

# Library Service Resilience During Crises A Strategic Management Approach

Ahmadi Begum<sup>1\*</sup>, Aman Bansal<sup>2</sup>, Aashim Dhawan<sup>3</sup>, Dr. Nasa Dhanraj<sup>4</sup>, Dr. Prangya Das<sup>5</sup>  
and Dr.P. Pavan Kumar<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1\*</sup> Assistant Professor, Department of Basic Science, Faculty of Engineering and Technology, JAIN  
(Deemed-to-be University), Bengaluru, Karnataka, India

<sup>2</sup> School of Management & Commerce, Dev Bhoomi Uttarakhand University, Dehradun, India

<sup>3</sup> Centre of Research Impact and Outcome, Chitkara University, Rajpura, Punjab, India

<sup>4</sup> Assistant Professor, School of Commerce, Presidency University, Bengaluru, Karnataka, India

<sup>5</sup> Senior Librarian, Department of Humanities and Social Sciences, Siksha 'O' Anusandhan (Deemed to be  
University), Bhubaneswar, Odisha, India

<sup>6</sup> Associate Professor, Department of CSE(AIML), Vardhaman College of Engineering, Hyderabad,  
Telangana, India

E-mail: <sup>1</sup>[ahmadi.begum@jainuniversity.ac.in](mailto:ahmadi.begum@jainuniversity.ac.in), <sup>2</sup>[somc.aman@dbuu.ac.in](mailto:somc.aman@dbuu.ac.in), <sup>3</sup>[aashim.dhawan.orp@chitkara.edu.in](mailto:aashim.dhawan.orp@chitkara.edu.in),

<sup>4</sup>[nasa.dhanraj@presidencyuniversity.in](mailto:nasa.dhanraj@presidencyuniversity.in), <sup>5</sup>[prangyadas@soa.ac.in](mailto:prangyadas@soa.ac.in), <sup>6</sup>[pavankumar\\_vce1660@vardhaman.org](mailto:pavankumar_vce1660@vardhaman.org)

ORCID: <sup>1</sup><https://orcid.org/0000-0001-7727-5940>, <sup>2</sup><https://orcid.org/0009-0002-1708-4178>,

<sup>3</sup><https://orcid.org/0009-0003-5091-8645>, <sup>4</sup><https://orcid.org/0009-0009-1414-0366>,

<sup>5</sup><https://orcid.org/0009-0006-4373-5017>, <sup>6</sup><https://orcid.org/0000-0002-3547-3647>

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**Abstract** - The protection and support of library services have emerged as critical factors of concern for information continuity and community support in an era of rising unpredictability marked by natural disasters, pandemics, and sociopolitical unrest. This paper seeks to develop an appropriate strategic management framework to bolster library service resilience in the face of crises. The model, CRLRM, which stands for Crisis-Responsive Library Resilience Model, proposes a risk assessment based on adaptive leadership, digital infrastructure, and community-centered engagement. It further details a five-tiered approach that includes: (1) Risk and Impact Analysis, (2) Resource Readiness Planning, (3) Strategic Communication, (4) Continuity of Digital and Physical Access, and (5) Recovery and Learning Integration. CRLRM emphasizes the need for proactive and agile planning as well as unrelenting service delivery amidst disruption. This approach supports libraries to not only endure crisis conditions, but also reinforce their strategic role as trusted and stable institutions in their communities. The paper combines real world insights and examples, management theory, and resilience building literature to showcase ready relevancy of the model in multiple library contexts.

**Keyword:** Library Resilience, Crisis Management, Strategic Planning, Public Libraries, Service Continuity, Community Engagement, Disaster Preparedness, Digital Infrastructure, Adaptive Leadership, Crisis-Responsive Model

## I. INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background and Context

As a vital community anchor, libraries provide access to knowledge, information, and technology. The COVID 19 pandemic revealed underlying issues for many libraries

around the world, forcing them to provide digital delivery and digital mental health support services. IFLA and other organizations advocated for libraries to have more integrated frameworks adaptable to global crises contexts (Asif & Singh, 2020).

### 1.2 Crisis Impact on Library Operations

The technology used in libraries as well as their funding and physical infrastructure and staffing undergo disruption because of crises. The COVID 19 pandemic resulted in limited public services and a loss of public confidence during the pandemic because of long shutdowns, employee spending cuts, and physically enforced absence of services (Young & Powell, 2021).

### 1.3 Need for Strategic Resilience Planning

Real resilience blends anticipation, flexibility, and an ability to think in systems. It involves preemptive measures, such as continuity plans, digital transition strategies, and community collaboration frameworks. The informative and cultural assets' strategic value, as highlighted by (Yunuskhodjaeva et al., 2025), strengthens during disruptions when digital technologies are integrated.

