

# Humanitarian Logistics In Malaysia: A Successful Collaboration in Relief Efforts among NGOs in Malaysia

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**ABSTRACT** - Working with a diverse group of stakeholders presents significant challenges for humanitarian organizations. Coordination between actors is often difficult, and efforts can be duplicated. Collaboration issues have been identified as major stumbling blocks in managing humanitarian projects. These issues must be addressed to prevent inefficiency and impediments in the humanitarian response process, before, during, and after disasters. This research examines the Malaysian humanitarian logistics scenario, as well as the factors that contribute to successful collaboration in relief efforts among Malaysian NGOs. Qualitative methods were used, and four NGOs involved in humanitarian work in 2020 were interviewed to investigate differences within and across humanitarian efforts. The study identified the main pillars of successful collaboration in humanitarian work, such as communication, coordination, and trust. These pillars influence the collaborative process and help all stakeholders in crisis management understand their roles and responsibilities in providing humanitarian aid.

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

## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

Humanitarian logistics is the process of planning, implementing, and controlling the efficient, cost-effective flow and storage of goods and materials, as well as related information, from the point of origin to the point of consumption to meet the requirements of vulnerable end beneficiaries (Kaatrud et al., 2003). Humanitarian logistics involves preparation, planning, procurement, transportation, warehousing, tracking and tracing, and customs clearance (2). 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). Coordination is an essential tool for obtaining a big picture of an emergency case, and it has been defined as the sharing of exclusive knowledge or resources by two or more unrelated or opposing entities (4). Horizontal coordination concerns the internal relationship and partnerships within an organization or community, while vertical coordination is a connection between two or more organizations that share their responsibilities, resources, and performance information to serve relatively similar end customers (Jahre and Jensen, 2009).

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 promoted by the Council (6). Malaysia's development policy has always prioritized disaster management. In 2013, Malaysia's National Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) was established, bringing together stakeholders from the public and commercial sectors. The resources allocated to reducing risk factors and facilitating long-term development demonstrate this priority. Malaysia's 11th Five-Year Plan (2016-2020) focuses on disaster risk management in five phases: prevention, mitigation, readiness, response, and recovery. Malaysia is continually

improving 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.

Efficient logistical procedures in humanitarian work require high levels of coordination, cooperation, and collaboration among organizations providing assistance (Kovács & Spens, 2007). Coordination, communication, and collaboration are particularly essential in the immediate response phase when NGOs assess the needs of the beneficiaries by sending field assessment and coordination teams into the disaster area.

## **2.0 PROBLEM STATEMENT**

Predicting the short and long-term effects of a natural disaster is difficult because a disaster physically interrupts a system, causing priorities and knowledge to become muddled. Without 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, while the economic impacts of disasters may be divided into macro-level effects and individual livelihoods at the micro-level (8). Humanitarian logistics is notorious for its tumultuous and complex environment (9), and disasters vary in nature with 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 characterized 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 organizations and the private sector in dealing with a volatile environment (Nurmala et al., 2018). Such cross-sectoral collaboration can aid in improving the efficacy and efficiency of humanitarian logistics by facilitating 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 organizations. Coordination between actors is difficult, and efforts are frequently duplicated (13). Although communities are key stakeholders in disaster response (Goulding et al., 2018), it is widely acknowledged that humanitarian organizations may benefit from good relationships with the business sector during disaster response (15). Collaboration problems have been identified as a significant stumbling block in the management of humanitarian work. These challenges cannot be overlooked because they result in inefficiency and impair the humanitarian response process before, during, and after a disaster.

