

Living a Post-Disaster Life: The Role of Cultural Adaptability, Coping Strategies, and Spiritual Support on Resilience Among Families Affected by the Semeru Eruption

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ABSTRACT

This research delved into the key determinants influencing family resilience in the aftermath of the Semeru volcano eruption. Catastrophic events like volcanic eruptions often create immense psychological and material challenges for affected families. Using a qualitative approach, this study conducts in-depth interviews with families residing in the Huntap-Huntara resettlement area of Lumajang Regency. The findings highlight three essential components of family resilience—belief systems, organisational structure, and communication coupled with problem-solving abilities—which are crucial in helping families recover. These components are shaped by both internal and external factors, including 1) flexible roles and cultural adaptability, 2) disaster-specific coping strategies, and 3) religious and spiritual support. Despite the uneven distribution of aid and the challenges of relocation, these resilience factors enable families to navigate post-disaster life. The study offers insights for future research and suggests potential psychological interventions to strengthen family resilience in similar contexts.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Numerous natural disasters disrupt the lives of communities, leading to substantial material losses and significant casualties. Often occurring without early warning, these events leave affected populations unprepared for mitigation or evacuation efforts. For example, the sudden eruption of Mount Semeru on December 2, 2021, caught residents by surprise, leaving them ill-prepared to undertake appropriate protective measures [1]. According to data from Basarnas, as of December 11, 2021, the death toll from the eruption reached 46, with nine individuals still missing, 18 suffering severe injuries, and 11 sustaining minor injuries. A total of 9,118 people were displaced and scattered across 115 evacuation sites [2].

The abrupt and drastic life changes caused by disasters give rise to various challenges for surviving families. Loss of property, homes, livelihoods, and even family members make post-disaster life particularly burdensome for survivors. The looming fear of subsequent disasters and the potential for further losses of life and belongings exacerbate their hardship. In such a distressed and challenging post-disaster environment, many survivors begin to experience psychological imbalance. It is unsurprising, therefore, that disaster survivors commonly exhibit symptoms of post-disaster stress, depression, anxiety, and similar psychological conditions [3]. The prevalence of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) following a catastrophic event can reach as high as 38.7% [4]. Without psychological intervention, many survivors experience persistent and worsening psychological symptoms. However, in other cases, these symptoms gradually diminish, allowing survivors to adjust and move forward in their post-disaster lives.

In post-disaster contexts, one critical variable that determines a family's ability to endure and adapt to adversity is family resilience. Family resilience refers to a family's capacity to withstand hardship, adapt to adversity, and recover from setbacks [5]. Previous research has shown that families with low resilience are at greater risk of developing psychological disorders, including PTSD [6]. Furthermore, the sudden nature of natural disasters exacerbates the lack of preparedness among individuals and families in coping with such adversity [7], leading to a decline in family resilience. Additionally, as noted by Puspitasari & Kaloeti,

families tend to exhibit weaker resilience when they hold negative worldviews and adopt a pessimistic attitude toward navigating difficult times during and after a disaster[8].

The findings from previous research contrast with the preliminary interviews conducted with three survivor families affected by the Mount Semeru eruption. BYU, A local figure, said:

“Yes, some families endure difficulties in living a post-disaster life. But in general, as you see, they remain strong. They want to establish their new life. Thanks to the philanthropists for their generosity in helping us.”

LIH, who represents her affected family, said:

“The communities around Semeru foothills have lived with Semeru's behaviour for a long time. These eruptions were not the first time. Thus, from Semeru's eruption records, we knew that this kind of disaster would eventually happen. We are ready (for these circumstances). We make a life from Semeru's natural resources... but we are also aware of the risk...”

PRS, a breadwinner for his affected family, confirms:

“There were absolutely some enormous eruptions throwing off tons of volcanic materials such as sands, stones, etc. over the mountain slopes. People around Semeru see magmatic debris as rich economic commodities. They can sell those sands and stones because the demand for those two is really high, especially around the East Java Province. We believe that we can restore our wealth if we manage those 'gifts' from Semeru”.

Those preliminary interviews imply that the survivors of the Semeru Eruption see the disaster differently. They wouldn't let this disaster make them down. They know how to deal with it, and it keeps them optimistic about living their 'new life'. Interestingly, this preliminary finding aligns with previous investigations. Total sampling research by Wibowo on 90 elderly survivors of the

Semeru eruption showed moderate resilience of 56.7%, high resilience of 17.8%, and low resilience of 25.6% [9]. Rakhmawati et al. also obtained almost the same results. According to their research, of the 60 respondents who filled out the Walsh Family Resilience Questionnaire (WFRQ), 60% showed moderate family resilience. This study used non-probability sampling [10].

Family resilience studies, in the context of survivors of the Mount Semeru eruption, still show limited research evidence to this day. However, this phenomenon can be attributed to several factors. First is the socio-cultural factor. The majority of the population in this region is Muslim family, and their lives are deeply intertwined with Islamic traditions. Communal activities, such as congregational prayers, regular study groups, and religious rituals, are embedded with spiritual values. Second, many families in the area have lived there for generations. Despite the sudden eruption, they may have been somewhat prepared, given that Mount Semeru is known to be an active volcano. Consequently, when the eruption occurred, these families were already equipped with disaster mitigation plans. Third, the government had stationed personnel, including teams from Basarnas, PMI, and PVMBG, to facilitate disaster response efforts in the area, ensuring that adequate resources were in place to address volcanic activity.