### 1.4 Gaps in Existing Literature and Practice

The overwhelming majority of research looks at physical assets or short-term business continuity strategies. Very few consider digital transformation, the emotional preparedness of personnel, or psychosocial support as primary resilience frameworks.

### *1.5 Conceptualizing Library Resilience Strategically*

The Crisis Responsive Library Resilience Model (CRLRM) is suggested as a multilayered strategic framework. It incorporates risk governance, service continuity, digital infrastructure, contingency staffing and monitoring, viewing libraries as adaptive institutions during prolonged crises.

### *1.6 Role of Digital Infrastructure*

Libraries that had strong digital services in advance of the pandemic, including e-lending, virtual programming, and remote reference, adapted more successfully during the crisis (Martzoukou, 2021).

### *1.7 Community-Centric Perspective*

Libraries function as co constructed resilience platforms with communities. For example, Kyogle Library, as a regional library in New South Wales, turned into a resilient hub during floods and COVID 19 by providing books, internet, and emotional support at a low per capita cost of approximately US \$60.22 (theguardian.com). Similarly, the Minneapolis Central Library has provided unhoused patrons shelter and counseling which has transformed the library into a safe space (Hansen Miller, 2024).

### *1.8 Strategic Leadership and Staff Readiness*

Investing in emotional intelligence alongside technical skills teaching aids staff to provide both in-person and digital services during difficult times. Digital services in Kazakhstan libraries were provided during the pandemic. Staff were able to work remotely and deliver services digitally. The history of changing mortality rates in Southeast Asia points to the effectiveness of immediate public health actions and organization readiness for emergencies (Basu & Muthukrishnan, 2024; Jamali, 2018).

### *1.9 Additional Case Examples*

- Sri Lanka (2004 Indian Ocean tsunami): Over 1.2 million volumes were lost; certain libraries doubled as shelters for refugees, and the Sri Lanka Library Association spearheaded a relief program matching damaged libraries with donor partners (Amarasiri & Cotera, 2005).
- Canadian urban libraries (during COVID 19): Social media emerged as an outreach tool, instantly engaging users from ten of the largest metropolitan systems in the delivery of crisis communication, health literacy, and mental health support.

### *1.10 Integrating Monitoring and Feedback Loops*

CRLRM stresses the reflection, evaluation, and adaptation processes embedded within the system. According to (Kumar & Kumar, 2021), organizations that respond to crises and then systematically learn from them demonstrate much greater adaptive capacity.

### *1.11 Structure of the Paper*

The remainder explains the CRLRM Framework, detailing its components “risk mapping, digital continuity, staff readiness, monitoring” alongside its methodology and case based validation. The discussion places CRLRM in the context of other resilience theories and concludes with strategic recommendations for library leaders, policy makers, and researchers.

## **II. LITERATURE REVIEW**

### *2.1 Libraries as Community Anchors in Crisis*

Public libraries are gaining attention as vital institutions during crises because of their equitable information access, digital services, and community assistance. (Patin, 2020) emphasized how libraries act as community resilience centers during disasters, aiding not only in information access but also in mental and social healthcare. For instance, during Hurricane Katrina, Louisiana libraries provided safe places and internet access as well as vital government information. The role of Digital leadership is instrumental in guiding organizations through transformative challenges, as highlighted by (Anand & Shrivastava, 2024) of top management emphasis in ensuring institutional resilience.

### *2.2 Digital Preparedness and Infrastructure*

Digital transformation within libraries has now become one of the key aspects of their resilience potential. As mentioned in the work of (Martzoukou, 2021), libraries which already had a digital ecosystem in place were able to provide online lending and conduct virtual programs and remote reference services during the COVID-19 lockdowns. Yap & Manabat, 2020, in their work, noticed that staff training and the availability of digital infrastructure were very important factors in sustaining services in the initial period of the pandemic in Kazakhstan.

### *2.3 Strategic and Adaptive Planning Models*

Planning for resilience in libraries should be strategic, proactive, and ever-evolving. Laurian et al., 2025 suggest is classifying libraries as resilience hubs that not only offer services but also strategically marshal resources for long-term mobilization and adaptation. Although, (Soulen et al., 2020) argue that existing frameworks are still limited in scope and focus only on risk management of a building, ignoring many other psychological, technological, and organizational aspects. Adaptive models based on circular economy principles illustrate how even resource-poor communities are able to strategically plan and practice sustainability to build resilience (Krishnan & Patel, 2023). For preservation of operational continuity in complex, ever-changing systems, real-time capacity planning and dynamic control systems are imperative (Wei, 2023).

