

WHAT CAN DERAIL DECISION MAKING? A PHASE MODEL PERSPECTIVE

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AS THE FIRST PHASE OF A PHD PROJECT, A LITERATURE REVIEW WAS CONDUCTED INTO FACTORS WHICH CONTRIBUTE TO DERAILING DECISION MAKING PROCESSES DURING EMERGENCY EVENTS. THIS RESEARCH WILL INFORM FUTURE STUDIES INTO PREVENTING THE DERAILMENT OF DECISION PROCESSES.

THE STUDY

Phase models are a common way to frame decision making in emergency management (Owen et al., 2013; SA CFS, 2011).

An example of a phase model is in Figure 1 below.

Research has shown that decision making can be derailed away from the processes outlined in the phase model.

The review aimed to understand the factors which could potentially lead to derailment.

METHODOLOGY

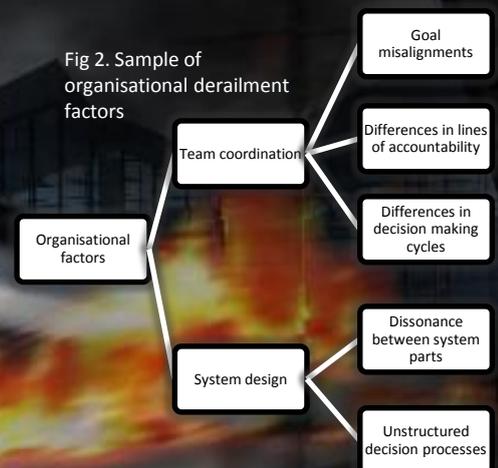
119 relevant research papers were reviewed for elements shown to derail the decision making process in emergency management.

5 major categories were drawn from the literature. Each of these could be separated into a large number of subcategories (see Fig. 2 for an example).

Examining the major decision making derailment categories...

- ▶ **Physiological factors** include physical burnout, fatigue and exhaustion. These have direct implications for a persons decision making capabilities.
- ▶ **Cognitive factors** are those which negatively influence a decision makers cognition. This includes building accurate mental models, situational awareness, and other factors which impair perception, such as personal bias.
- ▶ **Organizational factors** are primarily concerned with the systems which organizations operate within. For instance, some elements of command and control systems such as centralization of power are said to limit decision making capabilities.
- ▶ **Situational Factors** are factors attributed to an emergency event itself, including unique characteristics which typify the event such as weather, persons involved, available time scales, and level of uncertainty.
- ▶ **Socio-political factors** relate to the sociopolitical elements which influence decision making. This includes political pressures and pressures from the general public, such as maintaining community trust and confidence.

The figure below explores some of the decision derailment subcategories related to organizational factors.



MOVING FORWARD

These reviews will inform future research into a number of potential studies including;

- Model development
- Enhanced operational decision making
- Training and simulation practices
- Enhancing organizational policies

For more information on this research contact Jared Grunwald at j.grunwald@cqu.edu.au

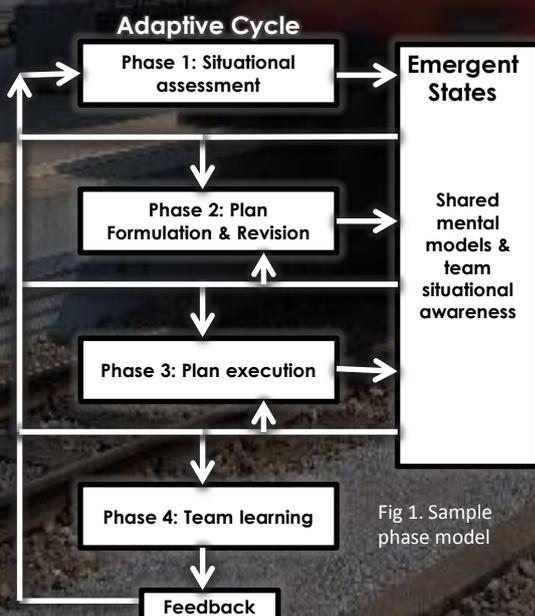


Fig 1. Sample phase model