## **3.0 Research Objectives**

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

#### 4.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

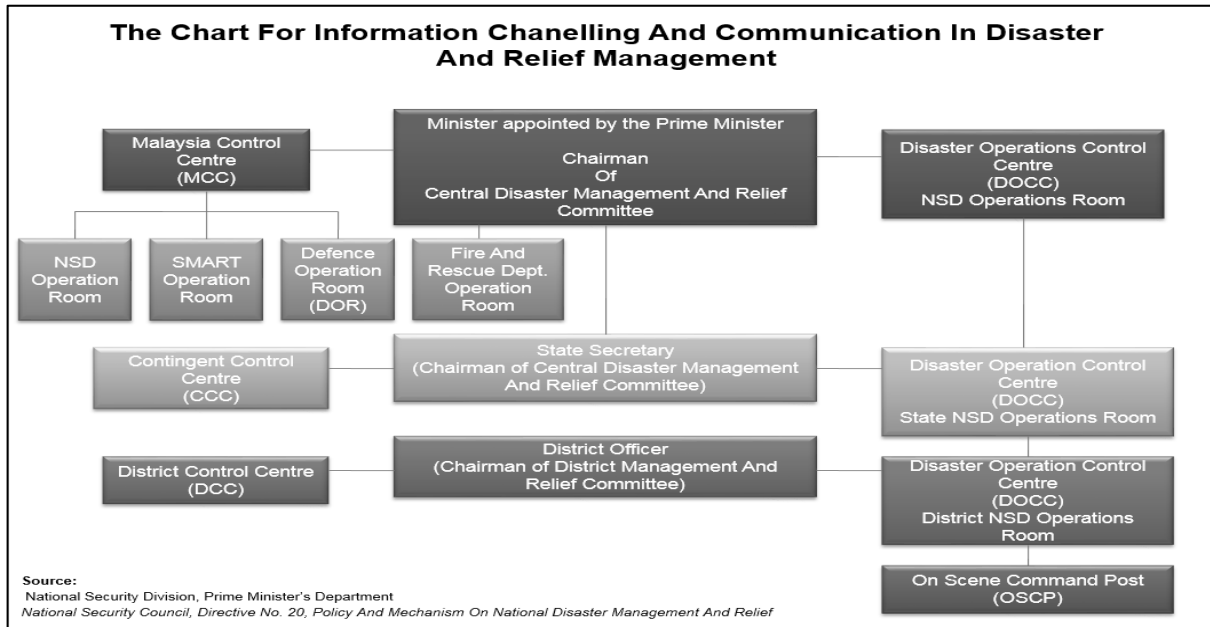
##### 4.1 Humanitarian Logistics

Humanitarian logistics is a subset of supply chain management that involves successfully managing operations. Private organizations may be involved in advancing supply chain management in disaster response (2). Understanding operational management activities is one of the most critical success criteria in humanitarian logistics operations. Additionally, humanitarian logistics is a branch of logistics that specializes in managing the transportation and warehousing of supplies to the impacted area and people during natural disasters or complex events. However, this definition only 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).

Humanitarian logistics has played an important role in disaster relief for several reasons. First, it helps mitigate the negative effects of natural disasters in terms of human lives lost and financial expenditures. Second, humanitarian logistics is seen as a data bank that can be analyzed to provide learning after an event. Logistics statistics reflect 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. As a result, it is critical to the success of present and future operations and plans. Creating emergency response plans can aid in catastrophe preparation and mobilization (Gupta et al., 2019)

##### 4.2 Malaysian Humanitarian Logistics

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



**Figure 1:** Information Channelling and Communication in Disaster and Relief Management

Disasters can be divided into three main categories: natural, man-made, and hybrid. The disaster aid program planned by the government is overseen by the National Security Council (NSC). The effectiveness of the program is empowered by Directive No. 20, which provides guidance for the agencies involved. Humanitarian activities during and after the disaster event heavily rely on logistics activities, especially transportation and inventory management. Due to the uncertainty and complexity inherent in humanitarian logistics, they need to be properly managed to implement better responses.

Currently, disaster management in Malaysia is run by the National Disaster Management Agency (NADMA), which is under the Prime Minister's Department. It replaced the National Security Council (NSC) as the focal point for disaster management and consolidated 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). The Malaysia Civil Defence Forces (MCDF) have been appointed as the Secretary for Disaster Management Committee at the state and district level and are responsible for enhancing community resilience and preparedness towards disaster. MCDF set up a Disaster Management Secretariat Branch to regulate and coordinate the secretariat's Disaster Management Committee activity at the state and district level (18).

The disaster management organization structure continues under three levels: federal, state, and district. The management of disaster risk is regulated by Directive No. 20, which provides guidance on policy and mechanisms related to national disaster management and relief activities. It guides the integration of various agencies in 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 incorporate international best practices. The Disaster Management and Relief Committee (DMRC) was formed to carry out the responsibilities of Directive No. 20 in forming various aspects of the four 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 involved in combating disasters (6).

