



7th International Conference on Building Resilience; Using scientific knowledge to inform policy and practice in disaster risk reduction, ICBR2017, 27 – 29 November 2017, Bangkok, Thailand

# A Conceptual Frame Using ‘Knowledge’ As a Lens for Deconstructing the Sendai Framework Priority 1: Understanding Disaster Risks

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## Abstract

Following increases in the frequency and magnitude of disasters over the past decades, continuous knowledge production and dissemination has become a crucial pathway for understanding disaster risks. The Sendai Framework provides guidance for various levels of governance and well lays emphasis on managing ‘disaster risks’. While a great deal of existing scholarship has contributed immensely to proactive participation of key players in the public and private sectors, the interpretation of knowledge produced by academia and professional organizations that aids in better understanding for ease of planning and implementation becomes a challenging and rigorous task. The aim of this paper is to present a conceptual framework that simplifies the interpretation of ‘knowledge creation’ and ‘knowledge dissemination’ connecting the Sendai priority one focus and requisite actions for disaster risk reduction at local, national, global and regional levels. The intended outcome is to better enhance understanding using ‘knowledge’ as a lens for key players and stakeholders involved in disaster risk reduction activities. This is achieved through the review of the role of knowledge and knowledge management literature for understanding disaster risks and utilizes an exploratory approach to further create a theoretical linkage with the focus of the Sendai Framework. The paper suggests that appropriate and continuous interpretation of knowledge created and disseminated has the propensity to stimulate and assist in achieving improved disaster risk reduction outcomes and judicious harnessing of resources required for achieving such tasks. The limitation of this paper is that it utilizes a knowledge lens to achieve its aim while acknowledging that other lenses can be used to provide better understanding and clarity of the subject matter.

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Peer-review under responsibility of the scientific committee of the 7th International Conference on Building Resilience.

*Keywords:* Sendai Framework, Knowledge, Disaster risk reduction, Interpretation, Knowledge creation, Knowledge dissemination

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## 1.0 Introduction

The impact of disasters cannot be overemphasized as it cuts across several geographical boundaries and has prompted a shift from disaster response to the identification and assessment of disaster risks that threaten society [1]. Following the increases in frequency and magnitude of disasters over the past decades, continuous knowledge creation and dissemination has become a crucial pathway to understanding risks. The Sendai Framework provides guidance for organizations at various levels of governance and as well lays emphasis on managing disaster risks. While research efforts have contributed to proactive participation of institutional actors, the interpretation of knowledge created by academia and professional organisations relevant for planning and implementation becomes challenging. Weichselgartner and Pigeon [2] suggest that researchers are now raising concerns on the need to explicitly define in clear terms why improved knowledge has not sufficiently reduced the upward trending nature of disaster statistics, hence the call for the need to question the utilization of knowledge in hazard management. Using knowledge as a lens, the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction (SFDRR) priority1 (understanding disaster risks) is deconstructed and a conceptual framework is presented to better interpret its intricacies for enhanced DRR delivery. Implications for practitioners are further discussed.

## **2.0 Methodology**

The aim of this paper is to present a conceptual framework that simplifies the interpretation of ‘knowledge creation’ and ‘knowledge dissemination’ connecting the Sendai priority one focus and requisite actions for disaster risk reduction at local, national, global and regional levels. Using an exploratory approach through the review of the role of knowledge management, it seeks to enhance understanding of the SFDRR using ‘knowledge’ as a lens. This is achieved through a review of available literature to create a theoretical linkage with a focus on the Sendai Framework. Secondary data sources such as books, journal articles, reports, and conference papers obtained from respected data bases were utilized for this purpose. The paper suggests that appropriate and continuous interpretation of knowledge created and disseminated will assist institutional actors judiciously harness resources and achieve improved DRR outcomes. The limitation of this paper is that it utilizes a knowledge lens to achieve its aim while acknowledging that other lenses can be used to provide better understanding and clarity of the subject matter. Other aspects can be explored to gain better understanding of deconstructing the SFDRR.

## **3.0 Conceptual views of knowledge**

Knowledge has been described as the most essential element and strategic resource for acquiring capabilities and intangible assets [3]. Sveiby [4] defines knowledge as the “capacity to act”. The knowledge people possess has an influence on their safety, effectiveness, satisfaction and comfort with which individual or organizational goals are formulated and attained. Hunt [5] also affirms that the data received and knowledge possessed greatly influences the interpretation of what is known. The behaviour of an individual and performance is also influenced by the knowledge that has been acquired through learning, practice and experience. Knowledge therefore contains information that is readily utilized for making decisions and actions [6].

## **4.0 Conceptual views of Knowledge management (KM)**

Knowledge that is not properly managed can be obsolete or useless, thus a number of processes may be implemented to manage knowledge [7]. Knowledge management has however been viewed as the capability to manage knowledge by gathering internal or external knowledge, converting them into new ideas or strategies and then applying as well as protecting them [8]. Knowledge management (KM) is also described by Lytras, Pouloudi [9] as the systematic and explicit application of knowledge to aid the maximization of knowledge-related effectiveness. Knowledge management is however a process of capturing, storing, sharing and using knowledge [6]. Some authors also describe knowledge management as the systematic process for organizing and communicating both tacit and explicit knowledge [10]. The main goal of knowledge management is therefore to enable organizations become aware of and shape knowledge for effective and efficient use [11].

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