



What is the President's Successful Crisis Management Leadership?: Based on the Assessment of the Sewol Ferry Disaster Case in Korea

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ABSTRACT

The state leader's political leadership on "how to manage the disaster situation and how to solve the post-disaster recovery process" is linked to national trust in disaster management capabilities, or political trust. Park, Geun-hye since the sinking of Sewol Ferry disaster in Korean society criticism of the government's disaster response capacity and disaster response but boils down to impeach the president of the first is the failure. This is understandable as the leader's leadership in disaster-level situation management affects political trust. Therefore, an understanding of the leader's leadership as his ability to manage disasters in terms of securing political trust is required. In this regard, this study attempts to explain the leader's leadership factors in disaster management that affect the successful assessment of disaster management independently of disaster damage through Sewol ferry disaster case. In particular, the study aims to present organizational management, communication skills, future forecasting skills, learning skills, and empathy as key factors.

Key words: Sewol ferry disaster, president, disaster management, leadership, news report

Introduction

The disaster management capability of nation's leader for "how do we manage disaster situations?" and "how do we solve the post-disaster recovery process?" are linked to government trust. In the case of Korea, because of the Sewol ferry disaster, the president Park, Geun-hye is criticism of the disaster management and disaster response As a result, president of impeachment, the results of the worst. This is a clear example of the president's leadership in disaster management affecting political trust. Therefore, an understanding of the president's ability to manage disasters

and leadership is needed in terms of securing political trust and government trust.

In the field of social science, trust is defined as "the subjective expectation that the trust target will act in accordance with the trustee's interests despite the risks, the spontaneity to place itself in a vulnerable state on the basis of those expectations", "the willingness to accept the vulnerability arising from the risk, the willingness to accept the risk reduction" (Lee & Kwon, 2013: 197). Therefore, expectations for the government's response in the face of the danger of disaster are directly linked to the people's trust in the government.

However, a disaster can impede structural imperfection of disaster management conditions, as well as accidental or accidental factors

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that require continuous decision making (Roh, 2010: 105). And a crisis situation is given both the characteristic opportunity structure and the risk burden to all interested parties involved. In other words, a crisis situation takes place within a controllable range to ensure the certainty of state intervention in a particular situation, but the uncertainty of the outcome prevents it from avoiding special political risks (Roh, 2010: 107). Nevertheless, the assessment of the president's crisis management skills as a national leader in assessing crisis response has only emphasized communication skills, leadership, image and reputation as the president's political leader, not assessment, to factors related to national crisis situations.

In this regard, the study will have various problems stemming from the Sewol ferry disaster, but this study will revalue the following three issues, which are pointed out in the government and the president's response to the Sewol ferry disaster that disappointed the victims' families and the general public.

First, it is the behavior of the government and rescue agencies' complacent response and response process to rescue operations immediately after the accident. In other words, the rescue authorities' dubious response process, which should have done its best to rescue passengers, has drawn public outrage. Why was the president unable to allow rescue authorities to focus on passenger rescue in times of crisis?. An evaluation of something is needed.

Second, the government has already faced criticism that it is trying to calm the situation with a change of tack as it hastily suggests future measures in the process of structure and recovery. In other words, in terms of disaster management learning, does the president assess and improve the causes of disaster management failures?. An evaluation of something is needed.

Third, it is the government's behavior to investigate the causes and punish those responsible. In the early days of the Sewol ferry sinking, the government shifted the blame for the disaster to ship companies, captains and other crew members, and the National Assembly's special investigation committee on the Sewol ferry sinking completed without much success. Also, the public's demand for a special law to investigate the case was not accepted. Was the president collecting opinions through proper communication with the people? It is part of the need for an assessment of the president's perception of and empathy for disasters.

To that end, the study seeks to discuss the president's leadership in disaster management, which affects the successful assessment of disaster management independently of the consequences of disaster damage, through several cases of countermeasures in the process of the Sewol ferry disaster in South Korea. In particular, this study seeks to discuss the evaluation of the president's disaster management leadership in Korean media articles, focusing on organizational management, communication skills, future forecasting

skills, learning skills and empathy skills presented through several preceding studies.

Background Theory

Disaster and Government Responsibility

The disaster management process becomes a more important policy task for the government at a time when it perceives disaster as an improperly managed human responsibility, not just a matter of natural threats or inevitable crises like the past. Nevertheless, the modern concept of disaster - or disaster management - that is predictable and manageable is making government policies more difficult as the rate of disaster occurrence increases due to unpredictable man-made factors rather than natural disaster power changes.

