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Community Resilience and Adaptive Capacity: An Integrative Perspective

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Abstract

The aim of this paper is to examine the adaptive capacity for community resilience. Adaptive capacity supports the residents of a local community to survive and recover during and after a disaster. The holistic view of community resilience is seen as personal attributes possessed by community residents which enables them to survive during and after a disaster. Reviewed articles and other secondary sources that discussed on the topic of community resilience and adaptive capacity were used for this study through content analysis and empirical evidence. The discussion of the theories in this paper shed more light towards understanding the four-way adaptive capacity. Community resilience increases the chance of community adaptation during and after a disaster. This study will encourage private businesses and professional individuals to become part of a community by providing them with resources needed to survive in the face or after a disaster. It will also contribute to related research in the future which focuses on adaptive capacity for community resilience.

Keyword: *Disaster, community resilience, sustained ability, preparedness*

1. Introduction

For some communities, one major issue facing them is lack of external support. However, some communities are experiencing a real hard situation, sometimes it could be an unpredicted hazard that is caused by destabilizing situations, such as climate crisis and conflicts which is a major cause for displacement, loss of lives, homes, and livelihood. Community resilience consists of a number of coping processes and adaptation to collective challenges. Community resilience is closely related to that of inherent resilience, which consists of actions taken by the community to manage serious damages (Colten et al, 2012).

Adaptive capacity is a strong indication of how people can manage risks from disaster. It is a key factor in community resilience. The study of community resilience makes it possible to identify factors that contribute to collective processes of coping with adversity. It considers a number of other interacting factors which does not exclude the policy context within a community, investment of public infrastructure, local personal capacity to design, plan, implement, execute and manage adaptation investments (Natalie A & Yoon K, 2019).

Adaptive capacity helps a community to reassess their situation, learn from the crisis experience as well as adjust their strategies in the face of the situation (Tierney, 2012). Adaptive resilience is commonly used in the context of the behavior of a community after the wave of a natural disaster (Kapucu, Hawkins, and Rivera 2013).

Norris (2008) pointed out that in some parts of literature, the disturbances to systems like disasters are called as stressors. Community resilience helps to discover factors that encourages the cohesion processes of managing and coping with adversity. It is something that should be encouraged especially when considering the role of the residents themselves, given the possibility to be transformed through external agents such as – private businesses, government and professional individuals (Plodinec et al, 2014).

Growth, sustainability and recovery are possible, but there are factors that must be in place in readiness for a disaster, significant resources should be available and accessible to the community from the government and private businesses to enable the community make use of them during a difficult time (Ungar, 2011). The word resilience has been used by researchers to describe the related response that people present when they are faced with challenges (Wilson, 2012).

Current research reveals that resilience is seen as a dynamic process and not static. However, resilience has been explained by some researchers as a social and psychic process through which people cope in a hard situation as a result of transformation and adaptation (Morais & Koller, 2011). Cartalis (2014) said that the sufficient capacity to adapt in the face of extreme stress or adversity and then go through the rigorous transformational change is what can be called a resilient system. According to Norris, F.H., et al. (2008), community resilience can be described as a connection between adaptive capacity of the community and a positive trajectory of functionality after a disaster. The outcome of the connection can be seen as community adaptation which is manifested by the wellbeing of the people alongside seen as the general quality of life of the people.

Community resilience has been conceived in relation to resources or capital that is within the community capacity and can be accessed during a time of hardship. This may be either social, physical, economic or human resources or capital. Resilience comes with the capacity to discover solutions, resist hardship, re-establish new functions, acquire new skills and changes (Gilbert, 2008). People become vulnerable to hardship when it is difficult to gain access to resources that are delivered as part of the plan for recovery, preparedness and response (Norris et al., 2008).

Residents of the community is competent when faced with adversities, but it requires sufficient assistance and support to have access to the collective forces that will surpass the loss (Agani & Landau, et al 2010).

2. Method

This study aims to critically evaluate the subject matter. It considered the following steps in order to get a guided path on the literature. 1. The choice of database; 2. topic definition for the search; 3. selection of articles according to inclusion criteria 4. evaluating the article and 5. Interpretation of data. However, in order to carry out this search some database selections were made. Scopus, PubMed AND SciElo were selected, the key word “community resilience” was typed to identify the list of peer reviewed articles which discussed on the topic of community resilience. The inclusion criteria published peer reviewed articles from Scopus, PubMed and SciElo that discussed on the selected topic with the full version available. The result of this study was derived through content analysis and empirical evidence which specified the qualitative approach used.

3. Discussion

This paper presents a four-way framework for adaptive capacity. At the community level, there are factors that determine and support resilience, one of them is economic development, the second is social capital, third is information and communication, the last is community competence. These adaptive capacities determine resilience and how well a community is likely to function and adapt when confronted by a severe shock or disturbance (Norris et al., 2008). Adaptive capacities are interrelated and linked to each other. (Jabeen et al., 2010) noted that there are adaptive strategies used by communities at the grassroots level and these includes; A) Modifying Physical Environment: Residents restructure their homes and a collective effort to construct a drainage system was noted as a major factor in disaster resilience. B) Source of Income Diversity: Residents strategies includes participating in informal trade, adopting savings schemes and not having one income earner in the family. C) Food Storage: Residents build up food storage facilities to store up food in case of severe hunger during or after a disaster. D) Development of Social Support: This includes financial, physical and

emotional support from family and friends as well as the wider social networks.

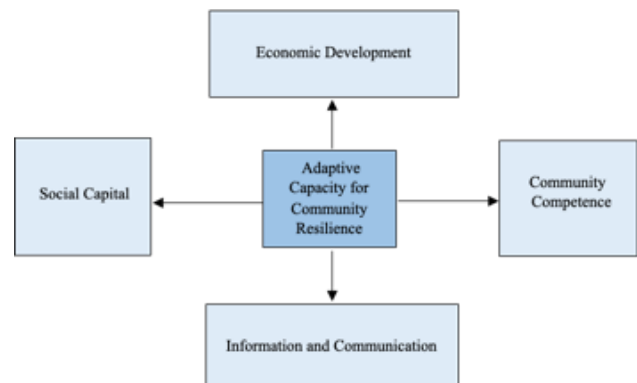


Figure 1: Theoretical Framework

Economic Development:

This includes good governance, economic strength and diversification as well as political stability which improves the general wellbeing of the people by creating strong enabling environment which makes it easier for the residents of a local community to overcome the outcome after a disaster.

Social Capital

Residents are allowed to work together effectively to achieve a common goal. Residents gain trust and share a common value as well as have a mutual relationship to support one another during and after a disaster.

Community Competence:

The cohesive ability of community residents to understand their environment and use the knowledge about their environment to identify and establish consensus to solve their problems collectively.

Information and Technology:

The process of learning, educating and passing knowledge about adequate planning and preparation as well as acceptance of uncertainty and changes.

4. Conclusion

This paper reviewed previous literature on community resilience and adaptive capacity. A review of recent literature proves that there are ways through which communities survive from a disaster. This paper considered the adaptive capacity framework which determines how well residents of a community can do in the face of a disturbance. There is no one definition of community resilience. Community resilience comes in different definitions but ultimately it has the same meaning. Different authors have different definitions, however, this does not nullify the original meaning. In this paper the definition that best describes community resilience was used. – It is the collaborative ability of a community to make use of all available resources in order to survive and recover during and after a disaster. Therefore, this study encourages private businesses and professional individuals to become a part of the community by providing them with needed resources to adapt and survive during and after a disturbance.

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