

## INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION OF NATURAL DISASTER VICTIMS TO VOLUNTEERS IN CENTRAL SULAWESI

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### ABSTRACT

The natural disaster that occurred in Palu City, Donggala Regency and Sigi Regency, Central Sulawesi on September 28, 2018 resulted in enormous losses ranging from property to thousands of dead victims. This study aims to determine the interpersonal communication of victims of natural disasters to volunteers in Central Sulawesi. This interpersonal process uses a dimension of self-disclosure. Qualitative research method with a case study approach.

The results showed that in the process of delivering messages, victims told more about their life experiences when a disaster struck which resulted in loss of property and loss of family life (closest people). In the process of a disaster, they as victims try to save themselves to a safer place even though they have to be far away from their families, causing them to be anxious and afraid.

**Keywords:** Interpersonal Communication, Self-Disclosure, Natural Disasters

### INTRODUCTION

Sesar Palu Koro is known as the most active fault that causes natural disasters in Central Sulawesi. On September 28, 2018, the earthquake and tsunami again repeated in Palu and Donggala. Consecutive earthquakes that begin with a magnitude 5.9 earthquake at 2 p.m. Within about three hours, an earthquake with a larger magnitude of 7.4 (and USGS) shook Palu and Donggala. Sesar Palu Koro, also caused the occurrence of liquefaction and large ground movements are in Balaroa, Sigi, Petobo, Jono Oge, Sidondo and Sibalaya, (Daryono, et al., 2018:51). Based on the data of the most victims are in Palu with the number of 1,636 people, while in Donggala 171 people and Sigi 222 people, Parigi 15 people and in Pasangkayu 1 person. While the number of missing victims to date reached 671 people. There were 10,679 injuries, out of this number, 2,549 were seriously injured and 8,130 were minor injuries. While hundreds more were declared missing in addition to the thousands of people feared dead were not identified due to liquefaction. The number of refugees so far is 82,775 people, and 8,731 of them outside Central Sulawesi, (Latief, et al., 2018:109-110)

The phenomenon of natural disasters that occur in Palu, Sigi and Donggala, Central Sulawesi province will certainly cause traumatic impacts for survivors. There are memories that make them always reminded of the experience when disasters occur both earthquakes, tsunamis and liquefaction. The disaster will certainly affect them to act, because so deeply felt grief such as fighting to save themselves, saving themselves others, seeing the families who died in front of

their eyes directly, both those hit by buildings due to the earthquake, dragged by the current of the tsunami and buried liquefaction land.

To be able to alleviate the traumatic impact experienced by victims of natural disasters in Central Sulawesi, the positive efforts that must be made in terms of communication is able to open up by being transparent about what is experienced so that the listener or interlocutor can provide the best solution. In a study related to the benefits of opening up also written by McGuire (2018) on residents affected by Hurricane Katrina also stated that people who received high social support after the disaster did not show symptoms of depression two years after the incident.

The American Psychological Association (2009) in its article on Recovering Emotionally from Disaster explained that the coping that disaster survivors must do is to ask for social support and communicate their experiences. Express all feelings in the most comfortable way possible such as talking to family or close friends. Social support can be obtained when the individual opens up and expresses their feelings to others. If the individual can share with the person he trusts about his emotional state or the problems he is facing, then he will feel a little comfort and a sense of relief over the problems he has been facing. It would even be a better thing if the individual received support and advice (Suryaningsih, Suci, Nugraha, 2016).

According to Sidney Jourand who is a social philosopher, clinical psychologist and empirical researcher said that the recipe of man is openness or transparency (in Littlejohn, 1983:179). It means that to be able to live a healthy life in good thinking, the process of opening up or telling a life experience is needed by everyone. Furthermore, it is conveyed that the process of openness basically occurs in interpersonal relationships. So it is no wonder that the discussion of self-disclosure is associated with the level of communication. Because generally, individual people are more comfortable conveying their heart and life experiences to only one person. That is, there is one communicator as the messenger and one communion as the recipient of the message. Although later this role can change each other when feedback occurs. This act of self-disclosure can be seen in natural disaster victims and volunteers in Central Sulawesi.

The positive impact of self disclosure is also evidenced in the results of research by Fadlunnida, Diah Karmiyati, and Diana Savitri Hidayati under the title Relationship of Self Disclosure and Stress of Youth Earthquake Survivors of Palu City (2019, Vol. 7, No. 4, 419-433). The results showed that teenagers who tend to have high self-disclosure in daily life and shortly after the palu disaster experience lower stress. The stress referred to in this study is the decrease in physical condition due to post-disaster stress, impacting cognitive and emotional as well as changes in attitudes in dealing with the environment.

