

# Malaysia Humanitarian Logistics: A Successful Collaboration in Humanitarian Relief Works Between NGOs in Malaysia

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## Abstract

Humanitarian organisations find it incredibly challenging to work with a diverse group of stakeholders. Coordination between actors is challenging, and occasionally efforts are duplicated. Collaboration issues have been identified as a major stumbling block in the management of humanitarian projects. These issues must be addressed since they will lead to inefficiency and impede the humanitarian response process before, during, and after a disaster. This research explores the Malaysian humanitarian logistics scenario as well as the factors that influence successful collaboration in humanitarian relief efforts between Malaysian NGOs. In this study, the researcher adopted qualitative methods and interviewed four NGOs involved in humanitarian work in the year 2020, allowing the researcher to investigate differences within and across humanitarian efforts. This study found the main pillars of successful collaboration in humanitarian works, such as communication, coordination and trust, which influence the process of collaboration and help all crisis management stakeholders understand their roles and responsibilities in providing humanitarian aid.

**Keywords:** Humanitarian Logistics, Non-Governmental Organizations, Collaboration, Communication, Coordination, Trust

## Introduction

Humanitarian logistics is defined as “the process of planning, implementing and controlling the efficient, cost-effective flow and storage of goods and materials, as well as related information, from point of origin to point of consumption to meet the vulnerable end beneficiary’s requirements (Kaatrud et al., 2003). Preparation, planning, procurement, transportation, warehousing, tracking and tracing, and customs clearance are among the tasks covered by humanitarian logistics (Tomasini & Van Wassenhove, 2009).

A lack of inter-organizational cooperation and coordination in the context of humanitarian logistics can result in significant losses of human and material resources (Nurmala et al, 2018). The coordination concept is an essential tool in the way to obtain the big picture of an emergency case. Coordination has also been defined as the sharing of exclusive knowledge or resources by two or more unrelated or opposing entities (Tatham et al., 2017). According to Jahre & Jensen (2009), there are two sub-categories of the main coordination concept are frequently referred to; vertical and horizontal coordination. Horizontal coordination concerns the internal relationship, the partnership inside an organization or a community, or the collaboration of an organization with competitors and non-competitors. Vertical coordination has been described as a connection between two or more organizations that share their responsibilities, resources and performance information to serve relatively similar end customers.

The National Security Council (NSC) of Malaysia coordinates disaster relief and management in accordance with Directive No. 20, "National Disaster Relief and Management Policy and Mechanism." The Disaster Management and Relief Committee, which includes federal, state, and local agencies, implements operations that the Council promotes (National Security Council of Malaysia, 1997). Malaysia's development policy has always prioritised disaster management. In 2013, Malaysia's National Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) was institutionalised, bringing together numerous stakeholders from the public and commercial sectors. The number of resources allocated to reducing risk factors and facilitating long-term development demonstrates this. The 11th Five-Year Plan (2016-2020) of Malaysia focuses on disaster risk management in five phases: prevention, mitigation, readiness, response, and recovery. Malaysia is continuing to improve its disaster management system and policies to address emerging and chronic catastrophe risks, as well as to expand its role as a regional leader in humanitarian assistance and disaster relief.

High degrees of coordination, cooperation, and collaboration among organisations engaging assistance providers are essential for efficient logistical procedures in humanitarian works. In the immediate response phase, when NGOs assess the needs of the beneficiaries by sending field assessment and coordination teams into the disaster area, coordination, communication, and collaboration are essential (Kovacs & Spens, 2007).

### **Problem Statement**

The short and long-term effects of a natural disaster are difficult to predict because a disaster is a physical interruption that causes a system's priorities and knowledge to become muddled. In the absence of effective emergency management, the cost of a natural disaster is measured in thousands of lives lost and a devastating economic impact on the affected area (Nurmala et al., 2018).

The core of humanitarian logistics is delivering aid to helpless people in disaster situations, whereas the economic impacts of disasters may be divided into effects at the macro level and individual livelihoods at the micro-level (Prasanna & Haavisto, 2018). Humanitarian logistics is notorious for its tumultuous and complex environment (Van Wassenhove, 2006). Disasters vary in nature with mostly very little or no indication of the time, duration, location and magnitude of the next disaster (Altay & Green, 2006; Tomasini & Van Wassenhove, 2009).

Disaster relief is characterised by uncertainty in needs, supply capacity and lead time (Kovács & Spens, 2007; Oloruntoba & Gray, 2009). Inter-organizational collaboration is a major subject in humanitarian logistics, particularly when it pertains to collaboration between humanitarian organisations and the private sector, to deal with such a volatile environment (Nurmala et al., 2018). Such cross-sectoral collaboration can aid in the improvement of humanitarian logistics efficacy and efficiency by easing the transfer of not only financial and product resources, but also information, skills, and expertise from the corporate sector to the humanitarian sector (Balcik et al., 2008; Oloruntoba & Gray, 2009).

Working with a wide range of stakeholders poses significant obstacles for humanitarian organisations; as a result, coordination between actors is difficult, and efforts are frequently duplicated (Larson & Foropon, 2018). It is found that communities are key stakeholders in disaster responses (Goulding et al., 2018), but it is also widely acknowledged that humanitarian organisations may benefit from good relationships with the business sector during disaster response (Quarshie & Leuschner, 2018). The problems in collaboration have been identified as a significant stumbling block in the management of humanitarian works. These challenges cannot be overlooked since they will result in inefficiency and impair the humanitarian response process before, during, and after a disaster.

### **Research Objectives**

- To explore the scenario of humanitarian logistics during the disaster relief operations in Malaysia.
- To examine the factors in successful collaboration in humanitarian relief works among NGOs.
- To develop a successful framework for collaborations of humanitarian relief works among NGOs.

