Narrative Analysis among B40 Students: From the Perspective of Flood-Related Trauma Analysis

Ng Yu Jin [1], Chong Seng Tong[2],
Ng Poh Kiat[3], Yeow Jian Ai[4] & Norwati Roslim[5]

[12] Universiti Tenaga Nasional, Kajang, Malaysia.
[3] Faculty of Engineering and Technology, Multimedia University,
Melaka, Malaysia.
[4] Faculty of Business (FOB), Multimedia University, Melaka,
Malaysia.
[5] Academy of Language Studies, Universiti Teknologi MARA
(UiTM), Rembau, Malaysia
yujin@uniten.edu.my

Abstract. The event of flooding and flood disasters across many countries is becoming more frequent or prone and at times the impact could be too devastating for any recovery. Malaysia has been regarded as a vulnerable country that needs to respond to floods more holistically which involves various stakeholders. The narratives of the affected people are often unheard or neglected. A narrative includes intentionally chosen, organized, and linked events that individuals think are important for a specific group of people. In this research, the use of trauma narrative analysis to look at the feedback from the affected people that might help society deal with the challenges of sustainable development, especially when it comes to communication management. In understanding narratives or feedback in the effort of contributing to trauma management, they could contribute to community self-efficacy and determine the dominant narratives. In summary, to ascertain the prevalent trauma narratives, it is established that respondents' voices are entirely consistent in stating that their current circumstances keep them 'on guard' with a high level of anxiety. Additionally, it is indicated that the respondents are aware of the dangers associated with residing near the flooding region. They are well prepared for any unanticipated tragedy, but they need to improve communication between themselves and local leaders and authorities to guarantee more involvement.

Keywords: Trauma narrative, trauma feedback analysis, community engagement.

1   Introduction and Literature Review

Uncontrolled and unplanned urbanization, as well as climate change, have changed the global landscape in terms of food risk in various settings, especially in urban areas of countries. Climate change could increase the proneness and brutality of foods and community engagement and effort is essential in ensuring survival and successful evacuation (Najibi & Deviveni, 2018). The event of flooding and flood disasters across many countries is becoming more frequent or prone and at times the impact could be too devastating for any recovery (Najibi & Deviveni, 2018). A disaster such as a flood is not alien to many countries and the comprehensive flood data could be obtained from various reliable resources such as the Dartmouth Flood Observatory (DFO) of the Uni- versity of Colorado and the Global Disaster Alert and Coordination System (GDACS), a global framework link between world-wide stakes holders which include the United Nations and the European Commission. These resources provide first-hand alerts, val- idated information exchange, and an inundation map index with accurate satellite map- ping. From these data, some countries were found to have suffered more flooding ca- lamities as compared to others, in Najibi and Deviveni (2018).

Malaysia has been regarded as a vulnerable country that needs to respond to floods more holistically which involves various stakeholders. Over the past three decades, the flood has hit Malaysia hard and frequently (Sani et al., 2014), attributed to climate change all over the world (Khan, 2014) as well as contributed by deforestation and the El Nino and El Nina effects (Akasah & Doraisamy, 2015). Flood is a serious problem in ASEAN which includes Malaysia, affecting more than 22% of the people and at least 9% of the area of the states in Malaysia (Estrada et al., 2017). Although there are many other examples of serious flooding in Malaysia in recent years, the most recent one occurred on 21st June 2020 during the Recovery Movement Control Order (RMCO) of Malaysia, in battling the Covid-19 pandemic, in five districts in Johor with 1,210 vic- tims from 288 families to be evacuated to relief centres (Free Malaysia Today, 21 Jun 2020). However, the victims' voices or narratives are often unheard or even neglected (Chin et al, 2021; Chong et al., 2020).

A narrative includes intentionally chosen, organized, and linked events that individ- uals think are important for a specific group of people. As a result, Riessman (2008) defines a narrative as reckoned to illustrate actualities about the human experience. Most importantly, the lived experiences are what matter as they are worldview, sub- jective experiences, which define individual perceptions, meanings, sense of under- standing as well as purpose obtained from a particular first-hand experience; for that person, this was the heart of their experience (Mertens, 2005). Trauma, on the other hand, is thought to happen when someone experiences, witnesses, or is in a situation where they are afraid, scared, helpless, or do not know what to do (Morrison, 2006; Rothschild, 2000). It causes problems with that person's sense of life experience, psy- chological development, and their brain and psychobiology, which can cause them to lose their sense of self or even a personal identity of manifestation (van der Kolk, 2000).