Furthermore, it is explained that the implication of this study is when teenagers, especially those who are experiencing the effects of earthquakes to always ask for help by speaking to trusted people such as family or friends when feeling depressed and difficulty in dealing with existing situations in order to avoid prolonged stress. However, if further analysis is carried out that the natural disaster that occurred in central Sulawesi on September 28, 2018 not only causes stress, but there are also other factors that can interfere with self-activity, they as victims are very afraid when aftershocks come many times, anxious when passing through the shore because the unimaginable is a tsunami, and the hardest thought is to worry about the next life because many of them have lost their jobs.

Various kinds of problems that have been obtained by victims of natural disasters in Sulawesi Tengan certainly have a negative impact on the victim's self-activity, but it can be treated through a good communication process, namely self-disclosure to competent people such as volunteers in the field of psychology, sociology, communicologists, and those who have experienced in disaster conditions both on a national and international scale. Therefore, from the description of the problem, the study is only limited to see self disclosure in interpersonal communication of natural disaster victims to volunteers in Central Sulawesi.

## METHODS

This study uses qualitative method with case study approach. The main purpose in using qualitative descriptive is to describe the nature of a state that existed at the time of the study and explore the causes of certain symptoms, (Sevilla, 1993: 91). In this study, it is expected to examine more specifically related to certain symptoms felt by victims of natural disasters in Central Sulawesi so that there is a so-called self disclosure.

Qualitative research method according to Sugiyono (2013: 1) is a research method used to research on the condition of natural objects (as opposed to experiments) where researchers are as a key instrument, data collection techniques are carried out triangulated (combined), data analysis is inductive, and qualitative research results emphasize meaning rather than generalization.

The data collection techniques used are in-depth observations and interviews. The informant interviewed consisted of 3 earthquake victims, 3 tsunami victims and 3 liquefaction victims. Informants are selected using purposive sampling. According to Miles and Huberman (1992) (in Pujileksono, 2015) that data analysis consists of Data reduction, Data presentation and Conclusion drawing. The validity of the data in this study uses member check by involving informants to correct the results obtained in the interview.

## DISCUSSION

Various kinds of events experienced by each person or the same event experienced by many people will certainly set aside their own perceptions. Perceived events are generally also often communicated to others in relation to what is felt especially on the impact that is on oneself both with regard to the burden of the mind and mental pressure. A very sad event for now has just been experienced by the people of Palu city and its surroundings, they experienced a devastating natural disaster that is earthquakes, tsunamis and liquefaction.

The experience of the people of Palu City and its surroundings related to natural disasters certainly caused deep sorrow because the disaster claimed many lives, loss of property, separation of children and parents, to the more painful that the disaster made many people live alone. Survivors are certainly very burdened mentally and mentally depressed. However, if the pressure is only silenced and felt for granted it will certainly make us weaker, therefore it takes communication to be able to convey the grief suffered, because with us talking we will know about what actions must be taken to be able to manage ourselves in order to be better.

Basically that well-managed communication will certainly bring a good impact, because seyogiyanya that communication is a remedy to be able to calm the heart and mind, as happened

in this study, the victims of natural disasters in palu city and its surroundings conduct interpirbadi communication whose feedback can be felt directly. However, there are also some victims who sometimes refuse to communicate by telling what was experienced when the disaster occurred, of course this is different from others, but the victim assumes that with him closed then he will not remember more in the incident that took many victims died in palu city, especially their loved ones.

Communication conducted by victims of natural disasters in Palu and surrounding areas on September 28, 2018 is more conducted in the level of interpersonal communication. Why? Because the feedback felt directly will be able to influence the disclosure of information submitted about the chronological that occurred to the grief felt by so many victims of death and losses on property. Feedback that occurs in the communication conducted by the victim are messages that can motivate themselves to be patient, be better and spirit in living life for the next.

Based on his definition that according to Joseph Devito in his book *The Interpersonal Communication Book* (Devito, 1989:4), interpersonal communication is the process of sending and receiving messages between two people or between a small group of people, with some effect and some immediate feedback. Furthermore, it is explained that interpersonal communication is a communication that takes place between two or more people face-to-face. "Interpersonal communication involves two or more people in a face to face setting" (Canggara, 2007:32).

Furthermore, based on its role that interpersonal communication plays a role (a) In order to understand the reality around us and test the truth of the impressions and understandings we have about the world around us, we need to compare it to the impressions and understandings of others of the same reality. Of course such social comparison can only be done through communication with others (Supratiknya, 2003: 9-10). From the results of existing research that the reality that occurs today is natural disasters such as earthquakes, tsunamis and liquefaction in palu city and its surroundings. Many people or survivors of the disaster feel angry, sad but still grateful because they are still given the opportunity to live and still be able to meet with family. Why does gratitude remain? Because some of them compared themselves to other survivors who have now lived alone because their families have been the victims of natural disasters on September 28, 2018.

