

Religious Coping in the Islamic Approach as an Effort to Resolve PTSD in Survivors of Natural Disasters

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Abstract

Purpose: As the largest archipelago in the world, Indonesia in addition to having extraordinary natural potential also has the potential for natural disasters. Since long time ago, Indonesia has often experienced natural disasters, namely natural disasters that are classified as large because it took a lot of victims such as the tsunami in Aceh, the eruption of Mount Merapi in Yogyakarta, the earthquake in West Sumatra and so forth. Natural disasters will certainly cause deep sadness to cause problems, one of which is post-traumatic stress disorder, which will arise if not treated from the beginning

Methodology: in this paper uses the literature review methodology, which aims to provide an overview of a concept more strongly based on empirical studies conducted

Results: Handling PTSD itself can be done one of them by conducting religious coping in an Islamic approach. In some studies, religious coping can reduce or overcome PTSD symptoms. The Islamic approach is used because if you look at the culture of the people who really hold religious values, especially Islam because the majority is Muslim. The Islamic approach in carrying out religious coping aims to build trust in God, be more dedicated in worshipping, applying Islamic religious values in dealing with problems, and building an Islamic environment. Therefore religious coping combined with Islamic values is felt to be suitable for the conditions of the Indonesian people, so that efforts to overcome PTSD in survivors of natural disasters can be even better.

Keywords: *religious coping, PTSD, disasters*

Indonesia is a country that has more than 17.480 island, located between two continents and two oceans, Indonesia is at the confluence of three world plates, which have the potential to cause earthquakes if the plates collide. Indonesia also has 127 active volcanoes, of which 76 are dangerous (Kardono, 2010). So that Indonesia has the potential to experience high natural disasters.

Natural disasters that have occurred in Indonesia include the tsunami in Aceh in 2004, the earthquake in Yogyakarta in 2006, the earthquake in West Sumatra in 2010, until the earthquake in Lombok in 2018. The disaster was classified as large because it has a large impact, ranging from damage infrastructure to cause fatalities.

For survivors of the disaster, this certainly raises deep sadness, not only because of the loss of property but also the loss of their families, this incident also raises problems that arise after the disaster, ranging from economic, social, health problems up to psychological problems such as anxiety, trauma, until it can cause a disorder called Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD).

PTSD is not only experienced by disaster survivors, but can also be felt by people who have experienced sexual trauma while in the military (Kintzle et al., 2015), can also be felt by war veterans (Haller, Myers, McKnight, Angkaw & Norman, 2016).

Research conducted by Rhodes, et al (2010) showed that after Hurricane Katrina, it was found that PTSD was found in 48.0% of respondents about 18 months after the storm. Bei, Bryant, and Gilson (2013) found 15.0% of respondents exposed to flooding in Australia showed increased

symptoms of PTSD. Survey results show that 20% of individuals who experience a traumatic event will experience PTSD (Van-Etten & Taylor, 1998).

Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) is a mental disorder that can develop after a person experiences a traumatic event, such as sexual violence, war, traffic accidents, or other events that can threaten a person's life (American Psychiatric Association, 2013)

The general symptoms of PTSD according to DSM-V, recalling traumatic events and nightmares, avoiding situations that remind them of trauma, dizziness or nausea when remembering trauma, hyperarousal which means being in a state of high alert and believing that the world is a dangerous place, loss of confidence in yourself or others, difficulty sleeping or concentrating, and are easily shocked by loud noises.

PTSD is an individual response to an event or condition that can cause symptoms, in the form of reexperiencing, avoidance, hyperarousal (increased alertness) (Schiraldi, 2009)

Research conducted by Endiyono and Hidayah (2018) on the survivors of the landslide disaster in Banjarnegara in 2014 showed that there were 30 people (78.9%) of survivors who experienced symptoms of PTSD from a sample of 38 people. Then also based on research data Pratiwi, Karini, and Agustin (2012) the percentage of mental problems PTSD Mount Merapi after 1 year after the eruption of Merapi amounted to severe PTSD 28.13%, moderate PTSD 53.12%, mild PTSD 18.75%. In addition, the results of Hotmaida, Yogisutanti, and Harini (2008) research on tsunami victims in Ciamis also showed that 48.8% of people experienced PTSD from a total sample of 43 people. From some of the above it can be concluded that survivors of natural disasters often experience PTSD.

DISASTERS IN ISLAMIC PERSPECTIVE

In Islamic perspective, everything that happens in this world is inseparable from the destiny of Allah SWT, as His words in Q.S Al An'am verse 59:

"And it does not drop a single grain in the darkness of the earth, nor does it get wet or dry, but it is written in the clear book 'Lauhul Mahfudh.'"

From this verse it can be understood that nothing happens without the purpose and purpose intended by Allah Subhana wa ta'ala. Meaning that in the Islamic concept, nothing happens by accident, but all happens with the permission of Allah SWT. Likewise, with every natural disaster that occurs, be it an earthquake, flood, and so forth, it all happens with the destiny of God that has a specific purpose, not just a mere natural event.

