from DMO3 also includes a reference to New Orleans and the positive media the destination garnered, which cultivated resurgence in New Orleans tourism markets following Hurricane Katrina. The findings support devising a media plan as a viable communication strategy for destination managers to use to reduce business interruptions and improve their destination's image.

Despite the negative perceptions concerning the media put forth by tourism scholars (AlBattat & Som, 2014; Hystad & Keller, 2008; Ryu et al., 2013), Becken and Hughey (2013) indicated that the media is successful in influencing popular perception and fostering trust, which has implications for individual's deciding to visit a destination or in formulating opinions about a destination. Consequently, Speakman and Sharpley (2012) supported implementing a strategy of honest communication with both the media and tourism stakeholders. All participants (P1 through P6) included procedures for media relations within their crisis plans (Documents 1, 2, and 6). P3 also shared,

> I would put more emphasis on earned media versus paid media. We found that if we were able to use the news media to honestly and accurately describe [our city], it was much more effective than us buying advertising space to run beautiful, slick ads on TV or in news print or on websites. I think people responded better to our strategy, which was honest and accurate reporting through the news media; earned media versus paid media.

The finding shows that individuals trust the media. Media relations support the response and recovery phase of managing a crisis. Therefore, destination managers can

strategically engage the media to limit the financial cost of promotions and advertisements pre- and post-crisis.

Several authors have advocated for harnessing the power of the media for post-crisis destination marketing (AlBattat & Som, 2014; Becken & Hughey, 2013; McCool, 2012). One type of recovery marketing message involves using disaster images as an asset by spinning unsafe images to highlight regeneration of the destination (Walters & Mair, 2012). The finding, which is supported by Document 5 from DMO3, suggests that destination managers can take messages from the media that is perceived as negative and incorporate with their post-crisis destination marketing to spin liabilities as assets. Visitors might be inclined to visit a destination to experience other attributes, such as physical changes and infrastructural damage (Biran et al., 2014).

P3, P5, and P6 incorporated marketing campaigns for post-disaster recovery. P6 released a video add campaign indicating, “We are open. The best way you can help us is to come and see us (P6).” Walters and Mair (2012) identified the open for business marketing approach as the least effective strategy for crisis recovery. Disconfirming the literature, P6 indicated that the open for business strategy was successful for recovery. In addition, P6 indicated, “We used national media and celebrities in town. It was the first time everyone in the city got on the same page message-wise. They were calling us, asking us “what’s your message? (P6)” Walters and Mair identified celebrity endorsement marketing as the most effective post-crisis destination marketing strategy for recovery. However, the receptiveness of celebrity endorsements for the tourism industry was unknown (Walters & Mair, 2012). Consequently, the finding extends

knowledge in the tourism crisis literature concerning the effectiveness of celebrity endorsement as a part of media relations.

Social media offers a forum to lessen crisis impacts (Derani & Naidu, 2016). P6 mentioned the existence of a social media team and P3 referenced a social media engagement plan. P6 shared that it is much easier today with social media to get your information out and to counter negative information that is disseminated. P1 shared that DMO1 relies on the media and meteorological reports to learn about severe weather situations affecting the destination. P6 stated,

> We have a team that goes to national and international social media news outlets on a daily basis. We are aware of our surroundings. We do not wait for a disaster to hit. We are monitoring and paying attention and trying to stay ahead of anything that might affect us.

The finding indicates that destination managers rely on the media to promote crisis awareness. Awareness comprises a critical phase of the cycle of preparedness conceptual framework. The rapidity of awareness reduces potential harm (Pelfrey, 2005).

Applications to Professional Practice

Many destinations rely on tourism for growth and existence (Ritchie, 2004). The reliance on tourism increases the responsibility of destination managers to consider potential crisis impacts and proactively devise plans and preparedness strategies (Ritchie, 2004). The findings reveal the strategies DMO executives from six organizations throughout the United States have used for preparedness. The study results are applicable to professional business practices for tourism leaders and destination managers by

highlighting organizational preparedness, operational preparedness, and strategic communication practices to safeguard tourism organizations and destinations.

