

## Public Perception towards Punjab Emergency Service (Rescue 1122): A Case Study of Lahore City, Punjab, Pakistan

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### ABSTRACT

*This research aims at to know the perception of Punjab Emergency Service (Rescue 1122) among general public of Punjab, Pakistan. Rescue 1122 was launched from Lahore dating back 2004 and later on, it expanded to all districts of Punjab and other provinces of the country including Khyber Pakhtunkhwa; Gilgit Baltistan and Azad Jamu & Kashmir. The researchers adopted Survey as methodology to analyze the perception of Rescue 1122 in the minds of citizens of Punjab. Lahore, widely considered as a heart of Pakistan because having people belonging to all areas of the country, was selected for survey study. A questionnaire was developed, which carried 25 open ended questions and the population of 500 respondents were chosen on non-random sampling basis. Total 491 respondents replied, and majority of the respondents gave positive opinion about provision of emergency services to the victims of various emergencies. The youth gave more positive opinion about the Service as compared to senior citizens, whereas the people belonging to urban areas especially the females were more aware of about the functioning of Rescue 1122 as compared to the same age group living in rural areas. They, however, recommended that more females should be encouraged in the department. Majority of the respondents also opinionated about minimum corruption chances in Rescue 1122 as compared to other departments. Overall, the satisfaction level was observed up to the mark. Also, the hypothesis set by the researchers proved true.*

**Keywords:** Survey Study; Rescue 1122, Public Perception, Positive Opinion, Female Respondents

### INTRODUCTION

According to *Associated Press of Pakistan* (2014), the Punjab Emergency Service (Rescue 1122) has become the largest emergency humanitarian service of Pakistan, with infrastructure in all districts of the Province, whereas the technical assistance for replication of this emergency management service in other provinces of the country is underway. Because of this sustainable emergency management, the Director General Afghan National Disaster Management Authority (ANDMA), Dr Daim Kakar, Dr. Mir Lais Mustafa and Idress Mehsud expressed their interest of assistance from Pakistan in order to strengthen their capacity of disaster management in Afghanistan.

According to *Daily Business Recorder* (2014), Pakistan's Sindh Government's Chief Secretary Sajjad Saleem Hotiana also expressed to replicate this emergency management system to ensure provision of basic right to timely emergency care to the victims of emergencies, as he has done while he was Chief Secretary of Gilgit Baltistan, Pakistan. Sajjad believed Rescue 1122 was a success story, which should be expanded.

According to Rizwan Naseer (2014), there was limited capacity of emergency services to deal with emergencies and there were over 95% chances that an ambulance shall not be available

in case of emergency. This depicted that the sector of emergency management was long neglected in the country, with significant absence of trained emergency paramedics even in teaching hospitals. Rizwan Naseer further stated that pre-hospital emergency services were non-existent, which was significantly exposed during catastrophic earthquake in October, 2005 in Pakistan.

According to Daily *The Nation* (2011), Rescue Service, which was virtually non-existent in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in past, shall be established in different areas of the province. Before establishment of this service, citizens were living on the mercy of Almighty Allah, as no one was ready to rescue them, now it was being provided them within five minutes.

According to Pervez Khattak (2014), it was a great satisfaction for him that Emergency Rescue Services (Rescue 1122) were being provided to citizens in time of need and were rescuing them free of cost. The provincial government was also giving priority to Emergency Rescue Services on merit based policy along with up-to-dated emergency equipments; properly fabricated vehicles on scientific basis, and soon the emergency rescue services shall be expanded to all districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Pervez Khattak (2014) further stated that provincial government was also giving priority to emergency rescue services in wake of terroristic attacks in the province.

## **SIGNIFICANCE OF RESEARCH**

According to Thomas Carlyle (1840), Media was the “Fourth Estate” as per stated by Edmund Burke, who used this term first time in parliamentary debate of 1787. As, the media have great impact on public opinion and even sometimes mold their opinion towards specific issues, so it can be said that media sets the agenda of people on different issues. Likewise, people develop their understanding about specific issues as per their mindset. This research project shall assist the research scholars to develop their understanding about PES (Rescue 1122) and its perception in the minds of the public. This research may develop understanding of the research scholars that how people make their minds about any specific department due to its working; services or its portrayal on television channels or from news & articles published in newspapers. The significance of this research project may also help to understand the public mindset towards PES (Rescue 1122) especially of those, who were being provided emergency services in the time of need. This research paper is also of great significance, as it may assist us to understand how different people of different age group think about PES (Rescue 1122) and how they appreciate or criticize Emergency Rescue & Fire Services of Rescue 1122.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

According to Paul Harlow (1994), as law enforcement agencies and police departments are necessary for maintaining of law and order of any country, same is the case of Rescue & Fire Services for emergency management. In different countries across the globe including the United States of America and Canada, these developed countries have Departments of Public Safety (DPS), which are important for public safety. Paul further stated that police fight with criminals and rescue and fire services put the fire off in time of need.

