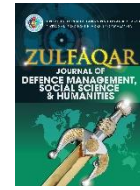




ZULFAQAR Journal of Defence Management, Social Science & Humanities

Journal homepage: <https://zulfaqarjdmssh.upnm.edu.my/index.php/zjdmssh/index>



THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN WELFARE, MORALE AND DISASTER RESPONSE MANAGEMENT AMONG THE INFANTRY PERSONNEL

Nur Hidayah Roslan^{a,*}, Haslinda Abdullah^a and Rosmah Mohamed^b

^a Faculty of Defence Studies and Management, National Defence University of Malaysia, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

^b School of Business and Economics, Universiti Putra Malaysia, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

*Corresponding author: hidayah_sun@yahoo.com

ARTICLE INFO

Article history:

Received

29-05-2019

Received in revised

12-12-2020

Accepted

14-12-2021

Available online

31-12-2021

Keywords:

Disaster,
Disaster response
management, Infantry,
Morale,, Welfare

e-ISSN: 2773-529X

Type: Article

ABSTRACT

The disaster always has an effect on person, financial, economical, trust issues, leadership and much more. It takes a lot of hard work and high intensity in managing the disaster. Infantry personnel is one of the mover in managing the disaster in Malaysia that provide response and conduct search and rescue. Welfare and morale are part of the elements that contributed in the disaster response management. However, the issues arises when some individual person only satisfied and do their job when welfare security is provided. The low morale also were influenced due to over working hours among the personnel. Thus, this study is aims to determine the relationship between infantry personnel's welfare and morale with effective disaster response management. Descriptive approach is used where the interviews were conducted with the infantry personnel in Sarawak. All the data were transcribed and categorized into themes and analysed using content analysis. All the ethical principles also were followed. Hence, the findings showed that infantry personnel have high morale and satisfied with the welfare provided by the military towards themselves and their families. The study recommended to provide fair welfare such as balance working hour, medical and counselling, more job rotation and cooperate among each other and community in performing disaster response management. Therefore, the personnel's satisfaction on welfare and morale leads to the successful of disaster response and management.

© Nur Hidayah Roslan 2021. All rights reserved.

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.58247/jdmssh-2021-0402-11>

Introduction

The disaster always has an effect on person, financial, economical, trust issues, leadership and much more. It takes a lot of hard work and high intensity in managing the disaster. Disaster in Malaysia including landslides, flood, earthquake and much more. In Malaysia, there are many issues arises from the natural disaster. The movement of mass rock, debris or soil down a slope influenced by the gravity are the causes of the landslide. In 18 years from 1993 to 2011, there are about 28 major landslides in Malaysia were reported with a total loss more than 100 lives. The estimated economic losses since 1973 to 2007 due to landslides in Malaysia is about US \$1 billion. Moreover, the most tragic landslide in Malaysia is the Collapsed of the 14-storey block A of the Highland Tower in Ulu Klang, Selangor which caused 48 deaths (Haliza and Jabil, 2017). In general, there were about 21,000 landslides-prone areas all over Malaysia which 16,000 is in Peninsular of Malaysia while 3,000 in Sabah and 2,000 in Sarawak. Shallow slides are the common types of landslides that happen in Malaysia where occurs during or immediately after intense rainfall (Ting, 1984). Even though Malaysia is not a precipitous country where the mountains and hills are less than 25%

of the terrain, however the fact of frequent of landslides are still reported almost every year (Qasim, Harahap and Osman, 2013). Thus, the main factor that caused slopes failure or landslides at numbers site in hillside development in Malaysia are rainfall, storm water activities and poor slope management (Haliza and Jabil, 2017; Bujang, Hua, Faisal, David, Harwant and Husaini, 2008).

Other than that, flood is a part of natural disaster in Malaysia. Flood can be defining as the dominating of high water flow in in any part of the river system. Therefore, when a river bank is full, the water is extended over the valley and become hazard to the community (Ching, Yatim, Toriman, Lee, Surif and Abdullah (2013). Flood is the most damaging natural disaster experienced by the Malaysian society. The total of 189 river basins with the main channels flowing directly to the south china sea and 85 of them are prone to recurrent flooding (89 of the river basins are in Peninsula Malaysia, 78 in Sabah and 22 in Sarawak) (Department of Irrigation and Drainage Malaysia, 2009). Furthermore, there are two categories of floods in Malaysia which are flash flood and monsoon floods (Department of Irrigation and Drainage Malaysia, 2000a). Based on the perspectives of hydrological, the flash floods can take only some hours to return to the normal water level, meanwhile the monsoon flood can last for a month (Noorazuan, 2006). The main effect of flooding is water damage to buildings while evacuating people from flood prone to the safe areas is the best way to response the disaster management and reduce the flood victims. It is suggested to ensure proper drainage is build and clear during the rainfall season. People also is suggested not to build new buildings on a water way to reduce the frequent occurrence of flooding (Sani, Muhd, Mohd and Abdullahi, 2014).