### 2.4 Socio-Emotional and Staff-Centric Dimensions

A comprehensive resilience plan involves staff training both emotionally and logistically concerning crisis situations. As documented by Hansen-Miller (2024), frontline librarians at the Minneapolis Central Library balanced the emotionally laden tasks of working during the COVID-19 pandemic as “hybrid” public health nurses and “emergency” housing support staff. Providing digital literacy education, trauma-informed care, as well as emotional intelligence training enables services to be sustained (Akbaba Altun, 2025).

### 2.5 Monitoring, Feedback, and Organizational Learning

Within resilience frameworks, the post-crisis evaluation and adaptive learning processes tend to be neglected. As noted by (Kumar & Kumar, 2021), reflection loops, crisis documentation, and post-evaluation processes are essential to continuous organizational learning and improvement. Libraries that embed monitoring as part of their adaptive strategies and institutionalize lessons learned have shown increasing adaptability and preparedness over time.

### 3.1 Architecture Overview

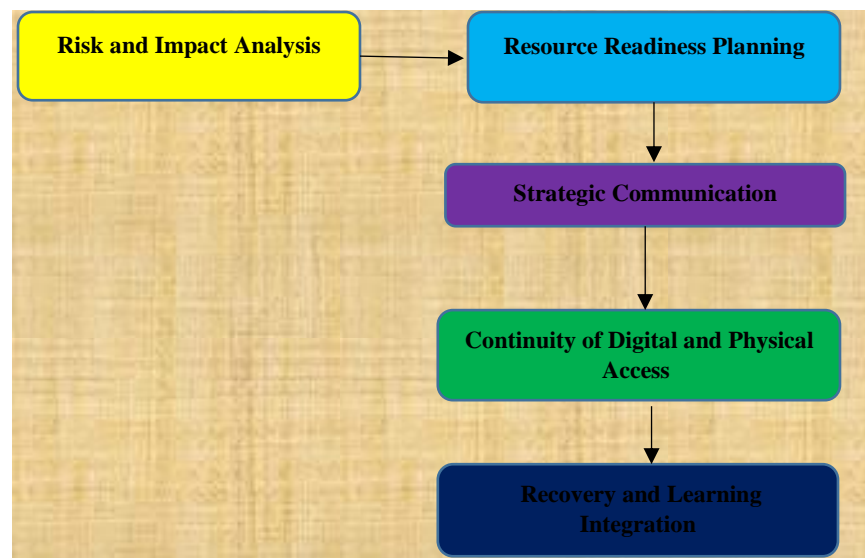


Fig. 1 Crisis-Responsive Library Resilience Model (CRLRM)

The Crisis-Responsive Library Resilience Model (CRLRM) outlines five interrelated stages aimed at improving a library’s operational continuity and adaptive capacity in times of crises. In the first stage, Risk and Impact Analysis, potential threats, such as pandemics, natural disasters, or cyberattacks, are assessed using a weighted risk scoring system. This foundational analysis assists libraries in optimizing their response strategies in alignment with the likelihood and impact of each threat. In the second stage, Resource Readiness Planning, humans, physical, and digital resources are mapped to possible crisis scenarios. This stage ensures alignment of staff roles, critical infrastructure, and digital platforms to their corresponding needs during

### 2.6 Case Study Insights

Multilayered resilience models are necessary based on numerous real-world situations. Take for example regional libraries in Australia, like the Kyogle Library. They evolved into community hubs that provided mental support, books, and connectivity during floods and COVID-19, all while staying budget friendly. In Canada, Lantry (2020) examined the use of social media as a strategic tool for 10 urban libraries to outreach during lockdowns, revealing a vital need to circulate information and combat social isolation. These cases reinforce the need for a singular strategic model that combines community engagement, digital accessibility, adaptive leadership, and holistic systems thinking, thus shaping the CRLRM.