In managing our communication, especially in a societal setting, where victims of post-traumatic events should narrate their pain, what matters most is 'what' communication is being put forward, not solely on 'how' it is said (Muszyńska, 2016). Thus, empathy or purposeful listening is crucial in aiding the community to recover from a post-traumatic event such as a flood as it builds trust and relationships with proper communication management among the team members, in this case, the society or com- munity within. Thus, it is believed that only when society is engaged in helping the post-traumatic victims through being empathetically good 'listening' effort, then and only then these victims could be guided to recovery or self-efficacy. Society engagement involves the participation of various stakeholders conducted through direct and indirect interactions of civil society organizations and communities with government, institutions, and corporations to pursue the common good for the betterment of society (Chan & Chin, 2021).

A collective sharing platform should be engineered, especially in communication management to ensure the stakeholders and victims would have an avenue to narrate what matters to themselves as a coping mechanism within the community when disasters strike. The collective risk perception of the danger of flood risk management and the effective communication of the risk is vital in disaster preparedness and recovery (Rana, Jamshed, Younas, & Bhatti, 2020). Previous research on the voices of the post- flood disaster communities in Malaysia has mainly used surveys to focus on the experiences of trauma faced by communities in terms of age group, ethnic groups, gender, and religion (Zainal Abidin Akasah & Doraisamy, 2015). In this research, the use of thematic analysis (see Nowell et al., 2017) incorporating trauma narrative analysis (see Caruth, 2009) to look at how the language of trauma might help society deal with the challenges of sustainable development, especially when it comes to communication management. In understanding narratives or feedback in the effort of contributing to trauma management, they could contribute to community self-efficacy and determine the dominant narratives. In this context, self-efficacy can be defined as the idea of one who is able to influence events that have affected him and cope with the way these events are experienced in a controlled manner (Benight & Bandura, 2004).

The B40 community, people with less than RM 3,900.00 household income are the target samples of the study as they are most affected by such disaster and their narrative point of view must be heard or shared, if not mitigated in terms of community communication aspects. This study focuses on the narratives or feedback of B40 students affected by recent floods. 163 students from the B40 communities were purposefully identified based on their resident addresses, in the area of Cameron Highlands, Pahang where flood would hit the community hard and sudden in 2021

through 2023. There has been little emphasis on the narrative responses from the affected communities and the importance of their voices. The trauma faced by these students or communities could prevent them from coping, understanding, and responding to the psychological effects. This problem, if persists, could prevent the communities from moving towards self- efficacy. This study revolves around the research question:

What are the dominant narratives of feedback of the post-flood disaster among the affected B40 students?

2   Methodology

The study adopts the thematic analysis of trauma narrative approach, by analyzing the communication or narratives provided by the respondents. Every traumatic lived experience is diverse across different regions or areas. Every individual narrative is real and unique, and the pain can be hard to be ignored (Caruth, 2009). The research design and approach adopted in this study are qualitative with the synthesis of survey questionnaire data to support the arguments. The intended data describes the target dominant trauma narrative in detail in terms of its 'communication management and sentimental' characteristics which were obtained from questionnaire feedback.

The major results obtained from this study would be the respondents' self-awareness check, taking into consideration that they are living near a major dam in Cameron High- lands. The survey questionnaires would require them to reflect if they are in the knowledge of the challenges, especially the recurrence of flooding event (disaster) as the dam is near their vicinity and could affect their livelihood too. The next part would seek their feedback on the risk and safety around the dam area. The survey questionnaires seek to understand their perception of the response or preparation has taken when they must face dam-related safety risks. Living in a community requires good communication, especially in managing people, emotions, and technical challenges when disaster strikes. Just like in a corporation, the stakeholders involved should never be undermined and communication management should be at its level best as human lives could be at stake. Lastly, the perception of safety precautions that should be implemented was asked to the respondents, to find out if they are prepared for any calamities.

