

Research Article

Navigating the Aftermath: Exploring Business Decision-Making and Family Recovery in Palu, Sulawesi, Indonesia, After a Natural Disaster

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Abstract.

This qualitative case study examines the decision-making process of a family that experienced a natural disaster in Palu. The participants of the study were Mr. FP, the head of the family, and his wife, Mrs. VP. Primary data was collected through in-depth interviews with FP and VP conducted by relatives who witnessed the family's gradual recovery. Additionally, supporting data was gathered through data mining, including pre -and post-disaster photographs. The family, like many others, faced an unpredictable and devastating event that not only resulted in the loss of their main source of livelihood but also inflicted deep trauma. The study aimed to delve into this family's experiences when confronted with an unexpected disaster, exploring the impact they faced, the recovery process they undertook, and the factors influencing their decision-making, with particular emphasis on the head of the family. The head of the family played a vital role in family dynamics, making their decision-making process of great importance. The primary objective of this research was to gain a deeper understanding of the experiences of family members, particularly the head of the family, as they navigate the challenges of post-disaster recovery, specifically focusing on decision-making in economics and finances. By comprehending their experiences and decisions, the study sought to shed light on how families can rebuild their lives, particularly in terms of achieving economic and financial stability. Narrative analysis was employed in this study, as it allowed for an exploration of the experiences and decision-making of natural disaster survivors in a subjective and unrestrictive manner. This analysis enabled the capturing of the narratives shared by Mr. FP and Mrs. VP, the main informants, and facilitated the interpretation of supporting documents. Consequently, the collected data yielded rich and in-depth insights, further strengthening the findings of this research.

Keywords: resilient decision-making, natural disaster, family economy, recovery process, qualitative case study

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1. Introduction

Natural disasters have devastating consequences, causing immense loss of lives, destruction of infrastructure, and severe economic impacts. One notable example is the Indian Ocean tsunami in 2004, which resulted in the loss of approximately 230,000 lives and caused significant damage to coastal communities [1]. Tsunamis, characterized by their sudden and destructive nature, pose immense challenges for affected individuals and families in their journey towards recovery.

In the wake of such disasters, individuals and families often face not only the immediate loss of lives and physical assets but also long-term psychological trauma and economic hardships. The recovery process becomes a complex endeavor, requiring resilient decision-making and adaptive strategies to rebuild lives and communities. Understanding the decision-making process in the aftermath of natural disasters, particularly in relation to economic and financial aspects, is crucial for facilitating effective recovery and promoting long-term resilience.

While the specific focus of this study is on the experiences of a family affected by a natural disaster in Palu, Sulawesi, Indonesia, it is important to acknowledge the broader context of natural disasters and their impacts. The Indian Ocean tsunami serves as a poignant reminder of the magnitude of losses incurred in such events and the urgent need to comprehend the decision-making dynamics of affected families.

By examining the experiences and decision-making of the selected family in Palu, Sulawesi, Indonesia, this research aims to contribute to the existing body of knowledge on resilient decision-making in post-disaster contexts. Insights gained from this study will not only inform strategies for supporting this particular family but also provide valuable lessons for policymakers, researchers, and practitioners involved in disaster recovery efforts worldwide.

The devastating natural disaster in Palu, Sulawesi, Indonesia, has left many families grappling with the aftermath and its profound effects. This qualitative case study examines the decision-making process of a family that experienced a natural disaster in Palu. The participants of the study were Mr. FP, the head of the family, and his wife, Mrs. VP. Primary data was collected through in-depth interviews with FP and VP, conducted by relatives who witnessed the family's gradual recovery. Additionally, supporting data was gathered through data mining, including pre and post-disaster photographs. This family, like many others, faced an unpredictable and devastating event that not only resulted in the loss of their main source of livelihood but also inflicted deep trauma. The study aims to delve into the experiences of this family when confronted with an unexpected

disaster, exploring the impact they faced, the recovery process they undertook, and the factors influencing their decision-making, with particular emphasis on the head of the family. The head of the family plays a vital role in family dynamics, making their decision-making process of great importance. The primary objective of this research is to gain a deeper understanding of the experiences of family members, particularly the head of the family, as they navigate the challenges of post-disaster recovery, specifically focusing on decision-making in the realms of economics and finances. By comprehending their experiences and decisions, the study seeks to shed light on how families can rebuild their lives, particularly in terms of achieving economic and financial stability. Narrative analysis is employed in this study, as it allows for an exploration of the experiences and decision-making of natural disaster survivors in a subjective and unrestrictive manner. This analysis enables the capturing of the narratives shared by Mr. FP and Mrs. VP, the main informants, and facilitates the interpretation of supporting documents. Consequently, the collected data yields rich and in-depth insights, further strengthening the findings of this research.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Resilient decision-making in post-disaster recovery

