

CPSP Yohana Arsen Rutaba*

The University of Dodoma, College of Business and Economics, United Republic of Tanzania

BOOK REVIEW

DOI: 10.7595/management.fon.2024.0006

Abstract:

Book review of: Tomasini, R., Van Wassenhove, L., & Van Wassenhove, L. (2009). *Humanitarian logistics*. Springer. ISBN: 978-0-230-23348-5

Practitioners and students in higher learning institution may consider reading this book to get the understanding on those aspects, from understanding the concepts to the application of the concepts. Reviewing this book was necessary so as to get the readers to understand the specific issues that are needed to ensure proper rescue operations and sustain disaster in the society, though the book did not exhaust enough specific events with the specialized undertaking but provided the crucial understanding from both the natural disasters and man-made disaster cases. This review provided discussion from the strengths and analyses on few weaknesses for the readers of the chapter, but it is a very good book for logistics practitioners and students in the field.

Keywords: Humanitarian Organizations, Humanitarian Logistics, Natural Disasters, Man-Made Disasters, Disaster Operations

JEL Classification: M14

1. Evaluations and discussions

In chapter one, the logistics of humanitarian aid presents both strengths and weaknesses in its exploration of supply chain management (SCM) in emergencies. It presents a comprehensive introduction to logistics and SC concepts, elucidating the shift from logistics to end-to-end SCM, p. 01-06. The authors effectively highlight the evolution and the importance of coordination among SC actors for increased efficiency in relief operations. There are some weaknesses, primarily in its lack of specificity regarding the differences between logistics and SC in broader aspects, particularly in the humanitarian sector. While emphasizing the benefits of a SC approach, the authors fall short in identifying specific issues unique to humanitarian actions. The mention of the "three Bs" (Boxes, Bytes, and Bucks) in commercial SC compared to the extended "five Bs" in humanitarian supply chain (HSC) adds clarity but lacks in-depth analysis, with reference Kovacs and Spens (2007), the authors provided a comprehensive framework aid for understanding the characteristics of humanitarian logistics (HL) in disaster operations.

Chapter two of the book delves into the principles and challenges of humanitarianism. Strength lies in its clear elucidation of the fundamental principles grounding humanitarian action—humanity, neutrality, and impartiality. The authors effectively demonstrate how the principles serve as pillars for all humanitarian efforts, shaping the humanitarian space and elucidating the complexities of operating within it, p. 20-24. The discussion on the contradiction of organization's face, particularly in the political realm, when establishing physical versus virtual existence adds depth to the understanding of humanitarian challenges. However, weaknesses emerge in the chapter's treatment of humanitarian challenges. While the authors touch upon ambiguous goals, impact assessment, levels of influence, and political-humanitarian relations, a more in-depth analysis could enhance comprehension.

Chapter three of the book delves into the critical aspect of preparedness in HOs, offering a nuanced exploration of both strengths and weaknesses. A notable strength lies in the authors' clear communication of the

*Corresponding author: Yohana Arsen Rutaba, e-mail: yarutaba@gmail.com

significance of preparedness in effectively responding to emergencies. The real-world example of Hurricane Mitch and the response efforts of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) effectively illustrate the impact of preparedness on disaster responses p.41-43. The inclusion of the relief cycle, incorporating mitigation, preparedness, response, and rehabilitation, provides a comprehensive framework for understanding disaster management p. 44-47. However, weaknesses arise in the chapter's discussion on the preparedness building blocks. While the authors touch upon Knowledge Management, Human Resources, Logistics, Community, and Financial Resources as essential components, a more detailed exploration of challenges and specific strategies in each area would enhance the chapter's depth. The extension of the discussion on the "five Bs" from chapter one adds continuity but lacks additional insights, potentially leaving readers wanting more application-oriented content. In better understating some aspects of preparedness, Paciarotti, Piotrowicz, and Fenton (2021) in their writing, they highlighted the importance of standardization in HL.

Chapter four of the book explores the intricacies of coordination in disaster operations, offering insights into both strengths and weaknesses. A notable strength lies in the authors' detailed discussion on the importance of proper design and coordination in ensuring the efficiency of the SC. The differentiation of coordination levels (p. 74-79) within the SC and the corresponding structures for effective collaboration adds depth to the understanding of disaster response. In the paper, Rutaba (2023), provided a narrations for vertical and horizontal coordination which state its contribution to effective disaster relief operations. However, weaknesses emerge in the chapter's coverage of coordination challenges. While the authors touch upon the role of the United Nations (UN) and emphasize the need for collaboration between HOs, a more comprehensive exploration of specific challenges and potential solutions in these areas would enhance the chapter's depth. The discussion on the UN Office for the United Nations Joint Logistics Center (UNJLC) and Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) provides valuable context but lacks a nuanced analysis of their operational effectiveness.

