

The Flourishing Dynamics of Male University Student Survivors of Lombok Earthquakes in 2018

Haryo Widodo¹, SitiUrbayatun²

¹(Professional Psychology Masters Student at Ahmad Dahlan University, Yogyakarta, Indonesia)

²(Lecturer at the Faculty of Psychology, Ahmad Dahlan University, Yogyakarta, Indonesia)

ABSTRACT: Disasters could have both positive and negative impact on survivors. Flourishing is a theory from positive psychology that represents the condition where an individual able to develop their maximum potential or achieve a balanced physical and mental operation as a whole. This study aims to learn the factors and dynamics of flourishing in male university student survivors of Lombok earthquakes. This study was conducted using phenomenology, a qualitative method. Participants included 5 (five) male university students specifically chosen according to a definite criterion (criterion sampling). Result showed that there are unique flourishing dynamics for each participants, although additional stressors aside from those caused by earthquakes were found causing individual distress, hindering the flourishing process of the participants. Another finding showed that most participants used religion as coping mechanism. Role of gender in affecting the flourishing dynamics of participants is also discussed.

KEYWORDS : Earthquakes, Flourishing, Male University Students

I. INTRODUCTION

Indonesia is an archipelago with immense potential of natural disasters because of its geographic location. Indonesia geological condition, located between meeting points of 3 tectonic plane, resulting in putting Indonesia especially vulnerable to volcanic eruptions, earthquakes, tsunamis, and every other natural disaster. Earthquakes especially, have notorious reputation for causing huge destruction, responsible for material loss, psychological shock, and also deaths. According to BNPB website, every natural disasters occurred in Indonesia is recorded in Indonesia Disaster Database (*Data Informasi Bencana Indonesia*). From 2008 until 2018, there are 21,408 natural disasters recorded in Indonesia. The database also record 39,168,782 victims by natural disaster, specifically 9,120 deaths, 142,597 injured, and 39,017,065 wounded and displaced (DIBI, 2019).

These disheartening conditions clearly took a heavy toll upon survivor's psychological well-being, triggering many mental illness onset, such as trauma, emotional disorders, anxiety disorders, panic disorders, et cetera. Furthermore, survivor's psychological condition could be affected deeply as any material loss could induce economical distress, which would add the burden and increase the psychological strain. For example, temporary or permanent displacement because of demolished living property; family separation because fathers or husbands would insist on staying to guard the house while wives and children would move into refugee camps for facilities; losing livelihood because of agricultural land destruction, and et cetera (Rusmiyati and Hikmawati, 2012).

Precarious conditions usually allow aggressive and risky behavior to thrive, such as ransacking and looting. These despicable actions were mentioned by news media, as seen in the report from CNN Indonesia regarding the looting phenomenon after Lombok earthquake (www.cnnindonesia.com, accessed 13 July 2019), and the video from Tribunnews depicting a riot and looting in Palu (www.tribunnews.com, accessed 13 July 2019). Constant distress and stressful environment usually lead to psychological strain and eventual emotional disorders and depression, especially for men because they have responsibilities to provide for their families as the head of the family.

Sugiarto and team (2014) in his study about male teenagers, found that one of the roles and responsibilities of a man is to become a father, a leader, and an example. In a patrilineal family, those responsibilities were recognized as a necessity, a must. Losing livelihood could increase men vulnerability resulting in psychological distress that potentially could develop into severe mental illness, especially if survivors deemed themselves helpless. Nur Hasyim and team (2007) said that in a patriarchal society, men have to be the protector figure to

women and others presumed more vulnerable. This belief demands men to possess emotional and intellectual maturity not many capable of. Some even have a misunderstanding, failing to differentiate between taking charge and being self-centered. Therefore, psychological repercussions experienced by male survivors very likely could threaten their well-being.

Furthermore, most of gender studies in the event of disaster almost exclusively focused on the vulnerability of women. Only a few studies of men and disaster from gender perspective can be found, even though gender expectations and society role indicate that men are also vulnerable (Gaillard et. al., 2017). Through vulnerability outlook, many studies about disaster were inclined to adopt a gender perspective, because it is clearly stated how disaster affect women unfairly, many women lose their safe place while aids were only available for their male counterpart, a product of discriminatory distribution of power both in local and international level (Gaillard et. al., 2017).