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

Collaboration is not only required between humanitarian organizations, but also with other stakeholders such as the commercial sector and local communities. Humanitarian agencies are available to respond to disaster-related needs, but they may not have the resources or capabilities to satisfy unanticipated needs that the private sector does. Before leaving the relief operation, they must work with communities to ensure significant risk reduction for a successful recovery. Most firms' humanitarian actions focus on contributing cash, goods, human resources, information, and experience, or a combination of these, all of which have their own benefits and drawbacks [2]. Increasingly, companies are designing their social engagement through long-term programs or partnerships with humanitarian partners.

The role of NGOs during a disaster is essential 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 allows 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 has its 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 achieving cooperation with disaster victims in terms of relocating them to 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 behaviors: trust, mutuality, information exchange, and openness and communication. Trust between organizations and within organizations 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 [26]. Meanwhile, Tsanos and 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 aims to establish a close and intensive relationship and coordination between NGOs to jointly solve problems (Saab et al., 2013). During the mitigation and long-term recovery phases, collaboration between government and NGOs is pursued with particular caution, adjusting strategies without time pressure (Li et al., 2019). Trust is the most important driver for successful collaboration, as it involves more than just sharing information and interfacing with other NGOs; there is also a need to develop and prioritize trustful relations. Establishing trust between partners leads to process integration and a shared interest in sharing benefits and costs. Trust is essential for coordination, cooperation, and long-term teamwork, supporting the pursuit of relief chain goals and high performance (Saab et al., 2013).

Aside from contributing skills and resources, NGOs must also share risks and costs from a long-term perspective, which are critical attributes for successful collaboration and continuous improvement in the humanitarian context (Maon et al., 2009). In conclusion, collaboration in relief supply chain management involves establishing a close and intensive relationship between NGOs to jointly solve problems, harmonizing government agencies and NGOs' internal standards, coordination, and rules, and prioritizing pervasive trust.

#### **4.4 *Coordination in Collaboration of Humanitarian Relief Works***

High levels of coordination, cooperation, and collaboration between aid providers are necessary for efficient logistics processes in procurement, transport, and warehousing of items. During the immediate response phase, coordination, cooperation, and collaboration are first required when NGOs assess the needs of beneficiaries by sending field assessment and

coordination teams into the disaster area (Kovács & Spens, 2007). Coordination is the process of organizing people or groups so that they work together properly. No organization working alone can address the magnitude and complexity of the needs associated with disaster preparedness and response [31].

According to the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), there are government agencies, public service institutions such as police, firefighters, 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 crucial 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 [32].

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..

#### **4.5 Communication in Collaboration of Humanitarian Relief Works**

Communication, or the act of transmitting a message from one organization to another organization or part of an organization, is a critical ingredient of collective action (Kapucu et al., 2009). Nowell and Steelman (2015) highlighted that the dynamic nature of disasters makes planning difficult and emphasizes the importance of real-time communication. Meanwhile, according to Comfort et al. (2004), failures in communication channels, whether conventional phone lines, cell phone systems, or radio channels, can severely harm emergency response efforts. In recent years, means of communication during disaster response have become increasingly 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) found that well-functioning information and communication technologies have a positive effect on disaster response and facilitate coordination among organizations.

Hence, Nowell and 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 are high after a disaster (Comfort, 2007). Comfort (2007) refers to this statement as building a 'common operating picture among organizations,' where all share and disseminate the information they have and value the information they receive, perhaps shaping a common institutional understanding of their environment, which likely consists of massive institutional voids.

