



Description of The Traumatic Experience of The Dinar Indah Housing Flood Disaster Victims

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ABSTRACT

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Unpredictable natural disasters can traumatize a person and disrupt the victim's daily activities. Moreover, if this is the first time a victim has experienced a natural disaster. The trauma that arises and the impact on them will be different from the victims who have experienced several natural disasters. In this case, the researcher will provide an overview of the trauma experienced by flood victims who have only experienced floods once, a total of four people. This study uses qualitative data collection techniques using interviews, observation and phenomenological data analysis techniques. The results showed that natural disasters that occurred to participants caused trauma due to this unpleasant experience. This impacts participants who are more easily anxious and afraid when symptoms of natural disasters appear—looking at the results of the interviews in analyzing the symptoms of trauma felt by the participants and how disturbing they were in carrying out their daily activities.

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1. Introduction

Natural disasters are things we cannot avoid, and natural disasters can happen anytime and anywhere without us expecting them. Natural disasters can devastate the economic, social and environmental sectors. As time goes by and the passage of time is accompanied by human activities, ecological damage tends to get worse. It triggers an increase in the intensity of disasters caused by human activities.

Indonesia, as a tropical country with high rainfall intensity, is followed by development carried out by humans, which has an impact on reducing water catchment areas, causing many flood disasters to occur in Indonesia, especially in large urban areas such as Semarang City. According to *Tribun Muria*, according to data from the Semarang City Regional Disaster Management Agency (BPBD), in 2022 alone, there will be 27 flood points in Semarang City (Arifianto, 2022). This number is an enormous figure for an area and can illustrate how often flood disasters occur in that area, especially when the rainy season has entered.

One of the areas where flooding occurs in the city of Semarang is the Dinar Indah Housing complex, located in Meteseh Village, Tembalang Semarang. According to data from residents, this area is already prone to flood disasters, but the flood that occurred in early 2023 was the most significant in the last ten years. This also causes great harm to residents, both physically and psychologically. Psychological impacts can be influenced by the interaction of changes in physical disorders, psychology, social situations and material problems (Rahmat and Alawiyah, 2020).

For victims of flood disasters like this, various factors cause the sufferer's psychological vulnerability, such as family displacement, death of loved ones, socio-economic losses, environmental losses, and lack of mental preparedness for disasters (Peek, 2008). The victims experienced traumatic conditions due to the catastrophe they experienced, which still left deep scars and impacted their mental state. In this research, the group tried to dig deeper into the symptoms of trauma experienced by victims. This victim's traumatic experience can indicate the victim's tendency to experience Post-traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD).

2. Method

In this research, the group used two variables, namely the dependent variable and the independent variable. The dependent variable focuses on the victim's traumatic experience, while the independent variable focuses on the Dinar Indah Housing flood disaster. The Dinar Indah Housing Area is in Meteseh Village, Tembalang District, Semarang City, a low-lying area prone to flooding. The Dinar Indah housing complex is right on the bank of the river that flows from Ungaran to Semarang City.

The environmental characteristics of Dinar Indah Housing itself include a dike which functions as a flood preventer. However, the barrier was only in the form of sacks filled with sand, so when heavy rain came, the dam was damaged and caused the river water to enter the Dinar Indah Housing Complex.



Fig. 1.Emergency Embankment to Replace Damaged Embankment

The socio-economic conditions of the residents of Dinar Indah are pretty diverse. Looking at the total number of residents, there are around 39 heads of families, with approximately 15 heads of families having children aged 4-7 years. Some families have fairly good socio-economic conditions, and some have poor socio-economic conditions. When the flood hit, families with a relatively good socio-economic background chose to move to board houses, rented houses, or took refuge in their family's home. Meanwhile, families with poor socio-economic conditions decided to take shelter in the Ar Rohmah Mosque, located on higher ground in the Dinar Indah Housing Complex.

The method used in group research is qualitative with phenomenological data analysis. Based on the explanation of Alase (2017) [1], phenomenology is a participant-oriented approach to express self-expression and stories of participants' life experiences without feeling that there are rules and prosecution. The data collection process uses observation and interview techniques with participants. There were four group participants, one of whom was in charge of the Dinar Indah Housing area, two were homemakers, and one was a child who lived in the Dinar Indah Housing Complex.

3. Results and Discussion

Based on observations and interviews with adults and children, researchers obtained data that the participants felt the psychological impact of this flood disaster. Further analysis will follow the PTSD diagnosis criteria according to PPDGJ-III[4].