Naomi Zack (2009: 7) describes a disaster as a series of events that cause considerable injury to a large number of people or serious destruction or damage to civil daily life, both natural and human, in her book, "The Ethics of Disaster". And most of all, disaster gives birth to a reenactment and narrative of the media about heroes, failures and losses. Although she has the limits of explaining only the responsibility for the disaster as a disaster within the three-way structure of innocent victims, innocent governments and innocent citizens (Huh, 2015: 80-81). However, it is a meaningful approach in explaining how a disaster gives meaning to members of society through the media at the time of a disaster. In other words, there is a limit in explaining the government's responsibility for the damage caused by the disaster, but it is an opportunity to reveal the structural vulnerabilities that society has not paid attention to. It also serves as an opportunity to make the victim realize that the pain or injustice she suffers is the fault of the social system or process (Huh, 2015: 81-85).

Thus, disasters go beyond simply the problems of disaster management process and response in the event of a disaster, and serve as a reason to pay attention to the tasks of a broader policy area and the ability of the political leader to predict and manage social vulnerabilities that are more threatening by the disaster in advance. In particular, the discussion of the political leader's leadership in disaster management is related to resiliency, given that Resilience, which has recently been emphasized in the field of disaster management, has two attributes: recovery and continuity, and that continuity means the ability to withstand shocks and to maintain stability (Lim & Lee, 2013: 21). And Lim & Lee (2013) needs to pay

attention to the political leader's leadership in disaster management, even in that he has studied and paid attention to the political leader's ability to endure and absorb the shock of disasters, defining the concept of "political resiliency" from the same perspective of this study.

Disaster Management Leadership of Political Leaders

That there is no single accepted leadership theory is indicative of the fact that identifying the relationships between leadership, situations, context and outcomes is a very complex and challenging endeavour. Especially, contingency theory is important because the difficulty in applying leadership theory to emergency management leadership is that none of the theories were developed in an emergency management context.

When people are boxed in by the complexities and uncertainties, coupled by myriad of challenges in the event of a manmade disaster, and their efforts have run out, they yearn for effective and better leaders who can turn the tide of times (Ozerdem & Kapucu, 2013: 155; Aluoch, 2015: 16, quotation). And disaster creates a vacuum of order in daily the lives of affected populations. When disasters strikes, it brings with it a state of confusion and uncertainty, lack of direction and control, agony, loss of property and lives. The aftermath of disasters, brings with it, the demand for a leader to step into action, and take charge of the daunting task ahead. Leaders in this situations are need to set direction in the mid of confusion, encourage rescue and rebuilding efforts, be a comforter, a source support, hope and purpose (Boin, *et. al.*, 2013: 81-87; Aluoch, 2015: 15, quotation).

However, previous studies on disaster management leadership have covered the topic of what leadership is needed. But it did not distinguish the boundary between a political leader, a leader of a disaster management organization and a leader responding to a disaster site. In his book, "The Professional Emergency Manager: Structures and Strategies for Success," Drabek (1987) emphasized disaster managers the power of the Civil Defense Professional, Communication, Administration, Management & Organization, Personal Qualities, Interaction in the most of the studies focused on leadership. And many studies in Korea have also emphasized this point. Of course, these studies are not entirely unrelated to the political leader's disaster management leadership. However, the social structure and characteristics of disasters that political leaders must deal with are more complex, making the situation more difficult regardless of the success or failure of disaster response through channels such as the media.

Research Method

This study was approached at three levels based on the Boin, *et. al.* (2008) study to assess the problems of the President's crisis management leadership at the time of the Ferry Sewol. And the research data for analysis utilized the big data for analysis of the related words provided by the BIG-Kinds website.

This study classified data largely on three dimensions: disaster situation management, situational awareness and response to victims, and disaster learning ability. First, in order to evaluate the situation management leadership, the related words for situation management were analyzed in the press release during the first week of the accident. Second, related words were analyzed for the first week since the accident in order to assess the president's awareness of the situation, conversation with the bereaved families, and ability to sympathize with them. Third, disaster-related keywords were analyzed for seven days from the week after the accident to the next week in order to evaluate the president's ability to improve policies and learn.

This is because from the time of the accident, the president should manage the disaster situation and maintain meaningful communication with the disaster victims. It was also assumed that discussions on the problems of the policy would be carried out together at a time when the occurrence of an accident has progressed to a certain extent.

In this study, key keywords and negative word exposure were identified through the analysis of related words. Based on this, we identified problems with the president's response to the Ferry Sewol sinking, based on the discussion of Boin, *et. al.* (2008).

Why did the South Korean President Sink with the Sewol Ferry Disaster?