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

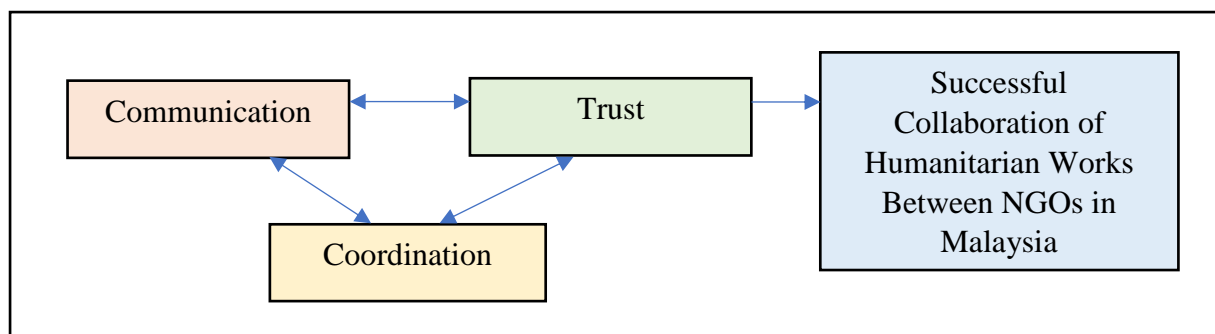
Trust can be defined as a function of predictability and expectations of others' behaviors or a belief in others' competencies, which affects performance through the activation of cooperation or other collaborative processes (Bond-Barnard et al., 2018). When there is trust, people ask for help, speak openly and honestly, take risks, accept new challenges, and carry out their activities with less anxiety and stress (Bachmann, 2001). There are two dimensions of trust judgments: goodwill and competence (Lewicki et al., 2006). 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. 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 (Dyer and Chu, 2000).

In addition to serving a control function, contracts provide a means by which parties can coordinate their expectations and efforts (Dyer and Chu, 2000). 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 (Krause et al., 2000). Trust is an essential component for team performance (Dirks and Ferrin, 2002). 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 a contract agreement to ensure that both parties will work efficiently, coordinate with the job, and minimize the risk that could occur.

## 5.0 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 sets the stage for the representation of the objective that drives the investigation being reported based on the problem statement. The research problem statement presents a 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 (Thomas, 2003). The framework model for this study is shown in Figure 2.



**Figure 2:** Framework of Successful Collaboration of Humanitarian Relief Work Between NGOs in Malaysia

## 6.0 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study considered applying interpretivism as the research paradigm. According to Creswell (2013), 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 and provides a roadmap for systematically completing research tasks. The researcher used qualitative methodologies in this investigation and applied thematic analysis, which is a qualitative data analysis method that involves reading through a data set (such as transcripts from in-depth interviews or focus groups) and identifying patterns in meaning across the data to derive themes.

The researcher chose various humanitarian works for this study for a variety of reasons, including the fact that they were the 2020 humanitarian works in Malaysia. Purposive sampling was used to identify the respondents, who were selected for their involvement in

collaboration networks between at least two parties, including between the government and NGOs and between NGOs themselves, with involvement from NGOs both within and outside project areas. Furthermore, the study's main goal was to find out what factors lead to successful collaboration between different parties during 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, which included obtaining information about the respondent's place of work and experience. 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, and 3) the roles of NGOs in the humanitarian works.

## 7.0 RESEARCH FINDINGS

### 7.1 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. These 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 ensure the effectiveness of collaboration in humanitarian relief works between NGOs. The researcher conducted in-depth interviews with four (4) NGOs in Malaysia that executed humanitarian relief works in the year 2020. One (1) of the organizations was involved during the flood disaster in Johor, two (2) organizations organized Covid-19 medical kit supplies for frontliners in Kuala Lumpur and Negeri Sembilan, and one (1) organization executed humanitarian relief supplies (foods) for the homeless during the fasting month (Ramadhan) in Kuala Lumpur. Table 4.0 shows the demographic profile of the research samples that were interviewed.