(b) Our mental health is largely also determined by the quality of our communication or relationships with others, especially those who are significant figures in our lives. If our relationship with others is covered by various problems, then of course we will suffer, feel sad, anxious, frustrated. If then we withdraw and avoid others, then the feeling of loneliness and alienation that we may experience will certainly cause suffering, not just emotional or mental suffering, maybe even physical suffering. (Supratiknya, 2003: 9-10). Based on the reality that occurs in the field that generally more victims of natural disasters in the city of Palu explain about what they feel both chronologically the occurrence of disasters and the impact felt after the disaster. When communicating privately, victims can convey it more deeply, this means that they are comfortable and certainly able to restore their mental health because in interpersonal communication there is a feedback message that can motivate, comfort each other, strengthen each other to be patient and grateful for still being given the opportunity to breathe.

The delivery of feelings and thoughts in interpersonal communication is referred to as self disclosure. Based on the concept definition that self disclosure is described as one of the most important forms of interpersonal communication where we can involve talking about ourselves, or opening up. Self-disclosure refers to communicating our information about ourselves to others (DeVito, 1997:77). Self disclosure or often called self-disclosure (in Dayakisni, 2003:86-87) is the process of presenting oneself that is manifested in the activity of sharing feelings and information with others. In the act of self communication (self) including actions that are important especially in our daily lives. This theory explains how we tell ourselves information to others. The information concerns personal experiences, feelings, future plans, dreams and others.

From the explanation above related to personal experiences, feelings, future plans, dreams and others of course in accordance with the reality that occurred in the people of Palu city and its surroundings dated September 28, 2018, namely natural disasters such as earthquakes, tsunamis and liquefaction. Personal experience related to efforts to save themselves from disasters, the presence of families who are victims of death and loss of property. Related to the future plans and dreams of course the survivors want to rise from the existing slump so that there is still a process to continue life to be better, then it is no wonder that in there are written sentences and often spoken by the people of Palu City, namely *Palu Bangkit* and *Palu Hebat*.

In detail, in the process of self-disclosure conducted by victims of natural disasters Palu city certainly varies, because personal experience, feelings felt and plans that will be done later after the disaster certainly vary. In the first part that there are victims who are able to open with their experience, related to efforts to save themselves from the 7.4-magnitude earthquake that caused many injuries and victims who died from the ruins of houses or buildings. In addition, in the chronological nature of the earthquake, many families are separated by distance due to the very strong earthquake shock and the release of the child from the arms of a mother.

Furthermore, in the natural disaster of tsunami, many victims who had to run around with panic to a safer place because they had seen from a distance the water soaring high kea rah palu bay. In the disaster, the informant who was also a survivor explained that they had lost both of their parents who were victims of the tsunami. In addition, many victims died on the beach ranging from children to adults. The bodies were very difficult to evacuate due to time and light constraints due to the night and the absence of electricity. In this study also found some survivors, although already carried by tsunami currents and bodies that were injured due to sharp objects and blunt objects. Physically, the victims were seriously injured.

In the process of searching for the victims died in the tsunami, many victims whose bodies were not found until now. Based on the information received from informant that a few minutes before the tsunami, liquefaction also occurred on the shore which chronologically split the ground and sucked the victim into, then closed it back and then the tsunami hit the shore of Palu Bay.

The next third disaster that occurred in Palu City on September 28, 2018 was liquefaction. The worst affected areas of liquefaction are petobo and balaroa. Both places are quite densely occupied housing, but everything is almost flattened to the ground due to the presence of moving land and sucking objects and any creature that is on it. The disaster also took many fatalities as experienced by Anti that he had to be sincere and steadfast because his parents, brother and sister were sucked into the ground causing them to die. Not only that, other experiences were also felt by Rusdy who survived liquefaction because the ground spewed him back until he was able to

hold on to one of the sturdy trees. But the tragic thing is, he had to let his 26 students become victims after being sucked into the ground with other communities.

Based on the explanation above related to three natural disasters that occurred in Palu City such as earthquake, tsunami and liquefaction, it is explained that most informants are open with the chronological events and feelings they feel. Openness is in accordance with the quadrant in Johari window theory namely (open), describing the situation or things known to yourself and others. These include his qualities, feelings, and motivations. An open self, knowing the advantages and disadvantages of oneself as well as others outside of him can recognize it, (Devito, 2011:58-61).

In this study there is also an informant who hides about the chronological occurrence related to natural disasters in Palu City, September 28, 2018. The informant only explained that he had a disaster and that there were people nearby who died. After that, the informant immediately closes the conversation, does not want to be asked again and in terms of mimic face shows distaste for the author. From such conditions, the action corresponds to the hidden quadrant that is there are things or parts that we ourselves know, but others do not. This is often observed. (Devito, 2011:58-61).

## CONCLUSION

This research relates to the process of communication between personal victims of natural disasters to volunteers. In the process of delivering the message, the victim tells more about the experience of life when disasters come to hit that cause loss of property and loss of life of family (closest people). In the process of disaster, they as victims try to save themselves to a safer place despite having to be separated from their families to cause them anxiety and fear.

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