



THE ROLE OF RELIGIOUS VALUES IN FACING DISASTERS (Padang City Flash Flood Case Study 2025)

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Abstract :

The flash floods that hit Padang City at the end of November 2025 not only caused physical damage, but also affected the psychological and social conditions of the community. This study aims to analyze the role of religious values in helping communities face and recover from the disaster. Using a descriptive qualitative approach, data was collected through in-depth interviews, participatory observation, and documentation in areas affected by flash floods. Informants included affected communities, religious leaders, volunteers, and disaster management agencies. Data analysis was conducted using the Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña model, including data condensation, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. The results indicate that religious values played a significant role in three main aspects. First, religious values provide a framework of meaning for society in interpreting disasters as tests, destiny, or means of self-improvement, thereby helping to stabilize psychological conditions. Second, religious values encourage positive religious coping strategies such as prayer, trust in God, and collective worship activities that strengthen calm and hope. Third, religious values strengthen individual and community resilience through social solidarity, mutual cooperation, and spiritual support from religious institutions. These findings indicate that religious values play a strategic role in post-disaster recovery and can form the basis for developing faith-based psychosocial support programs.

Keywords : religious values, religious coping, resilience, flash floods, Padang City

INTRODUCTION

At the end of November 2025, Padang City was hit by flash floods and extreme rain which caused infrastructure damage, thousands of residents were affected, and there were fatalities. Media reports and local agencies recorded tens of thousands of affected residents, thousands of refugees, and deaths within a few days of the incident, the local government declared a state of emergency for a certain period and carried out emergency response. Post-disaster conditions show not only the need for physical-infrastructure recovery, but also the need for psychosocial recovery and social life reconstruction efforts that require local resources including religious value capital.

Disaster studies and disaster psychology confirm that community resilience is determined by a combination of physical capital, social capital, and cultural/spiritual capital. In the religious context of Indonesia, a number of studies have shown that religiosity through worship practices, theological narratives, and religious community networks contribute to coping mechanisms, post-traumatic stress reduction, and the formation of collective solidarity. However, literature that specifically explores the role of religious



values in major flash flood events in the West Sumatra region (with a Minangkabau cultural context) is still limited, so a contextual empirical study is needed.

This study aims to (1) describe how religious values are interpreted and actualized by communities affected by flash floods in Padang City, (2) identify forms of religious coping (e.g., collective prayer, theological interpretation, charity/almsgiving, the role of religious figures) that emerge after the disaster, and (3) analyze the extent to which religious values strengthen psychosocial resilience and community solidarity in the recovery process. Thus, the study aims to contribute empirical evidence for the integration of religious dimensions in culturally sensitive disaster management policies.

Religious values act as multidimensional cultural and psychosocial capital, not merely rituals or private beliefs. They significantly shape individual and collective coping processes and support post-disaster social reconstruction mechanisms. Religious values provide a framework of meaning, a source of comfort, norms of solidarity, and support networks that facilitate local resource mobilization. Therefore, an empirical understanding of these mechanisms is crucial for designing more effective and sustainable disaster interventions. Literature support shows patterns of religious contribution to family/community resilience in various disaster contexts in Indonesia.

1. Religious Values in Social and Psychological Perspective

Religious values are a set of teachings, beliefs, and moral norms believed to guide life for individuals and communities. These values serve to guide how people think, act, and respond to life situations, particularly when facing traumatic events such as natural disasters. Koenig explains that religious values are "a system of spiritual meaning that influences an individual's perception, interpretation, and behavior in the face of stress" (Koenig, 2012). Thus, religious values are not merely ritualistic in nature, but are also closely related to the process of meaning-making in the face of adversity.

In the context of Indonesian society, particularly the Minangkabau community, religious values have been integrated into the social system through the philosophy of "adat basandi syarak, syarak basandi Kitabullah." This value conveys the message that all social activities, including how to respond to crises, should refer to religious teachings. Geertz stated that religion in such societies functions as a "cultural system" that shapes ways of thinking and orientation of actions. Religious values such as patience, trust in God, gratitude, and mutual assistance serve as moral foundations that strengthen emotional resilience and solidarity. Furthermore, Rahman (2020) noted that Muslim communities tend to integrate worship such as communal prayer, dhikr, and mosque activities as part of collective disaster response mechanisms. Thus, religious values serve not only as religious doctrine but also as social capital that strengthens community cohesion after a disaster.