### **Literature Review**

#### *Humanitarian Logistics*

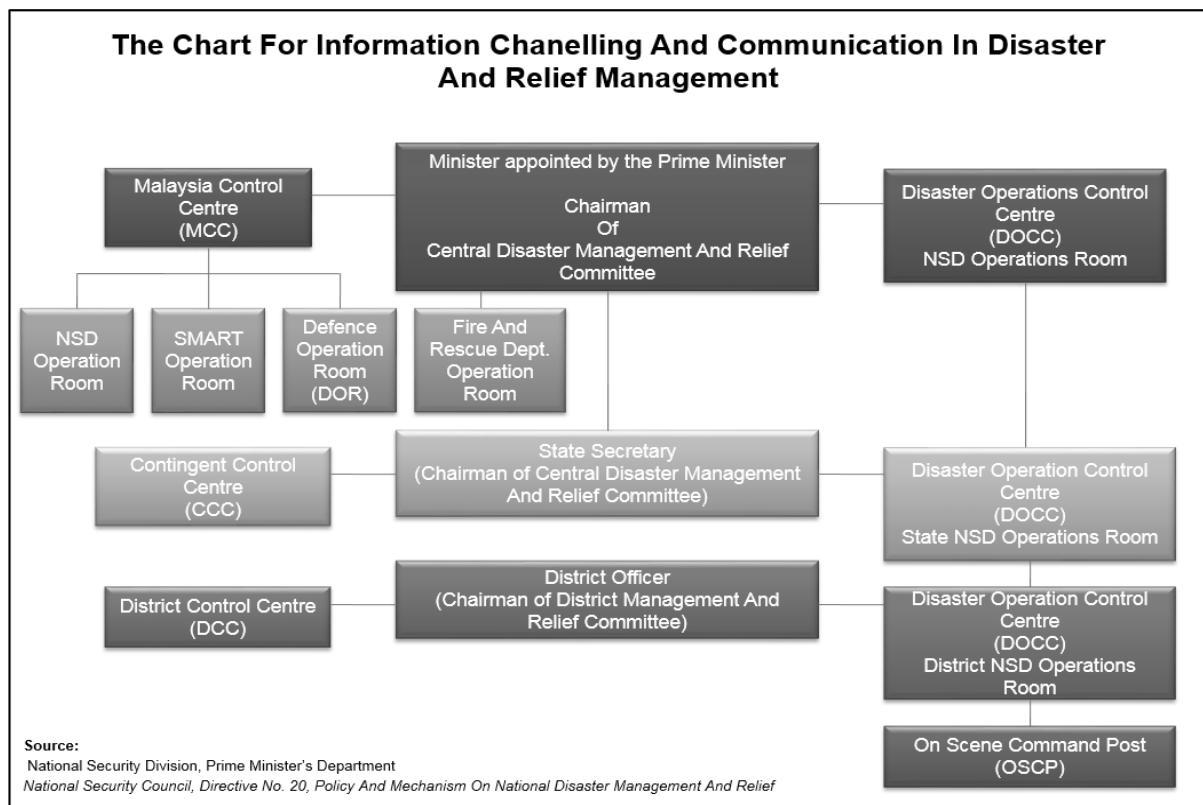
Humanitarian logistics is a subset of supply chain management, which include successfully managing operations. Private organisations may be involved in the advancement of supply chain management in disaster response (Tomasini & Van Wassenhove, 2009). Understanding operation management activities is one of the most important success criteria in humanitarian logistics operations. Furthermore, humanitarian logistics is a branch of logistics that specialises in managing the transportation and warehousing of supplies to the impacted area and people during natural disasters or complicated events. However, this definition just considers the actual flow of commodities to their eventual destinations; in practice, humanitarian logistics entails resource forecasting and optimization, inventory management, and information exchange (Ni et al., 2015).

For a variety of reasons, humanitarian logistics has played an important part in disaster relief to date. First, humanitarian logistics helps to mitigate the negative effects of natural disasters in terms of human lives lost and financial expenditures. Second, humanitarian logistics is viewed as a data bank that can be analysed to give learning after an occurrence. The effectiveness of suppliers and transportation providers, as well as the cost and timeliness of response, the appropriateness of donated items, and the management of information, are all reflected in logistics statistics. As a result, it is crucial to the success of present and future

operations and plans. Creating emergency response plans will aid in catastrophe preparation and, as a result, mobilisation (Gupta et al., 2019).

**Malaysian Humanitarian Logistics**

The Malaysian National Security Council, Directive 20 (2003) defines a disaster as ‘an emergency of some complexity that will cause the loss of lives, damage property, and the environment, and hamper local social and economic activities. Below is the chart for information channelling and communication in disaster and relief management.



Disasters can be divided into three main categories which are naturally, man-made, and hybrid. The disaster aid program planned by the government is powered by the National Security Council (NSC). The effectiveness of the program is empowered by Directive No. 20 which provides a guideline for the agencies involved. The humanitarian activities during and after the disaster event are much dependent on the various logistics activities, especially transportation and inventory management. Since humanitarian logistics are characterized by certain uncertainty and complexity, they need to be properly managed to implement better responses.

Disaster management in Malaysia is currently run by the National Disaster Management Agency (NADMA). NADMA is under the Prime Minister's Department monitoring, replacing the National Security Council (NSC) as the focal point for disaster management and consolidating the Disaster Management Division of the NSC, the Post Flood Recovery Unity of the Prime Minister's Department, and the Special Malaysia Disaster Assistance and Rescue Agency (SMART). Malaysia Civil Defence Forces (MCDF) has been

appointed as the Secretary for Disaster Management Committee at the state and district level and is responsible to enhance community resilience and preparedness towards disaster. MCDP set up a Disaster Management Secretariat Branch to regulate and coordinate the secretariat Disaster Management Committee activity at the state and district level (Khairul & Ismail, 2018).

The disaster management organization structure continues under three levels: federal, state, and district. Management of disaster risk is regulated by Directive No. 20. Directive No. 20 issues guidance on policy and mechanisms related to national disaster management and relief activities. It guides the integration of the various agencies on disaster management responsibilities and functions, and it regulates the management of disaster risks. Additionally, Directive No. 20 breaks down the disaster management cycle into four stages consisting of prevention and mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery. In March 2012, the second edition of Directive No. 20 was released to include a comprehensive response and incorporation of international best practices. The Disaster Management and Relief Committee (DMRC) was formed to carry out the responsibilities of Directive No. 20 in the formation of various aspects of the 4 stages of the disaster management cycle as official national policies and strategies. The objective of Directive No. 20 is to provide a policy guideline on disaster management and rescue in accordance with the level of the disaster. It also provides a mechanism for managing the roles and responsibilities of agencies that are involved in combating disaster (National Security Council of Malaysia, 1997).

### **Collaboration in Humanitarian Relief Works**

Collaboration is required not only between humanitarians but also with other stakeholders such as the commercial sector and local people. Humanitarian agencies are on hand to respond to disaster-related needs. They may not have the resources or capabilities to satisfy unanticipated needs that the private sector does. Before they can leave the relief operation, they must work with communities to ensure a significant reduction of risk factors threatening a successful recovery. Most firms' humanitarian actions concentrate around contributing cash, goods, human resources, information, and experience, or a combination of these, all of which have their own set of benefits and drawbacks (Tomasini & Van Wassenhove, 2009). Increasingly, companies are opting to design their social engagement through long-term programs or partnerships with humanitarian partners.