According to Anne Eyre (2014), the media can play a significant role while reporting of emergencies or even by portraying the image and working of emergency services. Anne stated media portray image of emergency services besides reporting of tragedies and this act of media sometime forces the authorities to take necessary action for reducing of emergencies. In 1980 in United Kingdom, after reporting of emergencies by media, the government had to change its laws and it introduced guidelines “Dealing with Disaster” and it

also developed manuals for responding to major emergencies. Anne believed that role of media is definitely worth praising especially when it plays its role by highlighting social issues. According to Anne, major incidents have major impact on press; radio and television channels, which arrive on the scene as quickly as the emergency services arrive to deal with emergencies.

According to Joe Hight and Frank Smyth (2002), reporters; editors, soundmen also work with “elbow-to-elbow” along with the workers of emergency services during any disaster or major emergency, by covering the miseries of the victims and urging the authorities to initiate rehabilitation process. They further stated that their newspapers helped their nation that what was happening in New York or Washington, as their newspapers were serving for a noble cause or common cause where citizenry was allowed to visit and know about the details of the victims. They, however, believed that journalists also needed the same post traumatic medical care as the policemen or rescue workers need after any disaster or major emergency.

According to L. E. Quarantelli and Dynes Russell (1972), when disaster strikes, editors dispatch their reporters to the disasters’ scene for accurate reporting. The reporters also try to collect more information and consume their time in on airing the news to their news channels or newsrooms of their newspapers and sometime they kill their entire time in single news story of disaster. Quarantelli and Dynes further stated that reporting of disasters to media channels also depict the interest of the media men in such news stories and ultimately their efforts bring positive change in society.

However, according to Novick L, Marr JS (2001), media do not show reality rather it sets agenda of public pertaining to specific issues. According to Birkland T. (1997), the public started perceiving the messages about specific issues according to their mindset, after media once set agenda about those issues by covering those issues.

According to Moeller S. (2006), notwithstanding the criticism on media’s handling the issue of Hurricane Katrina, it was media, which played a vital role and pushed then the USA government to take necessary action. Moeller stated that the image of media became very positive in the eyes of public on such coverage.

According to Quarantelli (2000), the news organizations often lack disaster preparedness plans whenever any disaster strikes, such news organizations have no such plans, therefore, these organizations must have proper coordination between the workers of emergency services, so that the efforts of the emergency medical services may not be affected.

According to Muhammad Rizwan (2010), Emergency Ambulance Service in Pakistan is the backbone of emergency rescue and fire services in the country and the globe. He stated that emergency ambulance service in Pakistan was established in 2004 and was widely appreciated by the public and the media as well. Rizwan (2010) further stated that as this was the only service in Pakistan, which started providing emergency services to the victims of emergencies without any discrimination of caste; color, or creed within standard time of seven minutes.

According to Mian Muhammad Shahbaz Sharif (2012), the credibility of the Rescue 1122 Service was owing to excellent outcomes of its purpose and professionalism. He stated that this credibility was also due to its marvelous services; committed leadership, effective monitoring system and devotion of the rescue workers. Due to such services, Rescue 1122 network was being spread across the country. Muhammad Sarwar (2012) stated that Rescue 1122 had become the model for the SAARC countries and assured that he would continue supporting to this organization in future. The Director General, (Rescue 1122) Rizwan Naseer

(2012) also said that Rescue 1122 had become the symbol of harmony by crossing provincial boundaries.

According to Daily *The News International* (2013), Rescue 1122 on pattern of Punjab shall be introduced in Sindh very soon, and professional and trained workers of Rescue 1122 shall be providing basic right to timely emergency care to the victims of emergencies in Sindh. Sajjad Saleem Hotiyana (2013) stated that he was in continuous contact with the authorities in Punjab to replicate this model of emergency management in Sindh province. He stated that National Forum for Environment and Health (NFEH) in collaboration with the Fire Protection Association of Pakistan (FPAP) have prepared basic proposal and recommendations for establishment of this emergency management system in Sindh.