The Sewol ferry sank at 8:48 a.m. on April 16, 2014, Korean time. Even when the Coast Guard arrived at the scene after receiving the Sewol ferry disaster report, it did not completely sink, but none of the passengers failed to escape from the ship were rescued. On April 18, families of missing people issued an appeal to the public, criticizing the government's real-life response at the scene and the government's false response to the public.

The Sewol ferry sinking left 295 people dead and nine missing out of 476 people on board. The president apologized to the people through a Cabinet meeting on April 29 and issued a statement



<Figure 1> The 'situation management' associated keyword (2014.04.16.~2014.04.23.)

to the people on May 19, acknowledging the failure to respond in the initial stages of the disaster and expressing the country's commitment to revamping the country to prevent a recurrence of the disaster. And a special investigation committee was formed from June 2 to August 30.

As we have known since another political issue with Park Geun-hye, who was impeached president was impeached by the court's verdict on March 10, 2017. Although the reasons for the impeachment were not finally recognized as a violation of the duty to protect the right to life and to fulfill the duty to protect the right to life in the Sewol ferry sinking, the minority opinion of the judge added that she violated her duty to serve faithfully in her duty under the Constitution.

In particular, demanding her resignation would not be wrong in saying because of the responsibility on Sewol ferry disaster, given that the issue of demanding her resignation from Oct. 29, 2016 to April 29, 2017.

Why sink President Park with the sinking of Sewol ferry disaster. And what was the problem of disaster management leaderships?

Disaster Situation Management (or Organization Management)

Boin, *et. al.* (2008: 8), explain that, leaders in disaster situation, are faced with three main type of challenges. The first challenge is usually the emergency response in the aftermath of a disaster, the challenge here involves dealing with handling the victims and psychological challenges, the logistical challenges, and the institutions that are involved in the disaster response.

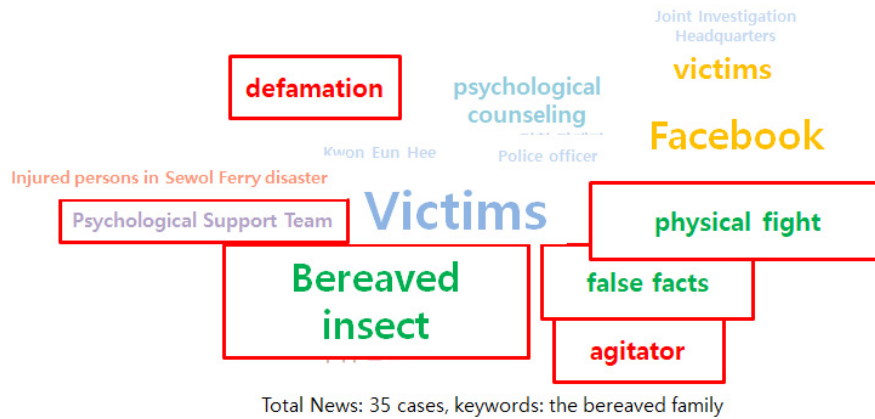
In Korean society, response to keywords that speaks volumes about the ability to manage the situation of the president Sewol ferry disaster is 'Park Geun-hye 7 hours' and 'The students wore

life vests. Is it difficult to rescue them?' will be. President Park did not receive a face-to-face report until seven hours after the accident, clearly revealing that she was not even aware of the exact information on the disaster situation in a countermeasure meeting. Moreover, the emphasis on the responsibility of accidents and failure to respond to accidents after meeting with the victims' families first came as a result of forgetting the role of the president and the presidential office as a facilitator and applicant. Moreover, even Cheong Wa Dae's chief security officer has said that "Cheong Wa Dae is not a control tower for disaster management", sparking a controversy over the overall insolvency of the ongoing disaster response management. This shows in short that President Park has virtually no ability to manage the disaster situation.

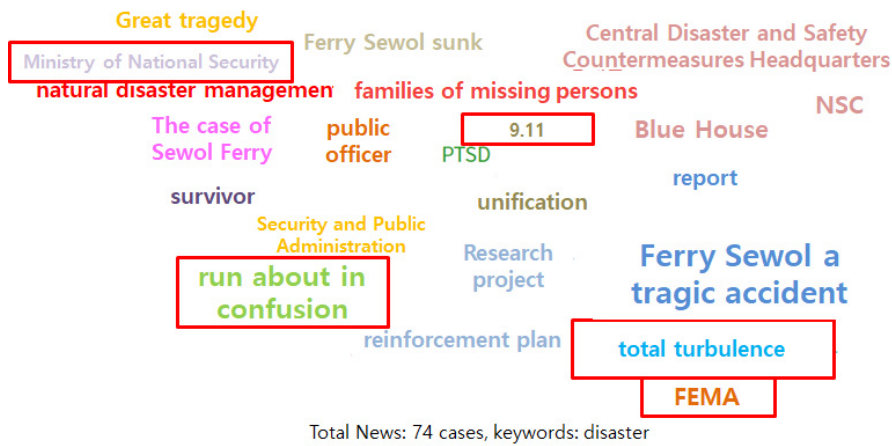
Communication, Situational Awareness and Empathy

