

## **Exploring the Challenges and Future Development of Humanitarian Logistics in China: SARS, H1N1, And COVID-19**

**Yicong Sha**

Wenzhou-Kean University, China  
*shayi@kean.edu*

**Candy Lim Chiu**

Wenzhou-Kean University, China  
*cchiu@kean.edu*

*Abstract.* China has been the country that was affected by the COVID-19 outbreak, and it has been receiving continuous humanitarian assistance from other countries and global organizations before the situation improved. At the same time, other provinces in China are sending relief supplies to medium-risk and highly infected areas such as Hubei province. However, despite a large number of donations and relief supplies being sent to Hubei province, many cities in the province still lack the necessary medical supplies between February and March 2020. The problems of the Wuhan Red Cross in the COVID-19 epidemic are the epitome of the challenges faced by humanitarian logistics throughout China. The Red Cross Society of China cannot make decisions on its own. It cannot perform its duties efficiently, which makes its credibility in front of the people continue to decrease. Due to the increasing frequency of natural disasters and human-made disasters, humanitarian supply chain management (HSCM) has become an essential scientific research subject. Because of the diversity of disasters and the difference in disaster resilience in affected areas, humanitarian logistics is not easy and has considerable complexity. A comprehensive study of the challenges of different phases of disaster relief is needed.

This paper reveals the main problems and causes of Chinese humanitarian logistics' supply chain management by evaluating the situations during the SARS, H1N1, and COVID-19 outbreak and comparing the similarities and differences. Many other challenges have been discussed throughout the literature. By examining these issues, the paper puts forward suggestions to improve and promote the development of China's humanitarian logistics to better adapt to national conditions. This study is of great value for Chinese humanitarian organizations to recognize and understand their environment and challenges. At the same time, it can help government and humanitarian organizations understand the relevant knowledge and training methods of humanitarian logistics, to cultivate more available resources in the industry.

*Keywords:* COVID-19 outbreak; China, Red Cross Society of China, Humanitarian Logistics, Humanitarian Supply Chain Management.

References:

- Bölsche, D., Klumpp, M., & Abidi, H. “Specific competencies in humanitarian logistics education”. *Journal of Humanitarian Logistics and Supply Chain Management* 3, no.2, (2013): 99-128. <https://doi.org/10.1108/jhlscm-08-2012-0019>
- Buckley, C., Wee, S.-L., & Qin, A. China’s Doctors, Fighting the Coronavirus, Beg for Masks. *The New York Times*. February 14, 2020. <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/02/14/world/asia/china-coronavirus-doctors.html>
- Hernández, J. C., & Wee, S.-L. Coronavirus Diplomacy: How China’s Red Cross Serves the Communist Party. *The New York Times*. April 28, 2020. <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/04/28/world/asia/coronavirus-china-red-cross.html>
- Kovács, Gyöngyi, and Karen Spens. "Identifying Challenges in Humanitarian Logistics". *International Journal of Physical Distribution & Logistics Management* 39, no. 6 (2009), 506-528. <https://doi.org/10.1108/09600030910985848>
- Kovács, Gyöngyi, and Karen M. Spens. "Humanitarian Logistics and Supply Chain Management: The Start of A New Journal". *Journal of Humanitarian Logistics and Supply Chain Management* 1, no. 1, (2011), 5-14. <https://doi.org/10.1108/20426741111123041>
- L’Hermitte, C., Tatham, P., Bowles, M., & Brooks, B. “Developing organisational capabilities to support agility in humanitarian logistics”. *Journal of Humanitarian Logistics and Supply Chain Management* 6, no. 1, (2016), 72-99. <https://doi.org/10.1108/jhlscm-02-2015-0006>
- Marie Allen, A., Kovács, G., Masini, A., Vaillancourt, A., & Van Wassenhove, L. “Exploring the link between the humanitarian logistician and training needs”. *Journal of Humanitarian Logistics and Supply Chain Management*, vol 3, no. 2, 2013, 129-148. <https://doi.org/10.1108/jhlscm-10-2012-0033>
- Sun, J., Chai, R., & Nakade, K. “A study of stochastic optimization problem for humanitarian supply chain management”. *Journal of Advanced Mechanical Design, Systems, And Manufacturing*, vol 12, no.3, 2018. JAMDSM0066-JAMDSM0066. <https://doi.org/10.1299/jamdsm.2018jamdsm0066>
- World Health Organization. Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) Situation Report – 187. July 25, 2020. Retrieved from <https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/situation-reports>
- Zhang, X., & Xu, L. “China’s ‘Counterpart Assistance’ Approach to Coronavirus: Lessons from the Wenchuan Earthquake Response”. Center for Global Development. February 26, 2020. <https://www.cgdev.org/publication/chinas-counterpart-assistance-approach-coronavirus-lessons-wenchuan-earthquake-response>