

Community reconstruction orientation by victims of the disaster of a post-monsoon flood in Malaysia

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Abstract

A monsoon flood often happens on a huge scale on the East Coast of Peninsular Malaysia and has an immediate impact on the community. This article explores the community reconstruction orientation of the victims of the disaster of a post-monsoon flood in Malaysia. The study was carried out using an exploratory case study design on nine flood victims in Pahang, Malaysia. These informants were chosen by using purposive sampling, and data were gathered using the interview and observation methods. This study found three forms of community reconstruction orientation: (1) self-orientation, (2) family orientation, and (3) community orientation. Each orientation can be observed in a context through a participation indicator element, such as priority and commitment; readiness, knowledge, and skill; and social routine. A reconstruction effort from all parties ought to consider these orientations to avoid negative effects on the community. Thus, this study suggests that a partnership approach should be applied in the future to carry out community reconstruction. However, the findings cannot be generalized since it was a preliminary study.

Keywords

Community orientation, community reconstruction orientation, family orientation, monsoon flood, self-orientation, social capital

Introduction

Flooding in Malaysia is not an uncommon disaster, and it is even labeled a ‘routine’ disaster in the country itself, but it does not occur in similar areas every single time. That is the uniqueness of floods in Malaysia. There are two types of floods that occur: flash floods and monsoon floods (Khan et al., 2014). A flash flood is caused by an excessive rainstorm in a short period of time, less than 6 hours (Hashim et al., 2011). Meanwhile, a monsoon flood is classified as a natural disaster (Khan et al., 2014). A disaster is generally described as a combination of hazard and vulnerability

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Picture 1. Malaysia map.

Source: University of Texas Library.

(Hossain, 2013) and, according to Amini Hosseini et al. (2013), a disaster (especially earthquakes) can result in major economic or social loss and damage. However, this article focuses on the monsoon flood that happened in Peninsular Malaysia.

Malaysia is geographically located between two large oceans: the Pacific Ocean to the east and the Indian Ocean to the west (Tangang et al., 2012). Specifically, Peninsular Malaysia is in the southern region of the South China Sea (SCS), with the Sunda Shelf acting as a submerged connection to the Indochina Peninsula, Sumatra, Java, and Borneo Island (Daryabor et al.,).

A monsoon flood does not happen all around Peninsular Malaysia, but only occurs in the East Coast area. However, Malaysia has two monsoon regimes: the Southwest Monsoon from late May to September, and the Northeast Monsoon from November to March. The Northeast Monsoon has heavy rainfall, particularly in the East Coast states of Peninsular Malaysia and western Sarawak, whereas the Southwest Monsoon normally signifies relatively drier weather. Meanwhile, the monsoon in the East Coast in Peninsular Malaysia means maximum precipitation during the months of November and December, and the East Coast is considered the wet belt of Peninsular Malaysia, with an annual rainfall of 2800 mm (Pour et al., 2014).

Malaysia holds a regular record for monsoon flooding on a large scale and a gap between specific times. Based on the records, Malaysia had a monsoon flood ‘disaster’ in the years 1926, 1967, and 1971 (Wing, 2004). According to Wing (2004), the flood in 1926 was the worst in living memory and struck most of Peninsular Malaysia. It caused extensive damage to property, road systems, and agricultural land and crops. Meanwhile in 1967, major floods happened in the river basins of Kelantan, Terengganu, and Perak (a province in Malaysia), and in 1971 a catastrophic flood swept across many regions of the country (Wing, 2004).

In Malaysia’s modern history, several severe monsoon floods have occurred. In records from the Malaysia National Security Council (NSC), three gigantic floods have happened so far: one in 2005, which involved 100,000 victims; one in 2006 with 140,000 victims; and one in 2010 involving 230,000 victims. However, in 2014 Malaysia suffered the worst monsoon flood in modern



Picture 2. The main stadium in Kota Bharu district, state of Kelantan – Sultan Muhammad IV Stadium. Source: Star Media Group Berhad (2014).

history. Kota Bharu, the state of Kelantan's capital city, sunk because of the cataclysmic flood, and a suburb and remote area in Kelantan were almost submerged. The flood involved almost 150,000 victims and set a new record for the most flood victims in Malaysian history. An example of the extent of the damage can be seen in Picture 2. That cataclysmic monsoon flood was known as the 'yellow flood'.

Other areas have also had similar floods to the one that struck Kelantan, such as the flood that affected Kuantan, Pahang Malaysia on 2 December 2013 and involved 21,253 victims. Such a huge flood was not expected by the community. Without any preparation, the Kuantan communities surrendered to the disaster. Regrettably, most people in Malaysia are little concerned about flooding disasters, because the issue is considered a trivial one and the government is expected to be solely responsible for flood protection whenever it occurs (Khalid and Shafiai, 2015).

A problem of community orientation in reconstruction after a disaster

The terms reconstruction and recovery are used interchangeably; sometimes recovery refers to reconstruction, and vice versa. In general, recovery is the time taken for a community to recover from disruption (Maguire and Hagan, 2007). Based on Burton et al. (2011), disaster recovery is the process of reconstructing communities to return life, livelihoods, and the built environment to their pre-impact states. Meanwhile, reconstruction has multiple criteria (Hamp et al., 2014), which include community interaction, education, family, and work as forms of social arrangements, as well as an attachment to place, opportunities, and risk (Henry, 2013). Thus, this article believes that the terms reconstruction and recovery have the same meaning, and will use the term reconstruction from now on.