There are many organizations and agencies that manage disaster in Malaysia where one of the mover is Malaysian infantry personnel. In managing the disaster response, a human resource such as infantry personal need to be ready and response on any disaster they are facing (Center for Excellence in Disaster Management and Humanitarian Assistance, 2016). The National Defence Security Council (NSC) Instruction No. 20 that sets out the guidelines, roles and tasks of related agencies play important roles that giving the instruction to the Malaysian Armed Forces to provide response and conduct search and rescue in disaster operation (Kumar, 2015). Thus, infantry personnel as human resource should be seen as a biggest investment in the country where the welfare and morale are part of the elements that contributed in the disaster response management.

Problem statement

Employees' satisfaction is important for the organizational management. Welfare provided by the organization can contribute to the personnel satisfaction and employees' morale is affecting the better performance. Ideally, welfare is administration's principle that satisfying the employees' needs. It is a facility and comforts related to employees' happiness, human resource development, health and employees' well being given by the employer apart from the salaries, wages and incentives (Dayarathna, 2019). Other than that, morale of an employee is a psychological state of affairs that is also affecting the performance which lead to the better management (Kumar and Velmurugan, 2020). However, in the reality, an individual employee is only satisfied and willing to perform well in their job if security such as a welfare is provided. In previous study, welfare is found have affecting the employees' rentention. Therefore, when a personnel is not given a fair welfare, the intention to stay and the willingness to perform a good job is low (Rao, Patro and Raghunath, 2015). Besides that, an employees' morale also were down due to over working hours and working condition. Moreover, heavy workload also have strongly significant with an individual's morale (Kumar and Velmurugan, 2020).

As the conclusion, when there is no response on disaster management, the consequences can be impact on environmental and socioeconomic issues such as loss of lives, damaged of properties and infrastructures, psychological pressures among the victims, disputes on land boundaries and also land degradation (Haliza and Jabil, 2017; Sani, Muhd, Mohd and Abdullahi, 2014). Since the infantry personnel is one of the first mover in managing the disaster in Malaysia, they are responsible to response and conduct search and rescue to safe the victims. Thus, this study aims to determine the direct relationship between welfare and morale with effective disaster response management.

Literature review

i. Disaster response management

Disaster is a serious phenomenon that involve the losses of human being, environmental, material and also economic. The consequences of all these surpass the capability of effected society or community to manage

using its own resources. Moreover, disaster management can be defined as the systematic process of using the administrative directives, organizations, policies, operational skills and capacities to implement strategies and improved coping capacities in order to lessen the adverse impacts of hazards and the possibility of disaster (UNISDR, 2009). Flooding is the natural disaster that dominated all the disaster that causing the deaths in the world (FitzGerald, Du, Jamal, Clark, & Hou, 2010). However, in Sarawak, there are 22 major river basin all over the state where each of them have plenty of main river. Other than playing beneficial functions to the environment and as a main source for water supply, river also is the main source of flood problem which led to the disaster. Flood in Sarawak always happen during rainy season or during North East Monsoon in November to February (Azura, 2014). However, Malaysian infantry personnel have become part of the first mover towards disaster response management. Malaysian Armed Forces has release the OP MURNI where it is the guideline for infantry personnel to response to the disaster management (Mohamad, 2015). Automatically, governance on disaster management become a crucial chain that link up with authority and the community. Nevertheless, people prefer to use the effective decentralization because it lead to more transparent use of public funds where the funding is used more efficiently in promoting local development and improving the quality of public service provision. Whereby the centralized governance makes the proses of disaster response management slower because all the processes need to go through the flow of command of top-down and somewhat autocratic. However, only one authority at the top that can give decision based on the relevant in disaster situations (Saifulsyahira, Edre, Ahmad and Muhamad, 2016). On the other hand, there are many things need to do in managing the disaster such as expanding the training field of relief and rescue, provide rules and regulations for crisis management, increasing people preparedness level on natural disaster and the consistency of programs with specific needs (Seyed, Roqieh, and Ali, 2013). However, there are more factors that contributed in disaster response management including welfare (Orozco, 2017) and morale (Bilasova and Smatanova, 2016).

