A Conceptual Framework on Determinants of the National Development of Crisis Communication Policy Towards Covid-19 in Malaysia

Nor Ain Zainuddin, Marina Ismail & Zulkifli Abd. Latiff

Abstract **- In general, we have seen some catastrophic events or natural disasters that took place in the country, including the Tsunami on December 26, 2004 and the huge floods throughout Peninsular Malaysia in 2006. However, what is interesting to interpret is that the government is basically seen illustrating on the crisis that happened specifically far more than handling anything that is actually related to the natural disaster. Having said that, when the country was stricken by the Covid-19 epidemic in late 2019 to the present day, it appears that the government has no specific reference or policy to deal with the outbreak that has affected thousands of people and killed more than100 people in the country. A crisis management team with specific crisis management policies must be in place to immediately mitigate and handle the crisis at hand efficiently. The chain of command must be in place to ensure smooth dissemination of proper information thus ensuring the government's credibility and no contradiction of information by the respective authorities responsible in handling the disaster management or crisis at hand. Disasters are a combination of threat (hazard) and vulnerability (vulnerability). Threats are a phenomena, dangers or risks, both natural and non-natural that can (but do not necessarily result in catastrophic floods, landslides, drought, disease outbreaks, armed conflicts etc.) Vulnerability is a condition in a community that makes them helpless of threats including physical, social, and psychological influences. So through this study, the communication crisis or catastrophe faced by the country can be divided into two forms: (1) hazard or crisis by eye-sighting (macro crisis), and (2) vulnerability or unseen crisis eye-sighting (micro crisis).**

Keywords **– crisis communication, policy, hazard, vulnerability, national development**

I. INTRODUCTION

Natural disasters are possible impending dangers that may lurk anywhere and anytime in this world. It is also practically impossible to predict when and where the next disaster will take place. According to Mahar, et al. (2013) stated in Disasters and their Effects on the Population: Key Concepts, we could strive to be prepared to handle both the acute and longer-term effects of a variety of disasters in different populations.

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Macro crises can be described as natural disasters such as major floods and earthquakes that are specific to natural phenomena. Meanwhile, micro crises have a devastating impact on human life such as the Covid-19 virus attack**.** The aim of this study is to formulate a theory on the relationship of macro crisis and micro crisis marked by people's experience through a combination of phenomenological and humane approaches towards the preservation of their national heritage.

Generally, it can be seen that the existing disaster plans are only in accordance with the current requirements and cannot be adapted for the future (not futuristic). When the country was hit by an unexpected communication crisis, then the government and its agencies became panic-stricken because they made a decision that was unpopular. In addition, the existing disaster plan or communications crisis is just to get the star rating in order to gain a place among the most famous countries to take immediate action to address the disaster.

Thus, the researcher can conclude here that the communication crisis or catastrophe faced by the country can be divided into two (2) forms: (1) crisis by eye-sighting (macro crisis), and (2) unseen crisis eye-sighting (micro crisis). If a disaster occurs on the same date and it hits more than one region, it then counts as one incident. Disasters are a combination of threat (hazard) and vulnerability (vulnerability). Threats are phenomena, dangers or risks, both natural and non-natural that can (but do not necessarily result in catastrophic floods, landslides, drought, disease outbreaks, armed conflicts etc.) Vulnerability is a condition in a community that makes them vulnerable to threats. Vulnerability of threats includes the physical, social, and psychological vulnerability.

What is macro crisis? Macro crises can be described as natural disasters or threat (hazard) such as major floods and earthquakes that are specific to natural phenomena.

What is micro crisis? Micro crises have a devastating impact on human life or vulnerability such as the Covid-19 virus attack.

Thus, the relationship between the macro crisis and the micro crisis is marked by the conscious and unconscious experience of the people of this country. At this level of consciousness, the country is in a panic situation to take action to ensure the safety and well-being of the people.

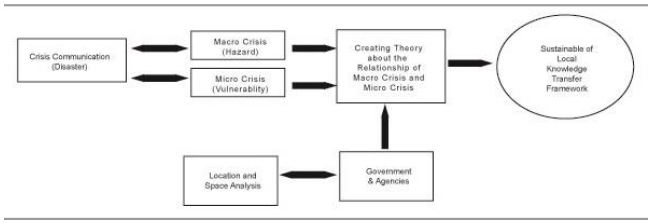


Figure 1: Framework of study

The above diagram is a social capital framework for understanding the conditions of Government's participation in handling the phenomena, disaster and others. Besides, the generation of social capital and tree plan of disaster recovery steps it has also included everything and that is suitable to be followed by a government servant is guaranteed. A social capital in context Society Revolution 5.0, which is Society 5.0 is a society that is capable of mastering life in the virtual and physical world and it can even analyse that information using "Artificial Intelligence" (AI), and the results are returned to humans in real life in a variety of ways that transcend the capabilities of humans (Hj. Nuruddin, 2020). As a result, this process will bring new value to industries and societies that were previously impossible for humans.