The reconstruction process is not a simple one, and many elements are involved concurrently or sequentially. It does not just involve a single area of a discipline, group of people, or organization, whether socially, economically, or politically. In addition, a variety of factors, systems, institutions,

efforts, people, and organizations are involved. To be more specific, according to Khalid and Shafiai (2015), there are four ways in which a community responds to disasters. These are, to reconstruct, to accommodate, to protect, to retreat, or, in some cases, to do nothing at all.

Reconstruction also involves a complicated decision-making process. Based on a study by Henry (2013), there are four major dimensions of the decision-making process in disaster management: (1) the process involves a plurality of tightly interconnected factors, (2) the process combines objective and subjective factors, (3) the process is deliberative in that factors may act in concert and in conflict in relation to a decision, and (4) there are significant variations by geographic area, home ownership, and type of decision. Thus, the reconstruction process can be recognized as a complex and complicated procedure. Henry's statement on the decision-making process is based on the context of Louisiana in the United States after Hurricanes Katrina and Rita in August and September 2005.

In this study, the reconstruction process focuses on a community's orientation to recover their lives after suffering a disaster. The early premise is that their response to a reconstruction process perhaps describes their orientation. Using the case of urban search and rescue (USAR) in Germany as an example, Hamp et al. (2014) explained that reconstruction by victims has a different dimension. This is comparable to Grimm et al.'s (2014) findings, in which victims' responses depend on their abilities or needs to recognize and to make sense of cues to life-threatening stimuli. However, it is normal when the victim reacts most to self-orientation, because, according to Grimm et al. (2014), they may have emotions and cognitions of fear because they recognized the danger present and acted in ways that did nothing to benefit their survival.

The term survival can be explained in many ways. For example, in the findings of Webber and Jones (2012), who studied a recovery process among the victims of a bushfire in Victoria, Australia, some of the community members were busy with their lives and were trying to re-establish their farms to recover their lives before the disaster happened. A different orientation can be observed based on a study by Burton et al. (2011), in which recovery depends on the social cohesion within the community. This position can be categorized as community orientation. Community orientation can also be observed from the findings of Grimm et al. (2014), which included helping actions, such as actions taken to save other people. However, while a disaster is happening, most have an emotional reaction that includes fear, panic, and nervousness (Grimm et al., 2014).

While people sustain a feeling of community orientation, they will present a positive reaction, even though a disaster is occurring. This was realized by Webber and Jones (2012), who claim that when a disaster affected communities, many survivors avoided contact with 'helpers' from outside of the community. One of the reasons was the survivors indicated that there were other people who were worse off than they were and should be attended to first, and they felt that they had not suffered as much as others (Webber and Jones, 2012).

Nadeem Bhatti et al. (2011) exposed different reactions in the case of the flood in Sindh, in which the victims depended on outsiders to help them, including the government and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), although all they could do was to give victims hope. Meanwhile, Kawasaki et al. (2013) shared the fact that after the Haiti earthquake, many volunteers helped the victims, including conducting search-and-rescue operations, distributing resources, and establishing emergency operation sites. This approach was applied based on the consideration of the real situation at ground zero with a limited capacity for all groups. The capacity aspect on the ground was explained by Hamp et al. (2014), who divided it into three situations: (1) decreasing resource capacity for increasing demand while demand is higher than capacity, (2) increasing resource capacity for decreasing demand while demand is higher than capacity, and (3) increasing resource capacity for decreasing demand while demand is lower than capacity. Depending on an outsider can be categorized as an outsider orientation.

For the case in Malaysia, it was hard to find research that exposed this issue. Many studies were more focused on the physical or environmental aspects. This made it difficult to find sources to help understand a reconstruction process post-disaster in Malaysia from the community aspects. Considering those aspects, this article explored a community orientation reconstruction post-disaster among a community in Malaysia.

An underpinning of participation theory for community reconstruction

A reconstruction process will not materialize without any participation from a group, either at a macro- or micro-based organization. It will also involve different local institutions, such as local authorities, relief committees established by external agencies, or religious or traditional leaders (Young and Maxwell, 2013). Participation is the key factor in the reconstruction process, particularly from the community development perspective. Participation is a powerful 'tool' to examine the success or failure of projects, because participation helps to identify local issues (Becker, 2007). According to Young and Maxwell (2013), participation is a broad concept and ranges from co-opting volunteers to undertake specific programmatic tasks to the development of an empowered local institution with full decision-making responsibilities. However, that aim was not based on an empowerment angle, from which a community's participation seems weak and passive. Meanwhile, based on the idea by Hossain (2013), participation could include all stages of involvement, like participating in setting goals, and preparing, implementing, and evaluating plans.

Thus, Young and Maxwell's (2013) idea is more practical in the context of reconstruction after a disaster has happened, especially at the early stage, in which it is inconceivable for a community to be reconstructed immediately after the disaster. This is parallel to the findings of Grimm et al. (2014), in which a community felt hopeless when a tragedy occurred. That is why participation at an early stage can be explained by the underpinning of participation theory.

As a general thought, participation at an early stage could be driven by Toomey's (2009) explanation. Toomey explains a difference in eight participation terms in a specific context with roles, that are directly capable of manifesting a community's empowerment and disempowerment. These terms are rescuer, provider, modernizer, liberator, catalyst, facilitator, ally, and advocate, and they are divided into two different clusters, a 'traditional' and an 'alternative' cluster. These terms explain the role that can alternatively be played by a community's development agent to attract participation among community members. Simply put, the terms that are coupled with roles attempt to explain the community members in an unclear position, either passively reacting or not withstanding as an object in the development process. Even so, those terms are a helpful guide to a practitioner, either to set a gap or to select the correct action to be carried out in a community.