Furthermore, these factors remain speculative and require further exploration through empirical research. The level of resilience demonstrated by the families surviving the Mount Semeru eruption offers valuable insight and inspiration for other families facing similar challenges. Beyond this, understanding the factors influencing family resilience is crucial for developing targeted psychological interventions and therapies to enhance family resilience in the future. In light of these points, the aim of this study is to investigate further the determinants of family resilience among families affected by the Mount Semeru eruption.

2. METHOD

The variable examined in this study is the family resilience determinant among survivors of the Mount Semeru eruption. Operationally, family resilience in this context refers to the adaptive dynamics exhibited by families affected by the Semeru eruption, enabling them to endure hardships, adjust to post-eruption life, and

take steps toward re-establishing a sustainable living condition. The population for this study includes families residing in Huntap-Huntara in the vicinity of Mount Semeru who were impacted by the major eruptions in 2021 and 2022.

Participants were selected using purposive sampling to ensure they represented families that signed some resiliency criteria during preliminary interviews. This was determined based on initial assessments during preliminary interviews using criteria such as demonstrated adaptive capacity, engagement in communal or individual recovery activities, and a positive outlook toward future planning. The study specifically included families with diverse socio-cultural and economic backgrounds to ensure a comprehensive understanding of resilience determinants.

Data collection was conducted using semi-structured interviews. The interview guide was designed based on Walsh's family resilience theory and included topics such as belief systems, family organisational processes, communication dynamics, and coping strategies [11]. Examples of specific questions included: "*Can you describe how your family supported each other during the initial evacuation?*" and "*What role did religious or cultural practices play in helping your family cope with the disaster?*"

Ethical considerations were integral to the research process. Informed consent was obtained from all participants prior to the interviews, ensuring they understood the purpose of the study, their voluntary participation, and their right to withdraw at any point without consequence. Confidentiality was maintained by anonymizing participant identities and securely storing data to prevent unauthorized access.

Data analysis was carried out using coding analysis, following a series of steps: verbatim transcription, data reduction, coding mapping, and the identification of sub-themes leading to the formulation of overarching themes. To ensure the rigor of the data collection process, the researcher adhered to the principle of data saturation, which was determined when no new themes, categories, or insights emerged during subsequent interviews. This was monitored by continuously comparing new data with existing themes and ensuring that all key aspects of family resilience had been thoroughly explored.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1. Research Findings

3.1.1. BYU Family

The first respondent is the BYU Family, a young couple with a 3-year-old child who has been residing in transitional and permanent housing (*Huntap-Huntara*) for approximately two years at the time of the interview. Originally from Kampung Renteng in Sumberwuluh village, the BYU Family fled during the 2021 Mount Semeru eruption and became displaced for several months. Their house, belongings, and livestock, including cows and goats, were completely buried under volcanic material. Reflecting on their experience, the husband stated, *"We lost everything during the eruption—our house, our farm, even our livestock. It was like starting from zero, but we managed to move forward step by step with the support we received."*

Before the eruption, the BYU Family lived relatively well in Kampung Renteng. The husband worked as a sand miner on the slopes of Semeru, while the wife managed the family's livestock and their coffee farm. However, the eruption drastically altered their lives. With their home and livestock buried, they were forced into displacement, moving from one shelter to another—village halls, schools, and finally renting in a different village. The husband remarked, *"It was tough moving from place to place. We had to rely on aid and help from volunteers to survive during those early months."* After months of living as evacuees, the BYU Family eventually received assistance in the form of a house at the relocated settlement for eruption victims (*Huntap-Huntara*), where they have lived since.

As a young family, the BYU Family has set short- and long-term plans in the aftermath of the disaster. They expressed gratitude for the assistance they received, particularly the house in *Huntap-Huntara*. The husband explained, *"We are thankful for the house they provided us. For now, we're monitoring how things go here. If life improves in the next couple of years, we'll stay. Otherwise, we may need to rebuild in Kampung Renteng."* Their short-term goal is to monitor how life progresses in this new location. If conditions improve in the next 1–2 years, marked by their small shop thriving and being able to meet their daily needs, they plan to stay. However,

if no significant progress is made, they intend to return to their original village (*Kampung Renteng*) and rebuild their home.

The BYU Family does not consider themselves deeply religious despite living in an area where religious and cultural activities such as *pengajian* and *tahlilan* (communal prayer) are common. Although they rarely participate in these collective prayer activities, the family still engages in the fundamental practices of Islam, which play a significant role in their spiritual strength. The wife shared, "*We may not join the communal prayers often, but we still pray daily. It keeps us grounded and gives us strength.*"

Flexibility has been a key strength for the BYU Family. Their adaptability is evident in how they transitioned from farming and livestock management to opening a small shop in *Huntap-Huntara* while continuing to dry coffee beans, which the husband picks from a coffee plantation where they now work. Despite the distance, the husband still commutes to work as a sand miner in *Sumberwuluh*, demonstrating his flexibility in coping with changes in his commute. He reflected, "*It's not easy, but you do what you have to. Working far away and running a shop here—this is how we survive now.*"

Communication within the BYU Family has improved since the eruption. This was highlighted by the husband purchasing a mobile phone for his wife. Before the eruption, they only had one phone, which made communication difficult, particularly during emergencies. Having learned from past experiences, the husband bought a mobile phone, albeit an inexpensive one, to ensure better communication in the future. He mentioned, "*I got her the phone so we can stay in touch. It's not fancy, but it's something we didn't have before the disaster.*"

Life after the eruption has been challenging for the BYU Family, requiring them to prioritise their most essential needs. The husband delayed purchasing a television, deeming it unnecessary, and the family has not gone on any recreational trips since the disaster. Despite being severely affected by the eruption, the family is debt-free and has some savings, mostly from aid provided by various organisations. The husband remarked, "*We've managed to save a little here and there, mostly from the aid we received. It's not much, but it's something to fall back on.*" They hold onto the hope of returning to their original village and rebuilding their home if conditions in *Huntap-Huntara* prove unsatisfactory.