First, organizational preparedness can be established in both the internal organization environment and external stakeholder environment by having well-trained staff and individuals in managerial roles with effective crisis knowledge. Crisis planning is a team effort. By transitioning from a silo mindset and embracing team members' perspectives, tourism leaders and destination managers can identify individuals, departments, and organizations to assign to activities and provide input throughout the crisis planning and preparedness process. In addition, organizations and individuals from public and private sectors can work and train together, which aids with recognizing and detecting imminent threats. Ongoing crisis training has the additional benefit of embedding awareness in the mindsets of all organization members and key personnel.

Second, operational preparedness can be encouraged through an all hazards approach to destination emergency preparedness. This may entail adopting, testing, and updating crisis management and communications plans annually to ensure relevancy and efficiency. Written strategies and emergency plans should be prepared for home and business. Devising a crisis management plan offers tourism leaders an opportunity to prioritize and engage operational and strategic planning (McCool, 2012). In addition, creating and enacting crisis management plans promptly following an incident limits financial impacts (Mair et al., 2016).

Third, tourism leaders can minimize disruptions and expedite the return to normal operations by applying efficient communication strategies. One such strategy may entail

using multiple methods to communicate with stakeholders to ensure effective and strategic messaging. This may include leveraging social media and mass media. Social media offers a forum to lessen crisis impacts (Derani & Naidu, 2016) by allowing for quick and easy distribution and countering of information. The media is regarded as a credible source. Therefore, destination managers can harness the power of the media to limit the financial cost of promoting and advertising a travel destination pre- and post-crisis.

Implications for Social Change

Billion-dollar disasters are projected to increase at the rate of 5% annually. Increases in disaster frequency and costs may adversely affect viability and profitability for tourism businesses and implicate tourism destinations in the process. The success of tourism destination economies hinges on tourism products and services, destination image, and reduction or elimination of crisis risks (Ryu et al., 2013), which makes preparedness important to destination managers and tourism stakeholders. Among the short-term benefits of preparedness is the ability to allocate resources to manage and minimize adverse impacts, save time, build confidence, and safeguard lives (Wang & Ritchie, 2013). The long-term benefits of preparedness involve increased organization competitiveness, lower insurance premiums, and limited legal liability (Wang & Ritchie, 2013).

The findings from the study has many implications for social change, including removing disaster-induced fear and reducing the adverse impact of crises on the lives and livelihood of individuals and communities. The resulting effect includes increased safety

for tourists, enhanced willingness of individuals to travel, improved perceptions of tourist destinations. Furthermore, benefits of travel and tourism may be realized, such as employment opportunities in both tourism and supporting industries, infrastructural improvements to support travel and tourism products and services, and the ability to experience or highlight the cultural heritage or traditions that are indigenous to a region or destination. The findings also revealed strategies that may be desirable to destination managers and tourism stakeholders seeking to (a) manage risks at the local level, (b) identify preparedness strategies for specific risks, (c) facilitate core business activities before, during, and following a crisis, (d) identify qualified individuals to collaborate with for emergencies, and (e) accelerate the speed and extent of recovery through improved managerial processes and flows. The overarching implication for tourism organizations and destinations is the economic resurgence from promoting destinations as safe places to visit.

Recommendations for Action

Recommendations from the findings of this research study might guide the actions of tourism leaders, destination managers, tour operators, and tourism and hospitality industry professionals. Based on the high frequency percentage (64.95%), identifying key personnel to lead and manage crises is the main strategy for organizational preparedness. Key personnel encompass crisis leaders and crisis teams. Trainor and Velotti (2013) attributed effective crisis leadership to the culmination of guidance and proactive efforts in crisis planning, awareness, and response. Similarly, AlBattat and Som (2014) acknowledged crisis teams as an essential requirement for

disaster management. Consequently, tourism leaders should establish partnerships and build rapport with key crisis personnel, including elected officials and first responders, to facilitate crisis response effectively.

Second, based on the high frequency (80.33%), developing a crisis and emergency management plan is the key strategy for operational preparedness. A crisis management plan is the single most critical resource for organizations (Faulkner, 2001). Having a written crisis management plan implies a managerial commitment to due diligence of care in visitor protection (Gaafar, 2013). In addition, destination managers with written crisis management plans recover destinations faster and better than destination managers without plans (Rittichainuwat, 2013). Through collaboration with other agencies and entities, key personnel can gain knowledge to enhance their crisis plans. Furthermore, tourism leaders should adopt, test, and update crisis management plans annually (AlBattat & Som, 2013) and encourage employees and tourism stakeholders to create and maintain plans for at-home use.