The role of NGOs during a disaster is also important to reduce the burden on government agencies in managing the humanitarian aid distribution process. The need for cooperation from NGOs as supporting teams is stated in Directive No. 20 (National Security Council, 1997). However, the roles and responsibilities of NGOs in supporting Government agencies in providing humanitarian aid are not clearly defined under current legislation. The roles and responsibilities of NGOs are loosely defined under each service theme, which allowed the NGOs to make their own decisions in providing humanitarian aid in any disaster with limited information gained from social media (Mohd et al., 2018).

The disaster management team have their plan, Standard Operation Process (SOP) or activities in managing the humanitarian aid distribution process (Gao et al., 2011). One of the challenging issues faced by government agencies is to achieve cooperation with the disaster victims in terms of relocating them to the disaster-proof areas, especially in relocation phases

(Gillespie et al, 2016). Apart from that, the main reason to cooperate with NGOs is to avoid program duplication (Joshi & Nishimura, 2016).

The diversity of actors operating along a relief chain is extremely high, depending on the magnitude and severity of disasters. For example, in the 2004 Asian tsunami, more than 700 different NGOs were involved in disaster relief operations. Investigating this high number of diverse actors in more detail reveals three main stakeholder groups that contribute most to Relief Supply Chain Management (RSCM) activities. They are represented by international agencies / NGOs, national agencies / NGOs, and companies from the private sector (Balcik et al, 2008). To maximize RSCM performance, the different relief actors have to strive for high levels of coordination, cooperation, and collaboration during relief chain operations. Externalities, such as demand uncertainty, chaotic post-disaster environments, resource scarcity, and disaster unpredictability are impediments that negatively affect coordination, cooperation, and collaboration among relief chain stakeholders (Balcik et al., 2010).

Barratt (2004), found that four collaborative cultural elements lead to collaborative successions and behaviours: trust, mutuality, information exchange, and openness and communication. Trust between organisations and within organisations is critical for long-term relationships between supply chain partners. Trust between buyers and suppliers enhances collaborative relationships. Trust between the dyad reduces the transaction costs and the buyer's need to monitor its suppliers and enhances the collaborative relationship (Nyaga et al, 2010). Conversely, lack of trust between the dyad acts as a barrier to collaboration and, in turn, promotes inter-firm rivalry (Russell & Fawcett, 2013). Meanwhile, Tsanos & Zografos (2016) found that mutuality and reciprocity in a dyadic relationship help develop trust and therefore lead to increased commitment in the relationship.

Collaboration between humanitarian stakeholders follows the intent to establish a close and intensive relationship and coordination between NGOs to jointly solve problems (Saab et al, 2013). Collaboration between government and NGOs is pursued in the mitigation and long-term recovery phases, where decisions are taken with particular caution, and NGOs' strategies are adjusted to others without time pressure (Li et al., 2019). The most important driver for successful collaboration is trust. It is more than just sharing information and interfacing with other NGOs because there is also the need to develop and prioritize trustful relations with other NGOs. Establishing trust between various partners leads to process integration and the interest to share benefits and costs. It is beyond doubt that trust is also important for coordination and cooperation but long-term teamwork. Trust supports the pursuit of goals and specific output of relief chain operations, thus leading to the high performance of relief chains (Saab et al., 2013).

Aside from contributing skills and resources, NGOs have to share risks and costs from a long-term perspective (Maon et al., 2009). These attributes may also impact cooperation, but they constitute the real basis for successful collaboration and continuous improvement in the humanitarian context. In conclusion, collaboration in the relief supply chain management deals with establishing a close and intensive relationship between NGOs for jointly solving problems, where government agencies and NGOs' internal standards, coordination, and rules are harmonized following others and trust is pervasive.

**Coordination in Collaboration of Humanitarian Relief Works**

High levels of coordination, cooperation and collaboration between involved aid providers are needed for efficient logistics processes in items procurement, transport and warehousing. In the immediate response phase, coordination, cooperation and collaboration are firstly required when NGOs, assess the beneficiaries' needs by sending field assessment and coordination teams into the disaster area (Kovacs & Spens, 2007). Coordination is the process of organizing people or groups so that they work together properly and well. No organization working alone can address the magnitude of the complexity of the needs associated with disaster preparedness and disaster response (Wankmuller & Reiner, 2019).

According to the International Federation Red Cross And Red Crescent (IFRC), there are government agencies, public service institutions such police, firemen, health workers, community groups such as farmers or youth groups, civic and religious organizations, NGOs, businesses, local leaders and local groups with roles and responsibilities in disaster preparedness and response. Effective coordination among these various responders is critical to successful preparation and response to disasters. At its best, coordination can eliminate gaps and duplication in service, determine an appropriate division of responsibility and establish a framework for information sharing, policy agreements, program collaboration, and joint planning (Interworks, 2000).

Disasters are characterized by overwhelming needs, competing priorities, destroyed or damaged communication and infrastructure, a rapid influx of humanitarian assistance organizations, and an outburst of mutual aid from local citizens and highly stressed local governmental and non-governmental institutions. In these environments, coordination takes extra effort, time, resources, and commitment. Coordination provisions will increase trust between agencies involved in disaster relief operations.

**Communication in Collaboration of Humanitarian Relief Works**

Communication, or the act of transmitting a message from one organisation to another organisation or part of an organisation, is a critical ingredient of collective action (Kapucu et al., 2009). Nowell & Steelman (2015) highlighted that the dynamic nature of disasters makes planning difficult and communication in real-time even more important. Meanwhile, according to Comfort et al (2004), failures of communication channels whether conventional phone lines, cell phone systems or radio channels can severely harm the emergency response. In recent years, means of communication during a disaster response have become more and more sophisticated, due to new developments in information and communication technologies (Bevc et al., 2009). However, Bevc et al (2009) are still concerned with information exchange that takes place face-to-face, via telephone, cellular phones or walkie-talkies, as well as e-mails, text messages and other forms of information and communication technologies. Celik et al (2014) find that well-functioning information and communication technologies positively affect the disaster response and facilitate coordination among organisations.