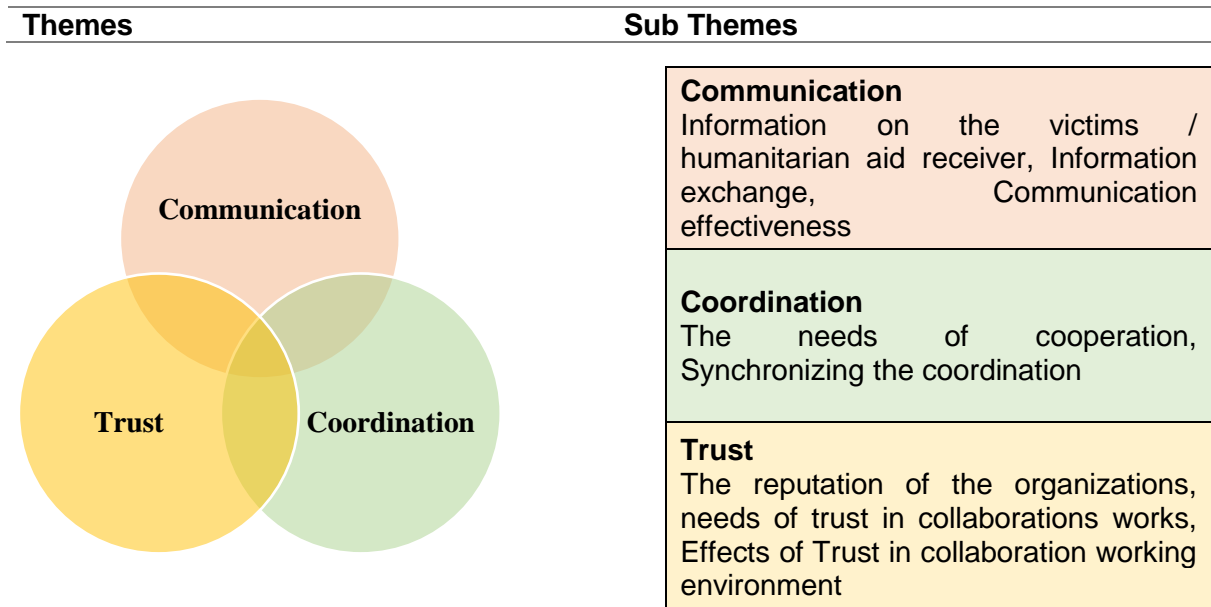
Table 1: Demographic profile of the research samples

Name of the NGOs / Representatives	Experience years in the Humanitarian 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 Shield Project	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 summarized in Figure 3. 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 sub-themes to obtain findings for the study.



**Figure 3:** Main Themes and subthemes for analysing from respondent.

Furthermore, based on interviews with the respondents, they agreed that each agency must have a leader who can properly control and distribute information. Moreover, to minimize communication breakdown during the execution of projects, all organizers and agencies involved in the humanitarian project should synchronize their communication platforms, and communication technology should be a priority for all organizers 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 2:** 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?	RA: They already have data from cases before, last year... RB: ..before the project, the organizer send a representative to see the real situations...
	Information exchange	How is the information being informed	RA: Representatives will enter the meeting, we get info from representatives.

		to the volunteers?	<p><i>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.</i></p>
			<p><i>RA: Communication is important. If not, the job fails. The task fails. Each unit will face catastrophe during the humanitarian project...</i></p>
Communication effectiveness		What is your opinion towards effective communications in a collaborative working environment?	<p><i>RB: It needs to centralize communication. Only one person or unit handle all the information and communicate very well to volunteers.</i></p> <p><i>RD: Very important. Not just the organizer, but the volunteer or other teams members should pay attention and communicate well...</i></p>

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

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

**Table 3:** 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>

			<i>RD: ..each is discussed, issue a step or process on how to carry out relief work later...</i>
	Synchronizing the coordination	During the execution of the project, how do you / your organization coordinate the task given to ensure the task is successfully executed?	<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>  <i>RC: Each team will do the work according to what is planned, update the leader.</i>

When agencies involved intend to collaborate and separate the tasks assigned during the project's execution, trust is required. The main organizer 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:** Excerpts from an interview session with the NGOs regarding Trust affect the success of collaborations in humanitarian relief works.

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

As a result, the researcher found that, based on interview findings with 4 representatives of NGOs, good and effective communication is necessary in every collaboration process to ensure that every plan, work, and instruction can be carried out and implemented well to ensure a successful collaboration network between NGOs in humanitarian work. The importance of coordination of work between NGOs is also crucial to ensure that every action carried out moves in parallel and syncs with other NGOs, avoiding disruptions or chaos during humanitarian aid work. The importance of placing trust in other NGOs in this collaborative network is undeniable. When trust is given to carry out the task or mission, the NGOs that are indirectly involved will gain a solid moral momentum and enthusiasm in carrying out the humanitarian aid mission, creating a harmonious atmosphere in the 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.