As survivors of the Mount Semeru eruption, the BYU Family received considerable support from various parties. Without this aid, it would have been difficult for them to move forward, as their assets were entirely destroyed. The husband noted, *"The help we got was crucial. Without it, we wouldn't be where we are now."* The assistance came from both central and local governments, coordinated through the national search and rescue agency (BASARNAS). The family acknowledges receiving sufficient aid and even declined additional help when it exceeded their needs. However, they also observed inequalities in aid distribution, with some survivors receiving aid while others did not. The husband commented, *"Some got more than they needed, and others didn't get enough. It's something that could have been handled better."*

The BYU Family received a range of assistance. While displaced, volunteers provided food and basic supplies such as clothing and food staples. Some volunteers also offered financial aid to the survivors, which the family saved for future needs. The husband shared, *"We were given food, clothes, even some cash. We saved most of the money because we knew we'd need it later."* The most significant form of aid for the BYU Family was the house they received in the *Huntap-Huntara* settlement, which marked a turning point in their post-disaster recovery. Not only did they receive a house, but it came furnished with essential items such as tables, chairs, mattresses, and kitchen utensils. The wife added, *"The house they gave us had everything we needed to start over. It's been a blessing."* This support was invaluable to the family, who had previously been renting a home while in displacement.

To triangulate the interview data, observation is conducted to confirm the interview. During observations, the BYU Family displayed strong adaptability through their daily routines. For example, the husband was seen organising shop inventory and drying coffee beans, while the wife managed household chores and interacted with neighbours to maintain social connections. The family's resilience was further evident in their collaborative problem-solving, such as discussions about managing finances and optimising their shop's operations.

3.1.2. LIH Family

The LIH Family member consists of a husband and wife with three children: two daughters aged 16 and 10, and a 7-year-old son. The family resides in one of the houses provided at the relocated settlement for victims of the 2021 Mount Semeru eruption (Huntap-Huntara) and has been living there for over a year. Prior to the eruption, they resided in Kampung Renteng, part of the Sumberwuluh village. The family described their current settlement as "*safe and secure, Alhamdulillah,*" emphasising the sense of safety they feel in their new environment.

The LIH Family fled during the eruption, with the children being evacuated separately by their teachers while the parents remained at home. When the eruption occurred, the husband and wife tried to save valuable items from the house but were unable to retrieve much due to the advancing lava. After the lava covered their home, they moved to a temporary shelter (Posko), where they stayed for approximately three months. The family described their challenges during this time, noting, "*Our savings were used up and gone,*" when discussing how they depleted their financial resources. Eventually, they received assistance from the government and were relocated to the permanent housing complex for survivors.

Before the eruption, the LIH Family's livelihood relied heavily on farming and managing livestock. The husband worked as a labourer on a coffee plantation and tended the family's small livestock, while the wife managed household tasks and occasionally helped with farming. However, the eruption destroyed their home, farmland, and livestock, forcing them to live in displacement and receive aid. Reflecting on this loss, the mother shared, "*Our farmland was buried under volcanic ash,*" illustrating the devastating impact on their means of livelihood.

In the initial months of displacement, the family relied on various sources of aid, ranging from food, clothing, and basic supplies provided by government and non-governmental organisations (NGOs). The family described how they had little to nothing left after the eruption, as their home and possessions were lost. However, over time, they received help in the form of food packages, clothing, and other essential items that helped them survive the difficult months. They emphasised the importance of certain aid, stating, "*Money is the most important thing,*" and

highlighting that financial support and food staples were critical for their recovery.

The LIH Family expressed both gratitude and concern about the aid they received. While they were thankful for the assistance provided, particularly the house in Huntap-Huntara, they were critical of the distribution process, noting that some survivors received more aid than others, which led to perceptions of inequality. Despite these challenges, the family is gradually rebuilding their lives. The father continues to work as a farm labourer and occasionally takes on additional jobs in the village. The mother assists by managing the household and helping with the family's new sources of income, such as drying and processing agricultural products from the relocated village.

When it comes to their future, the LIH Family is determined to make the best of their situation. They expressed their aspirations by stating, "*We want to make progress,*" emphasising their hope for economic improvement. They hope that life in Huntap-Huntara will improve, allowing them to rebuild their livelihood. However, they also mentioned that if circumstances do not significantly improve in the next few years, they would consider returning to their original village to start over, despite the risks associated with volcanic activity.

The LIH Family described their communication as relatively open, with the parents encouraging their children to express their thoughts and concerns. This openness has been important for the family's emotional recovery, as the trauma of the eruption and displacement took a toll on their mental well-being. The mother reflected on this by stating, "*If only we could, we would,*" highlighting her desire to support her children emotionally and address their needs. She has become more patient and attentive to the children's needs since the disaster, recognising their struggles in coping with the loss of their home and the sudden changes in their environment.