As a contrast, there are participation theories that explain more of the reality of happenings in a community. These theories include the ladder of participation (Arnstein, 1969), the ladder of citizen empowerment (Burns et al., 1994), and others. They could be considered as successful in explaining the condition of participation from the community itself, but over time a different theory explains participation discourse from different angles. To explain how a community participates in reconstruction after a disaster was hard just by applying those theories, especially to explain the community orientation. This difficulty occurred when a categorization of participation into a cluster of orientations was required.

However, Claridge (2004) can be considered an accurate choice to solve the matter when he discussed participation in the context of social capital. Furthermore, based on various literature reviews and other researchers' work, he grouped participation into three separate groups of people, as represented in Figure 1. They are individual (labeled micro), group (labeled meso), and societal

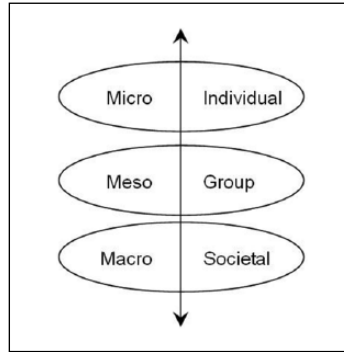


Figure 1. Illustration of the interaction of levels.

Source: Claridge (2004).

(labeled macro). This classification was based on Claridge's (2004) belief that there are different social capital levels established in the different orientations of community members. This idea was combined into two concepts: participation and social capital.

Social capital is a combination of two terms: social and capital. As a human being, interaction is a natural activity, in which there is reciprocal and mutual interaction for a purpose. Interaction is an asset or capital for humans to fulfill their needs or interests, thus without interaction these purposes cannot be achieved. As stated by Rahill et al. (2014), social capital allows people to meet individual or collective ends through formal and informal networks. In social science research, social capital was explained through various terms such as social networks, social contacts, social cohesion, social interaction, and solidarity (Mathbor, 2007). In a more clear and precise categorization, Woolcock (2001) categorized social capital into three categories: bonding, bridging, and linking social capital.

According to Bottrell (2009), bonding social capital is a relationship in a group. Group members possess a similar value or interest; perhaps they are family and community members, close friends, or other people. Bridging social capital, on the other hand, is the ability of a community to communicate with other communities (Dale and Newman, 2010). Linking social capital is a relationship with individuals or groups that have power. The participation of social capital theory is capable of explaining how a community orientation happens among victims of disaster to reconstruct their community.

The reconstruction process by community members in a context of either participation or social capital can be explained by understanding community-building theory. According to Mattessich (2009), community building refers to activities pursued by a community to increase the social capacity of its members. This definition is quite similar in meaning to Minkler and Wallerstein's (2012), which is an orientation to community through which people who identify as members engage together in building community capacity rather than 'fixing problems' through the application of specific and externally driven strategies. However, those definitions are different from Bacon's (2012) view, which states that community building is building a sense of belonging to the people in a community, and the sense of belonging is merely created through effective communication.

According to the Committee on Private–Public Sector Collaboration to Enhance Community Disaster Resilience (2011), the community-building part is important in a community, especially on issues related to emergency preparedness. However, community building is not done after a terrible disaster has happened, but in a community's daily routine, especially in people's daily

interactions. As explained by Walter and Hyde (2012), community building consists of the skills and principles for fostering community, participation, and creativity in planning and conducting activities and events relevant for use in a broad range of situations, with a broad range of people, and at many levels. From that explanation, it is very clear that community building should happen all the time in a community and should not happen at the time of or after a disaster has occurred.

However, we should realize that to recover from a horrible disaster, community building is not the main factor for success. As explained by Mattessich (2009), no community-building effort has a 100% likelihood of success because it depends upon many settings, which are both within and outside the control of the community members. Thus, community building is not the main factor in the recovery process, but merely a facilitator for community recovery, because people have built a participation norm from their daily routine interaction.

Research methodology

This article is based on an exploratory case study design which was framed to handle (1) preliminary research to explore an issue without any generalization from its findings and (2) helping the researcher to investigate whether the fundamental issues of the study were happening or not in the fieldwork. It is based on Mills et al. (2010), the sort of design that applies preliminary research, exploring a relatively new field of scientific investigation in which the research questions have not been clearly identified. The strength of this design helped the researcher to choose a specific location of study with certain criteria.

This research was conducted in Kampong Ubai in Kuantan, Pahang, Malaysia. This location was selected because it was situated in a suburban area and in 2012 it faced a larger-scale flood than the year earlier. The suburban area was selected based on the assumption that the members of the community in this location perhaps have good relationships among themselves. Moreover, the operation of the function of social capital and community members' orientation can be observed precisely, especially the reactions of reconstruction after a disaster has occurred.

Informants of this research were chosen among monsoon flood victims from Kampong Ubai. They were selected by using the purposive sampling technique, with specific criteria such as being a local person, head of household, and with experience of the monsoon floods in the same location. This sampling technique was chosen because it helped researchers to gain the correct data on the issue under study and to validate that there are no bias issues in gaining the sample of study in the future.

The sample size for this research is nine informants. That sample size was set after the data collection process, which was based on the saturation principle with a maximum variation technique. This technique guided the researcher to avoid capturing a homogeneous sample, like those possessing similar values and backgrounds. It acted as a guide to researchers in the fieldwork to avoid choosing a sample of people who all had the same thoughts (Othman, 2010). Based on the saturation principle, the researcher stopped questioning another person while similar data were being gathered. When the researcher interviewed the ninth informant, there was much overlapping information being gathered. This position is a sign that data saturation was happening. Thus, the researcher decided to stop collecting data.