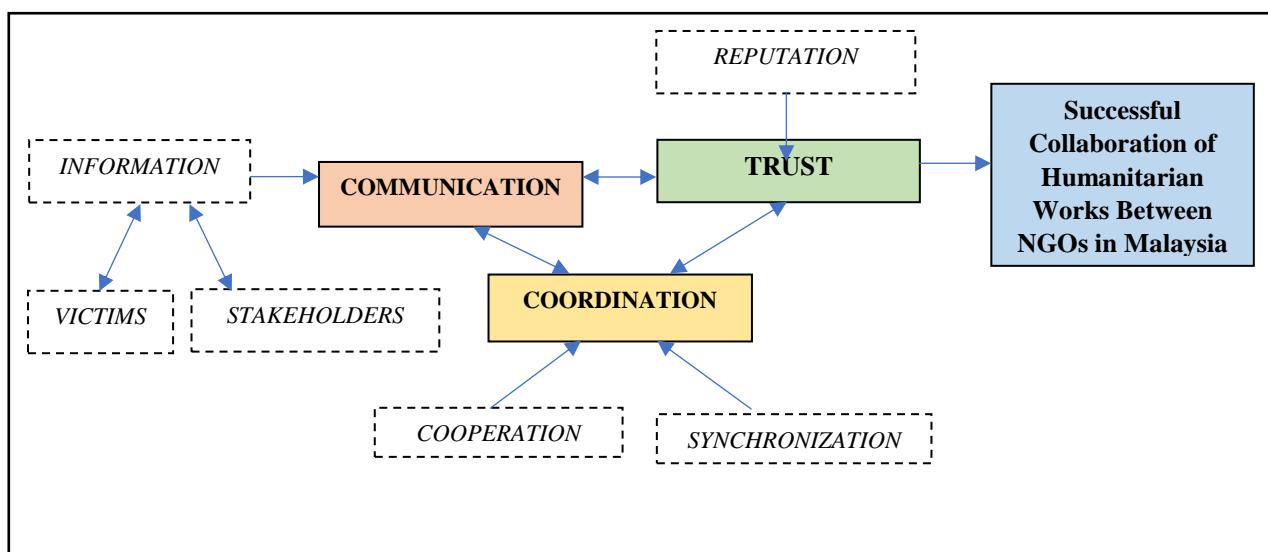
Based on the study's findings, the NGOs classify their project as successful when they successfully perform the assigned task, such as finding volunteer human resources, identifying the number of victims or recipients, purchasing supplies, and others. Additionally, they classify their successful projects 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 5:** 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>	Opinions	What is your opinion towards collaborations in the project?	<p><i>RA: Success... Everything OK...</i></p> <p><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></p> <p><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></p>
	Classification	How do you or your organization define that the collaboration is successful?	<p><i>RB: When we succeed in performing all the tasks given, achieving the goals that have been set, for us, it is successful.</i></p> <p><i>RC: the organizers will review the objectives that have been set .. that's how they stated that this network of cooperation was successfully implemented .. those small problems, as usual, everywhere there are problems...</i></p> <p><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></p>

## 8.0 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 world in 2020, including Malaysia, has made humanitarian work more challenging. To succeed in humanitarian relief missions, there is 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 to ensure that the work can be completed correctly. Furthermore, the importance of trust between the people involved in the completion of a task and mission is crucial 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 iii) how trust affects humanitarian morale among NGOs during humanitarian collaborations.



**Figure 4:** Framework of Successful Collaboration of Humanitarian Relief Work Between NGOs in Malaysia

After conducting the interviews and analysing the data, as shown in figure 4.1 above, this study discovered and related the findings to the study framework. Communication is essential for transmitting precise and accurate information between the organiser and the victim, as well as the organiser and other parties involved in the success of the humanitarian aid mission. The study also found that cooperation and synchronisation of work between the parties involved greatly affect the effectiveness of coordination, and that the reputation of organisations or parties wanting to collaborate in humanitarian aid missions significantly affects the effectiveness of trust. Hence, these variables influence the success of collaborative works in humanitarian aid missions.

### 8.1 Communication in Collaboration Works Process

During humanitarian work, communication is crucial. This study found that communication is essential in all processes of collaboration in humanitarian work. Any communication gaps will lead to a lack of understanding, the inability of NGOs or stakeholders to comprehend how collaboration works, and as a result, poor satisfaction with humanitarian efforts. Failures in communication can also lead to failures in coordination (Nowell & Steelman, 2015). Effective communication requires collecting and sharing information in a usable way, and as Comfort (2007) suggests, 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).