Hence, Nowell & Steelman (2015), suggest that failures in communication can lead to failures in coordination. Effective communication requires collecting and sharing information in a usable way and such needs after a disaster are high (Kapucu, 2006). Comfort (2007), refers to this statement as building a 'common operating picture among organisations where all

share and disseminate the information they have and value that which they receive, perhaps shaping a common institutional understanding of their environment, which likely consists of massive institutional voids.

### **Trust in Collaboration of Humanitarian Relief Works**

Trust can be defined as a function of the predictability and expectations of others' behaviours or a belief in others' competencies, which affects performance through activation of cooperation or other collaborative processes (Bond-Barnard et al., 2018). When there is trust, people ask for help, speak openly and honestly, take risks, accept new challenges and carry out their activities with less anxiety and stress (Carvalho, 2008). There are two dimensions of trust judgments; goodwill and competence (Das & Teng, 2001). Perceptions of goodwill entail attributions regarding the intention of another party to behave in a trustworthy manner; perceptions of competence entail attributions regarding the other party's ability to behave or perform as expected (Nooteboom, 1996). Contracts, meanwhile, represent the alternative means by which parties can manage risk in exchange relationships, but in interfirm relationships, firms typically use contracts while simultaneously attempting to build trust (Poppo & Zenger, 2002).

In addition to serving a control function, contracts provide a means by which parties can coordinate their expectations and efforts (Mayer & Argyres, 2004). As a result, common knowledge structures such as shared language and routinized interactions emerge that make it easier for the parties to communicate their ability to meet each other's needs (Zollo, 2016). Trust is an essential component for team performance (Erdem & Ozen, 2003). If trust is not present, teams cannot work efficiently. As the aim of humanitarian logistics is to alleviate the suffering of disaster-affected people, highly performing and trusted teams are of utmost importance. Therefore, building trust between parties involved in certain tasks or disaster relief activities can be enhanced by adding up a contract agreement to ensure both parties will work efficiently and coordinate with the job and minimize the risk that could occur.

### **Research Framework**

The research is using a framework to illustrate the relationship between the independent variable and the dependent variable. Based on Mcgaghie et al (2001), this framework has set the stage for the representation of the objective that drives the investigation being reported based on the statement problem. These research problem statements present the description of an issue that caused the researcher to conduct the study. The researcher also uses this framework to integrate existing literature and the research objective (Haralambos & Holborn, 2008). The framework model for this study is shown in Diagram 2.0.



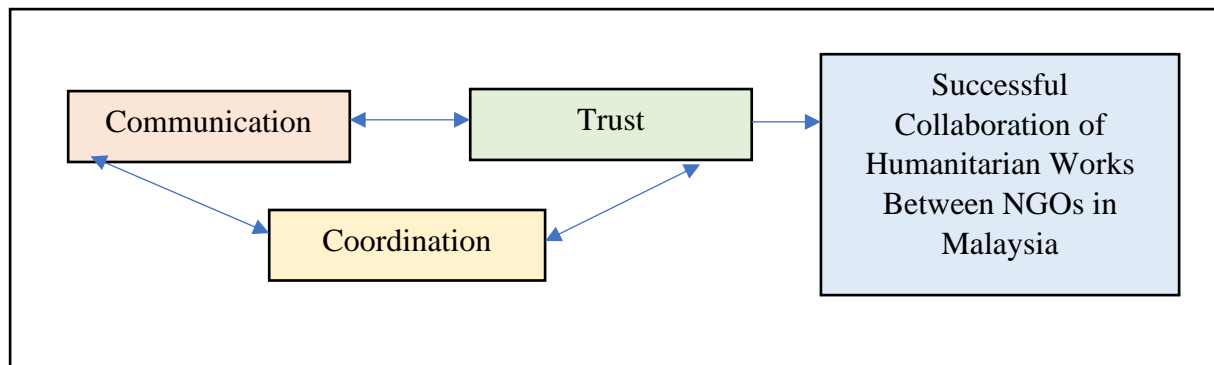


Diagram 2.0: Framework of Successful Collaboration of Humanitarian Relief Work Between NGOs in Malaysia

### Research Methodology

This study considered applying interpretivism as the research paradigm. According to Creswell (2013), the research design is a form of investigation that will give detailed instructions for a technique using one of three methodologies: qualitative, quantitative, or mixed approaches. In essence, research design lays the groundwork for the entire research project. The research design provides a roadmap for systematically completing research tasks. The researcher used qualitative methodologies in this investigation.

The researcher chose various humanitarian works for this study for a variety of reasons, including the fact that they are the 2020 humanitarian works in Malaysia. Moreover, purposive sampling was used to identify the respondents. The respondents were selected for their involvement in the collaboration networks involving at least two parties between the government and NGOs and between NGOs themselves, that they involve NGOs from both within and outside project areas. Furthermore, the study's main goal is to find out what factors lead to successful collaboration between different parties during the humanitarian relief works. The respondents were contacted by phone and via email, and all interviews were conducted between November and December 2020.

Interviews were conducted following a semi-structured interview topic guide. Information about the respondent's place of work and experience was obtained. The interviews explored the following aspects of collaboration in humanitarian works; 1) factors that influence the success of collaboration in humanitarian works, 2) the collaboration process in humanitarian works, 3) the roles of NGOs in the humanitarian works.

### Research Finding

#### *Background*

In Malaysia, all crisis management stakeholders coordinate and work together to provide compassionate relief to catastrophe victims in the form of shelter, food, medical attention, and basic requirements. However, a lack of understanding of humanitarian aid management has resulted in many concerns, including food redundancy, uneven distribution of food supplies to disaster victims, food insecurity, and an over-concentration of NGOs and volunteers in certain impacted areas. The issues reveal flaws in the crisis management stakeholders' management of the humanitarian aid distribution process.