According to Daily *The Nation* (March 12, 2014), a full scale emergency mock exercise was conducted at Allama Iqbal International Airport by Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) and Punjab Emergency Service (Rescue 1122). The emergency services responded to mock plane, which caught fire, and extinguished the fire. The authorities and people appreciated the efforts and lauded the emergency management services.

According to Daily *Dawn* (September, 2012), the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa assembly passed a law to provide legal shelter to the establishment of Rescue 1122 in KPK. Bashir Ahmed Bilour (2012) stated that he was happy that Rescue 1122 had achieved its objectives and goals, which were set on its establishment, on which rescue workers of Rescue 1122 were being regularized by the provincial government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

According to Daily *Times* (2011), Lord Nazir Ahmed appreciated Rescue 1122 its emergency humanitarian services particularly its response time of less than seven minutes on which on behalf of his UK's government; he extended his support for assisting rescue services in Pakistan. Lord Nazir (2011) witnessed different mock exercises and stated that he was impressed by the function of Rescue 1122 in Pakistan, as this service was providing emergency medical care mostly to innocent victims of emergencies.

Although no major research has been conducted in Pakistan to know the image of the emergency medical services especially of Punjab Emergency Service (Rescue 1122), but newspapers including *Daily Dawn*; *Daily The News International*, *Daily The Nation*, *Daily Times*, *Daily Pakistan Observer*, *Daily Jang*, *Daily Nawa-i-waqt*, *Daily Express* and other mainstream newspapers have carried articles; columns, editorials and features showing positive image of the Punjab Emergency Service (Rescue 1122) of and on. During literature review, the researchers gone through different research papers; articles, features and columns and concluded that the researchers in Pakistan did not carry any research to "measure" the image of rescue and fire services, however, aforesaid newspapers and even television channels projected the image of rescue and fire services positively.

## **OBJECTIVES**

The study focused on following objectives:

1. To analyze the image of PES (Rescue 1122) in the Eyes of Public.
2. To analyze the image of PES (Rescue 1122) in the Eyes of Males and Females.
3. To analyze the image of PES (Rescue 1122) in the Eyes of people living in Rural & Urban areas.

## **HYPOTHESIS**

H1: Citizens have positive image of PES (Rescue 1122) in their minds

H2: Females think more positively about PES (Rescue 1122) as compared to males

## **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

Today media has become integral source of information to aware public about different issues and play a pivotal role in enhancing understanding of the citizens on different matters. Therefore, people also build their opinion and develop their behavior about different matters and problems after making observations; learning from day-to-day happenings and other things in their environment.

### **Social Cognitive Theory**

Albert Bandura (2001) along with his colleagues proposed social cognitive theory after conducting a series of experiments named as “Bobo Doll Experiment”. Bandura concluded that people develop their behaviors and learn by observing activities of others living in same environment and cognition, which ultimately ends into the development of a reciprocal relationship. Bandura stated that people also change their behavior (opinion) about any aspect; issue or personality after witnessing acts of others, therefore, one act of anyone can change the way of thinking of others.

According to Robert Lentt; Brown D. Steven and Hackett Gail (1994), social cognitive theory can be applied in different areas of human functioning including choice of career or during organizational behavior.

Bandura (1988) also believed that “acquisition of knowledge” and “learning” are the two main factors around which social cognitive theory continues revolving. He, however, had firm belief on the notion that “people learn from others” therefore he along with his colleagues and students conducted a series of experiments and developed social cognitive theory.

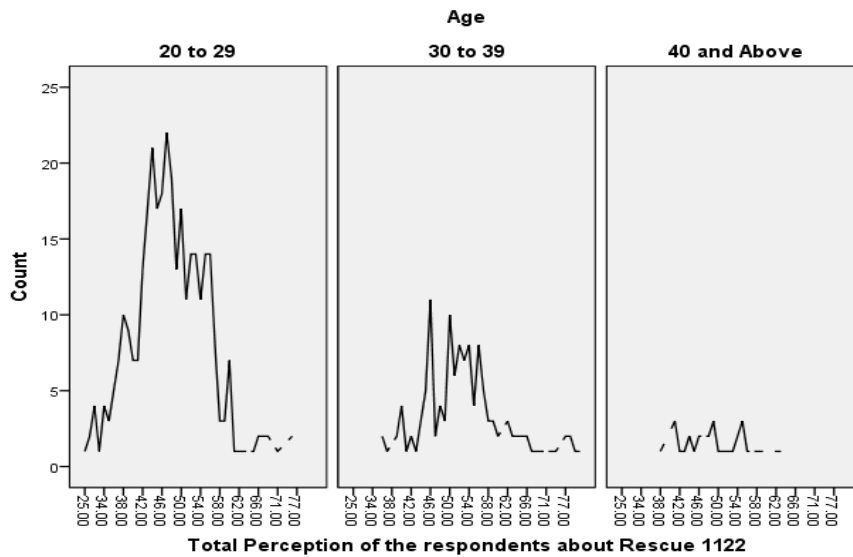
During the study underhand, the researchers developed their understanding that the respondents of survey study, while living in Lahore, must have watched rescue operations; news, talk shows about Rescue 1122 on television channels or they might have read news or articles in newspapers about the Service. The researchers found that the respondents had their firm opinion about PES (Rescue 1122) and they gave their opinion and expressed their mindset under which they had built up their perception about the Punjab Emergency Service (Rescue 1122).

