

Leadership and Command Structures in Multiagency Coordination During Emergency Response in Nairobi County, Kenya

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Abstract

Effective multiagency coordination is important for timely emergency response to minimise loss of lives and property damage. During emergencies, multiple agencies such as the fire department, paramedics, police, government agencies and non-governmental organisations often respond. Without clear leadership and a well-defined command structure, there is the risk of duplication of roles, wastage of resources, confusion and loss of lives. The study evaluates the leadership and command structures in multiagency coordination during emergency response in Nairobi County, Kenya. It focuses on how leadership adaptability, accountability, and decision-making processes affect the efficacy of multiagency coordination during emergency response. It uses a descriptive survey research design, questionnaires, and key informant interviews to collect data from key emergency response agencies in Nairobi County, Kenya. A sample of 316 respondents was selected through purposive and simple random sampling techniques. The findings show that 72.1% of respondents agree that leaders demonstrate accountability and transparency. However, there are challenges in adapting to rapidly changing emergencies, with political interference occasionally interfering with the established command structures. Further, 67.5% of respondents agree that decision-making processes are generally transparent, but inconsistencies arise when individuals bypass the Incident Command System (ICS). The study recommends enhancing the enforcement of the ICS to ensure streamlined decision-making, adaptation and accountability through targeted training. This will result in more efficient multiagency coordination and timely emergency response in Nairobi County, Kenya and beyond.

Key Words:

Accountability, Command structures, Emergency response, Leadership, Multiagency coordination

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Introduction

Focusing on multiagency coordination, multiagency leadership, and command structures during emergency response is emerging in disaster management studies. This research is particularly relevant given urban centres' concentration and rapid growth, including Nairobi County, Kenya, where emergencies such as terrorist attacks, fires, and natural disasters are rampant. Thus, leadership and command structures are key in managing critical incidents. Nonetheless, the efficacy of these systems of leadership remains a contentious issue. Academic debate continues whether command and control are better balanced with flexible, adaptive forms of leadership as the effective way for managing multiagency emergency responses.

Kean and Hamilton (2004) and Wendelbo et al. (2016) have noted that failures to coordinate based on weak leadership and divided communication have been significantly at fault. These emergencies highlight the use of strong but flexible leadership, which means that command and control must function in emergencies that are all similar but none the same. Similarly, poor coordination between the agencies involved due to a lack of training and ambiguous command structures worsened the Fukushima nuclear disaster in 2011 (Naderpajouh et al., 2018). Nairobi County's lack of coordination between agencies has led to ineffective emergency response, for example, during the Westgate Mall attack in 2013 (Wangara, 2017).

This is a scholarly debate on the relative importance of hierarchical command and control structure versus more flexible and networked coordination models in disaster management organisations. Comfort et al. (2019) argue that adaptive leadership can adapt as conditions evolve. Chaudhury and Bose (2017) contend that an effective command and control system must provide clear and centralised guidance for decision-making. Command structures in Nairobi County have been marked with response time and coordination delays during emergencies such as the September 21, 2013, Westgate Mall Attack and the January 15, 2019, DusitD2 attack (Lusiola, 2021).

Leadership is important in coordinating disaster response efforts. Empirical studies, such as those on the 2013 Boston Marathon bombing (Landman et al., 2015), emphasise the importance of flexible leadership frameworks. These frameworks balance command, collaboration, and adaptability, particularly in communication challenges and volunteer mobilisation. In Mexico's 2017 earthquake and Japan's 2011 earthquake and tsunami, clear communication and coordination between multiple agencies reduced loss across the board (UNISDR, 2017; Sano & Karasawa, 2020). However, leadership challenges remain, especially around decision-making processes and multiagency coordination. Local disaster response agencies, for example, in Nepal and Pakistan, are important but often lack clearly defined leadership command structures. This interferes with decision-making and resource distribution in emergencies (Naderpajouh et al., 2018; Dixit, 2019). Studies conducted after the Ebola outbreak in West Africa and the recurring fires and flooding in Kenya emphasise the importance of leadership and command structures. The Ebola crisis in West

Africa was worsened by delayed decision-making and decentralised leadership, thus suggesting that leadership frameworks should be more flexible and decentralised (van Neuwkerk & Mphahlele, 2019). Multiagency coordination is hampered by communication gaps and conflicts of interest in Nairobi County, where agencies operate under different mandates and priorities (Njeri & Mwaura, 2019). Due to this diversity, breaks in coordination are common. Therefore, standard procedures and tools for strong command structures are needed.