As a result, the framework intends to raise awareness of humanitarian aid management, strengthen the process, and assure the effectiveness of collaboration in humanitarian relief works between NGOs. The researcher has conducted an in-depth interview with four (4) NGOs in Malaysia that have executed humanitarian relief works in the year 2020. One (1) of the organizations involves during the flood disaster in Johor, two (2) organisations organized the Covid-19 medical kit supplies to the frontliners at Kuala Lumpur and Negeri Sembilan, and one (1) organization execute the humanitarian relief supply (foods) for the homeless during the fasting month (Ramadhan) in Kuala Lumpur. Below in table 4.0 is the demographic profile of the research samples that have been interviewe

Table 4.0  
*Demographic profile of the research samples*

Name of the NGOs / Representatives	Experience in the Humanitarian field	years in the field	Locality	Name of the Humanitarian Work	Description of the Humanitarian Work
Mr. A	10 years		Batu Pahat, Johor	Flood Relief in Batu Pahat, Johor	Aid for the 2020 flood victims at Batu Pahat, Johor.
Mr. B	4 years		Seremban, Negeri Sembilan	Rovers Project Shield	Supplying <i>do it yourself</i> (DIY) face shield to the frontliners in Seremban, Negeri Sembilan during the Covid19 outbreak in 2020.
Mr. C	8 years		Kuala Lumpur	Covid 19 Medical Kit Supplies to the Frontliners	Supplying Covid 19 medical kit to the frontliners in Kuala Lumpur during the outbreak of Covid 19 in 2020.
Mr. D	13 years		Petaling Jaya, Selangor	<i>Kotak Makan Ramadhan</i>	Feed the homeless in Kuala Lumpur during Ramadhan 2020.

The main themes are summarised in diagram 4.0. The researcher has categorized three themes for this study, namely Communication, Coordination and Trust, as well as related sub-themes. The interviews were conducted based on all three themes and subthemes to obtain findings for the study.

Themes	Sub Themes
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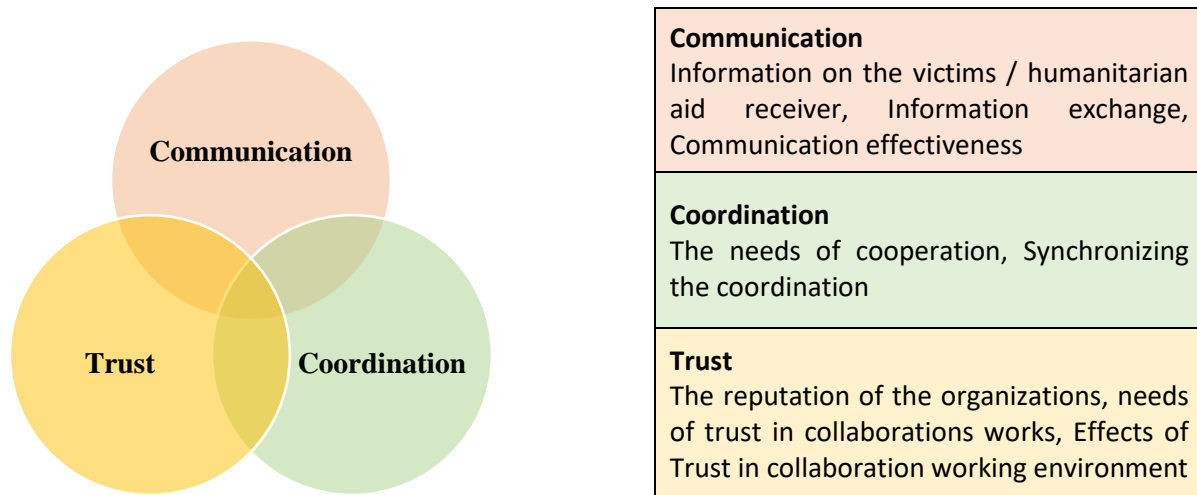


Diagram 4.0: Main Themes and subthemes for analysing from respondent

Furthermore, based on an interview with the candidates, they agreed that each agency must have a leader who can properly control and distribute information. Moreover, to minimise communication breakdown during the execution of the projects, all organisers and agencies involved in the humanitarian project should synchronise their communications platforms, and communications technology should be a priority for all organisers and agencies involved in the humanitarian project.

Below in table 4.1, is the excerpts from the interview session with the NGOs regarding Communication affect the success of collaborations in humanitarian relief project:

Table 4.1

Excerpts from an interview session with the NGOs regarding Communication affect the success of collaborations in humanitarian relief project:

Theme	Sub Theme	Questions	Quotes
Communications	Information on the victims / humanitarian aid receiver	How do you / your organizations get the information on victims that needs the supply aid?	<p>RA: They already have data from cases before, last year...</p> <p>RB: ..before the project, the organizer send a representative to see the real situations...</p>
	Information exchange	How is the information being informed to the volunteers?	<p>RA: Representatives will enter the meeting, we get info from representatives.</p> <p>RC: We held a WhatsApp group, a telegram group among volunteers, Committee, all volunteers. The organizer will upload all the information. But there is a small group for each unit.</p>
	Communication effectiveness	What is your opinion towards effective communications in a collaborative working environment?	<p>RA: Communication is important. If not, the job fails. The task fails. Each unit will face catastrophe during the humanitarian project...</p> <p>RB: It needs to centralize communication. Only one person or unit handle all the information and communicate very well to volunteers.</p> <p>RD: Very important. Not just the organizer, but the volunteer or other teams members should pay attention and communicate well...</p>

To complete the humanitarian works, the agencies involved in the humanitarian relief works will benefit from coordination and teamwork. It will boost the spirits of everyone participating. Each process of collaboration requires coordination to ensure that all of the NGOs involved can carry out the assigned tasks and duties following the plan. Furthermore, cooperation is critical to avert disaster in the management of humanitarian efforts by NGOs. Furthermore, the number of volunteers or manpower involved in the project should be adequate at hand and well-coordinated across all units or departments. Volunteer collaboration is also necessary since humanitarian work demands the participation of a big number of people for the project or assignment to be performed successfully. It is possible to successfully manage the uncertainties that arise during humanitarian endeavours. It will also lower the risk of failure and the amount of work that has to be done. Strong coordination and cooperation are essential to perform all of the actions in the humanitarian relief endeavour.

Below in table 4.2 is the excerpts from interviews for Cooperation & Coordination that affect the success of collaborations in the humanitarian project:

Table 4.2

*Excerpts from interviews for Coordination affect the success of collaborations in a humanitarian project.*

Theme	Sub Theme	Question	Quotes
Coordination	The need for cooperation	How do you / your organizations cooperate with other stakeholders during the humanitarian project?	<p><i>RA: The organizers have divided their tasks, so we do the work according to the set work.</i></p> <p><i>RB: ...equally. Do the work together. If there is a problem, solve it together according to the expertise of each ability.</i></p> <p><i>RD: ..each is discussed, issue a step or process on how to carry out relief work later...</i></p>
		During the execution of the project, how do you / your organization coordinate the task given to ensure the task is successfully executed?	<p><i>RA: ..when the project takes place, there will be a PIC, a runner to check all activities. which is not enough, there is a problem, will send support assistance.</i></p> <p><i>RC: Each team will do the work according to what is planned, update the leader.</i></p>

When the agencies involved intended to collaborate and separate the tasks assigned during the project's execution, trust was required. The main organiser must provide complete support and confidence to the other agencies involved, allowing them to manage the assignment following the established order. Moreover, the background of the organizations and their experience in the humanitarian field influence the level of trust gained in the collaboration's activities.