In terms of religious and cultural practices, the LIH Family remains closely connected to their faith and community. Despite their struggles, they actively participate in religious gatherings and communal prayers (*tahlilan*) with other families in Huntap-Huntara. This has provided them with emotional support and a sense of unity, helping them to cope with the aftermath of the disaster. The mother described these gatherings as "*weekly and*

regular," emphasising their importance in maintaining spiritual strength and social bonds.

Economically, the LIH Family has managed to remain debt-free since the eruption, thanks in part to the aid they received. While they have not made any major financial investments or purchases, the family prioritises saving for their children's education and other long-term needs. They are cautious about spending and focus on meeting their most essential needs. Reflecting on their priorities, the father remarked, "*A home is our top priority*," emphasising the importance of having a stable residence above all else.

Ultimately, the LIH Family hopes that their situation will improve with time. They appreciate the support from various organisations but are aware that recovery will be a long process. Their resilience is reflected in their willingness to adapt to their new environment while maintaining hope for a better future.

Triangulation using observation is employed to validate the interview data. It revealed the LIH Family's reliance on communal support and religious activities. The family frequently participated in neighbourhood prayer gatherings (*tahlilan*) and other collective activities, such as cleaning shared spaces in the resettlement area. These activities seemed to foster a sense of normalcy and emotional security, particularly for the children, who were observed engaging in group play with peers in the community.

3.1.3. PRS Family

The third respondent, the PRS Family, consists of a husband and wife with two children: a 16-year-old son and an 8-year-old daughter. They are among the survivors who relocated to the Huntap-Huntara settlement for victims of the 2021 Mount Semeru eruption. Previously, they resided in Curah Kobokan village, a high-risk area severely impacted by the eruption. The family has been living in the new settlement for just over a year.

During the eruption, the PRS Family evacuated together. The parents, along with their two children, managed to flee after receiving warnings from local authorities and neighbours. They described their escape as chaotic, with ash and volcanic material rapidly covering the area. In the immediate aftermath, the family sought shelter at a temporary evacuation site (*posko*), where they lived for around four months before being relocated to the current

settlement. Reflecting on their experience, the mother stated, *“We lost everything—our house, our belongings—but it wasn’t our fate to hold onto them.”* This perspective helped them endure the difficulties of displacement.

Prior to the disaster, the PRS Family’s livelihood depended on agriculture. The father worked on a local farm, growing vegetables and rice, while the mother managed the household and helped during harvest seasons. Their son assisted in agricultural tasks during school holidays. However, like many other families in the area, their farmland and homes were completely destroyed by the eruption. This forced them to abandon their agricultural lifestyle and depend on aid in the early stages of displacement. The father recalled the early challenges, saying, *“Our land and home were gone, and for months, we relied on donated rice and cooking oil to survive.”*

In the initial weeks after the eruption, the PRS Family struggled to meet their basic needs, relying on food and clothing distributed by humanitarian organisations and the local government. The father mentioned that the loss of their home and livelihood had placed them in a state of uncertainty. The family expressed gratitude for the support they received but highlighted that it was challenging to adapt to living in a relocation site where their primary source of income had vanished. The mother shared, *“We didn’t bring anything with us when we fled. Once we received help, I saved every bit of money we got to build a small stall and restart our lives.”*

Over time, the family began adjusting to life in Huntap-Huntara. The father now works in construction and occasionally helps in the local market. At the same time, the mother has taken on small tasks such as selling snacks and assisting neighbours in various community activities. Though these activities provide some income, it is considerably less than what they earned before the disaster, and the family continues to face economic difficulties. The mother explained, *“Sometimes I make snacks like chips or traditional cakes, and the children help me pack them. Everyone contributes in small ways.”*

The PRS Family reported that communication within their household has become more open since the disaster. The father explained that the experience of evacuation and loss had made them more aware of each other’s emotions, leading to deeper discussions

and emotional support among family members. *“Now, if one of us looks upset or overwhelmed, the others step in to help,”* the mother added, emphasising how family members have grown more understanding and attentive. They have also encouraged their children to express their feelings about the event, especially since both children initially experienced nightmares and anxiety due to the trauma of displacement.

The mother emphasised the importance of family unity, particularly in maintaining the children’s sense of stability. She has become more attentive to their needs, ensuring they feel safe and supported during this period of recovery. The parents also shared how they have reinforced the importance of education despite the disruption caused by the disaster and have worked closely with the children’s teachers to ensure they stay on track academically.

Religiously, the PRS Family has remained devout and closely involved with the local religious community in Huntap-Huntara. They attend regular religious gatherings and take part in collective prayers (tahlilan) with fellow survivors. According to the mother, these practices have provided them with emotional comfort and a sense of solidarity. *“We may have lost our home, but our faith keeps us grounded and connected with others,”* she remarked.

Financially, the PRS Family has adopted a cautious approach since the disaster. While their income is lower, they prioritise essential expenses and save whenever possible, with a particular focus on securing their children’s future. The father mentioned, *“I sometimes save small amounts, but it’s difficult. We focus on what’s most important—food, education, and shelter.”* They acknowledged that the aid provided by various organisations helped them to survive the early months but recognised that this support was not a long-term solution. As a result, the family has been trying to find alternative ways to sustain themselves economically.