One such tool is the incident command system (ICS), which has been suggested as an important enabler of command and control during emergencies. According to Burgiel (2020), the ICS allows for the standardisation of roles, minimises redundancy in efforts, and enables agencies to work together. However, the literature does not explain how the ICS contributes to faster and more consistent decision-making. ICS is well known for its structure, but there is an opportunity to dig deeper into its value for overcoming inter-agency disputes and how it can adapt to fluctuating circumstances during emergencies.

Despite the extensive literature on leadership and command structures, significant gaps exist. First, little research is available on how a strong team, effective delegation, and motivation impact the effectiveness of multiagency coordination while responding to an emergency. Second, although the studies touch on the need for adaptability, they do not tend to look at how agencies can change their coordination mechanisms in response to fast-growing crises. In addition, there has been a lack of exploration of how training and simulations might help grow leadership effectiveness and facilitate multiagency communication. Thus, this study assesses the command and leadership structures in multiagency coordination in Nairobi County based on the extent to which the structures affect the operational success of emergency response. Over time, leadership accountability and transparency have improved, but barriers remain, especially regarding how leaders can adapt to change or make decisions. While strides have been made toward an idealised multiagency leadership system, complete optimisation is yet to be realised.

Leadership and Command Structures in Functionalism Theory

Functionalism Theory provides a framework for understanding the dynamics of leadership and command structures in multiagency coordination in emergency response settings. Functionalism, developed by sociologists like Talcott Parsons (1951) and Robert Merton (1949), believes that every aspect of society contributes to its functioning. Functionalism refers to an analytical perspective focusing on the overarching systems.

The command structure in emergency management can be considered the central part of this system, ensuring that the different agencies (police, fire brigade, medical responders, etc.) do not act individually but as a team to minimise disaster impact. Each agency serves a specific purpose, like individual organs in a body, and the leadership is the brain that guides the functions. The

effectiveness of multiagency coordination depends on leadership structures to efficiently communicate and translate actions of all parts to fit the needs of an evolving crisis. Parsons' functionalism emphasises this interdependence, as the inefficiencies in leadership can contribute to systemic failure, leading to ineffective disaster response.

Functionalism states that stability is created through cooperation and coordination between each element of society or an ecosystem. However, suppose a single cog of that system fails to perform its proper function in balance (like a command structure not providing clear guidance or failing to adapt to new information). In that case, the entire system begins to fail. This theoretical framework supports the role of incident commanders in multiagency coordination. They organise the system, ensure agencies know what others are doing, and help facilitate quick decision-making under pressure. This functionalisation can be seen in the ICS, which constructs a command structure that establishes transparent decision-making and role differentiation guidelines and facilitates multiagency coordination.

Functionalism is critiqued for failing to account for conflict and struggles for power within social systems. For instance, the command structure for multiagency coordination is easily disrupted by political interference, inconsistent enforcement of the ICS, and conflicts over resource allocation. These disruptions can result in miscommunication, unclear decision-making and the waste of resources. Though the theory emphasises the role of leaders in keeping a system of response organised and functional, it also shows the system's fragility with parts (multiagency communication, decision-making processes, etc.) failing to do its job. The system of leadership can work together more effectively by making leadership structures far less static and more dynamic through communication.

Methodology

The study used a descriptive survey research design because it was suitable for capturing real-time views on multiagency coordination during emergency response in Nairobi County, Kenya. This study was conducted in Nairobi County, one of the fast-rising urban centres dealing with recurrent emergencies (fire, floods and collapse of buildings) owing to its vast population and growth in infrastructure. Nairobi was chosen because of the frequency of emergencies and thus was a relevant setting to study multiagency coordination. The sample size was 316, selected through purposive and simple random sampling. Data was collected using key informant interviews and questionnaires administered to National Disaster Management Unit officials, fire brigade, Red Cross, police, and other response teams. Data was collected by four trained assistants who followed standard procedures. Descriptive statistics were used to analyse quantitative data, and thematic analysis was employed to analyse qualitative data. Participation was voluntary, and data was anonymised to encourage open and honest responses.