Study on earthquake survivors in Sichuan, China showed that as a whole, life quality of men is higher than women, derived from various aspects such as gender, age, education, and income (Liang et. al., 2013). As a result, many studies are interested in the psychological changes experienced by survivors, specifically male survivors in relation to division of labor between men and women during post-disaster restoration. In emergency situations, men usually hold more access, control, and mobility to the available resources essential for recovery in comparison to limited information access and mobility of women, thus rendering women more vulnerable (Nastiti, 2016).

Conditions mentioned above, both psychological and social, certainly affecting survivor's recovery process. The fact that Indonesia is ridden with many disasters is a stressor for many, individually or as a community. Other risk factor that increase the possibility of mental illness onset post-disaster is records of past mental illness diagnosis. Meanwhile, having a support system, positive coping strategy, self-efficacy, and positive response during distress could increase ones resiliency and lessen the possibility of post-disaster mental illness (William and Poijula, 2002). This study aims to learn the dynamics and factors of flourishing on male university students survivors of Lombok earthquakes in 2018.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Flourishing is a positive psychology theory on psychological recovery that not only focus on individual development, but also how a person could be helpful toward the community. Effendy (2016) explained that flourishing is a synonym of an abundant mental well-being and portray a healthy mental condition (Huppert, 2009; Keyes, 2002; Ryff and Singer, 1998). Diener (in Effendy, 2016) also adds purpose in life, positive relationship, engagement, competence, self-esteem, optimism to enrichment of well-being as concepts of flourishing. People with high dose of positive emotion and possess a decent functionality psychologically and socially own complete mental health as flourishing. From the explanation we could gather that flourishing is an advance stage of well-being (Effendy, 2016).

According to positive psychology, flourishing is a condition when a person could develop him/herself to the utmost potential. This means that the person could function outstandingly in accordance with the person potential. The purpose of achieving flourishing is an optimum functionality of physical and mental operation as a whole (Seligman, 2011). As stated by Seligman, positive psychology aspire to reach authentic happiness, consist of 3 dimension (positive emotion, engagement, and meaning). On 2006, that concept is reconstructed into 5 pillars (Positive Emotion, Engagement, Positive Relationship, Meaning, and Accomplishment) shorten to PERMA and then known as flourishing.

Aspects of flourishing introduced by Seligman (2002) then became the aspects combined with five pillars PERMA as high level of well-being, those are:

1) *Positive Emotion*

According to Seligman (Hone et. al., 2014), positive emotion is the act of experiencing positive and kindness deed throughout a person's life. Watson (Compton, 2005) explained three basic dimension of positive emotion:

- a) Cheerful disposition, for example: happiness, joyfulness, enthusiasm
- b) Hopeful/belief disposition, for example: faith, courage
- c) Awareness disposition, for example: alert, concentration, determination

2) *Engagement*

Engagement is an event made of abundance of happiness, attraction, and savouring every single action in life (Hone et. al., 2014). A person with high level of engagement possess a profound desire to gain meaningful lesson from every single life experience and delighted in learning new knowledge (Huppert & So, 2011).

3) *Relationship/Positive Relationship*

Every person have a social need, and is known to work for his/her own well-being by creating a strong relationship with family, friends, or neighbors (Effendy, 2016). Ryff (1989) explained that a positive relationship with others is a capability to have a meaningful, warm, satisfying, and fulfilling relationship with

another person. Positive relationship with others can be seen from the intimacy and warmth of the relationship, also focusing on the other person happiness and well-being. A positive relationship is a belief of oneself that he/she is worthy, loved, taken care of, and important by his/her inner circle and is satisfied by the relationship with others (Hone et. al., 2014).

4) *Meaning*

Life is deemed more meaningful if one could dedicate time to serve others, the community and the environment, not only a slave to ones own ego (Effendy, 2016). Meaningfulness is one's appreciation in valuable and important findings, as a reason to continue living and could also serve as a life goal (Hone et. al., 2014). Life meaning direct oneself to an awareness of life goals, an understanding that past life is substantial, thus giving assurance of one's life purpose (Synder & Lopez, 2007).