Resilient decision-making in the context of post-disaster recovery involves the ability of individuals and families to adapt, recover, and make informed choices to mitigate the impacts of the disaster [2]. It is a dynamic and complex process influenced by a multitude of factors, including individual characteristics, social support networks, available resources, and the socio-cultural context in which the recovery takes place [3].

Scholars have emphasized the importance of understanding decision-making in post-disaster contexts, as it plays a critical role in facilitating effective recovery and long-term resilience [4]. Resilient decision-making enables individuals and families to identify opportunities, assess risks, and prioritize actions that lead to sustainable recovery and adaptive capacity [2].

2.2. Impact of natural disasters on families

Natural disasters have profound impacts on families, affecting various dimensions of their lives. Beyond the immediate loss of lives and physical assets, families often

experience psychological trauma, displacement, disruption of social networks, and economic hardships [5]. The economic consequences of disasters can be particularly severe, as they can lead to the loss of livelihoods, reduced income, and increased financial vulnerability [6].

Studies have highlighted the need to address the multidimensional impacts of disasters on families during the recovery process [7]. Effective recovery strategies should not only focus on rebuilding physical infrastructure but also consider the psychological and economic needs of affected families [6]. By understanding the specific challenges faced by families in post-disaster contexts, interventions and policies can be tailored to promote resilience and facilitate long-term recovery.

2.3. Decision-making and the role of the family head

Within the family unit, decision-making during post-disaster recovery often rests on the shoulders of the family head, who plays a crucial role in guiding the family's actions and shaping their recovery trajectory [8]. The family head's decision-making is influenced by various factors, including their knowledge, experiences, values, and the available resources within the family and the broader community [9].

Research has shown that decision-making within families can be complex and involve negotiation, conflict resolution, and the consideration of multiple perspectives [2]. The family head's decision-making process is influenced not only by their own perceptions and priorities but also by the needs and aspirations of other family members [9]. The family head's decision-making process is influenced not only by their own perceptions and priorities but also by the needs and aspirations of other family members.

2.4. Propositions

Based on the literature review, the following propositions are formulated:

Proposition 1: The experiences of families in post-disaster recovery are diverse and influenced by individual characteristics, social support networks, available resources, and the socio-cultural context [2]; [3].

Proposition 2: Resilient decision-making in post-disaster recovery contributes to long-term economic and financial stability for affected families [4]; [2].

3. Research Methods

3.1. Research design

To explore the experiences and decision-making of the selected family in post-disaster recovery, a qualitative research design is employed, specifically a case study approach. This approach allows for an in-depth examination of a specific family's unique circumstances, providing rich and context-specific insights into their decision-making process during post-disaster recovery [10]. By focusing on a single case, this study can capture the complexities and nuances of the family's experiences, enabling a comprehensive understanding of their challenges, strategies, and outcomes.

3.2. Data collection

Primary data collection for this study involves conducting in-depth interviews with the head of the family (Mr. FP) and his wife (Mrs. VP). The interviews are conducted by relatives who have witnessed the family's gradual recovery process, creating a comfortable and trusting environment for the participants to share their experiences [11]. In-depth interviews are particularly suitable for exploring subjective experiences, perspectives, and decision-making processes [12]. Through these interviews, the study aims to gain insights into the impact of the natural disaster, the decision-making factors influencing the family's actions, and their efforts towards economic and financial recovery.

In addition to the interviews, supporting data is gathered through a data mining process that includes the analysis of pre and post-disaster photographs. These visual documents provide additional context and corroborate the narratives shared during the interviews [13]. They offer a visual representation of the family's life before and after the disaster, capturing changes in their physical environment, possessions, and livelihoods.