Findings

Accountability and Transparency

Respondents were asked to indicate their responses on whether leaders and commanders demonstrated accountability and transparency during disaster response efforts. The study findings in Table 1 show that the majority (49.3%) of the respondents agree, 22.8 per cent strongly agree, 15.3 per cent are neutral, 9 per cent disagree, and 3.7 per cent strongly disagree. The study findings imply that the majority (72.1%) of the respondents agree or strongly agree that leaders and commanders demonstrated accountability and transparency, and 15.3% are neutral. In contrast, 12.7 per cent disagree or strongly disagree. The mean scores of 3.78 and a standard deviation of 1 suggest a generally positive perception of accountability and transparency in leadership and command structures.

Table 1

Accountability and Adaptation of Leaders

Statement	SD %	D %	N %	A %	SA %	Mean	Std. Dev.
Leaders and commanders demonstrated accountability and transparency	3.7	9.0	15.3	49.3	22.8	3.78	1.00
Leaders and commanders adapt in the face of changing circumstances	2.6	6.7	13.8	54.9	22.0	3.87	0.92

Key: SD (Strongly Disagree), D (Disagree), N (Neutral), A (Agree), SA (Strongly Agree)
Source: Field data (2024)

The study’s findings revealed that the respondents have a predominantly positive perception of leadership accountability and transparency during disaster response efforts. Seventy-five per cent of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that leaders and commanders showed those qualities, suggesting a broad base of trust in leadership during emergencies. Public trust in government efforts means agencies can respond more effectively and cooperate when needed. Twenty-eight per cent of respondents were neutral or disagreed. This indicates that there is potential for improved leadership practices and communication strategies. The neutral scores might also indicate that this population segment is unaware of what leadership is doing, suggesting a need for more outreach. A strong mean of 3.78 on a 5-point scale and standard deviation of 1 demonstrates that leaders are doing above average with accountability and transparency, whilst respondents show consistent opinions toward the question. The consistent data lends credibility to the findings and provides a reliable baseline for measuring future improvements in leadership during emergency responses.

Key informants were asked to state their perceptions of transparency and accountability for leaders during emergency response, and they corroborated the above findings, indicating the need for accountability and transparency. One of the informants reported that “accountability is key to emergency response. Leadership demands the sharing of rationale for decisions and accountability for outcomes. This contributes to developing trust and confidence between all the teams involved in the response.”

Another key informant expressed that, “There have been leadership decisions that were counterproductive to the response. We need harsher accountability steps to ensure that the leaders frequently talk and walk in the bigger step for the community’s well-being.”

Responses suggest that most respondents (72.1%) agreed or strongly agreed that leaders and commanders were accountable and transparent during the disaster response, aligning with existing literature on the subject. However, studies with divergent views on ensuring transparency and accountability in disaster response also exist.

Numerous studies cited leadership with accountability and transparency during disaster response. For example, Liswanty and Prabowo (2021) discuss how to be an effective leader during a crisis, one must be transparent and communicate with people better, together with the skills to invoke trust between people. Cebula and Craig (2022) argue that leaders who embody these traits are far more likely to promote collaboration and coordination and yield better outcomes. Consistent with this finding, Haavisto and Linge (2022) revealed that when decision-making processes are transparent and leaders communicate clearly with the public, trust in authorities and the overall effectiveness of response efforts can be improved during crises. However, they also argue that accountability and transparency will preserve the legitimacy of these emergency management organisations and your public support.

Accountability and transparency are critical elements of disaster response leadership, but some studies have demonstrated difficulties in meeting these objectives. Abdeen et al. (2021) state that disaster response typically involves multiple interdependent agencies, which makes it challenging to hold those agencies accountable. Moreover, they state that having multiple organisations with differing mandates, structures, and cultures could lead to a lack of clarity about which organisation is responsible for what, thereby hindering transparency and elements of accountability for individuals or organisations for their actions.

Adaptability in Changing Circumstances

The respondents were also asked to indicate their agreement on whether leaders and commanders adapt to changing circumstances during disaster response. The study findings presented in Table 1 indicate that the majority (54.8%) of the respondents agree, 22 per cent strongly agree, 13.8 per cent are neutral, 6.7 per cent disagree, and 2.6 per cent strongly disagree. The study findings imply that most (76.8%) of respondents agree or strongly agree that leaders and commanders adapt in

the face of changing circumstances during emergency response, and 13.8% are neutral. In comparison, 9.3% either disagree or strongly disagree. The mean of 3.87 shows a positive view of the adaptability of leaders during emergency response, leaning towards agreement with the statement. The standard deviation of 0.92 suggests a slight variability in responses, indicating some level of difference in their views.