3   Results and Discussion

The survey questionnaire items seek the honest perception of the 163 respondents. The thematic analysis or coding processes involved were adopted from those of Braun & Clarke (2020) and Zheng et al. (2023). The thematic analysis steps were empirically curated to fit those of trauma analysis theory (Caruth, 2009). The survey questionnaires are thematically divided into four categories

or themes to uniquely derive the feedback from the respondents. The summary of the themes or sentiments identified are as below:

1. Awareness of the Level of Safety around the Dam
2. Perception of the Risks that Will be Faced in the Event of a Dam-related Disaster.
3. Perception of Response/Preparation Taken when Faced with Dam-related Safety Risks
4. Perception of Safety Precautions that Should be Implemented.

Theme 1: Awareness of the Level of Safety around the Dam

The first part of the feedback highlights the awareness level among the students who are mindful that they are living near a dam. The respondents did not hold back their concern and made sure that their voices could be heard by the authorities. The respond- ents prefer to speak in their mother tongue, *Bahasa Malaysia,* as it could further reflect their core messages.

"Saya sedar sekiranya berlaku sesuatu terhadap empangan, tahap keselamatan penduduk di sekitar empangan akan terjejas."(response in Bahasa Malaysia)
"I am aware that if something happens to the dam, the safety of the people around. The dam will be affected." (translated into English)

"Saya sedar penduduk yang tinggal berdekatan dengan empangan terutamanya kawasan rendah berisiko lebih tinggi mengalami bencana."(response in Bahasa Malaysia)
"I am aware that residents living near dams especially low liying areas are at higher risk of disasters." (translated into English)

In terms of alertness, the respondents called upon collective actions should have been strongly coordinated. The changes around the dam area should have been given a priority among the villages. Their responses are as below:

"Saya sedar yang saya dan penduduk kampung harus sentiasa berwaspada pada perubahan sekeliling dan sebarang kemungkinan yang bakal berlaku di sekitar empangan. ianya boleh mengakibatkan kemusnahan harta benda." (response in Bahasa Malaysia)
"I realized that the villagers and I should always be alert to the changes around and any possibilities that might happen around the dam. it can result in property destruction." (translated into English)

"Saya sedar sekiranya tahap keselamatan terjejas, Tindakan segera diperlukan untuk menyelamatkan diri dan penduduk

kampung" (response in Bahasa Malaysia)
"I am aware that if the level of security is affected, immediate action is needed to save myself and the villagers." (Translated into English)

Saya sedar sekiranya berlaku perubahan drastik pada sekitar empangan pemakluman perlu dibuat kepada pihak berkaitan untuk mengambil tindakan segera.(response in Bahasa Malaysia)
"I am aware that in the event of a drastic change around the dam, notification needs to be made to the relevant parties to take immediate action."(translated into English)

In general, most of the respondents agree that they are aware of the safety risk they face as they are living near the dam. In addition, they are aware that the community is in this plight together and that they should always take care of each other as well as the properties involved. Every individual should play their role to take any proactive actions to alert the authority and save each other by taking immediate action. The most meaningful concerned raised by the respondents was linked to that this statement, "I am aware that in the event of a drastic change around the dam, notification needs to be made to the relevant parties to take immediate action." The respondents' sentiment re- volves around the underlying risk of living near a dam and they are quite concerned about their safety too, that of others.

Theme 2: Perception of the Risks that Will be Faced in the Event of a Dam-related Disaster.

The second theme captured the perception or what the respondents feel about the risk they might have to face. They felt that they could anticipate the losses as they were briefed by their parents and teachers alike.

"Saya akan kehilangan harta benda seperti rumah, kereta dan hasil ternakan selepas bencana alam." (response in Bahasa Malaysia)
"I will lose property like house, car, and livestock after a natural disaster."
(translated into English)

"Saya merasa risau akan kesan bencana tersebut terhadap tanaman penduduk." (response in Bahasa Malaysia)
"I am worried about the impact of the disaster on the crops of the people." (translated into English)

The respondents provide feedback on the potential risk they are willing to face should disaster strike (again) near the Cameron Highland dam. Most of them are fearful of losing their lives and loved ones. As compared to this, they are less concerned about the

loss of property, other means of assets, crops, and even the adequacy of food supply. Nonetheless, it does not mean that they do not care much as the common notion is that they still care a lot about the losses, but not as significant as the loss of lives and their loved ones when disaster strikes. Perhaps, they care less about crops as they are aware that crops could be replanted or grow again when the flood or disaster subsides, in the recovery phase.