This fieldwork did not involve an external agency such as government agencies, NGOs, or activists. This was because this research's purpose was to get data from the angle of the bottom-up group, without any opinions from certain external agencies. According to Cerna (2013), in a bottom-up approach, a community member is a subject actively participating in any activities that have an impact on them. The other consideration is that, by accepting this view, we can observe the reality of the community to interpret the situation, including their efforts to recover from disaster.

This research employed two different methods to collect data: interview and observation. The rationale of this decision was that, to verify that the attentional concept of this study was fully covered, accurate, and explained, it needed to apply a flexible method. Therefore, it was not enough to use only a single method. It was more appropriate to use a triangulation principle to gather the data. This conclusion was supported by Creswell's (2012) position that it is a common approach when qualitative research needs to validate its findings through the triangulation principle.

The researcher chose to use an unstructured interview protocol, because it was suitable for exploring the issues of the study without the limitations of a rigid protocol. The strength of this protocol is that it enabled a two-way conversation between the researcher and informants, a participant-centered approach, enabling informants to bring up themes that are important to them, and produced rich and detailed data. Simultaneously, the researcher could ask more questions so as to probe the informants' answers. Each interview was recorded by voice recorder tools. The researcher transcribed the data into words based on the verbatim technique, then each transcript was divided into a specific file. The next stage was that the researcher used QSR NVivo to coordinate and manage the data. By using QSR NVivo, each piece of data was organized using a simple technique in a qualitative approach, namely open coding, clustering, categorizing, and thematic.

Meanwhile, for the second research method, explicit observation, the researcher employed participant observation. This method was carried through by participating with the participants in their reconstruction actions, including living with them as they led their daily lives in the temporary shelters. Data were gathered while the researcher was staying in the temporary shelter for 5 days after the monsoon flood had happened. The researcher stayed at the temporary shelter with the local leader's permission and lived there like other monsoon flood victims. Each piece of observation data was recorded in the researcher's field notes and was imported to QSR NVivo. Then these data were analyzed separately from the interview data. However, to present the findings, each type of data (interview and observation data) mutually supported each other by using a descriptive technique.

Findings and discussion

This study found that there are three community reconstruction orientations: self-orientation, family orientation, and community orientation. The fact that various orientations are embraced by a community is not unusual, because, according to Mattessich (2009), any effort at recovery in a community depends on many factors, either internal or external. These orientations were manifested by their priorities, commitments, efforts, and ties. Each was explained case by case while people pushed themselves to reconstruct their community.

Self-orientation

Self-orientation refers to the actions of individuals who give priority to the reconstruction efforts. Such measures include making judgments, and focusing priorities, and efforts toward reconstruction after the disaster has occurred. This effort is being made to return their situations and states to pre-flood conditions. Generally self-orientation has a negative perception, in which it is interpreted as selfish, difficult to cooperate with, and should not be counted as part of efforts toward the reconstruction of the community. However, not all these are true.

In fact, self-orientation was the dominant reaction in the community, because people were afraid of losing their property and their lives, and thinking about the pain involved, which could be severe. However, this orientation decreased over the duration of the disaster. This means that self-orientation was not an act produced with negative intentionality by individuals. On the contrary, it was an act without choice that required their safety and avoided threats. This kind of situation was shared by Grimm et al. (2014), who stated that it is a normal reaction to be felt by a disaster victim

because of fear, panic, and nervousness. Therefore, it would be imprecise to judge victims with a purely negative label when they reacted in that manner. The self-orientation in the reconstruction effort can be understood through health, cleanliness, sanitation, and basic needs, as well as assets and recovery motivation.

Health recovery. Health recovery actions in self-orientation were the most significant effort shown by victims. They were straining to recover their health in advance, such as seeking certain medicines. They were also worried about diseases that are commonly caught during post-flood seasons, such as fever, dizziness, headaches, or the spread of leptospirosis, cholera, diarrhea, and other illnesses. Moreover, they were trying to get treatments and medications for other diseases, including chronic diseases that they were suffering. They feared the situation would become worse if they burned through their supply of medicines, of which they were deprived when the floods hit. Thus, they believed that medicine was their priority. This situation was presented by Informant C:

I have a health problem, a critical illness ... Yes, I might focus on myself first. If not, it merely becomes another problem which will be troubling other people to help me then.

Self-orientation in terms of health recovery was not only caused by their dependency on the stock of medicines, but also because they believed they would be a burden to other people if their health problems received attention over other people. Simultaneously, they realized that community members were responsible for helping other community members. Thus, it was deemed unacceptable if help was focused on themselves only. This statement establishes that in the health recovery dimension of self-orientation, a community member may consider an other person who requires attention for recovery. This finding was similar to Webber and Jones' (2012) study, in which a victim turned away from accepting outsiders' help because they felt guilty and realized that they did not suffer as much as others.

Cleanliness, sanitation, and basic needs. There were community members who had to give priority to the cleanliness of their house. The monsoon flood had completely destroyed their houses. The floors were covered by mud and rubbish, sticky, and smelly. They felt uncomfortable in these conditions, and at the same time they felt humbled by them. They also lost their basic sanitation and clothes, so they felt that they had to give top priority to these basic needs. Their endeavor was to clean their house, clear the drainage, and wash the clothes. It may seem like a simple task, but if they did not give enough attention to the situation, it would have a direct impact on their motivation to move forward, including helping other people and reconstructing their community:

I have to understand why this is happened [fewer local people to help] ... You can go to visit their house, they're suffering with many problems, include being faced with mud, for sure they need to clean them. (Informant A)

Instead, their effort also focused on getting basic needs, especially food stocks, clean water supplies for drinking, medicine stocks, communication access, and transportation, including four-wheel drive transport or boats for certain cases. These basic needs were important to victims, because they would be indicators of vulnerability, especially to a contagious disease (Nadeem Bhatti et al., 2011). The victims felt that for the sake of their survival they must continue their lives. Grimm et al. (2014) also found a comparable situation in discussing survival among disaster victims. Victims will try anything to survive, and this is expected because they received life-threatening provocations.