Looking to the future, the PRS Family expressed a desire to rebuild their lives, but they are uncertain about how long this process will take. They hope that their current situation will improve, allowing them to regain a stable livelihood. However, they also mentioned that returning to agriculture, their previous source of income, may no longer be viable given the ongoing risks associated with volcanic activity in the region. Despite these challenges, the family remains resilient and optimistic, with the

father stating, “We just have to adapt and keep moving forward, holding onto hope that things will improve in time.”

To validate the interview data, observation is taken into account. Observation of the PRS Family revealed their resourcefulness in transitioning to new livelihoods. For example, the father was seen managing a small food stall, while the mother prepared snacks for sale, with the children occasionally assisting in packaging and serving customers. The family also demonstrated a strong commitment to education, as observed in the parents’ active involvement in their children’s homework and discussions with teachers about academic progress.

3.2. *The Analysis of Family Resilience among The Survivors of Semeru Eruption*

This chapter describes the similarities and differences of resiliency dynamics in terms of Walsh's family resilience theory (belief systems, family organisational processes: relational and structural Supports, and communication) [11]. The table below breaks the units and is followed by the narration per component.

Table1: Comparison of family resilience among families

Component	Sub-Component	BYU Family	LIH Family	PRS Family
Belief System	Making Meaning of Adversity	Views hardships as inherent to life and faces them with gratitude and resilience.	Interprets the disaster as a divine test to be accepted with patience.	Sees difficulties as an opportunity to learn, especially in financial planning.
	Positive Outlook	Maintains a hopeful view of the future and plans to reassess their situation if conditions don't improve.	Optimistic about their child's future, despite the child not currently attending school.	Plans to save money and rebuild their home if conditions in temporary housing do not improve.

	Transcendence and Spirituality	Engages in daily personal religious practices rather than communal activities.	Actively participates in communal religious gatherings, which provide spiritual and social support.	Relies on daily prayers for spiritual strength, but is not highly active in communal religious activities.
Family organisational Processes	Role Flexibility	Displays high flexibility: operates a small shop, manages coffee beans, and works as a sand miner.	Limited flexibility: stopped working post-relocation due to lack of skills and job opportunities.	Highly adaptable: transitioned from farming to running a small food shop.
	Connectedness	Strong family relationships, enhanced by mobile phone use for communication.	Maintains close family ties through frequent phone conversations between family members.	Proximity allows direct interaction and strong family relationships despite limited phone ownership.
	Socio-Economic Resources	Received substantial aid but reports dissatisfaction with uneven distribution.	Relocation house is the most significant support, though financial struggles persist.	Received housing, cash assistance, and trauma-healing therapy, aiding both economic and psychological recovery.
Communication	Clarity	Prioritises clear communication in daily decisions, especially	No specific information on communication clarity.	Maintains clear communication in financial planning and

	regarding family needs.		business activities.
Open Emotional Expression	Efforts to improve emotional communication using an emergency phone; direct data unavailable.	Emotional connection sustained through frequent phone communication by the husband.	No direct evidence of open emotional expression; may not be a structured focus.
Collaborative Problem-Solving	Works collaboratively to manage finances and adjust to challenges post-disaster.	Husband and child collaborate in earning a living as sand miners despite economic difficulties.	Family cooperates effectively in running the shop and managing food orders.

3.2.1. Belief System

The belief systems of the three families (BYU, LIH, and PRS) play a crucial role in their resilience, as outlined in Walsh’s family resilience theory. Each family makes meaning of adversity in distinct ways: the BYU Family views hardships as inherent to life, embracing gratitude and resilience to persevere; the LIH Family interprets the disaster as a divine test that requires patience and acceptance; and the PRS Family sees their challenges as opportunities to learn and improve, particularly in financial planning. These perspectives allow the families to endure adversity with strength and hope.

A positive outlook is another critical factor for all three families. The BYU and PRS Families demonstrate hope and adaptability by planning to reassess their relocation situation if conditions do not improve. Similarly, the LIH Family remains optimistic about their child’s future, even though the child is currently out of school. This shared optimism underscores their resilience in navigating post-disaster difficulties.

Spirituality and transcendence offer varying degrees of support. The BYU and PRS Families rely primarily on personal religious practices, finding inner strength and gratitude in their

daily prayers, while the LIH Family actively participates in communal religious activities, such as prayers and tahlilan gatherings. For the LIH Family, these activities provide not only spiritual sustenance but also enhance their social connectedness, strengthening their overall resilience.

3.2.2. Family Organisational Processes: Relational and Structural Supports

Family organisational processes, including role flexibility, connectedness, and socio-economic resources, shape the resilience of the three families. Both the BYU and PRS Families exhibit high levels of role flexibility, with the BYU Family adapting to new roles such as operating a shop and managing coffee beans, and the PRS Family transitioning from farming to running a food business. In contrast, the LIH Family demonstrates limited flexibility, as economic and skill-related barriers prevent them from taking on new roles.

Connectedness, or the strength of family relationships, is a significant pillar of resilience for all three families. The BYU Family's purchase of a mobile phone facilitates better communication, while the LIH Family maintains close ties through frequent phone conversations between family members. The PRS Family, despite limited phone ownership, relies on physical proximity to nurture their strong family bonds, showcasing that closeness and communication play vital roles in coping with adversity.