Chapter five on information management in disaster operations is concerned with strengths and weaknesses. A notable strength lies in the authors' clear articulation of information management's role in enhancing visibility, accountability, and transparency in humanitarian supply chains p. 90-99. The chapter effectively underscores the importance of decoupling politics from disaster relief operations, emphasizing the need for efficiency and effectiveness. However, a weakness emerges in the chapter's brevity regarding practical applications or case studies to illustrate the implementation of information management principles. While the authors establish the foundational role of information in HSC, a more in-depth exploration of real-world challenges and solutions would enhance the chapter's applicability. The authors successfully connect information management to the crucial "bytes" in the disaster life cycle, aligning with concepts introduced in previous chapters.

Chapter six on knowledge management in relief operations presents strengths and weaknesses in its exploration of the significance of knowledge and knowledge sharing. A notable strength lies in the clear emphasis on the importance of knowledge in relief operations, particularly within organizations dealing with disasters. The use of the IFRC as a case study effectively illustrates specific issues and competencies, enhancing the understanding of knowledge management's importance, p.115. However, weaknesses arise in the chapter's coverage of knowledge creation and sharing. While the authors discuss the necessity for knowledge sharing at different organizational levels (Field Operations Level and Supply Chain Level), a more nuanced exploration of practical strategies or examples could enhance the chapter's depth, p. 120-123.

Chapter seven, focusing on building successful partnerships in humanitarian efforts, exhibits both strengths and weaknesses. Strengths lie in the clear emphasis on the importance of partnerships and resource sharing in relief operations p.131-136. The chapter effectively underscores the significance of joint efforts, both between private organizations and between private and government/public entities. The inclusion of discussions on the selection procedures for partners adds practical value, providing insights into the considerations involved. On page 137-139, the authors clearly provided the best narrations on forms of corporate support for humanitarian activities, best depictions. However, weaknesses emerge in the chapter's brevity and lack of detailed exploration.

2. Conclusion and recommendation

This book serves as a valuable resource for those (practitioners and students) seeking an introduction to HSC management and practical understanding. Its strengths lie in providing a foundation, real-world examples and cases, and a link between commercial and humanitarian critical perspectives of logistics management. While weaknesses include occasional lack of specificity, repetition, and a need for more detailed

exploration in certain areas, the overall content remains informative and well articulated. The book's strengths also make it suitable for readers new to the field, while potential improvements could enhance its applicability.

The authors successfully managed to bridge the gap between commercial SCM / logistics and its application in the humanitarian sector, providing a foundational understanding. It is a good book for humanitarian logistics practitioners and higher learning students undertaking studies in procurement, logistics, and transport and SCM. However, to enhance the book's utility, the authors should consider addressing certain gaps and weaknesses. Specifically, more in-depth analyses, cases for practical applications, and diverse case studies could be incorporated to provide a more nuanced exploration of challenges/ constraints and solutions.

REFERENCES

- [1] Kovacs, G., & Spens, K. M. (2007). Humanitarian logistics in disaster relief operations. *International Journal of Physical Distribution & Logistics Management*, 37(2), 99-114. DOI: 10.1108/09600030710734820
- [2] Paciarotti, C., Piotrowicz, W. D., & Fenton, G. (2021). Humanitarian logistics and supply chain standards. Literature review and view from practice. *Journal of Humanitarian Logistics and Supply Chain Management*, 11(3), 550-573. DOI: 10.1108/JHLSCM-11-2020-0101
- [3] Rutaba, Y. A. (2023). Contribution of Logistics Cooperation to Effective Disaster Relief Operations in Addressing Pandemics in Tanzania. *African Journal of Empirical Research*, 4(1), 147-158. DOI: 10.51867/ajernet4.1.12

Received: 2024-03-05

Revisions requested: 2024-04-11

Revised: 2024-06-24 (2 revisions)

Accepted: 2024-07-03



About the Author

CPSP Yohana Arsen Rutaba

The University of Dodoma, College of Business and Economics,
the United Republic of Tanzania
yarutaba@gmail.com



Yohana Arsen Rutaba is an assistant lecturer at the University of Dodoma and a certified procurement and supply professional (holding CPSP) with the Procurement and Supplies Professionals and Technicians Board (PSPTB) of Tanzania. He furthered his education with a Master's degree in Procurement and Supply Management from Moshi Cooperative University and an MBA in Marketing from Mwenge Catholic University. Rutaba is the author of several papers in the field of supply chain management. His future research interests include the humanitarian supply chain and sustainability in public procurement processes.