Assets and motivation recovery. Almost everything was damaged in community members' houses, including furniture, electrical tools, and transport. Other assets like money were also lost. The disaster was certainly a direct shock to their motivation. It seemed very hard for the victims to retrieve their losses, such as their monthly salaries, causing them to borrow, go into debt with bank organizations, and so on. Thus, they thought that it was not easy to bring back their lost assets. The situation became worse when their assets were still under a debt agency's tenure. As told by the informants, there were many people who were demotivated to make any reconstruction effort. They considered that they could not do anything unless they could solve their financial problems first:

Absolutely it's hard to recover, because I took a lot of time to collect money to get those assets. It is not easy to me to replace what I have lost in this disaster. (Informant F)

The issue of loss in a disaster was a crucial problem that has been discussed by many scholars. For example, in the study by Doberstein and Stager (2013), there was usually a combination of conditions that could facilitate the community's recovery, including strengthening land tenure, housing design, and community recovery. The disaster also had an impact on the victims' economic situations, either in the short or long term, and likewise had an impact on their consumption (Yu Xiao Nilawar, 2013).

In brief, the reality of health, cleanliness, sanitation, and basic needs, as well as the assets and motivation dimension lead to a rejection of the negative perception of the self-orientation reaction. Self-orientation should not be considered as a self-centered endeavor because it is a normal reaction to disaster, especially in the earlier stages of reconstruction after a disaster has happened.

Family orientation

Family orientation is an attempt to rebuild a community that gives priority to family recovery first because of their bond. The family in this article refers to the nucleus and extended form, which lives together in a house. The family consists of a spouse, parents, children, siblings, and others. This orientation can be observed through the health recovery focus, assets, and the recapture of basic needs (micro role model) and the distribution of manpower:

I have a father who lives with me and a son who has asthma ... That [situation] gave me no choice, I have make sure they are saved first before others [community] ... So never blame me, but understand my situation. (Informant H)

Health recovery focus. People were always looking for an agency to retrieve their family's health conditions. In the temporary shelter, health agencies from the government or NGOs were always ready to give health advice, including medical supplies. Community members were very dependent on these services and came out to help their family who had health problems. It was considered normal among victims in the temporary shelter to have fever, dizziness, and skin trouble. At the same time, they wanted to protect themselves against any contagious diseases such as cholera, dengue, or any diseases that were mosquito based. They felt that they had a duty to make sure that their family acquired a safe health service, medicines, and to recover from whatever diseases they had. Although it seemed a mere chore, it raised conflict among community members and any outsiders, particularly when there was a long waiting time to receive treatments or when they did not have enough medicines.

Assets and basic needs recapture. Besides a health recovery focus, another point is a community member's sole focus to recapture their broken assets. They not only cleaned, repaired, and restored those assets, but they also made sure that each of these processes was well handled. They further ensured that the destroyed assets could not be used any longer and were disposed of, including communicating with a disposal contractor or volunteers to help them. This part was always played by the head of household and this orientation was important to them, because without this role they realized that it was impossible to reconstruct the community. They thought that they could begin on a small scale to nurture moral values; that is, in a family, the parents should be good role models to the other family members and motivate them.

As occurred with the self-orientation reaction, broken assets had a profound impact psychologically and motivationally on the victims. Thus, the head of the family performed the most vital role for their family members like cleaning their house, repairing a broken asset, and motivating them to help themselves and always being together to recover. This role was parallel with the social capital role that was realized by Rahill et al. (2014). Social capital was important in the recovery process, since it provides enhanced access to shelter-related resources for those with connections, and accentuates pre-existing inequalities or creates new inequalities among displaced victims (Rahill et al., 2014).

Distribution of manpower. Although family orientation is a micro level of reconstruction, many saw that it did not have a substantial impact on the community reconstruction as a whole, especially when the family appeared busy managing their own problems. However, that perception was not accurate. As mentioned before, family orientation is a motivational key to push and recover family members from distress, trauma, and alienation. This orientation also invited other family members to help other groups who needed help. Consequently, this orientation had a direct impact on the reconstruction of all community members:

I can look after the house, then I push my sons, both, to help other people in the community ... But, I should make sure everything is complete in this house first. That's how I manage to recover our family, and at the same time help the community too. (Informant C)

The head of the family acted as a positive role model in this process, in which they assigned their family members to do tasks. More of them concentrated on serving their family, and others were given the task to help other people. That action enabled the community reconstruction process to happen smoothly and a local voluntary group formed. Without that energy, reconstruction action may be futile. This reality was outlined by Cho (2014), in which the failure of recovery efforts is due to the lack of involvement of community members in them.

Community orientation

Community orientation is consideration and action that give priority to the community to recover after a disaster has happened. The uniqueness of this reaction is that it happened after self-orientation or family orientation had occurred based on a time lag. The meaning of a time lag is that after a particular time, community members were finally ready and had prepared themselves to be involved in any reconstruction activities. It depends on how fast the community members recovered themselves, whether from self-orientation or family orientation. It also depends on a person's role in the community, such as the chief of the community, community committee, or any members of an authority group in a residential district:

Yes, it depends on time and how fast somebody recovers themselves and succeeds in managing their family. Me as a head of community, I should recover fast myself to help other people ... What I had seen, it happened too to other people ... They came to help after everything is okay in the family. (Informant A)

This indicated that it was also a selective response that depended on who they were in a community organization. They played similar roles as in family orientation, for example ensuring the community was free from a contagious disease, that health recovery services were provided, forming a good relationship between the community and rescue agencies, acting as the communication mediator, ensuring the safety of the victims in the temporary shelter areas and victims' abandoned houses, or recovering and rebuilding infrastructure in the community area. Their tasks were challenging, and they were always faced with confrontation from other community members who were not satisfied with certain services.