Below in table 4.3 is the excerpts from the interview session with the NGOs regarding Trust affect the success of collaborations in humanitarian relief project:

Table 4.3

*Excerpts from an interview session with the NGOs regarding Trust affect the success of collaborations in humanitarian relief works*

Theme	Sub Theme	Questions	Quotes
Trust	The reputation of the organizations	What is your opinion regarding trust among stakeholders involved in the humanitarian project?	<p>RA: <i>It depends... as long as we have the same interest in helping people, the reputations put aside...</i></p> <p>RB: <i>In humanitarian work, everyone who involves, we believe their sincerity to help people. So, we give our trust to them, and we provide the best effort to gain their trust to us to the mission...</i></p> <p>RC: <i>... If we get a good organization, we will feel more confident in executing the humanitarian works...</i></p>
	Needs of trust in collaborations works	Is trust important for you or your organizations in executing the humanitarian works?	<p>RB: <i>They invite us to work together, so it is necessary to give us the trust and freedom to run the project...</i></p> <p>RC: <i>... important. We will feel comfortable and motivated to do the work, without 100% supervision and follow our ability...</i></p> <p>RD: <i>That trust is important. not only the trust of the organizers in us, but we also have to trust the organizers...</i></p>
	Effects of Trust in collaboration working environment	How does Trust affect your collaboration working environment with others?	<p>RA: <i>It makes my job easy to manage. I can give orders and instructions to my unit.</i></p> <p>RC: <i>Our task can be executed efficiently. Give us more freedom and we can use our expertise...</i></p>

As a result, the researcher found that, from the interview findings with 4 representatives of NGOs, each collaboration process requires good and effective communication in ensuring that every plan, every work, every instruction is given can be carried out and implemented well to ensure collaboration network between NGOs in this successful humanitarian work. Also, the importance of coordination of work between NGOs so that every action carried out moves in parallel and sync with other NGOs. This is to avoid disruptions or chaos during humanitarian aid work. The importance of placing trust in other NGOs in this collaborative network collaboration is undeniable. When trust is given in carrying out the task or mission, the NGOs that are indirectly involved will gain a solid moral momentum as well as enthusiasm in carrying out the humanitarian aid mission. It will also create a harmonious atmosphere in a collaborative network. This clearly shows that communication, coordination and trust affect the success of a network of collaboration between NGOs in carrying out humanitarian aid work.

Based on the findings of the study, how they, the NGOs, state or classify that their project is successful in collaboration with other parties is that, when they successfully perform the assigned task, it is considered successful. For example, in a collaborative humanitarian aid project, each NGO and party involved has been given and assigned a task to be performed, for example, finding volunteer human resources, identifying the number of victims or recipients, purchasing supplies and other- another. In addition, they also classify their

successful projects and collaborative efforts based on the achievement of program objectives and targets that have been set. Below in table 4.4 is the excerpts from the interview session with the NGOs regarding how they classify their successful collaborations in humanitarian relief project:

Table 4.4  
*Excerpts from an interview session with the NGOs how they classify their successful collaborations in a humanitarian relief project*

Theme	Sub Theme	Questions	Quotes
<b>Successful Collaboration</b>	<i>Opinions</i>	What is your opinion towards collaborations in the project?	<i>RA: Success... Everything OK...</i>
			<i>RB: Cooperation with other NGOs is very good .. they all commit.. also ideas and ways to deal with all the problems that occur...</i>
<b>Successful Collaboration</b>	<i>Classification</i>	How do you or your organization define that the collaboration is successful?	<i>RC: Ok .. we have to choose the NGO or party that we want to collaborate with .. this is to avoid competency problems .. also coordinate exactly the work that has been distributed.</i>
			<i>RD: each of us is given a task .. which has been distributed by the chief, so, we see in that area .. successfully implemented together or not .. also the target recipients, the list is there, we have enough, the aid is completely given to them. Success is judged from that angle.</i>

Furthermore, the researcher has examined the most important criteria for managing the humanitarian aid distribution process, from a broad perspective of crisis management stakeholders' decision-making to the unique peculiarities of a given environment in this study. Below is diagram 4.0 is the relationships of the variables in the process of collaborations in humanitarian works among NGOs as well as the activities involved in each process.