ii. Welfare

It is important for military organization to provide security benefit such as welfare to the infantry personnel to perform better disaster response management. This is because the welfare has very close relationship with individual wellbeing, high in service quality and good performance. Welfare service is the main concern because it affects the objectives of an organization (Sillanpää, 2011). Moreover, employee welfare, communication in organization, and management's efficiency and effectiveness also influence the morale of the employees that lead towards the high performance (Baehr and Renck, 1958). In addition, The Social Protection Floor that protect employees' welfare should be closely linked to the policies to sustain and comprehend the social protection for all Malaysian in the long run (Koutronas, 2020). Other than that, the study also supported that welfare have an influence on the response management where the medical and counselling of employees' welfare affecting employees' good performance (Rosenstein, 2002). In accordance with the military concerns, the welfare is associated with the life of infantry. This is because securing the infantry loyalty in times of war and military threat and also to compensate with their lives, it is crucial to provide welfare security to the team (Obinger, 2020). However, it is important for the organization to conduct benefit analysis in order to provide fair treatment to all employees. Meanwhile, employees also are able to criticize the welfare provided that lead to the employees' satisfaction (Dayarathna, 2019). Therefore, organization's compensation programme such as human welfare have important significant effects on employees' economic and psychological wellbeing that contributed towards the productivity of an individual (Wiley, 1997). And this is mean, welfare have important related issues towards the disaster response management among the infantry personnel to provide best performance.

iii. Morale

Morale of an infantry personnel refers to the groups of feelings controlled by an individual towards their job which is also known as satisfaction (Robbins, 2005). There are several factors that contributed to high morale of personnel such as organization and management, immediate supervision, material rewards, fellow employees and job satisfaction (Baehr and Renck, 1958). Rad and Yarmohammadian (2006) and Taillard and Giscoppa (2013) also found, low or high individual's morale are related to job satisfaction. This indicates that job satisfaction and morale have affecting high response management in achieving job objectives. Moreover, positive affirmation, sharing and open communication environment and appreciative inquiry also increasing morale and commitment of the personnel in responding disaster management (Bechtold, 2011). In fact, appreciative inquiry is the approach for a problem solving which located within a social constructionist framework to address the problems in the management (Cooperrider, Whitney and

Stavros, 2003). In order to improve morale of the employee, there are some approaches that can be implemented in the organization such as thanking the staff for their work hard, sharing the compliments around the whole team and also encouraging upper level managers to be familiar with staff and organization (Rosenstein, 2002; Callaghan, 2003). So, when the lower level personnel being appreciated by upper level, satisfying feeling of the personnel enhancing their morale to perform the job. Therefore, utilizing good communication between the senior and junior levels as well as effective managerial and professional leadership among military personnel enhancing their morale to do better in disaster response management (Gulliver, Towell and Peck, 2003).

Moreover, there is a study states that contribution of the military in a community disaster encourage morale among both side. The existence of military troops appears to represent the efficiency and authority to many local societies and officials. Hence, morale by both parties contributed into the effectiveness of disaster response management that lead to efficiency disaster management processes (Anderson, 1968). This is because, the study found out that morale has an impact on the staff cohesion and their productivity (McFadzean and McFadzean. 2005). In addition, employees' morale and productivity are also influenced by the job security. The study show that organizational downsizing has an effect on job security and the productivity of the employees. When job security has an effect on the employees' economic and psychological wellbeing, thus this contribute towards employee morale and the productivity (Wiley, 1997). Moreover, pre-war military believed that human character shaped from morale can produced the good qualities of the troops (Oram, 2003). Therefore, when an infantry personnel job security has been secured, the effectiveness of disaster response management can be achieved thus the rehabilitation after the disaster are well managed. Morale also motivating individual to perform the best effort during the disaster response manangement. According to Reed, Midberry, Ortiz, Redding and Toole (2011), morale motivate the military personnel to be a resilient person and success in a group tasks. The researchers also said, morale stimulate the strength of military personnel to face the challenges, adversity, difficulties and high stress. Hence, morale have strong relationship with disaster response manangement where the infantry personnel give their best effort to help the community in responding the disaster management.