The key elements are important in building social capital and thus provide a useful framework, along with adopting new or alternative paradigms that are not complicities with the current economic, education, and political structures, for policy development and practice.

Disaster management is a series of activities designed to handle disasters and emergency situations and to prepare a framework to assist disaster-prone people to avoid or overcome the effects of the disaster. Disaster management relates to situations occurring before, during, and after a disaster (University of Wisconsin). Meanwhile, according to the University of British Columbia formulation process is a process of forming or setting common goals and shared values (common value) to encourage the parties involved (participants) to plan and deal with good potential or actual disaster.

Disaster Management defines disaster as an event or series of events that threatens and disrupts people's lives and livelihood because of natural and non-natural or human factors that can result in human death, environmental damage, loss of property, and psychological effects (Pedder & McIntyre, 2006).

If a disaster occurs on the same date and it hits more than one region, it then counts as one incident. Disasters are a combination of threat (hazard) and vulnerability (Vulnerability). Threats are phenomena, dangers or risks, both natural and non-natural that can (but do not necessarily result in catastrophic floods, landslides, drought, disease outbreaks, armed conflicts etc.).Vulnerability is a condition in a community that makes them vulnerable. Vulnerability of threats include physical, social, and psychological vulnerability.

In fact, disaster is an event or series of events that threaten and disrupt the lives and livelihoods caused by both natural factors and / or non-natural factors and human factors that cause human fatalities, environmental damage, loss of property, and the psychological impact (Nix-Stevenson, 2013).

II. PROBLEM STATEMENT

Disaster management in Malaysia is focused solely on physical disaster management, but does not look at it from a different perspective. By 2019, the existing disaster management plans will fail because they are irrelevant to be applied to a global crisis. According to Nix-Stevenson (2013), disasters mean a phenomenon that results from a sudden change in the ecosystem within the deepest part of the human network.

In addition, in terms of research methods related to the Communication Policy for vulnerability and disaster in Malaysia, no studies have used this GIS approach. Therefore, in line with the development of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) during the rise of the Society Revolution 5.0, the strengthening of digital systems through spatial mapping, known as Geographic Information Systems (SMG) has been widely used in many fields and disciplines. Therefore, a similar approach will be proposed in this study in detecting, mapping and analysing macro and micro crisis by various layers of society in Malaysia as no such study has been done.

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III. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The proposed research is intended to answer two central questions: (1) what are the characteristics that indicate that this event can be defined as a disaster? (2) How to specify interventions that are necessary to diminish the effects of disaster upon citizens?

IV. LITERATURE REVIEW

Awareness Crisis

"A disaster is a crisis resulting from a failure in human interactions with the physical and social environment. Disaster situations outstrip the capacity of individuals and societies to cope with adversity".

HDI, *From Disaster Relief to Development,* Studies on Development, No 1 (Geneva: Henry Dunant Institute, 1988), p. 170.

According to Nix-Stevenson (2013) Awareness is the first step toward action. Awareness can trigger interest, interest can lead to attention, and attention can prompt action. As schools are the best conduit for disseminating collective values, students and teachers can serve as vehicles

for building a culture of prevention. Norris, Stevens, Pfefferbaum, Wyche, and Pfefferbaum (2008) emphasizes that genuine social capital derives from network structures and linkages, social support, sense of community, place attachment, citizen participation, and communication.

According to O'Brien (2006), in an increasingly dangerous and uncertain world, preparedness, at all levels, for a range of threats is a key aspect of effective emergency management and of public reassurance. The preparedness is a combination of structural and non-structural measures designed to reduce known risks but also to ensure effective responses to a range of threats.

"A disaster is the convergence, at a given moment and in a given place, of two factors: risk and vulnerability".

G. Wilches-Chaux, "La vulnerabilidad global," in *Herramientas para la crisis: Desastres, ecologismo y formación professional* (Popayan, Colombia: Servicio Nacional de Aprendizaje [SENA], Sept. 1989).