Third, based on the high frequency (50.31%), communicating effectively before, during, and following a crisis is the primary strategy for strategic communication. Strategic communication implies managing information and its meaning (Coombs, 2015). Organization leaders should (a) identify multiple methods to communicate with stakeholders to ensure efficient and strategic messaging, (b) share information among multiple entities to increase awareness and emergency preparedness for threats affecting tourism organizations and destinations, (c) devise communication templates, and (d) establish relationships with the media to enhance readiness.

Findings and recommendations have significance to crisis preparedness efforts for sustainable and profitable tourism business. Using multiple outlets to disseminate findings will maximize opportunities for tourism leaders and destination managers to gain access to information from the study. Consequently, I will publish this study in the ProQuest/UMI database to make it available to students and researchers. In addition, study participants will receive a one or two-page summary of the findings and recommendations. I will write articles based on the findings for inclusion in peer-reviewed journals. I will also pursue opportunities to present the findings at meetings and hospitality industry conferences and trainings.

Recommendations for Further Research

Limitations are aspects that influence the interpretation of study results (Brutus, Aguinis, & Wassmer, 2013). There were limitations of the study resulting from the (a) sample size and geographic regions of participant organizations, (b) interview platform, and (c) participant eligibility criterion. First, the findings derived from interviews with six DMO executives, which is a relatively small sample size. A larger sample might provide additional or different perspectives on the phenomena of destination crisis preparedness. In addition, the geographic locations of the organizations represented covered two regions based on the U.S. census bureau regional division. Since each region is prone to different types of natural and human-caused disasters, including additional regions could enhance crisis knowledge. I recommend that future researchers repeat this study with additional participants to engage a bigger sample of DMO executives from more diverse geographic regions.

Second, all interviews were conducted by telephone. Telephone interviews are a viable alternative to face-to-face interviews and are useful for collecting data about sensitive topics because telephone interviewing offers greater anonymity and enables participants to control the privacy of the conversation (Irvine, Drew, & Sainsbury, 2013; Trier-Bieniek, 2012). Future researchers can carry out a similar study using interviews conducted face-to-face or via new, web-based technologies such as Skype interviews, which assimilates the face-to-face experience. Using alternative interview platforms may allow researchers to observe participants' nonverbal cues.

Third, a conspicuous limitation in the study is the fact that the participants were selected based on a purposeful criterion sampling method. In Section 1, as a delimitation of the study and again in Section 2, as part of the participant criterion, I excluded destination managers who were not in an executive leadership role since they might not have responsibility for crisis management in order to contribute experiences pertaining to successful strategies for preparedness. However, the decision to include only DMO executives, and specifically, those with experiences with large-scale natural and human-caused disasters, limited my ability to capture a wider range of knowledge and stakeholder experiences. Future studies using a similar conceptual framework should stipulate the inclusion of participants into the sample on a less rigorous selection criterion. Recommendations for further research include interviewing additional tourism stakeholders and destination managers in a non-executive role with experience with other types of crises to obtain additional perspectives on strategies for crisis preparedness for

tourism destinations. In addition, there can be a comparative analysis of two groups, one of which has not encountered the catastrophic effects of a major crisis.

Additional research may extend knowledge from the findings of this study. Recommendations for qualitative research includes (a) exploring strategies for crisis awareness, (b) investigating barriers and difficulties of tourism leaders in devising crisis management plans, and (c) identifying strategies for media relations for crisis management. Recommendations for quantitative research includes (a) examining post-crisis destination marketing techniques, (b) examining the organizational and environmental factors that influence crisis planning intentions and behaviors, (c) a correlational analysis on the effect of legislative monitoring on crisis preparedness, and (d) how crisis preparedness strategies differ by organizational factors, such as regions and types of crises. Last, crisis teams are essential for disaster management (AlBattat and Som, 2014). However, there is limited literature available on crisis teams in the tourism literature, which presents an opportunity for a broad-based exploration.