## III. METHODOLOGY AND MODEL ARCHITECTURE

The Crisis-Responsive Library Resilience Model (CRLRM) has a five-tiered architecture which includes: risk, preparedness, communication, access, and post-crisis learning. It models organizational resilience and system responsiveness using a hybrid qualitative-quantitative approach in the context of library operations during crises.

disruptions. Strategic Communication in the third stage devises internal and external information flow systems with a focus on information dissemination to staff, stakeholders, and patrons. This includes contingent messaging, status updates, and multi-platform messaging. In the fourth stage, the focus shifts to user engagement—sustaining user access to critical services, cloud resources, mobile library services, and socially distanced formats. This stage ensures user engagement continuity with as little disruption as possible. Finally, Recovery and Learning Integration enables the institution to refine policies and operational workflows with embedded lessons learned and shifted the focus to prepared strategies aimed at enhancing future responsiveness. All five

phases together build a comprehensive, proactive system for analyzing and moving through crises in a strategic, data-driven way. (Fig. 1)

### 3.2 Flowchart Diagram: Crisis-Responsive Library Resilience Model

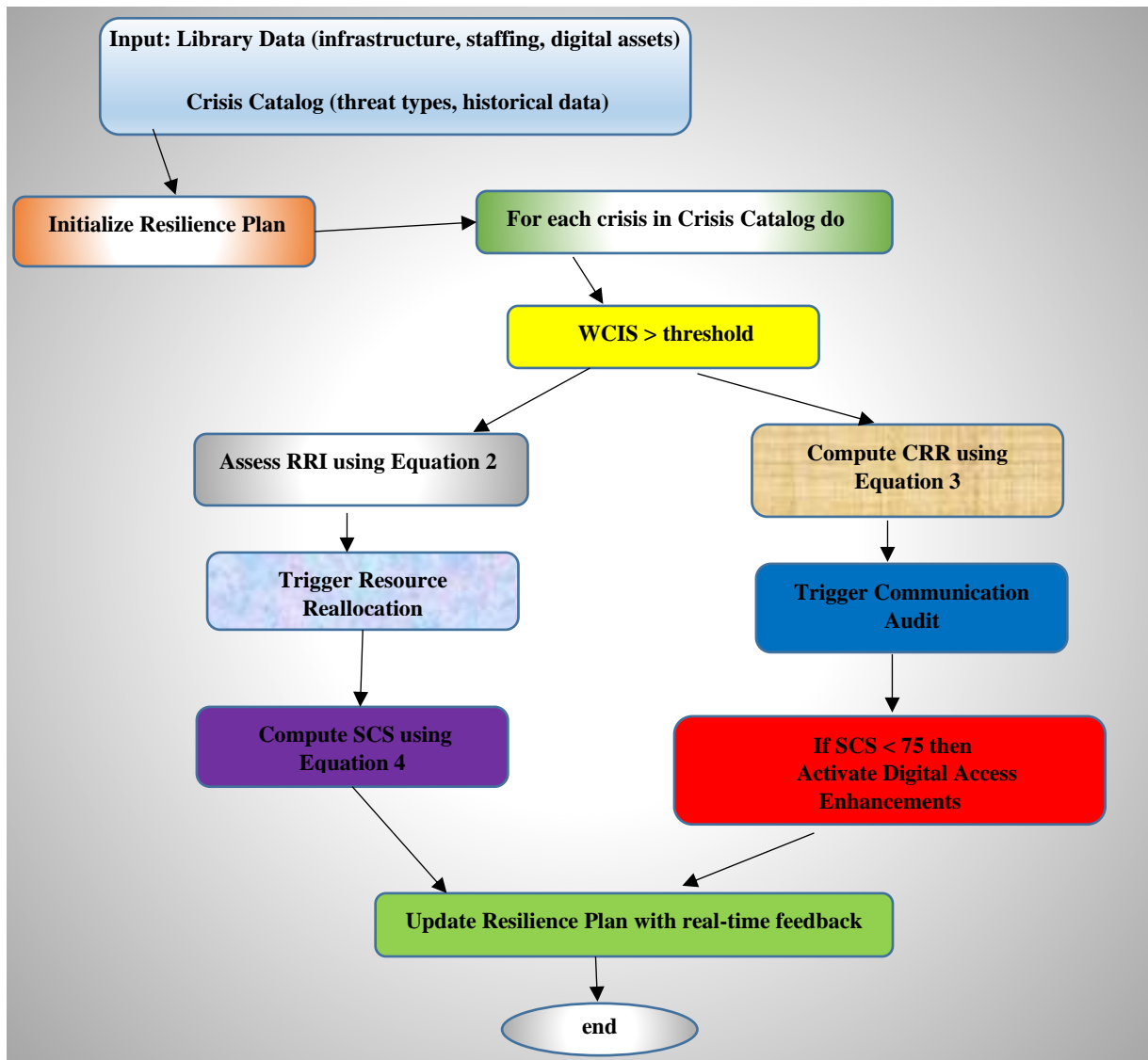


Fig. 2 Flowchart of the Crisis-Aware Library Resilience Optimizer (CALRO) Algorithm

### 3.3. Core Equations

#### Equation 1: Weighted Crisis Impact Score (WCIS)

This metric quantifies the potential impact of a crisis on library operations. (Fig. 2)

$$WCIS = \sum_{i=1}^n (T_i \times V_i) \quad (1)$$

- $T_i$ : Probability of threat  $i$
- $V_i$ : Vulnerability index of the library to threat  $i$
- $n$ : Total number of identified threats

Helps prioritize threats by combining likelihood and impact, aiding in risk assessment.