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

Effective coordination is particularly important in the context of humanitarian relief operations, as it can have a significant impact on the success of the project and the well-being of the disaster-affected population. This study found that a lack of coordination can result in disruptions or chaos during the humanitarian aid work, and that the number of volunteers or manpower involved in the project should be adequate and well-coordinated across all units or departments. It also found that successful coordination requires trust between the parties involved, as well as a clear understanding of the roles and responsibilities of each party. Additionally, the study highlights the importance of creating common knowledge structures, such as shared language and routinized interactions, to facilitate effective coordination. Overall, effective coordination is essential for ensuring that the various components of a humanitarian relief project work together in a synchronized and efficient manner.

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

Indeed, trust is essential in collaborative work, especially in humanitarian relief missions, as it enables the parties involved to have faith in each other's competence and intentions. This, in turn, leads to increased cooperation, which is necessary to achieve the mission's objectives. Trust allows NGOs to work together and pool their resources, resulting in more efficient and effective relief efforts. Moreover, trust enhances the morale and motivation of the people involved, which is crucial in humanitarian work where burnout and compassion fatigue are common. Therefore, building trust between the parties involved in humanitarian relief activities is crucial and can be achieved through effective communication, transparency, and consistent follow-through on commitments.

## **8.4 Successful Collaboration**

According to the study's interviews, NGOs classify their projects as successful when they complete the assigned tasks in conjunction with other parties. For instance, in a collaborative humanitarian relief initiative, each participating NGO and party is given a specific task such as locating volunteer human resources, determining the number of victims or receivers, procuring supplies, and so on. They also evaluate the success of their initiatives and collaborative efforts based on the achievement of program objectives and targets. In addition to providing skills and resources, NGOs must share risks and expenses in the long run. While these characteristics may affect cooperation, in the humanitarian context, they are the foundation for successful collaboration and ongoing progress (Maon et al., 2009).

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

This study is one of the few that draws on interviews with respondents who have worked on collaborative humanitarian efforts in Malaysia, and it corroborates some findings that have already been documented in the literature. The respondents interviewed were drawn from diverse backgrounds, providing a range of perspectives. A structured approach was used to analyze transcripts, building on themes identified from preceding analysis of the literature to minimize subjectivity.

There are limitations to this study, including the relatively small sample size and the short timeline during which the interviews were conducted. Purposive sampling increases the risk of selection bias in small studies. Two key constituencies, victims or aid receivers and

Malaysian government officials, were not included in the list of interviewees. This is a significant limitation because the experiences of service users would provide important insights on the delivery or distribution of aid in humanitarian efforts and other barriers to access, while officials' views would have given a better sense of governance in humanitarian efforts in Malaysia. Most of the interviews were conducted in Kuala Lumpur and Johor, and this may not be representative of the situation throughout the rest of Malaysia. Nonetheless, the perspectives and experiences of the respondents represented a broader geographical region across Malaysia.

## 9.0 CONCLUSION

The literature review sheds light on the scenario of humanitarian logistics in Malaysia and how disaster management is being managed. Notably, the Malaysian government and NGOs, as well as NGOs themselves, collaborate to carry out humanitarian relief activities. Each participant's position and responsibilities are stated in the National Security Council Directive No. 20, which addresses the first objective of this study. Based on these findings, the second and third research objectives were identified, and the framework described in this study can serve as a reference for NGOs to carry out collaborative humanitarian work in the future. It is clear that communication, coordination, and trust are crucial for the success of a collaborative network in humanitarian work.

This framework can also increase the knowledge of NGOs regarding collaboration and help them identify other necessary aspects of the collaborative process. Through interviews with four NGO representatives, the researcher found that effective communication is necessary for each collaboration process. NGOs must coordinate their activities to ensure they are carried out in parallel with and in sync with the activities of other NGOs. Trust among NGOs is crucial in a collaborative network, and indirectly involved NGOs develop strong morale when they are trusted to carry out the task or purpose. This trust provides a strong moral impetus and passion for carrying out the humanitarian aid mission. A collaborative network also creates a peaceful environment. Therefore, this study highlights how communication, coordination, and trust affect the success of a collaborative effort among NGOs working together to provide humanitarian aid.

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