Natural disasters or calamities can also be a warning from God to humans to immediately return to Him, as His words in Q.S. Al An'am verse 44:

"When they forget what they have been warned, We will open for them all the doors of all things, and if they are happy with what (favor) comes to them, We will take what We have given, and they will failed completely"

God's warning in the form of disasters and calamities can also occur because humans have forgotten the living conditions so that people commit sin and disobedience without remembering His commands and prohibitions, as in God's word:

"Then whatever calamities and disasters that befall you are all your own actions, and Allah has forgiven most of your mistakes" (QS al Syura: 30).

Besides that disaster and disaster as a warning from God to a group of people who commit disobedience, tyranny, and other sins. Allah says in Q.S Al Anfal verse 25:

“ And guard yourselves against a chastisement which cannot fall exclusively on those of you who are wrong-doers, and know that Allah is severe in punishment.. “

Disaster is also a form of warning as well as God’s love for his servants so that humans will be patient and return to His ways, according to His Word in Q.S Al Baqoroh verses 155-156:

“ And We will most certainly try you with somewhat of fear and hunger and loss of property and lives and fruits; and give good news to the patient. Who, when a misfortune befalls them, say: ‘Inna lillahi wa inna ilahi rajiun’ (Surely we are Allah’s and to Him we shall surely return) “

From some of the words of Allah SWT above it can be concluded that the disaster or disaster has two sides. On the one hand, that disaster is God’s warning of human actions, while on the other side it is a test of faith so that we can be patient, and in that patience is reward and kindness for humans. Therefore, the disaster that should befall makes people to remember and get closer to Allah SWT

RELIGIOUS COPING

According to Pargament, Smith, Koenig, and Perez (1998), religious coping is a variety of things related to spirituality and religiosity in the form of cognitive, behavioral, and interpersonal responses in dealing with sources of stress. Wong-McDonald and Gorsuch (2000) revealed that religious coping is an individual way of using beliefs to manage stress and problems in life. Pargament and Raiya (2007) define religious coping as a way to understand and deal with negative life situations which relate to something related to religion.

From the above explanation it can be concluded that religious coping is an attempt by someone in dealing with stressful situations or problems in life by using a religious approach that leads to positive thinking towards the problems at hand.

Pargament, Smith, Koenig, and Perez (1998) explain there are eight aspects in positive religious coping::

1. Reappraisal of the goodness of religion (benevolent religious reappraisal), which is to re-describe the stressors felt with a good religious approach and provide benefits.
2. Collaborative religious coupling, which seeks control by establishing a relationship with God in solving problems.
3. Mencari dukungan spiritual (seeking spiritual support), yaitu mencari rasa nyaman dan aman melalui cinta dan kasih sayang Tuhan.
4. Religious purification, which is looking for spiritual cleansing by doing activities or practices in religion.
5. Spiritual relationship, which is looking for connection with transcendent power.
6. Seeking support from clergy or members, which is looking for a sense of comfort and security through the love and affection of brothers and sisters and religious scholars.
7. Religion as a helper (religious helping), namely efforts to increase spiritual support and comfort to others.
8. Religion as a place of forgiveness, which is to seek religious help to release feelings of anger, pain, and fear associated with something painful.

RELIGIOUS COPING IN THE ISLAMIC APPROACH AS AN EFFORT TO OVERCOME PTSD IN SURVIVORS OF NATURAL DISASTERS

Achour, Bensaid and Nor (2015) suggest that there are six coping strategies in an Islamic approach:

1. Trust in God

For Muslims, relying on God is an effective way to direct motivation and improve individual performance. This will help individuals when they are in a difficult or stressful situation. Believing in God's plan can facilitate individuals to be better by believing that His plan is the best plan even when faced with difficulties in life. The principle of belief in God can also help individuals become better at carrying out activities while still being aware of the potential and limitations they have as their purpose in creating humans. In difficult conditions, relying on God can be a powerful way of managing stress followed by the belief that God will not leave His servants (Achour, Bensaid & Nor, 2015). The one word of God that underlies the above explanation is:

"Say (Muhammad) : Nothing will afflict us save what Allah has ordained for us; He is our Patron; and on Allah let the believers rely.." (QS. At-Taubah : 51)

2. Performance of prayer

Prayer is a religious coping strategy undertaken by Muslims in dealing with problems or pressures in life. Through individual prayers can generate awareness of the presence of God that can provide a feeling of calm in life. Prayers can also create a homeostatic (balanced) condition in the individual. This can reduce the feelings of stress that arise from daily activities by getting time to rest physically, mentally, and psychologically. When praying, individuals are also instructed to divert their thoughts about the world, including all the burdens and worries they have. Prayers performed are also able to turn perceived concerns into positive forces through spoken prayers (Achour, Bensaid & Nor, 2015). One of the verses in the Qur'an that explains the prayer related to facing problems in life, namely:

"O you who believe! Ask God for help with patience and prayer. Surely, Allah is with the patient." (QS. Al-Baqarah : 153)