Participation: Before and after a disaster. Shock management is a challenging duty to be performed by the community while the flood is happening. Although flooding is a natural disaster that takes place almost every year in the East Coast area of Malaysia, it still came as a shock to the community. It is hard to predict when a monsoon flood will occur in a specific region. For example, the last monsoon flood that happened in this area was 2 years earlier. The scale of the monsoon floods is also unpredictable.

Even though it might be a 'routine' disaster, community members had made all the necessary preparations. These preparations were limited due to lack of knowledge and skills. They were only able to manage disasters to the most basic degree and within the limits of the community's capacity. Managing the basics included bringing the victims to a safe place and managing the victims in temporary shelters. This encompassed arranging shelters, donating clothes or meeting temporary needs, providing food, and being a mediator for external agencies in the rescue and recovery effort.

Managing all these things was done by individuals who have authority in the community, and the groups were established earlier and on an impromptu basis. Although the taskforce group was established earlier, community participation was increasing over time, especially after the disaster, specifically during reconstruction activities. Community participation in the group was done either directly or indirectly. Directly means participation in a community organization, either as a committee or an ordinary member. The people who were involved directly had the awareness and determination to help other communities.

Indirect participation refers to community members who joined a group after a disaster had happened. They joined either as a taskforce member or as a volunteer. Participation as a taskforce member meant joining the official group formed in the community in a variety of roles. Since participation as volunteers in activities was not bounded by the group formation, they did not want to join the group, but only to help in implementing the activities or plans. This was due to them not being interested in being 'bonded' with all the commitments, but only offering to help when necessary:

Yes, I help them [community] just behind the scenes ... as a volunteer. I think that [it is] more appropriate if every [reconstruction] plan is arranged by a regular community organization. So, I mean, that's okay if I'm just being a worker then. (Informant G)

However, in this study it was found that there were not many community members involved in the group or reconstruction activities. They decided to relax, especially when they were living in temporary shelters. They were still feeling the trauma and were demotivated after the loss of all their property. There were also community members who were dependent on external agencies for their recovery efforts, including the trivial things such as cooking and hygiene care in the

temporary shelter. According to them, they were the victims of a disaster and should be given time to rest and receive all the attention and priority:

I am the victim, still in trauma. So, I need help from other people such as an outside volunteer ... There a lot of people, so I believe they can help me to recover. (Informant C)

However, in contrast to community members who were involved in reconstruction efforts, they tended to help the community. Among the reasons why depended on their involvement in the community before the disaster happened. People who were involved in any activity, either actively or not, tended to help the community in the reconstruction efforts. This showed community reconstruction was dependent on the social routine in the community. Their early participation in community activities helped members to know each other and build common interests. When Hossain (2013) described the types of community participation, he was aware of the many factors that caused that to happen. Among them is feeling a sense of community and recognizing the benefits of their involvement, which included setting goals, and preparing, implementing, and evaluating plans and programs. However, having not previously participated in reconstruction, community members were unaware of the planning and did not have the necessary understanding in dealing with disasters. That is why, according to Reimer et al. (2013), it is important for social ties in the community to be formed continuously so that they are useful in times of disaster.

Reducing contagious diseases and the disposal of waste. For the reconstruction of communities after disasters, reconstruction focused more on ensuring that the community was free from contagious diseases and in good health, on waste being disposed of, and on the rehabilitation and construction of facilities in the community. These actions occurred when community members were beginning to feel more stabilized and the problems involving self-orientation and family orientation had been solved. Community orientation focused on making sure that epidemics did not occur in the community, especially cholera, dengue, malaria, and leptospirosis. Those efforts were being made via cooperation between the other community members and the relevant agencies, including scouting for volunteers to reduce the flow of stagnant water, cleaning, and so on.

Moreover, the actions of the community orientation also involved the disposal of compost that came from destroyed furniture. Another action of the community orientation was identifying locations suitable to be used as a temporary waste assembly area (especially solid waste), transport provisions and adequate manpower, maintaining a good collection schedule to avoid conflicts between community members, and keeping the area free from waste. However, fear of contagion and sanitation was normal, because, according to Bhatti et al. (2011), it was an indicator of vulnerability to contagious diseases. Although the issue of compost seemed like a basic one, it had given rise to conflicts between community members in the case of waste collection scheduling inefficiencies.

Restore and rebuild facilities. Other community orientation actions included the restoration and rebuilding of facilities in the community that were destroyed due to the disaster. The community was only involved in a small-scale recovery of the basic facilities. Since the destruction of properties amounted to a very high cost in repairing them, such as roads, bridges, public assets, and others, the community expected the recovery to be made effective by the authoritative group. At the time the study was conducted, there were no community-based actions taken to restore the damage. This was because they did not have the expertise to repair the facility nor did they have the financial resources, so they expected the effort to be the responsibility of the government.

Burton et al. (2011) stated that communities with limited institutional capacities and few financial reserves may experience lengthier recovery periods. That caused them to need help and intervention from outside forces. According to Cho (2014), it is usually the government's task to repair and rebuild the damaged facilities, and it is obliged to provide large allocations to the enterprise. The destruction caused by a disaster of the physical facilities and infrastructure is declared to be a major problem faced by many countries. According to Amini Hosseini et al. (2013), if a disaster occurs on a large scale and damages public facilities, it will affect the economy for a long time.