Therefore, the researchers applied social cognitive theory on this research project to know public perception through a survey study of Lahore City.

## **METHODOLOGY**

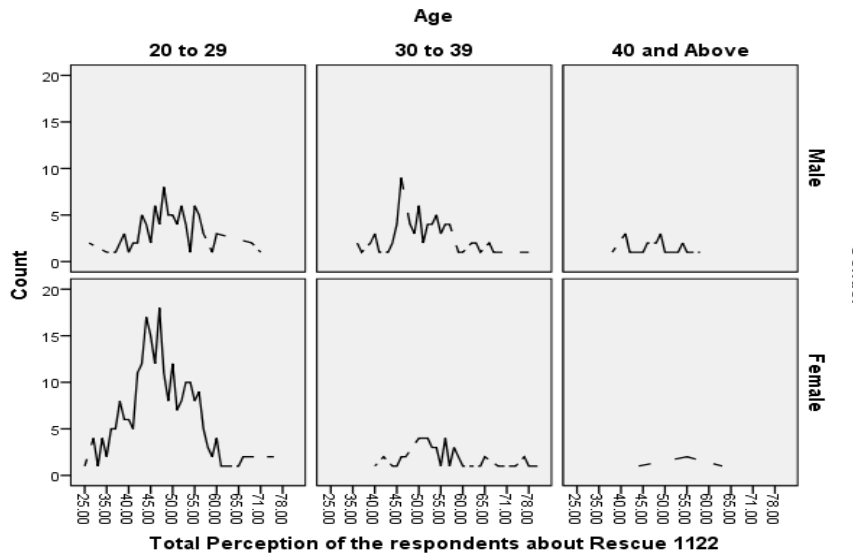
The researchers adopted Survey as a quantitative methodology for this research project. The researchers used software Special Packages for Social Sciences (SPSS) for data analysis collected through questionnaire, by circulating 500 questionnaires among respondents of Lahore, Punjab.

**DATA ANALYSIS**



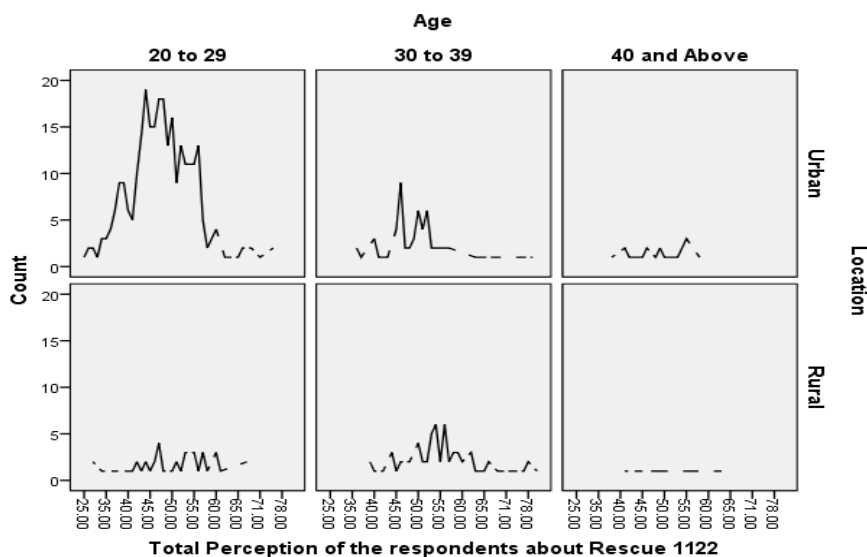
Graph 1. Age Based Perception

According to the Graph 1, the people between 20 to 29 years of age have strong perception and understanding about PES (Rescue 1122), as compared to the understanding of the people of age between 30 to 39 years of age. Similarly, the people aged 40 and above years expressed least understanding about PES (Rescue 1122).