Reflections

During the fall of 2015, I polled meeting industry colleagues to ascertain their concerns in the meetings and hospitality industry. Based on the responses, safety and security issues topped the list of concerns. Upon reviewing the existing literature regarding safety and security within a tourism and hospitality context, the resounding theme was *destination crisis*. Although the literature offered strategies to manage crisis, the strategies were either specific to what was implemented in non-U.S. destinations or largely explained how destination leaders responded to a crisis versus how they prepared

to prevent crises in their organization's and destination's. This gap in the literature cultivated my exploration of the phenomena of destination crisis preparedness.

To ensure adequate data to analyze and to achieve saturation of themes, I included a purposeful criterion sampling of all destination managers who met the eligibility requirement and were willing participate in the study. My participant recruitment efforts were more challenging than I anticipated. I contacted 79 DMO executives representing 33 DMOs that were in 4 regions throughout the United States as defined by the census bureau regional division. I devised personalized initial correspondences and follow-up reminders and emailed them out on a regular basis. I also followed up multiple times by telephone. I invited at least two executives from each DMO to participate in the study in order to obtain multiple perspectives on the phenomena and to ensure data saturation. However, more than one executive did not participate from any one organization.

The data collection process spanned a 3-week period. The timeframe was elongated by executives cancelling or postponing their interviews based on their travel schedules. I was inundated with data that emerged from conducting the semistructured interviews and particularly, from the plethora of information gleaned from reviewing organization crisis documents. The six study participants were passionate about sharing their perspectives and expressed an interest in learning about what other destination managers were doing in their organizations and regions in order to enhance their own destination crisis management and preparedness. My prospective, interest, and understanding of destination crisis expanded during the research process.

The findings of the study affect me professionally as a meeting industry professional, since the meetings industry is a sector of the wider tourism and hospitality industry. However, I now have an assurance that when I am planning conferences, meetings, and events across the United States, that destination managers have proactive preparedness measures and, contrary to what the tourism literature previously purported, destination managers do not derelict their duty for crisis planning.

Conclusion

The tourism and hospitality industry forms the cornerstone of local and global economies. The core purpose of DMOs is to promote a city by connecting visitors and local businesses with the best hospitality offered by the travel destination, thereby increasing economic stimulation and growth. Every year, large-scale disasters take a physical and financial toll on organizations and destinations. How quickly an organization and destination is able to get back to regular operations after an incident depends on preparedness measures undertaken in advance.

The findings from this study highlight three emergent themes for destination crisis preparedness to reduce business interruptions and improve destination image: (a) organizational preparedness, (b) operational preparedness, and (c) strategic communication. Organizational preparedness strategies encompass (a) identifying key personnel to lead and manage crises, (b) conducting or participating in crisis training, and (c) developing a safety culture. Operational preparedness strategies include (a) devising an all-hazard crisis and emergency management plan for organization and at-home use and (b) planning for contingencies and business continuance. Strategic communication

strategies entail (a) communicating effectively before, during, and following a crisis, (b) collaborating and exchanging information, and (c) partnering with the media.

The success of tourism business hinges on product and service offerings, destination perception, and reducing or eliminating crisis risks. Crises affect the viability and lucrativeness of tourism business and implicate tourism destinations in the process. Identifying strategies for crisis preparedness may be desirable to destination managers and tourism stakeholders seeking to limit tourism business interruptions and promote destination images of safety and appeal.

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Appendix A: Case Study Protocol

A. Case Study Introduction
   1. Research Question: What strategies have destination managers used for crisis preparedness to reduce business interruptions and improve destination image?
   2. Conceptual Framework: The cycle of preparedness (Pelfrey, 2005)

B. Protocol Purpose and Intended Use
   1. Researcher will use the case study protocol as a guide for preparing all data collection, analysis, findings, and conclusions
   2. Researcher will use the case study protocol to ensure reliability and validity of the qualitative research method and design