2. Coping Theory from a Religious Perspective

The concept of coping was classically described by Lazarus and Folkman as "cognitive and behavioral efforts to manage internal or external demands

that are perceived as burdensome or exceeding an individual's capacity" (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). Coping is divided into two types: problem-focused coping and emotion-focused coping. However, in religious communities, the dominant form of coping is religious coping, namely the use of religious beliefs and practices to overcome stress or crisis.

Pargament (1997) introduced the theory of religious coping as one of the most powerful adaptive mechanisms in extreme situations. He differentiates between positive religious coping, such as prayer, surrender, seeking wisdom, and spiritual support, and negative religious coping, such as feeling punished by God or blaming fate. According to Pargament (2011), religion-based coping strategies are a unique form of meaning-seeking, in which individuals internalize disaster experiences as a test, destiny, or a means of drawing closer to God.

Empirical research strengthens the role of religious coping. Ano & Vasconcelles' (2005) meta-analysis found that positive religious coping is associated with lower stress levels, greater emotional well-being, and better psychological adaptation. Moreover, Thomas & Barbato (2020) demonstrated that prayer, collective worship, and spiritual support can accelerate mental recovery in crisis-affected communities. In the context of the flash floods in Padang, religious practices such as communal prayer, spiritual support, and mosque activities are forms of coping that are deeply embedded in Minangkabau culture.

3. Post-Disaster Individual and Community Resilience Theory

Resilience is the ability to bounce back, survive, and adapt after experiencing stress or trauma. Masten (2014) calls resilience "ordinary magic", namely the natural capacity that individuals and communities have to recover from adversity. Resilience includes not only psychological aspects, but also social, cultural, and spiritual aspects. At the community level, Ungar (2011) emphasizes that resilience is formed through the interaction between social capital, support networks, cultural values, and collective abilities in managing resources.

In the context of disasters, resilience is a crucial factor in post-disaster recovery. Norris et al. (2008) explain that community resilience is influenced by four components: economic capital, social capital, information and communication, and community health. One crucial variable in the resilience process is religiosity. Bonanno (2005) shows that spiritual beliefs and religious practices can increase optimism, hope, and the ability to control emotions. In Indonesia, Yusuf (2019) found that communities with high levels of religiosity demonstrated faster and more stable recovery after a disaster.

In Minangkabau society, resilience is not only built through structural factors such as government assistance, but also through cultural factors – such as mutual cooperation, village solidarity, and religious spirit. Fauzia (2022) found that religious activities were an important means for the people of West Sumatra to recover after the disaster. Likewise, Firdaus (2023) in his research in Padang stated that religious values strengthen the social function of mosques as

centers of community recovery.

4. The Relationship between Religious Values, Religious Coping, and Resilience

Theoretically, the relationship between religious values, coping, and resilience can be explained through the mechanism that religious values become an interpretive foundation that shapes individual and community coping strategies. Religious meaning-making helps people interpret disasters not only as losses, but as tests that bring wisdom (Pargament, 1997). Coping strategies formed from religious values then influence the level of resilience of individuals and communities.

Koenig (2012) stated that people with high religious values have a tendency to use positive religious coping, which has an impact on increasing resilience and psychological well-being. Smith et al. (2020) showed that people who actively use religious coping methods recover from trauma more quickly and have higher levels of optimism. Even Mahoney (2021) emphasized that religiosity is one of the most significant predictors in building resilience after a traumatic event.

In disaster-prone areas like Padang City, religious values have proven to be a key pillar in strengthening the social fabric of the community. When flash floods occur, communal prayer, togetherness at the mosque, and solidarity based on religious values play a role in accelerating social and emotional recovery. This aligns with findings by Fauzia (2022) and Firdaus (2023), which show that religious values are a central force in the resilience of the West Sumatran community. Thus, within the theoretical framework of this research, religious values are positioned as variables that influence coping strategies and indirectly shape the resilience of disaster-affected communities.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study uses a qualitative approach with a descriptive design, because the focus of the research is to understand the meaning, experience, and form of actualization of religious values in communities affected by flash floods in Padang City. A qualitative approach was chosen to explore subjective phenomena that cannot be explained numerically, but rather through human narratives, perceptions, and experiences. Bogdan & Taylor assert that qualitative research seeks to understand social reality from the perspective of participants in a natural way.