Conceptual Framework of the Relationship between Welfare and Morale with Disaster Response Management

Based on the data collected from the interview with the infantry personnel, a new conceptual framework is developed. Welfare and morale are two independent variables whereas the disaster response management is dependent variable. This study is aiming at the relationship between the welfare and morale of the infantry personnel with the disaster response management. The relationship between these particular variables will be the basis of this research. Thus, the proposed conceptual framework of the research will be as per Fig. below.

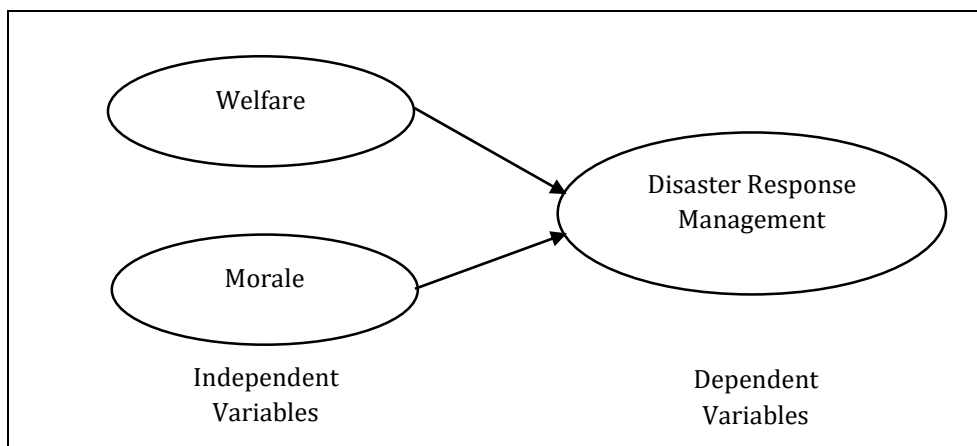


Fig. 1: Conceptual Framework of relationship between Welfare and Morale with Disaster Response Management

Method

The descriptive research design were used for this study to describe the situation in handling the disaster response management among infantry personnel. This study is using interview and focus group discussions with 11 RMR (Royal Malay Regiment), 13 RMR (Royal Malay Regiment), 10 RRR (Royal Ranger Regiment) and 3 RRR (Royal Ranger Regiment) in Sarawak to gather all the qualitative data needed. The estimated population for this study is about 90 of infantry personnel officers. Therefore, only 18 of infantry personnel officers were used as a sample for this study. All ethical principles were followed, which include respecting the rights of participants, voluntary participation, informed consent, confidentiality and anonymity of participants, protecting participants from risk of harm, honouring research sites and reporting research fully and honestly. The present study adheres to these ethical standards. All information gathered from individual and focus group discussions was categorized according to the themes identified and analysed using content analysis.

Finding and Discussion

After the interviewed with both Royal Malay Regiment and Royal Ranger Regiment, the data has been analysed and the finding shows that welfare have relationship with disaster response management. All the 18 infantry personnel officers agreed that being a military, they were provided with welfare security such as safety of the infantry personnel, work schedule, medical and counselling. According to the respondents, the infantry personnel were provided with the safety guidelines before the disaster mission take place. The respondents also added that, in order to take care of the welfare, job rotation were implemented during the disaster response management in order to maintain the energy and give enough rest for the personnel in between the task given. Moreover, the medical and counselling also been provided where it is easy to access when it is needed. Thus, as an individual person, fulfilling the welfare security has satisfied the inner feelings that leads to give more in performing the task. Therefore, it is important to provide welfare to the infantry personnel to perform well in disaster response management with high commitment. This is also supported by the previous studies that personnel satisfaction were influenced by the welfare provided in order to perform the best response in disaster management (Baehr and Renck, 1958; Rosenstein, 2002).

The findings also indicates that the infantry personnel have high morale to achieve the objective of disaster response management. Most of the infantry are positive, have spirit and ready for every task given on the disaster mission. Furthermore, the upper level position also supported all members in responding the disaster management. Hence, the finding emphasized that there is a relationship between morale and disaster response management among infantry personnel. The result were supported by Bechtold (2011) that stated individual's morale produced commitment to do a task including responding in disaster management. Moreover, Oram (2003) and Reed, Midberry, Ortiz, Redding and Toole (2011) believed that morale can produced the good qualities of the military troop and leads to the successfulness in the group tasks. Thus, based on the research findings, the results indicates that disaster response management can be achieving whenever there is fair welfare and high morale of infantry personnel.