The notable consensus among respondents (76.8%) indicated that leaders and commanders have historically demonstrated flexibility in adapting their strategies, decisions, and actions in response to the dynamic challenges and uncertainties that frequently accompany emergencies. This flexibility is key to managing disasters effectively. It allows leaders to stay responsive to the needs of affected communities and ensure that resources are allocated optimally, preserving the efficiency of response in changing and unpredictable landscapes.

The mean score on a 5-point scale of 3.87 strengthens respondents' overall positive outlook on leadership adaptability. That indicates, on average, the respondents agree that adaptability in leadership is both important and can be seen in responses to the disaster. Despite this, it is important to note that the standard deviation of 0.92 suggests moderate response variation. Most respondents agree or strongly agree, with opinions showing some dispersion. This dispersion might be due to variances in unique experiences, the contexts of the disasters they have experienced, or differences in leaders' and commanders' performance across different organisations or jurisdictions.

A lower percentage of respondents, 13.8 percent, chose neutral, which may be individuals with limited exposure to disaster response leadership or had mixed experiences with effective and ineffective examples of adaptability, creating a balanced perspective. 9.3 percent disagree or strongly disagree and may have witnessed situations where leaders cannot get it right because the organisation, funding, or personal skills limit them.

The relevance of these findings to disaster management organisations and the training and development of leaders and commanders is immense. The widespread consensus on adaptability's critical nature underlines the importance of organisations making efforts to develop this skill among their leaders. The moderate variance in responses also indicates that there is room to do so regarding improving adaptability within leadership at every level and in every emergency. The results of this study are consistent with the characteristics of effective leadership in public health emergencies addressed by Curnin et al. (2015), who highlight the role of adaptability, ownership, and collaborative decision-making in the context of multiagency coordination.

Further, respondents were asked to describe any specific challenges they had encountered regarding leadership and command structures during emergency response situations in Nairobi County. The key leadership challenges that emerged were a lack of clear command structures, ambiguity of roles, inconsistent joint planning and training and competing agency priorities and

cultures. These challenges compromised leadership's speed, coherence and effectiveness in multiagency emergency responses. The findings highlight the need for pre-established, well-rehearsed and universally recognised incident command frameworks to enable unified leadership when multiple agencies respond jointly to emergency incidents in Nairobi County. Overcoming these leadership challenges will be key to improving interagency emergency coordination.

Key informant interviews corroborated the above findings, revealing some challenges in adapting to changing circumstances during emergency response. A key informant stated that, "it can be challenging for leaders to adapt and make decisions quickly in rapidly evolving situations. Sometimes, the command structure lacks flexibility. This limits our ability to respond effectively to changing needs on the ground."

Another key informant reiterated the above sentiments and stated, "when faced with unexpected challenges, some leaders struggle to think outside the box and develop creative solutions. This slows the response and affects the general efficacy of multiagency coordination during emergency response."

The analysis of leadership and command structures in multiagency coordination during emergency response in Nairobi County indicates that respondents perceive adaptability, accountability, and decision-making processes positively. The findings also suggest that leaders and commanders generally demonstrate adaptability and accountability and that decision-making processes are characterised by clear communication, collaboration, and stakeholder engagement. The findings reveal challenges in adapting to changing circumstances during emergency response, which diverges from the generally positive perceptions indicated in the quantitative results. The divergence can be attributed to the realities that leaders and commanders face while dealing with rapidly changing emergencies. The findings align with a study by Nowell et al. (2017), who acknowledges the challenges faced while adapting to dynamic and uncertain environments.

Decision Communication

The respondents were asked to state their level of agreement with the statement that decisions are clearly and transparently communicated to the team by leaders and the study findings presented in Table 2. Table 2 shows that the majority (47%) of the respondents agree, 20.5 per cent strongly agree, 16.4 per cent are neutral, 11.6 per cent disagree, and 4.5 per cent strongly disagree. The study findings imply that the majority (67.5%) of the respondents either agree or strongly agree that decisions are clearly and transparently communicated to teams, 16.4% are neutral, and 16.1% disagree or strongly disagree. The mean scores of 3.68 and a standard deviation of 1.06 indicate a generally positive perception of decision communication processes within multiagency coordination.