5) *Accomplishment/Achievement*

This aspect portrays that a person has an awareness of one's skill and is motivated to achieve a goal (Seligman, 2010). Achievements are success on milestones and achieving improvements helpful in reaching the ultimate life goal (Hone et. al., 2014), while accomplishment is the possible goals, minor, medium, or major. Well-being will improve when a person could develop one's skill with having attained one's milestones and goals. A person equipped with aforementioned five pillars will potentially reach prosperity (Effendy, 2016).

Scientists have studied many factors influencing flourishing, such as:

1) Socio-Demography

There are several socio-demography factors concerning flourishing, for example age, sex, education, occupation, and life experience. Papalia and team (2002) explained that difference in age could affect a person's well-being. A middle-aged person have higher well-being compare to early adults or elderly.

In his study, Dijkstra and team found that women tend to have higher level of psychological well-being compare to men. This differs with the findings of Keyes and Simoes (2012), stating that it is easier for men to obtain a high level of psychological well-being (Dijkstra et. al., 2016). Social status including education level, income, and success. People with higher-ranked social status tend to have a higher level of psychological well-being compare to those of lower social status (Snyder & Lopez, 2002).

2) Personality Type

A study conducted by Ryan & Deci (2001) proved that there is a relation between personality type and well-being (Keswari, 2019). Dijkstra and team (2016) mentioned three types of personality in relation with flourishing, those are extraversion, conscientiousness, and neuroticism. This is in accordance with Keyes and team (2002) finding about high level of extraversion and conscientiousness and low level of neuroticism are associated with flourishing (Dijkstra et. al., 2016).

3) Situational Factors

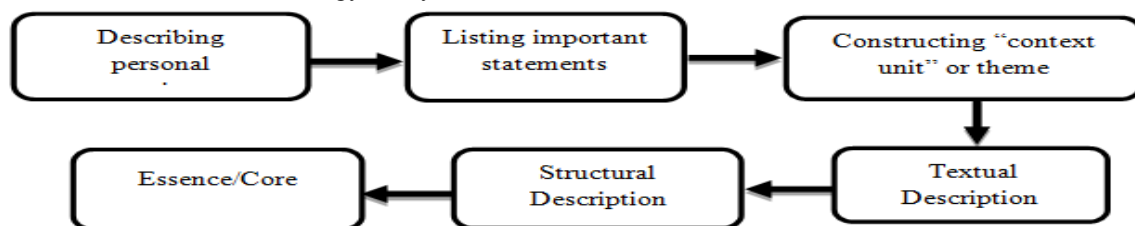
Dijkstra also mentioned situational factors affecting flourishing, consist of social support, positive and negative life experience, and physical health status (Dijkstra et. al., 2016). Social support is a very influential factors in relation with well-being. A person with reliable social support will also have excellent well-being. Social support is associated with an active social life (both of quantity and quality) together with the community. A person with high level of religiosity is associated with decent attitude and is more satisfied with life (Papalia et. al., 2002).

III. METHOD

This study used qualitative research methods specifically phenomenology study. Phenomenology was used to gain authentic understanding of participants experience regarding a specific concept and phenomenon, later disclosed and written through descriptive and interpretive approach. Participants were purposefully selected based on a specific criterion (criterion sampling). Participants included in this study were five male university students who were survivors of Lombok earthquakes in 2018. All participants have proven to experience flourishing, measured through completion of flourishing survey adapted from Maulidiyah (2018) study, enrolled in an undergraduate program, and range between 18 to 25 years of age.

In-depth interview was used to collect data. Analysis conducted using structured and specific method based on Moustakas (1994). Creswell then proposed a simplified version of said analysis method (Creswell, 2015).

Chart 1. Moustakas Phenomenology Analysis Method (Creswell, 2015)



IV. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Flourishing dynamics

In this study, it was found that participants could think positively which contributed to changes in the affection of the negative impacts they experienced. Participants felt the feeling of worry and panic when experiencing an earthquake event was reduced. The reduction in negative emotions indicates that the participants experience emotional changes based on positive psychological theories, leading to a flourishing condition. This is in line with research by Ryff & Singer (2014) which states that a person who can accept himself or his past life, and feels free from problems or pressures, is part of flourishing. In another study, Diener, et.al (2010) revealed that individuals who flourished still had negative emotions. The presence of feelings of worry, anxiety, and vigilance indicates negative emotions in the participants.

