

Sociological Analysis of Strategies to Increase the Social Responsibility of the IRCS with an Emphasis on People's Participation in Disasters

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Date of submission: 20 Jul. 2023

Date of acceptance: 08 Sep. 2023

Original Article

Abstract

INTRODUCTION: Promoting social responsibility in a relief organization can lead to the development of people's participation in its operations. This study has been conducted with the aim of sociological analysis of the strategies to increase the social responsibility in the Iranian Red Crescent Society (IRCS) with an emphasis on the development of people's participation in disasters.

METHODS: In this qualitative study, the sample population included experts and rescuers of the IRCS. The sampling method was purposeful until theoretical saturation was reached and therefore 22 people were interviewed. The data collected by semi-structured interview and analyzed in three stages of open, axial, and selective coding. The validity of the research was also examined through triangulation.

FINDINGS: Based on data analysis, strategies consist of 9 main categories, 51 subcategories and 230 primary codes. In general, after analyzing the data obtained from the research, a paradigm model of strategies for increasing the social responsibility of the IRCS was designed with emphasis on people's participation in disasters.

CONCLUSION: In order to increase people's participation during disasters in the IRCS, it is necessary to educate and promote a humanitarian participatory culture, create an organizational identity, increase the IRCS's responsibility towards participants, apply merit management, attention to the implementation of organizational justice and attention to social accountability processes by the IRCS must be considered.

Keywords: Competence management; Iranian Red Crescent Society; Organizational justice; Qualitative approach; Participants; Social responsibility

How to cite this article: Abjam Z, Soltani A, Dehghan H. **Sociological Analysis of Strategies to Increase the Social Responsibility of the IRCS with an Emphasis on People's Participation in Disasters.** *Sci J Rescue Relief* 2023; 15(4): 292-299.

Introduction

Participation is one of the important human and moral values, which includes concepts such as responsibility, conscious and free action. Participation in disaster relief means the opportunities provided to people in order to develop their presence in planning and providing services during disasters (1). This concept is one of the most essential types of conscious and active participation of people in disaster management programs in community,

which is of course one of the main concerns of mankind today. The presence of official relief organizations cannot be considered as a means of relieving the people of the burden and making the management of disasters organizational.

Iran is one of the disaster-prone areas in the world even further increase the necessity of this, and depending on the type of incident, location, scope and extent and in general the conditions of its occurrence, the participation of people, forces

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and local resources is needed (2).

Nowadays, organizations are increasingly involved in responsibility. Being responsible or not for behaviors and performance can cause positive or negative consequences at the organization level. (3) Due to the organizational strategy of the IRCS from 2015 to 2025, one of the organizational values that guides all its programs and activities is responsibility towards the community, especially the beneficiaries of the services of this organization which is through ensuring organizational health, transparency, honesty and effective productivity of donated resources and aid, as well as promoting the participation of people and local communities in planning and implementing humanitarian activities.

According to the definition, social responsibility refers to the organization's ability to support actions that consider the welfare of their workforce as well as community (4) "social responsibility is one of the management's commitments that, besides maintaining and expanding the interests of the organization, it will also influence the general welfare of the society" (5). In fact, "when an organization behaves as if it acts out of conscience, we say that it acts with a sense of social responsibility. (6) Porter, Kramer, Ricks, Saiia, Carrol, Bocholtz & Lantus believe that the social responsibility of organizations is done in order to increase social conditions (7). Keith Davis has proposed that (8) social responsibility comes from social power and every organization should assume the social responsibility of its activities in order to benefit more from the overall improvement of society (9, 10).

Since social responsibility is known as one of the most important elements of an organization's existential philosophy, compliance with this not only increases the possibility of promotion of organizational commitment, but also strengthens the satisfaction of stakeholders outside the organization to legitimize the organization.

The main essence of social participation can be seen as involvement, activity and influenceability. By accepting this essence of participation, individuals are stimulated to achieve group goals and participate in the accountability of work. (11).

Research has shown that when people have the opportunity to express their thoughts and participate in a decision that affects their fate, their creativity and innovation increases with a greater sense of responsibility (12). In fact,

people's participation in all the processes related to the disaster management cycle is a process in which people at risk or affected by disasters participate in decision-making, planning and implementation processes, and alone or with the help of local, regional, governmental and non-governmental organizations, national and international are trying to restore the situation to the conditions before the disaster (13).