Table 2*Decision-Making Processes for Leaders in Multiagency Coordination*

Statement	SD %	D %	N %	A %	SA %	Mean	Std. Dev.
Decisions are clearly and transparently communicated to the team	4.5	11.6	16.4	47.0	20.5	3.68	1.06
Leaders actively seek input and collaborate with other leaders and stakeholders when making decisions	3.0	10.1	17.9	49.6	19.4	3.72	0.98

Key: SD (Strongly Disagree), D (Disagree), N (Neutral), A (Agree), SA (Strongly Agree)

Source: Field data (2024)

This percentage (67.5%) demonstrates a considerable degree of consensus. Decision-making in multiagency coordination is typically perceived as transparent, and effective communication is made with the team members. It is important to communicate a decision clearly and transparently and ensure all parties are informed, aligned, and able to act. This assists in creating a shared understanding of the status quo and purpose, which is key to effective disaster response.

A mean score of 3.68 on a 5-point scale shows that respondents perceive the decision-making processes positively. Nonetheless, the standard deviation of 1.06 demonstrates substantial variance in the responses. Though most respondents agree or strongly agree, there is widespread response. This may be due to different teams or organisations having different communication practices, the nature and scale of the emergencies, or differences in personal experience that eventually impact decision-making.

However, it is worth mentioning that the 16.4 per cent of neutral responses may indicate limited exposure to instances of decision-making processes or situations where they were positively or negatively impacted by it. They include the 16.1% who disagree or strongly disagree, perhaps had witnessed communication breakdowns around decisions when "information flows" were broken or there were "information silos," or perhaps because no decision-making protocol existed in their setting.

These findings are relevant to organisations involved in disaster management and the design of communication processes in multiagency coordination. The consensus around the need for transparent and clear communication of decisions suggests that organisations must focus on developing and implementing effective communication mechanisms. However, the ranges in

responses indicate that better attention could be given to achieving consistency and transparency in decision-making in all stages of disaster response within various teams and organisations. Moreover, the results suggest that it is important to regularly review and analyse the communication mechanisms used in decisions to ensure their effectiveness.

Further, respondents were asked to state which factors contributed to effective decision-making within multiagency coordination during emergencies. The key factors enabling effective multiagency decision-making were well-defined command frameworks, seasoned incident commanders, co-located coordination and role clarity. The presence and strength of these factors heavily influenced the speed, unity and quality of decisions made in multiagency emergency responses.

These findings align with the work of Waring et al. (2020), who state that transparency within decision-making and accountability are key to improving the effectiveness of multiagency coordination during emergency response. Abbas (2021) argues that well-developed information-sharing and communication processes are necessary for situational awareness, decision-making, and multiagency coordination. The above authors recommend that transparent communication can build trust, minimise uncertainty, and allow diverse stakeholders to align around shared objectives. Hossain and Kuti (2010), in a similar way, describe the role that more transparent communication avenues and protocols play in response to disasters. They contend that transparent communication processes result in timely, accurate, and secure dissemination of important information to all relevant stakeholders. They point out that multiagency settings often call for transparent communication.

Though the need is well-established, some research has shown communication challenging at such times: clear, strategic, and transparent communication are key elements to disaster response. For instance, Bharosa et al. (2009) mention that the complexity of disaster environments, the participation of multiple actors, and the time-sensitive nature of response efforts can create significant barriers to effective communication. They suggest that technical, organisational, and cultural differences among the agencies that participate also create challenges to information sharing and can create communication breakdowns.

Altay and Labonte (2014) also mentioned that the overwhelming amount of information produced during disasters could hinder effective knowledge management. They state that the volume of data from diverse sources can lead to saturation of communication channels to identify and prioritise significant information. The authors point out that this information overload causes delays, miscommunications, or missing key details, ultimately affecting clear and transparent decision communication.

Input and Collaboration with Others

The respondents were asked to agree with the statement that leaders actively seek input and collaboration with other leaders and stakeholders when making important decisions. The study findings in Table 2 showed that the majority (49.6%) of the respondents agree, 19.4 per cent strongly agree, 17.9 per cent neutral, 10.1 per cent disagree, and 3 per cent strongly disagree. The study implies that the majority (69%) of the respondents either agree or strongly agree that leaders actively seek input and collaboration with other leaders and stakeholders when making important decisions; 17.9% are neutral, while 13.1% disagree or strongly disagree. The mean scores of 3.72 and a standard deviation of 0.98 indicate a generally positive perception of actively seeking input from other stakeholders within multiagency coordination.