Descriptive design is used to provide a detailed description of religious coping practices, resilience, and religious social capital of post-disaster communities without manipulating variables.

The research was conducted in Padang City, specifically in the area directly affected by the flash flood at the end of November 2025. This location was chosen purposively, because it was the center of the disaster and had religious dynamics and social networks that were very active in the post-disaster response and recovery process.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This study aims to reveal the role of religious values in helping the people of Padang City face flash flood disasters. Data was obtained through in-depth interviews with several informants consisting of flood victims, religious leaders, volunteers, educators, and local officials in the affected areas. Data analysis was carried out thematically.

1. Informant's Experience in Facing Flash Floods

The interview results showed that all informants experienced the flash flood as a traumatic experience that came suddenly. Floods cause damage to homes, loss of property, disruption of economic activities, and create fear and anxiety, especially for families with children and the elderly. After the disaster, environmental conditions suffered serious damage, while some communities had to evacuate and depend on external assistance.

2. Public Understanding of Disasters

Most informants viewed flash floods as events caused by a combination of natural and human factors, such as high rainfall, environmental damage, and suboptimal drainage management. From a religious perspective, disasters are understood as provisions from Allah SWT that contain wisdom, both as a test of faith, a warning, and a means of self-introspection for humans to better protect nature and increase piety.

3. Religious Values Held by Society

The dominant religious values embraced by informants include faith in Allah, patience, trust in God, sincerity, and gratitude. The majority of informants stated that these values did not weaken after the disaster, but rather became stronger. Disasters are seen as a momentum to get closer to Allah and improve the quality of worship and social relations.

4. The Role of Religious Values in Facing Disasters

Research findings show that religious values have a significant role in helping communities cope with post-disaster psychological stress. Faith in God provides inner peace and mental strength in the face of adversity. Religious practices such as prayer, dua, dhikr, religious study, and almsgiving increase after a disaster. These activities help reduce anxiety, foster hope, and strengthen the spiritual resilience of individuals and families.

The values of patience and trust in God help people accept the bitter reality without despair, while an attitude of sincerity and gratitude encourages people to rise and start life again slowly.

5. The Role of Religious Figures and Religious Institutions

Religious leaders play a strategic role in providing spiritual support through sermons, communal prayers, and spiritual guidance to victims. Mosques and religious institutions serve not only as centers of worship but also as centers for evacuation, aid distribution, and social solidarity coordination. Preaching and religious sermons are considered effective in calming the community and building optimism after a disaster.

6. The Impact of Religious Values on Social Attitudes

Religious values have been shown to foster a spirit of mutual assistance

(ta'āwun), solidarity, and social awareness within the community. Informants described increased mutual cooperation, sharing food, shelter, and labor during the recovery process. Religious values also influenced the community's attitude toward accepting aid with gratitude and without significant social conflict.

7. Challenges in Implementing Religious Values

However, research has found challenges in implementing religious values. Not all communities respond to disasters with the same religious approach. Differences in religious understanding, educational background, and psychological conditions cause some individuals to experience a shaken faith or become apathetic. In addition, post-disaster economic pressures become an obstacle in maintaining consistent religious practices.

8. Community Reflections and Expectations

Informants stated that the most valuable spiritual lesson from the disaster was an awareness of human limitations and the importance of surrendering to God. The community hopes that religion will play a role not only during disasters but also in mitigation efforts, disaster education, and strengthening environmental awareness. Synergy is needed between religious leaders, the government, and the community in integrating religious values into disaster management programs.

CONCLUSION

Based on the research results, it can be concluded that religious values play a crucial role in helping the people of Padang City cope with the flash flood disaster. The values of faith, patience, trust (Tawakal), sincerity, and gratitude have proven to be sources of spiritual and psychological strength for disaster victims. These values not only help individuals accept disasters with open arms but also foster social solidarity and concern among residents.

Religious leaders and religious institutions play a strategic role in providing spiritual strengthening, fostering community peace, and facilitating social assistance. Although there are challenges in implementing religious values due to differing understandings and post-disaster stress, in general, religious approaches make a positive contribution to community resilience.

Therefore, religious values need to be more systematically integrated into disaster mitigation and management efforts, through religious education, disaster outreach, and cross-sector collaboration. This approach is expected to foster a spiritually, socially, and morally resilient community in facing future disasters.

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