C. Data Collection Procedures
   1. Collect data on destination crisis management and preparedness from reviewing company documents, such as crisis management plans, business continuity plans, emergency and evacuation training procedures, conducting interviews with qualified participants using an open-ended, semistructured interview question format
   2. Recruit participants from DMOs located in the south and west regions of the United States. who have successfully implemented strategies to manage tourism destination crises proactively
   3. Specific study sites and participants will be identified and finalized after researcher sends invitations and receives responses
   4. Preparatory activities preceding face-to-face, telephone, or virtual interviews
      a. Collect and review organization documents of each participating DMO to assess organization perspectives on crisis management and preparedness
      b. Disseminate informed consent forms to each interviewee
      c. Conduct informational telephone calls with each study participant to reiterate the rights of the interviewee, commitment to maintaining confidentiality of the participant and the participants' organization, and respond to questions about participation or the informed consent form
      d. Review interview protocol and ethical research requirements
   5. Data collection instruments
      a. Researcher
      b. Semistructured interviews
      c. Audio recorder
      d. Journal

D. Case Study Interview Questions
   1. What are your overall strategies for local-level crisis preparedness?
   2. How have you prevented adverse impacts of crises in your destination?
   3. How did you gain awareness of crises in your destination?
   4. How have you responded to crises in your destination?
   5. How have you recovered your destination's image and vital tourism activities following a crisis?

6. What strategies were most or least helpful for crisis preparedness?
7. What additional information can you share that is pertinent to your strategies for crisis preparedness?

E. Interview Probes

1. Describe your collaboration activities with other agencies or organizations to plan or manage crises affecting your tourism destination?
2. What training measures have you used to prepare for a natural disaster or human caused crises?
3. What communication techniques have you used prior to, during, and following a crisis?

F. Data Analysis Techniques and Tools

1. Electronic coding (NVivo 11 Pro Software)
2. Analysis tool(s): Microsoft Word/Excel, NVivo 11 Pro Software

G. Credibility, Transferability, Dependability, and Confirmability of Qualitative Study Methods (see Section 2)

H. Outline of Case Study Report Content

1. Overview of study
2. Presentation of the findings
3. Applications to professional practice
4. Implications for social change
5. Recommendations for action
6. Recommendations for further study
7. Reflections
8. Summary and conclusions

Appendix B: Interview Protocol

Participants will be asked to read the informed consent form in its entirety, sign, date, and return the form. The following comprises the structure, script, and procedural protocols for the interview and collection of interview data:

1. Interviewer will send each participant a calendar invite for the date and time committed that includes the conference call dial in number and access code

2. Interviewer will send a reminder to each participant the morning of the scheduled interview

3. Provide an informal greeting to establish rapport, restate the research purpose and participant's rights, and remind participants of the interviewer's commitment to maintaining confidentiality of research subjects and collected data

4. Request permission to begin the audio recording

5. Opening statement and formal welcome using these remarks: "*Hello, my name is Carrine Todman-Lewis. I am a candidate for the Doctor of Business Administration degree at Walden University. I am pleased to invite you as a participant in my doctoral research project on destination crisis preparedness. Crises and disasters are problematic for the tourism industry. They have jeopardized tourism development and opportunities for destinations to thrive. Despite this, few tourism organizations and destinations are prepared to cope when a catastrophic event occurs.*

   If crises and disasters are not monitored, averted, or controlled, tourism destinations can experience disastrous effects in an industry sector that is a key contributor to socio-economic progress and infrastructural development worldwide. Today I have the privilege of speaking with a DMO executive located in the [south or west] region of the United States. To protect his identity and maintain confidentiality of his organization, I will refer to him as Participant [1, 2, 3, 4, 5, or 6] from Organization [A, B, C, D, E, or F]. Hello Participant [1, 2, 3, 4, 5, or 6] and welcome!"

6. Begin the interview using a semistructured interview format

7. Ask the following seven interview questions:

   a. What are your overall strategies for local-level crisis preparedness?

   b. How have you prevented adverse impacts of crises in your destination?
   c. How did you gain awareness of crises in your destination?
   d. How have you responded to crises in your destination?
   e. How have you recovered your destination's image and vital tourism activities following a crisis?
   f. What strategies were most or least helpful for crisis preparedness?
   g. What additional information can you share that is pertinent to your strategies for crisis preparedness?