Graph 2. Age & Gender Based Perception

The Graph 2 shows comparative analysis of opinion/ perception on gender and age based of the respondents. According to the graph, the female between 20 to 29 years have strong perception/ understanding of PES (Rescue 1122) as compared to the same age group in males. Likewise, the graph depicts that the males between 30 to 39 years of age have more strong opinion about the Service as compared to the same age group of females. However, the males between 40 and above years of age have more strong perception about PES (Rescue 1122) as compared to the same age group in females.



Graph 3. Comparative Age & Population Based Perception

According to the Graph 3, the respondents between 20 to 29 years of age living in urban areas have more positive opinion about PES (Rescue 1122) as compared to the same age group living in rural areas. Similarly, the respondents of Urban between 30 to 39 years of age have also strong perception about the Service as compared to same age group of respondents of rural areas. The graph further shows that the respondents of urban areas between 40 and above years of age have more positive opinion as compared to the same age group of respondents living in rural areas.

**FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

After collecting and analyzing the data through SPSS covering all questions asked in 500 questionnaires about PES (Rescue 1122), the researchers have found following findings.

The young respondents (20 to 29 years) have more positive and strong opinion about PES (Rescue 1122), as compared to the respondents (30 to 39 years). So, the researchers have found that the youth are more aware of the provision of emergency; rescue & fire services to the victims of emergencies in time of need.

Likewise, the females respondents (20 to 29 years) are more aware of about Rescue 1122, wherein the males respondents of the same age group have less understanding about the Service, however, the males respondents (30 to 39 years) have more positive opinion about functioning; working of rescue workers and like Rescue 1122 as compared to the same age group of females respondents. The researchers found that as young females stay at homes and they watch rescue activities on televisions; listen to the news on radios or read in newspapers so they might be more aware and have more positive image of PES (Rescue 1122) as compared to the opposite gender in same age group. Also, the males respondents (40 and above years) have stronger perception about PES (Rescue 1122) and they do believe that only Rescue 1122 can provide them emergency medical care in time of need, while the opinion of the females respondents in same age group is weak about the Service. The researchers concluded that as the males in this age group often use to work in factories; do job in public and private institutions, so they might have built their opinion about Rescue 1122 while discussing with each other; listening to news aired on television channels or published in newspapers or they might have availed the fire; rescue and medical services in time of need.

Likewise, the researchers found that the respondents (20 to 29 years) living in urban areas had more positive opinion about PES (Rescue 1122) as compared to the same age group living in rural areas. The researchers concluded that as the youth living in urban areas have more channels of information including television channels; cables, advertisements published in newspapers or the news and articles so they might have built up their positive image of the Rescue 1122 in their minds and the respondents of same age group living in rural areas have minimum opportunities of getting information so they could not built up their so strong opinion about Rescue 1122.

## **CONCLUSION**

As everyone has right to know information and to build his/ her opinion about specific issue, therefore, many factors are involved in strengthening the opinion of citizens about any specific issue. According to Phillips Davison (2014), people get information through different sources including opinion leaders, who give their opinion on different issues and the people are influenced from their opinion. Davison, however, stated that opinion leaders are not confined to just influential persons; rather opinion leaders can be the persons, who are followed by others. This research is based on opinion/ perception of the people about PES (Rescue 1122); regardless from where they have built their opinion either from opinion leaders; news or talks shows on television channels or published in newspapers. Out of the total 500 population of the survey study under hand, majority of the respondents gave very positive opinion about Rescue 1122. The respondents belonging to urban areas had more positive image of this Service as compared to the respondents living in rural areas. Therefore, the researchers found the hypotheses for this study proved true.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

After analyzing the data and evaluating the findings, the researchers give following recommendations:

1. The Punjab Emergency Service (Rescue 1122) may focus on rural areas for its image building through different tools of communication.
2. The Rescue 1122, Pakistan should utilize media to create awareness of this Service among citizens living in rural areas.
3. The Emergency Services of Rescue 1122 may educate community members especially of rural areas about functioning of the Service.
4. The Rescue 1122 may also approach senior citizens, who often play role of opinion leaders in rural areas, and educate them about purpose; goals and objectives of Rescue 1122 and ask their assistance in accomplishment of noble cause.



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