3.3. Data analysis

The collected data will be analyzed using narrative analysis, a qualitative approach that focuses on interpreting and making sense of participants' stories and experiences [16]. This analysis involves coding and categorizing the data to identify themes, patterns, and key insights related to resilient decision-making in post-disaster recovery [11]. The narratives shared by Mr. FP and Mrs. VP during the interviews will be the primary source of data for the narrative analysis. Additionally, the interpretation of the supporting documents, such as the pre and post-disaster photographs, will supplement the analysis and provide further depth to the findings [13].

The combination of narrative analysis and document interpretation ensures a comprehensive and rigorous analysis of the data, capturing both the subjective experiences and the tangible evidence of the family's recovery journey.

We used a qualitative descriptive approach to reach an understanding by providing a comprehensive description [14] [15]. This qualitative case study utilizes a narrative analysis approach, which allows for the exploration of the experiences and decision-making of natural disaster survivors in a subjective and unrestrictive manner [17]. The primary informants of the study are Mr. FP, the head of the family, and his wife, Mrs. VP. In-depth interviews were conducted with FP and VP by relatives who witnessed the family's gradual recovery [17]. These interviews served as the primary data source, providing rich and detailed insights into the family's experiences.

In addition to the interviews, supporting data was gathered through data mining techniques. Pre and post-disaster photographs were collected to supplement the narrative accounts and provide visual evidence of the family's situation before and after the natural disaster [18]. This multi-method approach enhances the depth and reliability of the findings, as it triangulates the information obtained from different sources.

To ensure the credibility and rigor of the research, several steps were taken. The interviews were conducted in a sensitive and empathetic manner, allowing the participants to share their experiences openly and honestly [18]. The interviewers were carefully selected based on their familiarity with the family and their ability to establish trust and rapport. The data analysis process involved a careful examination of the narratives shared by the main informants, Mr. FP and Mrs. VP, as well as the interpretation of the supporting documents, such as the pre and post-disaster photographs [18].

4. Results and Discussion

The following section presents the findings and discussion based on the interview transcripts with Mr. FP and Mrs. VP. Their narratives provide valuable insights into the challenges and experiences they faced after the natural disaster in Palu, Sulawesi, Indonesia, as well as their decision-making process and subsequent actions.

Mr. FP shared his account of the events leading up to the earthquake and the subsequent loss of their business. He mentioned that since 2006, he had been running a cellphone service business in Palu, which expanded to include a BlackBerry store in 2010. However, with the decline in BlackBerry sales and the rise of online competition, their business began to struggle. Eventually, Mr. FP shifted his focus to online

sales, sourcing products from China. Unfortunately, copyright issues and increasing competition led to a decline in sales once again.

When the earthquake struck Palu in September 2018, Mr. FP was at home, working on his laptop. His wife, Mrs. VP, was out shopping, and their children were at home. The earthquake caused their business premises to collapse, but fortunately, their family members remained safe. They described the intense shaking and the terrifying moments of trying to escape from their home, which was partially damaged due to the neighboring building collapsing. The chaos and the fear of a possible tsunami led them to seek shelter at a neighbor's house.

Mrs. VP recounted her experience of being inside a supermarket when the earthquake struck. She struggled to exit the building due to the violent shaking, but eventually made it out. The couple acknowledged the importance of quick decision-making and prioritizing the safety of their family during the chaotic aftermath of the earthquake.

Following the earthquake, the family decided to leave Palu and seek refuge in Surabaya. They faced financial challenges, as their business had already been struggling prior to the disaster. They sold their house to settle outstanding debts and relied on the support of extended family members. Mr. FP shared his determination to start anew, focusing on online sales and gradually rebuilding their economic stability.

The findings highlight the resilience and adaptability demonstrated by the family in the face of adversity. They made difficult decisions, such as leaving their hometown and starting over in a new city. Their experiences also shed light on the importance of family support and the need to prioritize the well-being of loved ones in times of crisis.

5. Finding and Conclusion

The findings from the interviews with Mr. FP and Mrs. VP provide valuable insights into the challenges faced by a family after a natural disaster and their subsequent decision-making process. Despite significant setbacks, the family displayed resilience and adaptability as they sought to rebuild their lives. The decision to leave Palu and relocate to Surabaya proved crucial in securing a safer environment and access to support systems. By shifting their focus to online sales, the family demonstrated a willingness to explore alternative sources of income and adapt to changing circumstances. The experiences of Mr. FP and Mrs. VP underscore the importance of quick decision-making and prioritizing the safety and well-being of family members in times of crisis. Their determination to start anew and rebuild their economic stability is a testament to their resilience and resourcefulness.