Table 2 indicates that most respondents (69%) either agree or strongly agree, thus showing a generally positive perception of collaboration. The consensus here indicates that leaders are perceived as proactive in finding creative solutions involving others when making important decisions. The collaborative decision-making approach is that complex challenges are better addressed when diverse knowledge, resources and strategies are brought together from multiple organisations.

It recognises that no single organisation or leader has all the answers and that a strand of effective solutions lies in the group consensus. In conclusion, leaders can make better decisions involving others by leveraging diverse perspectives, skills, and insights. In addition, asking for input and working together fosters trust, rapport, and a sense of shared ownership among the stakeholders in multiagency coordination. Also, it creates the spirit of partnership and mutual respect, which is key to effectively working together and achieving the level of coordination necessary in high-stakes situations such as these in response to an emergency.

On the other hand, this behaviour had the highest mean score (3.72) on a scale of 1 to 5, indicating overall positive perception. The average score, therefore, indicates that, at a minimum, they are inclined to agree with this statement, suggesting a consensus around the value and use of active input and collaboration in decision-making. A standard deviation of 0.98 shows a normal variability of the answers. While most of those who answer agree or strongly agree, there is some dispersion. However, this variation could be due to differences in personal experiences, different contexts in which they have operated in multiagency coordination or differences in leadership styles and practices across different agencies.

The 17.9 per cent of neutral respondents may have been those not exposed to decision-making in multiagency coordination, where they had more exposure to positive or negative examples of leaders prompting input and collaboration. The 13.1 per cent who disagree or strongly disagree may have encountered scenarios where decisions came down from a leader without much

consultation, or leaders neglected to leverage meaningful engagement with other stakeholders, perhaps due to time constraints, confidentiality, or unwritten rules around collaboration.

These findings have important implications for organisations engaged in multiagency coordination, leadership development, and practice. The consensus on the significance of actively seeking input and collaboration highlights the need for organisations to create an environment that values this behaviour. Moreover, the findings indicate that it may be possible to improve the extent to which all leaders embrace collaborative decision-making.

Additionally, respondents were asked to provide their views on the effectiveness of the other branches of government in implementing the Incident Command System (ICS) during emergency response situations in Nairobi County. Qualitative data indicated varied views on the success of ICS adoption and implementation across agencies in Nairobi County. Although many respondents had noted the importance of ICS, the actual use and familiarity of ICS varied widely. Although ICS had been adopted as the normative standard for multiagency response coordination in Nairobi County, the effectiveness of its application could be improved considerably. Challenges included uneven adoption, lack of training, stress-based differences, role ambiguity, inconsistent planning, incompatible communications, and minimal engagement of non-traditional partners.

Some respondents also noted that when a political leader visits an emergency scene, they miss the emergency command structure, which sometimes brings confusion and conflict of interest. Initially, some agencies did not fully understand the Incident Command Structure and how things were supposed to work; however, the leadership and command challenges have been worked out with training and joint exercises. More integrated planning, training, equipping, and investing were necessary to increase ICS proficiency and effectiveness. If Nairobi County hopes to achieve the full potential of ICS for multiagency emergency coordination, it will be important to address these challenges systematically.

It also found that effective emergency response often required the active participation of the community, including informing the residents about the risks, providing information on evacuation or shelter, and mobilising volunteers. However, establishing trust and collaboration among different communities in Nairobi County proved difficult, especially in places with poor infrastructure (like slum areas) or in cases of language barriers.

The results also highlight the need for training and capacity-building for multiagency coordination leaders and commanders. Sawalha (2020) provides insight into how leadership development programs can positively affect multiagency coordination's response, reinforcing the importance of providing emergency response leaders with training and capacity-building opportunities. These findings add to the expanding literature on leadership in crisis response and multiagency coordination. They are consistent with the work of Hoch and Trigg (2019), which focuses on

effective leadership, increasing collaboration, teamwork, communication, and coordination between various agencies to be integrated for emergency response. The results further underline the need for more studies and pragmatic mannerisms to improve leadership skills and boost interagency coordination, which, according to Jensen and Thompson (2015), needs to be encouraged.

Conclusion

This study thus concludes that although the County's multiagency leadership structures demonstrated accountability and the ability to adapt to emergent challenges, political interference and irregular command systems hindered effective emergency response coordination. Strengthening the use of the ICS, improving adaptability training and reducing political obstruction during emergencies will help improve leadership effectiveness in multiagency coordination.

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