Conclusion

As the conclusion, welfare and morale are crucial elements in managing disaster response. The satisfaction on welfare as well as good morale among infantry personnel indicates that they are ready for current and future disaster response management. Generally, the respondents also indicated that the current disaster response management is somewhat effectual. The study recommended that providing fair welfare including the safety of the subordinates and their families, balance working time schedule and the medical and counselling is essential to increase morale of the infantry personnel. Moreover, it is important for infantry personnel to cooperate with each other and with community in managing the disaster which lead to the successful of disaster response and management. In addition, the study also recommended to implement more job rotation for disaster response management in order to give enough rest and increase morale of the personnel before the next task.

Acknowledgement

The authors would like to acknowledge the financial support provided by The Ministry of Higher Education under the Niche Research Grant Scheme (NRGS/2013/UPNM/PK/P2). Moreover, the authors also would like to thank the Centre of Research and Innovation of National Defence University of Malaysia for supporting the researchers to do this research.

References

- Anderson, W. (1968). *Military-Civilian Relations in Disaster Operation* (Report No. 5). Office of the Secretary of the Army Washington, D. C. <https://apps.dtic.mil/sti/pdfs/AD0691110.pdf>
- Azura, M. Z. (2015). *Flood Mapping Using Geographic Information System (GIS)* (Master thesis, Universiti Teknologi Malaysia, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia). Retrieved from <http://eprints.utm.my/id/eprint/53593/>
- Baehr, M. E. and Renck, R. (1958). The Definition and Measurement of Employee Morale. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 3(2), 84 – 157.
- Bechtold, M. (2011). Improving Worker Morale Through the Use of Appreciative Inquiry. *Industrial and Commercial Training*, 43(1), 25 – 30.
- Bilasova, V. and Smatanova, A. (2016). Moral Theory and Disaster. *Human Affairs*, 26(1), 43-51.
- Bujang, B. K., Hua, T., Faisal, A., David, H. B., Harwant, S. and Husaini, O. (2008). *Landslides in Malaysia: Occurrences, Assessment, Analyses and Remediation*. Universiti Putra Malaysia Publisher.
- Callaghan, M. (2003). Nursing Morale: What Is It Like and Why?. *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, 42(1), 9-82.
- Center for Excellence in Disaster Management and Humanitarian Assistance (2016). *Malaysia Disaster Management Reference Handbook*. <https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/disaster-mgmt-ref-hdbk-Malaysia.pdf.pdf>
- Ching, Y. C., Yatim, B., Toriman, M. E., Lee, Y. H., Surif, S., and Abdullah, M. (2013). Impact of Climate Change on Flood Risk in the Muar River Basin of Malaysia. *Disaster Advances*, 6(10), 11-17.
- Cooperrider, D. L., Whitney, D. and Stavros, J. M. (2003). *Appreciative Inquiry Handbook*, Lakeshore Publisher.
- Dayarathna, D. (2019, August). *Employee Welfare Management*. ResearchGate. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/335524100_Employee_Welfare_Management
- Department of Irrigation and Drainage Malaysia (2000a). *Urban Storm Water Management Manual for Malaysia*, Department of Irrigation and Drainage Malaysia.
- Department of Irrigation and Drainage Malaysia (2009). *DID Manual: Flood Management (Vol 1)*. Jabatan Pengairan dan Saliran Malaysia.
- FitzGerald, G., Du, W., Jamal, A., Clark, M., and Hou, X. Y. (2010). Flood Fatalities in Contemporary Australia (1997–2008). *Emergency Medicine Australasia*, 22(2), 180 – 186.
- Gulliver, P., Towell, D. and Peck, E. (2003). Staff Morale in the Merger of Mental Health and Social Care Organisations in England. *Journal of Psychiatric and Mental Health Nursing*, 10, 7 – 101.
- Haliza A. R. and Jabil M. (2017). Landslides Disaster in Malaysia: An Overview, *Health and the Environment Journal*, 2017, 8(1), 58 – 71.
- Koutronas, E. (2020). Social Protection for All: The Next Step for the Malaysian Welfare. <http://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.3633760>
- Kumar, A. (2015). Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR) – Flood Relief Operations in Malaysia, In Chapter 3: *NADI Joint Working Paper: Sharing Experiences in ASEAN HADR Management*, (pp. 43–53). Thailand: Strategic Studies Center Thailand.
- Kumar, A. V. and Velmurugan, V. P. (2020). Employee Morale (EM) and Its Impact on Employee Attitude (EA) In Self Financing Colleges of Kerala. *Journal of Critical Reviews*, 7(2), 261-264.
- McFadzean, F. and McFadzean, E. (2005). Riding the Emotional Roller-coaster: A Framework for Improving Nursing Morale, *Journal of Health Organization and Management*, 19(4/5), 318 – 339.
- Mohamad, S. I. (2015). *Tentera Darat Tunjang Kesejahteraan Rakyat*. Pengarang Berita Tentera Darat Malaysia.
- Noorazuan M.H. (2006). *Urban Hydrological Changes in The Sankey Brook Catchment* (Unpublished Doctor of Philosophy's Thesis). University of Manchester.
- Obinger, H. (2020). Conscriptio, the Military, and Welfare State Development: An Introduction. *Historical Social Research*, 45(2), 7-26.
- Oram G. C. (2003). Military Theory and Redefining Troop Morale. In Oram, G. (2003). *Military Executions during World War I*. Palgrave Macmillan.
- Orozco, L. V. (2017). *Disaster Risk Reduction and Disaster Management in Myanmar: The Roles of Employer and Business Membership Organizations*. Bureau for Employers' Activities (ACT/EMP).
- Qasim, S., Harahap, I. S. H. and Osman, S. B. S. (2013). Causal Factors of Malaysian Landslides: A Narrative Study. *Research Journal of Applied Sciences, Engineering and Technology*, 5(7), 2303-2308.
- Rad, A.M.M. and Yarmohammadian, M.H. (2006). A Study of Relationship between Managers' Leadership Style and Employees' Job Satisfaction. *Leadership in Health Services*, 19(2), 11-28.
- Rao, P. V., Patro, C. S. and Raghunath, K. M. K. (2015). Employee Welfare is the Key: An Insight, *International Journal of Business and Administration Research Review*, 3(11), 40-47.