8. Audio record and take notes during the interview
9. Include interview probes, as needed
10. Conclude the interview, thank participants for their participation, and stop audio recording
11. Transcribe audio recording to verbatim text
12. Summarize interviewer's interpretation of the interview discussion
13. Provide interviewer's summarized interpretation of interview to research participants for verification through a member checking process
14. Correct interviewer interpretations, as applicable, or include additional data received
15. Commence data analysis

Appendix C: Case Study Documents

Document identification	Description	DMO identification
Document 1	Crisis Management Plan	DMO2, DMO4, DMO5, DMO6
Document 2	Crisis Communication Plan	DMO1, DMO3
Document 3	Convention Center Emergency Plan	DMO3
Document 4	Visitor Safety Statement	DMO3
Document 5	Crisis Public Relations Presentation	DMO3
Document 6	Emergency Plan for City-wide Events	DMO6

Appendix D: Case Study Code Book

Node	Node Description	Sources	Frequency
CA_CRISIS AWARENESS	Recognizing that a crisis is occurring in order to limit damage or harm	10	167
ca_CEMP_Crisis and Emergency Management Plan	Fomal, written crisis resources	10	49
ca_cemp_crisis management	Proactive and reactive considerations to minimize crisis damage	8	17
ca_cemp_crisis communication plan	A written plan that details communication protocol during emergencies	5	9
ca_cemp_personal crisis and emergency plan	Written crisis plan for at-home implementation	2	6
ca_communication methods	Ways of transmitting messages	7	14
ca_crisis training	Practice undertaken to achieve procedural crisis knowledge	8	22
ca_crisis alerts	Public warnings before a disaster	1	3
ca_RCC_Risk and Crisis Communication	Visual and auditory images prior to, during, and following a crisis	9	82
ca_rcc_external	Communication with stakeholders outside an organization	6	29
ca_rcc_internal	Communication with internal organization stakeholders (i.e. employees, organization leaders, etc.)	2	6
ca_rcc_synchronized	Coordinating visual and auditory messages so that stakeholders can operate in sync	5	14
ca_SC_Safety Culture	Beliefs, attitudes, and perceptions organization employees have about safety	6	12
ca_sc_employee safety	Safety of organization members	3	6
ca_sc_visitor safety	Safety of destination visitors	2	5

(table continues)

Node	Node Description	Sources	Frequency
CR_CRISIS RESPONSE	Actions taken to repair or limit the effects of a crisis	9	98
cr_crisis leadership	Individual who spearheads a team during times of crisis	7	12
cr_CT_Crisis Teams	Interdisciplinary group that assesses, intervenes, and offers disaster support	8	51
cr_ct_predetermined roles and responsibilities	Identifying and assigning individuals, departments, or organizations to activities	8	27
cr_ct_supporting role	Playing a part other than the lead role	4	5
cr_damage asessment	Preliminary evaluation of crisis damage or loss	1	1
cr_mass media	Media technology that reaches a large, diversed audience; communication with the public	8	28
cr_public relations	Favorable public image portrayed by an organizations	1	1
CP_CRISIS PREVENTION	Actions taken to avert a crisis	9	75
cp_collaboration	Joint effort to achieve a common purpose	9	29
cp_relationship building	Establishing a mutually beneficial affiliation or interest among individuals or groups	7	11
cp_IS_Information Sharing	Securing, analyzing, and disseminating relevant data	8	24
cp_is_external	Information disseminated among destination management organization's external stakeholders (i.e. visitors, elected officials, first responders, etc.)	2	2
cp_is_internal	Information disseminated among organization employees	0	0

(table continues)

Node	Node Description	Sources	Frequency
cp_crisis knowledge	Capturing tacit knowledge and making it explicit knowledge by incorporating it in policies, procedures, and organization rules	1	1
cp_crisis learning	Developing new knowledge from direct experiences	1	1
cp_monitoring legislative acts	Overseeing government actions	1	3
CR_CRISIS RECOVERY	Relaying and reinforcing that a destination has regained normalcy; moving forward past a state of crisis	8	31
cr_business continuity and contingency planning	Strategic planning to ensure people and assets are protected and can function in the event of a crisis	3	12
cr_post-crisis destination marketing	Marketing undertaken to restore destination image of safety and emphasize crisis recovery efforts	6	7
OS_OVERALL STRATEGY	Overall strategy for crisis preparedness	6	25
os_access to resources (individuals and people)	Availability of information or contact with individuals	3	11
os_most helpful crisis strategy	Beneficial strategies	5	8
os_least helpful crisis strategy	Non-beneficial strategies	1	1
CPB_Crisis Preparedness Barriers	Impediments to effective crisis management	0	0