The participation of the society is the foundation of a successful program in preventing and dealing with crises, and the existence of a participatory approach in all processes related to accidents and disasters is necessary to achieve sustainable development in a society undergoing crisis (13). Any successful intervention in a disaster depends on the method that is chosen and used to do it, as well as the extent of acceptance of this method by the target society and taking into account the needs and interests of the people is the only way to succeed in institutionalizing preparation programs, prevention and dealing with crises.

Strengthening the presence of people in the process of planning and implementation guarantees the success and permanent establishment of programs. Therefore, the participation of the society is one of the essential components in planning for disaster management and promoting social responsibility, and since the IRCS, as one of the non-governmental organizations, carries out activities in this regard, therefore, this study aims to explain the strategic model of increasing the social responsibility of the IRCS with emphasis on people's participation in disasters and accidents.

Methods

This study was conducted with a qualitative approach. We did a grounded theory study based on the Strauss and Corbin (2008) (14) method. The statistical population of this research included experts, and rescuers of the IRCS who had a desire and experience directly or indirectly related to the topic of the study. During the research process, theoretical sampling was used (15) and the samples were selected by purposeful selection.

The sample size in this research was based on the theoretical saturation index. And the researchers reached theoretical saturation after interviewing 22 people. To collect data, besides secondary data (literature and research review such as books, papers, related theses, websites,

etc.), after preparing the interview guide, refer to the selected population and the required data were collected using open interviews. The duration of the interviews was 60-90 minutes and the interviews were recorded by a digital recording device.

The first step in building a grounded theory is open coding. Open coding helps to create a set of first-hand concepts that, while rooted in raw data, are also abstract. At this stage, the researcher reviewed the data line by line and identified its processes and coded them using words and phrases. Then, by continuously comparing the codes in terms of similarities and differences in concepts, classes were formed and the characteristics and dimensions of each of them were determined (16). In the initial coding, the researcher attached a code (concept and label) to each desired unit based on the coding unit.

Then, by combining similar concepts, in a bigger umbrella called sub-categories, and finally, from the sub-categories, he reached the main categories. In the second stage, the classes were connected with each other and made a set of issues. At this stage, the codes and classes were compared and the relationships between classes and sub-classes were determined in order to obtain a more accurate interpretation of the desired phenomenon.

To ensure the validity of the data, the triangulation approach (17) as well as long-term engagement methods, re-inspection of the data acquisition path, checking with the participants, stable observation and continuous comparison (18) were used.

Also, in order to ensure the reliability of the data, the data obtained in the interview were also obtained in field notes, and in order to achieve the criterion of verifiability, all the stages of conducting the research, especially the stages of data analysis were recorded in detail and comprehensively so that if another researcher wants to continue research in this field, he can easily follow this work based on the available documents related to interviews and analyzes and other stages of the research.

In addition, a number of extracted interviews, codes and classes were given to the research

colleagues and a number of faculty members who are familiar with the method of qualitative research analysis, and they were asked to check the accuracy of this coding. In addition, in order to achieve more accurate results, the intra-subject agreement method of two coders was used, and a reliability of 80% was obtained. The classes and sub-classes discovered from this study are given along with some quotes from the interviewees (narrative analysis). Finally, by presenting the extracted concepts and the final paradigm, the research has been carried out according to the method of Strauss and Corbin (2008) (14).

Findings

The qualitative analysis of the interview results indicated the identification of 9 main categories, 51 sub-categories and 230 concepts in the field of applicable strategies in order to increase the social responsibility of the IRCS with an emphasis on people's participation in accidents and disasters, which is shown in table 1.

Based on this, the participants in the study have stated 9 different mechanisms as follows to increase the social responsibility of the IRCS with emphasis on people's participation in accidents and disasters:

- 1) Education and promotion of humanitarian cooperative culture;
- 2) Creation of organizational identity;
- 3) Attention to increasing the responsibility of the organization towards participants;
- 4) Applying merit management;
- 5) Increasing the social responsibility of the organization;
- 6) Attention to social responsiveness processes;
- 7) Creating a culture of organizational loyalty;
- 8) Formulating organizational policies and actions;
- 9) Attention to the implementation of organizational justice.