Access to socioeconomic resources also varies across families. The BYU Family benefits from substantial aid, though they highlight inequities in distribution. For the LIH Family, receiving a house in the relocation site has been essential, but financial struggles persist due to debt and limited job prospects. In comparison, the PRS Family has received comprehensive support, including housing, financial aid, and trauma-healing therapy, which addresses both their economic and psychological needs.

3.2.3. Communication

Communication is vital in all three families, encompassing clarity, emotional expression, and collaborative problem-solving. The BYU and PRS Families emphasise clear communication. The BYU Family prioritises clarity in daily decision-making, especially

regarding family needs, while the PRS Family applies it to financial planning and business activities. However, there is no evidence of clarity being a significant focus for the LIH Family.

Open emotional expression varies across families. The BYU Family uses an emergency phone to improve communication in emotionally charged situations, though direct evidence of open emotional expression is unavailable. The LIH Family demonstrates emotional closeness through phone communication initiated by the husband. At the same time, the PRS Family lacks explicit evidence of emotional openness, suggesting it may not be a structured focus for them.

All three families excel in collaborative problem-solving. The BYU Family works together to manage finances and adapt post-disaster. Similarly, the LIH Family demonstrates collaboration between the husband and child in earning a living as sand miners, despite economic challenges. The PRS Family exemplifies teamwork in managing their shop and food orders, showcasing resilience through coordinated efforts.

3.2.4 All three components

The three components of Walsh's family resilience theory—belief systems, organisational processes, and communication—collectively strengthen the resilience of the BYU, LIH, and PRS Families. The belief systems provide each family with meaning, hope, and spiritual strength, enabling them to endure adversity with optimism. Organisational processes, such as role flexibility, strong relationships, and resource utilisation, enable families to adapt and maintain stability during challenging times. Communication ensures clarity, emotional support, and collaboration, helping families solve problems and stay connected.

While all families exhibit resilience, the degree of effectiveness in these components varies. The BYU and PRS Families show high adaptability and communication clarity, while the LIH Family relies heavily on communal spirituality and relational bonds. Socio-economic resources are essential for all families, with the PRS Family benefitting most from holistic support. Collectively, these components interplay to provide a foundation for resilience, allowing each family to navigate the post-disaster landscape in ways that reflect their unique circumstances and strengths.

3.3. *Internal Factors of Family Resilience*

Based on interview data, several internal factors have been identified that influence the resilience of families affected by the Semeru eruption. These include flexibility, effective communication, emotional support, spiritual strength, future aspirations, and coping strategies. Flexibility and adaptability are crucial, as demonstrated by the BYU Family, who shifted from managing livestock and coffee plantations to running a small shop in Huntap-Huntara, and the PRS Family, who established a small business after the disaster. Communication and emotional support also play significant roles; the BYU Family improved communication by purchasing a mobile phone, while the LIH and PRS Families maintained strong communication and interaction, reinforcing emotional bonds amid challenging circumstances.

Faith and spiritual strength have been vital in maintaining emotional stability. Although the BYU Family is not heavily involved in religious activities, they continue daily worship, while the LIH Family participates in religious gatherings, providing social and emotional support. The PRS Family relies on daily worship and trauma healing for psychological recovery. Additionally, future planning and aspirations drive these families to develop both short- and long-term plans, such as assessing life in Huntap-Huntara and considering returning to their original village if necessary.

Families employ coping strategies to manage stress and adapt to post-disaster conditions. Proactive coping is evident in the BYU Family, who altered their livelihoods and made future plans to address changes, while the LIH Family manages their finances strictly and seeks spiritual support. The PRS Family diversifies their income and participates in trauma healing, indicating that coping is not only linked to material concerns but also to mental and spiritual well-being.

Overall, coping strategies strengthen family resilience, enabling them to adapt, confront challenges, and build resilience in the face of difficult circumstances. Internal factors such as flexibility, effective communication, emotional support, spiritual strength, planning, future aspirations, and coping strategies form the core foundation that helps families affected by the Semeru eruption adjust to their new post-disaster lives.

3.4. *External Factors of Family Resilience*

Based on the interview data, external factors influencing the resilience of families affected by the Semeru eruption include the aid and support received by IM, NA, and PRS families. The provision of permanent housing at Huntap-Huntara offered a stable and safe environment after the loss of their homes, forming the foundation for families to rebuild their lives. These homes, equipped with basic furniture, facilitated initial recovery. Additionally, economic assistance in the form of food, clothing, essential goods, and cash from the government, volunteers, and social organizations played a crucial role in sustaining families and alleviating financial stress. Cash assistance was particularly valuable due to its flexibility, allowing families to address urgent needs, such as small business investments or debt repayment.

Psychological support, including trauma healing, was equally important, especially for the PRS Family, helping them cope with the psychological aftermath of the disaster. This program eased fears, nightmares, and stress, enabling families to emotionally recover and move forward with a more optimistic outlook. Both local and international volunteers provided not only material and psychological assistance but also fostered a renewed sense of community among survivors. The role of government and volunteers was vital in offering coordinated and sustained aid, ensuring families had access to the necessary resources to rebuild their lives.

However, challenges such as unequal aid distribution affected family resilience, with some survivors perceiving the aid distribution as unfair, which fostered social jealousy and added psychological strain. The remote location of Huntap-Huntara also posed difficulties, as it was far from economic centers and employment opportunities, limiting access to work and raising transportation costs. These challenges have led some families to consider returning to their original villages if conditions do not improve. Overall, social and material assistance has been critical in fostering the resilience of families affected by the Semeru eruption. However, issues regarding aid distribution and economic access must be addressed to enhance their long-term resilience.