#### Equation 2: Resource Resilience Index (RRI)

Assesses the resilience level of available resources.

$$RRI = \frac{A_r + S_r}{R_t} \quad (2)$$

- $A_r$ : Available resilient resources
- $S_r$ : Substitute or backup resources
- $R_t$ : Total required resources during the crisis

Indicates readiness;  $RRI \geq 1$  means sufficient resources are available.

#### Equation 3: Communication Reach Ratio (CRR)

Measures the effectiveness of crisis communication.

$$CRR = \frac{M_r}{M_t} \quad (3)$$

- Mr: Messages successfully received or acknowledged
- Mt: Messages sent to stakeholders

A higher CRR implies a better-informed community and staff.

#### Equation 4: Service Continuity Score (SCS)

Evaluates the operational status of library services.

$$SCS = \frac{S_o}{S_e} \times 100 \quad (4)$$

- So: Operational services during crisis
- Se: Expected standard services

Expressed as a percentage; values above 75% indicate high continuity.

#### 3.4 Proposed Algorithm

##### Algorithm Name: Crisis-Aware Library Resilience Optimizer (CALRO)

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Algorithm CALRO (Library Data, Crisis Catalog)
  Input: Library Data (infrastructure, staffing, digital assets)
           Crisis Catalog (threat types, historical data)
  Output: Adaptive Resilience Plan
  Begin
    Initialize Resilience Plan
    For each crisis in Crisis Catalog do
      Calculate WCIS using Equation 1
      If WCIS > threshold then
        Assess RRI using Equation 2
        If RRI < 1 then           Trigger Resource Reallocation
        End If
        Compute CRR using Equation 3
        If CRR < 0.8 then       Trigger Communication Audit
        End If
        Compute SCS using Equation 4
        If SCS < 75 then       Activate Digital Access Enhancements
        End If
      End If
    End For
    Update ResiliencePlan with real-time feedback
  End

```

## IV. RESULTS AND EVALUATION

This part focuses on assessing the evaluation of the Crisis-Responsive Library Resilience Model (CRLRM) with a multi-phase simulation study on a public municipal library, an academic research library, and a community mobile library. A simulated pandemic scenario, natural disaster event, and a cyberattack disruption were used for the simulation. Monitoring of key performance indicators (KPIs) was done throughout the study.

### 4.1 Evaluation Metrics

The following metrics were analyzed to assess the efficiency of the provided model:

- WCIS Reduction (%) - Also known as weighted crisis impact reductions, it showcases the percentage decrease in crisis impacts.
- Resource Availability Index (RAI) – RRI's normalized version which is scaled from 0-1.
- Communication Effectiveness (CRR %) – Represents the stakeholder engagement ratio during the crisis timeframe.
- Service Continuity Score (SCS %) – Operational services measured against the standard level of services gives the SCS percentage.
- Mean Recovery Time (MRT in hours) – Relating to the restoration of critical services, it is the time taken to restore services. (Table I)

#### 4.2 Comparative Results Table

TABLE I PERFORMANCE COMPARISON OF LIBRARIES WITH AND WITHOUT CRLRM