One of the strategies that the participants have acknowledged is "teaching and promoting the culture of humanitarian cooperation". In this area, teaching and promoting the humanitarian participatory culture means giving importance to the value, normative and emotional-cognitive aspects of community. The value dimension is expressed as the concept of the value of action and the act of participation from the perspective of general public.

Table1. Sub-categories and categories extracted from qualitative data regarding the use of strategies in order to increase the social responsibility of IRCS with an emphasis on people’s participation in accidents and disasters.

Category	Sub-categories
Education and promotion of humanitarian cooperative culture	Value dimension of participation / Normative dimension of participation / Emotional-cognitive dimension of participation behavior
Creating an organizational identity	Honoring the status of participants / Defining relief activities / Creating a sense of belonging / Creating value for participants / Creating motivation in participants / Presenting participation identifying cards / Providing services of IRCS to participants / Promoting the principles and functions of the IRCS to the people / advertisements (banners/posters/social networks/mass media) / Sensitizing public opinion
Attention to increasing the responsibility of the organization (IRCS) towards the participants	Improving the level of civil liability insurance / Improving the level of accident insurance / Improving knowledge-oriented courses / Improving skill-oriented courses / Improving the level of training and empowerment courses
Application of competency management	Preparation of appropriate reports / Managers' use of development programs for the progress of participants / Attention to the progress of participants / Proper measurement of allocation to participants / Proper evaluation of the performance of participants / Welcoming the documentation of participants / The prominent role of managers in effective decisions
Increasing the social responsibility of the organization (IRCS)	Management based on trust / Management based on the quality of working life of participants / Conducting research in order to help the public participation / Attention to the concept of social responsibility of the IRCS / Attention to social responsiveness / Attention to economic responsibility / Attention to environmental responsibility / Attention to legal responsibilities / Attention to moral responsibilities / Creating a commitment to society / Observing the principles of social responsibility based on the United Nations Global Compact / Implementing an adaptive and effective strategy / Creating a code of conduct / Creating quality of life management in affected areas
Attention to social responsiveness processes	Increasing the capacity to respond/manage stakeholders (primary and secondary)
Creating a culture of organizational loyalty	Attention to the concept of service quality / Attention to the satisfaction of participants / Empathy with participants / Being responsive / Understanding emotional conditions / Prioritizing participants from the IRCS / Cultivating / Creating trust-based management / Attention to the process of trust building in the organization
Formulating of organizational policies and measures	Implementation of development programs / Performance evaluation and service compensation / Increasing organizational capacity in attracting and maintaining expert and efficient public forces / Respecting the political rights of participants
Attention to the implementation of organizational justice	Attention to the implementation of procedural justice / Attention to the implementation of distributive justice / Attention to the implementation of transactional justice

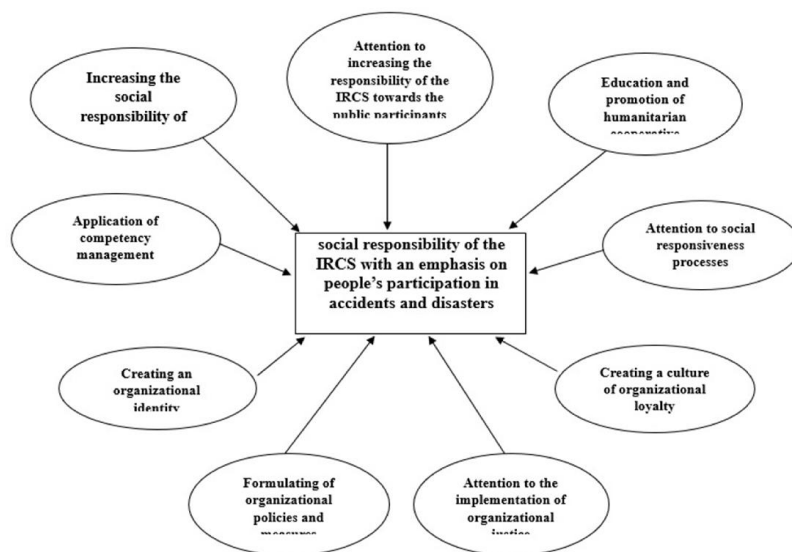


Figure 1. Paradigm model of strategies to increase the social responsibility of the IRCS with an emphasis on people’s participation in accidents and disasters

The normative dimension emphasizes the norm of participation from the general public view, promoting and institutionalizing the humanitarian participatory culture, and turning participation into a cultural norm in society. The emotional-cognitive dimension, third dimension of this strategy, means paying attention to the emotional and cognitive nature of a person's behavior to participate in the social structure.