3.5. Discussion: Research Findings on Family Resilience Determinants in Survivors of the Semeru Eruption

The findings of this study reveal that family resilience among survivors of the Semeru eruption is shaped by a dynamic interplay between internal and external factors that fortify their ability to withstand the disaster's impact. Specifically, coping strategies, role flexibility, communication, and social support are pivotal in enhancing the resilience of families such as Bu IM, Bu NA, and Bu TM. These results align with the work of Herdianto and Kusumiati, who assert that social support positively correlates with family resilience [12].

Social support, including assistance from government agencies, volunteers, and community networks, serves as a critical buffer against the economic and psychological pressures faced by disaster survivors, facilitating their post-crisis adaptation. This is consistent with Gumelar et al., who emphasize the importance of social support in disaster preparedness at the household level, as well as with Hendriani's findings, which underscore the role of social intervention in fostering resilience among individuals with disabilities. [13], [14]

Moreover, disaster survivors often experience both physical and psychological vulnerabilities, necessitating adequate social support to rebuild their lives. This is in line with Bakic and Ajdukovic's perspective, which posits that disaster survivors can draw upon individual, interpersonal, and community-based skills to persevere and seek aid [15]. This perspective means that -in various situations, social support does not come automatically. Therefore, disaster survivor families could utilize their social skills to access assistance resources around them [16]. This finding is in line with Aksyar et al. on disaster survivor families in Donggala Regency of Middle Sulawesi Province. According to him, internally, disaster survivors' families have shown resilience. However, they have difficulty adapting to post-disaster life [17]. Another finding is from the survivors of Pasigala liquefaction, Sulawesi. Their survivor succeeded in going through posttraumatic development growth because they have a robust level of family hardiness [18]. In the context of the Semeru eruption survivors, these social skills are evident in their ability to access assistance and support within the

Huntap-Huntara community, despite challenges such as unequal distribution of aid.

The study further highlights those key components of resilience, such as communication, conflict resolution orientation, and coping strategies, are essential determinants of family resilience. This supports the findings of Bogardi and Fekete, who identified communication and coping capacity as primary indicators of resilient families [19]. In this study, families such as Bu BYU and Bu PRS demonstrated flexibility and adaptation through role and occupational changes, such as transitioning from farming or livestock management to small business ownership in Huntap-Huntara. These coping strategies not only provided economic stability but also reinforced emotional bonds within the family.

3.5.1. The Role Flexibility and Cultural Adaptation

Family resilience is also significantly influenced by the ability to adapt flexibly to role changes. Anggraini and Hendriani illustrate how wives of men who became physically disabled were able to harness inner strength and utilise interpersonal and problem-solving skills to cope with major life changes [20]. In the context of the Semeru eruption survivors, role flexibility is evident in the adaptation of families such as Bu BYU and Bu TM, who changed their livelihoods, not only improving financial resilience but also strengthening family bonds.

The experience of the BYU and PRS Families demonstrates that role flexibility goes beyond merely finding alternative income sources; it reflects the capacity to reimagine family dynamics and responsibilities. For example, Bu BYU's involvement in running a small shop highlights the shifting role of women in contributing to family income, a change driven by necessity yet fostering empowerment and collaboration. Similarly, the PRS Family's decision to diversify their economic activities—transitioning from farming to selling food products—illustrates how adaptive strategies can help families regain economic stability while simultaneously reinforcing teamwork within the household.

Cultural adaptation also plays a significant role in sustaining resilience. The LIH Family's active engagement in communal activities such as *tahlilan* and *pengajian* reflects their reliance on cultural practices to maintain emotional well-being and social

cohesion. This aligns with Pudjiati et al.'s findings on the importance of community support in shaping resilience through cultural identity [21]. In the context of Semeru survivors, the ability to sustain traditional practices in resettlement areas not only preserves cultural values but also creates a sense of normalcy and belonging in unfamiliar environments.

Furthermore, survivor families' adaptability is influenced by their prior exposure to the risks of living near Mount Semeru. As reflected in the interviews, families like LIH were somewhat prepared for the possibility of a disaster, drawing on their cultural wisdom and past experiences. This pre-disaster familiarity with risks helped them navigate post-disaster challenges more effectively, illustrating how cultural knowledge can enhance resilience by reinforcing mental readiness and practical preparedness.

3.5.2. Coping Strategies in the Context of Disasters

Beyond social support, coping strategies play a crucial role in the resilience of disaster-affected families. Weber et al. emphasize that finding meaning in life and experiencing posttraumatic growth are significant predictors of resilience among families affected by natural disasters such as tornadoes [22]. This aligns with the findings of this study, where Semeru survivors exhibited an ability to derive meaning from their hardships and foster resilience through their traumatic experiences.

In a broader community context, Wang et al. highlight the importance of "family colocation" or the physical closeness of family members following a disaster as a coping mechanism that supports mental well-being [23]. Among Semeru survivors, the physical proximity and communication between family members while residing in Huntap-Huntara were key factors that helped maintain emotional balance and psychological stability amidst the uncertainty they faced.