3. Dhikr (Remembrance of God)

People who remember Allah both through dhikr, praying, and reading the Koran can help in dealing with problems such as stress, anxiety, and social or family conflicts. Individuals are encouraged to always remember God in every time and place because these conditions can create support and guidance from Him. In addition, reading or listening to verses of the Koran as a way to remember the power of God can also calm the mind and heart of an individual. Individuals who always remember God can create awareness in themselves that there is a greater power that is able to change difficult situations and provide patience in the face of adversity (Achour, Bensaid & Nor, 2015). One of the words of God underlying the explanation above is:

" those who believe and their hearts are calm in the remembrance of Allah. Remember, only by remembering Allah the heart becomes calm. " (QS Ar-Ra'd : 28)

4. Patience and forgiveness

Patience can help individuals manage stress effectively. Islam sees patience possessed by individuals as the highest quality of spirituality and morals. Individuals who are patient in dealing with problems can strengthen their patience, endurance, and strong will. God's promise

which states that there will be ease after the hardship can also encourage individuals to be full of patience. Patience has major implications in the stresses of life which can strengthen individual resistance to stressors and strengthen reactions to anxiety. This is due to the fundamental belief that God loves and supports people who are patient (Achour, Bensaid & Nor, 2015). As for the word of God that explains patience, that is :

“And We will surely test you with some fear, hunger, loss of wealth, soul, and fruit. And give glad tidings to those who are patient, (those) who, in the face of adversity, say “Innalillahi wa inna ilaihiraji’un” (verily we belong to God and to him we return). They are the ones who receive forgiveness and mercy from their Lord and they are the ones who are guided.” (QS. Al-Baqarah : 155-157)

5. Positive Thinking

Positive thinking is based on individual belief in God. This can make individuals optimistic about changes that occur in life, have a new perspective, and provide a broader and dynamic assessment. These changes can distance individuals from feelings of hopelessness, depression, and helplessness. Through positive thinking can help individuals in doing stress coping more effectively by providing space to hold hope, optimism, rational, and can encourage individuals to overcome feelings of fear, doubt, and doubt (Achour, Bensaid & Nor, 2015). As for one of the verses in the Koran that explains how individuals relate to things, that is :

“... But maybe you don't like something even though it's good for you, and maybe you like something, even though it's not good for you. God knows, you don't know.” (QS. Al-Baqarah : 216)

6. Community Support

Islam encourages its people to live and interact in a society. This can be seen from the activities of the five daily prayers at the mosque, Friday prayers, and the implementation of the feast day. The support and ownership that is created from activities in the environment can have a significant influence on how individuals deal with disaster, stress, or anxiety. According to the Islamic perspective, each individual has moral responsibility towards emotional, spiritual, religious, and financial to others (Achour, Bensaid & Nor, 2015).

The Islamic approach in carrying out religious coping aims to build trust in God, be more dedicated in worshipping, applying Islamic religious values in dealing with problems, and building an Islamic environment.

There is a longitudinal study conducted by McIntosh, Poulin, Silver, Holman, and Gil-Rivas (2003) regarding the symptoms of PTSD after the 9/11 attacks, the results show that people who used religiosity during the first 6 months showed high levels of PTSD but after a year later his mental health was much better. in addition, if religion makes a closer adjustment and reduces the symptoms of PTSD (Park & Cohen, 1993). In addition, research conducted by Ai, Peterson and Huang (2003) on the influence of religiosity coping on the positive attitude of adult Muslim refugees in Bosnia and Cosovo shows that optimism of refugees in viewing stressful situations turns out to be positively related to positive religious coping.

Several studies above show that religious coping can overcome or reduce PTSD symptoms. If we look at the condition of Indonesian people who generally embrace a religion and the majority are Muslim, then it is clear that the Indonesian people will adhere to the values of their religion in daily life. Also according to Hodge (2008) that in providing therapy or techniques must adjust to the values held by the client, in order to provide better results.

Houg (2008) explains the importance of using religious interventions to create relationships between individuals and God who have power beyond human control. It is able to increase confidence in individuals. Research conducted by Gholamzadeh, Hamid, Basri, Sharif and Ibrahim (2014) shows that problem solving with a religious approach is able to overcome traumatic events in one's life. Individuals who judge that everything that happens to him is a plan from God will have a positive impact on his psychological.

Therefore religious coping combined with Islamic values is felt to be suitable for the conditions of the Indonesian people, so that efforts to overcome PTSD in survivors of natural disasters can be even better.

In this Islamic approach the survivors are expected to realize that every event in the world including disasters is the destiny of Allah SWT as a warning that humans draw closer to Allah by way of remembrance, worship and always think positively, as well as disaster as a test for humans to be patient, because in patience there is pleasure that Allah will give.

There are some suggestions for further researchers. It is suggested for further researchers to create the module of religious coping. It is also suggested for further researchers to explore the effectiveness of religious coping to overcome PTSD.

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