The findings of this study have several implications for post-disaster recovery interventions and support systems. Firstly, there is a need to provide targeted assistance and resources to families affected by natural disasters. Financial counseling and guidance can help families make informed decisions and manage their finances effectively during the recovery process. Additionally, resilience-building programs should be developed to empower individuals and families to adapt to changing circumstances and explore alternative income-generating activities. These programs should emphasize the importance of collaboration and support networks in post-disaster recovery.

It is important to acknowledge the limitations of this study. The research focused on a single case study of a family in Palu, Sulawesi, Indonesia, which limits the generalizability of the findings. Further research could include a larger sample size and explore the experiences of families in different post-disaster contexts to gain a more comprehensive understanding. In conclusion, the experiences and decision-making process of Mr. FP and Mrs. VP provide valuable insights into the challenges faced by families in the aftermath of a natural disaster. Their resilience and adaptability in navigating the aftermath highlight the importance of family support, quick decision-making, and exploring alternative sources of income. By understanding these experiences, policymakers and practitioners can develop targeted interventions and support systems to facilitate the recovery and long-term resilience of disaster-affected families.

6. Implications, Limitations, and Suggestions

Implications, The findings of this qualitative study have several implications for practice and policy related to post-disaster recovery and support for affected families. Some key implications include:

1. **Support for Economic Recovery:** The experiences of Mr. FP and Mrs. VP highlight the importance of providing financial counseling and guidance to families in post-disaster settings. Access to such support can help families make informed decisions, manage their finances effectively, and rebuild their economic stability.
2. **Resilience-Building Programs:** The findings underscore the need for resilience-building programs that focus on enhancing adaptability and exploring alternative income-generating activities. These programs should emphasize the role of collaboration, support networks, and skill development to empower families to overcome challenges and navigate the recovery process.

3. **Family-Centered Approach:** The study highlights the central role of family dynamics and decision-making in the post-disaster recovery process. Interventions and support services should adopt a family-centered approach that recognizes the unique needs and strengths of each family unit and encourages their active participation in decision-making.

Limitation, It is important to acknowledge the limitations of this study to ensure the appropriate interpretation and application of the findings. The limitations include:

1. **Generalizability:** The study focused on a single case study of a family in Palu, Sulawesi, Indonesia. Therefore, the findings may not be fully representative of the experiences and decision-making processes of all families affected by natural disasters in different contexts.
2. **Subjectivity:** The study employed a qualitative approach, relying on the narratives and perceptions of Mr. FP and Mrs. VP. While valuable insights were gained from their accounts, the findings may be subject to bias and individual interpretation.
3. **Timeframe:** The study captured the experiences of the family during a specific timeframe, primarily focusing on their immediate responses and actions after the natural disaster. Long-term effects and changes in their decision-making process over time may not have been fully explored

Suggestions for Future Research, To build upon the findings of this study and address its limitations, several suggestions for future research are proposed:

1. **Comparative Studies:** Conduct comparative studies involving multiple case studies and diverse post-disaster contexts to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the decision-making processes and experiences of families. This would allow for a broader perspective and enhance the generalizability of the findings.
2. **Longitudinal Studies:** Undertake longitudinal studies to explore the long-term effects of natural disasters on families and their decision-making processes. This would provide insights into the evolving dynamics and recovery trajectories of families over time.
3. **Interdisciplinary Approaches:** Incorporate interdisciplinary approaches by collaborating with experts from various fields such as psychology, sociology, and economics. This would provide a more comprehensive understanding of the multi-faceted impacts of natural disasters on families and their decision-making.

4. Evaluation of Support Interventions: Evaluate the effectiveness of post-disaster support interventions, such as financial counseling programs or resilience-building initiatives. This would help identify best practices and inform the development of evidence-based interventions to support families in their recovery journey.

By addressing these suggestions for future research, scholars and practitioners can deepen their understanding of the decision-making processes and experiences of families in the aftermath of natural disasters and develop more targeted and effective support systems.

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