Interplaying between cultural mechanisms and coping strategies is cultural coping, cultural coping practices such as collective coping, avoidance coping, and engagement coping. Cultural coping expressions include *narimo ing pandum*, *ngukur sarira*, and *mulur mungkret*. Asking for help from *wong tuwek* and *tahlilan* to hope for blessings [24]. In line with cultural coping,

emotional and religious support can help shape coping and positive thinking, thereby increasing family resilience. Interventions that include religion and increasing resilience can fill some of the gaps in understanding resilience in preparing for disasters [7].

3.5.2. *Religious Practices and Spiritual Support*

The findings of this study indicate that religious practices and spiritual support play a vital role in fostering family resilience. As Hendriani notes, emotional and religious support can shape coping strategies and foster positive mindsets that bolster family resilience, particularly in dealing with a massive life-changing event such as disability and natural disaster [25], [26]. This is further corroborated by Lomeli-Rodriguez et al., who found that religious faith helped disaster survivors in Central Sulawesi navigate trauma and cultivate gratitude for their survival [27]. For instance, Bu NA's family actively participated in religious activities such as prayer groups and memorial gatherings (*pengajian* and *tahlilan*), which provided spiritual support and strengthened their sense of community among fellow survivors. These social interactions helped them maintain emotional equilibrium and provided the strength to face post-eruption challenges.

Religious practices also create a sense of purpose and continuity, which is critical during periods of upheaval. The LIH Family, for example, frames the disaster as a divine test, drawing on their faith to cultivate patience and resilience. This perspective not only helps the family process their experiences emotionally but also reinforces their commitment to rebuilding their lives while maintaining spiritual integrity. Similarly, the PRS Family's regular prayers anchor them emotionally, offering gratitude for survival and instilling hope for a better future. The BYU and LIH Families' involvement in communal prayers strengthens social bonds and creates opportunities for mutual aid among survivors. These gatherings serve as a platform for exchanging resources and emotional support, underscoring the interplay between religion and community resilience. Moreover, the shared rituals and narratives provide a framework for families to navigate their hardships and envision recovery collectively. By integrating traditional rituals with forward-looking prayers for blessings and success, families maintain a connection to their cultural identity

while embracing hope for a renewed life. For survivors like LIH, this dual focus on preserving cultural values and envisioning a better future reinforces both personal and collective resilience, highlighting the transformative power of spirituality in disaster recovery.

3.6. Study Limitation

While this study provides valuable insights into the determinants of family resilience among survivors of the Mount Semeru eruption, several limitations must be acknowledged. First, the relatively small sample size limits the generalizability of the findings. Although efforts were made to include diverse families, the participants may not represent the broader population of survivors. Second, the context-specific nature of this research, rooted in the socio-cultural and religious environment of the Semeru region, may not be directly applicable to other disaster-affected communities with differing cultural or religious frameworks. Future research should consider expanding the sample size and conducting comparative studies in different cultural contexts to validate and enrich the findings.

4. CONCLUSION

The resilience of the BYU, LIH, and PRS families is largely influenced by key components of family resilience, including their ability to find positive meaning in adversity, their flexibility in adapting to change, spiritual strength, and the social and economic support they receive. In alignment with these resilience components, factors such as flexibility, effective communication, emotional support, spiritual strength, planning and future aspirations, along with coping strategies, form the fundamental pillars that strengthen the resilience of families affected by the Semeru eruption. These factors enable the families to face post-disaster challenges with optimism and to adjust to their new living conditions.

Based on the findings, specific recommendations can be proposed for stakeholders, including community organisations, government agencies, and non-governmental organisations (NGOs). First, government agencies should prioritise equitable aid distribution to address disparities that create social tensions among

disaster survivors. Transparent mechanisms for monitoring and distributing aid are essential to fostering trust and fairness. Second, community organisations and NGOs should expand their focus on providing both material support and psychological interventions, such as trauma healing programs and family counselling services. These efforts would help alleviate the long-term psychological impact of disasters and strengthen family resilience.

The findings of this study also carry important policy implications. For instance, equitable aid distribution and improved access to psychological support are crucial in ensuring holistic recovery for disaster survivors. Policymakers should consider integrating community-based support systems into disaster management frameworks. This can include creating localised disaster preparedness programs that leverage existing communal networks, such as religious groups (*tahlilan* and *pengajian*) and neighbourhood associations (*Rukun Tangga/RT*), to enhance resilience. Furthermore, interventions designed to support families after a disaster should incorporate culturally sensitive practices that align with the affected community's values and traditions.

For future research, several actionable recommendations emerge. First, longitudinal studies should be conducted to explore the long-term impact of disasters on family resilience, particularly how resilience evolves over time as families navigate recovery and adaptation. Second, research should investigate the effectiveness of community-based interventions, such as collective coping mechanisms and mutual aid initiatives, in improving resilience among disaster-affected families. Such studies would provide valuable insights into the scalability and sustainability of these interventions in diverse cultural contexts.

Future policies should also emphasise the role of community support systems in disaster recovery. Encouraging partnerships between government agencies and local organisations could create a robust support network that fosters resilience at both the individual and community levels. Additionally, disaster preparedness programs should integrate strategies for strengthening social cohesion and collective efficacy, which are critical for effective community-based responses.

In conclusion, the combination of internal and external factors has empowered these families to persevere and rebuild their

lives after the Semeru eruption, with clear hopes and plans for the future. By addressing the highlighted gaps and implementing the recommendations provided, stakeholders can enhance the resilience of disaster-affected families and communities, ensuring more effective recovery processes in the face of future challenges.

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