Another important strategy in this area is creating organizational identity. This category has several sub-categories such as creating value for the participants, which can be mentioned as examples such as providing a participation identifying card, defining the anthem for the participants, having a uniform with the level of activity and the level of success and giving identity to the participants.

The other examples in this area are such as: creating motivation and creating a sense of belonging among the participants by sending messages to the participants on different occasions, providing special services to the participants, sending notifying messages, issuing participation card in the RCS, providing services and activities of the RCS to participants, promoting the principles and functions of the RCS to the people, introducing and promoting the principles of the IRCS, introducing the services and activities of the RCS to the general public, introducing the services and activities of rescuers to the general public, educating the IRCS duties and sensitizing public opinion through advertising with banners, posters, social networks and mass media such as radio and television, for example, the statement of participant number 7 is given here: "The creation of both spiritual and material incentives should be taken into consideration. That is, we consider a series of incentive offers. Give a receipt to anyone who comes with a Red Crescent card. Give them a ten percent discount. The ticket was ten thousand tomans. Give a ten percent discount. This can add value to the work of the participants."

The third strategy is to pay attention to increasing the responsibility of the organization (IRCS) towards the participants. Based on the results extracted from the data, this category has sub-categories of civil liability insurance and accident insurance promotion, raising the level of training and empowerment courses (promotion of knowledge-based courses and skill-based courses). Applying competency management was

another proposed strategy. This category consists of 6 sub-categories, preparing appropriate reports, paying attention to the progress of participants, measuring the appropriate allocation to participants, evaluating the performance of participants, appropriate promotion, and welcoming the documentation of participants.

The fifth strategy is to increase the social responsibility of the organization (IRCS). This category has 14 sub-categories as follows: trust-based management, management of the quality of working life of participants, conducting research in order to help the cause of public participation, paying attention to the concept of social responsibility of the RCS, paying attention to social responsiveness, paying attention to economic responsibility (transparency, control, supervision in Society activities, prevention of all types of corruption, use of local suppliers), attention to environmental responsibility, attention to legal responsibilities, attention to moral responsibilities, commitment to society, adhering to the principles of social responsibility based on the United Nations Global Compact, implementing an adaptive and effective strategy, creating a code of conduct and creating quality of life management in the affected areas.

Another solution is to pay attention to social responsiveness processes by the Red Crescent Society. This category has sub-categories such as increasing the capacity to respond, and management of primary stakeholders (creating appropriate relationships with participants and people affected by accidents and disasters) and secondary (strong communication between the Society and the media, attention to the local community).

The category of creating a culture of organizational loyalty has been one of the solutions extracted from the research. This category consists of 6 subcategories, attention to the concept of service quality, attention to the satisfaction of participants, empathy with participants, responsiveness, understanding of emotional conditions and attention to the process of building trust in the organization.

Formulation of organizational policies and measures has been another category extracted from the data. This category consists of 5 sub-categories of implementation of development programs, performance evaluation and service compensation, increasing organizational capacity in attracting and maintaining skilled and efficient personnel, paying attention to the social rights of

the organization and respecting the political rights of participants.

The last strategy obtained from the research is the category of paying attention to the implementation of organizational justice. This category consists of 3 sub-categories of attention to the implementation of procedural justice (participation of all participants in calls and acceptance based on merits), distributive justice (perception of participants of the fair distribution of rewards by managers, perceived fairness in payments in the organization and receiving fair salaries and rewards for doing work) and transactional justice (paying attention to reciprocity in personal relationships, interpersonal justice, informational justice (clear and honest expression) by branch managers and participants and creating a fair behavior of managers towards participants).