The first PTSD diagnosis criterion is the disorder occurs within six months after a severe traumatic event. The flood disaster at the Dinar Indah Housing Complex occurred in January. Apparently, until July, the impact of the traumatic incident was still being felt by the participants. Participants were still worried several times that the flood disaster would happen again. This shows that the first PTSD diagnostic criterion is fulfilled.

The second diagnostic criterion is participants repeatedly experience dreams about flood disasters. These criteria are fulfilled, as evidenced by the following participant's words.

"Because I'm so scared, I just have dreams every once in a while." (Regional Coordinator Participant)

"There are some residents who just want to sleep but can't sleep tight because they imagine floods so often until carried away into their dreams." (Housewife Participant (1))

Next, the third diagnostic criteria, autonomic, affective, and behavioural disorders, can all colour the diagnosis but are not typical. According to Erlin & Sari (2020)[3], the main symptoms of this disorder include feelings like re-experiencing a traumatic event (re-experiencing), avoiding things related to the traumatic experience (avoidance), as well as increased physiological and psychological activity. (arousal).

According to Widhayanti, Warsini, & Sutono (2018)[7], the results of previous research suggest that flood victims can experience anxiety during heavy rain, characterized by anxiety, fear, and inability to sleep. In line with the results of this research, the child participants in this study were afraid that if the flood happened again, even when the sky started to get cloudy, a sign that rain was coming, they began to get scared and asked their parents to look for safety place immediately.

"When the sky gets dark, this (child) will already ask to go to his aunt's house upstairs. Every time there is a flood, we take refuge there" (Housewife Participant (1))

"At that time, I heard a deafening alarm, so I immediately ran to wake my mother to put my clothes in my bag." (Young Child Participant)

These children also become more withdrawn, uninterested in playing with their peers, and afraid to leave the house.

"In the past, a lot of friends played with us, but some of them started to go to other places so that we couldn't play anymore. More often at home, sometimes I'm sad because my friends are far away." (Young Child Participant)

"Before the flood, he often played with his friends. "There are small children in the house in front of us, too, but now they prefer to stay home." (Housewife Participant (1))

The presence of scattered residents also left a feeling of loneliness and reduced social support for residents who chose to remain there, even though the Head of Housing was not where it happened. Therefore, it requires someone responsible for the residents there, which ultimately causes feelings of anger and fatigue. This is because some of those responsible are putting too much pressure on those who could share roles with figures who have genuine responsibility. Apart from that, many children also become moody and cry easily due to the absence of peers, usually their playmates. In the end, children's social interest decreased, which also had an impact on children's interest in learning at Dinar Indah Housing.

"Just received a report from the teacher that his grades have dropped. At school is also not as active as it was before the flood." (Housewife Participant (2))

Adults at Dinar Indah Housing also get psychological impacts. They are always ready when signs of rain start to come. One of their actions was to stay up all night until they lost time to rest. This action results from residents' anxiety and worries, disrupting their daily activities.

"When it starts to get dark, the group starts to get busy to see if the water is rising or not." (Regional Coordinator Participant)

"The men even went on patrol because the rain often comes at night. I feel sorry because they had to stay up late last night and, in the morning, had to clean the house, which was covered in mud." (Housewife Participant (2))

With the description above, the third diagnostic criterion is fulfilled. Next, the fourth criterion is not fulfilled because this natural disaster has only occurred for decades. Therefore, three of the four PTSD diagnostic criteria based on PPDGJ-III[4] were fulfilled, and the participant tended to PTSD. These diagnostic criteria being fulfilled are also in line with previous research where PTSD is often found together with anxiety, depression and other behavioural and psychological disorders.

However, apart from these diagnostic criteria, the tendency to experience PTSD is influenced by age, gender, religion and education (Weems in Erlin & Sari, 2020[3]). In other words, a person's tendency to develop PTSD can be influenced by individual characteristics. Therefore, it is necessary to consider efforts to identify, prevent and treat PTSD in terms of factors contributing to the formation of a person's risk level for getting PTSD.

4. Conclusion

Based on the results of the analysis, the authors conclude that the participants of this study, namely flood disaster victims who have experienced floods for the first time, have a tendency to develop traumatic disorders, also known as Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). According to the four criteria for PTSD outlined in PPDGJ-III, the participants met three criteria. These criteria include participants experiencing flashbacks or dreams of the traumatic event, the presence of affective disorders in participants, and the possibility of diagnosis because it has persisted for approximately six months.

Other factors influence the likelihood of respondents experiencing traumatic disorders or PTSD. These factors include age, gender, religion, and education, which are individual characteristics. Therefore, future research is expected to explore further efforts to identify, prevent, and address PTSD while considering various factors that play a role in determining the risk level for individuals experiencing this disorder.

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