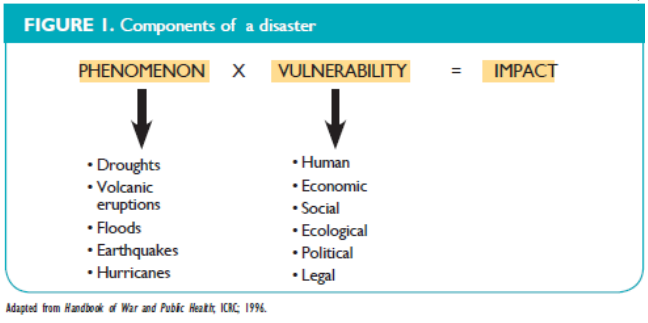
The problem becomes more difficult when tackling global problems such as climate change. Climate change, though a natural phenomenon, is being accelerated by anthropogenic activities. Though there is recognition throughout the international community of the threat that climate change poses, arriving at a solution is proving very difficult.

According to Mahar, et al., (2013) disasters are a greatest extent, beyond our control and inevitable. However, Society Revolution 5.0 can be better prepared for the consequences and thus reduce the degree of human suffering.

Disaster Management in Malaysia

Directive No. 20 (National Security Council) issued on May 11, 1997 is aimed at outlining a comprehensive Disaster Management Policy and Mechanism covering the levels before, during and after a disaster event on land. This directive also explains the roles and responsibilities of Government Agencies, statutory bodies, the private sector and voluntary agencies in Disaster Management.

Figure 2. Components of a disaster (Adapted from Handbook of War and Public Health; ICRC; 1996.)



An epidemic or pandemic can cause a surge in the number of people seeking medical care or treatment, and thus overwhelms the abilities of even a well-established medical system. Therefore, the ability of a country to accurately predict this is impossible.

However, by outlining the need and developing policies (guidelines) on disaster response planning to mobilize appropriate resources quickly and efficiently. Clear organizational structure must also be established to coordinate at national and international levels.

While significant improvements in sanitation and disaster response have taken place in certain areas of the world, developing countries continue to be particularly vulnerable to fragile economic and healthcare and transportation infrastructure (Mahar, et al., 2013).

V. PROPOSED METHODOLOGY

Geographic Information System (GIS) is a computer system for recording, storing, examining, and displaying data related to position on the earth's surface (DeMers, 2009). GIS can show different types of data on a map. This allows users to more easily view, analyse, and understand patterns and relationships.

This study aims to use mix methods approach for conducting the research. Thus, in the first steps for collecting data from previous studies, it will use content analysis and case studies. Besides, this will be strengthened by contributing surveys to the respondents all over Malaysia with a random sampling technique. Surveys will also be given via using google links. In addition, with the GIS system, quantitative data will be applied to this GIS system to describe and analyse specific features according to data result from SPSS. This feature will be mapping the data and give visualisation based on the results in Malaysia.

VI. CONCLUSION AND FUTURE RESEARCH

Previous researchers have emphasized the importance of a natural disaster policy that can be used to address both the macro or micro-crisis. We should not be late in our actions or only rectify when the damage is already done. The old adage "It's no use to shut the stable door after the horse has bolted" applies and takes effect here. This conceptual paper seeks to provide a framework for a new theory of macro-crisis and micro-crisis relations that can be worked out to better address natural disasters in the form of hazards and vulnerabilities.

This paper can also be expanded to include various types of respondents such as in urban and rural locations. The research is expected to contribute to the body of knowledge by increasing the literature on the importance of effective crisis management in the context of development of a country such as Malaysia, especially in the field of futuristic studies. The importance of this research is to enhance and contribute to the government agencies to understand the importance for the respective agencies to have a better understanding of the futuristic study in helping to save the country in solving a macro or micro-natural disaster.

The expected contribution of this study on the hazard and vulnerability impact to the Malaysian societies is to help the related agencies in dealing with natural disasters to understand the importance of this concept to be understood particularly in the Malaysian context. In addition, this research will also contribute to further research in the wider context.

Therefore, from this futuristic crisis management study it will create the competency model that will be developed and can be useful in guiding future research where other researchers can also apply this conceptual model developed to further study the Malaysian context collectively.

Researchers recommend future research to be carried out from this research in studying the importance of futuristic research in crisis communication management. In addition, this research will also focus on the importance of using the Geography Information System (GIS) in its early detection efforts to reduce the string of natural disasters occurring in our country.

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