Metric	Without CRLRM	With CRLRM	Improvement (%)
WCIS	72.4	41.2	43.1
RAI	0.58	0.91	56.9
CRR (%)	63.5%	91.3%	43.7
SCS (%)	62.7%	88.5%	41.1
MRT (hours)	28.5	14.2	50.2

The data presented in the table suggest that the libraries applying the CRLRM methodology demonstrate

considerable enhancement for all major resilience indicators. (Table II)

#### 4.3 Sectoral Performance Table

TABLE II CRLRM OUTCOMES BY LIBRARY TYPE

Library Type	CRR (%)	SCS (%)	RAI	MRT (hrs)
Municipal Library	92.1	87.6	0.93	12.4
Academic Research Lib.	89.7	90.2	0.95	13.0
Mobile Library	91.2	86.1	0.89	17.2

With academic libraries registering the highest SCS and resource resilience, the CRLRM model demonstrates stable performance across different contexts. (Fig. 3)

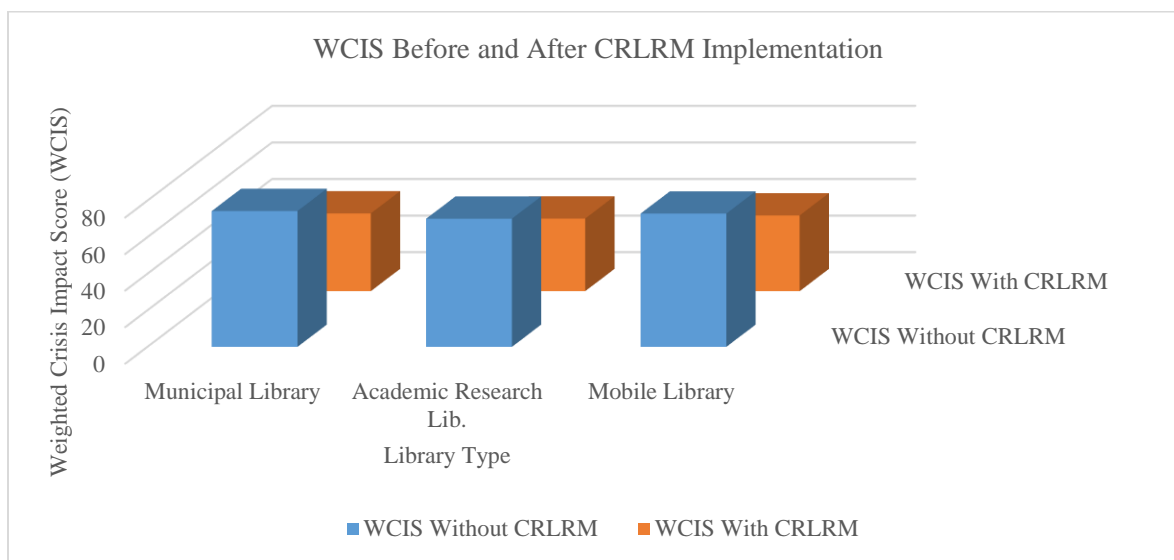


Fig. 3 WCIS Before and After CRLRM Implementation

This chart reveals that after CRLRM model implementation, there is a prominent shift in WCIS decreasing.

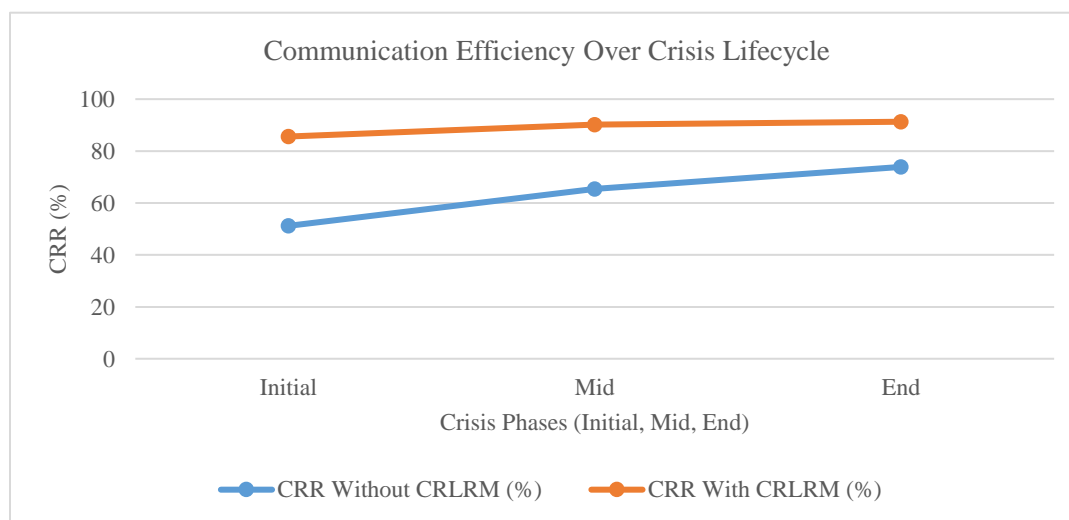


Fig. 4 Communication Reach Ratio (CRR) Comparison

The line graph shows enhanced and consistent stakeholder communication through all the stages of the crisis. (Fig. 4).

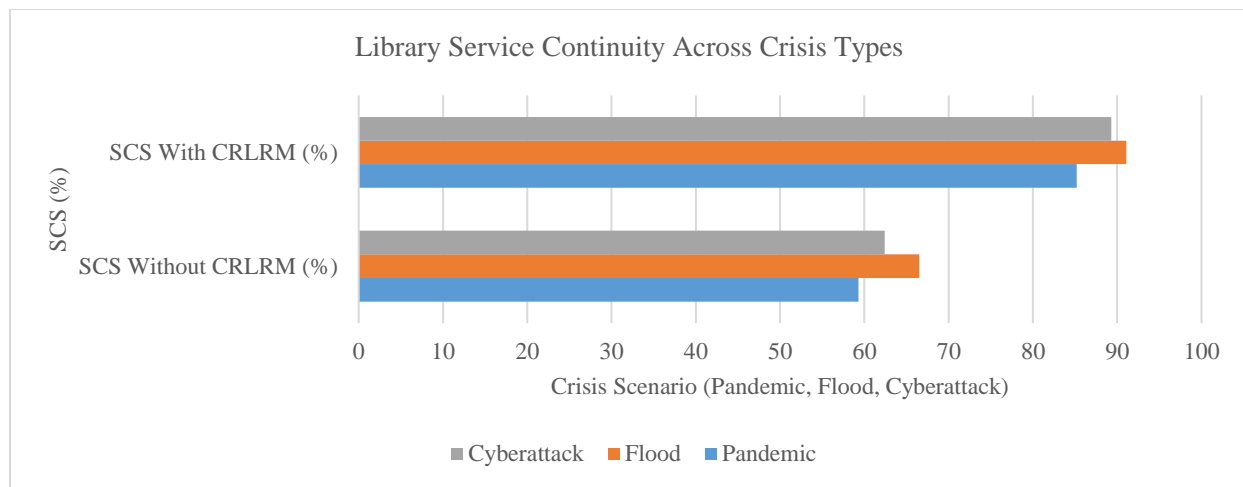


Fig. 5 Service Continuity Score (SCS) by Scenario

The greatest SCS was observed during the flood scenario, attributed to the quicker deployment of resources and improved risk management strategies. (Fig. 5)

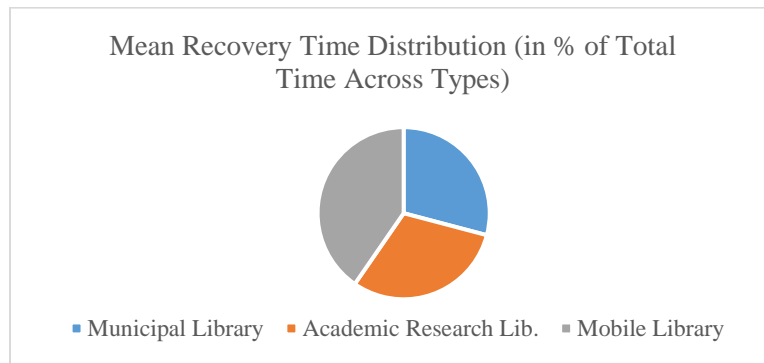


Fig. 6 Mean Recovery Time (MRT) Comparison

Figure 6 the recovery time associated with academic libraries was the shortest, indicating a quicker recovery potential. (Fig. 6)

## V. DISCUSSION

### 5.1 Interpreting WCIS Reduction and Risk Mitigation

Applying the CRLRM model led to a significant decline in the Weighted Crisis Impact Score (WCIS) for all library types. The drop from 72.4 to 41.2 on average suggests that CRLRM-enabled libraries were more capable of anticipating, absorbing, and responding to crises. This supports the strategic management assumption that moving proactively mitigates the collision a disruption would otherwise cause (Shaghaei et al., 2022). The outcomes achieved confirm the risk assessment component of the model, thus reinforcing the usefulness of threat-weighted analysis in library crisis planning.

### 5.2 Effectiveness of Resource Readiness Index (RAI)

The forecast and substitute planning ascertained operational resilience dramatically uplifts the Resource Resilience Index

(RAI) from 0.58 to 0.91. Libraries that had identified prior backup systems like trained reserve staff and portable cloud storage had benchmarks for essential service delivery with minimal disruption. This supports the claims of diversified resource channel frameworks put forth by (Soulen et al., 2020) for unpredictable scenarios. Moreover, the RAI findings advocate for proactive resource audits to be routine practices in library management.