The challenge for the leaders in the aftermath of disaster, is the media, thanks to the nature of global communication network. When disaster strikes, media usually get hooked on the unfolding events all around the clock, reporting the response to the disaster, with leaders expected to give an up-to-date account of the progress and decision they make as the events unfolds. The global internet village, has also made communication easier and quicker, thus the response to the disaster can be accessed worldwide. Thus, leaders tend to receive lots of criticism and support from the various communication media (Boin, *et. al.*, 2008: 8).

Internally, it is questionable whether proper mutual cooperation and support has been made, emphasizing accountability and punishment in the event of a failure to respond, rather than encouraging and supporting conductors in the disaster response process. Besides, she met a rescued child who was still in shock. And the victims' families were disappointed by the government's response and con-



<Figure 2> The 'bereaved family' associated keyword (2014.04.16.-2014.04.23.)



<Figure 3> The 'disaster' associated keyword (2014.04.24.-2014.04.30.)

tinued to demand a meeting with the president, but the only proper conversation was during the president's visit to the accident site, and talks with the victims' families were virtually severed afterwards.

Of course, the president doesn't have to be a great thinker. But at least there should be the ability to understand and empathize with human sensibilities. The president may not fully accept the diverse needs of the people, but at least they should have the ability to listen and sympathize with each other. Mentality, which does not want to direct a meeting with the families of the Sewol victims and make a public apology, cannot be the supreme leader.

Future Prediction and Learning Capability

The third type of challenge according to Boin, *et. al.* (2008: 8), in the response phase for the leaders, comes from the government policies and the rules and regulations that govern the given area where the disaster occurs. Leaders usually have to deal with the legal and policy repercussion that come with the disaster. This

often continue to the later phases and stages of disaster management. The effectiveness of disaster response, depends on several other factors come into play in disaster response phase. This includes the actions and decisions by actors within the response fraternity such as the media, non-governmental organizations, victims, and all the stakeholders (Boin, *et. al.*, 2008: 8; Aluoch, 2015: 10, quotation).

Already, President Park has emphasized "people's safety" during her early years in come to power, but the problem of running government agencies made up of non-experts turned out to be the biggest problem in the Sewol ferry sinking. Nevertheless, reform directions were discussed even before proper assessment and reflection of the Sewol ferry disaster was made. Discussions such as the dismantling and maintenance of related organizations, the need for a new organization composed of civilian experts and the creation of a new agency for disaster management have already been reported through the government and the ruling party amid ongoing rescue efforts for the Sewol ferry. And follow-up measures were taken that were close to adaptation of the term, including

the establishment of the "Ministry of Public Safety and Security" and the disbandment of the Korea Coast Guard on Nov. 19, 2014, seven months after the actual accident.

It is important to remember that responding to a crisis in a temporary or inappropriate way can cause bigger problems (Ozerdem & Kapucu, 2013: 1). But president Park's ability to learn disaster management showed its limitations by coming up with failed measures that are difficult to even discuss.

Discussion

In the event of a disaster in modern society, government intervention and the president's responsibility for the consequences cannot be free. This study does not empirically suggest what the requirements of the president's disaster management leadership are. But who is the ultimate responsibility for disaster management for President Park's failed leadership in responding to the sinking of the Sewol ferry? And suggests the importance of situational awareness and empathy skills a political leader should have.

The president, who carries the political responsibility together as a disaster management leader, is in a position to consider comprehensively the social vulnerabilities linked to the effects of disasters such as the process of responding to disasters, citizens' reactions through the media, policy limits and inconsistencies in the legal system. These problems sometimes appear as the president directs the disaster response process. Sometimes through the media, they actively promote the best efforts and measures the government takes, and show sympathy for the victims on the scene and their families. And based on the consequences of the disaster, decisions are taken to improve social vulnerability through the experience of disasters and predictions of future disaster situations. In other words, organizational management for disaster management, communication with the outside world as well as awareness and empathy for the situation, forecasting and learning skills are the minimum requirements for the president's disaster management leadership.

Therefore, the president's leadership needs to be addressed as a more important task in disaster management. And the process of analyzing the president's leadership style, which has been empirically shown in various disaster cases, is necessary to present more specific factors for the president's leadership in disaster management in the future.

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