- Koutronas, E. (2020). *Social Protection for All: The next step for the Malaysian Welfare*. West Virginia University.
- Reed, B., Midberry, C., Ortiz, R., Redding, J. and Toole, J. (2011). *Morale the Essential Intangible*. <http://digitalcommons.unl.edu/usarmyresearch/354>
- Robbins, S.P. (2005). *Organizational Behavior* (11th ed.). Pearson Prentice-Hall, Englewood Cliffs.
- Rosenstein, A. H. (2002), Nurse-Physician Relationships: Impact on Nurse Satisfaction and Retention. *American Journal of Nursing*, 102(6), 26-34.
- Saifulsyahira, J., Edre, M. A., Ahmad, F. A. F. and Muhamad, H. J. (2016). Governance of Flood Disaster Management: Malaysian Case Study. *International Journal of Public Health and Clinical Sciences*, 3(1), 17 – 30.
- Sani, G. D., Muhd, B. G., Mohd, E. T. and Abdullahi, M. G. (2014). "Floods in Malaysia: Historical Reviews, Causes, Effects and Mitigations Approach," *International Journal of Interdisciplinary Research and Innovations*, 2(4), 59-65.
- Seyed, A. H., Roqieh, H. and Ali, H. (2013). The Analysis of Factors Affecting People's Preparedness in Dealing with Natural Disasters in 2013 in Rasht-Iran. *International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences*, 3(10). 88 – 99.
- Sillanpää, V. (2011). Performance Measurement in Welfare Services: A Survey of Finnish Organisations. *Measuring Business Excellence*, 15(4), 62 – 70.
- Taillard M., Giscoppa H. (2013). Motivation and Morale. In *Psychology and Modern Warfare*. Palgrave Macmillan.
- Ting, W. H. (1984). Stability of Slopes in Malaysia. In *Proceedings Symposium on Geotechnical Aspects of Mass and Material Transportation*. Bangkok. 119-128.
- UNISDR (2009). *UNISDR Terminology on Disaster Risk Reduction*. United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (UNISDR).
- Wiley, C. (1997). What Motivates Employees According to Over 40 Years of Motivation Surveys?. *International Journal of Manpower*, 18(3), 263 – 280.