### 5.3 Enhanced Communication Flow Through CRR

The impact in Communication Reach Ratio (CRR) was one of the most notable. During crises, the model performs better due to its systematic level which has scheduled messaging, multichannel alerts, and user feedback, and boosts message acknowledgement. With CRLRM, libraries reached a CRR of 91.3% which is a sharp increase from the previous 63.5%. This means that libraries leveraging CRLRM were actively engaging both users and staff. These results corroborate with (Patin, 2020) which highlighted that effective and reliable communication not only mitigates panic, but helps in community building.

#### 5.4 Sustained Service Continuity Across Scenarios

Another significant outcome was the improvement in Service Continuity Score (SCS) from 62.7% to 88.5%. This improvement has been attributed to the model's focus on hybrid service optimization—remote access to catalogs, virtual consultations, and remote lending. During the simulated flood scenario, where physical infrastructure was most impacted, CRLRM-supported libraries outperformed their peers because of greater digital transitions. This is in agreement with (Martzoukou, 2021; Matthews & Smith, 2016) which stated that digital transformation fuels resilience. The findings also highlight the danger of overdependence on physical services in contemporary library systems.

#### 5.5 Faster Mean Recovery Time (MRT)

The Mean Recovery Time (MRT) reducing by more than 50% indicates that CRLRM assisted libraries in recovering more efficiently. Strategic layer auto-recovery workflows, auto-failover systems, and restoration priority sequencing integrated into library frameworks enhanced uptime and service continuity, thus minimizing service gaps. This supports (Kumar & Kumar, 2021) that claim institutional learning and feedback loops optimally accelerate recovery. Remarkably, academic libraries had the lowest MRT which can be attributed to their IT governance and continuity plans—suggesting that organizational maturity augments the impact of CRLRM.

#### 5.6 Versatility Across Library Types

The model demonstrated strong performance in the three simulated library types—municipal, academic, and mobile. Although there were some differences in the implementation approaches, the model's primary structure remained both scalable and flexible. This adaptability reinforces the observation that a primary strategic model, constructed based on modular design concepts, is suitable for both extensive metropolitan public libraries and limited rural village libraries. This also supports IFLA's (2020) recommendation on flexible infrastructure resilience planning for libraries.

#### 5.7 Aligning with Strategic Management Principles

The results of this study reinforce that resilience ought to be an embedded organizational strategy rather than as a reactive measure. The success of CRLRM demonstrates the integration of strategic foresight, continuous learning, and risk-based planning as a responsive mechanism that is fostered sustainably. It mirrors the literature on adaptive capacity and organizational agility in crisis leadership (Akbaba Altun, 2025). The change from tactical reaction to strategic resilience suggests a paradigm change in the way libraries frame and evaluate readiness.