"Saya takut berlaku kehilangan nyawa ahli keluarga dan penduduk setempat." (response in Bahasa Malaysia)
"I fear the loss of lives of family members and locals." (translated into English)

"Saya merasa risau samada keperluan asas mencukupi atau tidak untuk semua mangsa bencana." (response in Bahasa Malaysia)
"I am worried about whether the basic necessities are adequate or not for all the victims of the disaster." (translated into English)

"Bencana yang berlaku boleh mengakibatkan kesan negatif terhadap alam sekitar."(response in Bahasa Malaysia)
"Disasters that occur can have a negative impact on the environment." (translated into English)

Theme 3: Perception of Response/Preparation Taken when Faced with Dam-re- lated Safety Risks

Not all of the respondents were confident that they were well prepared and had the adequate knowledge on what needed to be done. In their defense, some of them thought that they had adequate information gathered by them and their family members.

"Saya sentiasa mengumpul maklumat awal tentang keselamatan empangan atau bencana seperti jenis ancaman bencana, jangkaan kejadian, sumber bantuan,tempat perlindungan dan sebagainya." (response in Bahasa Malaysia)
"I always gather early information about dam or disaster safety such as type of disas- ter threat, expected incident, source of assistance, shelter and so on." (translated into English)

"Saya berasa saya ada menyimpan nombor telepon pihak- pihak berkuasa tem- patan seperti polis, tentera, dan hospital untuk menghadapi bencana."(response in Bahasa Malaysia)
"I think I keep the phone numbers of local authorities such as the police, army, and hospitals to deal with disasters."(translated into English)

"Saya agak peka kepada berita-berita dari media masa, panggilan telefon, sms atau arahan daripada pihak berkuasa untuk berpindah sekiranya berlaku bencana." (response in

Bahasa Malaysia)
"I am quite sensitive to news stories from the time media, phone calls, SMS or in- structions from the authorities to evacuate in the event of a disaster." (translated into English)

In addition, from the statements gathered, it is implied that the respondents are un- decided, or rather puzzled on gathering the type of essential early information about dam or disaster safety such as type of disaster threat, expected incident, source of assistance, and shelter. They are also unsure of the exact numbers to call when they need to deal with disasters. They are indifferent in terms of being sensitive to news stories from the time media, phone calls, short messages, or instructions from the authorities to evacuate in the event of a disaster as well as they are not reliant on the head of the village for important announcements or update on any disaster alert. The only notion which they agree on is that they manage to keep essential documents near, and they know where to find them when they need to bring them along for any evacuation.

"Saya rasa terdapat maklumat berkaitan keselamatan empangan atau bencana di sesuatu tempat" (response in Bahasa Malaysia)
"I think there is information related to dam safety or disasters somewhere" (translated into English)

"Saya menyimpan dokumen-dokumen penting seperti sijil lahir anak, sijil nikah, kad pengenalan dan lain-lain dokumen penting di dalam bekas atau fail di tempat yang tinggi." (response in Bahasa Malaysia)

"I keep important documents such as child's birth certificate, marriage certificate, identity card and other important documents in a container or file in a high place." (translated into English)

Theme 4: Perception of Response/Preparation Taken when Faced with Dam-re- lated Safety Risks

In the final section of the survey questionnaire, the respondents believe in shared re-sponsibilities with the dam owner in ensuring the safety of the surrounding areas when a flood or another related disaster could have happened. They agree that dam owners should maintain the dam well to ensure safe livelihood and their views on the dam safety guidelines should be monitored. The respondents added that the dam owners should keep close relationships with the residents around the dam area, including proper or systematic distribution of important information or update on any potential threat to the vicinity. Their responses are stipulated as below:

"Pemilik empangan memainkan peranan dalam memastikan

empangan diseleng-garakan secara berterusan." (response in Bahasa Malaysia)
"Dam owners play a role in ensuring that dams are maintained on an ongoing ba-
sis." (translated into English)

"Pihak berkuasa tempatan perlu memainkan peranan dalam memastikan keselamatan empangan terjamin." (response in Bahasa Malaysia)
"Local authorities need to play a role in ensuring the safety of the dam." (translated into English)

"Pandangan penduduk tempatan perlu diambil kira dalam menetapkan standard (garis panduan) keselamatan empangan."(response in Bahasa Malaysia)
"The views of local residents should be taken into account in setting dam safety standards (guidelines)." (translated into English)