Discussion and Conclusion

The results of the sociological analysis of the strategies of increasing the social responsibility of the IRCS, with emphasis on people's participation in accidents and disasters showed that the optimal solutions can be defined in the areas of education and promotion, organizational identity, organizational responsibility, competence management, organizational social responsibility, social responsiveness processes, organizational loyalty, policies and actions and organizational justice.

Education and promotion of humanitarian cooperative culture as a strategy in this field is important. Since it is possible to direct or limit cooperative behaviors through social structures, therefore, effective, conscious and voluntary participation cannot be realized without training and character development.

Therefore, as it has been emphasized in the study of Dashti et al. (19), with the change in the system of people's tendencies during the process of socialization and acculturation, it should be taken action with the development of ethics, responsibility, self-reliance, activism, generalism and the desire for progress, all of which are the basis for effective participation. This strategy provides a social context so that people can form their own social approach by making changes in social norms. The point that was stated in Mortazavi et al.'s study that cultural values are a prerequisite for achieving social participation (20).

The category of creating an organizational identity is another strategy that means creating value for participants and creating motivation and a sense of belonging in participants. Along with this strategy, we have the category of increasing the social responsibility of the RCS. Management based on trust and the quality of working life of people's participation means that people are important, and their rights should be taken into consideration (21).

In approving this strategy, attention can be paid to the definition of the World Business Council for sustainable development, which is included in organizational social responsibility, improving the quality of life of the workforce and their families, as well as the local community (22) and it is necessary to knowledge-oriented and skill-oriented training and empowerment courses to be implemented in a regular, rotating, consecutive manner and with high educational quality (23).

Paying attention to the concept of social responsibility in the RCS means expressing and acting on ethical principles and standards, emphasizing and acting on the basics of human and humanitarian values, paying more attention to fulfilling the goals and objectives of the RCS, increasing the ability to respond to the community and participants and attention to the principles of social responsibility in the RCS (legitimizing the RCS as a social institution, creating an analytical perspective between the formation of mutual relations between the RCS and the community, RCS managers and participants of moral actors). In fact, the social responsibility of the organization means its capacity to respond to social pressures. It shows the ability of an organization to survive by adapting to its work environment (24). To do this, the organization must gain as much knowledge as possible about its work environment, have the ability to analyze the data of that environment, and must react to the results of this analysis. (25).

The United Nations Global Compact, which is the first and best communication for creating social and legal responsibility of organizations in their work activities, also emphasizes in a way on the observance of the principles of social responsibility of the organization. (26) An organization that considers such a strategy, in addition to complying with legal requirements, tries to adapt itself to public opinion; therefore, it participates in social activities and in this way

creates acceptance and popularity for itself in the community. (27) It is worth mentioning that adopting such a procedure voluntarily and using one's own resources and power to improve the situation of the community (28) can create positive and effective consequences in the IRCS.

Code of conduct is an official statement of rules and principles that define the behavioral standards of an organization. These standards include various issues such as the legal status of the workforce, bribery and corruption, safety and health, etc. (29&30) and its use can be an alternative to public and governmental legislations. (31) which needs to be important in the RCS.

Paying attention to the processes of social responsiveness is another solution that should be taken into account and promoted according to the duties of the IRCS in responding to disasters and accidents.

The IRCS must establish proper relations with the participants, people affected by accidents and disasters, the media, the local community, and with access to the resources and infrastructure of the local community, make cultural and social investment in the development of the local community and social investment.

Paying attention to the implementation of organizational justice with the concept of attention to the implementation of procedural justice, distributive justice and transactional justice is another strategy. Related matters such as intrapersonal justice and informational justice also lead to an increase in self-confidence among participants. In fact, observing justice leads to an increase in the sense of belonging, loyalty and trust of people to the organization and adds to the social capital of the organization (32).

In general, according to the results of the research, in addition to adopting and implementing adaptive strategies such as participating in social activities, gaining acceptance and popularity in the community, taking timely and appropriate action against accidents and disasters, effective strategies should also be considered and goals shall be set in this field and the resources and power must be used to improve the society. Also, while paying attention to competence management, consider the code of conduct as behavioral standards.

Acknowledgments

None.

Conflict of Interests

The authors have no conflict of interests.

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