Build a relationship with an outside agency. Important roles were played by people with a community orientation in forming good relationships with rescue and recovery agencies. Numerous government agencies and NGOs came to help, such as the National Security Council, the Malaysian Armed Forces, the Royal Malaysia Police, the Fire and Rescue Department, the Social Welfare Department, and the Malaysian Health Ministry. There are various NGOs from divergent backgrounds that assist in the community after a disaster has happened. Government agencies, particularly from the fire and police departments, made early preparations to cope with the flood, because the area experiencing the flood had an elevated risk of recurrence. The things that were done in the initial stages were to identify risk areas and provide special preparation, such as fiber boats for the rescue of people stranded during the flood.

Government agencies received help from community members in many things like planning and testifying to the standard of operation (SOP) that was appropriate when floods happened. According to Hossain (2013), a plan to help victims without taking notice of their views and acknowledging the reality of community members did not have a positive impact on the society, and could even lead to negative effects. Because of that, Reimer et al. (2013) believe that local community organizations should provide a opportunities in facilitating disaster recovery situations.

Information provided by the agency was extended to other community members. This task was performed by the local organizing committee, consisting of a chairman and community members, who were known as the taskforce that was set up in advance. Their task was to be the mediator between the government agencies and the rest of the community members. Community members being involved in this matter made it much easier for government agencies to design and deploy the necessary assistance. A joint venture of two different parties, according to Mathbor (2007), allows for all plans to succeed, but success is crucial regarding cooperation between the different parties.

The taskforce did not stop there, but continued to play a role when the floods hit and while reconstruction efforts were carried out, either in temporary shelters or after community members returned to their homes. Government agencies (especially the Social Welfare Department) and NGOs offered various forms of assistance, including getting the necessities such as food, beverages, blankets, clothing, and other daily requirements. According to a study by Hamp et al. (2014), rescuers regularly experience problems when carrying out rescue operations. One reason is that they underestimate the difficulty of information handling. Hence, the rescuers needed information from the local community because they were more knowledgeable about their surroundings.

Reconstruction in the context of community orientation happens only based on the limited knowledge, skill, and capacity of the community. Beyond that, the provision of large-scale financial assistance and tools and so forth is handled by the authorities and agencies. Meanwhile, NGOs' tasks are to help the community in the early stages post-disaster. However, not much effort can be seen in the collective effort among the community, government agencies, and NGOs in planning and operationalization to make the community reconstruction happen.

As a summary, the forms of community orientation reconstruction, namely self-orientation, family orientation, and community orientation, show a 'bottom-up' perspective in the reconstruction of a community after a disaster has happened. In the same bottom-up approach, there are many

orientations that should be realized and considered by stakeholders to help the community. Hence, in the same orientation, such as in self-orientation, there are many situations that should be considered by stakeholders. From the perspective of community building, this reality is different from Mattessich's (2009) argument, in which community building is not the main factor in the recovery process. However, from this finding, numerous factors, still in the context of community building through participation in a community routine, were proof of their significance to the reconstruction process in a community.

Synchronization of concepts of community orientation reconstruction

The community orientation of reconstruction after a disaster occurred did not mean that it occurred in sequence, such that each orientation must be over before another took place, starting from a low level (self-orientation), then progressing to medium (family orientation), and to high (community orientation). However, this study has found that the orientations were related to each other and were dependent on the stage and readiness of the community members. These elements and orientations can be observed and measured through the participation element.

Furthermore, the community orientation of reconstruction led to the rise of a resilience and participation indicator and showed that it had mutual relationships. The relationship is described in Figure 2, which describes the element of reconstruction orientations and another concealed element. It began with the forms of reconstruction orientation, namely self-orientation, family orientation, and community orientation. The ownership of each orientation was dependent on the recovery faced by the participants in the study, in which they had different orientations in the reconstruction process. Reconstruction might be rooted in four domains, that is, priority and commitment, readiness, knowledge and skill, and social routine.

Recovery is directly related to resilience. According to Amundsen (2012), resilience is the ability of a community to cope with and adjust to stress caused by social, political, and environmental change and to engage community resources to overcome adversity and take advantage of opportunities in response to change. The concept of resilience is also discussed in the context of disaster. A study conducted by Kimhi and Shamai (2004) found that the elements of resilience play a vital element in a community's recovery efforts. It is equivalent to Aguirre's (2006) argument (cited in Maguire and Hagan, 2007), that a more resilient community returns to its pre-disaster state quickly and efficiently, whereas a less resilient community recovers more slowly, or will fail to recover at all. This directly affects people's willingness to participate in the reconstruction process. The recovery process is different for everyone, and these factors have an impact on the type of reconstruction community, whether self-orientation, family orientation, or community orientation.

Details of an orientation manifestation were discussed indirectly in all of the orientation forms. For example, in self-orientation, its possession could be observed by how participants prioritized themselves in considering the reconstruction process. This included focusing on psychological motivation and health. Participants also showed their determination to fulfill these requirements to supply medicine to recover from pain. They also showed a willingness to help others, and this indicated that there are other elements of orientation, either family or community. The similarity between self-orientation and family orientation was that participation in both had two elements in common, namely priority and commitment, and readiness. However, the family orientation occurred on a larger scale in reconstruction efforts, and the participation domains can be easily observed.

In contrast to both concepts of orientation, the community orientation had additional concepts, namely knowledge and skill, as conditions to be involved in technical and non-technical forms.