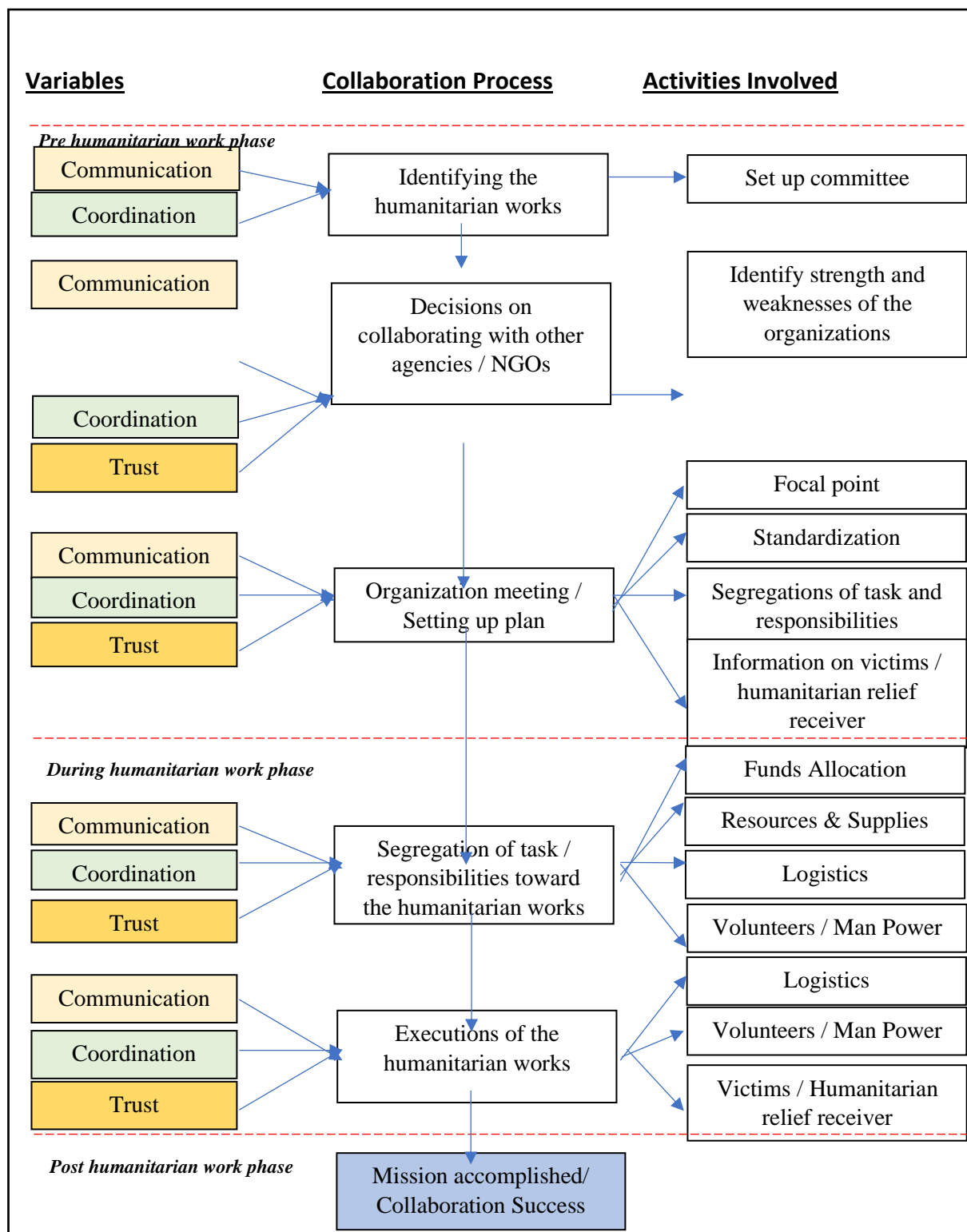


Diagram 4.0: Process of collaborations in humanitarian works among NGOs

These are the processes of collaboration among the NGOs that the researcher discovered from the interview sessions and analysis of humanitarian work undertaken by the NGOs, as shown in diagram 4.0. First, the NGOs will determine which humanitarian projects they want to conduct or carry out. They will form a committee among their members, as well as based on the location where the humanitarian effort will take place, at this stage. In the



second step, they will decide whether or not to collaborate with other non-governmental organisations. The selection is based on their capacity and availability, as well as their strengths and weaknesses when it comes to carrying out humanitarian missions. Once the NGOs have decided to collaborate, they will convene a conference of the NGOs, designate the focal point or focal area for humanitarian assistance, and standardise the work process to ensure that all NGOs work at the same pace and follow the key objectives. They also separate the tasks and responsibilities, divide the work, and obtain the aid recipient's information.

The fourth process entails dividing the task among the NGOs. The logistics, funding allocation, locating resources & supplies involving donations aid and volunteers are divided between the NGOs in this section. Each of the NGOs involved will do the task assigned to them. The final step is to carry out the humanitarian work following the plan. The logistics operations in this process include the number of modes of transportation, the number of trips needed, the number of volunteers required for each trip, how they intend to distribute the donation supplies, and updated information on the situation and condition of humanitarian efforts.

From the collaboration process in humanitarian works, the researcher discovered that communication, coordination and building trust among entities involved in humanitarian projects is critical towards their effectiveness. Communication is essential to ensure that the information received is well aligned with all the processes of the collaboration and the execution plans of all parties involved. Each organisation must successfully manage the information it receives.

## **Discussion**

This study examines the factors that determine the success of humanitarian collaboration among Malaysian NGOs. The rise in the number of NGOs as well as the advent of the Covid-19 pandemic, which impacted the rest of the world in 2020, including Malaysia, has made humanitarian work more difficult. To succeed in humanitarian relief missions, there is also a need for a network of collaboration between NGOs and authorities. When a large number of people work together to carry out a humanitarian aid mission, the main challenge is maintaining accurate communication and coordination so that the work can be completed properly. Furthermore, the importance of trust between the people involved in the completion of a task and mission, so that each work or task provided can be carried out to the best of one's ability. The primary emerging themes were: i) the role of communication in the collaborative work process, ii) the requirement for coordination during the collaborative work process, and ii) how trust affects humanitarian morale among NGOs during humanitarian collaborations.

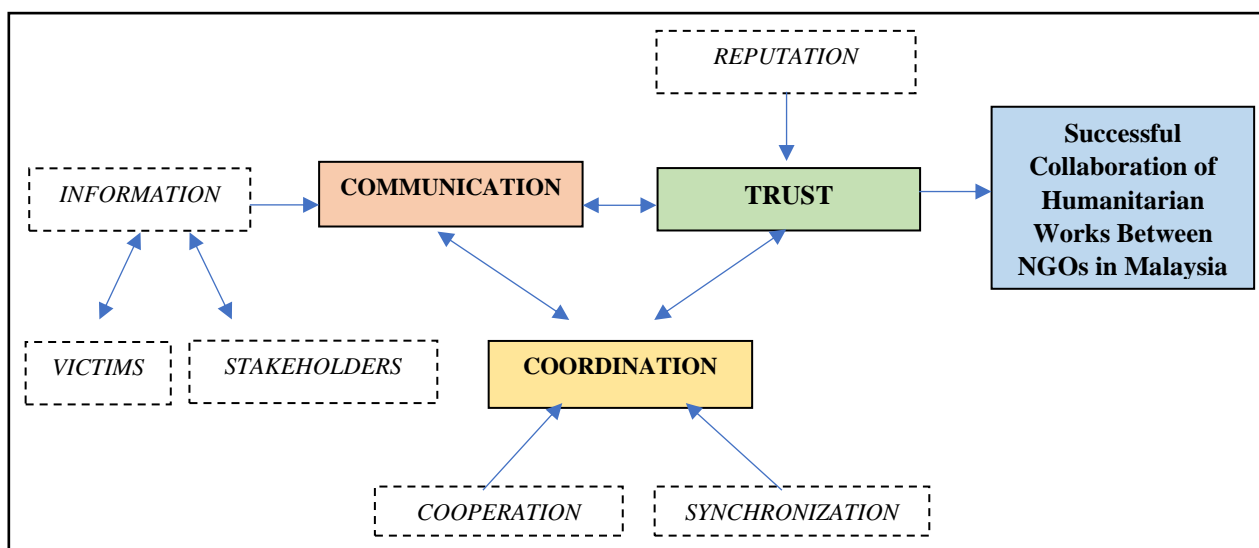


Diagram 4.1: Framework of Successful Collaboration of Humanitarian Relief Work Between NGOs in Malaysia

After the interviews were done and the data from the interviews were analysed, as shown in figure 4.1 above, this study discovered and relate the findings to the study framework. Communication is necessitating the transmission of precise and accurate information between the organiser and the victim, as well as the organiser and other parties engaged in the humanitarian aid mission's success. The study also discovered that cooperation and synchronisation of work between the parties involved greatly affect the effectiveness of coordination and that the reputation of organisations or parties who want to collaborate in humanitarian aid missions greatly affects the effectiveness of trust. Hence, these variables influence the success of collaborative works in humanitarian aid missions.