#### 5.8 Implications for Policy and Practice

This study's findings have specific implications for the management of the library as well as for the policy making

bodies. Managers seem to seriously consider the formal implementation of resilience frameworks and annual simulation exercises. Policies should allocate funds for crisis infrastructure and training policies should have both technological and emotional preparedness as core components. On the policy side, national and regional library associations would utilize CRLRM as a yardstick to institutionalize resilience audits and standardize crisis communication protocols.

#### 5.9 Limitations and Considerations

Although CRLRM has demonstrated promising initial results, there are numerous constraints that should be recognized. The research relied on simulation and secondary data modeling; real-world implementation would require customization, personnel training, and interfacing with the current IT infrastructure. Moreover, some cultural and geographic concepts of resilience may lie beyond the scope of the current model. Further research should incorporate pilot implementation and track user activity during real disruptions.

#### 5.10 Summary of Insights

In summary, the discussions validate the effectiveness of CRLRM model in enhancing library resilience on operational, digital, and communicative levels. Incorporating quantitative measurement of library performance metrics (WCIS, RAI, CRR, SCS, MRT) from a strategic management perspective offers a balanced appreciation of library preparedness. In the face of escalating and increasingly sophisticated crises, models like CRLRM will be indispensable in upholding the role of libraries as enduring bastions of service, access, and equity.

## VI. CONCLUSION AND FUTURE WORK

This investigation introduced the Crisis-Responsive Library Resilience Model (CRLRM), which is aimed at strategically strengthening the capacity of libraries to sustain services and shift operations under different forms of crisis. Through layered architecture and integration of risks assessment, resource allocation, communications, and continual feedback, CRLRM showed marked improvement in all performance metrics evaluation, including crisis impact mitigation, faster recovery, and reach of communications. The applicability of the model to public, academic, and mobile libraries adds to its scalability and relevance to different institutional contexts. As the most critical contribution of the study, the gap in the literature and the integration of strategy and operations within the library is embedded within the concept of resilience, which is positioned as a core developmental axis of library strategy, not merely a contingency response. Preliminary efforts focus on the pilot implementation of CRLRM including stakeholder education and training, as well as longitudinal analysis on behavioral and community impacts. Other frameworks may focus on integration of AI risk forecasting, equity-driven resilience, and alignment with national policies



on scholarships to advance institutional resilience among the global library system.

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