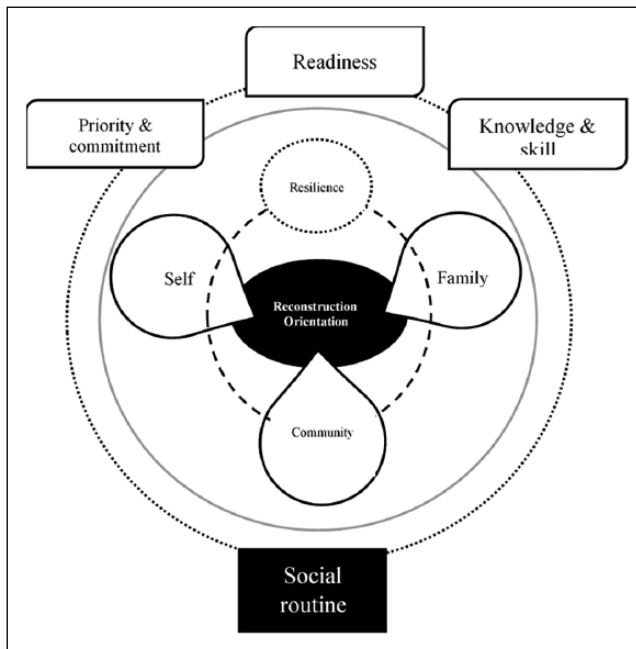


Figure 2. Element of reconstruction orientation.

Knowledge and skills are a vital source for managing and helping flood victims, including managing tension, either in a temporary shelter or in the community reconstruction process. However, the difference between the community orientation and the other orientations was that its formation was dependent on social routine, namely people's social relations before the disaster happened. The social routine helped form the community orientation, which did not happen immediately but was based on continuous interactions in the community.

Conclusions, implications, and recommendations

The efforts of community reconstruction are a complex process because the factors involved are diverse and it occurs immediately after a disaster has happened. According to Hamp et al. (2014), these efforts are complex due to multiple criteria concerning, inter alia, abilities, destruction, resources, time, and weather. Another consideration is that decisions need to fulfill numerous, and partially conflicting, objectives, including enhancing the social and economic conditions of the community (Mannakkara et al., 2014). However, much of the reconstruction process takes place in a non-humanitarian context, as described by Cho (2014), which focuses on the physical restoration of public infrastructure. Meanwhile, according to Cho (2014) again, it is a community matter.

What is different in this study is that it focused on reconstruction in terms of human action, especially on their orientations. This study has found three forms of community reconstruction orientations: self-orientation, family orientation, and community orientation. Each orientation can be observed through a participation indicator element such as priority and commitment; readiness, knowledge, and skill; and social routine. Each reconstruction orientation had specific actions that can be observed in each context. There was a tendency to give priority and show commitment.

Similarly, there was a willingness to participate in reconstruction efforts in a larger context, namely in the family and community context.

However, community orientation had its own unique appeal, because it involved the elements of acquiring specific knowledge and skills and participation in social routines before the disaster occurred. According to Reimer et al. (2013), this is quite common for the social life in the community, because there is always an element of mutual support. In this study, mutual support became more pronounced after the disaster happened. Transition from one orientation to the other orientation is determined by the element of resilience. Resilience indicated whether the individual has been or is willing to accept the reality of the changes that have occurred. This implication is comparable to Aguirre's (2006) argument in which a more resilient community is returned to its pre-disaster state quickly.

The mistakes in planning for disaster victims can have many effects from the economic and social standpoints. From an economic standpoint, the design of community reconstruction after disasters requires significant costs for the restoration of all aspects, including replacement housing and basic amenities (El-Anwar, 2013; Amini Hosseini et al., 2013). In fact, the longer it takes, the higher the costs that will be involved (Whitman et al., 2014). Similarly, the social impact, regardless of social background and development, can lead to ineffective reconstruction efforts. Furthermore, disasters often occur in communities that are already in a vulnerable situation (Joseph, 2013).

Regarding the overall form of the reconstruction orientation, a plan or SOP related to a community reconstruction policy should abandon a conservative approach, and instead the top-down approach and a partnership approach should be considered. In a top-down approach, a certain group of people, a formal group, has the 'power' or authority to decide for the community. Meanwhile, a partnership approach is a combination of the top-down and bottom-up approaches, a combination of effort and utilization of strengths in both approaches, but with efficiency and appropriate emphasis. According to Heenan (2004), the partnership approach emphasizes the importance of local people in the planning, development, delivery, and evaluation of social services organization with an authority. Both the community and the authority had a stake in a specific activity in planning and practice (Heenan, 2004).


This approach was appropriate, because the outside agency had the advantages of financial adequacy, knowledge, and expertise. However, the agency lacked knowledge of the physical and social environment of the village, including the terrain, and the cultural and social cohesion among local communities. This vulnerability could have been assisted by the local community because they were the ones who knew their environment. The villagers needed outside help because they did not have the financial resources, knowledge, and skills to effect a reconstruction. This certainty was also highlighted by Reimer et al. (2013), who stated that recovery requires a joint effort between the two stakeholders to ensure its success.

In a disaster context, the partnership approach is helpful to the reconstruction of a community. This reality is shared by Kawasaki et al. (2013) in observing the Haiti earthquake. The reconstruction process is considered to be successful with the combination of the professionalism of relief agencies and the enthusiasm of volunteers (Kawasaki et al., 2013). This approach has also proven its significance in the case of the 2003 Lost Creek Fire in Canada, as noted by Reimer et al. (2013), when local officials responded positively to the community's initiative and reorganized their activities in a more inclusive way. Consequently, the local community could mobilize all its resources and, in the process, build its capacity to deal with future crises. However, both approaches (top-down and bottom-up) have significance and strength and the potential to help a community at a particular time and place.

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