The earthquake event made the participants grow and develop due to positive feelings and beliefs that they would still be useful and meaningful. This condition shows the self-acceptance of the conditions they experienced after the earthquake. This is in line with Urbayatun's (2019) research which states that acceptance of disaster survivors wholeheartedly when faced with various problems is self-acceptance and part of the coping component of being patient. Ryff & Singer (2014) also said that a person is said to be flourishing when a condition in which a person can accept himself or his past life, performs self-development or growth, believes that his life is meaningful and has a purpose, has the quality of positive relationships with others, has the ability to organize their life and environment effectively and be able to determine their own actions.

The emergence of new positive values also seemed to be shared by the participants after the earthquake. Values such as caring for others, non-competitiveness, and respect for diversity are among the values that stand out in this study. These values show participants in their involvement in distributing aid to all refugees fairly, maintaining the safety of the refugee camps, and respecting each other, and providing safe space for all refugees to carry out religious activities based on their respective religions. Seligman (2011) states that every individual needs other people to improve their welfare by building strong relationships with family, friends, or neighbors.

Seeing the changes that occurred in the participants after the earthquake, it can be concluded that the participants continued to strive to grow and develop in reducing negative feelings to positive ones, changing their thoughts to be more positive by increasing concern for others, in this case, fellow earthquake survivors. By changing the status of their thoughts and feelings, a person is expected to be able to change their behavior from negative to positive. With a change in mindset and more positive behavior, the flourishing of the individual can also increase because he is free from feelings of depression (Carr, 2011).

The Flourishing Factor

The earthquake made the participants have room to reflect and interpret themselves. The participants made self-introspection efforts and interpreted events using a religious perspective as a self-transcendence process. The belief in Allah's help for Muslim participants and understanding the teachings of good karma for Buddhist participants encourages the emergence of feelings that are more optimistic and full of gratitude for the safety they get so that participants become more diligent in carrying out religious activities. According to Diener (2010), this factor is a factor of happiness that is determined by external factors, which are related to individual demographics, such as religion.

Family closeness was also the factor most likely to influence the flourishing of the participants. Participants get the support and attention they get from the closest people, namely parents. Parents were influential in the recovery process of participants after the earthquake. The presence of parents physically and psychologically also helps participants interpret earthquake events and encourages participants to continue to be optimistic about the future. Schotanus-Dijkstra et al (2016) revealed that social support from spouses, family, and neighbors has a good relationship with flourishing.

This study also found other factors, namely closeness to the father figure and the father's role in fostering positive emotions in the participants. The father becomes a close figure and becomes a role model for participants who teaches sincerity, courage, courage in facing life's challenges, and fosters social sensitivity. The trait inherited by the father figure shows that men are hereditarily taught to be brave in facing life's challenges and sensitive to the environment, which means that men have a responsibility towards themselves and their surroundings.

V. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The flourishing dynamics of male students who were affected by the Lombok earthquake is described by changes in the status of thoughts, feelings, and behavior. In this case, it is shown by the emergence of new values in the participants, including caring for others, non-competitiveness, and respect for diversity. Participants also showed a decrease in negative feelings, although anxiety, and panic sometimes still appeared, this condition was balanced by positive feelings such as feelings of gratitude and patience and optimism in living after the earthquake.

Flourishing of the participants is also due to supporting factors:

1. The factors of religious belief.
2. Family Support
3. Social support
4. The role of a father figure who teaches masculine character.

There are limitations to this study, hence should not be used as a generalization for the whole male university student survivors of earthquakes population. For that reason, researcher provides several recommendations to further develop this topic in the future:

1. Researcher have not inquiry deeper about religiosity level of each participants thus the data collected can be developed further regarding religiosity aspect.
2. Researcher have not disclose participant flourishing level in relation with their various religion belief, hence is a possible future research topic option.
3. Limited amount of study concerning disaster and male gender is a possible future development, especially masculinity aspect. Men, masculinity, and disaster could be an interesting research topic in Indonesia to broaden scientific knowledge specifically about social and psychology.

VI. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My deepest gratitude toward Ministry of Research and Technology Republic of Indonesia for providing the grant essential for this research to commence. Also my thanks to Faculty of Psychology, Ahmad Dahlan University for supporting the learning process through various facilities provided.

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