"Maklumat tentang keselamatan empangan perlu diedarkan secara berterusan kepada penduduk tempatan." (response in Bahasa Malaysia)
"Information on dam safety needs to be distributed continuously to local residents." (translated into English)

"Kerjasama daripada penduduk adalah penting bagi memastikan setiap langkah keselamatan yang dilaksanakan berjaya."(response in Bahasa Malaysia)
"The cooperation of the residents is important to ensure that every security meas- ure implemented is successful." (translated into English)

4   Discussion

The researchers have reached the same conclusion, regardless of age, gender, cul- ture, socioeconomic level, or personality type. It has been demonstrated through the use of text analysis or coding tools that people who benefit the most from writing do so by expressing themselves in a high percentage of positive emotion words, a moderate per- centage of negative emotion words, and a progressive increase in cognitive terms over the course of the days spent writing (Saini & Kaur, 2020). The discoveries imply that narrative development is crucial and serves as a barometer of mental and physical well- ness. According to ongoing research, writing serves as a means of organizing compli- cated emotional experiences (Hee et al., 2018).

The vast majority of those who responded to the survey expressed fear or worry about how the "upsetting" stories affect them in their

personal and university life, as well as in their personal relationships. This sense of uncertainty and anxiousness about the future persisted in these scenarios, even though the respondent had achieved some kind of closure or understanding regarding his or her traumatic experiences earlier in

the survey. They were unclear and concerned about the long-term effects of flooding events on themselves and their loved ones. Some said that their fear of the unknown was part of larger existential and life problems that came from their education, as well as their experiences in such situations. This future insecurity often touched on the re- spondent's humanity, fragility, and potential mortality, which brought them closer to the people they worked with or were surrounded by.

Vicarious trauma is characterized by feelings, sensations, hypervigilance, and guard- edness, according to most respondents (Caruth, 2009). Participants' vi- carious pain was compounded by dread or anxiety about their future, which affected how they saw other individuals and the world around them. According to most respondents, they felt a sense of responsibility during their vicarious pain. As a result, they felt a feeling of responsibility for the entire situation or fate, or in certain circum- stances, the entire population of people or the entire societal issue. This sense of re- sponsibility stretched beyond the specified tasks and obligations of their specialized function. Overwhelming responsibilities intensified anxiety, exhaustion, and a constant feeling of being overwhelmed.

The overwhelming majority of people who took part in this study reported feeling a constant sense of guilt, concern, and exhaustion because of their encounters with vicarious trauma. Primary trauma was not experienced by the majority of those polled, but it was evident in their stories of vicarious trauma. Primary trauma had a part in vicarious trauma through narratives, experiences, pictures, memories, and questions that are interwoven with vicarious trauma stories. Frequently, respondents expressed out loud their confusion regarding the distinction between primary and vicarious trauma, continually wondering where one ended and the other began. More than half of those who participated in the study said they had had serious issues, including wide- spread feelings of being "on guard," extreme worry, and the feeling of having an irrational sense of dread (see Ho & Cheng, 2016). Vicarious trauma has begun to alter the way respondents handled their days and circumstances beyond their everyday routines, according to the respondents.

In summary, although the feedback provided from the respondents serve as supple- mental input to determining the trauma dominant trauma narratives of the post-flood disaster among B40 communities, the responses are parallel to the previous findings of 'anxiety', 'worry', 'concerned of shared responsibilities' and

'feeling of losses. In helping the community move towards self-efficacy, the researcher believes that the 'voices' of the affected people must be heard, and proactive communication management language should be shared within the community, so that project managers, educators, or even local authorities could benefit from understanding what is within their narratives. Lastly, the survey questionnaires demonstrate strong affinity to identify their 'agreement' to certain issues or sentiments which are meaningful.

5   Conclusion

Researchers have uncovered some significant discoveries. In summary, to ascertain the prevalent trauma narratives, it is established that respondents' voices are entirely consistent in stating that their current circumstances keep them 'on-guard' with a high level of dread, anxiety, and even downheartedness. Additionally, it is indicated that the respondents are aware of the dangers associated with residing near the flooding region. They are well prepared for any unanticipated tragedy, but they need to improve communication between themselves and local leaders and authorities to guarantee more involvement. Although it is seen as a shared responsibility between communities and the authority, what is critical is that safety rules are followed, and inhabitants' concerns are considered.

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