### Communication in Collaboration Works Process

During humanitarian work, communication is crucial. Communication appears in all processes of collaboration in humanitarian work, according to this study. It is discovered that communication is crucial in the collaborative work process. Any communication gaps will contribute to a lack of understanding, NGOs' or stakeholders' ability to comprehend how collaboration works, and, as a result, poor satisfaction with humanitarian efforts. Failures in communication can lead to failures in coordination (Nowell & Steelman, 2015). Effective communication requires collecting and sharing information in a usable way, and Comfort (2007), refers to this statement as building a common operating picture among organisations where all share and disseminate the information they have and value that which they receive, perhaps shaping a common institutional understanding of their environment, which likely consists of massive institutional voids. Communication is the most basic or least embedded activity identified. Members of different organisations need to have conversations and trust each other and there are no significant costs associated with that (Martin et al., 2016).

### **Coordination during Collaboration Work Process**

Serious coordination and cooperation is required amongst the parties participating in humanitarian relief operations when there is a network of collaboration between them. Its purpose is to ensure that all work movements are appropriately coordinated. This study discovered that coordination is critical among the NGOs engaged and that it is required from the start of the collaborative process through the completion of the project. Solid coordination will result from effective communication. It's because all of the information received by the parties involved is consistent and relevant to the work at hand. Coordination, at its best, can reduce service gaps and redundancy, define an acceptable division of responsibilities, and develop a framework for information sharing, policy agreements, programme collaboration, and collaborative planning (Interworks, 2000). Incentivizing cooperation, such as through pooled funding or access to beneficiaries, maintaining clear leadership structures and accountability for humanitarian players, and minimising competition among key actors are just a few of the actions that could improve coordination (Jervelund et al., 2019).

### **Trust Affect the Morale Among NGOs In Collaboration Works**

In the interviews conducted, respondents noted that they greatly need the trust of people who help them carry out humanitarian aid operations. In addition, the background of the persons engaged, their reputation in the humanitarian works field, as well as their expertise in humanitarian aid work, can be used to assess trust. The trust offered can catalyse NGOs' passion and drive in the success of the work that has been distributed, and it provides them with the flexibility to do anything they want as long as they follow the ideas and concepts of work that have been developed together. People ask for help, communicate openly and honestly, take risks, accept new challenges, and carry out their activities with less fear and stress when they have trust (Carvalho, 2008). As a result, in collaborative work, trust is critical in the success of a humanitarian relief mission, where each party participating offers space and allows them to operate in their way, based on their skill and capability.

### **Successful Collaboration**

According to the study's interviews, how the NGOs express or classify that their project is successful in conjunction with other parties is that it is successful when they complete the allocated work. In a collaborative humanitarian relief initiative, for example, each NGO and party participating has been given and allocated a task to complete, such as locating volunteer human resources, determining the number of victims or receivers, procuring supplies, and so on. Furthermore, they categorise their successful initiatives and collaborative efforts according to the attainment of programme objectives and targets. NGOs must share risks and expenses in the long run, in addition to giving skills and resources. These characteristics may have an impact on cooperation, but in the humanitarian context, they are the true foundation for successful collaboration and continual progress (Maon et al., 2009).

### **Strengths and Limitations of The Study**

This study is one of the few which draws on interviews with respondents who have worked on the collaboration of humanitarian works in Malaysia. It corroborates some findings already documented in the literature. The respondents interviewed are drawn from varied backgrounds, therefore providing different perspectives. Analysis of transcripts was done

using a structured approach, building upon themes identified from preceding analysis of the literature to reduce subjectivity.

Limitations of this study include the relatively small sample size and the short times line during which respondents were performed. Purposive sampling heightens the risk of selection bias in small studies. In particular, two key constituencies are absent from the list of interviewees: i) victims or aid receivers and ii) Malaysian government officials. These are important limitations because victims' or aid receivers' experiences as service users would provide important insights on the delivery or the distribution of aid in humanitarian works and other barriers to access and because officials' views would have given a better sense of governance in humanitarian works in Malaysia. Most of the respondents were performed in Kuala Lumpur and Johor, and this may not be representative of the situation across the rest of Malaysia, although the perspectives and experience of respondents represented a wider geographical region across Malaysia.

### **Conclusion**

The scenario of humanitarian logistics in Malaysia and how disaster management is being managed can be learned through the literature review. Notably, the Malaysian government and NGOs, and among NGOs themselves collaborate to carry out humanitarian relief activities. Each participant's position and responsibilities were also stated in the National Security Council Directive No. 20. Moreover, the framework described in this study also hopes to be used by NGOs as a reference in carrying out humanitarian work in collaboration in the future. Hence, it is very clear that communication, coordination and trust will affect the success of a network of collaboration in humanitarian work. In addition, this framework will also increase the knowledge of NGOs in the matter of collaboration, it can also cause NGOs to see other things needed in the process of collaboration. By conducting interviews with four representatives of NGOs, the researcher discovered that each collaboration process necessitates good and effective communication. The necessity of coordinating activity among NGOs so that each action is carried out in parallel with and in sync with the activities of other NGOs. Trusting other NGOs is crucial in this collaborative network collaboration. The NGOs that are indirectly involved will develop strong morale if trust is granted in carrying out the task or purpose. When NGOs that are indirectly involved are granted faith in carrying out the work or mission, they receive a strong moral impetus as well as a passion for carrying out the humanitarian aid mission. A collaborative network will also generate a peaceful environment. Hence, this demonstrates how communication, coordination, and trust affect the success of a collaboration of NGOs working together to provide humanitarian help.

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